

**SECRET**

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August 17, 1961

McGB

A Sovietologist for whom I have the greatest respect and who has served in Germany called me today, greatly concerned at what he called the growing demoralization on both sides of the Berlin line. Seeing an urgent need to raise morale, he suggested getting some highly respected personality, e.g. ex-President Heuss, to go on the radio and propose "a day of German unity" in response to Ulbricht's action. He could call for all Germans on both sides of the border to stay home from work for this day (I recall that Berlin trade union proposed a fifteen minute work stoppage, and RIAS refused even to carry their appeal).

John Whitman thinks this holiday would be widely observed in GDR; it is a form of passive resistance which might have considerable psychological impact. I also doubt that it would be so provocative as to create major risks.

There are CIA reports that GDR regime very pleased with success of its border-closing move. It has given them new confidence, and I note that they turn the screw a little bit tighter each day. Failure to take some form of counter-action, even at risk of escalation, could lead to a dangerous fall in Berlin morale long before the real clutch occurs. In thinking about how to be firm but non-provocative, we must also take account of this special morale problem. I remember how concerned we used to be about it in earlier crises.

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