

December 5, 1989
**East Germany: Fresh Opposition Support for
Reunification** □□□

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Summary:

An analysis of growing support for reunification and its role in the upcoming free elections.

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EAST GERMANY: Fresh Opposition Support for Reunification

Growing signs of support for reunification by some East German opposition movements suggest that issue may become more important as free elections approach. 


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Yesterday, for the first time, an opposition party was formed with the expressed goal of a unified Germany. The Reunification Party made its debut at the usual weekly demonstration in Leipzig, where it led calls for reunification among a crowd of some 200,000, according to press reports. 

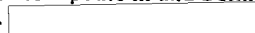
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The main opposition group, New Forum, has long opposed reunification but is showing signs of cracks on this issue. A New Forum spokesman yesterday announced that reunification would not be part of its platform despite calls from the movement's Berlin chapter for an early national referendum on the topic. The Potsdam chapter also voiced support for Germany's eventual reunification and demilitarization. Another opposition group, Democratic Awakening, has endorsed West German Chancellor Kohl's 10-point proposal as a framework for ending Germany's division. 

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Comment: Growing public support for a united Germany might become a major issue at the roundtable talks set to start Thursday as well as in the national election likely to be held next year. The issue may increasingly divide the opposition, particularly New Forum, if the national leadership continues to support an independent socialist state. Support for closer intra-German ties is likely to grow among the established non-Communist parties. Two of them—the Christian Democrats and National Democrats—have used the idea of a limited confederation to gain voters. 

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East German leaders, including Premier Modrow, probably will continue to reject early reunification as neither feasible nor desirable. Movement toward at least confederation might snowball, however, if political disarray grows and the economic crisis gets worse. Even without a crisis, closer cooperation on a broad front is likely as West German aid and investment pours in and Bonn's political influence rises commensurately. 

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