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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

Personal Minute

No. M8/84

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH THE COAL DISPUTE DURING AUGUST

I should be grateful if you and other Ministers concerned would make arrangements for dealing with the coal dispute during August on the following lines:

i. There should continue to be regular and frequent (if need be daily) meetings at the Department of Energy under your chairmanship, or that of your Minister of State or Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Mr. Shaw), to exchange information and consider tactics.

ii. At the end of each of these meetings a brief report and line to take should be prepared and circulated to the members of the Ministerial Group

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on Coal (MISC 101). The format and circulation of this situation report should be agreed between the Cabinet Office and the Department of Energy.

iii. Day-to-day responsibility for Ministerial supervision of the media arrangements, which are being coordinated at official level by Miss Christopherson, should rest with you, or the Department of Energy Minister deputed to act in your absence, maintaining frequent and regular contact with, and consulting as necessary, the Lord President and the Secretary of State for Employment on these matters. It may be convenient for the latter or the Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Gummer) to attend the meetings at i., as appropriate.

iv. If during my absence it is essential for MISC 101 to meet to consider an issue of policy requiring to be settled by Ministers collectively, I should be grateful if the Lord President or, if for any reason he cannot do so, the Home Secretary, would chair the meeting.

v. The Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry, Employment and Transport should ensure that a Minister from each of their Departments is available in this country at all times throughout August to receive reports and take part in whatever discussions (by telephone or at meetings) are required.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Lord President of the Council, the Home Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Defence, Scotland, Trade and Industry, Employment and Transport, the Attorney General, the Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Gummer) and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Margaret Thatcher

2 August 1984

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