

Canada needs a paradigm shift in approach to the United States

To the Editor,

The relationship between Canada and the United States has always been subject to fluctuations, disagreements, and even conflict. Irish Americans known as Fenians staged cross-border raids after the civil war. A pre-confederation Canada did battle with the United States in the War of 1812. In the modern era conflict has been less military and more trade-based. Irritants such as softwood lumber and Canada's closed dairy market have been issues. There have been disagreements but there have generally been rules-based mechanisms or tribunals to deal with them.

Enter the 2024 election of a new American President. Canadians have had the taste of a tumultuous first term. The erratic nature of a grievance-filled Leader of the Free World was made painfully known.

Canadians have been caught off balance by an aggressive programme of 'economic nationalism' and 'manifest destiny'. The latter refers to the idea that America is ordained to expand and be dominant geographically and politically in the North America.

What has been made obvious is the presence of a President with a distinct lack of morality towards other leaders, nations, and in general. This has been shown by the deliberate denigration of Canadian leadership in an attempt to minimize importance and insult sovereignty. The stated intent to destroy the Canadian economy with the use of 'economic force' [IE tariffs and trade action] to make Canada become the '51st state' is extreme and should alarm and offend Canadians.

These threats and rhetoric demand a rapid shift in understanding, attitude, and approach to the Canada/US relationship; it is necessary to adopt an entirely new paradigm. Canada is NOT dealing with a generally benevolent and amenable America of the past. Americans have elected a President with an isolationist, aggressive, and suspicious attitude toward traditional friends and trading partners. The Man in the Oval Office may be regarded as a non-rational actor and, indeed, overtly hostile to Canada. This is evidenced by an undisguised anger and belief that America has been 'ripped off' by Canada in trade. This apparently justifies a de facto declaration of economic warfare through tariffs and coercion with the goal of crushing Canada economically and bringing it to heel.

This is an understandably difficult concept and mentality for Canadians to get their heads around given that Canada has had a generally amicable relationship with America. It seems counter-intuitive that America would become malevolent toward their neighbours and trading partners to the north.

The main point is this: the morals, values, and methods in Washington D.C. have changed. The Administration has an uncompromising 'blunt instrument' approach to international relations in general and Canada specifically. Their reasoning may not be reality-based in facts [IE Fentanyl is 'pouring' across the border] or may be so distorted as to be outright falsehoods. The fact that the Administration would use these blatant lies to justify crippling economic action is a clear sign of uncaring and malice.

Consequently, Canadians citizens and leadership must make a rapid transition to a new set of assumptions when dealing with the Government of the United States. For the foreseeable future, it must be assumed that the Administration does NOT have Canada's best interests in mind. In fact, it wishes for its reduction, dissolution, and absorption. This is a predatory worldview without morals or consideration.

As much as Canada wishes that this could be dismissed as sinister conspiracy theory 'statements and evidence from the Administration suggest otherwise. The new realities must assume that this version of the United States is NOT a friend of Canada. The President and his cabinet/advisors are NOT attached to respect for historic relations. Words and actions about economic strangulation and taking Canada under the control of America SHOULD be taken seriously. There IS an existential threat to Canada and its sovereignty. Canada is dealing with a highly ideologically-driven US government that is unapologetically out for its own benefit [IE annexation for the purposes of gaining minerals and natural resources] at the cost of others.

It's time to be blunt and honest. Authoritarians only respect strength. The sooner that Canadians and their leadership acknowledge these as the immutable facts the sooner that a more realistic paradigm and approach may be developed to deal with a clearly malicious President and his Administration. ?Elbows Up!? Canada. Stand with your fellow Canadians in opposition to Trumpian annexation. Keep our land glorious and free.

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