

Denmark rejects US “conquering Greenland,” as NATO countries send troops

Andre Damon
15 January 2026

Denmark and Greenland rejected US President Donald Trump’s demand for the acquisition of Greenland Tuesday following a meeting at the White House with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, even as European NATO members sent troops to the Arctic island.

“We have a fundamental disagreement,” Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen told reporters Tuesday at the Danish embassy in Washington. Rasmussen rejected Trump’s “wish of conquering Greenland” and emphasized: “This is not in the interest of the kingdom.

“The president has made his view clear, and we have a different position,” he said. “Ideas that would not respect the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark and the right of self-determination of the Greenlandic people are, of course, totally unacceptable.”

Speaking at a separate event at the White House Tuesday, Trump reiterated his demands. “We need Greenland for national security,” he declared. “If we don’t go in, Russia is going to go in, and China is going to go in. And there’s not a thing that Denmark can do about it, but we can do everything about it.”

Asked whether he would rule out the use of military force against a NATO ally, Trump refused. “Certainly I’m not going to give up options,” he said.

The threats come amid a deployment of European troops to Greenland. Denmark announced military reinforcements, while Germany is deploying 13 Bundeswehr soldiers, Norway two military personnel, and Sweden an unspecified number of officers for “Operation Arctic Endurance.” France is deploying mountain warfare units, and Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have confirmed or are considering participation.

Greenland is an autonomous territory of Denmark, a founding member of the NATO alliance and covered by Article 5, which obligates all members to defend any member that is attacked.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen declared Sunday this is a “decisive moment” and warned: “If the United States attacks another NATO country, everything stops.” Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson condemned US “threatening rhetoric” Tuesday and confirmed that officers are arriving in Greenland “at Denmark’s request.”

The crisis has prompted pointed warnings from European leaders. French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking to ambassadors at the Elysee Palace last week, declared: “Every day people wonder whether Greenland will be invaded, whether Canada will be threatened with becoming the 51st state or whether Taiwan will be further encircled.” Macron accused the US of “gradually turning away from some of its allies and breaking free from international rules.”

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier warned in a speech January 7 of “the breakdown of values by our most important partner, the USA, which helped build this world order.” He declared: “It is about preventing the world from turning into a robber’s den, where the most unscrupulous take whatever they want.”

According to a Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted January 12-13, only 17 percent of Americans approve of US efforts to acquire Greenland, while 47 percent disapprove. Just 4 percent said using military force would be a “good idea,” with 71 percent calling it a “bad idea”—including 60 percent of Republicans. Polls indicate approximately 85 percent of Greenlanders oppose joining the United States.

Greenland commands the GIUK Gap, the critical maritime chokepoint between Greenland, Iceland and

the United Kingdom through which Russia's Northern Fleet must pass to reach the Atlantic. Climate change is opening Arctic shipping routes that could transform global trade, with the Northern Sea Route 40 percent shorter than the Suez Canal route between the North Pacific and northern Europe.

Beyond its military value, Greenland contains an estimated 1.5 million tons of proven rare earth reserves—potentially the world's second largest after China—along with vast deposits of copper, graphite and other critical minerals essential to advanced weapons systems and artificial intelligence infrastructure.

Clayton Allen of the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group told CNBC last week: "Trump is a real estate guy. Greenland is sitting on some of the most valuable real estate in terms of economic advantage and strategic defense for the next three to five decades."

The Greenland standoff is one front in a broader eruption of American military violence across the globe. On January 3, US forces launched a nighttime assault on Venezuela, killing over 100 people and kidnapping President Nicolás Maduro. The operation involved more than 15,000 troops, the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford and waves of drone and missile strikes. Maduro was flown to New York, where he appeared in federal court. The administration announced Tuesday that it has completed an initial \$500 million sale of Venezuelan oil, with proceeds held in bank accounts in Qatar and under US control.

The administration is simultaneously preparing for military strikes on Iran. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt declared Monday that Trump is "unafraid to use the lethal force and might of the United States military" against Iran, adding that "airstrikes would be one of the many, many options that are on the table." Trump received a military briefing on Iran Tuesday, with the Pentagon presenting strike options, including attacks on Iran's nuclear program and ballistic missile sites.

Amid this eruption of militarism, Trump announced plans for a \$1.5 trillion defense budget, the largest in history. The *Washington Post* editorial board published a piece Tuesday titled "Trump's welcome push for \$1.5 trillion defense spending," praising the proposal as "the right impulse."

The Senate voted Wednesday evening to kill a war powers resolution that would have challenged Trump's

authority in Venezuela. Vice President Vance cast the tie-breaking vote after two Republican senators—Josh Hawley of Missouri and Todd Young of Indiana—reversed their positions following intense pressure from Trump. The president had reportedly made "heated" calls to the senators and publicly denounced Republican opponents as "stone cold losers" and "disasters."

The eruption of US military violence across the globe—from the Caribbean to the Arctic—reflects the terminal crisis of American capitalism. Unable to maintain its global position through economic competition, the US ruling class is turning to naked military force to seize resources and subjugate rivals. Trump has dispensed with even the pretense of legality. "I don't need international law," he told the *New York Times* last week. Asked what limits exist on his power, he replied: "My own morality. My own mind. It's the only thing that can stop me."

Both parties have endorsed this lawlessness. In December, 115 House Democrats voted for a \$901 billion defense authorization bill, the largest in history.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact