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PRIME MINISTER

Coal: MISC 101(84)11th Meeting

The following will be reporting on the situation on the ground:

Mr Giles Shaw, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Department of Energy

Home Secretary

Mr Norman Lamont, Minister of State, Department of Trade
and Industry

2. You will probably wish to concentrate on the following:
 - i. any evidence of a further drift back to work;
 - ii. latest developments affecting the Special Delegate Conference on Thursday;
(any legal moves within the NUM; likelihood of rule change being approved; prospects for a national ballot and its likely outcome)
 - iii. attitudes of other unions
(in the light of recent statements at the Scottish TUC meeting at Aberdeen)
 - iv. how to influence rank and file opinion among the miners against a strike.
3. On iv. there is now a disturbing trend of comment that a national strike is inevitable. The expectation in the media

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is that the rule change will be agreed, that there will be a national ballot, that a majority will be secured for strike action, and that there will be a very long strike. This has been fed in particular by the recent polls. The highest priority for the Government and the NCB must still be to mobilise rank and file opinion against the strike. There is ample evidence that local miners' leaders and delegates do not reflect rank and file opinion, Moreover those who oppose a strike may be reluctant to reveal this in a reply to a poll researcher. Can we do more over the next couple of weeks to get across to the rank and file that the NCB plans are to provide the coal industry with a better future, not to destroy it, and that the most certain way to damage the industry's future would be a long national strike?

Next meetings

We are making arrangements to brief you on developments, especially the outcome of the Delegate conference, on your return from Portugal.

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4. The next opportunity for you to chair a meeting of MISC 101 will be on Wednesday 25 April (provisionally 2.30). Shall we assume that the next meeting will be then, unless something comes up requiring Ministerial discussion in your absence. In the latter event, we could ask the Home Secretary to chair a meeting, say this Wednesday, 18 April.

Pq

P L GREGSON

16 April 1984

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