WHY DID GREENLAND BECOME SO IMPORTANT TO WORLD POWERS?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Denmark's parliament has approved a new security agreement involving Denmark, Greenland and the United States. The agreement updates a defence deal from 1951 and gives the United States access to waters around Greenland, as well as permission to build a missile defence system. It also recognises Greenland as an equal partner and says that Greenland could remain in NATO if it becomes fully independent from Denmark. Greenland is the world's largest island and has long been important because of its position between North America and Europe. During the Cold War, the United States built military facilities there because the Arctic was a possible route for Soviet missiles and bombers. The new agreement follows months of tension after President Donald Trump threatened to take control of Greenland. Danish and Greenlandic politicians have now approved the deal, but trust between Greenland, Denmark and the United States still needs to be rebuilt.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

Greenland's story connects colonialism, independence and Cold War strategy. Although it is far from most people's homes, its location makes it important for missiles, radar, shipping routes and natural resources. The agreement also raises a big historical question: who should decide the future of a territory that was once controlled by another country?

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"Why has Greenland mattered to powerful countries for so long?"

Source: The Guardian

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/nov/19/danish-mps-approve-greenland-security-pact-us