



April 2, 2025

Statement on US-Canada trade war

The US has initiated a trade war with Canada. It's very unclear what the ultimate plans of the US administration are. The deep uncertainty that Canadians are facing—whether to interpret rhetoric about annexation as a US negotiation tactic or a deeper threat—is resulting in a range of feelings and experiences such as fear, anger, and betrayal.

At Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers), we are clear that, as in all wars, this situation will create mostly losers. It will cause great suffering to almost all while further enriching a very few.

We call for continued relationship building with the US. We urge dialogue and diplomacy. We support acts of compassion—a form of bravery that resists simple narratives and refrains from demonizing the other side or distancing from them. We acknowledge with thanks and hold in the Light all those in the US who are [practicing noncooperation](#) and otherwise [protesting](#) this trade war and other harmful government policies.

We are disturbed by the voices we hear within Canada loudly proclaiming the need to strengthen the military as a means of defence against invasion. Such thinking is not surprising given the militarism that pervades every aspect of Canadian culture from film and video games to history textbooks. This thinking is completely unrealistic, outdated, and dangerous.

As we've [explained](#) elsewhere, [civilian-based defence](#) and [related techniques](#) of [active nonviolence](#) are [viable ways](#) for nations to [defend themselves](#). They don't require killing. We urge Canadians to [learn more about active nonviolence](#).

We urge Canada to engage in nonviolent resistance focused on justice and peace. Rather than just pointing fingers at the US, we join with the many voices calling the federal and provincial governments to use this as a moment to reflect on Canadian policies.

In this challenging moment, Canada can reassess, change course, and build more equitable, environmentally sustainable, and resilient economies that don't leave people behind. Canada can use the urgent need to reduce dependency on US trade as an opportunity to prioritize investments in human rights and social justice.

We've seen [proposals](#) including implementing price controls on essential products, investing in greening the economy, and curtailing copyrights and patents held by US companies so that, for example, generic drugs could be made in Canada at a vastly reduced cost.

One impactful initiative would be [cancelling the planned purchase of 88 war planes](#) from the US weapons company Lockheed Martin. The planes are not only made in the US but their source code is processed through US facilities and parts and maintenance would need to come via the US. The fighter jets are estimated to cost over \$70 billion for their full lifecycle. These planes are not designed for defence, they're designed to strike first by dropping bombs.

Canada still has the chance to get away from this disastrous purchase. For years we've proposed cancelling it for reasons of conscience. But now, due to the trade war, calls to cancel this order are getting much more attention.

This 70 billion could do a great deal of good for everyday Canadians. It could be invested in environmentally sustainable jobs, healthcare, restorative justice programs that keep communities vibrant, and reconciliation efforts including realizing promised commitments to fully implement the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

The prospects of increased economic insecurity are stressful to many of us. They are directly impacting the poor and marginalized most of all. This is coming at a time when many people can least afford it. The cost of living in Canada was already increasing and poverty has been growing at historic rates.

A policy CFSC advocates for—a [guaranteed livable basic income](#)—would be one forward-looking and long-term contribution to addressing the economic insecurity many Canadians are currently facing.

Feeling powerless generates anxiety, so we encourage you to take the actions that you're able to take:

1. **Take in news with care.** Psychologist Rick Hanson explains, "What flows through the mind sculpts your brain. Immaterial experience leaves material traces behind." Placing sustained attention on something changes your body and mind, not always for the better. Social media is designed to capture your attention. This is often done by showing you sensational or inaccurate bad news. Try to notice where you're placing your attention and how you're feeling. More bad news intake might make you feel worse without informing or empowering you to take any meaningful actions. **Take breaks from bad news and remember to do things that bring you joy.**
2. What happens in the US tends to spread to Canada. **Reach out to people who are feeling particularly targeted** by current policies in the US and let them know you're thinking about them and they matter to you. **Building community can be done at any time.** It especially matters when people are feeling tense.
3. **Buy local.** It's usually a positive thing to do for lots of reasons and right now it's an even better thing when you can.
4. **Ask questions of candidates and vote.** Canada will hold an election on April 28th. This is an important opportunity to [ask questions of candidates running for office](#). Would they support a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income that could help Canadians who are being hurt by the impacts of the trade war?