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Sir Michael Lyons
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Dear Sir Michael,


IMPROVING NAO ACCESS TO BBC INFORMATION

Thank you for your letter of 4 January setting out your thoughts on how National Audit Office access to BBC information should be improved.

Your proposals reflect the helpful discussions between the Trust and the NAO, and I welcome them. While short of the statutory right of audit access that the Committee of Public Accounts has recommended, they strike me as a practical way of strengthening our ability to help the Trust examine value for money at the BBC.

It is good to know that you are seeking to make sure that the NAO has access to the BBC's confidential contracts, on the basis that the NAO provides professional advice to the Trust. The NAO is of course in a different position from others who advise the BBC in that the statutory function of the C&AG, and the NAO on the C&AG's behalf, is to provide independent support to Parliament in its scrutiny of public money. That said, the approach you propose appears to be a pragmatic way of providing access to information, with any subsequent disclosure being subject to our routine clearance discussions.

Like you I am committed to making a success of the arrangements for our work at the BBC. I am grateful to you for the efforts you have put into making the arrangements work, and agree that we should keep them under review.


AMYAS C/E MORSE

