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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
INFO : Amembassy BONN, LONDON, PARIS, MOSCOW, USAREUR

FROM : U. S. MISSION BERLIN

January 18, 1963

SUBJECT: Contacts Between East German Border Guards and West Berlin Police.

Paris also for USRO, McGuire, Stoessel and US Element LIVE OAK  
USMR SHAPK; USAREUR for POLAD.

Since the erection of the Wall, the West Berlin Police President has encouraged all police on duty at sector and zonal borders to establish personal contacts whenever possible with East German border guards (GREPOS). The purposes of such contacts are to obtain intelligence information and to encourage GREPOS to defect to the West. The Police President has set up a fund to provide a subsidy to police officials who pass cigarettes, food and other gifts to their eastern counterparts in the course of promoting such contacts.

Although only moderate success has been achieved in the past (since the erection of the Wall five contacts have been reported which developed some valuable intelligence information), a recent police report reveals that a striking increase in the number of contacts with East border police has taken place in the area of Police Revier 106 (the area adjacent to Heinrich Heine Strasse crossing point). Shortly before Christmas, Revier 106 personnel noted that East German border guards demonstrated a willingness to be contacted and to engage in across-the-border chit-chat. The police describe this as a complete change in attitude, as formerly the GREPOS assigned to border duty in this area were unfriendly and often hostile.

As an extension of initial contacts established on December 20, 1962, on Christmas Eve West Berlin police shared official presents they had received and also purchased cigarettes and chocolates with their own funds which they passed to certain known GREPOS who in turn shared the gifts with several "reliable" GREPO comrades. West Berlin police are continuing to pass cigarettes, food and other items to their eastern counterparts. Recently, one policeman offered a fried chicken to four GREPOS. While one retired to guard the area to the rear in order to

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prevent their detection, the remaining three divided the chicken and ravenously devoured it on the spot.

The contacts established since December 20, 1962 have thus far produced no important intelligence information. For the most part, the GREPOS have been extremely cautious and expressed great fear of being detected in conversation with West Berlin police. They indicate that punishment for this "crime" is very severe and will only indulge in border conversations when they are certain they are serving with reliable comrades.

Several GREPOS have indicated that the population of East Germany is "in want of everything," stating that with the exception of a few fanatics, no one really believes the promises of a bright future made by the present regime. Others have stated that many GREPOS would like to defect to the West, but refrain from doing so because of fear of revenge on members of their families.

Morale among members of the border police was described as very bad, primarily because of unduly harsh disciplinary measures and long working hours. GREPO units were reported to be assigned to border duty in sections of 25 men serving 12-hour shifts which change daily at 0700 and 1900 hours. GREPO sections on duty at the sector border are usually composed of an approximately equal number of East Berliners, Thuringians and Saxons, and it was reported that there are normally four or five reliable Communists assigned to each section. GREPOS have indicated they would under no circumstances attempt to establish contact with West Berlin police officials if one of these men were known to be anywhere in the vicinity.

COMMENT: The foregoing is indeed a striking change in attitude on the part of East German border guards. Shortly after contacts began on December 20, 1962, the police became suspicious that the GREPOS were acting under orders, possibly with some form of entrapment involved. This has thus far not proven to be the case, and while the passing of gifts can not be discounted as one reason for an increase in the number of contacts, the police believe, and we are inclined to agree, that the main motivation of the GREPOS is to give vent to their frustrations and grievances, including dissatisfaction with their jobs and the Communist regime. Other than the five isolated contacts previously reported since the erection of the Wall, similar activity has not been noted in any other sector or zonal border area.

For the Assistant Chief of Mission:



Alex T. Prengel  
Chief  
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