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By BKT/NC on 2 May 2013

POL 32-1

--BERNAUER STR TUNNEL--

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TO: Department of State A - 8 0

INFO: BOMN, POLAD/CINCUSABOMN, POLAD/CINCUMR, POLAD/CINCUSAFE,
BREMEN, DUESSELDORF, FRANKFURT, HAMBURG, MUNICH, STUTTGART

FROM: US Mission BERLIN March 1, 1971

SUBJ: Escape Tunnel at Bernauer Strasse

REF: Berlin A-252 of 19 May 70

33/1//

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MIN-2
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As a result of East German border guard activity in the immediate vicinity of the East Berlin border area adjacent to 137 Brunnens Strasse in the French Sector, an escape tunnel was discovered by West Berlin police on the morning of 25 February. The tunnel began in a house at 137 Brunnens Strasse and had progressed some 125 meters eastwards at a level approximately 8 meters under the surface. It was evidently meant to end in the cellar of a house located in the East Sector at 143 Brunnens Strasse. According to police interrogation of three persons who accepted responsibility for the digging of the tunnel, the construction had begun on 20 January 1971 and been carried out by seven persons working on it in day and night shifts.

The objective of the tunnel-building had supposedly been to enable some 17 persons, including relatives of the tunnel-diggers, to flee to West Berlin. The tunnel was practically completed when it was discovered by the East Sector border guards on 25 February, so much so that it had been planned to make the escape in the night of 25/26 February.

Apparently because the soil was so hard, the tunnel-builders thought it necessary to use a pneumatic drill to loosen it. It was evidently this that led to the discovery. Work on closing up the West Berlin end of the tunnel was carried out in the presence of West Berlin police.

Decontrol: March 1, 1972

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PS:DSHarris/EL

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M:Minister

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