



Greenland, the German blunder: mission closed after two days amid Trump's tariff fears

Published on 19/01/2026

Germany hastily **withdrew its soldiers from Greenland** just two days after their arrival, causing disbelief in European diplomatic and military circles.

Last Friday, a small reconnaissance unit of the Bundeswehr, about 15 men, landed on the Arctic island as part of a NATO exercise coordinated by Denmark to strengthen the European presence in a territory at the center of growing geopolitical tensions.

However, after **less than 48 hours**, the withdrawal order came from Berlin without any clear public explanation, and the troops left the island by Sunday, shortly after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to impose **tariffs of up to 25%** against European allies supporting Denmark in the area.

A decision that leaves many puzzled

Germany's move was seen by many as **a sign of weakness on the diplomatic and military front**. Not so much for the withdrawal itself, but for **the dynamics**: starting a mission in a sensitive theater and then abruptly halting it. Such a rapid decision, made before fully assessing the possible political and economic consequences of a friction with Washington, inevitably raised questions about the **preparation, foresight**, and level of coordination between Berlin's intelligence, Defense Ministry, and Foreign Ministry in evaluating foreign policy implications.

It is therefore not just an operational episode: **the entire decision-making chain** is exposed. A mission launched without clear political sustainability and then closed in record time risks undermining Germany's strategic credibility as a political and economic engine of Europe, as it conveys the image of a country that **acts first** (without considering the consequences) and then **corrects course** under pressure.

Before sending personnel into such a context, one would expect a thorough analysis of the repercussions: from the reactions of the U.S. administration to the implications for NATO cohesion, to the message sent to allies and international observers.

Instead, what seemed to emerge was a step taken and then urgently retracted: a withdrawal perceived as hasty, leaving an inevitable question on the table: **in whose hands is German leadership today?**

Rome, from supporting role to central actor

Amidst this mess, Italy today appears as one of the few European countries (if not the only one) that **knows how to sit at the table with everyone**: it talks with Washington, maintains the line with EU and NATO allies, and also has a voice in the Mediterranean. A change of pace that weighs especially when looking at the past: for years, Italy was treated with disdain, **mocked or sidelined by the Franco-German “directorate”**, while Paris and Berlin claimed the political leadership of Europe.

Today, however, with the Meloni government, that dynamic seems to have reversed: Rome gives the impression of a more cohesive and readable line, and above all avoids the most costly thing in foreign policy: **acting randomly and then backtracking**.

A stance like the Meloni-Crosetto approach on the defense dossier would hardly have ended in such a naive sequence: first sending men to a highly sensitive area and then fleeing after 48 hours, **fueling the perception of a Europe retreating as soon as the confrontation with Washington becomes concrete.**

What lies behind the Greenland crisis

The context of this affair is the increasing pressure exerted by the United States on **Greenland**, a Danish autonomous territory of great strategic value and rich in natural resources. **Trump** has repeatedly expressed his intention to gain control of the island and has linked trade relations with Europe to the issue, announcing new tariffs against countries sending troops there.

The European reaction has been mixed: while various countries reaffirm solidarity with Denmark, the German episode risks being remembered as one of the most **embarrassing** moments in recent European foreign policy.

A necessary reflection

For a country like Germany, which aspires to a leading role in the European Union and collective defense, these misjudgments are not trivial. A more decisive, planned, and aware approach to U.S. reactions could have prevented the sense of disarray now surrounding Berlin.

Instead, the impression is of **an action managed without a long-term strategy**, an episode that should prompt reflection on the current state of German intelligence and foreign policy structures.

News link: <https://it.euronews.com/2026/01/18/paura-dei-dazi-di-trump-lesercito-tedesco-si-ritira-dalla-groenlandia>