



KING ETHELRED'S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Established in 978 (ish)

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ECONOMICS, CREATIVE ACCOUNTANCY
AND THE BURSAR'S NERVES

TWO DEALS, ONE TUESDAY: GREENLAND, CHAGOS, AND THE GOING RATE FOR A BASE

Being an examination of the Agreement signed at New York on 22 September 2026, of what the Agreement of 1951 had already given, and of what a base costs when the host keeps the freehold



A departmental research thesis prepared under the College Fellowship Ordinance
(Rents, the Reasonableness Thereof, and Who Pays Whom)

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*Fortitudine.
Ingenio.
Tea and biscuits.*



ABSTRACT

On Tuesday 22 September 2026, in the same building in New York and within a few hours, two arrangements for an ally's base on somebody else's island were put on the record. In the morning the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Denmark and the Prime Minister of Greenland signed an Agreement on the defence of Greenland which the President described as giving the United States 'permanent control over security and all other needs on that territory', at 'no cost to the United States'.^[1,2,3] In the afternoon the same President, beside the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, described Britain's arrangement for Diego Garcia, under which Britain gives the island away and pays to rent it back, as 'terrible'.^[4] The College's Chagos paper had gone to press the night before. The Bursar asked for the Greenland one to be read at once, on the ground that somebody, somewhere, had got a base for nothing, and he wished to know how.

This paper reads the Agreement against the one it amends, the Defence of Greenland Agreement of 27 April 1951, and finds that the reader's question, whether it is mainly bravado and not very different from what 1951 already gave, has the answer: mostly, and not entirely. The 1951 text already let the United States establish bases wherever the two governments agreed, fly over and land anywhere, move between bases by land, sea and air, keep as many troops as it liked and pay no rent. What is new is that the arrangement now has no end date, is to be carried over to an independent Greenland should there ever be one, screens investment from outside the alliance, and names two more places. What is not new is sovereignty, which stays with Denmark in the preamble, and the people, who are named in the treaty as a people with the right to self-determination. The Danish press called it a Danish victory and asked that the President not be told.

The Department's interest is the arithmetic. Denmark kept the freehold, granted the tenant everything the tenant already had plus eternity, and paid nothing; the tenant paid nothing either, and called it control. Britain proposes to give the freehold to a third party and pay that party £101 million a year for a lease: £34.7 billion as a projected cash total over the century, or £3.4 billion at net present value. The going rate for a base, established on Tuesday, is nil. The Department recommends the Danish method, and has drafted it for Diego Garcia in Appendix C, in two pages, for nothing.

Research status. This is a fictional thesis of a fictional college. The Agreement of 22 September 2026, the Agreement of 1951 and its amendment of 2004, the history from 1941, the figures, the statements of the President, the two Prime Ministers, the officials and the commentators are real and referenced; where a source is a newspaper or a think-tank the paper says so. The Department, its Fellow, the Bursar, the Trebuchet Research Group's application in Chapter 8 and the draft in Appendix C are not. The people of Greenland are reported as the treaty reports them, as a people; their unease is quoted; the jokes are about Washington, Whitehall, the Bursar and the College.

Keywords: Greenland; Pituffik; the 1951 Defence Agreement; Igaliku; Kauffmann; Camp Century; Diego Garcia; rent; sovereignty; permanence; investment screening; the Danish method; the going rate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bursar commissioned this paper on the evening of 22 September and has read every draft. It is the first international agreement of which he has approved without reservation, on the ground that nobody in it pays anybody anything. He has asked that this be recorded, and that it not be taken as a precedent.

Professor Sir Peregrine W. Fortescue and Dr Isolde M. Farthing-Vane, whose Chagos paper of the previous evening supplied the other half of the comparison, read Chapter 7 and confirmed that the Calais test has nothing to say about a treaty in which nobody's sovereignty moves, which they regard as the point of it.

Professor Cuthbert Widdowson-Bligh, of the Chair of Large Numbers and Difficult Formulae, was asked to state the difference between the rights of the United States in Greenland on 21 September 2026 and on the 23rd. He replied that it is a small number, that it is not zero, and that the Department should say which.

Miss Honoria Catchpole of the Æthelred Library of Useful Numbers has filed the Agreement in the South Atlantic Map Cupboard under the Atlantic, and reports that it is the first item in the Cupboard's history to be filed under the right ocean. She has asked the Department not to make a habit of it.

Major (Retd.) Alistair MacTavish read the account of Henrik Kauffmann in Chapter 3, a minister who signed a treaty without orders, was charged with treason by his own government, and was right. The Major has said nothing, which in his case is approval.

Mr Arthur Stobbs, Clerk of Works, was told about Camp Century, a nuclear reactor installed under the ice without the explicit permission of the owner. He asked whether the owner had a lawn. He has not been told about Project Iceworm, and the Department would be grateful if nobody did.

Mrs Enid Partridge of the Senior Common Room was asked whether her ruling of the previous evening, that a thing you pay rent on is not yours, applied to a thing you pay no rent on. She said that it did, and that in that case it was not yours either, but at least it was cheap.

Gerald was not consulted. Project Iceworm was under the ice from 1959 to 1967 and nobody was told; Gerald has been under the workshop since 1998 on the same terms.

Statement on nomenclature. 'The Agreement' means the treaty signed at New York on 22 September 2026. 'The 1951 Agreement' means the Agreement concerning the Defence of Greenland signed at Copenhagen on 27 April 1951. 'Igaliku' means the amendment of 6 August 2004. 'Pituffik' means the base called Thule until 2023. 'The other deal' means the Chagos Agreement of 22 May 2025, examined in the College's paper of the previous evening. 'The Danish method' means keeping the freehold.

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NOMENCLATURE

Symbol	Meaning
Block grant	Denmark's annual transfer to Greenland: DKK 5.4 billion a year on average, 2019 to 2023
BMEWS	The Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, of which Pituffik is one station
Defence Area	A place in Greenland where the United States runs a base by mutual agreement. In 2004 there was one
Freehold	Ownership. In this paper, sovereignty, which is the same thing with a flag
Golden Dome	The President's proposed missile shield: \$175 billion, \$1.2 trillion or \$3.6 trillion, by estimator. Pituffik is in it
Igaliku	A village in south Greenland where the 1951 Agreement was amended in 2004
Permanent Committee	The consultation body of the 1991 memorandum, to which every disagreement is sent first
Pituffik	The base: 150 service members, one radar, the world's northernmost deep-water port
Rent	What a tenant pays a landlord. In Greenland, nothing; on Diego Garcia, £101 million a year, proposed
The Cupboard	The South Atlantic Map Cupboard. Greenland is in the Atlantic, and has been filed accordingly
The Danish method	Keep the freehold; grant the guest everything; charge nothing; take the credit quietly
The going rate	What a base costs its guest, established on 22 September 2026 as nil

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The question as put

The reader's question was short: is the Greenland Agreement mainly bravado again, and not very different from what 1951 already gave? The Department has taken it literally, as the Bursar's department takes everything, and has read the two treaties side by side, article by article, with the 2004 amendment between them. The answer is in Chapter 5 and is not quite yes.

1.2 Why this Department

The Department of Applied Economics, Creative Accountancy and the Bursar's Nerves was founded to check Domesday's arithmetic and reconstituted when the Bursar heard the word 'IMF' on the wireless. It concerns itself with the difference between what passes through a country and what stays. A base is a thing that passes through: the troops, the money, the aircraft. The island stays. The Department's question is not whether the President got what he said he got, which is a question for the Department of Strategic Geography, but what it cost, who paid, and whether the same sum, applied to another island, would have bought the same thing. The Chagos paper found that Britain proposes to pay £101 million a year, £34.7 billion in projected cash over ninety-nine years, for a base it already has.[5] On the same Tuesday the United States obtained a base it already had for no rent at all. The Department wished to know why the two prices differ by the whole of one of them.

1.3 Method

Chapter 2 is the island and the base. Chapter 3 is the history, from a treaty signed without authority in 1941 to a threat of tariffs in January 2026. Chapter 4 reads the Agreement. Chapter 5 sets the claim against the text. Chapter 6 is what is actually new, which matters. Chapter 7 is the other deal. Chapter 8 is the Department's trial, which is fiction and says so. Distances are great-circle miles, Appendix A.

College hypothesis. The going rate for a base is what the host can be persuaded to charge. The Department expects to find that Denmark charged nothing and kept everything, and that Britain proposes to pay a great deal and keep nothing, and that these are the same base, viewed from opposite ends.

2 THE ISLAND, AND THE BASE

2.1 The island

Greenland is the largest island in the world and has 56,831 people, which is a small town spread over a continent's worth of ice.[6] It has been self-governing within the Kingdom of Denmark since 21 June 2009; Denmark keeps foreign affairs and defence, and sends a block grant that averaged 5.4 billion kroner a year between 2019 and 2023, more than a fifth of the island's product and, Bruegel says, more than half of its public-sector income.[6,7] The procedure for independence is written into the Self-Government Act, and independence was the chief issue of the election of 11 March 2025, after which Jens-Frederik Nielsen of the Democrats became Prime Minister.[8] Nuuk, the capital, is 2,196 miles from Copenhagen and 2,028 from Washington, which is the geographical fact at the bottom of everything that follows. Miss Catchpole, asked which ocean, said the Atlantic, filed it there, and recorded the date, since it had not happened before.

2.2 The base

The United States has one base in Greenland: Pituffik, called Thule until 2023, on the north-west coast, 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle and 931 from the Pole.[9] It hosts a radar of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, which watches for missiles coming over the top of the world, and the northernmost deep-water port on earth. About 150 American service members are stationed there, down from some 6,000 in the Cold War; Politico puts the American presence in Greenland at more than 10,000 at its height.[9,10] Figure 2.1 shows why the base is where it is: Washington and Moscow are nearly equidistant from it. Major MacTavish, shown the numbers, observed that 150 men, one radar and a harbour is a rifle, a brew and not moving, with the brew delivered by sea, and that the position has been held for seventy-five years without anybody once being asked to move.

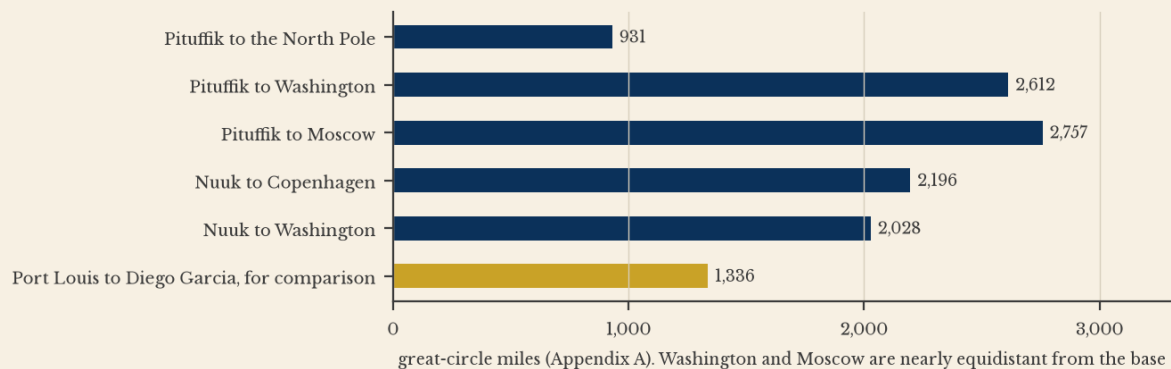


Figure 2.1: Why Pituffik. Great-circle miles, Appendix A. Port Louis to Diego Garcia is shown for comparison with the other deal.

2.3 The other two places

The Agreement names two further sites. Narsarsuaq, in the south, was built by the United States Army in 1941 as Blue West One, hosted Catalinas and Mitchells hunting submarines, was shared under the 1951 Agreement, and was left by the Air Force in November 1958; it is now the civil airport.[11] Mestersvig, on the north-east coast, is a military outpost beside a closed lead and zinc mine, used by the Sirius dog-sled patrol, which is the Danish Army's means of asserting sovereignty over a coastline nobody else wants to walk.[12] The Department notes that the two new defence areas are an airfield the Americans left in 1958 and a kennel. Mr Stobbs has asked for the patrol's terms of employment, on the ground that he too asserts sovereignty over a surface by walking on it, and has never been offered a dog.

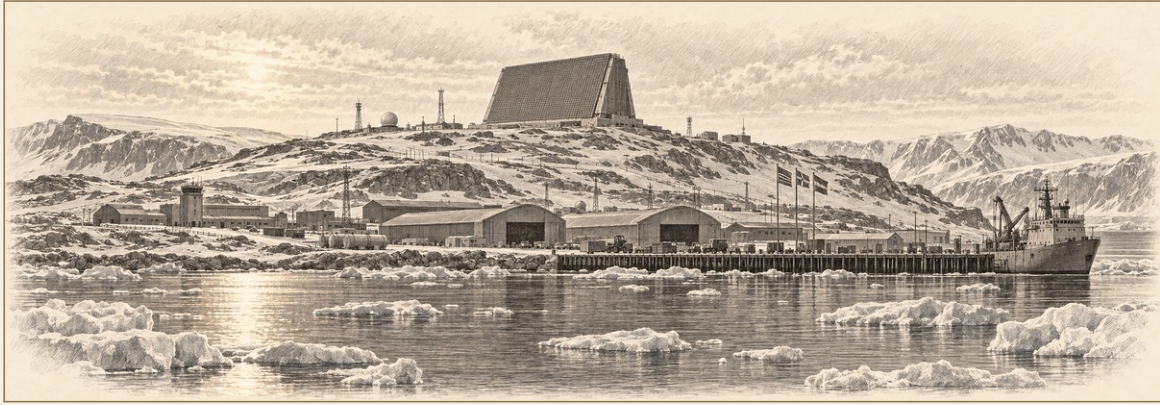


Figure 2.2: Pituffik Space Base from the fjord. The Department's reconstruction. The radar is the large one. The flags are three, since 2004.

Finding. Greenland is a small population on a large island in exactly the wrong place for anybody who wishes to be ignored. The base has 150 people and one radar. The two new sites are an old airfield and a dog patrol. None of this is a criticism; it is what the island is for.

3 EIGHTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE SAME ARRANGEMENT

3.1 A treaty signed without orders

On 9 April 1941, a year to the day after Germany occupied Denmark, the Danish minister in Washington, Henrik Kauffmann, signed 'in the Name of the King' an agreement letting the United States defend Greenland and build what it needed there. He had no authority to do so. The government in occupied Copenhagen charged him with high treason and stripped him of his rank; the United States went on recognising him as Denmark's minister; and in May 1945, a fortnight after liberation, both chambers of the Danish parliament approved what he had signed, and the King after them.[13,14] Denmark then waived any payment for the wartime use of the bases.[14] The Department records this as the founding transaction of the whole arrangement: a Dane gave the Americans Greenland's defence for nothing, without asking, and was right.

3.2 The offer, and the treaty

In 1946 the United States offered Denmark a hundred million dollars in gold for the island, in secret, and was declined.[15] The Bursar asked what Denmark had said, in Danish, and was told 'nej'. He regards it as the best-value word in the paper. In 1951, two years into NATO, the two governments signed the Agreement that still governs. Its terms are set out in Table 3.1 from the text itself.[16] The Department draws attention to three of them. Bases were to be established wherever 'the two Governments ... may from time to time agree', and there was no limit on their number. American aircraft could 'fly over and land in any territory in Greenland', and American ships, forces and vehicles could move between bases 'by land, air and sea', free of pilotage and harbour dues. And the Agreement was to last 'for the duration of the North Atlantic Treaty', which in 1951 was expected to be a long time, and has been.

Article	What the 1951 Agreement gave	Still there in 2026?
II	Defence areas wherever the two governments agree; no limit on number; the American commander runs them	Yes, with two named
II(1)	Both flags fly over every defence area (three, since 2004)	Yes
II(3)(b)	'Without prejudice to the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark'	Yes, in the preamble
V(3)	Fly over and land anywhere; move between bases by land, sea and air; no pilotage or harbour dues	Yes, restated, plus undersea
XI	American property stays American; may be removed or disposed of; sites need not be restored	Yes
XIII	Questions of interpretation go to the Foreign Minister and the Ambassador	Yes, via the Permanent Committee
XIV	'For the duration of the North Atlantic Treaty'	No: now no end date
(none)	Rent	None then, none now

Table 3.1: What 1951 gave. Source: the text of the Agreement, reference 16.

3.3 What was done under it without asking

The Agreement was generous and the Americans found its edges. From 1959 to 1967 the Army built Camp Century, twenty-one tunnels under the ice 130 miles from Thule, powered by a nuclear reactor, and began it 'without explicit permission from the government of Denmark'; it was the preliminary camp for Project Iceworm, a scheme to hide missiles under the ice sheet, which was never fielded and never mentioned to Denmark, and was declassified in 1996.[17] On 21 January 1968 a B-52 carrying four thermonuclear bombs crashed on the ice near Thule; the high explosive in the bombs went off and spread their contents over the bay. Denmark had declared in 1957 that no nuclear weapons would be kept on its soil in peacetime; in 1995 it emerged that its Prime Minister had, in effect, told the Americans he would not ask.[18]

The Department reports this because it is the history of the arrangement and because it bears on the reader's question. What the United States has done in Greenland since 1951 has not been limited by the text of the treaty. It has been limited by what the Danes found out, and when. The 2004 amendment at Igaliku, signed by Colin Powell, the Danish foreign minister and Greenland's deputy premier, was the correction: Thule became the only defence area, Greenland's flag went up beside the other two, Greenland got a representative at the base, and the Americans undertook to consult before 'any significant changes' to their operations or facilities.[19] Mr Stobbs, told of the reactor under the ice, asked whether the owner had a lawn. Project Iceworm was under the ice for eight years and nobody was told. Gerald has been under the workshop since 1998 on the same terms, and the Department has decided, on the Danish precedent, not to ask what he is building.



Figure 3.1: Washington, 9 April 1941. The Department's reconstruction. The minister signs. The instruction not to has not arrived, and would not have been followed.

Date	Event	Rent
9 April 1941	Kauffmann signs 'in the Name of the King', without orders; charged with high treason	None
May 1945	The Danish parliament and the King approve what he signed; remuneration waived	None
1946	The United States offers \$100 million in gold for the island; declined	n/a
27 April 1951	The Defence Agreement: bases by mutual agreement, overflight, movement, no end but NATO's	None
1959 to 1967	Camp Century: a reactor under the ice, begun without explicit permission; Iceworm unmentioned	None
21 January 1968	A B-52 with four bombs crashes near Thule; the 1957 no-nuclear policy, it emerges in 1995, waived	None

Date	Event	Rent
6 August 2004	Igaliku: Thule the only defence area; three flags; Greenland at the table	None
2019	The first offer to buy; Copenhagen: 'absurd'	n/a
January 2026	Tariffs threatened, force not ruled out; both ruled out at Davos on the 21st	n/a
22 September 2026	The New York Agreement: permanent; two new sites; sovereignty reaffirmed	None

Table 3.2: *Eighty-five years of the same arrangement. Sources: references 2, 3, 13 to 19 and 21.*

3.4 The crisis

In 2019 the President proposed to buy the island and the Danish Prime Minister called the idea 'absurd'.^[15] In January 2026 he proposed it again, declined to rule out force, threatened a 25 per cent tariff on several European countries until Denmark ceded the territory, and on 20 January cited Britain's Chagos deal as evidence of the weakness that made the acquisition necessary.^[21,22] On 21 January, at Davos, he ruled out force and tariffs, and a framework was discussed with NATO officials that Politico, the next day, called 'old wine in a new bottle': a 1951 treaty 'already covers much of what a potential agreement on the island would include'.^[10] Eight months later, on 22 September, the wine was bottled. Professor Fortescue observes that a threat to tax one's own citizens' shopping until a second country hands over a third country's island is the first proposal in his experience to fail the Calais test in every direction at once.

Finding. Since 1941 the United States has had the defence of Greenland for nothing, from a minister who was not allowed to give it. Since 1951 it has had bases by agreement, the sky, the sea and no rent. What it did not have it took under the ice and did not mention. The 2004 amendment put the Greenlanders at the table. The 2026 crisis was about buying what the tenant already occupied.

4 THE AGREEMENT OF 22 SEPTEMBER, READ

4.1 The text

The Agreement is twelve articles and a preamble, done in triplicate in English, Danish and Greenlandic, English prevailing.[1] Its preamble reaffirms 'the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Denmark', recognises 'that the People of Greenland constitute a people pursuant to international law with the right to self-determination', notes the independence procedure in the Self-Government Act, and records 'the United States' indispensable historical and ongoing contributions ... including significant sacrifices and billions of dollars spent over the better part of a century', which the Department reads as the tenant's account of the rent it has paid in kind. Miss Catchpole holds the Agreement in its three languages and observes that it is the first treaty in the Cupboard to say which of its own copies is right, a practice she has recommended to the College's minute-takers without success. Table 4.1 sets each operative article against 1951.

Article	What it says	Against 1951
I	Objectives: expeditious measures to defend the treaty area, Greenland and the American continent, respecting Greenlandic society	Restated
II	Stronger NATO engagement in the Arctic	New words, no obligation
IV(i)	Pituffik may be modernised and expanded	Already possible within a defence area
IV(ii)	New defence areas at Narsarsuaq and Mestersvig, details to be agreed	Two named; the mechanism is Article II of 1951
IV(iii)	Further areas: either Party proposes; the Permanent Committee decides 'based on mutual agreement'; if none in 90 days, deputy ministers, then ministers	Mutual agreement, as in 1951, with a clock
IV(iv)	Contracts for the bases to Greenlandic firms 'to the maximum extent possible'	New, and it costs the guest
V	Unmanned installations outside defence areas, on an accelerated approval procedure	New; still an approval
VI	Free access and movement between bases by land, air and sea; fly over and land anywhere; undersea access to territorial waters	Article V(3) of 1951, plus submarines
VII	The vicinity of a base not to be used to threaten it; a right to raise concerns about buildings; counter-espionage together	New, and modest
VIII	Denmark to keep strengthening its Arctic posture	A promise by the host
IX	No non-NATO state may have a base or a persistent military presence, unless the Parties agree	Implicit before; explicit now
X	No control, significant influence or sensitive access in sensitive sectors for states or investors from outside NATO, its partners and the EU	New: investment screening
XI	No end date; amendable only by mutual consent; Denmark and Greenland undertake to ensure that an independent Greenland stays in NATO and assumes the obligations	New: 1951 lasted 'for the duration of the North Atlantic Treaty'
XII	In force on a diplomatic note after Danish and Greenlandic parliamentary procedures	Not yet in force

Table 4.1: The Agreement of 22 September 2026, article by article, against the Agreement of 1951. Sources: references 1 and 16.

4.2 The price

There is no rent, and no payment of any kind to the host. The President said the deal came at 'no cost to the United States', [2] which is true of the paper and not of the concrete: the new sites will cost the guest what building in the Arctic costs, and a runway at Pituffik was already priced at up to \$25 million. [10] The text contains no rent, no grant, no trust fund and no development payment; the only money it directs flows the other way, in Article IV(iv), which gives the construction contracts to Greenlandic firms 'to the maximum extent possible'. Denmark waived payment in 1945 and has never asked since. The Department sets this beside the other arrangements it knows of in Figure 4.1. France pays Djibouti about 85 million euros a year. The United States pays Britain nothing for Diego Garcia, where 'the required sites will be made available ... without charge'. [5] And Britain proposes to pay Mauritius £101 million a year, on average, for ninety-nine years, to be allowed to go on hosting the Americans for nothing.

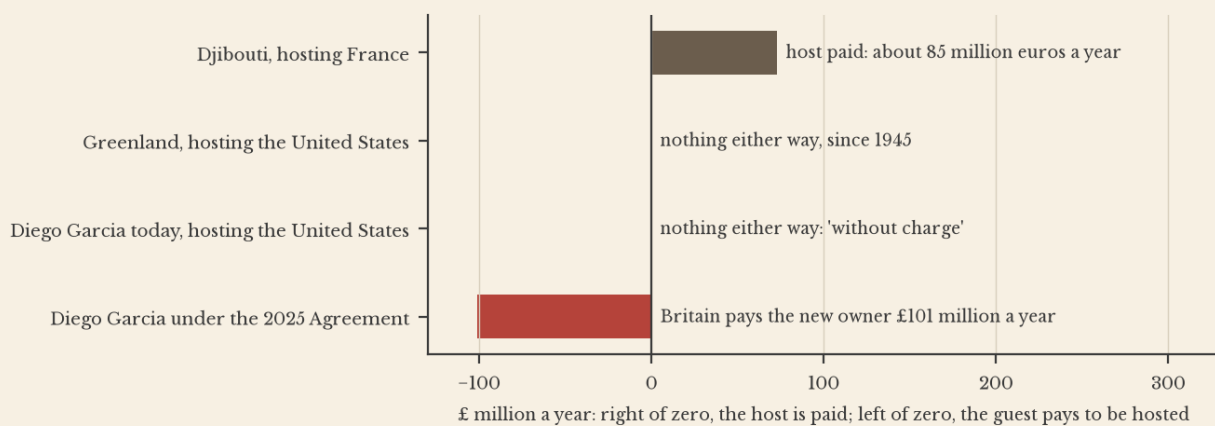


Figure 4.1: Who pays whom for a base. Positive when the host is paid; negative when the guest pays to be hosted. Sources: references 5, 12, 14 and 15 of the Chagos paper, and this Agreement.

The Bursar has examined Figure 4.1 with care and observes that of the four rows, one is a landlord being paid, two are neighbours lending each other a field, and one is a man paying a stranger to be allowed to lend his own field to a friend. He has asked which of the four the College would be, and been told the second. He has initialled it.

Finding. The Agreement restates 1951, names two places, adds a screening regime and takes away the end date. It charges the United States no rent and pays Denmark nothing; what the guest builds it pays for, as guests do, and the contracts go to Greenlandic firms to the maximum extent possible. The going rate for a base, established in New York on a Tuesday morning, is nil.

5 THE CLAIM, AND THE TEXT

5.1 What was said

The President, at the United Nations: the deal gives the United States 'permanent control over security and all other needs on that territory', and 'no U.S. adversary will ever be permitted to establish a military presence in Greenland any more, or make sensitive investments there without our express written approval'.[3] On the Friday before: the United States would 'immediately begin the process of developing a large military presence in the appropriate part of Greenland, of which there are many', under 'an infinite life agreement, there is no end'.[3] A State Department official, to the BBC: the United States 'has unilateral power to build additional military structures with no approval needed from Greenland or Denmark'.[2] Mrs Partridge, told that the agreement had 'infinite life', said that so has the urn, and that it is on its third element.

5.2 What was signed

The text gives access, basing and overflight, most of which it had; two named sites, to be arranged 'in accordance with modalities and technical details to be mutually agreed'; and, for any further site, a proposal, a consultation in the Permanent Committee 'to decide implementation details based on mutual agreement', and if no agreement in ninety days, an escalation to deputy ministers and then ministers.[1] That is not unilateral power. It is a procedure with a clock, and the clock runs to a meeting. 'Control over all other needs on that territory' appears nowhere; what appears is a reaffirmation of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark, in the second paragraph of the preamble. The written approval for investments is real, in Article X, but it is an approval by 'the Parties', which are three, and is administered by Greenland 'in close cooperation with the authorities of the Kingdom of Denmark'.[1]

5.3 What the experts said

Ole Wæver of Copenhagen: 'the new deal is indeed very close to the 1951 treaty'.[3] Torrey Taussig of the Atlantic Council: the 1951 agreement 'already gave the United States relatively unfettered military access to Greenland'; the deal is 'a significant feat for Danish diplomacy'.[3] Jim Townsend, formerly of the Pentagon: 'a lot of it is old wine in a new bottle ... it's not something that we're getting uniquely free from Greenland'.[10] Jacob Funk Kirkegaard of Bruegel: the Agreement 'entrenches the status quo' and is 'a significant accomplishment for Danish and Greenlandic diplomacy'.[7] President Macron: 'Danish sovereignty is respected ... this is what we were asking for'.[2] Berlingske: 'Don't tell Trump that it's the Kingdom of Denmark that has won'.[2] Politiken: 'Trump didn't get Greenland, but he was allowed to take a victory lap on social media'.[2]

The Department, which reads the Danish papers as it reads the Bursar's card, for the note in the margin, concludes that the reader's question has the answer he expected. Professor Widowson-Bligh, asked for the difference between the American rights on 21 September and on the 23rd, said that it is a small number, that it is not zero, and that the Department should say which. Chapter 6 says which.

Finding. Mostly bravado. The text gives what 1951 gave, by the same procedure, with a clock on the consultation and a preamble that hands sovereignty back to Denmark in writing. The Danish press wrote the finding first and asked that the President not be told.

6 WHAT IS ACTUALLY NEW, AND WHY IT MATTERS

6.1 Eternity

The 1951 Agreement lasted for the duration of the North Atlantic Treaty. Wæver puts the consequence plainly: it 'contained the possibility that either NATO disappears, or Greenland or Denmark leave, and the agreement ends'.^[3] The new one has no end date, may be amended only by mutual consent, and in Article XI provides that if Greenland becomes independent, Denmark and Greenland 'shall together ensure' that the new state stays in NATO, applying to join if necessary, and 'affirmatively assume, as from the date of independence, all of the rights and obligations of the Kingdom of Denmark'.^[1] Bruegel's reading is that this 'binds a possible future independent Greenland to hosting US military bases', 'greatly narrows the political options' of such a state, and 'effectively undermine[s] at least part of the political and economic case for Greenlandic independence'.^[7] The irony Bruegel draws is that the President's demand to own the island has 'solidified the political and fiscal union between Denmark and Greenland'.^[7] Mr Stobbs, asked whether the College has any agreement with no end date, named the one with the Parish about the ha-ha, which nobody has read since 1790 and both sides keep, on the ground that neither can find its copy.

The Department adds the arithmetic. More than half of Greenland's public income is the block grant.^[7] An independent Greenland would lose it and inherit, on the day, a permanent American base arrangement it could neither charge for nor end. The Bursar, shown this, said that it was the first independence prospectus he had read in which the assets were transferred before the liabilities, and asked who had drafted it.

6.2 The screen

Article X bars 'control', 'significant influence' or sensitive access in 'Particularly Sensitive Sectors or Activities', which include critical infrastructure and mineral extraction, for states or investors from outside NATO, NATO's partners and the European Union, unless the Parties agree.^[1] It is aimed at China and Russia and it is new in a treaty, though Denmark had already seen off a Chinese airport bid in 2019 without one.^[3] Bruegel notes the gap: NATO's partner list runs to more than thirty countries, some of them not democracies, so Denmark and Greenland will still be policing investment themselves.^[7] The Department notes the other gap, which is that the screen is administered by the host, in cooperation with the host's sovereign, which is the opposite of control. The Bursar observes that a screen with thirty partners' worth of holes in it is a colander, that the College has one, and that it is used for what colanders are for, which is letting most things through while looking like an instrument.

6.3 The people, named

The Agreement recognises the People of Greenland 'as a people pursuant to international law with the right to self-determination', notes their independence procedure, and undertakes that American rights be exercised 'in a manner that respects the Greenlandic society and the Greenlandic way of life, including hunting, fishing, and other traditional, cultural, historical, and other future activities'.^[1] The Department has read a great many treaties in the last two days and this is the first in which the people who live on the island are named in the text as a party to the arrangement with a signature at the bottom. The Prime Minister of Greenland signed it. The Chagossians have never been asked to sign anything. Not all Greenlanders are content: the MP Naaja Nathanielsen called it 'news we have all been hoping for' but 'absolutely crucial that any agreement preserves our right to self-determination', and the former politician Aaja Chemnitz said 'I don't have much confidence in Trump'.^[2] The Department reports both and notes that they were able to say so at the table, which is the difference.

6.4 The Dome

The Agreement's preamble names one purpose the 1951 text could not: 'establishment of a Golden Dome defense system'.^[1] The Golden Dome is the President's proposed shield against ballistic, hypersonic and cruise missiles, ordered by executive order on 27 January 2025 under the name Iron Dome for America, and planned as a constellation of thousands of satellites carrying sensors and interceptors, the first American weapons in orbit.^[20] Its cost is estimated at \$175 billion by the White House, \$1.2 trillion by the Congressional Budget Office and \$3.6 trillion by the American Enterprise Institute, a range of twenty to one, which the Department notes with respect, having spent the previous evening on a range of ten.^[20] Congress has so far provided \$24.4 billion and \$13 billion.^[20] On 14 January 2026 the President said the United States needed control of Greenland to build it, and analysts explained why: Pituffik is 'one of the few defensible places on Earth that can directly communicate with all planes in the constellation', and sovereignty would 'eliminate political constraints' on its use.^[20]

The Department observes that the Agreement supplies exactly this, without the sovereignty. Pituffik may be 'modernised and expanded'; unmanned installations may be placed outside the defence areas on an accelerated procedure; and the Dome is named in the preamble as a shared interest of all three Parties.^[1] The base already operated for the purpose 'with Denmark's consent'.^[20] So the one thing the annexation was said to be for has been obtained by treaty, for nothing, from a host who kept the freehold. The Bursar has asked whether the College's boiler-house roof might be declared vital to a shield of some kind, on the ground that it would then be repaired by somebody else, for nothing, for ever.

Finding. The small number is not zero. What is new is eternity, an independence clause that makes independence dearer, and a screen the host runs. The first two are the real price of the deal, and Denmark paid them in the future, which is where a Treasury likes its liabilities. The people are in the text. That is new too, and the College would not have it otherwise. And the thing the island was to be bought for, a ground station for the Dome, came by treaty, for nothing.

7 THE SAME TUESDAY, THE OTHER DEAL

7.1 Two deals

The Chagos paper was finished on the evening of the 22nd and this one was commissioned the same night, because the Bursar noticed that the two were about the same thing and had come out with opposite signs. Table 7.1 puts them side by side. The Department has been careful: the Greenland Agreement is between a host and a guest; the Chagos Agreement is between a host and a third party who is to become the new host. They are not the same transaction. That is the finding.

	Greenland, 22 September 2026	Chagos, 22 May 2025
Sovereignty	Stays with the Kingdom of Denmark; reaffirmed in the preamble	Transferred to Mauritius
The guest	The United States, since 1941	The United States, since 1966; Britain as lessee
Who pays whom	Nobody; contracts to Greenlandic firms	Britain pays Mauritius £101 million a year, on average
The total	Nil	£3.4 billion, £10 billion or £34.7 billion, by method
Term	No end date	99 years, plus 40 on agreement
The people	Named as a people; their Prime Minister signed	Not asked; excluded from Diego Garcia
If the host changes	An independent Greenland assumes everything	Mauritius may end it on two grounds
The guest's claim	'Permanent control'	'Secures the base'
Who won, per the press	Denmark ('don't tell Trump')	Mauritius
The Bursar's view	Approved without reservation	Initialled three times, under protest

Table 7.1: Two deals. Sources: reference 1; the Chagos paper, reference 5, and its references.

7.2 The Danish method

The Danish method, as the Department has named it, is four steps. Keep the freehold and say so in the preamble. Grant the guest everything the guest already has, in writing, and add eternity, which costs nothing today. Charge nothing, and secure the contracts for your own people. Let the guest announce permanent control, and tell your own newspapers not to correct him. Denmark did all four in nine months from a threat of tariffs, and the Danish press called it a victory.

The British method, on the evidence of Chagos, is the reverse. Give the freehold to a third party on the strength of an advisory opinion. Rent it back for ninety-nine years at £101 million a year, £34.7 billion in projected cash. Announce that the base is secured. Be told by the guest, in front of the cameras, that the deal is terrible. Mrs Partridge's ruling of the previous evening, that a thing you pay rent on is not yours, was put to her again with the Greenland text, and she added that a thing you pay no rent on is not yours either, but at least it is cheap. The Department has adopted this as the finding of the chapter.

Britain has a base on an island it owns, a guest who pays nothing and would like to stay, and a claimant 1,336 miles away with an advisory opinion.[5] Denmark had a base on an island it owns, a guest who paid nothing and threatened to take the island by tariff, and a claimant who was the guest. Denmark's problem was harder and its answer was cheaper. The Department has drafted the Danish method for Diego Garcia in Appendix C. It runs to two pages and contains no rent.

Finding. The two deals are the same base seen from opposite ends. The host who kept the freehold paid nothing and was called a loser by nobody but the guest, who called himself the winner. The host who proposes to give the freehold away will pay £101 million a year, £34.7 billion in projected cash, and has been called a loser by the guest. The Danish method is available to Britain and costs the same as the 1951 Agreement cost Denmark.

8 THE DEPARTMENT'S TRIAL

8.1 Method

This chapter is fiction, as is the College. The Department reasoned that an arrangement which has kept the peace between a small landlord and a large guest for eighty-five years ought to work at the College's scale, and invited applications. The Trebuchet Research Group of the Department of Civil, Siege and Unnecessarily Robust Engineering applied, as it applies for everything, for a 'defence area' on the water meadow below the boating lake, for the siting of the Trebuchet, which Estates has refused since 1643.

8.2 The Agreement of the Water Meadow

The Department drafted it on the 1951 pattern. Sovereignty over the meadow remains with Estates, which is Mr Stobbs, and is reaffirmed in the preamble. The Group may establish such defence areas on the meadow as the two parties 'may from time to time agree to be necessary', which is none. The flags of both fly over any such area; the Group has a flag, and Estates has a rake. The Group enjoys free access to and movement between its defence areas by land and, across the lake, by water, and may fly over and land anywhere in the meadow, which the Trebuchet already does. Any proposal for a new area goes to a Permanent Committee, which is Mr Stobbs and Mrs Partridge; if no agreement in ninety days, it escalates to the Bursar and then the Vice-Chancellor, who has an appeal before him already, about a trench. No group that is not a department of the College may establish a persistent presence on the meadow, which excludes the Parish. No rent is payable. The Agreement has no end date and binds the Group's successors.

8.3 Results

The Group signed at once, on the ground that it had been given permanent control over the meadow. Mr Stobbs signed, on the ground that it had been given nothing it did not have, that the Trebuchet was no nearer the meadow than it had been in 1643, and that any proposal to move it would come to him first and stay there for ninety days, after which it would go to the Bursar, who does not read proposals after lunch. The Bursar signed because nobody paid anybody. The Group has issued a statement announcing 'an infinite life agreement, there is no end'. Estates has asked the College newsletter not to correct it.

Element	The 1951 pattern	The water meadow
Freehold	The Kingdom of Denmark, reaffirmed	Estates, reaffirmed; Mr Stobbs has the rake
New areas	'As the two Governments may from time to time agree'	As Estates may from time to time agree: none
Access	Land, sea and air; overflight anywhere	Land and lake; the Trebuchet already overflies
Disputes	The Permanent Committee, 90 days, then ministers	Stobbs and Partridge, 90 days, then the Bursar, who does not read after lunch
Third parties	No non-NATO base	No Parish
Rent	None	None
End date	None	None
What the guest announced	'Permanent control'	'Permanent control'
What changed	A small number, not zero	Nothing; the Trebuchet is where it was

Table 8.1: The Department's trial. Declared fiction. Signed in triplicate; the Group's copy is in the Cupboard, under the Atlantic, correctly.



Figure 8.1: The water meadow, with the defence area marked. The Department's reconstruction. The Trebuchet is not in it, which is the point of the agreement.

Departmental observation. An agreement that gives the guest everything he already has, in writing and for ever, at no cost, and lets him announce it, is a very good agreement for the landlord. The College has one with the Trebuchet Research Group and the Trebuchet has not moved.

9 CONCLUSIONS

The Department was asked whether the Greenland Agreement is mainly bravado and not very different from what 1951 already gave. It finds as follows.

- Mostly bravado. The 1951 Agreement already gave bases by mutual agreement without limit, overflight and landing anywhere, movement by land, sea and air, as many troops as wanted, and no rent. The 2026 Agreement restates it by the same procedure, adds a clock to the consultation, and reaffirms Danish sovereignty in writing.
- Not entirely. What is new is permanence: no end date, and an undertaking by Denmark and Greenland to ensure that an independent Greenland stays in NATO and assumes the obligations, which makes independence dearer and, as Bruegel says, solidifies the union the President set out to break. Also new: a screen on investment from outside the alliance, run by the host; a right to object to buildings near a base; and two named sites, an airfield left in 1958 and a dog patrol.
- 'Permanent control over all other needs on that territory' is not in the text. 'Unilateral power to build ... no approval needed' is contradicted by Article IV(iii). The Danish press wrote the finding and asked that the President not be told.
- The price to the host was nothing: no rent, no purchase, no payment. The guest pays for what it builds, and the contracts go to Greenlandic firms so far as possible. Denmark waived payment in 1945 and has never asked since; the going rate for a base is nil.
- The people of Greenland are named in the text as a people with the right to self-determination, and their Prime Minister signed. On the same Tuesday, in the same building, the President called Britain's arrangement for Diego Garcia, which transfers the freehold, pays £101 million a year and asks nobody, terrible.
- The Danish method, keep the freehold, grant everything, charge nothing, let the guest take the credit, is available to Britain, is drafted in Appendix C, and costs what it cost Denmark.

Mrs Partridge's ruling. A thing you pay no rent on is not yours either, but at least it is cheap.

The Bursar's ruling. Approved. Nobody pays anybody. Do not make a habit of it.

Principal finding. Denmark gave the United States, in writing and for ever, what it had given in 1951, kept the freehold, paid nothing, put the Greenlanders' names in the treaty and let the guest call it control. Britain proposes to give the freehold of Diego Garcia to a third party, pay £101 million a year for a lease, ask nobody, and be told by the same guest that it is terrible. The base is the same base. The difference is who kept the keys, and the going rate, established on Tuesday, is nil.

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APPENDIX A - SAMPLE CALCULATIONS

A.1 Distances

Great-circle distances on a sphere of radius 3,958.8 miles, by the haversine formula. Positions: Pituffik 76.531 N, 68.703 W; Nuuk 64.181 N, 51.694 W; Copenhagen 55.676 N, 12.568 E; Washington 38.907 N, 77.037 W; Moscow 55.756 N, 37.617 E; the Pole 90 N; Narsarsuaq 61.161 N, 45.426 W; Mestersvig 72.237 N, 23.932 W; Port Louis 20.161 S, 57.501 E; Diego Garcia 7.320 S, 72.423 E.

Pituffik to the Pole 931 miles (Wikipedia gives 947, by a different route); to Washington 2,612; to Moscow 2,757. Nuuk to Copenhagen 2,196; to Washington 2,028. Pituffik to Narsarsuaq 1,191; to Mestersvig 858. Port Louis to Diego Garcia 1,336.

A.2 The going rate

Greenland: rent 0. Diego Garcia today: rent 0 ('without charge'). Diego Garcia under the Chagos Agreement: £101 million a year on average, £34.7 billion nominal, £3.4 billion at net present value. Djibouti: 85 million euros a year, about £73 million at 0.86. Difference between the two Tuesday deals: £34.7 billion minus 0 = £34.7 billion, or £3.4 billion by the Treasury's method. The Bursar notes that the ratio is undefined.

A.3 The block grant

DKK 5.4 billion at about 8.6 kroner to the pound is about £630 million a year, for 56,831 people: about £11,000 a head. The Bursar has asked whether the College might be adopted.

A.4 The troops

6,000 at Thule in the Cold War to 150 in 2025: a reduction of 97.5 per cent. The rights under the treaty over the same period: unchanged. The Department notes that the rights are not the troops.

APPENDIX B - THE BURSAR'S CARD

Item	Figure	The Bursar's note
Greenland, 1946, offered	\$100 million in gold	Declined. Correctly
Greenland, 1951 to 2026, rent	Nil	Approved
Greenland, 22 September 2026, price	'No cost to the United States'	And none to Denmark. Approved
Contracts under Article IV(iv)	To Greenlandic firms	The only money in it, and it goes to the landlord's people. Approved
The block grant	DKK 5.4 billion a year	About £11,000 a head. Enquire about adoption
Diego Garcia, rent today	Nil	Approved
Diego Garcia, rent proposed	£101 million a year, £34.7 billion nominal	Initialled three times last night. Still under protest
The Golden Dome	\$175 billion, \$1.2 trillion or \$3.6 trillion	Twenty to one. I had thought ten was the limit
Access to Pituffik for the Dome	Nil, by treaty	The thing the island was to be bought for. Approved
The water meadow	Nil	Approved. The Trebuchet has not moved
Habit	Not to be made	Initialled

Table B.1: The Bursar's card. Figures from references 1, 5, 6, 15 and 16. He has approved six lines, which is a record.

APPENDIX C - THE DANISH METHOD FOR DIEGO GARCIA

This appendix is fiction. It is the Department's draft of an agreement on the 1951 pattern, offered to the Foreign Office free of charge, which is the point.

Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of the United States of America concerning the Defence of Diego Garcia. The Parties, reaffirming the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Kingdom over the British Indian Ocean Territory; recognising that the Chagossian people constitute a people with the right to self-determination, and that they shall be asked; recalling sixty years of cooperation and the exchange of notes of 1966; agree as follows.

I. The United States may establish and operate such defence areas on Diego Garcia as the two Governments may from time to time agree to be necessary. The flags of both shall fly. **II.** Without prejudice to the sovereignty of the United Kingdom, the United States may within such areas construct, operate, station, supply and secure as it requires. **III.** United States aircraft may fly over and land in the Territory, and its vessels move within the territorial waters, without restriction except as mutually agreed. **IV.** No state that is not a member of NATO shall establish a military installation or a persistent presence in the Territory. **V.** No rent is payable by either Party to the other, or by either Party to anybody else. **VI.** Contracts for the establishment and maintenance of the defence areas shall be awarded to Chagossian sources to the maximum extent possible. **VII.** Disputes go to a Permanent Committee; failing agreement in ninety days, to ministers. **VIII.** This Agreement has no end date and may be amended only by mutual consent. **IX.** Done in duplicate, in English, at Upper Piddlington, on a Tuesday.

The Department observes that the draft gives the United States nothing it lacks, gives Mauritius nothing at all, gives the Chagossians a question and the contracts, and gives the Treasury the £101 million a year, £34.7 billion in projected cash, it would otherwise have spent. It is aware that the draft does not answer the advisory opinion. Neither, it notes, did Denmark answer the President; it wrote a preamble and waited.

APPENDIX D - DEPARTMENTAL NOTE

The Department of Applied Economics, Creative Accountancy and the Bursar's Nerves teaches the BSc in Applied Economics and Creative Accountancy (KE32), of which the first module is What Passes Through and What Stays. From Michaelmas 2026 the module will include the two Agreements of 22 September 2026 as a paired set text, with the question: 'Two hosts, one guest, one Tuesday. One paid nothing and kept the island; one proposes to pay £101 million a year for a century and give it away. Identify what passed through and what stayed. Show your working. The Bursar will not read it after lunch.'

The Bursar has approved this paper. The Department has been asked to record that this is not a precedent, and has recorded it, in the Cupboard, under the Atlantic, correctly.

Persevera Etelred