

DATA DIVE WITH NIK NANOS

# PREPARED FOR A TRADE WAR

Comfortable majorities of Canadians are game for a wide swath of countermeasures in response to Donald Trump's tariff threats

OPINION

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Donald Trump is the Great Disruptor. Not only is the American President reshaping the Canada-U.S. relationship, he may very well unknowingly impact who will win the next federal election.

Back in 2017 during his first term, Nanos asked people how we should respond to the Trump tariff threat. The first preference of Canadians was to negotiate (49 per cent) followed by retaliating immediately (28 per cent), and then doing anything to avoid escalating (16 per cent). Only 3 per cent thought we should wage a full-on trade war.

Fast forward to our latest tracking on this with The Globe and Mail and CTV News, and opinions have changed drastically in the wake of Mr. Trump's musings around making Canada the 51st state and his threats of tariffs. Currently, a majority of Canadians prefer immediate retaliation (58 per cent, up 30 points since 2017), while only 21 per cent want negotiation.

Comfortable majorities of Canadians are also game for a wide swath of countermeasures in response to the Trump threats. Almost nine of 10 Canadians support (78 per cent) or somewhat support (10 per cent) having provinces remove American beer, wine and liquor from stores. More than eight of 10 support (62 per cent) or somewhat support (21 per cent) putting dollar-for-dollar counter tariffs on U.S. goods entering Canada.

Even the hot topic of using energy exports as a countermeasure has broad support. Three in four Canadians support (51 per cent) or somewhat support (25 per cent) suspending exports of oil, natural gas and electricity to the United States. Of note, two of three residents of the Prairie provinces (66 per cent) are good with using energy to hit back at the Americans.

Although there is latitude to act, Canadians are divided on whether we can realistically fight back. Forty-two per cent think we hold a strong position and can

effectively fight a tariff war with the U.S., while 38 per cent believe we are in a weak position and that a tariff war will seriously damage the Canadian economy.

And it doesn't matter which party leads us into battle: respondents are just as likely to think a Conservative (31 per cent), or a Liberal government (31 per cent) would result in a positive negotiating outcome.

However, asked which politician would do the best job at negotiating with Mr. Trump, the numbers are clearer. Forty per cent of Canadians gave a tip of the hat to

The next election will be decided by a simple question: Who can best manage Canada's relationship with Mr. Trump? Pragmatism may override anger and party loyalty.

Liberal leadership hopeful Mark Carney, while 26 per cent thought Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre would do the best job negotiating with Mr. Trump. Chrystia Freeland, a Liberal leadership candidate and the person who played a key role in the last trade negotiation, was named by 13 per cent as the best negotiator.

With federal politics transfixed on Mr. Trump, Canadians are thinking twice about who should lead the country. On the eve of Justin Trudeau's resignation, Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives had a whopping 26-point advan-

tage over the Trudeau Liberals. Liberals had hemorrhaged support to the Conservatives among young people and women. When Conservative support is at 47 per cent, the reality is that there are many Liberals in the blue column registering both their discontent and anger at a tired government. But in the period after Mr. Trudeau's resignation and Mr. Trump's broadside against Canada, voters have been swinging away from the Conservatives and moving to the leaderless Liberals.

The swing has been striking: Ballot support which was 47-20 favouring the Conservatives before Mr. Trudeau stepped down is now 38-30. The once-projected Conservative supermajority is at risk. An expected federal election that was predicted to be a Liberal car crash may now be a horse race.

What have we learned in the past four weeks?

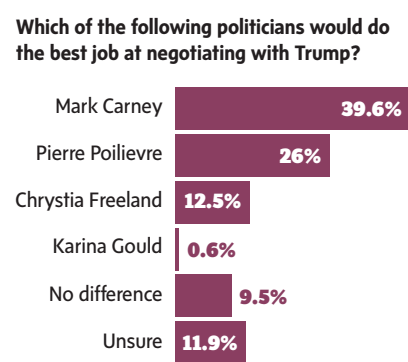
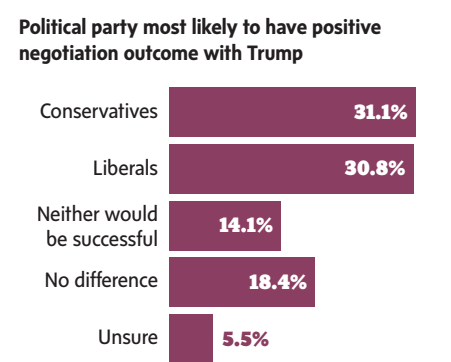
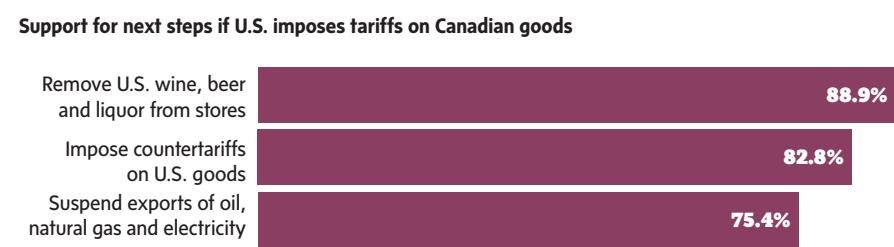
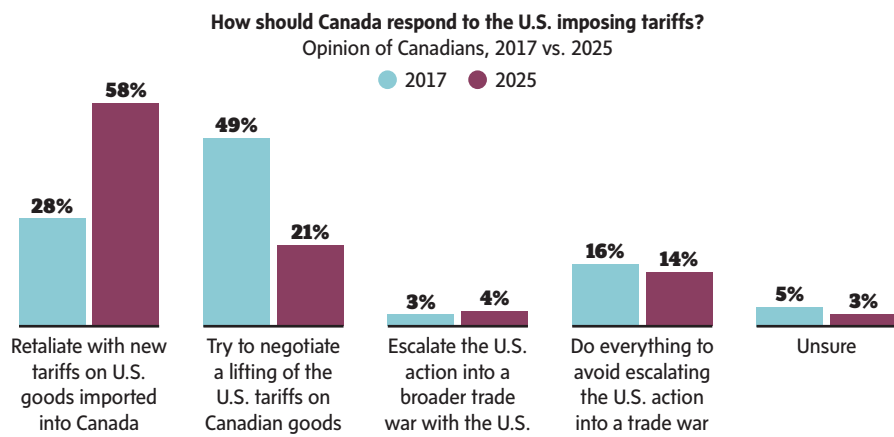
First, Mr. Poilievre's focus on past anger toward both the carbon tax and Justin Trudeau is yesterday's news. Canadians are thinking of the future. Mr. Trudeau taking the lead on the response alongside Canada's premiers, and Liberal leadership hopefuls focusing on Mr. Trump, is in sync with what Canadians are worried about. Mr. Poilievre's pivot has been too slow. He was ahead of the Liberals in 2024 when he was tapping into anxiety about the rising cost of living, but he's been flat-footed when it comes to telling Canadians how he'd manage Mr. Trump.

Second, the next election will not be a referendum on Mr. Trudeau and also will not be a referendum on the Liberal Party of Canada. The next election will be decided by a simple question: Who can best manage Canada's relationship with Mr. Trump? Pragmatism may override anger and party loyalty.

Finally, the numbers may very well change again. Just because the trendline has moved against the Conservatives over the past four weeks does not mean it will continue to do so. It suggests that we are in a fragile transition period. As Canadians change the lens through which they see their political options, they may change their minds again as the two front-running parties sharpen their focus on the binational relationship.

Whatever the case, the shadow of Mr. Trump looms large for both the future of Canada and of our political leaders.

## Canadians on a trade war with the U.S.



MURAT YÜKSELİR / THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: NANOS RESEARCH

# Donald Trump has restored McCarthyism to America

LARRY TYE

OPINION

Journalist and the author of nine books, including *Demagogue: The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joe McCarthy*

The Red-baiting lawmaker aimed wrecking balls at his enemies and at American norms. He railed against “enemies within” and crafted handy scapegoats for the country's troubles. When one charge against a manufactured enemy was exposed as hollow, he would lob a fresh bombshell; when the news was bad, he'd blame the newsmen. He'd learned early on that there was no worse a penalty for a big lie than for a little one, but that only the big ones drew a crowd – so he told whoppers. And what was it all for? The fealty-obsessed politician had no master plan other than accumulating and holding onto power.

Sound familiar? President Donald Trump's continuing government purges conjure up from our darkest communal recesses two words of alarm: Joe McCarthy.

When McCarthy drafted his poisonous script, few people knew the Wisconsin senator's full story. Now – thanks to the unique access I was given to his personal and professional papers, along with his military and medical records – we can shave away the myths and understand how a backbench senator became powerful enough to cow Dwight Eisenhower, America's most popular postwar president. Pulling open the curtain, we can

see that McCarthy was in fact more insecure than we imagined, more undone by his boozing, more embracing of friends and avenging of foes, and more sinister – but it also shows that eventually, America was more than able to work its way out of his thrall.

Of course, he was not alone in his browbeating behaviour. A uniquely American strain of demagoguery has pulsed through the country's veins from its founding days. While his drastic tactics and ethical indifference make McCarthy an extraordinary and instructive case, he was hardly an original. He owed much to a bipartisan line of zealots and dodgers who preceded him – from Huey (The Kingfish) Long to Boston's “Rascal King” mayor, James Michael Curley, and Michigan's Jew-baiting radio preacher, Father Charles Coughlin. “Low Blow Joe,” in turn, became the exemplar for so many of the American bullies who followed him: Alabama governor George Wallace, Nation of Islam minister Louis Farrakhan, and Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke appealed to their countrymen's simmering fears of imagined subversions even as they tried to escape the label of McCarthyism. All had big plans and a glorified vision in which they played the crowning role.

In 1951, the junior senator from Grand Chute, Wis., promised America a holy war against a Communist conspiracy “so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man.” While the conspiracy claim was a stretch, the body count was measurable: a TV

broadcaster, a government engineer, current and former U.S. senators, and incalculable others who committed suicide to escape Mr. McCarthy and his warriors; hundreds more whose careers and reputations he crushed; and the hundreds of thousands he frightened into a tongue-tied silence. His targets all learned the futility of taking on a tyrant who recognized no restraints and would do anything – anything – to win.

“To those of you who say that you do not like the rough tactics – any farm boy can tell you that there is no dainty way of clubbing the fangs off a rattler or killing a skunk ... It has been a bare-knuckle job. It will continue as such,” the farm-bred soldier-turned-senator delighted in telling audiences about his hunt for pinkos and Reds. “I am afraid I will have to blame some of the roughness in fighting the enemy to my training in the Marine Corps. We weren't taught to wear lace panties and fight with lace hankies.”

Polling pioneer George Gallup was so taken aback by Mr. McCarthy and his minions that he wrote of this self-anointed hero: “Even if it were known that [he] had killed five innocent children,” his supporters “would probably still go along with him.” More than six decades later, the Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump chose chillingly similar phrasing in boasting: “I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters.”

There is also a flesh-and-blood through line between McCarthy and Mr. Trump. As a 25-year-old

attorney, Roy Marcus Cohn was McCarthy's ingenious and imperious protégé who helped remake the senator's name into an “ism” – in this case, a synonym for reckless accusation, guilt by association, political double-dealing and relentless hyperbole. Thirty years on, Mr. Cohn became Mr. Trump's hard-as-nails preceptor. The aging political fixer taught the tenderfoot Trump the transcendent lessons he'd learned from his own muse, McCarthy – including how to slander opponents and manufacture grand conspiracies in a way that makes even America's archetypal demagogue look almost good.

McCarthy's evolving list of enemies also rings bells today. He went after gay Americans along with Reds, and his slurs as well as his harassment offered more than ample evidence of antisemitism. America got its best look at the single-minded senator in his public and prodigiously publicized hearings, in which he zeroed in on alleged Soviet infiltration of the Foreign Service and the Voice of America news network (there was no U.S. Agency for International Development to gut back then).

Shameless opportunism may have inspired McCarthy's anti-Communist jihad, yet by the end he had willed himself into becoming a true believer in the cause and even cast himself as its Messiah. He didn't invent the dread of an enemy within that permeated the United States during its drawn-out faceoff with the Soviet empire, but he did channel those suspicions and phobias more skillfully than any of his fellow crusaders. In the

process, he shattered many Americans' faith in their government, trust in their neighbours and willingness to speak up. The diplomatic corps was especially hard hit by McCarthy-inspired purges, as an entire generation of Asia specialists who might have helped America find a way around wars in Vietnam and Korea were drummed out. While his reign of repression lasted barely five years, that was longer than any other demagogue had held our attention, and at the height of his power, fully half of America was cheering him on.

In the end, however, the fear-mongering senator was tone-deaf about knowing when enough was enough, and – taking a step too far – he took on the mighty U.S. military. That led to the famous Army-McCarthy hearings, where it became clear how specious his charges were, which led to the senator's downfall. “Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last?” the Army's special counsel famously asked him on live television that spring of 1954, echoing what much of the country was thinking by then.

The Midwestern senator's tumble from favour suggests a heartening message at a moment when many around the world are desperate for one. As gut-wrenching as the tales of McCarthy and his fellow firebrands are, every one of those autocrats – James Michael Curley and George Wallace, “Pitchfork Ben” Tillman and “Low Blow Joe” McCarthy – fell even faster than they rose, once America saw through them and reclaimed its better self.