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From the Private Secretary

4 May 1989

Dear Rindard,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN

The Prime Minister had a meeting this morning with the new Governing Mayor of Berlin. Herr Momper was accompanied by the Federal German Ambassador. Mr Michael Burton was also present.

The Prime Minister said that she understood that immigration into Berlin from Eastern Europe was causing problems. Herr Momper confirmed this: 20,000 people of German origin had come to settle in Berlin last year from Eastern Europe. In the public's perception they were lumped together with Turks and asylum-seekers. It was impossible to provide housing for all of them. The 6/7,000 immigrants who came from East Germany each year were less of a problem, adapting more easily to the way of life.

The Prime Minister observed that East Germany was lagging far behind countries such as Poland and Hungary in its approach to reform. Herr Momper doubted whether there would be any change so long as Honecker and his old guard colleagues remained. The Party Congress in 1990 was the next opportunity for a major change in personnel.

Herr Momper said that it was important that the West should respond to developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union obviously wanted to reduce its military spending. The reforms in Eastern Europe deserved to be supported with financial help. The Prime Minister warned against wishful thinking. It was evident that the Soviet Union was making West Germany a special target for its propaganda. We must judge the Russians by what they do, not what they say. The fact was the Soviet Union remained immensely strong militarily. Even its unilateral disarmament proposals had to be viewed with some caution: for instance there was evidence that, rather than destroy tanks withdrawn from Eastern Europe, they were intending to store them East of the Urals. Herr Monger commented that he was less impressed with Soviet military efficiency. He accepted that there would have to be hard bargaining on arms control.

Herr Monger volunteered that the new Red-Green Coalition government in Berlin wanted good co-operation with the Allies. They would rely on the Allies' help and partnership. Even the Greens accepted the status of the City and the presence of the Allies. He had banned them discussing the numbers of Allied forces publicly. He would try to discipline them. The Prime Minister welcomed Herr Momper's statement.

The Prime Minister asked whether the East Germans had reverted to a policy of shooting those attempting to cross the border illegally. Herr Momper doubted whether they had ever given up the policy, although they had certainly tried to avoid incidents at sensitive times such as Honecker's visit to West Germany. He thought the East German authorities were very sensitive to the damage which such incidents could do to their reputation.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence).

*Yours sincerely,
C.D. Powell*

(C.D. Powell)

Richard Gozney, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.