

Donald Trump

Donald Trump refuses to rule out force to take Greenland and Panama Canal

US president-elect also vows to rename Gulf of Mexico as 'Gulf of America' and to impose tariffs on allies



Donald Trump's latest broadside against Mexico came as he spoke to reporters from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida © Carlos Barria/Reuters

James Politi in Washington and **Christine Murray** in Mexico City YESTERDAY

Donald Trump has refused to rule out using force to obtain Greenland or take control of the Panama Canal, as he vowed to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the “Gulf of America”.

In a freewheeling press conference, less than two weeks before he takes office, the US president-elect threatened to use his country’s economic and military might against traditional allies to further national security and territorial expansion.

Asked whether he would exclude the use of military or economic coercion to acquire [Greenland](#) or assume control of the Panama Canal, he said: “No, I can’t assure you on either of those two. But I can say this, we need them for economic security . . . We need Greenland for national security reasons.”

At Tuesday’s press conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, [Trump](#) vowed to “tariff Denmark at a very high level” unless the country gave up control of Greenland, which he had sought to buy during his first term of office.

Earlier on Tuesday Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said Greenland, which is an autonomous part of the kingdom of Denmark, [was “not for sale”](#), but stressed that she was keen to co-operate with Washington in the Arctic.

Responding to Trump's latest comments, she added that the US was Denmark's "most important and closest ally" and that she did not have "the imagination to believe that we'll get" to possible military or economic coercion to gain control of Greenland.

Trump has since 2019 sought control of the world's largest island, which is home to just 56,000 people, but central to the strategically vital Arctic region.

He also argued at his press conference that the US needed control of the Panama Canal, which the country built more than 100 years ago, because of the channel's strategic role.

"The Panama Canal is vital to our country," he said. "It's being operated by China . . . And we gave the Panama Canal to Panama, we didn't give it to China."

Panama operates the Panama Canal, not China.

In a further broadside at a traditional ally, Trump said a US annexation of Canada "would really be something", but would occur through "economic force" rather than military action.

"You get rid of that artificially drawn line, and you take a look at what that looks like, and it would also be much better for national security. Don't forget, we basically protect Canada," he said.

Citing US deficits with both countries and an influx of migrants across the US's southern border, Trump said he was prepared to hit both Canada and Mexico with higher levies. "We're going to put very serious tariffs on Mexico and Canada . . . then we want to get along with everybody," he said.

"We're going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America," he added. "What a beautiful name. And it's appropriate."

Trump labelled Mexico a "very dangerous place" that was "allowing millions of people to pour into our country" and was "essentially run by the [drug] cartels".

Mexico has been living through an unprecedented wave of homicides since 2009, with organised criminal groups extending their reach from drugs and migrant trafficking into oil theft and extortion.

When Trump initially suggested imposing tariffs on Mexico and Canada soon after his election in November, Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum initially hinted at retaliatory measures.

While the two leaders said they subsequently had a cordial conversation, Sheinbaum is now preparing for an onslaught of mass deportations, trade barriers and pressure for greater US involvement in tackling the cartels.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded on social media that both countries benefit from being each other's biggest trading and security partner. "There isn't a snowball's chance in hell that Canada would become part of the United States," he [posted](#) on X.

Additional reporting by Richard Milne and Ilya Gridneff

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