

Trump, Vance double down on threats to annex Greenland, rail against European powers

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US President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance doubled down Thursday and Friday on their threats to annex Greenland, which Trump previously threatened to conquer by force.

Denmark, which governs Greenland as an autonomous territory, is a member of both the European Union and the NATO military alliance, alongside the United States. The Trump administration views control of the Arctic—where Greenland serves as a strategic chokepoint—as essential to its aim of dominating the world through military force.

On Thursday, Trump said, “we’ll go as far as we have to go” in seeking to annex the territory. “We need Greenland,” Trump said. “And the world needs us to have Greenland, including Denmark. Denmark has to have us have Greenland.”

On Friday, Trump posted a video on Truth Social claiming that the “bond” between the US and Greenland was forged through “blood and bravery.” The video proclaimed that their “shared legacy” is “not just history, it is destiny,” concluding with the declaration: “Now it is time to stand together again... America stands with Greenland.”

Trump posted the video on the same day that Vance, accompanied by National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Energy Secretary Chris Wright, visited a US Space Force base in Greenland, where Vance denounced Denmark and the European imperialist powers.

Vance declared, “Our message to Denmark is very simple: you have not done a good job by the people of Greenland.” He accused Denmark of having “failed” to keep Greenlanders safe and condemned what he called “attacks” from “Danish authorities” on the Trump

administration.

Vance railed against the United States’ European allies, stating that they have “neglected international security for 40 years” and have “used America as a piggy bank... used us to absorb all of their excess economic production.”

Addressing the people of Greenland in the manner of a mafia enforcer, Vance said, “I think that you’d be a lot better coming under the United States’ security umbrella than you have been under Denmark’s security umbrella.”

When asked by a reporter why “the President has previously not ruled out military force when he’s talking about taking over Greenland,” Vance responded, “We do not think military force is ever going to be necessary” because “the people of Greenland are rational.”

In other words, Vance explained that, faced with the threat of attack by the world’s largest military power, the territory of just 56,000 people will be expected to make the “rational” choice and surrender to US demands.

Commenting on the trip, Múte Bourup Egede, Greenland’s prime minister, declared, “What is the national security adviser [Waltz] doing in Greenland?... The only purpose is to demonstrate power over us.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin made it clear that he is taking Trump’s threats to annex Greenland seriously. “Everyone knows about the US plans to annex Greenland... It would be wrong to believe that this is some sort of extravagant talk by the current US administration.”

Trump announced his plan to annex Greenland during a speech in January, alongside a proposal to rename the

Gulf of Mexico the “Gulf of America”—a change that has already been implemented—and plans to annex both the Panama Canal and Canada. While he claimed he would pursue the annexation of Canada through economic coercion, he pointedly refused to rule out the use of military force to seize either the Panama Canal or Greenland.

Other administration officials have similarly refused to rule out a military attack on Greenland. During the confirmation hearing for defense secretary, Pete Hegseth was asked by Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, “Would you use our military to take over Greenland or an ally of Denmark?” and “Would you carry out an order from President Trump to seize Greenland, a territory of our NATO ally, Denmark, by force?” In response, Hegseth refused to rule out such action, citing Trump’s electoral mandate.

In his remarks alongside Vance on Friday, National Security Advisor Waltz explained, “This is about shipping lanes. This is about energy.”

Vance said, “Russia and China and other nations are taking an extraordinary interest in Arctic passageways and Arctic naval routes, and indeed, in the minerals of the Arctic territories. We need to ensure that America is leading in the Arctic.”

He added, “What is the alternative? To give up the North Atlantic, to give up the Arctic to China, to Russia, and other regimes that don’t have the best interest of the American people at heart? We have no other option.”

As a factual matter, Denmark, a member of the NATO alliance, places effectively no limits on US military operations on Greenland. The US does not, and never has, paid rent to Greenland or Denmark for operating its Pituffik base on the island. As Reuters noted, “A 1951 agreement between the United States and Denmark gave the U.S. the right to move around freely and construct military bases in Greenland as long as Denmark and Greenland are notified.”

The unstated implication of Vance’s remarks is that the United States is seeking to annex Greenland to assert dominance not only over Russia and China, but also its European imperialist rivals.

The United States has launched a furious trade war against the European Union, with which the US has the second-largest trade deficit after China. The EU is a critical member of what Treasury Secretary Scott

Bessent has called the “dirty 15” of leading exporters to the US. This week, Trump announced a 25 percent tariff on auto imports into the United States, a move that will have major consequences for the economy of Germany.

Earlier this week, *The Atlantic* published internal discussions by the Trump administration on this month’s attack on Yemen, in which Vance railed against the European powers, whom he called “freeloaders,” and demanded economic concessions in exchange for US protection of European shipping.

Commenting on Vance’s trip to Greenland, the *New York Times* wrote that “of the four territories Mr. Trump has discussed acquiring—Greenland, the Panama Canal, Canada and Gaza—it is Greenland that he seems most determined to get.”

Beyond its strategic role in controlling Arctic military and shipping lanes—which will become even more critical as sea ice continues to recede—Greenland has long been viewed by the United States as a key launchpad for its nuclear ambitions. During the Cold War, the US Army initiated Project Iceworm, a secret plan to construct a network of mobile nuclear missile launch sites beneath the Greenland ice sheet. Though the project was ultimately abandoned, it underscores the enduring military significance Washington attaches to the territory.

The *New York Times* commented that the US space force base in Greenland “could become part of the ‘Golden Dome’ missile defense system, modeled after Israel’s Iron Dome system, that Mr. Trump has said he wants to build.”

Such a system would significantly expand the United States’ capacity to launch “preemptive” nuclear attacks, giving the US the ability to menace not just Russia and China, but even the European powers, with a nuclear first strike.



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