

Maga influencer makes waves in Greenland and unsettles Danes

US investor with no official role now viewed as "Trump's man" on the island

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Danish-American relations reached a fresh low last week after claims that the US was conducting covert influence operations in Greenland, the vast Arctic island that Donald Trump wants the US to control.

But at the same time, prominent figures linked to Trump and his team have been promoting the US president's agenda on Greenland in a way that is anything but covert.

One such influencer is Thomas Dans — an investor, former US Arctic commissioner and Treasury official during the president's first administration, and prolific poster on social media. While he stresses that he has no official role, media on the island have christened him "Trump's man in Greenland".

"Americans and Greenlanders share a great and brave past, and what I am certain will be a wonderful future," US-based Dans told the *Financial Times*.

"If I can support President Trump and his exceptional team's historic efforts to bring greater peace, security and goodwill to this world, I am proud to do so."

Dans, who has spoken about making outsized returns as a fund manager in Russia in the wild privatisation days of the 1990s, was the driving force behind the visit in January of the president's son Donald Trump Jr to Nuuk as well as an aborted plan for Usha Vance, wife of the vice-president, to visit a dog-sledding contest in Greenland in March.

"Greenland is the front door on our east coast... What's really important

for Americans and the rest of the world [is] to realise how closely intertwined our country is with Greenland for so long," Dans told Steve Bannon's War Room in February, in one of his many appearances on the *Maga* ideologue's podcast.

American Daybreak, the organisation Dans leads — which describes its mission as "welcoming a New American Day in Greenland, the Arctic and Eurasia" — has campaigned to raise awareness of US involvement in Greenland during the second world war.

Dans has expressed strong public support for Trump's renewed focus on the Arctic and "hemispheric defence" from Greenland and Alaska to Panama.

"I am an unabashed, day one supporter of President Trump, his administration and the *Maga* agenda," he said. "I'm also a private US citizen and have been since I was fired by president Biden in an act of political retribution from the independent US Arctic Research Commission."

Dans has appeared regularly in local media in Greenland, a semi-autonomous part of the kingdom of Denmark with just 57,000 inhabitants. He took Greenlandic MP Kuno Fencner, who has expressed some sympathy with Trump's interest, to the White House in January, as well as local *Maga* fan and builder Jürgen Boassen.

"There is nothing covert about Tom Dans and other Americans who have visited or engaged in Greenland in recent years," Fencner told the FT — unless, he added, Danish intelligence knew some-

Flag-bearer: Thomas Dans shared this photo of himself outside the American consulate in Greenland in January
Thomas Dans/FT

thing that people in the capital of Nuuk did not. "The Americans we have seen here — their activities have been visible, often public... What we see is not hidden influence from the United States, but rather Danish media framing... risks [and] creating unnecessary fear among Greenlanders about US engagement."

Dans said: "The current insinuation and innuendo about the nature of my interest and friendships in Greenland is completely false and not only wrong, but also regrettably, similarly malicious."

Dans is a Russia expert, who has argued for more engagement with the longtime US foe. He was an exchange student at the Moscow Energy Institute in 1990 in the dying days of the Soviet Union, before returning in the mid-1990s as an investor.

"It's fun to remember a time when we made 15x cash-on-cash returns for the US government building television networks in a newly independent Russia —

and then selling them on to Russian oligarchs for \$550m," he said on LinkedIn in February, calling them "some of the most enjoyable days of my career".

He added that in 1997 when working for Evercore Partners he worked with Kirill Dmitriev, the head of Russia's sovereign wealth fund who accompanied President Vladimir Putin to his meeting with Trump in Alaska. Dans called him "the Kremlin's ace in the hole".

Later, in the run-up to Trump's second term, Dans spent a year as a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a rightwing think-tank with links to Trump's circle, where he worked on "conservative approaches for Ukraine's postwar reconstruction", according to his LinkedIn page.

His twin brother Paul led Project 2025, a radical conservative programme put together by the foundation ahead of Trump's election to a second term, and is now challenging Republican Lindsey Graham for his seat in the US Senate.

Thomas Dans has not only popped up



Dans said he is 'proud' to support Trump's 'efforts to bring peace, security and goodwill to this world'

in Greenland recently, but also in Romania, where he spoke to Bannon from the headquarters of the ultranationalist George Simion during his unsuccessful presidential campaign.

In Copenhagen, Danish officials are taking Trump's threats seriously — including his refusal to rule out using force to take Greenland — but have started being more assertive with what is the main security guarantor to both Copenhagen and Nuuk. Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said last week that she took a local media report of three US citizens with ties to the Trump administration conducting influence operations in Greenland with "great seriousness" and that if proved they would be "unacceptable".

A White House official retorted that "the Danes need to calm down" after its top diplomat in Copenhagen was summoned to the foreign ministry.

Pelle Dragsted, a Red-Green Alliance MP, said the Danish government needed to wake up to the new situation "where the US, which has historically been a close ally, is now an adversary when it comes to Greenland, who wants to do both us and Greenland harm".

Most Greenlanders are keen to become independent from Denmark in time, according to opinion polls, but they do not want to become part of the US: some 85 per cent rejected that in a January survey.

The US has the only military base on Greenland, which vice-president JD Vance visited in March, saying that Denmark had not done "a good job" on the island. Asked about the media report on influence operations, the state department said it had no comment "on the actions of private US citizens in Greenland" and stressed it did "not control or direct the actions of private citizens".

Dans himself has been clear about Greenland's importance for the US. He told Bannon in March: "Greenland is part of North America. We've had an indelible tie with them for centuries... Today, the security of Greenland is the United States. That has never changed, it will never change... Right now, Greenland is ours to lose."

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