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FM EAST BERLIN
TO DESKBY 160930Z FCO
TELNO 197
OF 151615Z MARCH 90

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THE GDR ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS (ON 18 MARCH) TO THE VOLKSKAMMER
(PARLIAMENT)

SUMMARY

1. A FAIR CAMPAIGN, HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY WEST GERMANY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS. A CENTRE RIGHT/CENTRE LEFT GRAND COALITION THE LIKELY OUTCOME. THEREAFTER THE TEMPO OF NEGOTIATIONS ON UNIFICATION WOULD SPEED UP. IF THE PDS DO WELL ENOUGH TO HOLD UP FORMATION OF AN ANTI-COMMUNIST COALITION THE EXODUS COULD RESUME, LEADING TO CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION, EVEN CHAOS. THIS IS A POSSIBLE, BUT UNLIKELY OUTCOME. AFTER 18 MARCH THE GERMAN QUESTION CAN BE ADDRESSED.

DETAIL

2. FIFTY YEARS AFTER HITLER BROKE THE MUNICH AGREEMENT BY INVADING CZECHOSLOVAKIA, SETTING THE CONDITIONS FOR THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, GERMANS IN (EAST BERLIN AND) THE GDR GO TO THE POLLS. THE POLL WILL TAKE PLACE SIX MONTHS AFTER THE HUNGARIANS PRECIPITATED THE EAST GERMAN REVOLUTION BY OPENING THEIR BORDER WITH AUSTRIA.

3. THE LAST ELECTIONS IN THIS PART OF GERMANY IN WHICH THE VOTERS HAD A CHOICE BETWEEN ALTERNATIVE POLICIES, WERE HELD UNDER NAZI (1933)

AND COMMUNIST (1946) AUSPICES. ON THE EVIDENCE OF THOSE POLLS AND OF THE 1990 CAMPAIGN, THE RESERVOIR OF SUPPORT FOR THE CENTRE RIGHT IS SOMEWHAT GREATER THAN FOR THE CENTRE LEFT. THERE HAS BEEN ONE ISSUE: THE TIMING AND MODALITIES OF UNIFICATION. THE CENTRE RIGHT CDU-BACKED ALLIANCE FOR GERMANY FAVOUR THE FASTEST POSSIBLE ROUTE: ACCESSION TO THE FRG VIA ARTICLE 23 OF BASIC LAW. THE SPD ARE ALSO IN FAVOUR OF EARLY UNIFICATION, BUT ON THE BASIS OF A NEW ALL-GERMAN CONSTITUTION. THE PDS (SUCCESSOR TO THE COMMUNIST SED) AND ASSORTED LEFT WING GROUPS WHICH HAVE BEEN WOOING THE 'ANGST ...' VOTE QUITE SUCCESSFULLY, WANT TO SLOW THINGS DOWN. IT SEEMS LIKELY, HOWEVER THAT THE MAJORITY STILL FAVOUR EARLY UNIFICATION. KOHL

ATTRACTED MORE THAN TWICE AS MANY PEOPLE (AROUND 250,000) TO HIS FINAL ELECTION RALLY (ON 14 MARCH) IN LEIPZIG THAN WILLI BRANDT. ALLIANCE SUPPORT FOR ARTICLE 23, AND KOHL'S OFFER, AS FEDERAL CHANCELLOR, OF CURRENCY UNION, ALSO SUGGESTS A STRONG SHOWING FOR THE ALLIANCE, ALTHOUGH THE SCHNUR AFFAIR (MY TELNOS 193 AND 194) COULD TRIM THEIR SUPPORT. THE SITUATION OF GENSCHER (POSSIBLY THE MOST POPULAR AND CERTAINLY MOST TRUSTED OF ALL WEST GERMAN POLITICIANS HERE) COMPARED WITH THE WEAKNESS OF THE LIBERALS SUGGESTS THAT PEOPLE WILL VOTE FOR BIG PARTIES THAT CAN GET THINGS DONE OR SLOW THINGS DOWN.

4. THE TYPICAL PDS VOTER WOULD BE A YOUNGISH, UNDER-EMPLOYED (IN FUTURE, UNEMPLOYABLE) FEMALE OFFICE WORKER OR SOCIOLOGIST WORRIED ABOUT FREE KINDERGARTENS. MODROW AND GYSI (THE ONLY TWO SIGNIFICANT GDR PERSONALITIES IN THE CAMPAIGN WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF SPD LEADER BOHME) HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY EXPECT TO BE IN OPPOSITION NEXT WEEK. BUT IF THE PDS POLLS WELL ENOUGH TO BID FOR A PLACE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT OR HOLDS UP FORMATION OF AN ANTI COMMUNIST COALITION THERE IS LIKELY TO BE A FURTHER MASS EXODUS AND SOMETHING APPROACHING CHAOS. FORTUNATELY THE LIKELY OUTCOME IS A GRAND COALITION BETWEEN THE ALLIANCE AND THE SPD. IN THE FINAL STAGES OF THE CAMPAIGN, THE ALLIANCE, THE SPD, AND THEIR WEST GERMAN BACKERS HAVE LARGELY REFRAINED FROM ATTACKS ON EACH OTHER.

5. THE EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF UNIFICATION HAVE HARDLY FEATURED IN THE CAMPAIGN, REFLECTING A CONSCIOUS DECISION BY THE WEST GERMANS AND ALL EAST GERMAN POLITICAL FORMATIONS. ON THE CONTRARY, THE HUNGARIANS AND GORBACHEV PERSONALLY HAVE BEEN PRAISED FOR MAKING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS POSSIBLE. THE FRG'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATION HERE HAVE CONFIRMED THAT KOHL AND GENSCHER DID NOT WANT THE ' ' 2+4 ' ' TALKS TO DISCUSS SUBSTANCE BEFORE 18 MARCH BECAUSE THEY COULD HAVE FORCED EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF UNIFICATION ON TO THE ELECTION AGENDA.

6. THERE ARE MANY FOREIGN OBSERVERS HERE. THEY HAVE SEEN A CAMPAIGN THAT WAS FAIR IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THE ONLY AREA OF CONTROVERSY HAS BEEN WEST GERMAN INVOLVEMENT,

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AN ISSUE FOR THE PDS WHICH HAS NO WESTERN SUPPORT.
THE FIRST RESULTS ARE EXPECTED ON SUNDAY EVENING
BUT THE LACK OF A DATA BASE (OF PREVIOUS RESULTS)
AND THE NUMEROUS (24) PARTIES WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT THAN
IN WEST GERMANY TO PREDICT THE FINAL RESULT QUICKLY.

7. ON 19 MARCH THE PACE OF EVENTS WILL PICK-UP.
IF THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES OVER COALITION BUILDING,
THE POPULATION WILL PUT PRESSURE ON THEIR NEWLY ELECTED
PARLIAMENTARIANS BY VOTING WITH THEIR FEET AGAIN.
THERE COULD BE ATTEMPTS, BY SAXONY AND THURINGIA
FOR EXAMPLE, TO JOIN THE FRG VIA ARTICLE 23 AT
ONCE. IF ON THE OTHER HAND, A GRAND COALITION CAN BE
FORMED QUICKLY, NEGOTIATIONS ON CURRENCY UNION WILL
FORGE AHEAD, ALLOWING POLITICAL UNIFICATION AND
THE EXTERNAL ASPECTS TO BE DEALT WITH AT A MORE
MEASURED PACE. THIS OUTCOME WOULD ALSO ALLOW FOR
ORDERLY PREPARATION OF LOCAL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON 6 MAY.

8. THE ELECTIONS ON 18 MARCH WILL NOT ANSWER
THE GERMAN QUESTION BUT THEY WILL PERMIT IT TO BE
ADDRESSED.

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PAGE 3
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