

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

PANORAMA AND SPARROW

As you are aware, the BBC's flagship current affairs programme, Panorama, is planning a film on the Sparrow issue on June 22. We have been approached with a request for an interview with you in relation to this.

Panorama is a prime time programme which commands a significant audience. The coverage will also be channelled through other BBC outlets in order to drive audience figures in advance. The film is being made by a reporter called John Sweeney. Mr Sweeney is high profile and has a reputation for covering subjects in a distinctive manner. We will provide you with examples: the most famous recent example was his film from North Korea where he posed as a Phd student from LSE to gain entry to the country. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-22142294>

While it is frustrating that Panorama is covering this issue, it is sufficiently high profile for us – in our view – to take very seriously, and to be as accommodating as possible to the programme, and robust in our responses. If we do not appear in the programme we risk looking evasive when – as we know – we are in a very strong position. This view is shared by our external advisers at Brunswick.

We therefore recommend that [at the right time, and only once we are clear about their line of questioning and other interviewees] we offer an interview with you to the programme. This would be accompanied by substantial preparation and 'mock' interviews with Brunswick and my team.

In addition, I plan to offer the programme:

- A full background, off camera briefing on the issues with relevant colleagues (Angela VDB and Patrick Bourke)
- A filmed interview with Angela
- Full access to all relevant documentation (where agreed with legal team)

We should be confident and open about this approach. It is frustrating and will be time consuming. But it is also an opportunity to place on record both the thorough nature of our approach and, crucially, the lack of any evidence to suggest an issue with Horizon.

Mark Davies, May 20 2015