

Don't put anything past Trump: We've seen such imperial ambition before

Thomas S. Caldwell: The U.S. president is not bound by historical conventions, rules or respect for other nations. And Canada should take that seriously.

By **Thomas S. Caldwell**, [Special to Financial Post](#) Published Jan 09, 2026



U.S. President Donald Trump arrives to a meeting with oil and gas executives in the East Room of the White House on Jan. 9 in Washington, D.C.

Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images

Anschluss. A word describing the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938, not in use for 88 years.

What could have been more logical than Anschluss for Austria and Germany? They had the same language and similar cultures, simply divided by a pesky—or as U.S. President [Donald Trump](#) would say, “artificial”—border.

It is not a reach to say most wars are about territory or land. It is true that God is generally enlisted or differing ideologies promoted, but the root real estate goal generally becomes apparent over time.

We are today in a world where old loyalties, friendships, laws and alliances no longer hold. Even American constitutional safeguards on power are being swept away.

New imperial goals are now the order of the day, and President Trump now sees himself as the unfettered ruler of the “free” world.

It is interesting that the phrase “a threat to [national security](#)” has become commonplace nowadays. No one seems to recall that it came out of the Stalinist era where it was used to arrest, torture and execute enemies of the state or government.

That catchall phrase is now widely used to persecute and prosecute, with “narco-terrorist” the latest apparent variant.

President Trump sees the world in tripolar terms led by Putin, Xi and, of course himself. Each with total influence within their respective spheres—sort of a new “axis of power”—again, an old term.

All of that is interesting but what does it mean for Canada and its future?

First, it is useful to remember that people with agendas are not bound by truth. Rationale for action is simply stated and repeated often enough so as to become the truth. Remember the flood of drugs and illegal aliens coming from Canada into the [United States](#)?

America has already stated its desire to annex Greenland despite the objections from Denmark, a fellow NATO member.

The reason given is, what else, “national security” — never mind the man behind the curtain, Greenland’s significant natural resources.

Again, recall President Trump’s 51st State comments. America’s contention that Canada cannot adequately defend its Arctic coast is valid. The question is, from who? [Russia](#), [China](#) or America?

Again, “national security” rears its ugly head.

Is the threat of cheap Chinese goods taking a short cut to Europe really that terrifying?

That brings us to our southern “artificial” border with the United States. Canada is indeed a large country, but the heart is only 150 miles deep from the U.S. border and stretched thousands of miles. In short, it is undefendable with the condition of our military.

Canada could just as effectively post reduced speeding limits to slow down any forced incursion from the south.

President Trump, in his self-appointed imperial role, is not bound by historical conventions, rules or respect for other nations.

His goals are focused on ever more real estate and creating a mega North America with him or his dynasty in charge. He sees amalgamation creating a cleaner map with massive resources.

The rationale for continental consolidation can be anything: China’s influence, strategic minerals, national security, fresh water, freedom of the Northwest Passage or Canada’s selling oil to China — it will be conjured up when and as needed.

I am not suggesting military incursion is looming, but I am suggesting economic measures (tariffs, embargoes, etc.) to damage the Canadian economy, with the intent of making joining the U.S. increasingly attractive. Clearly the upcoming free-trade talks between Canada and the U.S. will be an indicator.

At present, Canada is a country divided. It is dominated by special or regional interest groups, and having debased its proud history, is particularly vulnerable to an Anschluss campaign.

Frankly, our best and only defence is a strong, innovative economy, a focus still lacking in our leadership.

It is important to know who your friends are and more important to know who your real enemy is. President Trump appears to be following the original visions of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, who sought a united North America — by any means necessary.

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