

United States Senate

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Tulsi Gabbard
Director of National Intelligence
1500 Tysons McLean Drive
McLean, VA 22102

Dear Director Gabbard:

In support of the Trump administration's goals to prevent the weaponization of our nation's intelligence agencies, I urge you to ensure that foreign intelligence collected by those agencies isn't shared with the German government to be used against its political opposition.

On May 2, Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) classified the Alternative for Germany (AfD) Party as a "proven right-wing extremist organization." Under German law, this decision allows BfV to intensify surveillance on AfD through signals collection and the use of undercover informants to support a potential party ban. In other words, German intelligence can now eavesdrop, monitor, and infiltrate Germany's main opposition party and its second largest vote-getter in the recent elections. One would expect such police-state activities in dictatorships like Communist China and Russia—not Western Europe's largest country.

I understand that liberal elites on both sides of the Atlantic loathe the AfD, but AfD's platform has resonated with many Germans. Unsurprisingly so, since an agenda of strong borders, energy independence, and economic growth has appealed to our own electorate and may other Western democracies. Rather than trying to undermine the AfD using the tools of authoritarian states, Germany's incoming government might be better advised to consider why the AfD continues to gain electoral ground and how German's government can address the reasonable concerns of its citizens.

Until the Germany government treats the AfD as a legitimate opposition party and not as a "right-wing extremist organization," I ask that you direct our intelligence agencies to take the follow actions:

- pause the sharing of intelligence with BfV that could be used to target the AfD,
- refuse requests of assistance from the BfV to surveil AfD and its members, and

- review whether our intelligence agencies under the Biden administration cooperated with German requests to surveil the AfD or other opposition parties and notify the Senate of the findings of the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Cotton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Cotton
Chairman