

Greenland and All of That

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The Kingdom of Denmark, which includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands (the Danish Realm), has the chairmanship for the Arctic Council for the next two years. The Arctic Council has eight members, which include the United States and Russia, and six organisations that represent the Indigenous People of the Arctic.

Already in June 2021 it was decided between Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands that Greenland would represent the Danish Realm in the Arctic Council, and therefore it was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greenland, Vivian Motzfeldt, who took over the chairmanship on the 12th of May 2025.

Even though the Arctic Council has had challenges since 2022, when Russia attacked Ukraine, it will not make the task any easier for the Danish Realm because of the current situation with the President of the United States, Donald Trump. A few of the visions Minister Vivian Motzfeldt highlighted include economic development, indigenous peoples' priorities, and a focus on climate change, which can make working with the United States difficult because the Trump administration does not acknowledge or view climate change as a threat or as a result of human activity.

In President Donald Trump's pursuit to acquire Greenland, it can be argued that there are different driving forces, and it is suggested that one of them is the possibility to do a profitable business in the mining of natural resources. This is a contrast to the vision about focusing on climate change, but at the same time, President Donald Trump could argue that it would provide economic development, but since he and his administration probably would not consider the climate, it could raise the possibility that this economic development would be at the climate's expense, and it is doubtful that the people of Greenland would be a part of such business.

Another driving force, which President Donald Trump has expressed many times, is the security issue, mainly national security, which involves concerns about Chinese and Russian influence in the Arctic and therefore Greenland.

This concern was already expressed by President Donald Trump in 2019, and the same year Denmark announced that it would invest 1.5 billion Danish kroner in the Arctic Development and Capacity Initiative, which of course would include Greenland, but it was not implemented. Some may contend that it is understandable if the United States interprets this as lack of willingness from Denmark to prioritise the security in the Arctic region, why it can be seen as reasonable that President Donald Trump again makes his opinion quite clear on the matter.

Meanwhile, his methods are questionable if you look at the behaviour from one ally to another ally, also considering new initiatives from Denmark in prioritising security in the Arctic, and in the spring of this year Denmark made a settlement of 15 billion regarding this. Although it has not changed President Donald Trump's rhetoric in this matter, and he still wants to acquire Greenland, which strengthens the belief that there are other interests in the Greenland situation. This suggests that maybe the Danish Realm needs to take another approach in the communication with the United States but remain clear that Greenland is not for sale.

It becomes clear how important Greenland apparently is for President Donald Trump when it was revealed by the media that U.S. intelligence agencies have increased the focus on Greenland the last several weeks and that a “collection emphasis message” was sent from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

According to the media, the message asked for information regarding Greenland’s independence movement and public attitudes towards American resource extraction and to identify residents in Greenland and Denmark that support the Trump administration’s goals for the island. The subject regarding resource extraction supports the previously mentioned driving force about the possibility of making a profitable business, and there is an argument to be made that it probably would not be in the interest of Greenland but only the United States when it has such a high priority since it is a part of the message to several intelligence agencies.

Of course, this whole situation regarding spying has not been passed in silence by Denmark and Greenland, and it should not, since the United States is still considered an ally. Both the Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, and the Foreign Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, of Denmark have expressed that allies do not spy on each other and that it is concerning what is brought in the media. Also, the Prime Minister of Greenland, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, has expressed his opinion on the matter, and he says it is unacceptable and disrespectful. It is plausible to suggest, considering this new development, that maybe the United States is not an ally in the way it is normally viewed, which could mean that the Danish Realm needs to look at this relationship in another light and act accordingly. It does not mean that they should act as if the United States is an enemy, but not the usual ally either.

From this perspective, it could seem that it is not enough when Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen summons the top diplomat for the United States in Denmark.

It is a good signal that the Danish Realm stands together and are united against the pressure from the United States, and there is also support from the other countries in Europe for Greenland's right as a country in the Danish Realm. But still there is an argument to be made that it is time to take a different approach towards the pressure from President Donald Trump, because the current strategy is not giving any real results. Since President Donald Trump took office again in January this year, it has been the same repeatedly from both sides of the Atlantic.

Some of the latest President Donald Trump has said was in an interview on the 4th of May 2025, where he said, "*We need Greenland very badly. Greenland is a very small amount of people, which we'll take care of, and we'll cherish them, and all of that*" (NBC News, 2025, p. 47). This shows that it is still a priority for him to acquire Greenland also because he is still not saying no to the use of military force. At the same time, it is interesting what "all of that" covers – maybe it is the profitable business in the mining industry or something else, but it could suggest that there are several motivations behind getting Greenland as a part of the United States.

President Donald Trump also says that "we'll cherish them", but at the same time the history shows Greenland that it is difficult to trust the United States when it comes to the treatment of the indigenous people, and that goes for both in America and in Greenland. Besides that, Greenland also has a problematic history with Denmark, but at least now they support Greenland in the future Greenland wishes to have. Which is probably some of the reasons that Greenland now stands united with Denmark against the United States and that Greenland does not wish to be a part of the United States.

Meanwhile Greenland wants to focus on indigenous peoples' priorities as the chairman of the Arctic Council, together with the Faroe Islands and Denmark, and for some reason I am doubtful that it is a shared focus with President Donald Trump.

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