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THE GERMAN QUESTION

SUMMARY

1. FEDERAL MINISTERS, ESPECIALLY GENSCHER, CONTINUE TO TAKE A RESPONSIBLE LINE. GOVERNMENT NOT MANAGING TO GIVE APPEARANCE OF BEING MASTER OF EVENTS. BICKERING BETWEEN AND WITHIN PARTIES GROWING, ESPECIALLY ABOUT CONDITIONS TO BE ATTACHED TO NEW AID TO GDR. REUNIFICATION AND CONFEDERATION FEATURING MORE IN THE DEBATE.

DETAIL

2. THE DOMINANT PUBLIC FEELING IN THE FRG ABOUT EVENTS IN THE GDR IS STILL STRONG SATISFACTION. THE GOVERNMENT HAS GENERALLY MAINTAINED ITS RESPONSIBLE LINE. GENSCHER, WHOM YOU WILL SEE AGAIN ON 29 NOVEMBER, IS PARTICULARLY CAREFUL. HE IS THE MOST POPULAR POLITICIAN IN THE FRG AND HIS RESTRAINT IS INFLUENTIAL IN THE POLITICAL DEBATE. HE CONTINUES TO AVOID THE WORD REUNIFICATION AND ALWAYS COUPLES THE IDEA OF GERMAN UNITY WITH THAT OF A FREE, UNITED AND STABLE EUROPE.

3. THERE IS A FEELING IN THE AIR THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY KOHL IS NOT RISING TO THIS HISTORIC MOMENT AND LOOKING LIKE THE MASTER OF EVENTS. ONE REASON IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS OBLIGED TO REFRAIN FROM CLEAR STATEMENTS ON VARIOUS MATTERS BY ITS LINE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE GDR SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE THEIR OWN FUTURE AND THE WEST GERMANS SHOULD NOT TELL THEM WHAT TO THINK. THERE IS ALSO INCREASING ARGUMENT ABOUT ASPECTS OF THE GERMAN QUESTION WITHIN AND BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES.

4. ONE MAJOR SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSY IS THE CONDITIONS TO BE ATTACHED TO NEW AID TO THE GDR. THE SPD ARGUES THAT INTRUSIVE PRECONDITIONS AMOUNT TO TUTELAGE. EVEN GENSCHER AND THE FDP ARE NOW ARGUING AGAINST CONDITIONS FOR NEW AID. THE CDU TODAY HAS SAID THERE WILL BE NO FINANCIAL INJECTIONS TO SAVE SOCIALISM AND THAT MAJOR NEW HELP WILL DEPEND ON LAWS BEING INTRODUCED IN THE GDR TO ABOLISH THE LEADING ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND TO ENSURE FREE ELECTIONS.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY MODIFIED ITS INSISTENCE ON CONDITIONS FOR AID BY STATING THAT HUMANITARIAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT CAN TAKE PLACE BEFORE REFORM. THERE IS A RISK THAT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE GDR COULD DETERIORATE BEFORE REFORM, POSING ACUTE DILEMMAS, AS WELL AS A THREAT OF A NEW WAVE OF IMMIGRANTS, FOR THE BONN GOVERNMENT.

5. THE FLOW OF PERMANENT EMIGRANTS FROM THE GDR TO THE FRG HAS FALLEN FROM 10,000 A DAY BEFORE THE FRONTIER WAS OPENED TO ABOUT 3000. THAT IS A GREAT IMPROVEMENT BUT THE FIGURE IS STILL HIGH. AND IT WOULD PROBABLY RISE AGAIN IF PEOPLE IN THE GDR BECOME MORE DISSATISFIED FOR POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC REASONS. THAT WOULD FURTHER INTENSIFY THE HOUSING PROBLEM AND COULD CAUSE A POLITICAL BACKLASH. AN OPINION POLL IN THE FRG HAS INDICATED THAT 67 PER CENT OF WEST GERMANS NO LONGER SEE A VALID REASON FOR PERMANENT EMIGRATION FROM THE GDR. THERE ARE ALSO THE BEGINNINGS OF A PUBLIC FEELING THAT WEST GERMANS OUGHT TO GAIN SOMETHING FROM THE CHANGES ON THE INNER GERMAN BORDER. HENCE THE INCREASING STRESS ON THE CDU ON THE DEMAND FOR EASIER VISA ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEST GERMANS VISITING THE GDR AND THE ABOLITION OF THE MINIMUM EXCHANGE REQUIREMENT. ONE MOTIVE IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN A FUND TO REPLACE WELCOME MONEY FOR GDR VISITORS IS THAT THE LATTER WOULD MAKE A PAYMENT IN EAST MARKS AND THUS WOULD NOT BE GETTING SOMETHING FOR ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, WHICH ANNOYS A PROPORTION OF WEST GERMANS.

6. LAFONTAINE, LEFT-WING MINISTER-PRESIDENT OF THE SAARLAND AND A CANDIDATE TO LEAD THE PARTY IN THE FEDERAL ELECTION IN DECEMBER 1990, HAS ARGUED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE PROSPECTIVE PRESSURES ON THE FRG'S SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, IT IS NO LONGER SENSIBLE TO MAINTAIN OPEN ACCESS TO, AND AUTOMATIC CITIZENSHIP OF, THE FRG FOR ALL GERMANS. AUTOMATIC CITIZENSHIP IS A HALLOWED PRINCIPLE, AND LAFONTAINE HAS BEEN SHARPLY CRITICISED BY PEOPLE WITHIN AS WELL AS OUTSIDE HIS OWN PARTY. BUT HE HAS A SHARP NOSE FOR WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS TO HEAR, AND HIS REMARKS SUGGEST THAT HE BELIEVES THAT ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE GETTING WORRIED ABOUT THE MONEY SPENT ON EAST GERMANS IN THE FRG.

7. THE THEME OF REUNIFICATION, THOUGH STILL SHUNNED BY KOHL AND GENSCHER, IS GRADUALLY BECOMING MORE PROMINENT IN POLITICAL DEBATE. BELIEF IN THE LIKELIHOOD OF REUNIFICATION WITHIN 10 YEARS IS GROWING: ONE POLL SUGGESTS THAT IT DOUBLED FROM 24 PER CENT TO 48 PER CENT IN THE PAST FOUR WEEKS. IT HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED THAT KRENZ MENTIONED THE IDEA OF CONFEDERATION IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE FINANCIAL TIMES ON 25 NOVEMBER AND THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG HAS SAID IT SHOULD NOT BE DISMISSED OUT OF HAND. IT HAS ALSO

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BEEN WIDELY REPORTED THAT REUNIFICATION HAS BEGUN TO APPEAR ON PLACARDS IN DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE GDR. LABOUR MINISTER BLUEM, ON THE LEFT OF THE CDU, NOW AGREES WITH DREGGER ON THE PARTY'S EXTREME RIGHT THAT REUNIFICATION MUST BE THE AIM OF CDU POLICY, AND PLANS TO INCLUDE IT IN HIS PLATFORM AS CDU CANDIDATE FOR MINISTER-PRESIDENT IN NORTH-RHINE WESTPHALIA'S LAND ELECTION IN MAY. ON THE OTHER HAND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CDU DECIDED TODAY NOT TO MAKE AN UNEQUIVOCAL COMMITMENT TO REUNIFICATION. IT SAID THAT IT DID NOT EXPECT THERE TO BE TWO GERMAN DEMOCRACIES BUT THAT IT WOULD RESPECT A VOTE BY THE PEOPLE OF THE GDR TO MAINTAIN THEIR OWN STATE.

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