

Trudeau meets Trump at Mar-a-Lago Amid Rising Trade Tensions

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau traveled to Florida on Friday for an unannounced dinner meeting with President-elect Donald Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate, as Trump's recent tariff threats against Canadian imports sparked concerns.

The meeting came at the end of a tumultuous week for North American trade relations, with both Canada and Mexico scrambling to address Trump's promises of imposing steep tariffs. Experts have warned that such measures could have significant repercussions for U.S. consumers as well as trading partners.

Trudeau was spotted leaving a hotel in West Palm Beach before heading to Mar-a-Lago, where he joined the growing list of prominent figures meeting with Trump ahead of his second term, set to begin in January. His re-election has already shifted focus from the waning months of President Joe Biden's administration.

Flight trackers first noted a plane using the prime minister's call sign arriving in Florida, and a Canadian government source later confirmed the leaders were dining together.

Trump caused alarm earlier in the week by announcing plans for tariffs of 25% on Mexican and Canadian imports and 10% on goods from China. He accused the countries of failing to curb drug trafficking, particularly fentanyl, and undocumented migration into the United States.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum held a phone call with Trump on Wednesday, but their accounts of the discussion diverged. Trump claimed Sheinbaum agreed to stop migration through Mexico to the U.S., effectively sealing the border, while Sheinbaum described the conversation as centered on existing U.S.-supported anti-migration policies and dismissed the threat of a trade war.

Canada faces significant stakes in the escalating trade tensions, as over three-quarters of its exports—valued at \$423 billion last year—are destined for the United States. Nearly two million Canadian jobs are tied to this trade relationship.

Speaking earlier in the week, Trudeau dismissed the idea that Trump's tariff threats were merely a negotiating tactic, stating, "Donald Trump, when he makes statements like that, he plans on carrying them out. There's no question about it."

Upon returning to his hotel Friday evening, Trudeau declined to answer questions from reporters about the meeting. However, a Canadian government source indicated that Canada is exploring retaliatory tariffs in response to Trump's threats.

Trudeau was accompanied on the trip by Public Safety Minister Dominic LeBlanc, according to reports from Canadian broadcaster CBC.

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