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LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)/12/3

14 May 86

PS/Minister(DS)

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UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS - CENTRAL TELEVISION INTERVIEW

1. My staff spoke to you on Friday evening about a request from Central Television to conduct an interview with a member of MOD, preferably a Minister, for inclusion in a 45 minute piece on UFOs which they propose screening in "Central Weekend", a 1 1/2 hour current affairs programme shown on Sundays in the Central TV area. The producers are, as yet, unsure of the actual date of the broadcast. We promised to let you have fuller information about the programme when it was to hand.
2. The programme will be based on a series of interviews interspersed with film, taken from public roads, of some MOD establishments which are assumed to be of significance in UFO circles. Interviewees will include Lord Hill-Norton and an ex-MOD employee Mr C T Withers, who worked at Boscombe Down during the 1950's and who claims to have seen a UFO in 1952. You may wish to note that, because of his official status at the time, Mr Withers has been in touch with this office, independently, about taking part in the programme. We have advised him that, as a private citizen, the decision to take part must be his own but that the MOD would have no objection to him doing so.
3. The proposed interview with Minister(DS) would last perhaps 15 minutes which, when edited, will provide 2-3 minutes of TV time. The interview would take the form of specific questions upon which we would, of course, provide briefing. The questions are expected to include: our explanation of the strange phenomena which occur in the sky; the seriousness with which MOD treats reports of incidents; whether MOD is the sole authority in Whitehall which receives reports or whether they are passed on to another more clandestine organisation; and the incident in December 1980 at RAF Woodbridge. Central Television have indicated that the interview can take place at Minister's convenience but they would preferably wish it to be within a fortnight.