

December 22, 1989

East Germany: Modrow Against the Tide□□□

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Summary:

An analysis of Premier Modrow's efforts to rally support for the continued independence of East Germany.

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6.2(d)

EAST GERMANY: Modrow Against the Tide

Premier Modrow's government is trying to drum up international support for continued East German independence, but today's opening of the Brandenburg Gate is likely to increase sentiment for unification.

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East German media yesterday highlighted French President Mitterrand's visit a day after the departure of West German Chancellor Kohl. Press reports noted that it was the first visit by an Allied head of state, that economic advisers accompanied the President, and that Mitterrand called for bilateral ties comparable to those Paris has with Bonn. East Germany limited its reaction to the US military action in Panama to vague expressions of concern while harshly condemning the Romanian massacres.

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A pedestrian crossing between East and West Berlin will open today at the Brandenburg Gate, closure of which has long symbolized the division of Germany. Press reports indicate Modrow, Kohl, West Berlin Governing Mayor Momper, and East Berlin Mayor Krack will attend the ceremonies. The West Berlin Senate and East Germany intend to set up a Berlin regional committee as early as tomorrow.

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Comment: Playing up the Mitterrand visit and Secretary Baker's visit two weeks ago as evidence of Four-Power support for a separate, sovereign East German state evidently is meant to help offset growing pronification sentiment in East Germany. Modrow probably hopes that the French leader's go-slow approach to unification will dampen some of the public enthusiasm aroused by Kohl's visit and that the visit will help him in the election set for next May.

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East Germany probably hopes its responses on Panama and Romania and recent public suspensions of aid for some radical Third World regimes will help relations with the US and other Western nations and gain economic assistance to help offset rapidly increasing intra-German ties. The move makes East Berlin's foreign policy increasingly similar to Bonn's, however, and could backfire, accelerating unification. In any case, the opening of the Brandenburg Gate and the new Berlin regional committee are further steps in the Germanization of Berlin issues and the erosion of Four-Power rights.

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