

March 19, 1990
**East Germany: Election Mandate for Near-Term
Unification**□□□

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Summary:

An analysis of the victory of Alliance for Germany in East German elections and its effects on the political climate in both Germanys.

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~~Top Secret~~**EAST GERMANY: Election Mandate for Near-Term Unification**

The impressive victory of the center-right Alliance for Germany in yesterday's election will probably give German unification efforts greater momentum, reduce one potential obstacle to NATO membership for Germany, and improve the standing of Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrats in all-German elections.

Provisional final returns indicate the Alliance for Germany—consisting of the East German Christian Democrats, Democratic Awakening, and the German Social Union—outpaced the East German Social Democrats by a margin of 48 to 22 percent, gaining 193 of the 400 seats in the one-chamber legislature. The Party of Democratic Socialism (the former Communist party) won 16 percent of the vote, and the liberal League of Free Democrats 5 percent. Kohl and top West German Social Democratic leaders made victory and concession speeches, and one East German Social Democrat complained that the voters were “too inclined to support the government,” seeming to concede that East Germans already see Bonn as their government.

Comment: The Alliance probably will opt for a coalition government with at least the Free Democrats, a constellation that would mirror the West German governing coalition. It may also, however, invite the Social Democrats to join to give the appearance of rule by consensus and spread the blame should the already battered economy worsen. A new government may be formed as early as this week.

The Alliance's victory will probably hasten political and economic unification. Many voters probably swung their votes to the Alliance because it advocates achieving unity more quickly than the Social Democrats do, and could secure a more generous aid package from Kohl. The Alliance will probably begin negotiations with Bonn as soon as a government is formed. It is likely to make plans to reconstitute the five East German states and, if the talks with Bonn go well, vote to join West Germany by acceding to its Basic Law under Article 23. Such a procedure and Alliance domination of the government increase the prospect East Berlin will accept NATO membership for Germany in the two-plus-four talks.

The victory also strengthens Kohl's position for the West German federal election in December and probably gives the Chancellor confidence his party could even win a Germany-wide contest this year. The long-term strength of the center-right parties in the east may still be soft, however, and could erode as the painful economic effects of unification kick in.

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