



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# Any Change in Greenland's status must come from its residents

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## Context

- Vice President J.D. Vance's recent visit to Greenland, where he reaffirmed United States President Donald Trump's plan to assert control over the Arctic island, was a blunt demonstration of American power over a strategically vital territory inhabited by around 56,000 people.
- The visit drew sharp disapproval from Greenland's local leaders and the Danish government, which retains sovereignty over the island.
- While Mr. Vance was inspecting the Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Air Base), Mr. **Trump declared that the U.S. would "go as far as we have to" to take control of Greenland. This is not the first time that an American administration has attempted to acquire the island.**
- In 1867, following the purchase of **Alaska from Russia**, the U.S. held unsuccessful **talks with Denmark to buy Greenland.**
- During the Second World War, after Nazi Germany occupied Denmark, the U.S. established military and radio stations on the island.
- In 1946, Washington offered Denmark \$100 million for Greenland, which it rejected. More recently, during his first term, Mr. Trump made a similar offer, which was again declined by Denmark and Greenland.
- **Now, in his second term, he is aggressively pursuing the idea, undeterred by the strong opposition from both sides of the Atlantic.**
- **Once a Danish colony**, it was formally incorporated into the Kingdom of Denmark in 1953. After a 1979 referendum, it gained autonomy, with foreign affairs and defence under Danish control.
- In another survey, 85% of the population opposed becoming a part of the U.S. The American push for Greenland is rooted in geopolitical calculations.
- **As climate change accelerates Arctic ice melt, the region is becoming more accessible for navigation and resource extraction.**
- **Only five countries have direct access to the Arctic seabed: Canada, Russia, Norway, Denmark (via Greenland), and the U.S. (via Alaska).**
- **Russia already maintains a strong military presence in the region.** Washington sees control of Greenland as a way to expand its Arctic claims and access to **untapped natural resources.**

**Kamaraj IAS Academy**

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**