

Trump, Trudeau Optimistic After Meeting on Tariffs, Border, Fentanyl

President-elect Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau discussed trade, border security, and the drug crisis during a Mar-a-Lago meeting.

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Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau exits a hotel in Palm Beach, Fla., on Nov. 30, 2024. Brandon Bell/Getty



By Tom Ozimek

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President-elect Donald Trump said he had a “very productive” meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in Florida on Friday, emphasizing a need for the United States and Canada to work together to address concerns such as border security, the drug crisis, and trade imbalances. Trudeau described the discussions as



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“excellent” and earlier stressed the need for dialogue to resolve issues of concern to the incoming administration.



The Nov. 29 meeting at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate marked an early



test of the relationship between the president-elect and one of America’s closest allies as tensions rose over Trump’s threat to impose



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a 25 percent tariff on all imports from Canada unless the country does more to stop the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants across the border into the United States.

“I just had a very productive meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada, where we discussed many important topics that will require both countries to work together to address, like the fentanyl and drug crisis that has decimated so many lives as a result of illegal immigration, fair trade deals that do not jeopardize American workers, and the massive trade deficit the U.S. has with Canada,” Trump wrote in a [post](#) on Truth Social.

The dinner at Trump’s estate in Palm Beach, which reportedly lasted three hours, brought together senior Canadian officials and Trump’s nominees for several key posts in the incoming administration.

On the Canadian side, Minister of Public Safety Dominic Leblanc, as well as Trudeau’s chief of staff Katie Telford and deputy chief of staff Brian Clow were in attendance.

Trump was joined by his nominee for secretary of the interior North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum and his wife, commerce secretary nominee Howard Lutnick and his wife, national security adviser nominee Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Fla.) and his wife. Senator-elect Dave McCormick (R-Pa.) and his wife were also in attendance.

Trudeau told reporters on Saturday that an “excellent conversation” unfolded, while Trump said they discussed a wide-ranging agenda, including Arctic sovereignty, energy, illegal immigration, and trade matters.

Trump wrote about the fentanyl crisis on Truth Social. “Too much death and hardship! Prime Minister Trudeau has made a commitment to work with us to end this terrible devastation of U.S. families..”

The backdrop for the meeting was Trump’s recent announcement that he plans to impose a 25 percent tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico unless the two countries stop illegal border crossings and the flow of illicit drugs such as fentanyl into the United States.

At a press conference on Friday before the Mar-a-Lago meeting, Trudeau said that Trump’s tariff threat needs to be taken seriously and that he hopes to resolve the matter through dialogue.

“One of the things that is really important to understand is that ... Donald Trump, when he makes statements like that, he plans on carrying them out,” Trudeau said. “There’s no question about it.”

Trudeau added that he looked forward to having “lots of great conversations with president-elect Trump as we move forward on standing up for good jobs on both sides of the borders.”

Canadian officials have pushed back against being grouped with Mexico on border security issues, noting that the number of illegal crossings and drug seizures at the U.S.–Canada border is far lower than at the southern border.

However, Trudeau has acknowledged the need to address those concerns, with Canada's public safety minister pledging to enhance border security measures. LeBlanc **vowed** earlier this week that the Canada Border Services Agency will strengthen its ability to detect illicit drugs crossing the border, including by the use of enhanced inspections at ports of entry, detector dogs, and high-tech.

Canada is the leading export destination for 36 U.S. states, with approximately \$2.7 billion in goods and services exchanged daily across the border.

Meanwhile, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo **said** Tuesday she will seek dialogue and cooperation with Trump following his pledge to impose a 25 percent tariff on Mexico over drugs and illegal immigration.

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