



US President Donald Trump delivers his meandering, 70-minute speech yesterday at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Photo: AP

TRUMP RULES OUT USING FORCE TO TAKE OVER GREENLAND

President also slams Nato, while touting strength of US economy and how country leads China on AI

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US President Donald Trump yesterday said he would not deploy American military might against Greenland as tensions mounted over his repeated threats to acquire the world's largest island by force if necessary.

His much-anticipated appearance at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting turned the normally cosy gathering of billionaires and elites in the Swiss town of Davos into a hot geopolitical ticket. But Trump made it clear he still had his eye on "our big piece of ice" for its national security and rare earth deposits.

"People thought I would use force. I don't have to use force. I don't want to use force. I won't use force," he said. "All the United States is asking for is a place called Greenland."

In a meandering, 70-minute speech, Trump also slammed Nato, called Europe "not even recognisable" and touted the US economy as evidence of his leadership. On other fronts, he spoke about how the US was beating China in artificial intelligence (AI) and cryptocurrency competition. Trump appeared to enjoy the

global spotlight as he took multiple victory laps. The US economy was so attractive under his leadership, he said, that Chinese firms encouraged by President Xi Jinping were rushing to invest, along with Japan, Mexico and Canada, in order to adapt to his tariff policy.



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DONALD TRUMP

"I've always had a very good relationship with President Xi of China. He's an incredible man." Trump also touted US leadership in AI. "We're leading the world in AI by a lot," he said. "We're leading China by a lot. I think President Xi respects what we've done."

Yesterday was Trump's first in-person attendance at the Davos forum since 2020. A rare

electrical fault on the US presidential aircraft caused a several-hour delay before he resumed the trip aboard an Air Force C-32.

The 79-year-old president returned to several recurring themes throughout his Davos speech. He criticised wind energy policies, claiming they harmed the environment and weakened economies, while arguing that China profited from selling windmills it barely used.

The mercurial leader claimed he had stopped referring to the pandemic as the "China virus" at Xi's request to avoid conflict, and said he was warned of "something really bad happening in China", claiming satellite images showed body bags in Wuhan without explanation.

Trump gave relatively short treatment to the Ukraine-Russia conflict, citing it as one of the few wars he has not halted in his quest for a Nobel Peace Prize, calling it a "bloodbath".

Both sides should strike a deal to save thousands of lives, he said, adding it would be "stupid" for them not to agree to a peace deal.

In typical fashion, Trump went off script repeatedly, riffing on the lawns in Washington, restaurants in Memphis, how US cities would soon have "no crime", questioned

the IQ of Somalis and praised Switzerland for its watches but slammed its trade deficit and said his tariffs were ultimately of benefit. "Without us, it's not Switzerland any more," he said.

But the main global focus for much of the audience was on Greenland and whether his aggressive interpretation of US power would lead to conflict.

Trump's ambition to acquire Greenland from Denmark has intensified since the US raided Venezuela earlier this month. He has also threatened to impose new tariffs on European countries that oppose his move.

White House pressure over Greenland has drawn criticism from European leaders, who are concerned about the future of the post-war world order and rising tensions in the transatlantic alliance.

French President Emmanuel Macron used his Davos speech on Tuesday to challenge the US position, saying Europe would not "passively accept the law of the strongest" and "we do prefer respect to bullies".

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen took a more moderate tone than Macron in her Davos speech but was also firm in her opposition to

Trump's tactics, calling the tariff threat a "mistake, especially between long-standing allies".

She also underscored the need "to build a new form of European independence" in the face of geopolitical shocks.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told lawmakers that Denmark, the nation at the centre of the Greenland dispute, was "being threatened by our closest ally". Denmark has asked Nato to establish a permanent presence in Greenland.

Vice-Premier He Lifeng called for "building bridges, not walls", and firmly supported free trade and multilateralism.

Meanwhile, addressing the conflict in Gaza, Trump has invited dozens of world leaders to join the "Board of Peace" initiative as part of his efforts to push forward his 20-point plan. The board will be chaired by Trump and was originally conceived to oversee the rebuilding of the war-torn territory, but a draft charter sent out last week to prospective members suggested its role could be expanded to other conflicts.

Beijing, while confirming receipt of the invitation, has not announced its decision and explicitly disagrees with the idea of the board supplanting the United Nations.

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