

WEBVTT

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Hello again, and welcome to Global Exchange, part of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute's Podcast Network.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm your host Colin Robertson.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>On this episode, recorded on December the 10th, we talk with Sofie Lilli Stoffel about When Your Ally Turns Narcissistic, a Self-Help Manual for Europe Navigating Transatlantic Relations.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie wrote this paper with her colleague Professor Philippe Yorck Herzberg.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie Lilli Stoffel is a research fellow with the Global Public Policy Institute in Berlin, where she contributes to the Institute's work on peace and security.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>She focuses on long-term strategies for foreign and security policy using psychology and neurology.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Welcome, Sofie.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Thank you so much for having me.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>For listeners, When Your Ally Turns Narcissistic, a self-help manual for Europe Navigating Transatlantic Relations applies insights from psychological research, specifically narcissism, to help explain the often erratic ways the Trump administration treats its allies.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>It sets forth eight practical responses for the allies, and I encourage you to reach, look at the paper, and we will link to it, of course, in the program notes.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Rather than viewing the United States behaviour as unpredictable, Sofie argues that a narcissism lens reveals consistent, expectable patterns shaped by status, visibility, and hierarchy.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>While her Manual for Allies is designed for Europe, Canada faces the same ally problem, albeit complicated by our geography, economics, and societal closeness to the United States.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>The Canadian government has actually demonstrated some of what Sofie's research would consider best practices, successfully projecting the country as a well-liked underdog rather than a subservient neighbour, all the while working to build support with allies for trade divergence, while continuing to shore up support with the United States for continuing mutual profitable trade.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>As we saw in the recent United States trade representatives, United States, Mexico, Canada agreement, trade hearings, as we get ready for the review next year, there is broad support for USMAC, or as we call it in Canada, COSMA, renewable amongst the US business community.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>And of course, there's huge enthusiasm for renewal amongst the Canadian business community.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>So, let's begin.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie, what does it mean for a foreign policy to be narcissistic?

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Well, it's quite a big term, of course, which we've borrowed from psychology.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>I think on an outcome level, what we see is that this is a foreign policy that's focused on capturing the spotlight and establishing dominance.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So, the packaging ends up being more important than the policy content, which is, I think, the biggest deviation from previous US foreign policy.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It also introduces volatility because foreign relations turn into an arena for managing insecurity and asserting superiority.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Often, this is done in media spectacles, as we've seen many times.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It also seems to be.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Please.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Yeah, and they pursue quick wins.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So that's the combination, which we've then summarized in this trilogy of status, visibility, and hierarchy.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But that's obviously, they are very abstract terms.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And so what we're seeing in practice is we've developed seven criteria that identify narcissistic foreign policy in its elements.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And that also makes it possible to rate any given foreign policy move on a spectrum.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie, it also seems to revolve around the personality of one individual, because you normally think of the United States administration as, yes, headed by presidents, but with his cabinet and with all the various agencies, the interagency process, for example, the United States is usually quite complex.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>But what I find particular about the Trump administration is it really does seem to come down to the personality of the president.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Well, I think I would be quite careful with that.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Obviously, Trump has made the MAGA movement, but the MAGA movement has also made Trump.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And the president Trump wasn't elected just for himself, right?

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<v SPEAKER\_2>He was elected for what he represents, for the policy style that he represents, and for the cabinet that he selected.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And for European counterparts, for example, it doesn't really matter if it's Hexeth that sits in front of you, or Rubio, who in his personality is much more measured than Donald Trump himself.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think for us, what really matters here is the patterns that emerge from the foreign policy.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And of course, it can't be discounted that Donald Trump has a big imprint on those.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But I don't think the Republican Party would reward to their previous style of wielding power and doing politics if Donald Trump died tomorrow, or if his entire group of people disappeared for the next election.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>I think this is a larger issue that we're seeing, where he is both obviously a creator, but also a manifestation of a trend.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>So what you're saying is if Trump were to disappear tomorrow, the mega movement which dominates the Republican Party, that's something we as allies are going to have to live with.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>For the foreseeable future, that's what I would say.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Of course, you never quite know what happens.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But I think this is really the outcome of a larger cultural, societal, political process.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And again, this was a pretty broad election supporter situation.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So we're not seeing a dictator that's come to power with a small group of military people that helped him gain this position.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But this was the outcome of a democratic process.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Flawed, for sure, but it was still the outcome of a democratic process.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Which underlines why the patterns that you've identified are worth paying attention to, because regardless of Trump, these are likely to persist.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Exactly.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And it also kind of moves us away a little bit from this question of if he as a person is narcissistic or not, which I think in many ways isn't that helpful, because we simply don't know if there is a completely separate Trump personality that he exerts in private, or if this is a deliberate strategy that he decided to put up at some point.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And even if he is a narcissist, it doesn't help us either because the outcome of this entire government of this entire administration remains the same.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Interesting.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>You say that the Trump administration might be not quite as unpredictable as we think.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Why do you say that?

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<v SPEAKER\_1>And what do you mean?

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<v SPEAKER\_1>I guess it gets us back to those patterns that you see.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Yeah, exactly.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And I think the default has been between the US and its

close allies to always engage on a subject matter level.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Even if American administrations and allied governments didn't agree on fundamental issues or on policy directions, we always engaged on this question of policy content.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And we're now seeing that the topics change sometimes daily, sometimes weekly.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Some of these huge issues have basically felt like they fell from the sky.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And that introduces this perception of unpredictability, because we literally don't know what topic the Trump administration will come up with next.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And we don't know what news headline they will target, and we don't know which issue they will decide to escalate or ignore.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And so the what has kind of become unpredictable.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And because we're so focused and so used to the what and the what being stable, we are not that perceptive of the patterns that emerge in the how and why and when.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So what our study does is kind of focus on the patterns and bring out the patterns in showing when the thing happened and why it happened rather than what happened.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>If that makes sense at all.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>No, I think it does.

00:08:45.660 --> 00:09:02.360

<v SPEAKER\_1>And certainly during my entire career, the post-war period, post-Second World War period and then post-Cold War period, you could always count on a US administration to have sort of three broad themes, the open markets, freer trade and democracy.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>That no longer seems to apply.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>And particularly when it comes down to trade negotiations, which we're involved in now.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>In the past, there was always an approach by administrations that it was a win-win.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>But with Trump, it's you give, we take.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>And that's a risk for allies.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>So how do we deal with that?

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Because we Europe have been accustomed to dealing with an administration on a very different approach to trade, where they were seen as win-win.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>But as you point out, that's no longer the case.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Maybe one point about trade, just because it's also the tariff war is also one of the case studies in our research reports, just because it is so exemplifying for the dynamic that we're seeing, where it isn't really about the economic outcome.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Most economists that I know and most economists analysis that I read, kind of agree more or less or at least as controversial what the US impact will be, what the domestic impact will be of the tariff war.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So it isn't about achieving the best economic outcome for the domestic market.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It must be about something else.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And if you analyze the statements that the Trump administration has put out in relationship to tariffs and trade imbalances, it feels much more personal.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It's almost on a relationship level, right?

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It's like they cheated us and we're victims of like almost a global conspiracy against the US that's trying to diminish our value because tariffs and trade imbalances are basically used as a metric for estimating global hierarchy.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And it's unacceptable that the US isn't on the number one spot in that hierarchy.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And so it becomes about the domination.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It becomes about asserting superiority rather than about creating economic value.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And collaboration in that scenario isn't beneficial to the end goal.

00:11:10.900 --> 00:11:11.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>No.

00:11:11.200 --> 00:11:14.340

<v SPEAKER\_1>So how do we as allies deal with that?

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Because we cooperate with one another to try and reduce our dependency on Washington, but it's a tough road.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, this claimer in the beginning must be that this is very difficult also because both as Canada but also as Europe.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>We come from a position of 70 years of almost integrated markets, right?

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Not integrated markets, but integrated collaboration on every topic.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>We have such close trade relationships, political relationships, cultural ties.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>If this was an individual level of relationship, if this was a big brother and their smaller siblings, or if this was a romantic relationship, then probably every therapist or advisor would say to walk away, to remove yourself from the situation, from the shooting line.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But you can't do that in international relations.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Neither Canada nor Europe has any option of just like walking away.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So the recommendations are much more about managing rather than optimizing.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So I don't think there is a world in which the US exists the way that it wields power right now vis-a-vis its allies in a world in which the US deals with Russia the way it does right now that doesn't heavily negatively impact those who stand in the crossfire.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But I think there are things that we're not doing that we could be doing.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Because we are so focused on the subject matter level of policy, we're being pushed into a reactive position.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So we're always waiting for the next scandal to happen.

00:13:00.780 --> 00:13:03.840

<v SPEAKER\_2>We're always waiting for the next issue to pop up.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And then the entire state system kind of does their thing, right?

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<v SPEAKER\_2>The desk officers are being given tasks to analyze things and write talking points and press conferences are being held and country statements are being issued.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And that fixes all of our resources on reacting to US

policy, which makes US policy and US priorities the kind of guiding factor in Canadian or European policy.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And out of that dynamic, we really need to break out.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Because it negates our interests, but it also puts us in a position where these behaviors become worse over time.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Because a fixture of narcissistic behavior patterns is that they get worse if they are confirmed.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So if a narcissistic actor realizes that they're pushing people into a situation of reactiveness, of victimhood works, that they will submit, that they will provide the status goal that they want out of that relationship, the demand will be higher next time.

00:14:10.760 --> 00:14:13.540

<v SPEAKER\_2>The loyalty test will be higher next time.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And at the point where you keep giving and giving and giving, there will be a red line, right?

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There is things that we are not willing to give up.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There's things that we're not able to give up.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And then the punishment will be even more severe.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So rather than trying to submit, you kind of need to establish an eye level relationship in some form or way.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And I'm going to get into specifics in a second.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But I just wanted to say this is why I really liked the way Canada reacted, especially right in the spring after the inauguration.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Because as a country, you didn't submit.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>You didn't say, of course, we're fine.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>We can talk about being the 51st state.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Let's see how we can maybe have a new extra deal that solidifies how important the US is to Canada.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>You managed to even on a societal level, create this image of the well-liked underdog.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>You had a rally around the flag effect.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There was humor in it.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It was online, offline.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There was a great communication between different levels of government once the first bombs were evened out.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Obviously, that's very difficult to keep up, but I think that's what should be done.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>In terms of maybe more specific things, governments, especially also the Canadian and European governments, should build buffers rather than having expectations.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So kind of assume volatility and plan for it.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>We need shock absorbers.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And that also means especially diversifying dependencies in the economic field, but also in the security field and find new partners, strengthen other relationships, not end relationships with the US.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>That's not possible.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And also, I think not necessary.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There are still a lot of shared interests and overlap.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But make sure that if the US breaks away at any given point, you're not sitting there empty handed.

00:16:14.420 --> 00:16:17.820

<v SPEAKER\_3>Hi, I'm Dave Perry, the President and CEO of The Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:16:17.820 --> 00:16:22.440

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<v SPEAKER\_3>I also want to take a minute to thank everyone who donated to the Institute on Giving Tuesday.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie, I've served sort of three different behaviours in

response to Trump.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Canada initially, as you say, we responded, we certainly reject the idea of being the 51st state.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>We did to stay in the negotiations, take down our digital services tax and remove our reciprocity tariffs.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>You recall that we in China were really the only two to apply reciprocal tariffs.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>The Europeans did not, which surprised me to a degree.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>They simply seemed to go along and accept high tariffs, 15%, 10% for the British.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>And then we have the Mexicans as a kind of third, with Claudia Scheinbaum, basically keeping quiet and just watching the situation and not rising to any of Trump's various statements.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Of those three sort of patterns, that is, to Chinese, Canada, initially, we applied reciprocal tariffs, the Europeans caved, and I'm doing this in shorthand and obviously summarizing and generalizing, and then the Mexicans basically staying quiet and just watching what was going on.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So I would keep China out of it just because the dynamic is inherently so different, but I think Mexico is also a nice case to compare it to, and it's a tightrope walk, for sure.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There is two recommendations in the report that almost sound contradictory, but I'm going to try to explain why they aren't, and one of them is leveraging the power of saying and doing nothing, which is exactly what you're now describing, Mexico's path has been, because narcissistic patterns thrive on attention.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>Pursuit of attention is even one of the criteria that we've set out for identifying narcissistic behavior patterns, and fighting fire with fire basically automatically leads to escalation, and you're affirming the status achievement that the narcissistic

actor pursued, and then you're kind of caught in that dynamic and that spiral.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So saying and doing nothing, most of the time, is the best course of action, because you're not providing attention to something that in the end can only harm you.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>However, of course, it is impossible on all issues.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>There is red lines and it is also important to really recognize those red lines and assist on them because part of narcissistic patterns is trying to rewrite the rules and control the rules of the game.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And obviously, we've seen how the US has done that and trying to shift the way international law applies to different actors and trying to almost decide on their own rules of international relations or at least their bilateral relations.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And so what I think is important is that you in staying quiet, you don't become submissive.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It's something that I've also called strategic confidence.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And it's more about a confident calmness, I would say.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So sometimes it also is important to dare to be bold.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So that's the second recommendation that can be read as being contradictory to staying quiet and keeping calm.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But it's relevant that the calmness comes from a place of confidence, also because narcissistic actors recognize strength and other narcissistic traits as equal.

00:20:46.120 --> 00:20:59.260

<v SPEAKER\_2>Narcissistic actors among each other tend to get along better than narcissistic actors that have identified a weakness in another actor and aim to submit them to their field of influence.

00:21:01.980 --> 00:21:09.820

<v SPEAKER\_1>Interesting, as I went through your eight rules, recommendations, I thought a lot of them made sense.

00:21:09.820 --> 00:21:11.160

<v SPEAKER\_1>I was thinking, if Mr.

00:21:11.160 --> 00:21:15.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>Carney were to turn to you, what would you say today would be the best?

00:21:15.780 --> 00:21:20.040

<v SPEAKER\_1>I would look at your number one, invest in the optics of confidence, independence, and unity.

00:21:20.040 --> 00:21:35.320

<v SPEAKER\_1>I certainly think that's one that the Canadian government has tried to develop, as you pointed out, the sense of patriotism, which I had never seen in my lifetime in Canada, flag waving, which was very young Canadian.

00:21:35.320 --> 00:21:40.700

<v SPEAKER\_1>I've seen more flags since February, our flag day, than I've ever seen in my life.

00:21:42.140 --> 00:21:48.980

<v SPEAKER\_1>The way the premiers and the prime minister came together, you're not entirely in complete unity.

00:21:48.980 --> 00:21:50.580

<v SPEAKER\_1>No one would expect that federation.

00:21:50.680 --> 00:21:53.000

<v SPEAKER\_1>We're like the European Union in that sense.

00:21:53.000 --> 00:22:04.940

<v SPEAKER\_1>But generally in sync with the approach to the United States and support of the prime minister with premiers taking different perspectives of it, like different leaders in Europe.

00:22:07.640 --> 00:22:16.040

<v SPEAKER\_2>Do you mean now specifically asking how the relationship between the federal states and the federal government should happen?

00:22:16.040 --> 00:22:18.100

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yeah, I'm interested in advice you would give.

00:22:18.660 --> 00:22:28.440

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because, as you pointed out, your advice is for Europe,

which is a federation like Canada in many ways.

00:22:28.440 --> 00:22:30.400

<v SPEAKER\_1>We are also decentralized.

00:22:30.400 --> 00:22:44.700

<v SPEAKER\_1>So I'm interested in that's why I think that I found your paper particularly interesting because it had, I think, real application to the Canadian situation, given the fact that our federation, for example, is much more decentralized than the American situation.

00:22:45.640 --> 00:22:46.300

<v SPEAKER\_2>Yeah.

00:22:46.300 --> 00:22:49.300

<v SPEAKER\_2>No, I think that's a really relevant point.

00:22:49.300 --> 00:22:53.860

<v SPEAKER\_2>And that's also why there are two recommendations that sound similar.

00:22:53.860 --> 00:22:59.740

<v SPEAKER\_2>And one is invest in the optics of unity, and the other one is create real unity.

00:22:59.740 --> 00:23:06.580

<v SPEAKER\_2>But obviously, in the European case, that is a historical process that's taken decades.

00:23:06.580 --> 00:23:23.760

<v SPEAKER\_2>And we're not going to be able to resolve disagreements between different European states about the fundamental direction the EU should take or about key policy issues within the month that are the timeline when it comes to managing the relationship with the US.

00:23:23.760 --> 00:23:26.920

<v SPEAKER\_2>But what we can already do is invest in the optics.

00:23:26.920 --> 00:23:31.540

<v SPEAKER\_2>And I think that's also what I would recommend the Canadian government.

00:23:31.540 --> 00:23:35.700

<v SPEAKER\_2>Try to keep all disputes internal.

00:23:35.700 --> 00:23:39.600

<v SPEAKER\_2>So that also means obviously that's not easy and there will be imperfections.

00:23:40.280 --> 00:23:55.500

<v SPEAKER\_2>But really try to discuss key policy red lines and key policy guideposts in a way that ensures that federal states and the government don't speak two different languages.

00:23:55.860 --> 00:24:06.300

<v SPEAKER\_2>And that at all points Canada is perceived as a unit and that it's not possible to play, for example, Quebec against Ottawa.

00:24:08.660 --> 00:24:11.320

<v SPEAKER\_2>That requires a lot of communication.

00:24:11.320 --> 00:24:22.780

<v SPEAKER\_2>Someone told me recently that in Canada, the government and the state level have more communication now than they did during COVID.

00:24:22.780 --> 00:24:24.480

<v SPEAKER\_2>And that's exactly the way to go.

00:24:24.480 --> 00:24:28.000

<v SPEAKER\_2>Like there needs to be the most regular check-ins.

00:24:28.000 --> 00:24:33.020

<v SPEAKER\_2>And that also requires obviously cooperation across political aisles.

00:24:34.680 --> 00:24:35.540

<v SPEAKER\_1>I think that makes sense.

00:24:36.480 --> 00:24:53.400

<v SPEAKER\_1>And your idea also of investing, as you put it, invest in European independence, well, that would be Canadian independence, but also strengthen coordination unity across Europe, which is, I guess, what we would do across Canada, which is just what you've described.

00:24:53.400 --> 00:24:54.760

<v SPEAKER\_2>And perception matters.

00:24:54.760 --> 00:25:03.820

<v SPEAKER\_2>Like, it's not so much about the question if on a state level and on a government level there is disagreements.

00:25:03.940 --> 00:25:05.960

<v SPEAKER\_2>They can exist.

00:25:05.960 --> 00:25:11.740

<v SPEAKER\_2>It's a lot more about how do you present yourself to the international public?

00:25:13.980 --> 00:25:17.140

<v SPEAKER\_2>What are the pictures that are making the news?

00:25:17.140 --> 00:25:28.780

<v SPEAKER\_2>So it's also important to avoid domestic scandals that are to the effect that individual provinces are doing other things than what the federal government says.

00:25:28.780 --> 00:25:31.440

<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie, have you taken this out in terms of how it ends?

00:25:31.540 --> 00:25:42.340

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because all of your recommendations make sense to me while you're in this extraordinary situation.

00:25:42.340 --> 00:25:55.820

<v SPEAKER\_1>But if at the outset we talked about, if Trump is there or not, Trumpism and the mega movement characteristics remain, is this something that we permanently have to shift?

00:25:55.820 --> 00:26:15.960

<v SPEAKER\_1>And therefore, Canada and Europe and other like-minded, the Japanese, Koreans, Australians, New Zealanders, we are going to have to look to our own devices collectively, because we can no longer rely upon, as we have for the last 80 years, the United States?

00:26:17.840 --> 00:26:24.120

<v SPEAKER\_2>Well, I think, especially the European reliance on the United States was probably outdated anyway.

00:26:24.120 --> 00:26:28.100

<v SPEAKER\_2>That came from a world order that no longer exists.

00:26:28.100 --> 00:26:34.220

<v SPEAKER\_2>So it was time to go our own path, with or without a narcissistic US foreign policy.

00:26:34.220 --> 00:26:46.820

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think in that terms, there's also nothing lost in investing in independence and unity and trying to form more diverse partnerships across like-minded states.

00:26:46.820 --> 00:26:56.440

<v SPEAKER\_2>I would not bet on the next few years to see a significant shift in the type of policy style that we're witnessing right now.

00:26:56.440 --> 00:26:57.740

<v SPEAKER\_1>Now, what do we do?

00:26:57.740 --> 00:27:05.940

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because we're all facing populist challenges internally, and what you've provided is a kind of schematic for how to deal with the United States.

00:27:06.440 --> 00:27:12.380

<v SPEAKER\_1>But we have all of the nations that are involved.

00:27:12.380 --> 00:27:20.340

<v SPEAKER\_1>I look at certainly the big three, Britain, France and Germany, have internal challenges from populist movements within.

00:27:20.460 --> 00:27:39.380

<v SPEAKER\_1>We have, as you pointed out, they're different than what you have in the Europe, but both in Western Canada and in Quebec, there are dissident groups that don't necessarily favor the current approach towards how we manage the federation.

00:27:40.760 --> 00:27:52.140

<v SPEAKER\_2>Well, I think also what has to be said here is that not all populist actors automatically employ narcissistic foreign policy strategies or narcissistic behavior patterns.

00:27:52.140 --> 00:28:05.960

<v SPEAKER\_2>There's obviously a clear logical overlap, and I would say that populist actors probably have a higher tendency to act in narcissistic ways, but I wouldn't equate them per se.

00:28:06.200 --> 00:28:40.980

<v SPEAKER\_2>And then the other point is that there is a different power dynamic between, especially if we're now thinking maybe we're facing a populist government, there's a different power dynamic between domestic actors and their government, especially if we're also looking at like different domestic political dynamics and how that plays out with the, you know, security services and so on that the state has, the capabilities that the state has that civil society actors simply don't.

00:28:40.980 --> 00:29:02.980

<v SPEAKER\_2>So many moves that I'm recommending to other countries, other states, they aren't necessarily one-to-one applicable to the domestic context, just because establishing an I-level partnership with a government that controls the police or the military, for example, simply isn't possible, right?

00:29:02.980 --> 00:29:06.640

<v SPEAKER\_2>I would say there is a lot to take away, though.

00:29:06.640 --> 00:29:38.200

<v SPEAKER\_2>And part of it is also, I think, the bit on not providing

the attention that that behaviour pattern craves and staying calm and silent, but also not in a way that ignores the problem, but kind of really investing in that unity, independence and confidence, and really investing in strong democracies and strong democratic institutions that can credibly say, oh, we don't mind.

00:29:38.200 --> 00:29:58.180

<v SPEAKER\_2>A few years ago, and I mean, the situation has shifted significantly since then, and the German, the Highest Court in Germany declined banning one of our right-wing parties because they said it wasn't relevant enough to be banned.

00:29:58.180 --> 00:30:01.960

<v SPEAKER\_2>I don't remember the details, but basically that's what made the headlines.

00:30:01.960 --> 00:30:13.340

<v SPEAKER\_2>And I think that was a really smart move because it also takes the wind out of the sails of any narrative that we are the victims and we're being disadvantaged and so on.

00:30:13.340 --> 00:30:25.740

<v SPEAKER\_2>But unfortunately, we haven't had the chance to extend the research project in a way that I could give very detailed, very well-founded recommendations for that scenario.

00:30:25.740 --> 00:30:34.160

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think what is worth looking into is a concept called collective narcissism.

00:30:34.160 --> 00:30:37.220

<v SPEAKER\_2>So it's a psychological concept, not a foreign policy concept.

00:30:38.180 --> 00:30:56.600

<v SPEAKER\_2>And it talks about or speaks to, especially in democracies, how we reward leaders that crave attention, that thrive on status and visibility, and therefore democracies are particularly vulnerable to populist tendencies.

00:30:56.600 --> 00:31:14.740

<v SPEAKER\_2>But it also shows how a society can develop narcissistic behavioral patterns, like extreme national pride, for example, or, yeah, or like overestimating the relevance of one's own culture, state, international prowess.

00:31:16.760 --> 00:31:17.600

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, Sofie, thank you.

00:31:17.600 --> 00:31:19.420

<v SPEAKER\_1>I think you've done a signal service.

00:31:19.420 --> 00:31:29.880

<v SPEAKER\_1>And I certainly, as I read through, I thought a lot of what you said made sense, in that, in a sense, keep calm, carry on, stay united, and stick with your game plan.

00:31:30.000 --> 00:31:44.820

<v SPEAKER\_1>But the stay united part and remain confident seemed to me two of the principal recommendations that certainly had resonance, I think, for the Canadian situation vis-a-vis the Trump administration.

00:31:47.660 --> 00:31:48.580

<v SPEAKER\_2>Yeah, absolutely.

00:31:48.580 --> 00:32:05.920

<v SPEAKER\_2>And then the point, of course, is for the Canadian situation, you're almost in a more volatile situation than Europe is, just because of the geographical proximity and the shared land border.

00:32:05.920 --> 00:32:15.460

<v SPEAKER\_2>And also in a way, of course, culturally the closest mirror to the US, which means Canada is also the first surface where cracks appear.

00:32:15.460 --> 00:32:22.500

<v SPEAKER\_2>And economic exposure makes Canada uniquely vulnerable to punitive trade swings.

00:32:22.500 --> 00:32:42.420

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think what's really important there is to build relational capital early and don't wait for crisis, especially now that we've had a taste of what's possible, especially if you're also looking at the Mexico, US, Canada, Canadian trade agreement being renewed.

00:32:42.420 --> 00:32:47.080

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think cooperation with Mexico would need to be extremely close.

00:32:47.080 --> 00:33:02.520

<v SPEAKER\_2>Really try to get on one line there as much as possible, and also figure out very early which strength the two countries can leverage in this negotiation and not give in too early.

00:33:02.520 --> 00:33:16.620

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think that's also an important part that narcissistic actors tend to really favor unreasonable demands, but if you give in, it gets worse.

00:33:16.620 --> 00:33:20.020

<v SPEAKER\_2>So trying to stick the line as long as possible.

00:33:20.020 --> 00:33:22.580

<v SPEAKER\_2>But then Canada also has opportunities, right?

00:33:22.580 --> 00:33:36.160

<v SPEAKER\_2>Because you have an international reputation of being a credible, trusted partner that tends to be very calm and also is rarely perceived as a threat by the US.

00:33:37.280 --> 00:33:44.820

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think that's also a little bit maybe of a different situation to Europe, that you are truly neighbors.

00:33:44.820 --> 00:34:10.720

<v SPEAKER\_2>And that can be leveraged too, to kind of position yourself as a mediator, as a partner that maybe also shapes the way that like-minded states can come together in this new world order that we're seeing, and that you could also help build bridges between European states and Japan, Australia, Korea, and so on.

00:34:10.720 --> 00:34:13.040

<v SPEAKER\_1>So strategic patience and...

00:34:13.040 --> 00:34:15.700

<v SPEAKER\_2>Strategic patience, exactly.

00:34:15.700 --> 00:34:16.780

<v SPEAKER\_1>Excellent.

00:34:16.780 --> 00:34:18.780

<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie, thank you very much.

00:34:18.780 --> 00:34:22.460

<v SPEAKER\_1>Let me ask you what you're reading or streaming these days.

00:34:23.480 --> 00:34:30.500

<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, you've heard now how dense my job is that I spend most hours on every week.

00:34:31.140 --> 00:34:41.180

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I'm currently working my way through the Netflix Christmas movie lineup that comes out every December and trying to find some balance there.

00:34:41.180 --> 00:34:41.840

<v SPEAKER\_1>Oh, very good.

00:34:41.840 --> 00:34:46.300

<v SPEAKER\_1>That's what I've been doing the same thing, provide some diversion to the day to day.

00:34:46.300 --> 00:34:49.880

<v SPEAKER\_1>So I think they're not all good, but some are better than others.

00:34:49.880 --> 00:34:51.920

<v SPEAKER\_1>So go back to them.

00:34:51.920 --> 00:34:52.620

<v SPEAKER\_1>Sofie, thank you.

00:34:52.620 --> 00:34:55.580

<v SPEAKER\_1>And thanks for listening to this episode of The Global Exchange.

00:34:55.580 --> 00:34:57.600

<v SPEAKER\_1>We were joined today by Sofie Lilli Stoffel.

00:34:58.360 --> 00:35:08.580

<v SPEAKER\_1>And in our program notes, we will link to her paper, When Your Ally Turns Narcissistic, A Self-Help Manual for Europe Navigating Transatlantic Relations.

00:35:08.580 --> 00:35:12.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>Again, it has application for the Canadian situation as well.

00:35:12.200 --> 00:35:16.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>You can find the Canadian Global Affairs Institute on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

00:35:16.200 --> 00:35:20.000

<v SPEAKER\_1>The Global Exchange is brought to you by our team at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:35:20.000 --> 00:35:25.300

<v SPEAKER\_1>As always, my thanks go out to our producer, Jordyn Carroll and to Drew Phillips for providing our music.

00:35:25.300 --> 00:35:26.200

<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm Colin Robertson.

00:35:26.860 --> 00:35:28.660

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thanks for joining us today on The Global Exchange.