

Denmark's Leader Questions How Long America Will Be Ally

By JIM TANKERSLEY

BERLIN — Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen of Denmark, who remains locked in a struggle with President Trump over the future of Greenland, questioned on Tuesday whether the United States would remain an ally of Europe as Mr. Trump rapidly reorients its posture in the world.

"I don't know what will happen in the U.S.," Ms. Frederiksen said during an hourlong question-and-answer session, in an auditorium that the Danish Embassy in Berlin shares with other Nordic missions. "I'm not responsible for what will happen in the U.S. I hope that they will stay in our alliance, but I don't know what will happen."

Ms. Frederiksen said the events of the past few weeks — in which Mr. Trump mused about using economic or military force to take ownership of Greenland from Denmark, then abruptly announced a "framework" agreement over the island with the secretary general of NATO — showed that "the old world order is now gone."

Her comments came as Europe continued to debate how to respond to provocations over Greenland from the United States, which provided military guarantees to Europe during the Cold War and its aftermath. On Tuesday, Ms. Frederiksen was asked repeatedly whether the issue had driven wedges between European

partners, including questions of whether Europe should be collectively more concerned with shoring up American support for Ukraine than warding off American designs on Greenland.

Ms. Frederiksen praised European unity but called for dramatic steps to bolster the continent's independence from the United States. European countries, she said, need to rapidly increase military spending and take full re-

'The old world order is now gone,' the prime minister said.

sponsibility for their own defense, ideally by 2030 — an extraordinarily ambitious timeline by the standards of even the most hawkish European security experts.

Ms. Frederiksen did not cast Mr. Trump or America as adversaries, but she said the United States had put Denmark in an "awkward and difficult situation" over Greenland, a Danish territory that Mr. Trump has repeatedly said he wants America to own.

"I'm trans-Atlantic in my heart," she said, "so I feel a bit sad about how things are developing."

Last week in Davos, Switzer-

land, Mr. Trump appeared to defuse the situation by announcing a deal with Mark Rutte, the NATO secretary general, though neither side has provided many details of that agreement.

Western and European security officials say discussions since then have centered around establishing a permanent NATO mission in the Arctic, including Greenland; barring China and Russia from mining rare earth minerals on the island; and renegotiating a 1951 agreement between Denmark and the United States that gives America wide latitude to station troops in Greenland. NATO officials have discussed the possibility of the United States obtaining pockets of sovereign territory in Greenland, similar to land claims held by Britain for military bases in Cyprus.

Ms. Frederiksen reiterated on Tuesday that the idea of granting sovereignty was a "red line" Denmark and its European allies would not cross, and that Mr. Rutte was not empowered to negotiate anything of the sort on Denmark's behalf. She praised the 1951 treaty but did not rule out revising it as part of the discussions that have persisted for months between Danish and American officials.

Asked how the negotiations had changed concretely since Davos, Ms. Frederiksen stressed the potential of a permanent NATO Arctic mission.



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"I think now we have a more traditional path to follow to try to find a political diplomatic solution," she said, "and a more clear support from NATO of being a permanent presence in the Arctic region — very positive."

Her comments came in a town hall-style meeting with an invitation-only collection of diplo-

mats, academics, students and journalists, organized by the Danish Embassy and the German Council on Foreign Relations. Ms. Frederiksen was originally scheduled to appear alongside Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen of Greenland, in a show of solidarity, but his arrival in Berlin was delayed by icy conditions in Copen-

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hagen, organizers said. Ms. Frederiksen has repeatedly said that decisions about Greenland's future, including possible independence, should be left to Greenlanders to decide.

The two leaders met later in the day with Friedrich Merz, the chancellor of Germany, on the sidelines of an economics conference in Berlin. The chancellor reaffirmed his solidarity with Denmark and Greenland, a spokesman said, a day after appearing with Ms. Frederiksen at an offshore energy summit in Hamburg.

Ms. Frederiksen and Mr. Nielsen are set to appear together again at a forum in Paris on Wednesday. Their tour appears, in part, to be an attempt to maintain European support for Denmark's position as the Greenland talks continue.

Ms. Frederiksen said "there will always be different ideas and positions" among allies, but she rejected a suggestion that the issues of Greenland and Ukraine presented a conflict for Europe.

"I have never believed that the war in Ukraine is about Ukraine, it's about Russia and it's about Russia's imperial dreams and their willingness to go into a war with Europe at some point," she said. "And you have to look at the situation in Greenland with the same eye. This is not about Greenland, this is about how things are changing in the world."