

OPINION

# Mad King Trump would break the world to gain Greenland



CAMPBELL CLARK

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A woman waves a Greenlandic flag as people attend a protest against U.S. President Donald Trump's demand that the Arctic island be ceded to the U.S., calling for it to be allowed to determine its own future, in Nuuk, on Saturday. **MARKO DJURICA/REUTERS**

673 COMMENTS

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Prime Minister Mark Carney said he is “concerned” about the escalation. It was a calm word for this particular bout of Donald Trump’s insanity.

The President of the United States insists he will take Greenland from Denmark – and the European Union – and now says that he will use heavy tariffs to try to coerce allies into handing over the territory. If you take him at his word, it’s worth noting that he has said he’d be prepared to invade an ally, too.

It’s a surefire way to break the U.S. from Europe, to start a trans-Atlantic trade war, to rip the North Atlantic Treaty Organization apart, and to make the world much more chaotic and dangerous. Not least for Canada.

If Mr. Trump breaks the trans-Atlantic alliance, Canada will be awkwardly placed in the middle between its long-standing allies and the newly avaricious U.S. superpower on whom it depends for domestic security.

Greenland has become the epicentre of the growing rift between Europe and the U.S.

And it’s already awkward. Mr. Carney obviously has to oppose the Greenland madness of King Trump. But will it invite a new round of tariff threats for Canada?

Until recently, the U.S. led a group of countries that protected democracies from aggressors bent on expanding their territory.

Now, the President of the United States has switched sides.

The alarming thing is that, on the whole, the American public doesn’t seem to have noticed how far that has gone.

Mr. Trump’s Greenland threats are no longer just a momentary whim. Now, the world has to hope that Americans themselves will step up to slam the brakes on it.

David Shribman: Trump’s preoccupation with Greenland reflects how his presidency is reshaping the world order

Yes, there are members of Congress who have opposed Mr. Trump’s threats to invade Greenland, but the numbers of Republicans who have spoken up are underwhelming. Congressional opposition to Mr. Trump’s proposal to levy tariffs on eight European countries that oppose it has so far been weak.

The suggestion by House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson that there will be no invasion but “diplomatic channels are the way to go” – he cited Mr. Trump’s appointment of Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry as a special envoy charged with making Greenland a U.S. territory – show us just how far congressional Republicans have gone in accepting Mr. Trump’s Greenland fetish.

Mr. Trump’s assertion that the U.S. needs to own Greenland to prevent it from being taken by Russia or China is also flatly ridiculous.

It's part of NATO. The U.S. already has a base there. Denmark would have welcomed an increase in U.S. security in Greenland, at least until Mr. Trump started to express lust for its conquest. Somehow, in the world we're in, Mr. Carney's assertion that NATO can and should collectively defend Greenland sounds like he is challenging Mr. Trump.

Instead, Mr. Trump's Greenland coercion is a boon for the global ambitions of Russia and China, and a great danger to the now-fractured "West." The biggest obstacle Russia and China faced was not just U.S. power, but the fact that it was amplified by like-minded countries that backed it through policy, diplomacy, economic measures and alliances such as NATO.

Carney says Trump's 'escalation' of Greenland pursuit is concerning

Now, Mr. Trump is rending that fabric. He is instead asserting that the U.S. should control the hemisphere and proposing a world divided into the spheres of influence of great powers.

That means a world divided up by the U.S., China and Russia. It's just what President Vladimir Putin has wanted. The Russian leader must find it hard to believe that a U.S. president would come to decisively aid his ambitions by trying to dismantle NATO and weaken Europe.

The demand that Greenland be ceded to the U.S. for security reasons amounts to a statement that the U.S. is unwilling to defend territory that is not owned by the U.S. – in itself a weakening of U.S. commitment to the NATO alliance.

For Canadians, that's an impending split between its allies. Just as alarming is the shrug of the American polity. Mr. Trump has shifted the U.S. from leader to predator, and the Congress has acquiesced.

The Congress failed to assert its constitutional power over trade policy when Mr. Trump declared all manner of things as threats to national security so he could impose tariffs. To impose them over Greenland, he'd have to make the farcical claim that the failure of European countries to support his Greenland demands is a national-security emergency.

This time, however, it's bigger than a trade disruption. This farce threatens to smash security alliances and make the world more dangerous.