

# Germany's Election Results and the Marginalized Conservatives

By Victor Davis Hanson

There were elections recently [in Germany](#). And as many people and pollsters had predicted, the conservative parties, and there are two of them, won nearly, almost, 50% of the vote.



Christian Democratic Union leader and chancellor candidate Friedrich Merz.



The Christian Democratic Union, under Mr. Friedrich Merz, will be the—probably the new chancellor. And then there is the Alternative für Deutschland, the AfD. This is the more controversial conservative.

We in the United States wouldn't see them so controversial. But for European socialists, they are considered ultra-ultra-right. They believe in things like the ability to buy guns or to close borders. And in the United States that would be normative, not [in Europe](#).

But here's my point, even though they have about half of the support of all German voters, it's likely that the Alternative for Germany will not be represented. And the seats that will

comprise the majority will be made up by either a socialist party or the green party, or both.

Here's my point, again, there's a populist, nationalist backlash, a counterrevolution to the craziness of Europe. And we know [U.S. Vice President JD Vance](#) has outlined that craziness: low fertility, high energy prices, bans against fracking, open borders, dishonourment, deindustrialization, etc. But the conservatives will not have a voice under their parliamentary democracy, even though they earned a voice. And that's only going to make them more polarized.

But here's what I also want to talk about, Mr. Merz said in a speech that given the trajectory of America under [President Donald Trump](#), he's distancing himself and he doesn't really consider the United States an ally anymore, at least he said Trump's America.

Think about that for a second.

Now, I don't want to go through ancient history, but we fought two wars with Germany. And we defeated them both, but we also came to their rescue. I think we rescued them in World War I from kaiserism. And that allowed them to have a brief romance with democracy. And then we rescued them from Nazism. They paid a terrible price. But they did lose two wars they should have lost. And then we protected them in the Cold War.

But here's another point, we have right now about 40 bases and over 50,000 American soldiers in Germany. Germany spends 1.5% of gross domestic product. People look up to it in NATO and then say, we don't have to meet the 2% benchmark that's required of us over a decade because Germany doesn't.

Because it's disarmed. Because they will not frack. And they will not use [nuclear energy](#). And they are ambiguous about their coal. They are paying four times more in electricity. We've mentioned before their birth rate is about 1.45. They have open borders. Sixteen percent of their population is not

native-born.

So, my point is, they're not in a strong position. And all they would have to do is look at the voices of dissent on the conservative side that are calling for cheaper energy, closed borders, freer speech, reindustrializing, strong defense. And they're not. Instead, they're blaming the United States. And as I said, when you have 50,000 soldiers protecting them in 40 bases, that should speak volumes.

More importantly, they don't have a source of energy that they can import, especially natural gas after the Nord Stream 2 pipeline was blown up. We don't know if Donald Trump can solve the Ukraine war quickly or not, or how quickly that pipeline can be fixed. But they're going to have to import oil from a very volatile—oil and gas, as they do oil—increasingly from the Middle East or from us, liquid natural gas terminals on our southern coast.

So, they're dependent on us on defense. They're dependent upon us on energy and on trade. They run, depending on how we calibrate a trade surplus, they're running somewhere between \$70 and \$100 billion surplus, predicated on the fact that they have 5% to 6% tariffs. We have 2% to zero. It's an asymmetrical situation.

So, given the fact that there has been no GDP growth in Germany and all of the other maladies that I mentioned, and the fact that the bulk of foreign aid and military aid that has protected Ukraine has come from the United States, and given the fact that we have soldiers there and we allow them—in a mercantile sense—to run up a big surplus, don't you think Mr. Merz would say, "Yes, we have differences with the United States but it's a strong friend"? Or would you expect what he did say, that we were no better or no different than Russia in their relationship to Germany?

I have a piece of advice for Mr. Merz, I'd be very careful for

what you say because there's no law that says the United States has to keep protecting you. There's no law that says the United States has to keep subsidizing you to the tune of \$80 or \$90 billion a year. And there's no law that says that we have to be, as we have been for 85 years, committed to having a sizable presence in NATO and paying 16% to 17% of the budget.

We want to do that. As JD Vance said, we want you to reform. We want you to be the powerhouse of Europe. We want you to be a partner in the Western. But if you don't want to, we're not going to force you. We're not going to force you. It's your choice, not ours.

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