



By: TA | AP Insight

Europe warns of dangerous downward spiral after Trump threatens tariffs over Greenland



The eight European countries targeted by U.S. President Donald Trump for a **10% tariff** for opposing **American control of Greenland** blasted the move Sunday, warning that his threats “undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral.”

The joint statement by some of America’s closest allies signaled a possible turning point in the recent tensions over sovereignty and security nearly 24 hours after Trump’s threat.

It was also the most forceful rebuke of Trump from the European allies since he returned to the White House almost a year ago.

In recent months, Europeans have mostly opted for diplomacy and flattery around him, even when seeking an end to the war in Ukraine.

Sunday’s statement, as well as some European countries sending troops to Greenland for a Danish military training exercise, appeared to be a step away from that strategy.

The unusually strong joint statement from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland said troops sent to Greenland for operation “Arctic Endurance” pose “no threat to anyone.”

Standing in solidarity with Denmark and Greenland

Trump's Saturday announcement sets up a potentially dangerous test of U.S. partnerships in Europe.

He appeared to indicate that he was using the tariffs as leverage to force talks over the status of Greenland, a semiautonomous territory of **NATO ally Denmark** that he regards as critical to U.S. national security.

“We stand in full solidarity with the Kingdom of Denmark and the people of Greenland,” the group said. “Building on the process begun last week, we stand ready to engage in a dialogue

based on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that we stand firmly behind. Tariff threats undermine transatlantic relations and risk a dangerous downward spiral.”

There are immediate questions about how the White House could try to implement the tariffs because the European Union is a single economic zone in terms of trading.

It was unclear, too, how Trump could act under U.S. law, though he could cite emergency economic powers that are currently subject to a **U.S. Supreme Court challenge**.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said China and Russia will benefit from divisions between the U.S. and Europe. She added in a post on social media: “If Greenland’s security is at risk, we can address this inside NATO. Tariffs risk making Europe and the United States poorer and undermine our shared prosperity.”



If Greenland's security is at risk, we can address this inside NATO - Kaja Kallas

Europe has been trying to keep Trump on its side to ensure U.S. support for Ukraine, including Washington sharing intelligence with Kyiv and its involvement in security guarantees if a peace agreement is reached with Russia.

Rasmus Søndergaard, a senior researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies, called Trump’s announcement “unprecedented” because tariff threats normally stem from trade disagreements, not territorial disputes between allies.

"That's of course why we're seeing the response from European countries saying 'enough is enough,'" he told The Associated Press. "I think there's in part probably a strategic calculation, of course, from the governments in these countries that if you give in to Trump on this, what will be the next thing? And at some point you have to sort of push back."

Søndergaard also said Trump leveled the playing field for Europe with the tariff threat. Europeans cannot compete militarily, but the EU can wield an economic weapon through reciprocal tariffs.

"The EU has the ability to really strike back with force if they want to, and it will hurt European economies," he said. "It will hurt American economies. The challenge for Trump is he has midterms coming up and it's not going to help him if the U.S. goes into more of an economic recession or more of a economic turmoil than is already the case."

Meanwhile, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte wrote on social media Sunday that he'd spoken with Trump.

Rutte has been criticized in recent days for largely sidestepping questions about Trump and Greenland and any NATO tensions over the island.

"We will continue working on this, and I look forward to seeing him in Davos later this week," Rutte said.

Trump's move was also panned **domestically**.

Trump's threatened tariffs on U.S. allies would make Americans pay more to try to get territory we don't need - Sen. Mark Kelly

U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, a former U.S. Navy pilot and Arizona Democrat, said Trump's threatened tariffs on U.S. allies would make Americans "pay more to try to get territory we don't need."

"Troops from European countries are arriving in Greenland to defend the territory from us. Let that sink in," Kelly wrote on social media. "The damage this President is doing to our reputation and our relationships is growing, making us less safe. If something doesn't change we will be on our own with adversaries and enemies in every direction."

Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said he supports the United States ultimately owning Greenland, but not how Trump is trying to accomplish it.

He said he had concerns whether Trump had the constitutional authority to impose unilateral tariffs on NATO allies, as well as about a threat of a military invasion. Trump's current position threatens "to fracture that strong relationship, not just with Denmark, but with all of our NATO allies," Pence said on CNN's "State of the Union."

Populist allies of Trump criticize the tariff threat

Six of the countries targeted are part of the 27-member EU, which operates as a single economic zone in terms of trading. It was not immediately clear if Trump's tariffs would impact the entire bloc.

EU envoys scheduled emergency talks Sunday evening to determine a potential response.



Giorgia Meloni said she had spoken to him about the tariffs, which she described as "a mistake"

The tariff announcement also drew blowback

from Trump's populist allies in Europe.

Italy's right-wing premier, Giorgia Meloni, considered one of Trump's closest allies on the continent, said she had spoken to him about the tariffs, which she described as "a mistake."

The deployment to Greenland of small numbers of troops by some European countries was misunderstood by Washington, Meloni said, adding it was not a move against the U.S. but aimed to provide security against "other actors" that she didn't identify.

Jordan Bardella, president of Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party in France and a European Parliament lawmaker, posted that the EU should suspend last year's **tariff deal with the U.S.**, describing Trump's threats as "commercial blackmail."

Trump also achieved the rare feat of uniting Britain's main political parties — including the hard-right Reform UK party — all of whom criticized the tariff threat.

"We don't always agree with the U.S. government and in this case we certainly don't. These tariffs will hurt us," said Reform UK leader Nigel Farage, a longtime champion and ally of Trump. His social media post stopped short of criticizing Trump's designs on Greenland.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who leads the center-left Labour Party, said the tariffs announcement was "completely wrong" and his government would "be pursuing this directly with the U.S. administration."