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MR. POWELL

UK/SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you.
CDR 21/7.

Thank you for your minute of today. I am not quite sure the precise details of Consolidated Goldfields' proposals for the privatisation of British Coal. One of their directors, Alan Sykes, has sent me some interesting notes on this general subject, but though they express interest, they fall short of a definite proposal. In any event, I do not think that Consolidated Goldfields' interests in British Coal can be a material factor in evaluating the prospective bid by Anglo-American. Privatisation of British Coal is some years off, perhaps in the next Parliament, and that rather vague prospect can hardly be said to affect decisions now. Moreover, Consolidated Goldfields are only one company among several which might have an interest in a privatised British Coal, RTZ and BP are other obvious examples.

So my conclusion is that the British Coal point is not of particular sensitivity or importance in present circumstances.

N.L.W.

N. L. WICKS

21 July 1988

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