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## FEDERAL GERMAN POLITICS

## SUMMARY

1. KOHL'S COALITION SUFFERS FURTHER SERIOUS BLOW IN FRANKFURT ELECTIONS. FEDERAL POLITICS IN AN INCREASINGLY UNCERTAIN PERIOD. NEED FOR LEADERSHIP FROM KOHL GREATER THAN EVER. PROSPECTS FOR GENERAL ELECTION IN DECEMBER 1990 NOW FAR LESS CLEAR. SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR FEDERAL POLICIES.

## DETAIL

2. IN THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN THE LAND OF HESSEN ON 12 MARCH, THE CDU DID EVEN WORSE THAN EXPECTED. IT LOST CONTROL OF FRANKFURT. ITS SHARE OF THE VOTE IN HESSEN WENT DOWN BY 6.8 PER CENT AND IN FRANKFURT BY 13.0 PER CENT (AND IN BERLIN IN JANUARY BY 8.6 PER CENT). THE FDP FAILED TO RE-ENTER THE FRANKFURT CITY PARLIAMENT. THE SPD, GAINING ONLY 1.5 PER CENT IN FRANKFURT, WAS NOT THE MAJOR WINNER IN TERMS OF VOTES. SUCCESSES WERE ON THE EXTREMES. THE GREENS GAINED 2.1 PER CENT IN FRANKFURT AND THE NEO-NAZI NPD, EVEN FURTHER RIGHT THAN THE REPUBLICANS, GOT INTO THE FRANKFURT CITY ASSEMBLY WITH 6.6 PER CENT.

3. LIKE THE BERLIN ELECTION IN JANUARY, THIS IS A DISASTER FOR THE CDU. IT IS ALSO BAD NEWS FOR THE FDP. SO THE COALITION IS LOOKING VERY BRUISED. THERE IS A FEELING OF TURBULENCE IN POLITICS, WITH TALK OF A CABINET RESHUFFLE, WHICH KOHL HAS NOT EXCLUDED. THERE IS ALSO SPECULATION ABOUT A CHANGE OF CHANCELLOR, BUT KOHL'S HOLD ON THE CDU PARTY IS STRONG AND NO CHALLENGER HAS DECLARED HIMSELF.

4. THE EXPECTATION ABOUT THE GENERAL ELECTION IN DECEMBER 1990 HAS BEEN THAT THE PRESENT COALITION OF CDU/CSU AND FDP HAD GOOD PROSPECTS OF BEING CONFIRMED IN OFFICE. THAT MAY STILL BE THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME, BUT THE ODDS HAVE LENGTHENED GREATLY. THE CHANCES OF THE FDP WANTING TO SWITCH PARTNERS BACK AGAIN TO THE SPD CAN NO



LONGER BE AS SMALL AS HAS BEEN ASSUMED. AND THE GAINS OF THE GREENS IN FRANKFURT, WHERE AN SPD/GREEN CITY GOVERNMENT IS NOW EXPECTED, SUGGEST THAT THE VOTERS' FEAR OF SPD/GREEN COALITIONS HAS DIMINISHED, SO THAT THIS COMBINATION MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BECOME POSSIBLE AT FEDERAL LEVEL. IF THE REPUBLICANS GOT INTO THE BUNDESTAG ALONG WITH THE 4 PARTIES NOW REPRESENTED - CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP AND GREENS - THE ARITHMATIC COULD BE SUCH THAT THE ONLY PARTIES CAPABLE OF FORMING A COALITION WOULD BE THE TWO BIG ONES - CDU/CSU AND SPD.

5. WITH 20 MONTHS UNTIL THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS, THE PROSPECTS ARE WIDE OPEN. THE ECONOMY IS IN EXCELLENT SHAPE, WHICH IS A BIG PLUS FOR THE COALITION. ANOTHER FACTOR IS THAT THE SPD NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CLEARLY FEAR THAT THE SPD/GREEN COALITIONS IN BERLIN AND FRANKFURT MAY DISPLAY MUDDLE AND DISAGREEMENT AND THAT THIS WILL TELL AGAINST THE SPD NATIONALLY AND INCREASE THE CHANCES OF THE PRESENT FEDERAL COALITION BEING CONFIRMED IN OFFICE IN DECEMBER 1990.

6. THE COALITION PARTIES ARE CASTING AROUND FOR MEANS OF REGAINING SUPPORT AND STEMMING THE FLOW OF VOTES TO THE EXTREMES ON LEFT AND RIGHT. KOHL WILL PARTICULARLY BE LOOKING FOR WAYS OF DAMPENING PUBLIC CONCERN THAT THE WAVE OF IMMIGRATION OF ETHNIC GERMANS FROM EASTERN EUROPE WILL PROVIDE NEW COMPETITION FOR JOBS AND HOMES. THE THREAT FROM THE EXTREME RIGHT IS LIKELY TO INCREASE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BAVARIAN CSU, WHICH IS RIGHT OF THE CDU, AND THUS ITS PULLING POWER IN THE COALITION. THE CSU WILL LEAD THE CALL FOR STRICTER TREATMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM. THE CSU WILL BE EVEN MORE AGAINST REDUCTIONS IN SUPPORT FOR FARMERS, WHO NOW CAN TURN IN PROTEST TO THE REPUBLICANS. THE FDP CLEARLY INTENDS TO PLAY UP ITS DIFFERENCES WITH ITS LARGER PARTNER IN THE FEDERAL COALITION. SNF IS ONE EXAMPLE. THERE IS ALSO A RISK (LETTER FOLLOWS) OF THE FDP EXPRESSING DOUBTS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. THESE TRENDS ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE THE STRAINS IN THE COALITION AND THUS ITS IMAGE OF INDECISION. THE NEED FOR STRONG LEADERSHIP BY KOHL, ALWAYS GREAT, IS TODAY GREATER STILL. AND LEADERSHIP OF THE COALITION IS FAR FROM BEING HIS FORTE.

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