

Trump Demands Greenland Ownership, Not Lease Agreements, Analysts Say



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WASHINGTON / COPENHAGEN: US President Donald Trump has expressed that any deal short of full ownership of Greenland would be unacceptable, highlighting his long-standing focus on the strategic island.

The United States has maintained a military presence in Greenland since World War II. Under a

1951 agreement with Denmark, the US can station as many troops as it wishes on the territory.

Currently, more than 100 personnel are permanently based at the Pituffik facility in north-western Greenland.

US officials say potential negotiations could involve a renegotiation of this longstanding agreement. However, all land in Greenland is public and cannot be bought or sold, presenting a legal hurdle for any transfer of sovereignty.

Trump has compared the situation to the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where the United States has had effective control since 1903 under a lease agreement, though sovereignty remains Cuban. He has insisted that such leases are not sufficient, stating, “Countries have to have ownership and you defend ownership, you don’t defend leases. And we’ll have to defend Greenland.”

The threat of force was later dropped at Davos, easing tensions with NATO allies, who had warned that any attack on Denmark would breach the alliance’s core principle of collective defense.

Danish Prime Minister and international leaders, including Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, have been in close communication with Trump throughout the discussions.

The debate over Greenland underscores ongoing questions about US military strategy, sovereignty, and alliance obligations in the Arctic region.

