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**ENVOYS** Vivian Motzfeldt, left, and Lars Lokke Rasmussen arrive Wednesday for a meeting on Capitol Hill.

# Talks on threat to seize Greenland

[Greenland, from A1] first time top officials from the three governments met to discuss Trump's threats to seize Greenland, and it came at the same time that Denmark and allied countries announced they were increasing their military presence in and around the Arctic territory.

After the meeting, Lokke Rasmussen said a high-level working group would be formed and meet within weeks to "explore if we can find a common way forward" on security with the request that the U.S. respect Greenland's sovereignty.

"Whether that is doable, I don't know, but I hope it could take down the temperature," he said.

A few hours after the closed-door talks, Trump told reporters that he had not been briefed yet on the discussions but reiterated that "we need Greenland for national security."

The president has long talked about making Greenland part of the United States, but his threats have escalated in the days after the U.S. military's operation in Venezuela that led to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. For instance, Trump warned last week that his administra-

tion was going to "do something in Greenland, whether they like it or not."

"If we don't do it the easy way, we're going to do it the hard way," Trump said at a White House event Friday.

European and Danish leaders have repeatedly opposed the president's plans to take over the semiautonomous territory, warning that such a move threatens to dismantle the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Trump said Wednesday that part of the reason he wants to acquire Greenland is to build a Golden Dome missile defense system. He said NATO would become "far more formidable and effective with Greenland in the hands of the United States."

On Tuesday, Greenland's prime minister, Jens-Fredrik Nielsen, and Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen both came out in opposition of the president's plans.

"If we have to choose between the United States and Denmark here and now, we choose Denmark," Nielsen said at a news conference in Copenhagen.

Asked about Nielsen's comments, Trump said: "I disagree with him. ... That's going to be a big problem for him."

The president's plans

have also drawn opposition domestically.

In Washington, a growing number of GOP lawmakers have expressed unease about the White House's threats to use force to acquire Greenland — let alone pursue any military action against a U.S. ally without congressional approval.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) on Tuesday joined Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, the top Democrat of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to push legislation that would bar the departments of Defense and State from using funds to "blockade, occupy, annex or otherwise assert control" over the territory of any other NATO member state.

In practice, the proposal — titled the "NATO Unity Protection Act" — would block Trump from taking over Greenland.

"This bipartisan legislation makes clear that U.S. taxpayer dollars cannot be used for actions that would fracture NATO and violate our own commitments to NATO," Shaheen said in a statement.

Murkowski said it was "deeply troubling" to see the United States attempt to use its resources against allies, and said such actions

"must be wholly rejected by Congress in statute."

"Our NATO alliances are what set the United States apart from our adversaries," Murkowski said. "We have friends and allies who are willing to stand firmly alongside us as the strongest line of defense to keep those who work to undermine peace and stability from making sweeping advances globally."

A similar bipartisan proposal was introduced in the House on Wednesday that would block federal funds from being used to occupy a NATO ally.

"America is at our strongest when we honor our alliances and stand by our allies," said Rep. Jason Crow, a Colorado Democrat co-sponsoring the House measure.

Beyond diplomatic concerns, the president's plans to buy or seize Greenland are not popular among the electorate.

About 9 in 10 registered voters oppose the U.S. trying to take Greenland by military force, and only 9% are in favor, according to a new Quinnipiac University poll. Voters are also divided on the idea of buying the territory, with 55% of voters opposing and 37% in favor.