

PEACELINE



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By Jessica Freeman

Donald Trump's Return: Renewed Debates on US Foreign Policy

Donald Trump was inaugurated as US President on Monday 20th January, marking the start of his second term and reigniting debates about US foreign policy. One key issue drawing attention is Trump's stance on Greenland, which has sparked intrigue, concern, and heightened geopolitical tensions.

Greenland: Strategic or Symbolic?

During his first term, Trump proposed purchasing Greenland from Denmark, framing it as a strategic move to secure US economic and military interests. While Denmark dismissed the idea as absurd, it highlighted Trump's interest in expanding US influence in the Arctic. Greenland's location and untapped resources make it a key focus of global power competition, particularly between the US, Russia, and China.

In December, Trump renewed calls for US ownership of Greenland, calling it "an absolute necessity." At a recent news conference, he refused to rule out "military or economic coercion" to gain control of Greenland, or even the Panama Canal. Reports of a fiery phone call with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen have intensified concerns. Senior European officials described the call as "horrendous," with Trump adopting an aggressive tone after Frederiksen reiterated Greenland was not for sale. Trump's fixation on acquiring the Arctic island has strained transatlantic ties, raising fears of US pressure on allies to cede territory.

In his second term, Trump may push for a stronger US military presence in the Arctic. Greenland's Thule Air Base, critical for missile defense and space surveillance, could receive more investment. This aligns with Trump's broader demand for NATO allies to increase defense spending, including calls for members to allocate 5% of GDP to defense. These demands have strained alliances and contributed to a global arms race.

Meanwhile, Denmark has bolstered its security measures in Greenland, including proposals to buy Arctic inspection vessels and enhance its military presence. Denmark has committed \$400 million to improve surveillance and intelligence in the region, including long-range drones. Plans to upgrade Greenland's Kangerlussuaq airport to accommodate F-35 fighter jets underscore the island's growing strategic importance.

Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen stressed that these measures address security gaps and reinforce Greenland's defense in response to rising Arctic competition and US ambitions.

Greenland, Denmark, and Autonomy

Greenland's relationship with Denmark is complex, shaped

by historical and cultural tensions. While Denmark handles Greenland's defense and foreign policy, the island operates as a semi-autonomous territory. Greenlandic leaders have expressed a desire for greater independence, with Prime Minister Múte Egede stating, "We don't want to be Americans. We don't even want to be Danes. We want strong cooperation between our countries."

The legacy of colonialism casts a shadow over Denmark-Greenland relations. Greenlandic Prime Minister Egede has described the forced sterilisation of 4,500 Greenlandic women between 1966 and 1970 as a form of genocide. This dark chapter fuels mistrust toward Denmark, complicating the geopolitical landscape.

For many Greenlanders, the concept of "owning" land is foreign. Actor Miké Thomsen explained, "Ownership—it's not in our mentality. To own land, we don't... it's not in our mind." This cultural perspective contrasts sharply with the view of Greenland as a commodity, further complicating its geopolitical position.

Arctic Tensions, NATO, and Nuclear Risks

Greenland's importance is amplified within broader Arctic geopolitics. Melting ice caps are opening new shipping routes and exposing vast reserves of oil, gas, and rare earth minerals. Trump's militarised approach could escalate tensions with Russia, which is fortifying its Arctic territories, and China, which has invested heavily in the region. These dynamics are linked to NATO, which Trump has sought to redefine by demanding higher military spending and greater contributions to US-led initiatives.

Critics warn these policies could increase the risk of nuclear escalation. NATO's Arctic strategies may provoke responses from rival powers, potentially turning the region into a flashpoint. The focus on militarisation over diplomacy undermines disarmament efforts and accelerates an arms race in one of the world's most fragile ecosystems.

Greenland and the Disarmament Struggle

Trump's renewed focus on Greenland reflects a broader shift in US foreign policy, prioritising economic competition and military dominance over multilateral cooperation. For advocates of nuclear disarmament, this is deeply concerning. The militarisation of the Arctic underscores how competition for resources and strategic positioning can overshadow efforts to reduce nuclear threats.

As Trump's second term progresses, Greenland's future will reveal his administration's priorities. Will he double down on Arctic militarisation and resource extraction, or will international pressure steer him toward peace and sustainability? These decisions will shape not only US-Greenland relations but also the global push for a world free from nuclear weapons.

GAZA AND UKRAINE

A Test Bed For New Weapons Technologies
By Dave Webb (abridged)

It is clear that Ukraine and Gaza are being used as test sites and as a shop window for new weapons technologies. The use of satellites, drones, cyberwarfare, artificial intelligence (AI) systems, global positioning systems (GPS), and electromagnetic fields (EMF) blocking and spoofing are among the most commonly used techniques employed by all sides.

No war has seen both sides of a conflict use space and counterspace systems as much as in Ukraine. Satellites are deeply integrated into conventional warfare, enabling precision strikes, drone operations, and missile warnings. The primary military functions of satellites are Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR); Communication; and Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT).

A new dimension has been the reliance on commercial satellite providers. For the first time, information that was previously only available from government sources has been supplied by commercial companies. The U.S. intelligence community has provided Ukraine with commercial satellite imagery in “minutes of collection,” and Ukraine has obtained satellite imagery and communications services from U.S., Canadian, and European companies.

Ukraine has also relied on Starlink for communications and military coordination. Starlink has been used to carry out drone strikes and military operations and serves as the backbone of the command-and-control software Ukraine uses to share data and communicate with U.S. and NATO advisers. However, Starlink uses GPS, which Russia has successfully jammed. Russia has also obtained Starlink terminals through third parties despite sanctions.

In Gaza, Starlink is being used to assist Israel’s ongoing invasion. Some of the tactics and technologies from Ukraine, especially drones, have also been seen in Gaza. The U.S. and UK have flown surveillance flights over Gaza, passing information to the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Spy satellites are used to monitor communications, with data downlinked to Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire and passed to Israeli forces. AI-enabled decision-making systems, such as “Gospel” and “Lavender,” are used to target individuals by analysing behaviours like frequent phone changes or connections to known Hamas supporters. Drones, a staple of Israel’s military operations, play a central role in surveillance and strikes.

Dave Webb is a member of CND’s International Advisory Group and Convenor of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, as well as Professor Emeritus of Peace Studies at Leeds Beckett University.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February Meeting with Andrew Murray

Donald Trump claims he can end the war in Ukraine 'in 24 hours'. Is it anything other than an idle boast? What might a US-imposed political settlement look like? Will Britain still have a part to play? What would NATO's role be? And would we still face nuclear confrontation? Click [here](#) to register.

Monday 3rd February 2025 19:00-20:00



UK Nuclear Energy Developments in 2025

In 2025, the UK is making significant strides in its nuclear energy sector with key developments such as the ongoing construction of Sizewell C. Additionally, four nuclear power stations are having their operational lifespans extended: Heysham 1 in Lancashire and Hartlepool on Teesside will continue producing power until 2027, and Heysham 2 and Torness in Scotland will remain in operation until 2030. These moves are part of the UK’s flawed strategy to ensure energy security and meet decarbonisation goals despite the well-known dangers.

The expansion of nuclear power is a central part of the government’s broader energy strategy. The UK is also investing in cutting-edge technology and infrastructure to support the development of new nuclear plants, as well as maintaining and upgrading existing sites to ensure reliable energy production for years to come. This includes a focus on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and advanced reactors, which are expected to play a key role in the future energy mix.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero’s strategic review of NNL, transforming it into the United Kingdom National Nuclear Laboratory, further signals the government’s misguided commitment to nuclear expansion. This focus on nuclear energy only deepens the UK’s environmental and security vulnerabilities, increasing the risks of catastrophic accidents and making the nation more susceptible to global threats.

Welcoming Sophie Bolt as General Secretary of CND UK

We are thrilled to welcome Sophie Bolt as the new General Secretary of CND UK. Sophie brings a wealth of experience and passion for peace and disarmament, and we are excited to have her join our movement. With her dedication to advancing nuclear disarmament and her commitment to building a safer, more just world, we look forward to continuing the fight for a nuclear free world



Report on Launch of New Finchley Group!

Three Finchley residents have established a new branch of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Kate and Sally met Ruth by chance on the bus to a national demonstration outside the US Air Force base at Lakenheath, Suffolk, protesting the siting of US nuclear warheads in Britain for the first time in 15 years.

“We discovered a shared concern about the increasing threat of war in Europe,” explained Sally. “If three of us feel this strongly about nuclear warheads being located 80 miles from our home, there are probably others who are equally disturbed—or maybe unaware this is happening.” Following their initial meeting, they were encouraged by the positive response.



Two attendees, Gail and Jane, were former CND campaigners who had believed the threat of nuclear war was resolved by international treaties signed in the 1990s and 2000s. “Here we go again,” they remarked.

The Finchley branch has grown steadily, taking manageable steps to expand awareness. With an aim to triple attendance from Finchley on the London Region coach on 26 April to the national demonstration at Lakenheath, they have agreed an action plan, including leafleting shoppers one Saturday, making their own Finchley poster to display in local venues and writing articles for their local free paper. They also submitted a question to MPs: “How will you respond to public opinion opposing the siting of American nuclear weapons in Suffolk, only 80 miles from this constituency and making us a target?”

The group is building confidence and enthusiasm, attracting both experienced campaigners and new members. “It took so little to get the ball rolling,” said Sally, crediting support from London Region CND. “One positive thing to emerge from the current drive to war is that people are beginning to feel it’s better to do something than nothing. This has to be CND’s time!”

Report by Sally Spiers (abridged)