

## **Trump is worse than anyone could have guessed**

[The following is a summary for those keeping track of Trump's activities and actions. The summary includes my opinions, comments and interpretation of the superb column written by TorStar contributor Justin Ling -> [ORIGINAL COLUMN](#) ]



By [Justin Ling](#) **Contributing Columnist**

We knew Trump's return was going to be unpredictable. As America's closest neighbour, ally, and trading partner, that naturally put Canada in the awkward and difficult position of imagining and planning for every kind of scenario: Good, bad, very bad, even worse.

### **American system of “*checks and balances*”**

The American system of checks and balances where the three parts of government have unique power regarding legislation separating them from the other two parts and enacting an oversight and control of them. The objective is that no part of the trio can dominate and control the government on its own, thereby preventing an autocratic rule by anyone of the three partners. Trump is pushing this envelope constantly, regularly and with inching success.

### **The erosion of American democracy**

Trump has been gradually moving the needle toward American autocracy over the nine months of his second term of office.

Columnist Ling says, “Canada needs to do more than just plan. We need to actively prepare for what happens as America's democracy comes apart.”

### **Trump's assault on the rule of law and the American people**

Trump has consistently abused executive authority to do things that, constitutionally, can only be performed by Congress. Here is a list of what he has done so far, many much of which have no validity in the constitution:

- from bombing Iran;

- hitting Canada with tariffs
- firing scores of civil servants
- purging military commanders and immigration judges
- shutting down entire agencies and departments
- deploying federal agents and the national guard to occupy Washington and Los Angeles in violation of the constitution
- creating a national program of abductions and deportations, in complete violation of due process
- sending migrants off to be abused and tortured
- arresting politicians who get in the way of those immigration arrests
- recruiting an army of loyal, conspiratorial, and aggressive influencers and media organizations
- withholding federal funds, including disaster relief, from cities and states which protect migrants
- funnelling millions of dollars of public money into his companies and set up a multibillion dollar bribery scheme through his cryptocurrency
- ousting independent watchdogs and imposing control over once-independent agencies
- hitting Brazil with 50 per cent tariffs as punishment for prosecuting their corrupt former president
- rolling out the red carpet for dictator Vladimir Putin
- supplying Israel's crusade against Gaza
- dismantling America's public health system
- destroying America's foreign aid operations
- aggressively deregulating and eviscerating America's climate plans
- using legal and financial threats to cow private companies, universities, and media outlets into subservience
- defunding America's public broadcasters
- pardoning domestic extremists
- appointing conspiracy theorists to high-level positions
- turning government agencies into bullhorns for white nationalist propaganda;

- placing sanctions on a Canadian judge serving on the International Criminal Court

### **Trump promises more to come**

Trump is promising to go further:

- to take over America's decentralized voting system
- to ban mail-in voting
- to gerrymander the Congressional map
- he will prosecute his chief critics for treason
- he has threatened not only Canada, but Greenland, Panama, and Mexico too — the latter, with illegal military action.

### **Trump uses lawfare to bash his way through**

Some of these lawless exercises have been blocked by the lower courts, and Trump has responded with lawfare against the system:

- Ignoring legal orders
- packing the court with his henchmen, arresting judges
- appealing every ruling up to the more-pliable Supreme Court.

### **Fascism ultimately**

Media outlets have trotted out well-worn euphemisms to explain this moment: They say he “tests the boundaries” of the presidency and that he is “flirting” with lawlessness. Others have tried to compare this term to his first administration, where he would regularly float crazy ideas which would be soon forgotten.

But when you look at what Trump has already achieved, and what he openly says he wants to do next, there is only one word that accurately describes his political project: *Fascism*.

He may yet fail at achieving it. But *Trump is, more than any other president in American history, trying to bend America's entire system* — its legislative branch, the police, military, courts, even the media, academia, and private enterprise — to his will. And thus far it's *going shockingly well for him*.

### **800-pound gorilla in the White House**

There is no tiptoeing around this 800-pound gorilla for Canada. Maintenance of the

status quo is no longer the safe option. Luckily, Canadians seem, perhaps more than any other population on earth, alive to the threat and willing to act. We don't have the power to remove him for office or stop his attempt to reorder the world, but *we can protect and insulate ourselves against it, and try to minimize the damage.*

## **What Canada should do**

### **Science and public health**

Mitigate Trump's enormous damage to science and public health. America's funding cuts will amount to tens of billions of dollars in lost funding per year, at least. Canada could:

- spearhead infectious disease research and surveillance at home and abroad
- court the academics and scientists whose funding has been cut by the White House.
- start with funding of researchers who have been researching mRNA vaccines for bird flu and HIV.

### **Finance and banking**

Today, our financial institutions are much more integrated into the American financial system. We could:

stress-test the exposure our financial institutions to a possible American financial crisis, and reduce it where possible.

offer better consular support for our citizens in America (Scores of Canadians have already been arrested and detained by American immigration enforcement officers; one has died in custody.)

speed up our diversification of trade to avoid overreliance on American markets for our oil, electricity, and gas. We should be dashing to get those exports to new markets.

### **Other strategic areas against Trump**

Dependence on America's national security apparatus

We can no longer trust them to investigate the pressing threat of right-wing extremism or Russian sabotage and meddling, amongst other things.

## **European affairs**

We need to abandon the idea that Trump is an advocate for Ukraine (After lavish praise from Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump echoed Putin's plans to seize more of Ukraine.)

Canada needs...

- up its support for Kyiv
- deepen its defensive links with Europe and its Nordic allies, above-and-beyond NATO.

## **Trump uses information warfare**

Trump is ramping up his attacks on journalism, while tech CEOs trip over themselves to win his favour. Meta has blocked news in Canada. Twitter has manipulated its service to promote Trump's brand of dour illiberalism. Extremist groups are flourishing in this new digital wild west, and are actively recruiting Canadians to join their cause.

Canada's response to Trump's information warfare should be

- prioritize Canada's digital and informational sovereignty
- our politicians and government agencies need to get off Twitter immediately
- impose regulations on these services
- should try to support, fund, and build good, reliable, decentralized internet infrastructure which isn't owned by oligarchs and ideologues loyal to the wannabe king.

## **Trump is destroying American democracy, with years to go**

It may seem inconceivable to some that America's democracy has fallen apart so thoroughly and quickly, and that it promises to get worse still. But it's no longer a hypothetical, it's actively happening. Trump still has three years left to complete his mission, and there is no reason to think it will stop in 2028.

Many Americans are finally beginning to stand up and resist this power grab. [ Rachel Maddow of MSNBC news is enthusiastically optimistic in this regard claiming Americans across the entire nation are demonstrating and protesting which indicates the people will not accept what Trump is doing. ]

Canada should join them and take concrete and constructive actions to thwart this dictatorship wannabe.

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**“What do you think?”**



Your responses are invited at [zippyonego@gmail.com](mailto:zippyonego@gmail.com)