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FM EAST BERLIN

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GDR : INTERNAL SITUATION

SUMMARY

1. GENERAL ELECTION DATE ADVANCED TO 18 MARCH. REFORM GROUPS READY TO JOIN GRAND COALITION. SEVERAL WEEKEND PARTY CONGRESSES. BRANDT IN THURINGIA. MORE ARRESTS OF FORMER LEADERS.

DETAIL

2. A MEETING BETWEEN THE ROUND TABLE AND PREMIER MODROW ON SUNDAY 28 JANUARY DECIDED TO ADVANCE THE DATE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION FROM 6 MAY TO 18 MARCH (BUT THE DATE FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS -6 MAY- WOULD BE UNCHANGED). THIS CHANGE WAS IMPOSED BY OPPOSITION REPRESENTATIVES ON THE ROUND TABLE AS A PRICE FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF MODROW'S INVITATION TO JOIN HIS GOVERNMENT. IT WAS DECIDED THAT EACH GROUP REPRESENTED IN THE ROUND TABLE WOULD PROVIDE A MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO. MODROW WOULD APPOINT ONE OF HIS MINISTERS AS GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR THE ROUND TABLE. THE ROUND TABLE REPRESENTATIVES FURTHER STIPULATED THAT THE RESULTING GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE TRANSITIONAL AND INDEPENDENT OF PARTIES. THESE DECISIONS WILL BE PUT FORMALLY TO THE VOLKSKAMMER TODAY, 29 JANUARY.

3. DURING THE WEEKEND, THE GERMAN FARMERS' PARTY (DBD) HELD A CONGRESS AT WHICH IT RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT GUENTER MALEUDA (THE ONLY BLOCK PARTY CHAIRMAN TO HAVE SECURED RE-ELECTION SINCE THE BLOCK'S DISSOLUTION), AND DECLARED THEMSELVES FOR GERMAN UNITY AND A MARKET ECONOMY. NEW FORUM (NF) HELD ITS FORMAL FOUNDATION CONGRESS, DECIDED TO REMAIN A CITIZENS' INITIATIVE RATHER THAN BECOME A PARTY, BUT BARLEY ESCAPED A SPLIT WHEN LEFT WING MEMBERS WHO WISH TO MAINTAIN A SOCIALIST GDR, OPPOSED THE MAJORITY'S PREFERENCE FOR GERMAN UNITY AND A MARKET ECONOMY. IN THE EVENT, THE MINORITY (WHICH INCLUDES BAERBEL BOHLEY AND THE PRESENT NF ROUND TABLE REPRESENTATIVES), WILL CONTINASH A GROUP WITHIN NF.

4. THE SPD-GDR FOUNDED ITS THURINGIA PROVINCIAL ORGANISATION AT A MEETING IN GOTHA, ATTENDED BY WILLY BRANDT WHO DECLARED THAT HE SAW NO INTENSIVE NEED FOR THE EXISTENCE OF THE GDR. REPORTS TODAY, 29 JANUARY, INDICATE THE FOUNDATION OF A GERMAN REUNIFICATION PARTY IN BRANDENBURG, WITH THE AIMS OF PROMOTING GERMAN UNIFICATION AND A MARKET ECONOMY, AND OF ASSURING POLAND THAT ITS WESTERN FRONTIER IS IMMUTABLE.

5. MEANWHILE, FORMER SED POLITBURO MEMBER, HERRMANN, (MEDIA AND AGITROP) AND SCHUERER, FORMER STATE PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIRMAN WERE ARRESTED DURING THE WEEKEND, RESPECTIVELY CHARGED WITH HIGH TREASON AND CRIMINAL ABUSE OF OFFICE. HONECKER WAS TODAY RELEASED FROM THE CHARITE HOSPITAL AND PLACED IN REMAND AT THE RUMMELSBERG PRISON IN BERLIN, PENDING THE STATE PROSECUTOR'S DECISION (ON MEDICAL ADVICE) ON HIS FUTURE IMPRISONMENT WHILE AWAITING TRIAL.

COMMENT

5. THE ADVANCING OF THE ELECTION DATE, WHILE MAKING IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE NEW PARTIES TO BE READY TO COMPETE EFFECTIVELY FOR VOTES, WILL SHORTEN THE PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY FACING THE COUNTRY. THE PROBLEMS FACING IT ARE MORE THAN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CAN HANDLE FOR LONG.

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