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**PHONE HACKING INVESTIGATION**

Thank you for your letter of 22 March to the Home Secretary regarding recent developments in relation to the phone hacking investigation. I am replying as the Minister responsible for Policing and Criminal Justice. I am sorry for the delay.

The Government does of course maintain a close interest in the very serious allegations, and associated developments, relating to the hacking of personal communications. However, the investigation of the various allegations is an operational matter for the police. It would be inappropriate to comment on the detail of ongoing investigations, and neither should Ministers seek to influence whether, and how, any allegations or complaints are pursued.

A number of strands of investigation and inquiry remain underway. While the Parliamentary Committee on Standards and Privileges has recently reported on its assessment of the question of potential breach of Parliamentary privilege, the matters raised by the case remains under active consideration in the current police investigation, in various civil actions before the courts, by the Home Affairs Select Committee, and by the Press Complaints Commission. The Government continues to believe that the correct course is to await the outcome of these various inquiries.

NICK HERBERT