

News from Senator

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOLE: BRING THE WALL DOWN

WASHINGTON--TODAY, AUGUST 13, 1986, IS A SOMBER ANNIVERSARY. TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO TODAY--AUGUST 13, 1961--CITIZENS FROM BERLIN AWOKE TO FIND THAT THEY HAD BEEN SEVERED FROM ONE ANOTHER, EAST AND WEST, BY BARBED WIRE AND BARRICADES ERECTED BY SOLDIERS OF THE EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT. THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE BERLIN WALL: THE MOST TELLING SYMBOL OF THE FAILURE OF SOVIET POWER AND POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE.

THE STORY HAS BEEN TOLD MANY TIMES, BUT THE HISTORY AND MEANING OF THE BERLIN WALL SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO SLIP FROM THE TOP RANK OF OUR CONCERNS IN SHAPING EAST-WEST RELATIONS. BERLIN REMAINS A CRITICAL POINT OF DIVISION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION. AND THIS DAY OF COMMEMORATION, SAD THOUGH IT IS, MAY WORK SOME GOOD IF IT INSPIRES US TO A NEW INITIATIVE TO BRING THE WALL DOWN, AND TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS BETWEEN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS--NORMALIZE, THAT IS, ON THE BASIS THAT FREEDOM IS THE WAY OF THE FUTURE ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT.

CALL TO ACTION

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE GERMAN NEWSPAPER DER BILD, PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS CALLED FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE BERLIN WALL, LABELING IT "AN AFFRONT TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT." THAT IS AN EXACT DESCRIPTION, IF EVER THERE WAS ONE. THE PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT "DISMANTLING THE WALL WOULD BE A MAJOR STEP TOWARD IMPROVEMENT OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS."

I AGREE. BUT I WOULD NOTE THAT THE PRESIDENT IS NOT THE FIRST TO SUGGEST USING THIS OCCASION TO REVIVE INTEREST IN THE CAUSE OF BRINGING DOWN THE WALL. IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR, MY GOOD FRIEND CONGRESSMAN GUY VAN DER JAGT MET WITH EAST GERMAN LEADER ERICH HONECKER AND URGED HIM TO TAKE DOWN THE WALL AS A GESTURE OF RECONCILIATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 750TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CITY OF BERLIN. HONECKER REPLIED THAT THE WALL WOULD STAND SO LONG AS THE CONDITIONS THAT LED TO ITS CREATION PERSISTED (THAT IS, FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE SOVIETS AND THE EAST GERMANS).

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SO LET US DISABUSE OURSELVES OF A FEW NOTIONS AT THE OUTSET. THERE NEVER WAS JUST CAUSE FOR THE CREATION OF THE BERLIN WALL: BUT THE CREATORS OF THE WALL ARE AS INSISTENT NOW, AS THEY WERE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, ON THEIR RIGHT TO BUILD THAT WALL AND PREVENT ANY EXODUS FROM EAST TO WEST BERLIN. SECOND, THE WALL WILL NOT FALL JUST ON OUR SAY-SO, OR BECAUSE WE ASK POLITELY THAT IT BE DONE. THE WALL WILL COME DOWN WHEN WE SHOW THE STRENGTH OF WILL, THE PERSEVERANCE, AND THE BARGAINING SKILL TO WIN AN END TO THE FORCED DIVISION OF BERLIN.

TO THAT END, LET ME SUGGEST SOME AVENUES THAT WE MIGHT USEFULLY PURSUE.

AN APPEAL TO INTEREST

I HAVE SAID THAT THE BERLIN WALL SYMBOLIZES THE FAILURE OF SOVIET POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE. THAT IS TRUE NOT JUST BECAUSE A WALL TO KEEP YOUR PEOPLE IN IS A TELLING CONDEMNATION OF ANY SOCIETY. IT IS TRUE ALSO BECAUSE THE BERLIN WALL EMBODIES THE FAILURE OF THE SOVIET UNION TO HONOR COMMITMENTS SOLEMNLY MADE IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND IN WRITING.

IT SEEMS TO THIS SENATOR THAT, ON THE BRINK OF WHAT WE HOPE WILL BE A PRODUCTIVE SUMMIT MEETING AND MAJOR ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS, THE SOVIETS HAVE AN INTEREST IN RECTIFYING THEIR RECORD IN BERLIN.

SINCE WORLD WAR II, BERLIN HAS BEEN GOVERNED BY A FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT: AMONG THE U.S., BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND SOVIET UNION. WHILE THE CITY OF BERLIN WAS DIVIDED INTO FOUR SECTORS, ONE ASSIGNED TO EACH OF THE GOVERNING POWERS, THE FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT MADE CLEAR THAT ALL OF BERLIN WAS SUBJECT TO EACH OF THE FOUR POWERS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE SOVIETS HAVE RIGHTS IN THE FRENCH SECTOR--THE U.S. HAS RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET SECTORS--THE FRENCH AND RIGHTS IN THE U.K. SECTOR--AND SO ON.

THE SOVIET UNION HAS CHALLENGED THAT AGREEMENT, AND VIOLATED IT, MANY TIMES--BUT NEVER SO BLATANTLY AS IN CONNIVING WITH THE EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO CREATE THE WALL THAT NOW DIVIDES BERLIN.

THE SOVIET UNION CAN VASTLY ENHANCE ITS CREDIBILITY IN NEGOTIATING WITH THE WEST--BY TAKING DOWN THE WALL IN BERLIN.

THE EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT CAN GREATLY HASTEN NORMALIZED RELATIONS WITH WEST GERMANY--BY BRINGING DOWN THE WALL.

THERE ARE OTHER REASONS WHY SELF-INTEREST SHOULD DICTATE TO THE SOVIETS AND THE EAST GERMANS A FRESH START IN BERLIN. WHILE THE EAST GERMAN ECONOMY HAS IMPROVED GREATLY IN THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY, MUCH OF THAT IMPROVEMENT IS DUE TO ITS INCREASING TIES WITH THE WEST--AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WITH WEST GERMANY ITSELF. SIMILARLY, THE SOVIET ECONOMY IS NOT FREE FROM DEPENDENCE ON THE WEST, PARTICULARLY IN THIS ERA OF LOW OIL PRICES AND POOR HARVESTS.

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BUT ABOVE ALL, IS THE INESCAPABLE FACT THAT THE BERLIN WALL IS A STUNNING PROPAGANDA FAILURE FOR THE SOVIET UNION AND THE EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT. SO LONG AS THE WALL STANDS, NO ONE CAN SERIOUSLY BELIEVE IN THE MARXIST IDEAL OF THE SO-CALLED "WORKER STATE"--WHEN IT IS CLEAR THAT THE WORKERS MUST BE KEPT IN BY BRUTE FORCE. THE REMOVAL OF THE WALL, AND EVERYTHING IT STANDS FOR, COULD BE THE KEY TO OPENING A NEW ERA IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS, RELATIONS BASED ON HARD-HEADED UNDERSTANDING OF FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES, AND REALISTIC BARGAINING ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN: THE PREVENTION OF WAR, THE PRESERVATION OF THE PEACE, CONSISTENT WITH THE WESTERN COMMITMENT TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN FREEDOM--WHICH MUST FOREVER REMAIN OUR HIGHEST VALUE.

A SOBER ASSESSMENT

THE DAYS ARE LONG GONE WHEN MERE SENTIMENT WOULD SERVE AS A BASIS FOR EAST-WEST RELATIONS ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE OF BERLIN. AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LIVING WITH THE WALL, WE CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW WE FAILED BERLIN AT A CRITICAL MOMENT: NOT BY FAILING TO ATTACK THE WALL, WHICH PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN FUTILE--BUT BY BEING TOO SLOW TO UNDERSTAND, TO RESPOND, TO THIS OUTRAGEOUS VIOLATION OF THE WORD AND SPIRIT OF THE FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT; AND TOO SLOW TO COMPREHEND THE DEVASTATING IMPACT THE CREATION OF THE WALL WOULD HAVE ON MORALE IN FREE EUROPE, AND ITS FURTHEST OUTPOST: BERLIN.

WE ARE WISER TODAY, I TRUST. AND WE ARE REALISTIC ENOUGH NOT TO RAISE "FALSE HOPES," AS PRESIDENT REAGAN WAS WARNED AGAINST IN HIS NEWS CONFERENCE LAST NIGHT. BUT MAYBE IT IS BETTER TO RAISE FALSE HOPES, THAN TO OFFER NO HOPE AT ALL. I BELIEVE THERE IS HOPE FOR PROGRESS ON THE MATTER OF BERLIN. LAST NIGHT THE PRESIDENT ALSO EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO TAKE UP THIS ISSUE WITH SOVIET LEADER GORBACHEV AT THE NEXT SUMMIT MEETING. THERE ARE OTHER FORUMS THAT MIGHT ALSO BE CONSIDERED, INCLUDING THE STOCKHOLM DISCUSSIONS ON BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY IN EUROPE--AND THE HELSINKI FRAMEWORK GOVERNING HUMAN RIGHTS IN EUROPE, EAST AND WEST.

SO LET US SEEK PROGRESS ON BERLIN, AND WORK TO BRING THE WALL DOWN. BUT LET US ALSO RESOLVE, IN HONOR OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE DIED SEEKING FREEDOM BEYOND THE WALL--NEVER TO NEGOTIATE AWAY THE FREEDOM BEYOND THE WALL--NEVER TO NEGOTIATE AWAY THE FREEDOM OF BERLIN, OF ALL BERLIN, OR THE RIGHTS WE AND THE WEST GERMANS MAINTAIN IN BERLIN. THE FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT HAS LASTED FOR FOUR DECADES--IT IS TIME FOR IT TO BE HONORED IN FULL, AND NOT IN THE BREACH. ALL OF BERLIN IS OUR TRUST, AND OUR CONTINUING CONCERN.

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