



By: TA | AP Insight

Mineral exploration in Greenland – not that simple



U.S. President Donald Trump said that “massive” oil, gas and **mineral exploration** is set to begin in “our new and beautiful Greenland,” though it wasn't clear what developments he was referring to on an island where resource extraction has stymied companies for decades.

Despite Trump's optimism, the **harsh climate** of Greenland — a self-governing territory of Denmark, rather than a part of the United States — as well as a lack of infrastructure have foiled all previous attempts to extract so-called rare earth minerals, as well as oil and gas.

No efforts have ever progressed beyond the exploratory stage, and a moratorium on new gas and oil permits has been in place for several years.

“Massive Oil, Gas, and Mineral Exploration is getting ready to begin in our new and beautiful Greenland!” Trump posted on his Truth Social platform following a campaign event Tuesday in **Wasilla, Alaska**.

Trump was stumping for Republican U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan, who is seeking a third term to represent the state in an election against Democratic former Rep. Mary Peltola.

Rising energy prices — a direct result of the Iran war, which began on Feb. 28 after the U.S. and Israel launched joint strikes — are creating serious and sustained financial hardships for working class Americans before the midterm elections next month.

Trump's comments are likely aimed at addressing voters' concerns before Election Day on Nov. 3.

More US bases but no exploration rights

Last month, Trump signed an **agreement** with the leaders of Denmark and Greenland to strengthen security in the Arctic and North Atlantic, following months of tensions with

NATO allies over the U.S. president's repeated demands to take control of the semiautonomous Danish territory.

It doesn't grant the U.S. any special exploration rights, but does place some limits on investments by non-NATO countries in strategic sectors.

The **deal** also paved the way for more U.S. bases in Greenland and eased tensions over Trump's repeated calls for Greenland to become part of the United States.

The agreement would still apply if Greenland eventually chooses independence.

Trump has expressed his desire to **acquire Greenland** since 2019 and, during his second term, issued threats to **seize the territory** from Denmark, a NATO ally.

There's no Greenlandic barrels of oil on ground in any near future - Naaja H. Nathanielsen

Naaja H. Nathanielsen, who represents Greenland in Denmark's parliament, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that she wasn't very surprised — or concerned — following Trump's post.

“This is just the way the president decides to engage,” she said. “I think we have all come to expect something like that.”

Nathanielsen said that any current projects regarding resource extraction were still years away from potential success.

She said that she believes Americans worried about the price of gas were the post's intended audience, rather than Greenlanders, before the upcoming election.

“I recognize the worry in the U.S., but I think it's not a quick fix,” she told the AP. “There's no Greenlandic barrels of oil on ground in any near future.”

Nathanielsen also said that she wasn't upset by

Trump calling the island “our Greenland.”

“I think, of course, it’s somewhat disrespectful,” she said. “But you can also see it as a term of endearment if you wanted to be very generous. Right now, I don’t think much of it.”

Representatives from Denmark’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as from Greenland’s prime minister and the island’s mining ministry, did not immediately return requests for comment Wednesday.

Greenland has valuable resources

Greenland has large deposits of the rare earth minerals that are needed to make everything from computers and smartphones to the batteries, solar and wind technologies that will power the transition away from fossil fuels.

China currently dominates the world’s supply of these critical minerals and the Trump administration is seeking to break Beijing’s chokehold on them.

The U.S. Geological Survey has also identified major potential offshore deposits of oil and natural gas.

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But tapping these resources could be prohibitively difficult: The rare earth minerals are encased in rock, and the offshore oil and natural gas deposits are covered by Arctic ice.

And in 2021, Greenlandic lawmakers said the island would not issue any new oil and gas permits because of the environmental impacts of oil extraction, and a desire to avoid further worsening of the global climate crisis.

Trump boasts about Greenland’s strategic spot in the Arctic

Trump’s Truth Social post also touted Greenland’s strategic location, saying that “from a Security Purpose in the Defense and Offense of both the United States of America, and Europe,” the island is “second to none.”



Since 1945, the U.S. military presence in Greenland has decreased from thousands of soldiers on 17 bases and installations to roughly 200 soldiers on the remote Pituffik Space Base

“Any future attack on the United States will have to come across Greenland, where our Defense will routinely knock down drones, missiles, or any other form of weapon not yet even conceived,” he wrote. “It gives us time, location, and sightline, like nowhere else in the World!”

The United States was prominent in Greenland for decades but, since 1945, the **U.S. military presence** in Greenland has decreased from thousands of soldiers on 17 bases and installations to roughly 200 soldiers on the remote Pituffik Space Base in the northwest.

The base supports missile warning, missile defense and space surveillance operations for the U.S. and NATO.

Trump said last month that the U.S. would “immediately begin the process of developing a large military presence in the appropriate locations,” including “building two very major military bases.”