

European leaders defend Greenland's sovereignty

Trump's comments about US takeover criticized abroad

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Several European leaders pushed back Tuesday on President Donald Trump's comments about seeking an American takeover of Greenland.

The leaders issued a statement reaffirming that the strategic, mineral-rich Arctic island "belongs to its people."

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom joined Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in defending Greenland's sovereignty in the wake of Trump's comments about Greenland, which is a self-governing territory of the kingdom of Denmark and thus part of the NATO military alliance.

"Greenland belongs to its people," the statement said. "It is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland."

Canadian Prime Minister

Mark Carney also expressed his support and announced a visit to Greenland early next month by Canadian Gov. General Mary Simon, who is of Inuk descent, and Foreign Minister Anita Anand.

"The future of Greenland and Denmark are decided solely by the people of Denmark," Carney said, standing next to Frederiksen at the Canadian Embassy in Paris.

Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry, appointed by Trump last month as U.S. special envoy to Greenland, said when it comes to making a deal with Greenland, he isn't interested in talking to people in Denmark who "absolutely have made their position clear" nor does he want to talk to European diplomats.

Instead, he said, he wants to have conversations directly with residents of Greenland.

"I want to talk to people who want an opportunity to improve the quality of life in Greenland," the Republican said on a Fox News radio show Tuesday.

Landry said he has already exchanged emails with Greenlanders who had reached out to him.

"They tell me they like to

hunt, they like to fish, they like to have a good time. I'm like, y'all belong in Louisiana. I'm gonna call it culinary diplomacy," Landry quipped.

Stephen Miller, the White House deputy chief of staff, said Monday that Greenland should be part of the United States in spite of a warning by Frederiksen that a U.S. takeover of Greenland would amount to the end of NATO.

"The president has been clear for months now that the United States should be the nation that has Greenland as part of our overall security apparatus," Miller said during an interview with CNN on Monday afternoon.

His comments came after the Danish leader, together with Greenland's prime minister and other European leaders, firmly rejected Trump's renewed call for the island to come under U.S. control in the aftermath of the U.S. military operation in Venezuela.

Trump has argued the U.S. needs to control Greenland to ensure the security of the NATO territory in the face of rising threats from China and Russia in the Arctic.

"It's so strategic right



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, left, and Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen, speak on April 27 in Marienborg, Denmark. **MADS CLAUS RASMUSSEN/RITZAU SCANPIX**

now," he told reporters Sunday.

"Greenland is covered with Russian and Chinese ships all over the place," Trump said. "We need Greenland from the standpoint of national security, and Denmark is not going to be able to do it."

Miller wondered during his interview Monday whether Denmark can assert control over Greenland.

"What is the basis of their territorial claim," Miller said. "What is their basis of having Greenland as a colony of Denmark?"

He said it was not necessary to consider whether

the U.S. administration was contemplating an armed intervention.

"There is no need to even think or talk about this in the context that you are asking, of a military operation. Nobody is going to fight the U.S. militarily over the future of Greenland," he said.

Greenland had been a colony of the Danish kingdom for hundreds of years, becoming an integral part in 1953. The U.S. government recognized Denmark's right to the whole of Greenland at the start of the 20th century.

Legislation in 2009 that extended self-government to Greenland also recog-

nized a right to independence under international law, an option favored by a majority of Greenlanders.

Greenland sits off the northeastern coast of Canada, with more than two-thirds of its territory lying within the Arctic Circle. That location has made it crucial to the defense of North America since World War II.

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