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THE PRIME MINISTER

21 July 2022

Dear Sir Bernard,

Thank you for your letter of 8 July in which you asked for further information following my appearance before the Liaison Committee on 6 July.

Question 23

At present, OneWeb's main focus is generating revenue from internet connectivity through its first-generation satellite constellation. Future OneWeb satellites may be capable of offering general navigation services but that is a decision for the company.

Question 41

In April 2018, I attended a social event at the house of Evgeny Lebedev in Italy. In the interests of transparency, I declared the overnight stay in the Ministerial returns which can be found on gov.uk.¹

At this social event, I also met Evgeny Lebedev's father. This was not a formal meeting, nor something that was pre-arranged.

Officials were aware in advance that I was attending the social event. Contrary to some reports, my visit was in line with established security protocols under successive Foreign Secretaries. It would not have been normal practice for civil servants or security staff to have accompanied me to such a private, social occasion. I did not take Ministerial papers with me.

If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual and finds themselves discussing official business without an official present – for example at a social occasion – any significant content should be passed back to the department after

1

the event. That was not necessary in this case. As far as I am aware, no Government business was discussed.

At the time, the Lebedevs' company owned the *Evening Standard* and the *Independent*, and the *London Live* television company. Its ownership of and participation in British newspaper publishing was not disputed.

Indeed, it was the last Labour Government that resolved not to intervene in the purchase of the *Evening Standard* in 2009 (a decision made by the then Secretary of State, Lord Mandelson).²

More broadly, I would observe that during my time as Foreign Secretary, I took a leading role in coordinating the global action against the Salisbury poisonings. We expelled 23 Russian intelligence officers posing as diplomats. In collective solidarity, and in recognition of the shared threat posed to our allies, 28 other countries and NATO joined us in expelling over 150 Russian intelligence officers and acting in concert to refuse entry to them in future.

We also sanctioned individuals responsible for hostile and malign activity; introduced new Chemical Weapons, Global Human Rights and Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regimes; and cracked down on illicit finance. We also challenged Russia's actions in Ukraine, in Syria, the Western Balkans and in cyber space. We continue to expose Russia's malign activities and counter their disinformation tactics.

And under my Premiership, the UK has led in convening a global alliance to ensure Ukraine survives and thrives as a free and sovereign nation. Together with our international partners we stand united in condemning Russia's unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack. We have sanctioned over 1,000 individuals and over 100 entities, the largest and most severe package ever imposed on Russia.

In relation to Lord (Evgeny) Lebedev, I also refer the Committee to the Government's response to the Humble Address of 12 May 2022, *Official Report*, HCWS22. He has been vocal in his criticism of the Putin regime.

Up to 2016, the Labour Party published details of its meetings with senior media executives. The historic returns show considerable engagement by the Shadow Cabinet with Evgeny Lebedev and attendance at his social events³. This included meetings with the current Shadow Home Secretary (the Right Honourable Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) and

² *Hansard*, 29 January 2009, Col. 762W; *Hansard*, 21 April 2009, Col. 524W.

³ Returns listed at the bottom of: <https://labour.org.uk/about/how-we-work/>

the current Chair of the Standards Committee (the Honourable Member for Rhondda), who have both raised the issue of my engagement in recent weeks. The Labour Party has stopped publishing such returns, despite a commitment following the Leveson Inquiry.

Questions 53 and 56

As I said during my appearance, this country can be very proud of our support to Ukraine.

We have been front and centre of the international response to Putin's barbaric invasion, building an international coalition which continues to provide unprecedented financial, military and diplomatic support to President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people.

The Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme represent one of the fastest and biggest visa programmes in British history.

Visa data by age and sex of applicant for the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme and Ukraine Family Scheme is published on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homes-for-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-and-ukraine-family-scheme-visa-data-by-age-and-sex-of-applicant>.

Local authorities are notified of the sponsor details once a visa application is made, and will then undertake accommodation and DBS checks as soon as possible, including visiting the accommodation to ensure it is suitable. Councils must confirm that they have checked that the accommodation exists as part of their data return to the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.

In addition to these accommodation checks, councils must visit shortly after a guest has arrived to confirm that the guest is safe and well and that there are no serious health and safety and welfare concerns.

Question 95

We have been clear that major fiscal decision should be left for the next Prime Minister. However, that does not preclude Ministers from tackling the issues affecting people across the UK. This Government has made the biggest cut ever on all fuel duty rates which will see a one-car family save £100 on average – from March, for a year.

Question 158

As I am sure the Committee will appreciate, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on sensitive personnel matters. The Government takes all allegations seriously and they are managed through the appropriate processes.

Within Government, staff can raise concerns in a number of ways using standard departmental procedures such as through line managers and other mechanisms. All concerns raised, including any relating to sexual impropriety, should be escalated directly to the Permanent Secretary. Concerns may also be raised directly with a senior member of the Propriety and Ethics team in the Cabinet Office. If a concern has been raised, the Permanent Secretary, in consultation with the Cabinet Office, will determine how to take the matter forward.

Individuals outside of Government can also raise concerns about Ministers directly with the Cabinet Office, its Party HQ or via Parliamentary channels.

In response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's 2018 report on Intimidation in Public Life, the Government recommended that all political parties establish their own code of conduct for all party members, including elected representatives. These codes provide a mechanism to ensure high standards of behaviour of elected representatives.

Question 177

This investigation had not been completed by Lord Geidt before his resignation. The investigation therefore remains outstanding and should be a matter for a new Independent Adviser function, as soon as appointed by my successor.

I shall arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bernard Jenkin', written over a circular stamp or mark.

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP