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East Germany: Free Election Set Roundtable Shares Power

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Summary:

An analysis of Communist and opposition leaders' decision to host free elections.

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~~Top Secret~~**EAST GERMANY: Free Election Set Roundtable Shares Power**

In roundtable talks yesterday, Communist and opposition leaders agreed that a free election will be held on 6 May; they also agreed to oversee the government and legislature in the interim. [redacted]

The roundtable participants insist on being involved in all important decisions and retain the right to submit their own proposals to the public. Head of state Gerlach proposed that the roundtable decide what action is to be taken against corrupt former leaders and propose a new election law. The opposition New Forum has called on Premier Modrow to declare his government transitional, dissolve the security forces, and hold a referendum on electoral and constitutional changes. In preparation for the party congress today, the Communists yesterday published a draft program supporting a "treaty community" with West Germany that could lead to "confederative structures." The draft also suggests immediate incorporation of new opposition groups into the government. At the same time internal security officials demanded an end to attacks on local security installations, saying that they have been broken into and security officers injured. [redacted]

Comment: The roundtable has the potential to become a parallel government. Its agreement may increase the longevity of Premier Modrow's government but will drastically limit his freedom of action and probably involve him in political strife. The Communist party's endorsement of power sharing also suggests that more non-Communists will be added to his government. [redacted]

Setting a date for a free election will only partly satisfy citizens outraged by allegations of corruption. The legislature will have to move quickly to punish corrupt leaders and security personnel. [redacted]

The party platform's support for confederative structures—echoing calls by Chancellor Kohl, Modrow, and two small East German parties—is intended to remove a potentially important bone of contention and could facilitate some form of intra-German political rapprochement. The party's support for wider power sharing and New Forum's statement may prompt Modrow to replace Communists in his cabinet more quickly with members from smaller parties and the opposition. [redacted]

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