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Secretary of State

From: S J Wordsworth

R.d/y

Western European Department

Date: 10 April 1989

cc: PS/Mrs Chalker

PS/Mr Waldegrave

PS/PUS

Sir J Fretwell

Prime Minister

Mr Ratford

Mr Synnott

*You asked
about these
incidents.*

*COP
10/4*

Mr Ramsden
Private Secretary

BERLIN WALL ESCAPE INCIDENTS

1. You asked Mr Ramsden for an account of the three escape attempts which took place in Berlin over the weekend.

A 2. BMG telno 19 provides details:

- i) On 8 April two young men tried to run across one of the sector crossing points. A warning shot was fired and they were recaptured, apparently without injury;
- ii) On the same day a lorry tried to crash through the defences. The fate of the occupants is not known;
- iii) On 9 April a single man was captured in the "death strip".

B 3. The first incident was recorded by a West German photographer. His pictures have been published widely in the Western press. The GDR side have already given their own account of this incident, claiming that two men tried to cross the border illegally after a warning shot had been fired. They claim that their initial investigations show that the incident was "organised and instigated from Berlin

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(West)".

4. In view of the interest expressed by No 10, BMG's telegram has been passed to them.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stephen Wordsworth". The signature is written in dark ink and features a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

S J Wordsworth

SW1AFD/2

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COMMENT

UNCLASSIFIED
FM BMG BERLIN
TO DESKBY 101600Z FCD
TELNO 019
OF 101530Z APRIL 89
INFO ROUTINE BONN. EAST BERLIN

TELECON WORDSWORTH/ CHARLTON: BERLIN WALL INCIDENTS

SUMMARY

1. THREE UNSUCCESSFUL ESCAPE ATTEMPTS OVER THE WEEKEND. ALLIED PROTEST OVER INCIDENT AT CHAUSSEE STRASSE SECTOR CROSSING POINT (PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE TIMES OF 10 APRIL). UNSUBSTANTIATED REPORTS OF A POSSIBLE FATALITY AT BERNAUERSTRASSE INCIDENT.

DETAIL

2. AT 0930 ON 8 APRIL TWO YOUNG MEN TRIED TO ESCAPE ACROSS THE CHAUSSEE STRASSE CROSSING POINT BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND FRENCH SECTORS. GDR BORDER GUARDS BRANDISHED WEAPONS AND A SHOT WAS FIRED JUST BEFORE THE MEN REACHED THE FINAL BARRIER. A WEST GERMAN JOURNALIST ON THE SPOT TOOK PHOTOGRAPHS (REPRODUCED IN THE TIMES OF 10 APRIL). THE FRENCH COMMANDANT ISSUED A PRESS STATEMENT OF PROTEST ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIES. THE SENAT HAVE ALSO PROTESTED.

3. ON THE EVENING OF 8 APRIL A LORRY RAN INTO BORDER DEFENCES AT BERNAUERSTRASSE (ADJACENT TO FRENCH SECTOR) APPARENTLY IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ESCAPE ATTEMPT. AN EYE-WITNESS REPORTED THAT BORDER GUARDS APPROACHED THE LORRY AND ISSUED THE ORDER "COME OUT". NO OCCUPANTS WERE SEEN. THE LORRY WAS SUBSEQUENTLY TOWED AWAY. NEARLY TWO HOURS LATER TWO WITNESSES REPORTED HEARING SHOT-LIKE SOUNDS AND ONE CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN 2-3 BORDER GUARDS CARRYING AWAY A LIFELESS BODY FROM THE SCENE. THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES TELL US THAT THESE REPORTS COINCIDED WITH THE NOISE OF FIREWORKS IN THE AREA. THEY DO NOT (NOT) CONSIDER THAT THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE SO FAR IS FIRM ENOUGH TO WARRANT A PROTEST.

4. ON 9 APRIL A MAN WAS SEEN SPREADEAGLED AND SURROUNDED BY BORDER GUARDS IN THE DEATH STRIP ADJACENT TO THE WILDENBRUCHSTRASSE IN NEUKOELLN (US SECTOR). THE MAN WAS TAKEN AWAY APPARENTLY UNINJURED. NO SHOTS WERE REPORTED.

CORBETT

YYYY

ADVANCE 13

.BERLIN/INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS 1

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PS 1

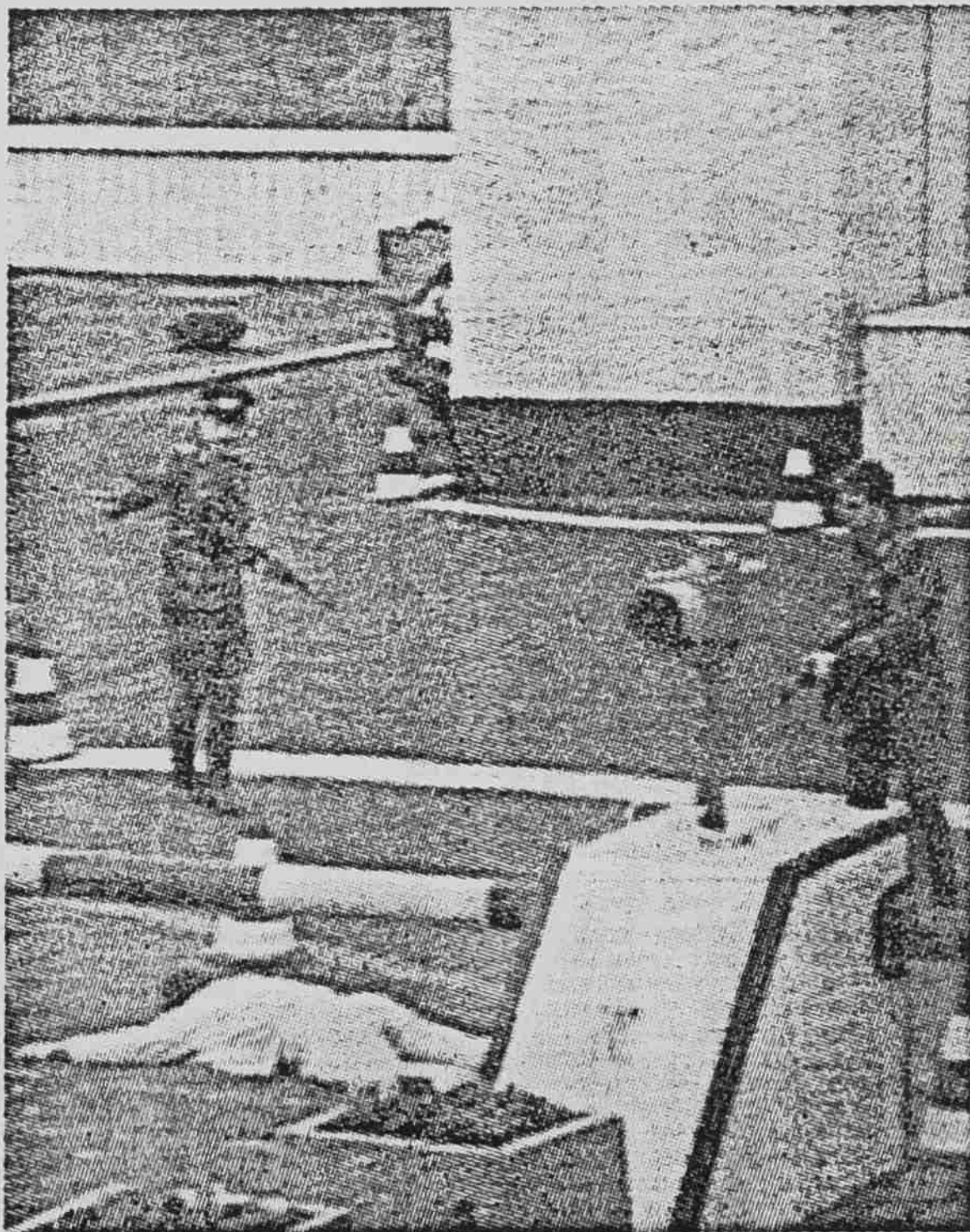
PS/PUS 1

PS/SIR J FRETWELL 1

MR RATFORD 1

HD/WED 1

MAIL PICTURE POWER



Freedom runners caught at the Wall

Mail Correspondent
in West Berlin

TWO men run desperately, a rifle shot rings out ... and another dream of freedom dies on the streets of divided Berlin.

The East Germans made their break (top) at the Chausseestrasse crossing point and were only yards from the Western sector.

But Communist border guards were at their heels and one warning shot was enough to halt the runaways. The guards then closed in, guns pointing menacingly (left) at one man lying helpless.

Both were taken away unharmed. The drama was one of three along the Berlin Wall at the weekend. Guards detained another man on Saturday night after he rammed a truck through frontier fences in the north of the city.

The guards were seen leading the apparently uninjured man away and removing the vehicle.

Yesterday another man was held at the Wall.