

Cruz	Justice	Murkowski
Curtis	Kaine	Paul
Durbin	Kennedy	Ricketts
Ernst	King	Risch
Fischer	Klobuchar	Rounds
Graham	Lankford	Schmitt
Grassley	Lee	Shaheen
Hagerty	Lummis	Sheehy
Hassan	Marshall	Sullivan
Hawley	McConnell	Thune
Hoeven	McCormick	Tillis
Husted	Moody	Welch
Hyde-Smith	Moreno	Young
Johnson	Mullin	

NAYS—40

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kelly	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Luján	Slotkin
Booker	Markey	Smith
Cantwell	Merkley	Van Hollen
Coons	Murphy	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warnock
Duckworth	Ossoff	Warren
Fetterman	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gallego	Peters	
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—7

Cramer	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Daines	Scott (SC)	
Moran	Tuberville	

The nomination was confirmed.
(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)
(Mr. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

GREENLAND

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as we are starting this new year, there is certainly no shortage of issues to be talking about. You and I have been engaged in fruitful discussions, I believe, about how we address health coverage for millions of Americans that are looking at dramatically higher costs, in many cases, and recognizing that there is a pretty short window here in front of us. In fact, for many, it feels like that window is already closed. We have work to do on that account.

We certainly have work to do on the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2026. We have got a looming deadline of January 30 that is fast approaching. And I think it is good news that we will be able to begin that process to advance this next minibus, these three bills—my Interior subcommittee appropriations as well as CJS, and Energy and Water—be able to advance those.

But then we have to get moving on the fiscal year 2027 cycle. We are already, technically, behind on that. So we have got efforts there.

We obviously need to do more when it comes to the situation around the world.

We just had a vote on a motion to discharge a War Powers Resolution as it relates to Venezuela. We need to strengthen sanctions on Russia, which continues to prosecute this awful war against Ukraine. We need to do more.

We need to work together to reach a bipartisan agreement on permitting re-

form. We seem to make good forward progress and then take a few steps back. But we need that to build out the infrastructure that this country needs.

We know we all need to tackle the affordability issues that impact all of us, whether they relate to the costs of goods or housing.

There is a lot that we have to do here, but there is one thing that we should not be doing, one thing that we should not be spending our time doing, and that is an effort—any effort—that would seek to annex Greenland, whether it is taking it by force, taking it by coercion, taking it by pressure or threat, or, really, in fairness, any related method. It is not an issue that I would have ever expected to raise here on the floor of the Senate.

In my time here in the Senate, over the past two decades, I have immersed myself in all things Arctic. I have strong relationships with friends across the Arctic and in Greenland, specifically. I have been the cochair of the Arctic Parliamentarians Conference for years now, and my cochair is a strong Greenlandic woman, who I just spoke with this morning about the situation and the rhetoric that is coming out of Washington, DC, directed toward her country.

It is an issue that is not necessarily new to Congress—the U.S. interest in Greenland. In fairness, there have been discussions prior to the first Trump administration. It was actually back in 1867. This was when the United States bought Alaska from Russia and, apparently, at that time, Seward made some inquiries. Seward was Secretary of the Interior at the time. He made some inquiries about Greenland, but the Congress wasn't interested in doing anything about it.

And then, in the Taft administration, there was a land swap that was proposed. This was back in 1910. It was rejected by Denmark. And then, apparently, there was actually a formal offer made back in 1946, at the outset of the Cold War, in the Truman administration, where there was actually an outright offer—\$100 million, as I understand it, in gold—to buy Denmark. That is what it was reported as.

That was, again, rejected by Denmark.

But it was at this time where we moved from the discussion about how do we take or how do we buy or how do we trade into one that was based on a relationship and shared mutual interests and national security, and working with Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark to ensure that military assets could be based at Thule, at the time—now called Pituffik—Air Base Station.

Again, these are discussions that have been had in the past—but in the very, very distant past—until just recently, when, again, we have seen comments coming out of the administration and really stepped up in this past week or so.

It is one thing to have a discussion. It is one thing to have a conversation.

But, instead, what we are hearing is some pretty aggressive rhetoric from the Trump administration and some members of Congress. There are statements that we are seeing that are suggesting that not only is a taking by force or coercion or other related method not only an option but perhaps a priority. And that, as a priority for the United States to take Greenland, military action is an option. And that, to me, is profoundly, profoundly troubling.

I think most of us want to be able to just not only quiet that but make clear that is not only not going to happen, but it is an option that has been taken off the table. I wish that I could say we have received that kind of reassurance, but to date, we haven't. We haven't had that assurance.

To be fair, the Secretary of State has recently stated that we are not talking about military intervention, so much as seeking to purchase. Again, in order to purchase something, you have to have a willing buyer and a willing seller. Greenland has made it very, very clear and Denmark has made it very clear that Greenland is not for sale.

As I speak with those whom I have established relationships with across the Arctic and, more specifically, in Greenland, they are sharing with me their concern, their deep anxiety about what is going on. What is it that the United States is asking for?

Think about the 57,000 people who reside in Greenland. That is the total population of this massive, massive island—57,000 people. But those 57,000 people are their own autonomous country. They have been striving for independence and control of their own future for years. Greenland's Prime Minister made a point very clearly recently. He said that “threats, pressures and talk of annexation have no place between friends” and that Greenland's future must be decided by its own people.

We need to take that message seriously. We need to respect the will and the wishes of the people of Greenland. Greenland's future must be decided by its own people.

It is also deeply unsettling if you live in Denmark, which administers defense and foreign policy for Greenland, as a mostly autonomous territory. So those who are not Greenlanders but who live in Denmark are justifiably disturbed and unsettled.

It is deeply unsettling, if you understand the immense value of NATO—or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—and how one cofounding member taking land from another shatters this crucial alliance forever. We have seen that in statements coming from our NATO allies.

Frankly, this should be unsettling for all of us because, bluntly, there is no need to treat longstanding allies with such a brutal lack of respect. And that is what I believe it is, a lack of respect.

We are not talking to the people of Greenland. We are talking over them.

We are talking about them. But we are not talking to them. That is what you do with your friends. That is what you do with your allies.

The people of Greenland are watching us, and the United States is not exactly winning them over by treating them like serfs in a feudal estate. The administration's approach is not improving relationships. It is alienating Greenland. It is alienating Denmark. It is alienating many of our friends and allies in Europe. And it sets the worst possible example for Russia and China and others.

This is coming into focus in the wake of the arrest and extradition of Nicolas Maduro. We get that. We get that. But Greenland is not Venezuela. It is not Venezuela. It is not a narcostate that is run by an illegitimate dictator. It is not an area where we have seen the economy wrecked by a dictator.

Greenland's Prime Minister has rejected any comparison to Venezuela and has emphasized that Greenland is a peaceful democracy. It is not a territory to be pressured, to be threatened.

There is no case, legally or otherwise, for U.S. military intervention in Greenland. Greenland has been not only a partner but a faithful partner. They have been an ally and a friend to the United States, dating back to World War II. At that time, it played a pivotal role in the Allied victory.

To this day, they continue to be that staunch ally. As I mentioned, they have been hosting the Pituffik Space Base and allowing the United States to have not only an important presence there but an invaluable presence. Any colleagues who have had the opportunity to visit the U.S. assets that we have there at Pituffik understand that strategic geography and the level of cooperation that we have seen now for decades.

I was in Greenland just a couple of months ago. I had an opportunity to meet with the new Greenlandic President, and he wanted to know—he said: What is it that the United States wants? What are they seeking? There is this talk about U.S. wanting Greenland. What does it mean? What do they want? Is it critical minerals? Is it more from a national security perspective? Because if that is what you are seeking, we are not only willing to talk; we are anxious to talk. We want to have that discussion with our friend and our ally. We don't want to cut that off. We encourage it.

We have seen how Greenland has encouraged that. The way that they have provided the access, again, to our military for decades, we should be thankful for that. We should appreciate it. We should recognize what we have there and, again, that Greenland and Denmark are willing to give more. They have said as much. Denmark's Prime Minister has suggested that a larger U.S. military presence in Greenland—if that is what we are looking for, let's talk about it.

And we could pursue that as we pursue other areas of cooperation. Wheth-

er it has to do with trade or tourism or the other economic ties that bind, that is what we should be doing, but we are not doing it.

Instead, at least publicly, the Trump administration is focused on acquisition, on ownership, even though every one of our strategic goals can be accomplished with Greenland as our partner, rather than a possession.

I would hope that the Trump administration realizes that the United States' taking control of Greenland, especially by military force—which, again, I can't even wrap my head around that one—what harm that would bring to our national security and our international relationships.

This is the 21st century. This is where the United States is supposed to set the example for the rules-based global order, not be the exception to it. And that includes respecting the sovereignty of others.

If we do the wrong thing in Greenland, we will not—we will not—end up with a more secure Arctic. For those of us who have been focused on the Arctic for decades, that is what we have been pushing for. It was this area of peace. We used to call it a “zone of peace.” Then Russia fouled all that up. But it still is an area where, again, we have prioritized the security, and we have done so in a way that is collaborative and cooperative. If we lose the people of Greenland, we will lose partners in Denmark and across Europe. We will destroy—we will destroy—our strongest international alliance, and that is NATO, and that gives Russia and China exactly—exactly—what they are looking for.

Now, there may be some new forms of partnership. I am talking about dialogue and trade relationships, but there may be other forms of partnerships that might make sense in 2026. There has been some suggestion of a joint Compact of Free Association that accounts for both Greenland and Denmark's interests. That is one proposal, and I think it is worthy of consideration if folks are interested in that, but we can't force it on them. We need to have both Greenland and Denmark at the table. We would need to treat them both with the respect that they deserve, and it would have to be their choice—their choice—to enter freely into any such accord, and that type of an accord, I might add, would require congressional ratification. So we would have involvement and engagement with that as well.

It should go without saying, but how we talk to our friends and allies matters a great deal, and our approach to Greenland and then, by extension, to Denmark is severely lacking right now. In early 2024, Greenland released their Arctic strategy to guide its foreign security and defense policy for the next decade. The title of that document—the title of their Arctic strategy—is “Greenland in the World—Nothing about us without us.” I hear that phrase “Nothing about us without us”

all the time from my fellow Parliamentarian in Greenland. We would do well to remember that—to remember that real people live in Greenland; that real people are watching the U.S.'s actions and deciding whether or not they want to have much of anything to do with us going forward. We need to be making sure that that is a firm yes instead of a no.

Greenland is an amazing place. It is a beautiful place. Again, I have had an opportunity to visit it multiple times. It reminds me of Alaska, my home State. It is extraordinarily beautiful in so many ways. It is also, like Alaska, very geostrategic. It is a resource-rich area just like my State of Alaska. We have cultural connections thanks to the Inuit people, who migrated from Alaska to Greenland centuries ago. We see that. We see that in the art, and we hear that in the language, where there are shared and common words.

But, unlike Alaska, Greenland is not part of America, and we can't simply take it because we want to. To do so would be a colossal mistake. It would end NATO. It would be a gift to Russia and China and all autocratic nations that lust after new territory and want it to justify their own provocations. Again, it is not necessary. It is not necessary given the decades-long, still-strong partnership that we have with Greenland—again, a country that is willing to work with us diplomatically, militarily, and otherwise.

I am proud of the Alaskans who have really worked to enhance the relationship between my State—the State that causes the United States to be called an arctic nation—and the country of Greenland. We have been working to forge relationships with the people. We have been focused on shared economic interests, whether it be tourism, whether it be trade, whether it be sharing best practices regarding indigenous governance structures or in the collaboration that we are seeing going on with arts and cultures. It is just exactly what we should be doing, which is building these relationships—building these relationships instead of sending out provocative messages that unsettle and disarray everything.

Again, we have got a lot ahead of us in 2026. Greenland—taking Greenland or buying Greenland—should not be on that list. It should not be an obsession at the highest levels of this administration.

I urge—I urge—a reset in how we are conducting these discussions. Let's be respectful of one another. Let's have dialogue. Let's have cooperation. Let's have partnership. Let's take a different tack to secure this relationship with Greenland, recognizing that they are an ally and not an asset and not appropriate for any—any—sort of forced annexation or action.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

DIRECTING THE ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL TO PROMINENTLY DISPLAY, IN A PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATION IN THE SENATE WING OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL, A PLAQUE HONORING THE MEMBERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONDING ON JANUARY 6, 2021, UNTIL THE PLAQUE CAN BE PLACED IN ITS PERMANENT LOCATION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, 5 years and 2 days ago, the Capitol Police protected us as a team stormed the Capitol. Many other forces came and defended the Capitol as well. It was more than just stopping folks headed toward the Capitol to try to interrupt the counting of votes; it was protecting the peaceful transfer of power, which goes to the heart of the Republic.

In 2022, we passed a law saying we would put up this plaque to recognize the valiant efforts of the police officers, but the plaque has not gone up yet; so I am here to team up with my colleague from North Carolina in order to have a strategy to make sure that we do get this plaque up until the House and Senate can reach an agreement.

Therefore, Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 580.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 580) directing the Architect of the Capitol to prominently display, in a publicly accessible location in the Senate wing of the United States Capitol, a plaque honoring the members of law enforcement responding on January 6, 2021, until the plaque can be placed in its permanent location.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; that the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 580) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I yield to my colleague from North Carolina.

I will have some comments following his comments. We also have the Democratic lead on the Rules Committee here who would like to weigh in on the importance of this action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I came to the floor on January 6 to make sure that we conveyed our undying gratitude to everybody who played a role.

Senator MERKLEY and I were here in the Chamber, and what we saw there was a parliamentary staff being focused on the job, not worried about themselves but worried about getting the ballots that we were certifying into safekeeping. We saw the Sergeant at Arms' staff do an extraordinary job of marshaling people around and getting them out of the building. We saw the Capitol Police spirit us away from this Chamber, over to the Hart Building, and secure us—literally—without any risk of any of us being harmed.

Having said that, we walked by several Capitol Police officers who were injured. They had been hit. They had been crushed in doors. You know all of the reports. Yet they did their jobs that day. So, when I heard that, apparently, the law that we passed to recognize them and to place this plaque had a technical implementation problem, I went about seeing how we could clarify things, and I found out that my colleague from Oregon Senator MERKLEY had a similar concern. So we are two folks who came together to say: Let's provide some clarity here.

The one thing I will tell you is that this is the plaque, but according to the Capitol Architect, the technical problem that, apparently, the House identified, which I think they can cure fairly quickly if they think it is a concern, is that the plaque was to include a list of all of the individual law enforcement officers who came to the Capitol on that day. This plaque actually has the names of the various law enforcement agencies, but the reality is, there is a digital component to this, which I understand, once it is implemented, will have a list of each and every person who answered the call.

I think it is good that we actually have all of the agencies here because you will see how many people came here—again, I will close on this—to be a part of withstanding what I would consider to be one of the most significant stress tests for this institution since it was founded.

Just keep in mind that we came here. We heard thousands of people storm this Capitol. People died. Police officers were injured, hospitalized. One died shortly after January 6. A lot of people said that was a dark day for democracy. I would leave with you this: It was a great day for democracy because of the law enforcement officers—the people who kept us safe—because do you know what we did when we were confronted with thousands of thugs storming this building? We took a brief recess. We got ourselves together. The Capitol was secured. Then, before we left this compound, we came back and completed our constitutional duty to certify the election. If that is not a good example of parliamentary staff, cloakroom staff, the Sergeant at Arms, and Capitol Police being a part of helping us withstand the greatest threat to this great institution—we owe them our eternal gratitude, and this Nation is stronger because of it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it was an extraordinary moment to be sitting here in this Chamber and seeing a member of the staff's team run down the aisle to the podium, speak quietly to the Vice President, have the Vice President immediately gavel down the session and depart through the side door; then to see police officers from the Capitol Police immediately engaged, working to lock the doors, protect this Chamber; and whole teams set up to ensure the safety of the Members of the Senate, with the same thing happening over on the House side.

Then, within a few hours, as my colleague from North Carolina has pointed out, the Capitol was secured, but in the process, 170 police officers in defending the Capitol were injured, and as a consequence of the attack on that day, 5 died.

So it was no small movement. It was not a peaceful protest outside but a storming of the Capitol, with some brutal assaults on folks within, on the police officers within. It is so important that we fulfill the vision of the 2022 law and get this plaque up to honor those police officers.

What this resolution is saying is that we in the Senate will put it up here, in a publicly available space, until a deal can be reached with the House of Representatives to display it. Both Chambers have to agree on that, but this is to put it up here in the Senate in a place where the public can see it. That we can do here on our own, and we intend to do it. That is the right thing to do.

It was a shocking thing to me this week because, simultaneous with discovering that this plaque had been stashed away in a room—out of sight somewhere—and that there wasn't an agreement to display it, I also saw the White House's posting, saying that it was a fiction that the Capitol was assaulted and that it was just a peaceful protest outside.

It is so important we be honest with the American people about what happened. It is so important that we recognize those who defended our democratic Republic on that day. It is so important that people know that we came back as Senators and House Members and finished our work that day for the peaceful transfer of power, which is essential to the future of our democratic Republic, and that we succeed in that every 4 years.

We have all taken an oath to the Constitution, and that is one of the most important functions to preserve in the Constitution—the integrity of the ballot box, which is the beating heart of a democratic republic—and the subsequent peaceful transfer of power.

Mr. TILLIS. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. MERKLEY. I will yield, yes.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, the one thing I would like to say to Senator MERKLEY—and that is why I should bring notes when I come down to the