

Washington's War on Canada's Health Plan,

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Introduction

Republicans and Democrats are befuddled by President Trump's attacks on Canada and Prime Minister Trudeau; his repudiation of NAFTA; the bilateral agreement with Mexico; tariffs, trade quotas and threats of trade constraints of billions more to come.

Many are the experts, political leaders and media commentators who have offered a variety of explanations. The most frequent explanation is that the White House is pursuing a nationalist – protectionist policy to weaken and dominate Canada and to increase the US competitive position. The problem with that argument is that for the better part of a century Canada has followed US imperialism in global and regional wars and interventions on four continents – even where Ottawa has paid a high military, financial, political and human cost. Canada has always been considered a bulwark of the US led NATO alliance, a reliable trading partner and staunch defender of cross border controls.

Trump critics attribute his hostility to his unruly, impulsive and unstable temperament which blocks him from an understanding the ongoing historical legacy. Paramount long-term links are sacrificed for short-term economic gains according to some academics.

Most senior diplomats ,accustomed to friendly negotiations, have privately expressed objections to Trump's ultimatums and his effort to brow- beat Canada into submission, believing that a few genial tweaks over a re-packaged NAFTA would secure Canadian compliance and submission.

Yet Trump refuses to accept Canada's partial submission to a modified NAFTA. Apparently, Trump is after long-term, large scale changes which will have a major political, economic and social impact on the US competitive position in the world economy.

Trump's War Against Canada's National Health and Education Programs

The US economic elite and workers spend hundreds of billions of dollars in a failed private health system. Canada's capitulation to Trump's conditions for a bilateral trade agreement will eventually shift the burden of healthcare from a low cost universal public program to the high cost exclusionary private sector -- reducing the competitiveness of Canada's economy especially its exports.

Trump is neither a demagogue nor an irrational nationalist. He has succeeded in changing Mexico's trade terms in favor of the US economy, increased the share of US exports and retained a dominant role in setting the terms for re-negotiating agreements. Trump aims for the same result with Canada.

He sizes up Trudeau as an easy mark-'very dishonest and weak'. The Saudi Arabian reprisals over a human rights issue caused Trudeau to retract. Trump's on and off the record remarks are intended to humiliate Trudeau and force him to plea for mercy.

Trump's disparaging remarks of Prime Minister Trudeau ,presiding at the 2018 G-7 meeting in Quebec Canada---accusing Canada of 'robbing the [US] piggy bank'- and his unilateral slapping of tariffs-- went uncontested.

Trump's aggressive posture is directed at eliminating those features of Canadian society and economy which are appealing for US working families. Trump's strategy is to lower Canada's competitiveness not raise US living standards. US prescription drugs are 60% higher than Canada; the US private health bureaucracy costs the economy five times more than Canada's public health administration.

Conclusion

Trump's trade rules are intended to pressure Canada to lose competitiveness and reduce its attractiveness to the US public. If he succeeds Trump will reduce pressure from the 'single payer' majority and gain support from US exporters to Canada.

In sum, from a US capitalist perspective, Trump is using his political bullying to increase profits and exports markets.

The vast majority of Canadians back their public administered and financed health system. They will resist any effort to reduce it via incremented 'rulings' by bilateral US-Mexican-Canadian bodies. They will realize that the deck is loaded in Trump's favor. If Canada is to retain what remains of its welfare state it will have to break with its dependence on Washington – including its support for overseas wars, trade sanctions and Washington's drive for world domination. A new political leadership in

the fashion of Tommy Douglas will need to replace Justin Trudeau. The question is where will it come from?