

My Intervention on the Ministerial Statement – Telegraph Media Group Ltd: Acquisition

Sir John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

I strongly welcome the Secretary of State's clear statement of policy that foreign states should not be allowed to take over press and media in this country, which is a welcome development. I hope that in the proposals for amending the law it will be clear that the policy relates not only to Governments but to nationalised industries, public authorities or companies in which states have significant influence because of their shareholdings. If that is not set out, such bodies may try to find ways around the law. I am sure my right hon. and learned Friend is up to that, but can we please have an amendment that absolutely nails press freedom in the way we want it to exist—free of influence from foreign states?

Lucy Frazer (Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport):

I understand my right hon. Friend's points. When we bring forward legislation, it is important that it does not have loopholes. As a Department, we thought very carefully about how we can protect against that. When the Bill comes back to this House this afternoon, he will see that we have defined foreign state ownership very broadly. We have extended the definition to include not only ownership but control and influence.