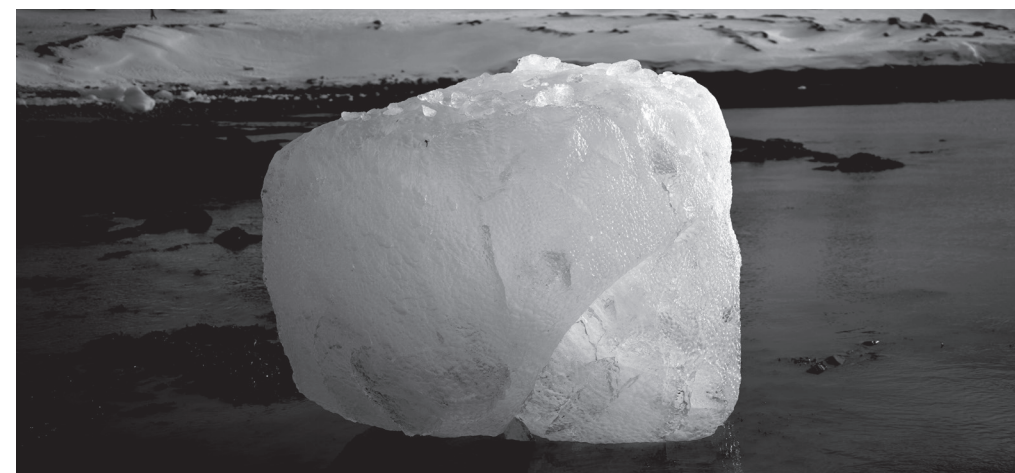


Talking Points

A weekly section to spur conversation



ON A COLD NORTHERN ISLAND, A MANTRA RISES: 'GREENLAND IS NOT FOR SALE'

By Luis Andres Henao | The Associated Press

On a boat, surrounded by snow-covered mountains and icebergs in shades of blue, Qooqu Berthelsen points to the breaking sea ice as a worrisome sign.

Now, though, something is worrying him and many Greenlanders as much as the retreating ice that endangers their livelihood.

"My concern," says the 23-year-old hunter, fisher and tour company owner, "is that Trump will come and take Greenland."

He then repeats what has become a mantra for Greenlanders in the weeks since U.S. President Donald Trump pushed their Arctic homeland into the spotlight by threatening to take it over. That has ignited unprecedented interest in full independence from Denmark — a key issue in a parliamentary election on March 11.

"Greenlanders don't want to be Danish. Greenlanders don't want to be American," Berthelsen says.

"Greenland," he says, "is not for sale."

It's a rising argument about a strategic location

You'll hear this declared all over the land, from the prime minister and university students in Nuuk, the world's northernmost capital, to hunters and fishermen in sparsely populated villages across the planet's largest island. This is, after all, Kalaallit Nunaat — Greenlandic for the "Land of the People" or the "Land of the Greenlanders."

Most of those 57,000 Greenlanders are Indigenous Inuit. They take pride in a culture and traditions that have helped them survive for centuries in exceptionally rugged conditions. In their close link to nature. In belonging to one of the most beautiful, remote, untouched places on Earth.

Many in this semi-autonomous territory are worried and offended by Trump's threats to seize control of their mineral-rich homeland, even by force, because he says the U.S. needs it "for national security."

"How can a few words ... change the whole world?" asked Aqqaq Lyngbe, a former president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and founder of the Inuit Ataqatig party, which governs Greenland. "It can because he's playing with fire. We're seeing another United States here with whole new ideas and wishes."

Greenland is vital to the world, though much of the world may not realize it. The U.S. and other global powers covet its strategic location in the Arctic; its valuable rare earth minerals trapped under the ice needed for telecommunications; its billions of barrels of oil; its potential for shipping and trade routes as that ice keeps retreating because of climate change.

Not even one of Trump's most fervent fans in Greenland — who proudly wears a MAGA hat, and a T-shirt emblazoned with Trump pumping his fist and the words: "American Badass" — wants to be American.

But like other Greenlanders, he wants stronger ties to the

U.S. and to open for business beyond Denmark, which colonized them 300 years ago and still exercises control over foreign and defense policy.

"When Trump came to office, he wanted to talk to Greenlanders directly without going through Denmark. He wants to negotiate with us and that's why the Danish are very afraid," said Jørgen Boassen, who has visited the White House and welcomed Donald Trump Jr. when he recently visited Nuuk.

The American president's comments set off a political crisis in Denmark. The prime minister went on a tour of European capitals to garner support, saying the continent faced "a more uncertain reality," while her country moved to strengthen its military presence around Greenland.

There's consternation all around. For some, it's been dizzying, a rollercoaster of emotions since Trump's threats, since his son landed in Nuuk in January in a TRUMP-emblazoned plane and since his father posted on social media: "MAKE GREENLAND GREAT AGAIN!" with a message to Greenlanders: "We're going to treat you well."

"When that was happening, I felt like I was hit in the stomach," said Qupanuk Olsen, a mining engineer and social media influencer running in the election for the Naleraq party.

Around her, supporters gathered at a bay filled with giant pieces of ice in Nuuk waving the red and white national flag that represents the sun and the ice that covers most of Greenland.

"I could feel that the ground will no longer ever be the same again," she said. "It's as if we were on sea ice and it started to break, and we don't know what's going to happen next."

Journalists from afar have descended on Nuuk, asking locals what they think of Trump's words. Pro-Trump media influencers known as the Nelk Boys arrived handing out MAGA hats and \$100 bills to children in Nuuk's streets.

"Even though there are strong feelings of sadness, despair, confusion, I think we're also stronger than ever. We're fighting it for our people and that gives me hope," said Aka Hansen, an Inuk filmmaker and writer. She is suspicious of Trump's intentions but still thanks him for turning the world's attention to her homeland.

"We went through all the emotions — at first very funny, very light, then very serious," said Hansen, who worked with Conan O'Brien when the comedian came to Nuuk in 2019 to shoot an episode poking fun at Trump's idea of buying Greenland. "Now, with all the international press that's been here, we've been given a voice that's being taken seriously."

Like many other Greenlanders, she doesn't want to be ruled by another colonial power. But she feels Trump's rhetoric has increased the momentum for independence from Denmark.

The former colonial ruler is accused of committing abuses against her island's Inuit people, including

removing children from their families in the 1950s with the excuse of integrating them into Danish society and fitting women with intrauterine contraceptive devices in the 1960s and 1970s — allegedly to limit population growth in Greenland.

"It's a historic moment for Greenland ... compared to two months ago when nobody was talking about independence," Olsen said. "Now, everybody's talking about it."

Is autonomy the way?

A former colony of Denmark, Greenland gained self-rule in 1979 and now runs itself through its parliament. A treaty with the United States, and a U.S. military base in Greenland, also gives Washington say over the territory's defense.

Greenland is massive — about one-fifth the size of the United States or three times the size of Texas. Its land mass is in North America, and its Arctic capital city is closer to New York than to Copenhagen.

"Denmark is just a middle man in that whole setup. And we don't need that middle man anymore," said Juno Berthelsen, a candidate in the election for Naleraq party. He says Trump has given Greenland leverage to negotiate with Denmark. "Our political goal is to have our own defense agreement, so that we connect directly with the U.S. in terms of defense and security."

His party, he said, aims to invoke an article in a law that would give Greenland increased autonomy and eventually a path to full independence.

Asked to describe Greenland's moment, he said: "If I had to pick one word, it would be exciting. And full of opportunities."

In his first term in office, Trump began to talk about acquiring Greenland from Denmark, a longtime U.S. ally. Back in 2019, most dismissed it. But it had a ripple effect.

"It was not taken that seriously back then as it is today. But it was important for Greenland because he, without wanting, did Greenlanders a favor," said Ebbe Volquardsen, a professor of cultural history at the University of Greenland. "He underlined the value of being in a union with Greenland."

Greenland's economy depends on fisheries and other industries as well as on an annual grant of about \$600 million from Denmark. When Trump showed interest in buying Greenland because of its strategic location and mineral resources, he highlighted that annual sum as the amount of what other nations would be willing to pay to have a military or commercial presence in Greenland, Volquardsen said. With that, he gave Greenland leverage for more autonomy and possible reparations for abuses committed by its former colonial ruler.

"That was important because the narrative in Denmark until that date ... had been that Greenland is receiving this funding as a kind of aid or altruistic gift," Volquardsen said.

Talking Points

HERE'S WHAT TARIFFS ARE AND HOW THEY WORK

Paul Wiseman | The Associated Press

Tariffs are in the news at the moment. Here's what they are and what you need to know about them:

Tariffs are a tax on imports. Tariffs are typically charged as a percentage of the price a buyer pays a foreign seller. In the United States, tariffs are collected by Customs and Border Protection agents at 328 ports of entry across the country.

U.S. tariff rates vary: They are generally 2.5% on passenger cars, for instance, and 6% on golf shoes. Tariffs can be lower for countries with which the United States has trade agreements. Before the U.S. began imposing 25% tariffs on goods from Canada and Mexico as of Tuesday, most goods moved between the United States and those countries tariff-free because of President Donald Trump's U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement.

Mainstream economists are generally skeptical about tariffs, considering them an inefficient way for governments to raise revenue.

There's much misinformation about who actually pays tariffs.

Trump is a proponent of tariffs, insisting that they are paid for by foreign countries. In fact, it is importers — American companies — that pay tariffs, and the money goes to the U.S. Treasury. Those companies typically pass their higher costs on to their customers in the form of higher prices. That's why economists say consumers usually end up footing the bill for tariffs.

Still, tariffs can hurt foreign countries by making their products pricier and harder to sell abroad. Foreign companies might have to cut prices — and sacrifice profits — to offset the tariffs and try to maintain their market share in the United States. Yang Zhou, an economist at Shanghai's Fudan University, concluded in a study that Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods inflicted more than three times as much damage to the Chinese economy as they did to the U.S. economy.

What has Trump said about tariffs?

Trump has said tariffs will create more factory jobs, shrink the federal deficit, lower food prices and allow the government to subsidize childcare.

"Tariffs are the greatest thing ever invented," Trump said at a rally in Flint, Michigan, during his presidential campaign.

During his first term, Trump imposed tariffs with a flourish — targeting imported solar panels, steel, aluminum and pretty much everything from China.

"Tariff Man," he called himself.

Trump is moving ahead with higher tariffs in his second term.

The United States in recent years has gradually retreated from its post-World War II role of promoting global free trade and lower tariffs. That's generally a response to the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs, widely attributed to unfettered free trade and and China's ascent as a manufacturing power.

Tariffs are intended mainly to protect domestic industries.

By raising the price of imports, tariffs can protect home-grown manufacturers. They may also serve to punish foreign countries for unfair trade practices such as subsidizing their exporters or dumping products at unfairly low prices.

Before the federal income tax was established in 1913, tariffs were a major revenue source for the government. From 1790 to 1860, tariffs accounted for 90% of federal revenue, according to Douglas Irwin, a Dartmouth College economist who has studied the



history of trade policy.

Tariffs fell out of favor as global trade grew after World War II. The government needed vastly bigger revenue streams to finance its operations.

In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, the government collected around \$80 billion in tariffs and fees, a trifle next to the \$2.5 trillion that comes from individual income taxes and the \$1.7 trillion from Social Security and Medicare taxes.

Still, Trump favors a budget policy that resembles what was in place in the 19th century.

Tariffs can also be used to pressure other countries on issues that may or may not be related to trade. In 2019, for example, Trump used the threat of tariffs as leverage to persuade Mexico to crack down on waves of Central American migrants crossing Mexican territory on their way to the United States.

Trump even sees tariffs as a way to prevent wars.

"I can do it with a phone call," he said at an August rally in North Carolina.

If another country tries to start a war, he said he'd issue a threat: "We're going to charge you 100% tariffs. And all of a sudden, the president or prime minister or dictator or whoever the hell is running the country says to me, 'Sir, we won't go to war.'"

Economists generally consider tariffs self-defeating.

Tariffs raise costs for companies and consumers that rely on imports. They're also likely to provoke retaliation.

The European Union, for example, punched

back against Trump's tariffs on steel and aluminum by taxing U.S. products, from bourbon to Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Likewise, China has responded to Trump's trade war by slapping tariffs on American goods, including soybeans and pork in a calculated drive to hurt his supporters in farm country.

A study by economists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Zurich, Harvard and the World Bank concluded that Trump's tariffs failed to restore jobs to the American heartland. The tariffs "neither raised nor lowered U.S. employment" where they were supposed to protect jobs, the study found.

Despite Trump's 2018 taxes on imported steel, for example, the number of jobs at U.S. steel plants barely budged: They remained right around 140,000. By comparison, Walmart alone employs 1.6 million people in the United States.

Worse, the retaliatory taxes imposed by China and other nations on U.S. goods had "negative employment impacts," especially for farmers, the study found. These retaliatory tariffs were only partly offset by billions in government aid that Trump doled out to farmers. The Trump tariffs also damaged companies that relied on targeted imports.

If Trump's trade war fizzled as policy, though, it succeeded as politics. The study found that support for Trump and Republican congressional candidates rose in areas most exposed to the import tariffs — the industrial Midwest and manufacturing-heavy Southern states like North Carolina and Tennessee.

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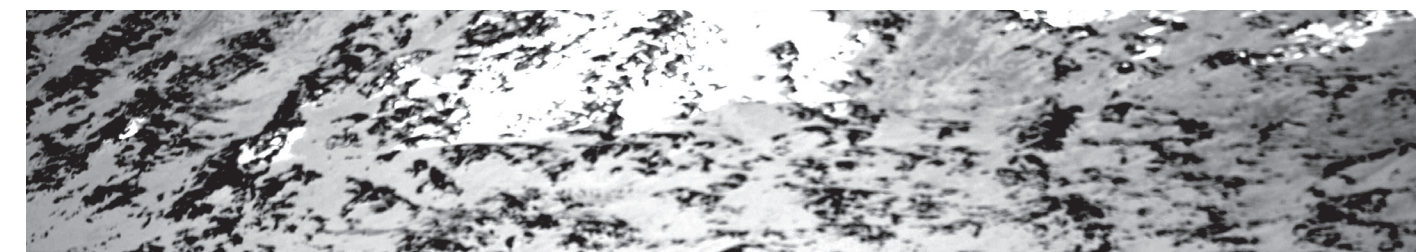
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