# AN APPEAL TO DONALD TRUMP: JOIN CANADA!

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Dear President Trump,

In the 100-plus days since you took office, you have been around the world without leaving home. My, my, you are busy – brokering peace in Ukraine, rebalancing the international trade system, ending foreign aid, imagining Gaza from the River to the Riviera, reclaiming the Panama Canal, painting Greenland red, white and blue.

What is most audacious, though, is your promise to make Canada the 51st state. You raised the idea after your election, and you generously shared it with Justin Trudeau at Mar-a-Lago in December. You even called him governor! He appreciated the promotion and your avuncular interest in his political future.

You should know, Mr. President, that Canadians are thrilled with your invitation. To think that we, the Shy Dominion, could one day join the Great Republic! It's humbling. Some Canadians have always wanted to become Greater America, and it's easy to see why. As they sing in *West Side Story*, "Life is all right in America!"

Canadians have long envied so much about your country – Hollywood, jazz, rock 'n' roll, baseball, hot dogs, Howard Johnson's, Marilyn Monroe and Taylor Swift, Mount Rushmore and the Grand Canyon, the Secret Service, the Washington Monument. Everything is bigger and better. Canada is dull. You win a television game show here and the grand prize is a toaster; in America, it's a Cadillac. As kids in Montreal, we had Smarties, Fanta and Place Ville Marie; we wanted M&Ms, Coca-Cola and the Empire State Building. We had *The Beachcombers*, you had the Beach Boys. We had Mackenzie King, you had Martin Luther King, Jr. Enough said.

We so envied you, we copied you. The National Park Service and Parks Canada; the Great Society and the Just Society; the Flatiron Building in New York and the Gooderham Building in Toronto (truth be told, ours was first).

But much as we wanted America – dazzled by your geography, your history, your personality – you never seriously wanted us. It's flattering – touching, really – that you do now.

But because we admire you, Mr. President, we must tell you that annexing us is a mistake. We are a progressive, moderate country of activist government, state regulation and political correctness. We are expanding our social welfare state (dentalcare, pharmacare) while you want to shrink yours (Social Security, Obamacare). Until Canada's population recently overtook California's, there were more Americans thinking like Canadians in the U.S. than there were in all of Canada. More dangerously, we would add 52 seats to the House of Representatives, equal to those California has now. Most would be held by Democrats, who would control the House for a generation.

You know that, Mr. President. We think that when you speak of the 51st state (which you've also repeated since Mark Carney became PM) you're just being your shrewd, mischievous self. We suspect that you don't really want us. What you want is our water, oil and gas, critical minerals. We're not offended that you aren't interested in hockey, curling, Anne Murray, poutine, Newfoundland, black flies and winter. It doesn't hurt our feelings. Well, maybe, a little bit.

But here's another way to look at it, Mr. President: Rather than our joining you, why don't you join us? The more you consider it, the better it sounds. It makes so much sense, you'll be disappointed you didn't think of it yourself. (Don't worry, we can keep this idea between us and let you announce it on Truth Social.)

Why join us? Well, for starters, you would take on the character of Canadians. You'd become smaller and weaker, sure, but kinder and gentler. You will be modest, unassuming and uncomfortably polite. Not necessarily nice, because we aren't always nice; hockey is more violent than baseball, especially the fighting. Rest assured, you won't become wallflowers. You'd still be free to shout, curse and rant. In response, we'll "tsk" and disapprove "with respect". Instead of defiant, your default position, you'll be deferential. In no time you'll be saying "please", "thank you" and "sorry" even when the other person is at fault. You will be calmer, almost Zen. UnAmerican, yes, but your blood pressure will thank you.

As Canadians, your people will also be less violent. A hard trait to lose, I know. After all, you were born in blood in 1776 and you've been bleeding ever since. You lost more of your own in the Civil War than in all your foreign wars combined. We have never had a civil war, revolution, insurrection or much in the way of riots or civil disorder. You'll have fewer guns (you have 400 million among 348 million people). No right to keep and bear arms, so that will take some adjustment. But don't worry, Mr. President, in Canada we won't be mugging, robbing and killing you as much, so there won't be a need for them. Bad things do happen in Canada, but they happen less often.

When you become us, you become one with our less complicated past. Rather than settling the West and killing and displacing native people, you can say you did it our way, which wasn't genocide. Same with slavery, which we rejected and became Harriet Tubman's Promised Land. Won't it be a relief not to have to answer for that anymore, or feel guilty, either, which is good because you never apologized for it? We will introduce you to reconciliation and land acknowledgements.

You'll look at life differently as American-Canadians. Politics and religion don't mix here. Guns are not sacrosanct. Neither is the military. Pot is legal everywhere, not just in some states. Hot-button social issues are less hot. We reject capital punishment but allow abortion and medically-assisted death. (It's becoming so popular an elderly friend in Alberta reports that she and the husband attended a lively workshop at the seniors' centre to learn their options, and the place was packed. They can't wait.) As Canadians, you should also know, we're fine with stem-cell research, same-sex marriage and transgender rights. Join us, and the angst over these all goes away.

You won't love our economy. Taxes are higher. Prices are higher. You'll be less wealthy. You will notice that consumers here are different, which means cheap, which is why Nordstrom failed. Target wasn't even enough of a bargain for Canadians. If you fail here, well, we say, you can fail anywhere. Hudson's Bay, our iconic department store, is failing, just like Macy's. The Bay was killed by Americans, but may be saved by the Chinese. You don't like our few chartered banks, but who needs Chase Manhattan and Bank of America when you have the Bank of Commerce and Bank of Nova Scotia? More Canadian prudence and fewer bank failures.

You won't have to worry about all those tariffs on us; you can raise revenues through our national sales tax. You won't have to worry about health care, either, which is free and universal. And because we accept vaccines, we had one third of the deaths (per capita) of your country during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have less chance of an outbreak of the diseases you worry about (though, like Texas, there are rising cases of measles in Ontario.)

The real benefits for you, Mr. President, will be in military and foreign affairs. Worry not about spending US$892 billion on defence as you do now; in Canada, our army is the size of a constabulary, and we practice pinch-penny diplomacy. We don't worry about threats from anyone, because, who wants to invade us? Indeed, with your joining us, the greatest threat – you – disappears. A win-win for everyone, Mr. President.

Unlike you, we get along with everyone. We are the world's nice guy, the boy scout, the helpful fixer and honest broker. We put middling in middle power. We were once the world's leading peacekeepers, and now you can be, too! There isn't a club we haven't joined. Everyone loves us, we Canadians, and they'll love you, too.

Something else. As Canadians, you'll inherit the Far North. No need to take it from us, as you've been threatening. Now we'll be one happy family, extending from the Gulf of Canada to the Sea of Gretzky. With our land and your icebreakers, we can keep the Russians and Chinese out. And, most of all, you won't need Greenland.

But you know the biggest attraction of joining Canada, Mr. President? It's what's in it for you, personally. You can become prime minister in a few weeks. Our campaigns are shorter and cheaper, and we count the votes and announce the result immediately. No one challenges them. Keep winning and you can govern forever. Really. No term limits, here! No fussing over a third term. As prime minister you set the date of the election. Up here, like FDR, you can run and run and run. Mackenzie King was in office 22 years, Pierre Trudeau 16 years, and others, including Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau, around a decade. And, hey, if you want to be King of Canada, that's possible, too! Persuade your friend King Charles III to abdicate, and his crown is yours. I don't think he'd mind losing Canada, which he rarely visits anyway. Another thing: you can pack the high court with your appointees, no Senate confirmation needed. Here you can be dictator not for a day, as you threatened, but for as long as you want.

Go for it, Mr. President. Seize the moment. This is your time. This is your opportunity for immortality. Join us and you'll be celebrated and venerated, now and forever, as the sovereign of the greatest union the world has ever seen: The United States of Canada.

Your faithful servant,

Andrew Cohen