

Taking on Trump: Moderate confidence in Trudeau government to effectively represent national interests in the U.S.

Six-in-ten have a negative impression of new administration based on what Trump has done so far

March 6, 2017 – Between shouts-out from the presidential podium during his first speech to a joint session of Congress, to multiple handshakes in the Oval Office, it appears that for now, U.S. President Donald Trump holds more admiration for Canada and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau than other traditional American allies.

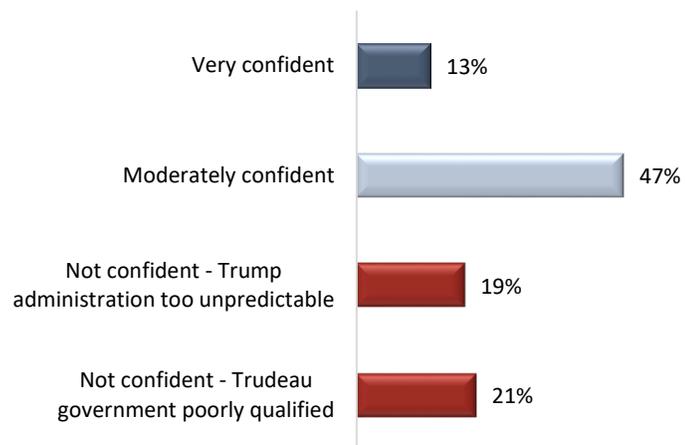
And while the Trump-Trudeau association is in its infancy, a new public opinion poll from Angus Reid Institute – the first installment of a three-part examination on the Canada-U.S. relationship in the Trump era – shows most Canadians are expressing moderate confidence at minimum in their government's ability to deal with the U.S. administration in the coming years, even as many they expect the Trump presidency harm Canada overall.

The majority (60%) say they trust the federal government to represent Canada and its interests in forthcoming dealings with the new U.S. President. The rest are evenly divided between feeling Trump is too unpredictable for any Canadian government to handle, and believing that Trudeau and the government are ill-equipped for the challenge.

Key Findings:

- Two-thirds (68%) of Canadians say they would describe themselves as pessimistic and worried about the next four years of Donald Trump and the effect that his administration will have on Canada. Another one-in-three (32%) say they are hopeful and optimistic

How confident are you in the ability of the Canadian government to effectively represent Canada's interests in future dealings with the Trump administration?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from February 16 – 22, 2016, among a representative randomized sample of 1,515 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- Most Canadians followed the Trudeau and Trump meeting quite closely; the summit did not have much impact on opinions of how prepared Trudeau is to handle the new President. For those whose opinion changed, more say their opinion improved than worsened
- Canadians view the first few weeks of the Trump presidency negatively by a ratio of more than three-to-one (60%-17%) over those with a positive view

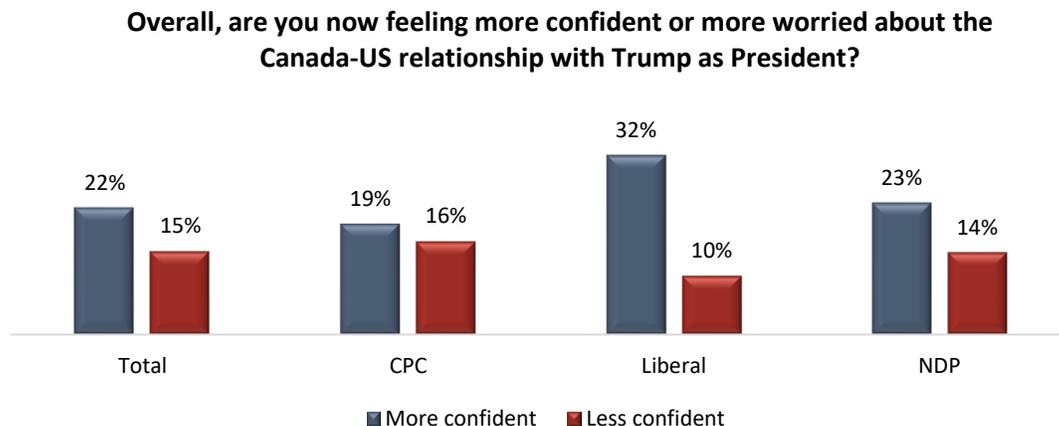
Moderate confidence in Canadian government to handle Trump

While much of the coverage of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's first meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump was devoted to how Trudeau approached [the now-viral initial handshake](#), the two leaders also discussed some serious issues, including trade and the role of [women in business](#).

Canadian media largely portrayed the meeting as [a successful start](#) to a relationship that could easily become a rocky one, given the [ideological gulf](#) between the two men.

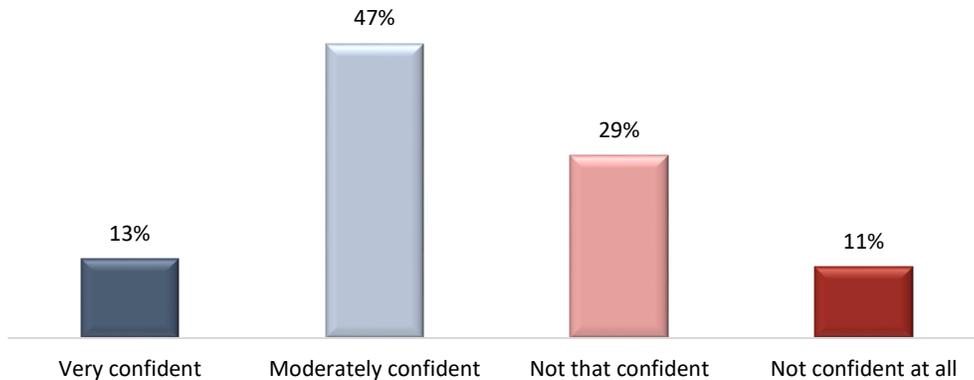
Most Canadians who paid attention to the meeting also say it went well. Among the nearly nine-in-ten Canadians who saw either "lots" (31%) or "a bit of" (57%) news about the meeting, most say it didn't change their opinion about the Trudeau-Trump relationship (63% say this).

Those for whom the meeting did change their views tend to say it made them more confident about the Canada-U.S. relationship with Trump in the White House, rather than less so. This is true even among those Canadians who did not vote for Trudeau's Liberal Party in the 2015 election, as seen in the following graph:



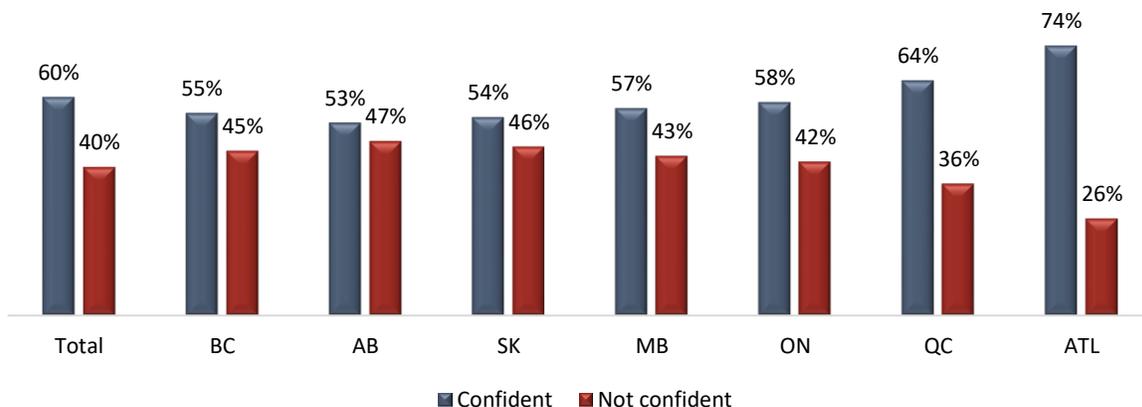
These responses come against a baseline of moderate confidence in the Canadian government's ability to deal with the Trump administration. Overall, six-in-ten (60%) say they have confidence in their government to effectively represent Canada's national interest in future dealings with the Trump administration. That said, most of these respondents are "moderately," not "very" confident:

How confident are you in the ability of the Canadian government to effectively represent Canada's interests in future dealings with the Trump administration?



Notably, confidence is expressed among at least half of all respondents across the country. Atlantic Canadians (74%) and Quebecers (64%) are most certain about the Trudeau government's ability to deal with the White House; it is lowest in Alberta, where this sentiment drops to just over half (53%).

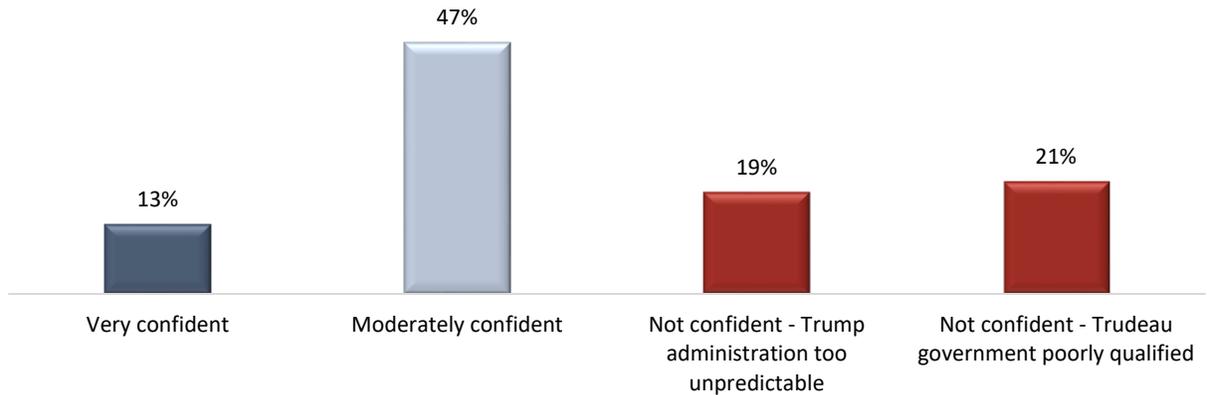
How confident are you in the ability of the Canadian government to effectively represent Canada's national interests in future dealings with the Trump administration? Would you say you are:



Among the remaining forty per cent who say they lack confidence in the Canadian government, reasoning is split equally along two lines of thinking. Just under half (48%) say that the unpredictability of President Trump drives their concern, while the other half (52%) say their doubts rest with the Trudeau government itself. These respondents say a different government would be better qualified to deal with the current White House.

Looking at these two questions in combination, the relative size of these two camps becomes more apparent. Each one represents roughly one-in-five Canadians, a relatively small number, but larger than the percentage of Canadians who are “very confident” in government’s ability to handle the Trump administration:

How confident are you in the ability of the Canadian government to effectively represent Canada's interests in future dealings with the Trump administration?

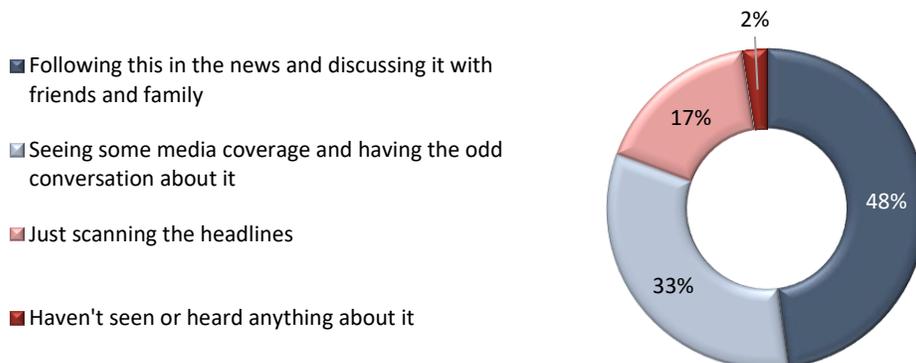


'Pessimistic and worried': Most have a negative impression of Trump administration

Donald Trump has been near-unavoidable in the news cycle since he declared his candidacy for President, and now that he has made it to the Oval Office, Canadians are following the early days of his presidency with a great deal of interest.

Nearly half of all Canadians (48%) say they are following Trump’s first several weeks in office in the news and having discussions with friends and family. Fully eight-in-ten (81%) are engaging with the story on a level that goes deeper than “just scanning the headlines,” as seen in the following graph:

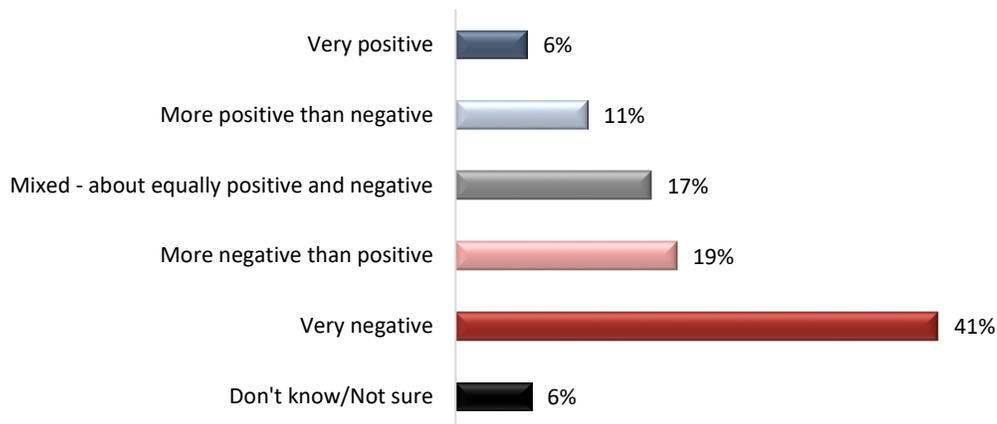
How closely would you say you've been following the first few weeks of the Trump presidency? Are you:



This is one of the highest levels of awareness of an issue the Angus Reid Institute has ever recorded, on par with awareness of the Canadian federal election in 2015.

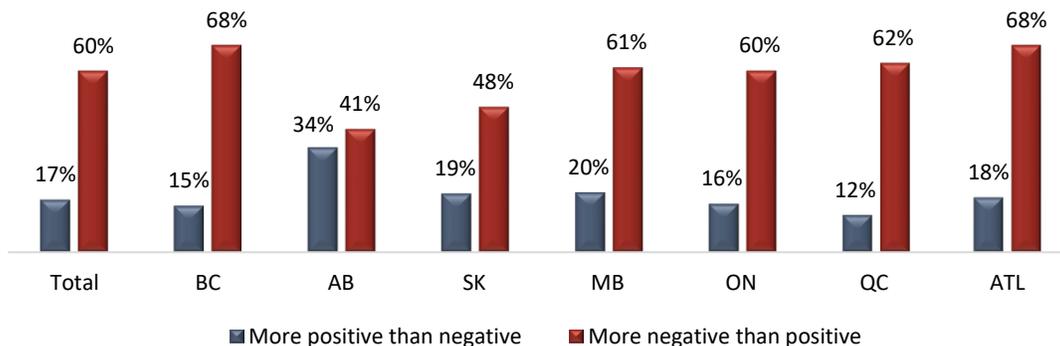
The heightened awareness of the first few weeks in the Trump era translates into disappointment for many Canadians. Asked to consider the administration's performance since Jan. 20, two-in-five (41%) view it as "very negative," more than twice as many as choose any other option, as seen in the following graph:

Based on the Trump administration's performance in these first few weeks, is your overall impression positive or negative so far?



Alberta stands as the provincial outlier on this question. While no other region voices a positive opinion among more than 20 per cent of its residents, fully one-third of Albertans (34%) – twice the national average – say their impressions of the Trump presidency have been more positive than negative so far:

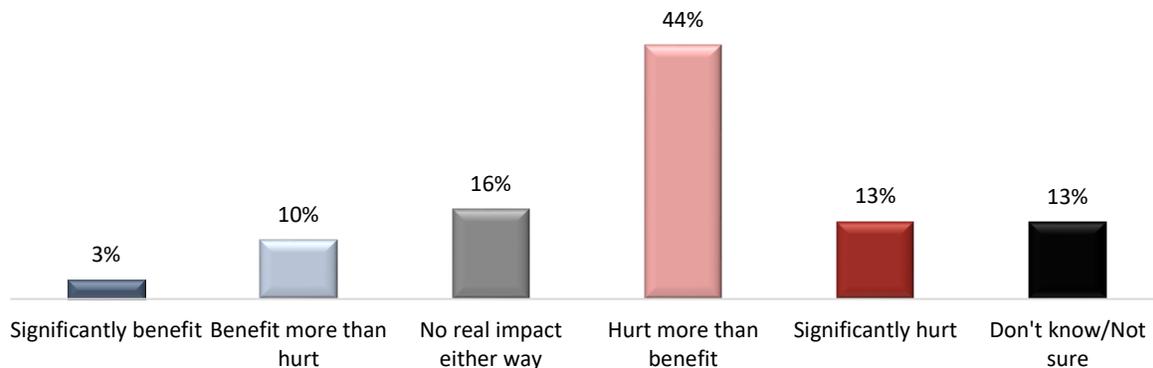
Based on the Trump administration's performance in these first few weeks, is your overall impression positive or negative so far?



Trump fares relatively poorly in American polls regarding his first month as well. He reached a majority disapproval rating in just eight days, by far the fastest of any President since Gallup began polling on this question in 1945. After his first month, his approval is reported anywhere between 39 to 48 per cent, depending upon the methodology used.

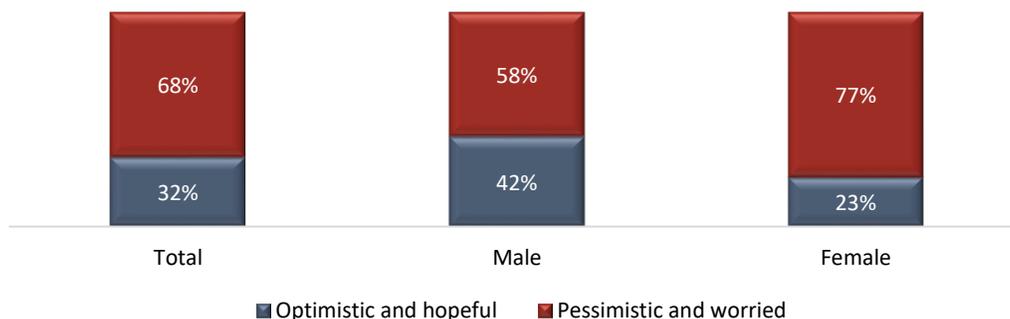
The same feeling of negativity follows into assessments of how the new administration will impact Canada. As the saying goes, when the U.S. sneezes, Canada catches a cold. Decisions made by President Trump, particularly on foreign policy and trade, have a huge potential for influence on Canadian lives. Two-in-five (44%) say that Trump's time in the White House will yield a net harm to Canada and Canadians. Another 13 per cent say that this country will be significantly hurt, while the same proportion take a positive view and expect a benefit:

Overall, do you think Trump being U.S. President will benefit or hurt Canada and Canadians, or have no real impact either way?



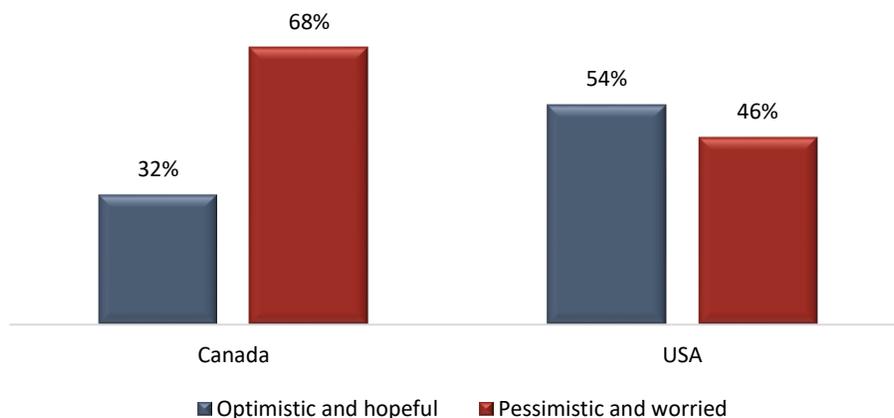
It should be little surprise, then, that when Canadians are asked about their hope for the next four years with Donald Trump as President, two-in-three (68%) take a pessimistic view. Notably, men are almost twice as likely as women to voice an optimistic and hopeful view:

And overall, thinking about the next four years with Donald Trump as U.S. President, would you describe yourself as:



When the Angus Reid Institute put this same question to American respondents, a much closer split was found – 54 per cent said they are optimistic about the next four years, while 46 per cent said they are worried and pessimistic:

Overall, thinking about the next four years with Donald Trump as U.S. President, would you describe yourself as:



The general skepticism on the part of Canadians toward Donald Trump's presidency also manifests itself in their reaction to specific actions the Trump administration has taken so far, and in their desire to see their own government carry on with its current policies in the face of changes south of the border.

Coming Up Next:

Canadian public opinion on eight specific Trump administration policies will be discussed in detail in parts 2 and 3 of this series of reports. Part Two will focus on climate change and the Keystone XL pipeline – two areas where Canadians' arguably contradictory views lead to both agreement and disagreement with the U.S. President. Part Three will focus on international affairs, including Canadian views on the U.S. role in NATO and on their own country's defence spending obligations.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Summary tables follow. For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

Overall, thinking about the next four years with Donald Trump as U.S. President, would you describe yourself as:		
	Canada February 2017 (1,515)	USA January 2017 (1,502)
Optimistic and Hopeful	32%	54%
Pessimistic and Worried	68%	46%