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EVENTS IN THE GDR: THE MOOD IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

SUMMARY

1. KOHL TO VISIT GDR IN EARLY DECEMBER. MOOD OF POLITICIANS AND MEDIA DELIBERATELY RESTRAINED. SOME BICKERING BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION. THE GOVERNMENT LACKS A LONG-TERM STRATEGY. WIDESPREAD FEELING THAT GDR MUST SORT OUT ITS OWN FUTURE.

DETAIL

2. IT WAS ANNOUNCED OVER THE WEEKEND THAT KOHL WOULD PROBABLY MEET KRENZ IN THE GDR (NOT IN EAST BERLIN) AT THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER. SEITERS (HEAD OF THE FEDERAL CHANCELLERY) WILL VISIT EAST BERLIN ON 20 NOVEMBER FOR PREPARATORY TALKS WITH KRENZ AND MODROW.

3. THE OPENING OF THE GDR'S BORDERS HAS QUICKLY CAUSED A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS INTO THE FRG. BEFORE THE BORDERS WERE OPENED THE FIGURE WAS 10,000 A DAY. YESTERDAY THE NUMBER DECIDING TO STAY WAS 3400 OR LESS THAN 1 PER CENT OF THE 416,000 VISITORS TO THE FRG.

4. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME SHARP EXCHANGES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION, SYMPTOMATIC OF UNCERTAINTY ON ALL SIDES ABOUT THE RIGHT POLICY IN THE NEW SITUATION. KOHL, EMBARRASSED BY THE JEERING WHICH GREETED HIS SPEECH BEFORE THE SCHOENEBERGER TOWN HALL IN BERLIN ON 10 NOVEMBER, ATTACKED GOVERNING MAYOR MOMPER FOR REFERRING TO 'THE PEOPLE OF THE GDR' IN HIS SPEECH ON THAT OCCASION. KOHL QUESTIONED WHETHER MOMPER HAD THE SAME UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSTITUTION AS HIMSELF. MOMPER ACCUSED KOHL OF A 'SPECTACULAR FAILURE AT A DECISIVE MOMENT IN GERMAN HISTORY' IN NOT RESPONDING ADEQUATELY TO THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN THE GDR.

5. PRESS COMMENT IS GENERALLY STEADY. BUT THERE ARE A FEW SHARP NOTES. SOME COMMENTATORS POINT OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO COHERENT POLICY TO COPE WITH THE PRESENT CHALLENGES. 'SINGING THE

NATIONAL ANTHEM IS NO SUBSTITUTE''. SINCE GERMAN UNITY HAS BEEN THE AIM OF ALL FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENTS, WHERE ARE THE CONTINGENCY PLANS? COMMENTATORS ALSO NOTE THAT THE GDR IS NOT PREPARED TO BE DICTATED TO BY THE FRG, AND IS NOT LOOKING FOR 'ALMS' FROM THE WEST. THERE IS A WIDESPREAD FEELING THAT THE FRG SHOULD NOT TRY TO TELL THE PEOPLE OF THE GDR WHAT THEIR FUTURE SHOULD BE, BUT SHOULD BE CONTENT TO CALL FOR SELF-DETERMINATION, FREE ELECTIONS AND REFORM. THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE (RIGHT OF CENTRE) SEES THE EMERGENCE OF A 'GRAND COALITION' BETWEEN THOSE IN BOTH GERMAN STATES WHO WANT DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM IN THE GDR. KOHL, WAIGEL (CSU LEADER) AND LAMBSDORFF (FDP LEADER) ARE SAID TO HAVE RECOGNISED THIS RISK AND TO INTEND TO ENSURE THAT THE GDR CARRIES OUT THOROUGH ECONOMIC REFORM.

COMMENT

6. THE POLITICAL STATEMENTS ARE DELIBERATELY RESTRAINED. ONE PURPOSE IS TO DISCOURAGE EMOTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE, ANOTHER TO AVOID CAUSING CONCERN AMONG NEIGHBOURS, ESPECIALLY REFORMING STATES IN EASTERN EUROPE. THE PRESS MOSTLY ECHOES THE SOBRIETY OF THE POLITICIANS. THE TONE IS CERTAINLY NOT TRIUMPHALIST. THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE AT THE DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS IS STILL STRONG.

7. KOHL IS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION. HE IS SEEKING TO OCCUPY THE WIDEST POSSIBLE GROUND, SO HE PLAYS DOWN THE THEME OF REUNIFICATION BUT DOES NOT AVOID IT ALTOGETHER, FOR FEAR OF LEAVING IT TO BE HIJACKED BY THE RIGHT OF THE CDU/CSU AND ESPECIALLY THE REPUBLIKANER. BUT THIS PRODUCES A LINE WHICH THE OPPOSITION AND SOME OF THE MEDIA FIND TOO NATIONALISTIC. GENSCHER, BY CONTRAST, IS MANAGING TO STRIKE A NOTE WHICH GOES DOWN WELL WITH ALL BUT THE NATIONALIST WING OF THE CDU/CSU AND THE REPUBLIKANER.

8. THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION OVER ECONOMIC REFORM IN THE GDR REFLECT EMERGING DIFFERENCES ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED OF THE GDR AND WHAT THE ROLE OF THE FRG IN THE PROCESS SHOULD BE. SUPPORTING 'DOMOCRATIC SOCIALISM' IS A TRAP FOR THE GOVERNMENT. BUT APPEARING TO DICTATE TO THE GDR IS TOO. KOHL IS SAYING THAT NEW ECONOMIC HELP DEPENDS ON ECONOMIC REFORM. BUT HELP COULD BECOME URGENT BEFORE REFORM HAS BEEN DECIDED. FOR THE PRESENT THE GOVERNMENT IS TEMPORISING. ONE OF SEITERS' TASKS DURING HIS VISIT TO EAST BERLIN WILL BE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ECONOMIC ELEMENTS IN THE SED'S NEW ACTION PROGRAMME.

MALLABY