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INFORMATION REPORT

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SOURCES:

1. Speculations about Chancellor Adenauer's retirement have somewhat died down since the election campaign got under way. The CDU leadership realizes that the Chancellor has no intention of simply stepping down after the election and believes that he will continue as active chancellor until he is either incapacitated or dies.
2. Among well-informed CDU leaders, the general opinion is that the Chancellor will not select any of the eligible candidates for possible succession to be played up as a "crown prince" and built up in the public eye. With this policy they are in agreement, since they feel that nomination of one person can make only him happy and all the rest unhappy and would be detrimental to the present close party harmony. The CDU leadership also cites the example of Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden as a case for avoiding the same step in West Germany. They believe that as long as the CDU maintains a majority and forms the new government, the party will not be too much weakened if no successor is chosen, and a period of intraparty politics and in-fighting which must follow in case of the Chancellor's removal will result in the naming of a candidate acceptable to the majority.
3. Of the candidates for the future chancellorship, many CDU leaders regard the following order of strength as most likely:
 - a. Eugen Gerstenmaier. He has gained in popularity during the past few months through his excellent debate on the atomic issue in the Bundestag, his keynote speech at the party convention in Hamburg, and his many excellent campaign speeches. In addition, as leader of the CDU left wing, he has won considerable support among Catholic CDU elements, who take the liberal view that it would perhaps be

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better to have the next chancellor Protestant instead of Catholic.

- b. Heinrich von Brentano. He has had excellent opportunities to reach the general public through his activities as Foreign Minister. The Chancellor's failure to designate him as "crown prince" has hurt him considerably, since many persons interpreted the situation as indicating that Brentano did not have the capability for the high office.
- c. Ludwig Erhard. His chances remain approximately the same and will so remain as long as the West German economy is sound. He is believed, however, not to command sufficient support for the chancellorship.
- d. Franz Josef Strauss. He has become a "red hot" political personality, controversial but recognized by all as a person of great capacity and with a willingness to take political chances when others hold back. Judgment on him will depend on his accomplishments, or lack of them, in a year or two in the Defense Ministry. His chances are good and are expected to continue so.
- e. Karl Arnold. He has made some gains in recent months by seeking new alliances within the CDU/CSU political structure and by moving from a position left of center to center within the party.