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## THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING GERMAN CHANCELLOR

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Friedrich Merz wanted to lead Europe. First he has to lead his country.

When Friedrich Merz arrived at the White House last summer for his first meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, the German chancellor brought a gift calibrated to flatter without groveling: a framed copy of the birth certificate of the American leaders grandfather, Friedrich Trump, born in 1869 in Kallstadt, a wine-growing village in southwestern Germany.

The meeting went smoothly enough. The two men talked Ukraine, trade, defense spending and the fraying transatlantic order. Trump, pleased, called Merz a very respected man. That was then.

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