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## IS GERMANY'S POWERFUL FINANCE MINISTER IN OVER HIS HEAD?

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Lars Klingbeils leap to the highest rung of German politics began on a day of unprecedented defeat for his center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Klingbeil, as one of the SPDs national leaders during the reign of former Chancellor Olaf Scholz, undeniably bore much of the responsibility for the partys worst national election result in its modern history in a February snap election. But instead of falling victim to his partys failure, Klingbeil emerged as the new face of the SPD and one of Germanys most influential politicians, serving as vice chancellor and finance minister in the new coalition government led by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

At at time when Germany, the European Unions biggest economy, is on the cusp of a historic increase in borrowing and spending, Klingbeils control over the purse strings gives him immense power to shape Europes course. The only question is whether the cunning that enabled his stunning domestic rise will allow Klingbeil □ who has no real governing experience □ to thrive in one of the most important, difficult posts in European politics just as the continent faces the immense challenges of war, a fraying alliance with the U.S. and great economic uncertainty.

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