AMERICAN REVIEW OF CANADIAN STUDIES
2024, VOL. 54, NO. 4, 347–373
https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2025.2459642

The JFK Paradox and the Challenge of Rating "Canada's Presidents"

David G. Haglund

Department of Political Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the analytical challenges posed by the administration of John F. Kennedy for scholars who would seek to "rate" American presidents from the perspective of *Canadian* interests. No one in Canada seems to have much of a desire to try to rank-order the presidents systematically. But if they did, the Kennedy administration would present an enigma for them, because while America's 35th president was very popular with Canadians, his time in office is nevertheless typically recalled as having been an extremely turbulent period in Canadian–American relations. The turbulence was almost exclusively attributable to differences between the two countries over whether Canada had committed itself to equipping a suite of recently acquired weapons-delivery systems with nuclear warheads, and as a result the events of the early 1960s have routinely (if not completely accurately) been subsumed under the rubric of the "Bomarc crisis." This article tells the story of that crisis, set against the larger backdrop of the challenges facing scholars wrestling with the question of how American leaders might be systematically assessed and ranked according to their impact upon Canadian national interests.

KEYWORDS

Canada; United States; nuclear weapons; John F. Kennedy; John G. Diefenbaker

Introduction: The Best of Times, the Worst of Times?

During their only presidential debate, in late June 2024, President Joe Biden and his Republican challenger, the once and future President Donald Trump, engaged in a memorable bit of post-adolescent one-upmanship that saw them launching identical *ad hominem* shafts at each other (CNN 2024). Though they agreed on little else that evening in Atlanta, an event that dealt a mortal blow to Biden's bid for reelection, the two men were of one mind in assessing the merits of their political rival: "You are the worst president in American history," charged the challenger, citing no evidence whatsoever. "No," came the incumbent's *tu quoque*, "You are the worst president in American history," citing at least *some* evidence—a recent poll conducted by a pair of political scientists whose Delphi exercise situated Trump dead last on an evaluative ladder of all 45 chief executives starting with George Washington, one rung below that occupied by the usually unmovable James Buchanan (Rottinghaus and Vaughn 2024, 3).

CONTACT David G. Haglund david.haglund@queensu.ca Department of Political Studies, Queen's University, 68 University Avenue, Mackintosh-Corry Hall Room C328, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6, Canada

Although not enough time has passed for anyone—pundit or president—to pronounce a definitive judgment on the effectiveness of either Biden or Trump as chief executive, it is fair to say that the Rottinghaus and Vaughn assessment of the latter would not elicit very much criticism from Canadians. To the contrary, there would be general agreement among them on Trump's lack of worthiness. To put it mildly, Canadians do not "rate" him very highly. Not only do they disapprove, they also tend to be extremely worried about him; at the very least, a world in which Donald Trump is president again is a world in which Canada suddenly finds itself "alone" (Nossal 2023). The worry dates back to the first time that Trump occupied the Oval Office (2017–2021), and it has been exacerbated by his statements and tweets during the period between his election in late 2024 and his inauguration early in 2025, making it seem as if he thought Canada's territorial absorption into the US was not only a good thing, but also something that was very likely to happen (Chase 2025).

Canadian disquiet with Trump is nothing new; in the run-up to the penultimate Canadian federal election, in 2019, the communications adviser to former Prime Minister Paul Martin reflected this disquiet when he took to the pages of the country's leading newspaper to remind Canadians that the single most obviously important issue facing them as they headed to their *own* polling booths that October could be summed up in three words: "Donald. Freaking. Trump." Scott Reid asked his readers, "How could it be otherwise? . . . [I]t is a 100-percent fact that no living human has the ability to more directly or more comprehensively affect the lives and livelihoods of Canadians than this President of the U.S. – whether we like it or not" (Reid 2019).

The five years separating the Canadian election of 2019 from the American one of 2024 did not witness any seismic change in Canadians' opinion regarding the 45th and 47th president.[1] Prior to the president's pre-inauguration musings about annexation, there had actually been a slight uptick in the number of Canadians willing to confess to pollsters that they liked Donald Trump more than they had a half-decade earlier. This uptick was registered in an Environics Institute poll taken in the autumn of 2024 finding that the Republican's level of support among Canadians had increased 40% between 2020 and 2024, from 15% to 21%; even so, the vast majority of the country continued to be disapproving of Trump (Environics Institute 2024). The November 2024 election results and the subsequent Trump suggestions of impending annexation have rekindled the fears of those who have always thought Trump necessarily bodes ill for Canada's prospects. For sure, calmer voices have also been heard among members of the "Can-Am" epistemic and policy community—voices such as that of Kirsten Hillman, Canada's ambassador to Washington, who made front-page news in the country simply for confessing, a couple of months prior to the US election, that she did not believe the sky would fall should Donald Trump prevail over Kamala Harris in the autumn balloting. "I don't think we have any reason to be concerned under, to be frank, either administration," she remarked to the press covering the federal cabinet retreat in Halifax during the final week of August (Walsh 2024).

Early in Trump's second term, no one can tell which perspective on Trump's impact will turn out to be the most prescient, though it has to be acknowledged that the minatory tweet he fired off less than a month after his election, threatening across-the-board 25 percent tariffs on all goods imported from Canada (and Mexico), coupled with his follow-on intimations that Canada would make a "great" 51st American state, gives reason for

thinking that the pessimists occupy the predictive high ground (Chase and Morrow 2024). These contrasting perspectives highlight a different kind of challenge confronting anyone who might be inclined to try to gauge the impact of American presidents upon Canadian interests—the challenge of distinguishing between presidential popularity and presidential impact.

Perhaps the distinction is a meaningless one; how Canadians assess the impact of an American president upon their country's interests must fundamentally be a matter of understanding how Canadians *feel* toward that president. An unpopular leader must be "bad" for those interests, just as a popular one must be "good" for them. *Vox populi*, in this view, does and should settle the question of how we might comparatively and transitively assess America's presidents in terms of their impact upon Canadian interests—at least ever since the advent of modern survey-data gathering. Yet the distinction is far from meaningless, and the Kennedy administration's approach to Canada on the all-important defense file from 1961 to 1963 tells us why. For if the Trump tenure in office can easily be styled in the Dickensian sense of representing the "worst of times," then the brief Kennedy years can just as easily be made to look like the "best of times" – if we are basing the assessment upon presidential approval ratings among the Canadian public.

Hence arises the paradox. On the one hand, America's 35th president was "wildly popular" among Canadians (Azzi and Hillmer 2022, 383), so much so that he has passed into popular collective memory as one of the absolute favorite "Canadian presidents." On the other hand, the Kennedy years have been chronicled as being *the* most conflictual period in Canadian–American relations in the 20th century, a period that respected TV journalist Knowlton Nash could label, with little risk of being contradicted, as one of "fear and loathing" across the normally placid Canada–US border (Nash 1990). If this label sounds excessive, it paled in comparison with the mid-1960s' lamentation of another widely read author, philosopher George Grant, who called those rancorous years the "end of Canada as a sovereign state" (Grant 1965, 2).

Since the occupant of the Oval Office at that time was Kennedy, it only follows that he must have been the key "culprit" responsible, on the American side, for this deteriorating bilateral relationship, with its apparently dire implications for Canada's continued existence. But if so, a contradiction arises: how could a president so liked by Canadians also be a president who so disturbed bilateral tranquility, even to the point of menacing Canada's very survival? And if he was capable of being both an admired leader in the eyes of the public and a feared as well as a despised one in the eyes of his Canadian counterpart, John G. Diefenbaker, what does this tell us about how Kennedy might rank in comparison with other American presidents when judged from the perspective of *Canadian* interests?

The Kennedy case can help put things in perspective. Even if Canadians have not been known to play the American presidential "rating game," or as it is sometimes called, the presidential "ranking game" (Bowman and Goldstein 2022; Felzenberg 2008; Lonnstrom and Kelly 2003; Nichols 2012; Pederson and McLaurin 1987), they do possess at least an intuitive understanding of how some US presidents might feature from the point of view of their impact upon Canadian interests—and in the case of a few presidents, the understanding is much more than a simply intuitive one. It is time for those various understandings, largely episodic in nature, to be fleshed out by a more systematic, longitudinal assessment of "Canada's presidents." A comparative and transitively ordered list of the country's presidents would require more than can be accomplished in an article. Still, this

article provides a point of entry for such a project and argues that the puzzling pattern of Canadian–American interaction during the brief period when Kennedy was in the White House yields important insights for scholars who might mount such a project.

In seeking those insights, I structure the article in the following manner. In the section immediately below, I show why Canadians and other non-Americans tend not to engage in the kind of systematized rank-ordering of American leaders that one encounters so often in the US. The next section probes some of the problems encountered by Americans themselves when they play the game. Following it comes a section that illustrates those problems with an examination of the troubled bilateral relations during the Kennedy years. The concluding section highlights a few important challenges, as well as opportunities, encountered by scholars seeking to compile a rank-ordered list of Canada's presidents.

Playing the Presidential Rating Game: Home Turf Only?

Americans seem to enjoy the presidential rating game, and who can blame them? To start, there is a national and soul-satisfying curiosity regarding the degree of effectiveness (often couched in terms of "greatness") attained by the 45 individuals who have occupied the presidency since George Washington first assumed that office in April 1789 (Browne 2020; Coe 2020; Phelps 1987). It is hardly surprising that there should be this level of national curiosity in a constitutional office, the executive, that has come to occupy such a central position in the nation's (and the world's) fortunes.

That central position could not have been something anticipated, or very much desired, by the designers of the constitutional republic in the 1780s, who were held firmly in the grip of "tyrannophobia" (Posner and Vermeule 2010, 177–178) and obsessed with the emergence of an American version of King George III (Cronin 1987; Morris 1987; Thach 1969). Notwithstanding, there can be no mistaking the general trend ever since those early days; despite occasional and temporary reversals, this trend has reflected a shift in the relative capabilities of the executive branch vis-à-vis the legislative one in favor of the former (Davis 1979; Fisher 1991; Franck 1981; Hinckley 1994; Sundquist 1981; Zeidenstein 1978). As a result, it has not been unusual to find the executive branch sometimes stylized, misleadingly or otherwise, as the "imperial presidency" (Christenson and Kriner 2020). While no one can pinpoint exactly when this executive dominance over Congress and courts became established, there is broad agreement that it could not have begun to occur before the final quarter of the 19th century (Banks and Straussman 1999; Calabresi and Yoo 2008; Goldsmith 1983; McDonald 1994; Patterson 1976; Pious 1996; Rossiter 1948; Schlesinger 1973; Suri 2017; Zakaria 1998).[2] Even so, prior to the Civil War there were a few chief executives whose administrations could have easily passed muster as imperial presidencies: Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and even James K. Polk come to mind in this respect (Meacham 2008; Merry 2010; R. W. Tucker and Hendrickson 1990). Then, there was the Civil War, whose exigencies required Abraham Lincoln to assume powers sometimes adjudged to be verging on the dictatorial (Belz 1984; Johnson 1989; McPherson 1991; Neeley 1991). All of this is to state the obvious: "leaders matter" (Jervis 2013), and it is important for scholars and others to comprehend how and why they do so.

Since no global political leaders are as important as *America's* presidents, it might follow that outside the US there would also be widespread interest in ranking them. Yet

the presidential rating game is not something that is easily exportable. This is understandable; it would be unusual for, say, Argentinians to profess greater interest in the occupant of the White House in Washington than they profess in the occupant of the Pink House in Buenos Aires. And though one might think that Argentine historians and political scientists would have been busy developing means of comparatively assessing their *own* country's leaders, there really has not been anything comparable to what occurs in the US. Argentinians and denizens of so many other of the world's republics do not play American-style presidential ratings games of their own (Directorio Legislativo 2022).[3] One reason for this is obvious: the constitutional makeup of some republics vests greater authority in the office of prime minister than in that of president. And even in the case of a country such as France, where there has been a continuous predominance of president over prime minister dating from the end of the 1950s, there have been far too many "republican" regimes (five) since 1792 for anyone to think it a worthwhile use of their time to try to put together comparative assessments of presidential effectiveness, particularly as the first four republics were ones in which prime ministers almost always mattered much more than presidents (Winock 1999).

Even if there existed an urge to amass comparative rankings of their own presidents, the capacity to satisfy it would be limited, given how much more abundant in America are the flocks of historians, political scientists, and members of the media gazing intently upon the presidency from their divers disciplinary and epistemological perches (Morini 2013; Murray and Blessing 1983). In no other country is it possible to find so many who are so eager and able to explore every facet of presidential political action, or what one scholar calls the "presidential game" (McCormick 1982).

Nevertheless, from time to time *leadership* rating games do get played, *mutatis mutandis*, in such non-republics as Canada and the United Kingdom, where it is prime ministers rather than presidents who get measured against each other. But these are uncommon exercises, nothing remotely approaching the torrent of American presidential rankings (Azzi and Hillmer 2021; Dutil 2023; Granatstein and Hillmer 1999; IRPP 2003; Richards 2020; Theakston, 't Hart, and Walter 2013). Even more uncommon are those occasions when non-US scholars play the *American* presidential rating game. A rare example of such an undertaking is the compilation coordinated by the London-based presidential scholar, Iwan Morgan, more than a decade ago (Morgan 2011, 2014). In short, the rating of America's presidents is, like Gaelic hurling, a sport enjoyed only on the home field.

With this said, it is at least a minor curiosity that in Canada scholarly efforts have never been bent to the business of trying to rank-order, in a comparative and systematic fashion, the "meaning" for *Canadian* national interests of America's presidents. Although there have been many excellent studies of the relationships between individual presidents and their prime ministerial counterparts (Azzi and Hillmer 2016; Clarkson 1985; Cullinane and Farr 2022; Mackenzie 2014; Martin 1982; McKercher 2016; McKercher and Stevenson 2024; Perras 1998), there is nothing in Canada replicating what Morgan and his colleagues sought to do in the UK. This is surprising because of the generally conceded reality that so much of what the US does, at home and abroad, is likelier to impact Canadian interests than the interests of other foreign countries.

While it may be that the complex nature of North American interdependence means that there are numerous foci of decision-making in the bilateral relationship, no one

would deny the significance of the executive. Canadians have sensed for a long time just how important American presidents can be to their national wellbeing. Moreover, ever since the rise of Trump to national and international political prominence, this sense has become magnified (Haglund 2021), to the point that some Canadians, like Scott Reid, argue that American presidential elections are more relevant to Canadian interests than *Canadian* national elections. A recent report of a high-level group of Canadian foreign policy analysts noted that in the return of Donald Trump to the Oval Office, "[o]ur country faces the most serious threat to its sovereignty and economic prosperity since the Second World War" (Expert Group on Canada-US Relations (2025, 1).

In light of the importance of American presidents to Canadian national interests, it is surprising to discover the total absence of scholarly attention given to the task of systematically rating Canada's presidents. Such a systematic and transitive assessment of presidential impact upon Canadian interests could provide the sort of "context" that political scientist Paul Pierson calls indispensable for explanation in social science, enabling analysts to see things they might otherwise have missed and thus to avert the "scientific disaster" that would unfold in the absence of "defining locational information" (Pierson 2004, 168–69).

The lack of such locational information in respect of Canada's presidents can be ascribed partly to the historical complications stemming from Canada's constitutional links with Great Britain. Until Canada became fully "independent," some might argue, "Canadian" interests were British ones, and vice versa. Thus, according to one way of dating the transition, i.e., from the founding of modern Canada in 1867, even if Canadians wanted to compile such a comparative list, it would have to be an incomplete one, starting not with George Washington but with the 17th president, Andrew Johnson. Yet others would deem the constitutional transformation to have occurred more recently, further truncating and thereby rendering such a list less relevant. Such criticisms, however, miss the mark: Canada as a political entity dates from the onset of European colonization in the early 17th century, long preceding the administration of even George Washington. Therefore, it makes little sense for anyone to deny the reality that American presidents, obviously to varying degrees, can and do have an impact upon "Canadian" interests, and have done so ever since 1789.

A more important reason for the absence of the kind of defining locational information Pierson associates with context is one rooted in assumptions of North American "specialness," the argument here being that the peculiar quality of "complex interdependence" has rendered the Canadian-American relationship one in which there are so many points of cross-border "influence" as to make it unwarranted to single out the executive branch as the most relevant decision-making entity in bilateral affairs (Hale and Anderson 2021; Keohane and Nye 1974, 1989; Stuart and Behiels, 2010).[4]

Yet there is another, perhaps even more compelling, reason for Canadians to have absented themselves from trying to rank order the American presidents: it is hard for anyone, Americans included, to do this, for reasons we discover in the section below.

The Presidential Rating Game and Its Problems

While there have been often heated debates in the United States about the quality of national leadership from George Washington's administration on (Anderson 1980;

Brookhiser 1996; Cunliffe 1958; Longmore 1988; Schwartz 1987),[5] the systematic and *comparative* assessing of presidential performance across generations only began to take place following the Second World War. The first was conducted by the eminent historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., who in 1948 surveyed 55 experts (adopting a methodology sometimes labeled the "Delphi technique") and on the basis of their judgments, produced a rank-ordered list of all chief executives (save William Henry Harrison and James Garfield), from the administration of Washington to that of Harry Truman.[6] The list was published in *Life* that same year; 14 years later, Schlesinger produced an updated and expanded version of it for the *New York Times Magazine* (Schlesinger 1962). Subsequently, numerous other stabs at rankings continued to be made at an accelerating rate—so many that the ratings game developed into a veritable national pastime (Maranell 1970; Maranell and Dodder 1970).

It is a game whose standings demonstrate a great deal of consistency at the very top and the very bottom, while in between nothing has been constant except change (Pfiffner 2003). Routinely, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Franklin D. Roosevelt (in shifting order) rank as the greatest among the "greats." They are sometimes joined by a few other greats, even if none of the interlopers ever manage to displace any of the top trio (T. A. Bailey 1966; Kynerd 1971; Landy and Milkis 2000; Riccards 2012; Rottinghaus and Vaughn 2024; Sokolsky 1964). Just as routinely, the category of failed presidents always seems to include Andrew Johnson, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan, the cellar-dwelling trio (Boulard 2015; Hamilton 1964; Skowronek 1993; Strauss 2016).[7] Where one encounters real excitement in this perennial ratings contest is in the clusters separating the Lincolns from the Buchanans, clusters grouping the near greats, the average, and the mediocre, variously pigeon-holed by scholars and pundits (C-SPAN 2021; Faber and Faber 2000; Felzenberg 2008; Pederson and McLaurin 1987; Reedy and Johnson 2009; Ridings 2001; Taranto and Leo 2004). On this latter point, much disagreement exists.

What is noteworthy is not that there is such disagreement concerning the ranking of the majority of the presidents, but that there has managed to be such agreement about who should occupy both the top and the bottom rungs of the rankings ladder (Grendstad 2008). The standards of presidential performance tend to be anything but scientifically "certifiable," something to be expected given the subjective nature of what is being appraised: the slippery concept of presidential "leadership" (Abbott 1998; Burns 1978, 1984; Greenstein 1998; Kellerman 1984; Neustadt 1990; Nye 2013; Rockman 1984; Wildavsky and Ellis 1989). For this reason, a few scholars have thrown up their hands in dismay and pronounced a pox upon all who would propose to produce a rank-ordered list of presidential leaders (Bose and Landis 2003; Skidmore 2004).

The subjectivism of leadership is complemented at times by another, only slightly less subjective, gauge of assessment: "effectiveness." Some rankers understand this quality to be a function of the chief executive's ability to preside over national prosperity, and since it is easier to obtain metrics for prosperity than it is for leadership, they employ the former as proxy for the latter, and concentrate on data attesting to the economy's state of health during the administrations of the presidents under examination (Berlemann and Enkelmann 2014; Curry and Morris 2010; Dolan, Frendreis, and Tatalovich 2009). Some, holding the safeguarding of national security to be the most genuine test of effectiveness, turn to success in war and other geopolitical confrontations as the best measure of presidential performance (Adler 2003; Dawson 1993; King and McConnell 2020; Mueller 1973). Still

others rely on *vox populi*, making public opinion the ultimate arbiter, on the grounds that in a democracy, if the public thinks a president is great (or otherwise), then that judgment should suffice for scholars and pundits (Cohen 2003; Edwards 1990). Relying upon public opinion to sort out performers is just a different means of getting at the abovementioned distinction between the economic and foreign-policy (especially war and crises) standards of judging effectiveness, with the additional twist being the injection of a more finely calibrated "issue salience," in which judgments are based not solely on how a leader handles either the economy or foreign-policy crises, but rather on how he handles other issues adjudged by survey respondents as important to them (Cavari 2019; Edwards, Mitchell, and Welch 1995).

Sometimes, however, favorability ratings are not based on output indicators of past performance, but rather on *input* indicators of past or anticipated future performance. Here, the always aleatory game of rating presidents becomes an even chancier enterprise. This is because of the great variety of inputs that can be invoked to support comparative and transitive assessments linked to an individual's makeup. Many scholars see these inputs as traceable to personality conceived as abnormal psychology; but not all do, and one can find in the scholarly writings works that link effectiveness to what might seem to be such "normal" indicators as the age, the IQ, and even the height [!] of presidents (McCann 1995; Simonton 2006; Sommers 2002).

Mostly, the inputs of greatest interest are the psychological traits that can testify to a president's "character." For some scholars, character is the fountainhead of presidential behavior, thus must be of surpassing importance when it comes to rating presidents (Bailey 1981; Barber 1992). "Good" people in the White House make for good leaders, and "bad" ones for bad leaders: this seems to be a common assumption of many and is an assumption that accounts for recent years' anxiety levels in Canada (and elsewhere) being elevated by Donald Trump (Drezner 2020).[8] Common or not, it is also a controversial assumption.

For example, consider the case of Woodrow Wilson, the president who, prior to the era of Trump, attracted the most scholarly critical attention on the part of analysts who believed a) he possessed a defective character because of profound psychological maladjustments, and b) that disastrous policy outcomes flowed from those maladjustments (Brodie 1957; Freud and Bullitt 1967; George and George 1956; R. C. Tucker 1977). As Wilson's most prolific biographer and defender, Arthur Link, wryly commented, for "a mentally unbalanced person, Wilson had a remarkable career. Somehow, he managed to make distinguished contributions to the four separate fields of scholarship, higher education, domestic politics, and diplomacy" (Link 1967, 93). Obviously, Link did not believe Wilson to have been unbalanced, but his words remind us of some of the reasons why we should not put too much stock in the correlation between character and effectiveness. At the best of times, it is far from easy for a psychiatrist to get inside the head of the man or woman reclining on their office couch, but when it comes to psychoanalyzing presidents, the challenge is even more daunting, not just because most of them will have already shuffled off their mortal coil by the time of the "analysis."[9]

To reiterate the point, whether construed in terms of policy outputs or character inputs, it is far from obvious that scholars can agree on the standards to apply when assessing presidential impact. This does not mean that attempts to judge and rank-order performance are bound to be futile. It just means that they are bound to be difficult. One

of the pitfalls most in need of avoiding is the temptation to conflate popularity with performance. It is this last point that makes the Kennedy case so intriguing from the perspective of rating Canada's presidents. Kennedy was one of those rare presidents (Truman was another) who was known actually to play the presidential rating game himself (Schlesinger 1997, 181). But what makes him so interesting for us is the paradox of a president so well-liked in Canada yet so often associated with the visitation of great tribulation upon America's northern neighbor.

Revisiting "Fear and Loathing" in Canadian–American Relations

From a remove of more than 60 years, it seems strange that some Canadians appear to have believed, at the time the troublesome events of the early 1960s were unfolding, that their country was facing a dire challenge to its sovereignty. Making even stranger the depiction of this period as a time of "fear and loathing" across a border that symbolizes amicable international relations was the high favorability rating among the Canadian public of John F. Kennedy, the very figure whom the alarmists were fingering for the demise of their country's sovereign status. What does the controversy have to tell us about the complexity of the business of rating Canada's presidents? This section begins by examining the source of the ruckus, which has come to be remembered as a Canadian-American disagreement over the best means of defending the North American continent against the threat of long-range Soviet bombers armed with nuclear weapons. Usually, the ruckus is recalled as the "Bomarc crisis" of 1963.

What gave this crisis its piquancy was that it featured credible allegations about American "interference" in Canadian electoral affairs. Those allegations swirled around suspicions that the president was, by early 1963, attempting to engineer the removal from office of his Canadian counterpart, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker (Ghent 1979; Granatstein 1989b). Indeed, in early April of that year, Diefenbaker *was* removed from office, by the Canadian electorate, after a bitter campaign that is commonly recollected as having been primarily about nuclear weapons. The specific question was whether to equip Canada's armed forces with warheads for weapons that same government had only recently acquired but had been consistently refusing to arm with the nuclear munitions necessary for them to be usable as intended. To many defense and foreign policy intellectuals, as well as to members of the country's political class, to the US and some of its important European partners, the delay in assuring that the costly weapons could function as planned was noteworthy; in the measured words of one scholar writing nearly four decades after the crisis, "[b]etween 1960 and 1963, the Diefenbaker government followed an incoherent nuclear policy at times implying the [nuclear warheads] would be acquired, at other times questioning whether any nuclear commitments had, in fact, been made" (Richter 2002, 9).

Admittedly, for the Canadian electorate, as it was heading off to the polling booths on April 8, 1963, there were other issues that took precedence over recondite questions of ordnance, no matter how important, if befuddling, those latter might have appeared to be. Survey data reveal that voters who would decide the fate of Diefenbaker's minority Conservative government had different worries in mind, especially pocketbook issues related to the country's sputtering economy (Laulicht and Paul 1963). It is not that the voters lacked views on nuclear weaponry; it is just that they did not place the nuclear

conundrum very high up on their list of anxieties. In fact, among those Canadians who *had* formed a distinct view on nuclear warheads, many more preferred that the country's armed forces have those atomic arrows in their quiver than did not.[10] But it was not the nuclear issue that was mobilizing them to vote, despite the aspirations of many disarmament activists that it *should* have been (McMahon 2009).

But even if the public might have had other concerns, the country's political class and its strategists really *were* singularly focused on defense policy and upon the weapons systems required to give operational significance to the policy, and that is how the electoral stakes were framed, by both the incumbent, Diefenbaker, and his Liberal challenger, Lester B. Pearson. Never before in times of peace had the country's political class and its strategists been as agitated by weapons-acquisitions controversies as they became during the closing and chaotic final stage of the Diefenbaker prime ministership, which had begun in June 1957 and would culminate in the election of April 1963.[11] For the experts and the politicians, the "crisis" reflected in their debates has routinely (if misleadingly) been symbolized by one particular weapon, the *M*-99 anti-bomber ground-based missile known as Bomarc.[12] In reality, the crisis was about far more than this single weapons system. Some aspects of the crisis had little to do with military matters *per se*, and much more to do with questions of "national identity" and partisan infighting in federal politics than they did with Canada's defense policy.

For the past six decades, deciphering the meaning of the Bomarc crisis has been an ongoing scholarly enterprise. Some students of the crisis have interpreted the upheaval of those years as a singular and distressing failure of executive leadership in Canada on items affecting the "vital interests" of the state. Others have seen the controversy through the lens of Canadian–American relations and have envisioned it as constituting either a) an unwarranted and intolerable interference of the United States into the domestic affairs of Canadians, or b) an inexplicable and dishonorable dereliction of duty on the part of a Canadian ally presumably pledged to the common defense, not just of North America, but the entire West. Still others distill from the crisis lessons applicable to promoting "proper" civil–military relations in the Canadian democratic system, with battle lines here drawn between scholars who worry that Canada's military (chiefly, its air force) had arrogated to itself responsibilities best left in the hands of the elected officials, versus those who favored the triumph of professional expertise over populist emotionalism.

First, some discussion of the *dramatis machinae* in the crisis is required. The cast comprised four leading non-corporeal actors. They were the eponymous missiles themselves, the Bomarcs, accompanied by three other weapons systems, consisting of interceptors (the CF-101B Voodoo), strike/reconnaissance aircraft (the CF-104 Starfighter), and battlefield rockets (the Honest John). With the exception of the latter, which was fielded by the Canadian Army, the systems were operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Of the four, two (the Voodoo and the Starfighter) were considered able, if only "sub-optimally," to function without nuclear armaments; the Bomarc and Honest John, on the other hand, depended upon being fitted with such armaments if they were to make any military sense (McLin 1967). These four weapons systems dominated the debate over whether the Canadian government was effectively bound to arm with nuclear warheads those platforms it had come recently to possess.[13]

The four weapons systems had been obtained for two theaters of the Cold War. One pair, the Bomarc and the Voodoo, had been acquired for the defense of North America

against attack by Soviet manned bombers; the other pair, the Starfighter and the Honest John, had been procured for service with Canadian military units deployed to Europe, where they were intended to respond to armed incursions on NATO territory made by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies (Clearwater 1998). They had all been obtained during Diefenbaker's time in office; none had been married up with their nuclear munitions by the time Diefenbaker left office. And in that puzzling discrepancy between lavishing planners' attention and public funds on military kit without bothering to make that equipment functional, hangs a tale.

For many in Canada (and elsewhere), there has been at least a tacit assumption that involvement with nuclear weaponry was not then an important aspect of the country's military posture in the post-Hiroshima era—an assumption that recent scholarship reveals, empirically, to be mistaken (Colburn and Sayle 2020; Sayle 2023). The reality is that Canada *was* present at the creation of the atomic bomb and became an important contributor to the construction and maintenance of America's nuclear arsenal during the Cold War (Keating and Pratt 1988; Simpson 2001). It also derived considerable economic gain from its cooperation with the US. Yet Canadian policymakers hardly gazed upon the country's nuclear relationship with the US as only a financial one. Ottawa also felt a compelling moral duty during the developing struggle with the Soviet Union to play its part by serving as a reliable supplier of uranium and cooperating closely with the US on continental air defense (Conant 1962; Jockel 1987).

Moreover, it was a duty that extended far beyond the defense of North America, as starting in the mid-1950s, officials in Ottawa came to accept that safeguarding the country's European allies would depend upon the kind of deterrence that could only be provided by America's nuclear arsenal. This duty later played an important part in the nuclear crisis that eventually swept the Diefenbaker government from power. Because of the wider transatlantic context of Canada's nuclear experience, it really is a misnomer to refer to the early 1960s' downturn in Canada–US relations as the "Bomarc crisis," since that anti-bomber missile was only one of four *dramatis machinae*.

Whatever the crisis is called, its seeds had been planted prior to the Kennedy administration's ascension to power, for during the Eisenhower years pressures grew upon Canada to integrate nuclear warheads into weapons the country's military was employing for the related tasks of North American and European defense and deterrence. But it was left to the Kennedy team to deal with the seeds' harvest. There were three important temporal stages through which the upheaval in bilateral relations occurred. The first of these came in late September 1961. The second arrived in early May 1962. And the third, most commented-upon moment was during the Cuban missile crisis of late October 1962. Because the state of animosity that developed between Diefenbaker and Kennedy is usually considered to have been unmatched in the history of Canadian-American leaders' relations with each other,[14] it might be tempting to believe that personal incompatibilities between the two men rendered it impossible for them to work together harmoniously.

Yet to conclude that would be wrong. The first meeting between the two leaders, in Washington on February 20, 1961 ("Memorandum of Conversation" 1994, 13: 1147), augured a continuation of the relatively harmonious relationship that Diefenbaker had had with Kennedy's predecessor, Eisenhower (Heeney 1967; McKercher and Stevenson 2020). Only in hindsight does it seem that, *all along*, it had been impossible for the young,

urbane, and liberal American president to get along successfully with his older, populist, and conservative Canadian counterpart (Robinson 1989).[15] The spoiling of relations required events, not attitudinal predispositions, to become a reality—or to phrase it more accurately, those attitudinal predispositions required events to trigger them.

The first trigger came with the late September 1961 publication in *Newsweek* of a story in which President Kennedy confirmed that nuclear negotiations had been underway with Canada since the previous month. Diefenbaker was outraged with the story's publication (McKercher 2016, 102), fearful of electoral retribution from a Canadian public whose anti-nuclear sentiments he consistently overestimated, due to his populist-engendered distrust of the "experts" who presumed to have developed "scientific" methods for gauging the public's mood. Instead, he trusted what his own eyeballs related to him about that mood, which he saw reflected in the many anti-nuclear letters and telegrams that crossed his desk; in fact, what those messages really demonstrated was the problem of "selection bias," as the vast majority of the communiqués had been systematically recruited by anti-nuclear activists (McMahon 2009).

It was not the negotiations to which Diefenbaker objected; on the contrary, he was promoting them. But he did not want the Canadian public to know this. What enraged him was that Kennedy's confirmation of the *Newsweek* story's accuracy put him in a potentially difficult political position, since it was well known that the US was hoping that Canada's newly acquired Voodoo interceptors would be outfitted with nuclear-tipped air-to-air missiles so as to optimize their effectiveness. Diefenbaker, however, preferred temporizing to optimizing, and chose to outfit the planes with the conventional G.A.R. Falcon instead of the nuclear MB-1 Genie used by the USAF. He was worried that the opposition Liberals, at this time vocally anti-nuclear, would reap political advantage from any decision of his to proceed with obtaining nuclear munitions for the Voodoos and the other three weapons systems that had either been acquired or were in the process of being acquired.

Presidential confirmation of the *Newsweek* story's veracity, the prime minister was certain, would portray him as a Washington lackey. It did not help matters that Diefenbaker convinced himself that Kennedy had *himself* leaked the news upon which the confirmation was based. As one account of the relationship between prime minister and president has put it, Diefenbaker's "sudden change of heart [was] remarkable. Having long attacked advocates of disarmament as being unrealistic, Diefenbaker now cast himself as a champion of arms limitation. It was really no coincidence that the prime minister's newfound faith in disarmament came just as he needed a defense policy that did not cast him as a vassal of the American president" (McKercher 2016, 103–104).

Events of May 1962 constituted the second nail in the coffin of presidential-prime ministerial amity. Kennedy had, starting with his visit to Ottawa the previous May, managed to upset his Canadian counterpart for a pair of reasons unrelated to nuclear weapons. The president thought Canada should become more involved in hemispheric affairs and publicly urged Ottawa to consider joining the Organization of American States (OAS) (Address 1961). Just as bad from Diefenbaker's perspective, the president wanted Britain to join the European Common Market, as part of the administration's "grand design" for the future of transatlantic relations (Winand 1993), a project that, in Diefenbaker's view of the world, constituted a challenge to Canadian national identity, given his conviction that a British "counterweight" to American influence was essential for

safeguarding any number of Canadian ontological-security interests.[16] Not for him was the Liberals' – and especially Pearson's—growing interest in developing a broader, continental European, counterweight that for its functioning would require closer British integration with neighbors in Western Europe. Instead, the Diefenbaker vision of a happier world for Canada was one in which Britain was to play the central political and economic role in Canadian life that it had once played, when it was at the height of its power (Granatstein 1989a).

On May 4, 1962, the retiring American ambassador to Canada, Livingston Merchant, dropped in on the prime minister to pay a farewell call, and was startled when the latter told him that he had kept an American briefing memo from the year before—a memo that had been inadvertently left behind in Diefenbaker's office by Kennedy advisor Walt Whitman Rostow, following the previous May's meeting between president and prime minister. Rather than return the memo, Diefenbaker had held onto it, sensing there might be political gain for him in its possession. Now, with a federal election looming for June 1962, the time had come to take advantage of some of talking points Rostow had assembled for the president in that year-old memo, urging that Canada be "pressed" on the OAS and some other questions (but *not*, however, the nuclear one). Warming to his subject, Diefenbaker told Merchant that he intended to use the "Rostow memorandum" in the upcoming election, the dominant campaign theme of which, he menaced, was going to be Canada–US relations (McKercher 2016, 132–133).

When word of this unusual diplomatic *tête-à-tête* was transmitted to Washington, the president was both bemused and annoyed. Bemused, because, as he remarked to an aide, he could not understand why the Canadian prime minister did not do what any normal leader would have done if in the possession of a possibly useful, and potentially embarrassing, document belonging to another country: make a photocopy of it and return the original. But Kennedy was outraged by what he clearly sensed was a threat. In the words of one Canadian historian, "Diefenbaker's outrageous conduct deservedly cost him his relationship with Kennedy, who felt, with good reason, that the prime minister was 'a prick,' 'a shit,' and a 'fucker.' Indeed, the president supposedly spoke of 'cutting [Diefenbaker's] balls off'" (McKercher 2016, 134).[17]

The third and final nail began to be inserted into the coffin lid in late October 1962 and was banged snugly into place by the end of January 1963. The progression was triggered by the prime minister's delayed support for the president's decision to blockade Cuba, as a means of getting the Soviets to withdraw the 60 medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles they had been installing on the island since July (Munton and Welch 1997; Radchenko and Zubok 2023). At first, Diefenbaker, miffed because he received neither consultation on nor advanced notification of Kennedy's plan for getting the missiles removed, hinted that he would feel more comfortable taking the president's word about the missiles if its veracity could be confirmed by an independent investigation conducted by the United Nations. To compound things, Diefenbaker, in what has been termed his "three-day stutter" (McKercher 2016, 173–174), delayed until Thursday 25 October placing Canada's NORAD forces on DEFCON 3 alert, even though America's own military had been placed on that alert status by the time of the president's speech to the nation on Monday 22 October.[18]

Although routinely billed as a "crisis" in Canadian–American relations, the stutter turned out not to be a problem for North American defense cooperation (McKercher

2011) because Canada's NORAD forces, as well as its army and naval units, *were* rapidly placed on higher alert by the defense minister, Douglas Harkness, even though the prime minister was unaware of this (Haydon 1993; Urban 2015). What the Cuban missile crisis *did* do, however, was twofold. First, it plunged the Diefenbaker-Kennedy personal relationship into hitherto unplumbed depths out of which it could not climb. Second, it ignited the most intense phase in the running debate within the Canadian political class over whether to furnish nuclear armaments for the four weapons systems. The war scare of October 1962 had concentrated Canadian decision-making minds; the world had suddenly become more dangerous, and doubts rose as to whether the prime minister fully appreciated the danger. For its part, the public sided strongly with the way President Kennedy had handled the challenge; a survey in early November conducted by the Canadian Peace Research Institute recorded that close to 80% of Canadians supported the president's actions (Nash 1990, 204).

As for the country's political class, the October events signaled that it was time to restart nuclear negotiations with the Americans, but on the condition that they be kept top secret. On November 20, 1962, a team of American negotiators arrived in Ottawa to begin those secret talks. Shortly after the American negotiating team arrived, the now-retired ambassador, Merchant, returned to the capital as a special emissary of the president. In a meeting with Basil Robinson, the prime minister's special assistant for External Affairs, Merchant explained how upset the Kennedy administration had become with Diefenbaker's behavior, which it saw as damaging to the bilateral relationship ("Memorandum of Conversation" 1994, 13: 1190–1191). Diefenbaker, aware that most Canadians appeared to prefer Kennedy's leadership to his own, was hopeful of finding some means by which the nuclear-acquisition circle could be squared so as to allow Canada to honor commitments it *had* made. He took some comfort later in the month from his own reading of talks held in the Bahamas between Kennedy and the British prime minister, Harold Macmillan—talks to which Diefenbaker had managed to get himself invited, to the president's dismay (McKercher 2024).

The major issue on the Kennedy-Macmillan agenda in the Bahamian capital, Nassau, was the future of Britain's own nuclear deterrent, suddenly put at risk by the open secret that the US would shortly be announcing the cancellation of the Skybolt air-to-ground missile. The British had been counting upon Skybolt to extend the life of their V-bomber deterrent, enabling the planes to launch nuclear warheads at Soviet targets from a far safer distance than immediately overhead.[19] At this time, bomber-launched nuclear weapons were Britain's *sole* deterrent. At Nassau, Kennedy made a commitment to Macmillan to supply Polaris missiles for the Royal Navy's nuclear-propelled submarines, thereby reinvigorating the British deterrent and averting a crisis in Anglo-American relations (Neustadt 1999).

But in heading off one alliance crisis, the Nassau meeting contributed to another. Diefenbaker took away from his meeting with the American and British leaders two impressions, which he later made public in an extraordinary (and lengthy) speech to Parliament on January 25, 1963. The first was a confirmation of his hunch that the era of the manned bomber was on the verge of expiring; that, at least, is how he read the Kennedy decision to substitute one means of deterrence (submarine-launched ballistic missiles) for another (bomber-launched missiles). This confirmation played into his hope that he might yet extricate himself

from the North American conundrum, on the grounds that neither the Bomarc nor the Voodoo was going to be viable much longer, and the Skybolt cancellation, in his view, proved this.

The second was his belief that the discussion at Nassau about creating some sort of novel multilateral nuclear force (MLF) constituted a "change in the philosophy of defence,"[20] because in placing a NATO deterrent on either surface vessels or submarines (there were different versions of how this mooted multilateral force was to function), Diefenbaker sensed that it might be possible to do away with his Starfighter and Honest John problems as well. In the apt words of one student of the Bomarc crisis, "[h]aving employed the Skybolt cancellation to suggest the obsolescence of NORAD's Bomarc, Diefenbaker now used the Nassau agreement to question the relevance of NATO's Starfighter" (Ghent 1976, 232).

The Starfighter and Honest John problems, however, did not go away; neither did the Bomarc and Voodoo problems. Instead, things grew infinitely worse for Diefenbaker in the wake of his speech in the House of Commons on January 25, 1963 (Parliament of Canada 1963, 3127–3136). In this address, the prime minister conceded that a commitment *had* been made to outfit the weapons systems with nuclear warheads—but *only* for the European theater. Further negotiations would have to occur before a similar outcome could be reached for the two North American systems, details of which remained to be worked out. Here, Diefenbaker revealed the existence of those heretofore top-secret discussions that had been underway for the previous two months. He also hinted that technological changes were rendering more questionable the utility of placing so many air-defense eggs in the anti-bomber basket, and he intimated that from his discussions with Kennedy and Macmillan at Nassau, he knew that NATO would fundamentally revise its approach to deterrence.

This last claim was what really riled up American officials and did the most to trigger the surprising American response, which came five days after Diefenbaker's speech in the House and created a temporary uproar about interference in Canada's electoral affairs. As a testament to how different "interference" used to look in that more innocent age, consider the gravamen of the American response: the allegation was that the prime minister had played fast and loose with the facts. Nor was the method of "interfering" terribly dastardly—certainly not when contrasted with today's manifold allegations centering on attempts made by China and India to influence Canadian elections.[21] But in 1963, such was the normative strength of a Canada–US diplomatic culture suffused with the tenets of a "quiet diplomacy," abjuring any public airing of bilateral grievances (Bow 2009; McKercher 2012), that the American reaction did possess shock value.

That reaction took the form of a press release issued by the State Department on January 30. In it, departmental officials who were normally both exceedingly well-informed about and well-disposed toward Canada made a series of "corrections" to the prime minister's January 25 address. Drafters Rufus Smith, Willis Armstrong, and Col. Lawrence Legere especially were concerned to dispel two assertions that the prime minister had made. They stressed that defenses against manned bombers (viz., nuclear-armed Bomarcs and Voodoos) were still essential, and they reiterated that the Nassau talks, which in any case were not about the defense of the North American continent, had not constituted a revision of NATO deterrence policy undertaken behind the back of the allies on that *other* continent, Europe.

In short, the State Department press release accused the prime minister of telling a lie. Needless to say, Diefenbaker saw an opportunity to rally the public to his side against this assault upon his honor and, by extension, Canada's, and for a very short time it looked as if the release had been a terrible blunder for American diplomacy. He recalled the Canadian ambassador to Washington, Charles Ritchie, in protest, the first time a prime minister had taken such a step. And he exulted at what he thought was the gift the State Department had just presented him: a wedge issue that he was sure would gin up Canadian nationalistic concerns about ontological security, or what some termed the country's basal "anti-Americanism" (Granatstein 1996). To an aide, the prime minister jubilated, "We've got them. Everything's going to be OK" (Stevenson 2014, 27).

However, far from rallying the country behind him, the sharpening crisis over nuclear weapons split his cabinet, engendered the resignation of the defense minister, Harkness, the following week, and led to Pearson's putting forward a motion of non-confidence in the House on February 4. The next day, the government fell, and an election was called, the main campaign plank of which for Diefenbaker would be his standing up to Washington's bullying (with a little help from its Liberal friends). Although the campaign went better for him than many expected it could, it did not go well enough. On April 8, 1963 Canada had a new Liberal government and a new prime minister, Pearson. And the Bomarc crisis, which had been festering for nearly half a dozen years, came to an end.

Conclusions: What the Case of JFK Tells Us About Rating Presidents ("Canada's" Included)

Three principal conclusions emerge from the analysis in this article. The first applies equally to Americans rating their own presidents as it does to Canadians who might be tempted to rank-order *their* "presidents:" it is never a wise idea to use presidential popularity as a surrogate for presidential effectiveness or impact. If the alarmists who imagined the Kennedy government was subverting Canada's very sovereignty were correct, then any assessment of this particular administration's meaning for Canadian interests must logically be one eliminating the employment of public opinion as a definitive basis of judgment. To put this matter in contemporary context, Canadian public opinion was as negative toward Donald Trump's first presidency as it was positive toward Kennedy's (Chase 2020), and yet the highly popular Kennedy would rank lower than Trump as a Canadian president, on the grounds that threatening Canada's sovereignty was a much more serious offense than simply annoying the country's population through generally boorish behavior, or through the specific imposition of tariffs upon the country's steel and aluminum exports to the US on specious "national-security" grounds.[22]

This brings us to the second concluding point: any judgment rendered on a president's impact upon a country's (whether it be America's, Canada's, or some other land's) "national interest" requires very careful assessment of both the conceptualization of the national interest *and* the impact that time and changing circumstances must have upon that conceptualization. On the matter of determining what exactly such an interest might be, a single article cannot do justice to such a weighty issue; scholars have spent entire books interpreting that interest (Holloway 2006; Krasner 1978; Trubowitz 1998). Here, it need only be observed that most analysts who employ the national-interest rubric do so

with two postulated aims uppermost in mind: the enhancement of prosperity; and the preservation of security (with the latter embracing not only physical but also ontological security).

The second matter relates to how the passage of time manages often to transform an otherwise immutable national interest. When presidents are assessed in terms of *American* interests, we have already discovered above that while presidential rankings might demonstrate stability at both the very top and the very bottom, there is a great deal of variation in the spaces between: scholars and others who play the ratings game disagree on how they should rank-order the vast majority of the presidents. This is unavoidable, because the passage of time leads to the unearthing of new material upon which judgments are based, but perhaps more importantly, it generates new ways of judging "old" material. In the US case, perhaps the best example of how a president's "stock" can become revalued in the marketplace of assessment is Herbert Hoover. At one time widely reviled as the epitome of presidential ineffectiveness, he was subsequently reimagined as a progressive whose fight against the Depression never received its just due from the assessors (Krog and Tanner 1984; O'Brien and Rosen 1981; Romasco 1965, 1975; Wilson 1975).

And this leads to the final observation, regarding the curious case of John F. Kennedy as a Canadian president. The "Bomarc crisis" was not just about one weapons system; it was subsumed in a set of other grievances maintained by the Diefenbaker government against the Kennedy White House concerning ontological more than physical security. Diefenbaker regarded Kennedy's urging Canada to join the OAS and his support for British integration into Europe as antithetical to Canada's sense of its place in the world, thus menacing its ontological security. The passage of time, however, suggests that Kennedy was more prescient in appreciating Canadian interests than was Diefenbaker himself. Canada did join the OAS, in 1990, and its having done so is generally assessed as having been *supportive* of the national interest. Diefenbaker also resented Kennedy's advocacy of British entry into the European Common Market. Again, later generations of Canadians would come to see that Britain's membership in the eventual European Union was hardly antithetical to Canadian interests, and though they had no vote in 2016's Brexit referendum, Canadians would have been happier had the country chosen to remain in the EU (McGoogan 2017).

This leaves the question of "meddling" in Canada's domestic politics. Scholars looking back at Kennedy's impact upon Canada at the time of the Bomarc crisis have been as divided as the political class and the federal bureaucracy were in the run-up to the Canadian election of 1963. One theme that has garnered most attention is the question of responsibility for both the terrible relationship between Kennedy and Diefenbaker and, relatedly, the "cause" of the latter's downfall. Some insist that it was the American leader who bore principal responsibility for his rival's ouster while others see the prime minister's undoing as self-inflicted. To this longstanding interrogation as to whether Diefenbaker was "pushed" instead of "jumping" on his own,[23] perhaps the last word goes to historian Asa McKercher: "American officials had little love for Diefenbaker, and some had helped to precipitate his downfall. Rather than being guilty of premeditated murder, the Americans had, at worst, committed manslaughter, but had done so out of self-defense" (McKercher 2016, 204).

From the analysis in this article, it is not yet clear how one should assess JFK as a Canadian president. And this is the whole point: until a scholar attempts systematically to rank-order, according to a structured set of postulated security interests, those "Canadian presidents," situating Kennedy among them would not just be difficult, it would be impossible, notwithstanding his high favorability rating among Canadians.

Notes

1. By a quirk of tabulation, American presidents are enumerated not in terms of the number of years served in the White House but rather on whether they have had continuous administrations. Thus, while Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected four times and served from 1933 to 1945, he is listed as only one president, the 32nd. By contrast, Grover Cleveland, who was elected twice (in 1884 and 1892) and served for eight years, is recorded as both the 22nd and the 24th president. Donald Trump is the only other case of a single individual being enumerated as two presidents.
2. Useful benchmarks for the period since the Civil War are provided by Zakaria (1998), who dates the onset of the era of executive dominance to the late 1880s, with Benjamin Harrison, as well as by Schlesinger (1973), who holds it to be of much more recent vintage, following the Second World War, with Harry Truman.
3. What one does sometimes find in Latin America are different kinds of presidential ratings, done cross-nationally in a contemporary context, rather than longitudinally through a single-country case. See, for example, Directorio Legislativo (2022).
4. For this perspective, which has the effect of "de-centering" the executive in decision-making regarding the bilateral relationship, see Keohane and Nye (1974, 1989).
5. It is sometimes forgotten how even George Washington became an object of vituperation in the republic's early years, prior to his getting, in the words of Anderson (1980), "promoted to glory."
6. While the 9th president, Harrison, is almost always left out of comparative rankings due to the extreme brevity (one month!) of his tenure in office, the 20th, Garfield, sometimes makes an appearance on the lists, for reasons related in Peskin (1977, 2012) and in Ackerman (2003).
7. Usually, the latter is accorded the dubious distinction of the worst ever on the grounds of his having "lost" the country by failing to prevent the secession of the South. But at least two prominent scholars argue that Franklin Pierce was worse, with Skowronek (1993, 177) terming Buchanan's immediate predecessor "[p]erhaps the most colossal failure in presidential history," and Hamilton (1964, 187) judging that the president "who had the best opportunity to keep the Union permanently intact without war was neither [Millard] Fillmore nor Buchanan but the genial and pathetic Pierce."
8. For an intriguing analysis of what actually makes a leader a "bad" one, see Abbott (2009).
9. A judicious assessment of the challenges, as well as the potentialities, of attempting vicariously and even posthumously to penetrate the presidential psyche, is Ross (1982).
10. A March 1963 poll conducted by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion revealed that 57% of respondents wanted Canada's military to be equipped with nuclear warheads, versus 35% who were opposed and the remainder unsure on the matter. That same month, a Gallup poll found that 34% of voters worried most about unemployment, compared with only 11% who put nuclear weapons atop their list of concerns. To further complicate matters, a poll conducted by Samuel Lubell in the closing days of the campaign revealed that just as many Canadians believed their prime minister to be *in favor* of acquiring nuclear warheads as thought he was against (Nash 1990, Eaton 2005).
11. Diefenbaker won three elections in a row, in 1957, 1958, and 1962; the first and last saw his Progressive Conservatives gain a minority, but in 1958, they won a massive majority, capturing 208 out of a total 265 seats.

12. An acronym derived from the US entity that developed it, the Boeing-Michigan Aeronautical Research Center.
13. There were other nuclear-related issues in play, including the permanent storage of nuclear warheads at USAF bases in Newfoundland and Labrador, which had been acquired by the US under the terms of the historic "destroyers-for-bases" arrangement with Britain in the late summer of 1940, at a time when Newfoundland was still a British dependency. See Reynolds (1982, 113–132).
14. A few years after the events described in this article transpired, Robert F. Kennedy would recall that "my brother really hated John Diefenbaker. He thought him a contemptible old fool . . . . My brother really hated only two men in all his Presidency. One was Sukarno and the other was Diefenbaker." Quoted in Maloney (2007, 249).
15. On Diefenbaker's populism, see Newman (1963) and Smith (1995).
16. By ontological security is meant a concern with safeguarding a country's foreign-policy identity (Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008), which logically must also embrace the defense of its "sovereignty."
17. On the frequent tendency of Kennedy and his aides to use undiplomatic language in dealing with Diefenbaker and Canada-US relations, see Azzi (2018).
18. DEFCON is an acronym for defense condition, with the status of alert ranging from 5 for normal peacetime situations to 1 for war.
19. Skybolt's range was such that it would enable V-bombers to strike at targets from as much as a thousand miles away. See "Skybolt Programme Cancellation – 22 December" (1962).
20. Quoted in Stevenson (2014, 23). The MLF was an outgrowth of a summer 1960 report produced by a team led by Robert Bowie, calling for a seaborne deterrent force under NATO control, with crews and funding provided by member-states. Initially, it was envisioned as a submarine force, but this was later changed to a surface (freighter-based) platform. It never did set sail. See Priest (2011).
21. For what foreign (usually Chinese) interference in Canadian domestic politics looks like in today's much more rough-and-tumble environment, see CSIS (2021).
22. The reference here being the Trump administration's imposition of duties on those two metals imported from Canada and other US allies, under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 (as amended by section 127 of the Trade Act of 1974 and the Reorganization Plan of 1979).
23. Inclining toward the "push" thesis are Ghent (1979), Granatstein (1989b), and Azzi (2018); leaning toward the "jump" thesis are Bothwell (2007), Lyon (1968), Richter (2002), and Maloney (2007).

Acknowledgments

This article had its origins in a research project on historical case studies of Canadian decision-making in foreign and defense policy, jointly spearheaded by Justin Massie of the Université du Québec à Montréal and Philippe Beaulieu-Brossard of the Canadian Forces College in Toronto; warmly I thank them both. I am also grateful for the suggestions made by two anonymous reviewers of an earlier draft of this article, as well as for the research assistance provided by Kimberly Fawcett Smith, a doctoral student in the Queen's Department of Political Studies.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

Research for one section of the article was supported by a grant made by the Canadian Department of National Defence through the Canadian Forces College, Toronto.

References

Abbott, P. 1998. *Strong Presidents: A Theory of Leadership*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Abbott, P. 2009. "Two Bad Kings and Two Bad Presidents." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 39 (2): 210–225. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2009.03672.x.

Ackerman, K. D. 2003. *Dark Horse: The Surprise Election and Political Murder of President James A. Garfield*. New York: Carroll and Graf.

Address to Canadian Parliament, Ottawa, 17 May 1961. 1961. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. Papers of John F. Kennedy/Presidential Papers/President's Office Files. https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/jfkpof-034-027#?image_identifier=JFKPOF-034-027-p0001 .

Adler, D. G. 2003. "Presidential Greatness as an Attribute of Warmaking." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (3): 466–483. https://doi.org/10.1111/1741-5705.00002.

Anderson, P. A. 1980. *Promoted to Glory: The Apotheosis of George Washington*. Northampton, MA: Smith College Museum of Art.

Azzi, S. 2018. "The Problem Child: Diefenbaker and Canada in the Language of the Kennedy Administration." In *Reassessing the Rogue Tory: Canadian Foreign Relations in the Diefenbaker Era*, edited by J. Cavell and R. M. Touhey, 103–120. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Azzi, S., and N. Hillmer. 2016. "Intolerant Allies: Canada and the George W. Bush Administration, 2001–2005." *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 27 (4): 726–745. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2016.1238704.

Azzi, S., and N. Hillmer. 2021. "Ranking Prime Ministers: Canada in a Commonwealth Context." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 49 (1): 22–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2020.1765531.

Azzi, S., and N. Hillmer. 2022. "The Presidents and the Polls, 1963-2021: An Inquiry into Canadian Anti-Americanism." *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 52 (4): 381–401. https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2022.2150927.

Bailey, T. A. 1981. *Presidential Saints and Sinners*. New York: Free Press.

Bailey, T. A. 1966. *Presidential Greatness: The Image and the Man from George Washington to the Present*. New York: Wiley.

Banks, W. C., and J. D. Straussman. 1999. "A New Imperial Presidency? Insights from U.S. Involvement in Bosnia." *Political Science Quarterly* 114 (2): 195–217. https://doi.org/10.2307/2657737.

Barber, J. D. 1992. *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*. 5th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Belz, H. 1984. *Lincoln and the Constitution: The Dictatorship Question Reconsidered*. Fort Wayne, IN: Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum.

Berlemann, M., and S. Enkelmann. 2014. "The Economic Determinants of U.S. Presidential Approval: A Survey." *European Journal of Political Economy* 36 (December): 41–54. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2014.06.005.

Bose, M., and M. L. Landis, eds. 2003. *The Uses and Abuses of Presidential Ratings*. New York: Nova Science.

Bothwell, R. 2007. *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Boulard, G. 2015. *The Worst President: The Story of James Buchanan*. New York: Universe.

Bow, B. J. 2009. *The Politics of Linkage: Power, Interdependence and Ideas in Canada-US Relations*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Bowman, K., and S. Goldstein. 2022. "The Ratings Game: Polls on Presidential Greatness." *AEIdeas*. February 17. https://www.aei.org/politics-and-public-opinion/the-ratings-game-polls-on-presidential-greatness/.

Brodie, B. 1957. "A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Woodrow Wilson." *World Politics* 9 (3): 413–422. https://doi.org/10.2307/2008922.
Brookhiser, R. 1996. *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington*. New York: Free Press.
Browne, S. H. 2020. *The First Inauguration: George Washington and the Invention of the Republic*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.
Burns, J. M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.
Burns, J. M. 1984. *The Power to Lead: The Crisis of the American Presidency*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
Calabresi, S. G., and C. S. Yoo. 2008. *The Unitary Executive: Presidential Power from Washington to Bush*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Cavari, A. 2019. "Evaluating the President on Your Priorities: Issue Priorities, Policy Performance, and Presidential Approval, 1981–2016." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 49 (4): 798–826. https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12594.
Chase, S. 2020. "More Canadians Hold an Unfavourable View of the U.S. Than at Any Point Since Sentiment Was First Tracked, Poll Indicates." *The Globe & Mail* 15 October: A4.
Chase, S. 2025. "U.S. President-Elect Floats Using 'Economic Force' to Take Canada." *The Globe & Mail* 8 January: A1, A15.
Chase, S., and A. Morrow. 2024. "Trump Promises 25% Tariffs on All Canadian, Mexican Products." *The Globe & Mail* 26 November: A1, A4.
Christenson, D. P., and D. L. Kriner. 2020. *The Myth of the Imperial Presidency: How Public Opinion Checks the Unilateral Executive*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Clarkson, S. 1985. *Canada and the Reagan Challenge*. Toronto: J. Lorimer.
Clearwater, J. 1998. *Canadian Nuclear Weapons: The Untold Story of Canada's Cold War Arsenal*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.
CNN. 2024. "CNN Presidential Debate: President Joe Biden and Former President Donald Trump." Accessed November 18, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-v-8wJkmwBY.
Coe, A. 2020. *You Never Forget Your First: A Biography of George Washington*. New York: Viking.
Cohen, J. E. 2003. "The Polls: Presidential Greatness as Seen in the Mass Public: An Extension and Application of the Simonton Model." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (4): 913–924. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0360-4918.2003.00091.x.
Colburn, S., and T. A. Sayle, eds. 2020. *The Nuclear North: Histories of Canada in the Atomic Age*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
Conant, M. 1962. "Canada's Role in Western Defense." *Foreign Affairs* 40 (3): 431–442. https://doi.org/10.2307/20029566.
Cronin, T. E. 1987. "On the Origins and Invention of the Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 17 (April): 229–235.
CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service]. 2021. *Foreign Interference Threats to Canada's Democratic Process*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.
C-SPAN. 2021. "Presidential Historians Survey 2021." https://www.c-span.org/presidentsurvey2021/?page=overall .
Cullinane, M. P., and M. Farr, eds. 2022. *The Palgrave Handbook of Presidents and Prime Ministers: From Cleveland and Salisbury to Trump and Johnson*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
Cunliffe, M. 1958. *George Washington: Man and Monument*. Boston: Little, Brown.
Curry, J. L., and I. L. Morris. 2010. "The Contemporary Presidency Explaining Presidential Greatness: The Roles of Peace and Prosperity?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40 (3): 515–530. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2010.03784.x.
Davis, E. 1979. "Legislative Reform and the Decline of Presidential Influence on Capitol Hill." *British Journal of Political Science* 9 (4): 465–479. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400001939.
Dawson, J. G., III, ed. 1993. *Commanders in Chief: Presidential Leadership in Modern Wars*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
Directorio Legislativo. 2022. "Image of Power: Report on Presidential Approval Ratings in Latin America." Buenos Aires. May-June. https://alertas.directoriolegislativo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/july-2022-image_59163018-3.pdf.

Dolan, C. J., J. Frendreis, and R. Tatalovich. 2009. "A Presidential Economic Scorecard: Performance and Perception." *PS, Political Science & Politics* 42 (4): 689–694. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096509990011.

Drezner, D. W. 2020. *The Toddler in Chief: What Donald Trump Tells Us About the Modern Presidency*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dutil, P., ed. 2023. *Statesmen, Strategists and Diplomats: Canada's Prime Ministers and the Making of Foreign Policy*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Eaton, M. A. 2005. "Canadian Editorial Opinion and the 1963 Nuclear Weapon Acquisition Debate." *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 35 (4): 641–666. https://doi.org/10.1080/02722010509481386.

Edwards, G. C., III. 1990. *Presidential Approval: A Sourcebook*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Edwards, G. C., III, W. Mitchell, and R. Welch. 1995. "Explaining Presidential Approval: The Significance of Issue Salience." *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (1): 108–134. https://doi.org/10.2307/2111760.

Environics Institute. 2024. "Canadian Support for Donald Trump Higher Than in Last U.S. Presidential Election, Poll Finds." Institute News. October 15. https://www.environicsinstitute.org/home/2024/10/15/canadian-support-for-donald-trump-higher-than-in-last-u.s.-presidential-election–poll-finds.

Expert Group on Canada-US Relations. 2025. "A Canada-First Response to Donald Trump." Norman Paterson School of International Affairs/Canadian Global Affairs Institute. January 1. https://carleton.ca/npsia/wp-content/uploads/Statement-by-Members-of-the-Expert-Group-on-Canada-US-Relations.pdf.

Faber, C. F., and R. B. Faber. 2000. *The American Presidents Ranked by Performance*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

Felzenberg, A. S. 2008. *The Leaders We Deserved (And a Few We Didn't): Rethinking the Presidential Rating Game*. New York: Basic Books.

Fisher, L. 1991. *Constitutional Conflicts Between Congress and the President*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Franck, T. M., ed. 1981. *The Tethered Presidency: Congressional Restraints on Executive Power*. New York: New York University Press.

Freud, S., and W. C. Bullitt. 1967. *Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Twenty-Eighth President of the United States: A Psychological Study*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

George, A. L., and J. L. George. 1956. *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*. New York: John Day.

Ghent, J. M. 1976. *Canadian-American Relations and the Nuclear Weapons Controversy, 1958-1963*. PhD dissertation, University of Illinois.

Ghent, J. M. 1979. "Did He Fall or Was He Pushed? The Kennedy Administration and the Collapse of the Diefenbaker Government." *The International History Review* 1 (2): 246–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1979.9640184.

Goldsmith, W. M., ed. 1983. *The Growth of Presidential Power: A Documented History*. Vol. 3. New York: Chelsea House.

Granatstein, J. L. 1989a. *How Britain's Weakness Forced Canada into the Arms of the United States*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Granatstein, J. L. 1989b. "When Push Comes to Shove: Canada and the United States." In *Kennedy's Quest for Victory: American Foreign Policy, 1961-1963*, edited by T. G. Paterson, 86–104. New York: Oxford University Press.

Granatstein, J. L. 1996. *Yankee Go Home? Canadians and Anti-Americanism*. Toronto: HarperCollins.

Granatstein, J. L., and N. Hillmer. 1999. *Prime Ministers: Ranking Canada's Leaders*. Toronto: HarperCollins.

Grant, G. 1965. *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Greenstein, F. I. 1998. *Leadership in the Modern Presidency*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Grendstad, G. 2008. "The Contemporary Presidency: And We Will Know Their Greatness by the Trail of Controversy: Washington, Lincoln, and Franklin D. Roosevelt and Their Increasingly Contested Successors." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 38 (3): 476–490. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2008.02656.x.

Haglund, D. G. 2021. "Canada and Trump Revisited, Revisited." H-Diplo/ISSF Policy Series April. https://issforum.org/to/ps2021-21 .

Hale, G., and G. Anderson, eds. 2021. *Navigating a Changing World: Canada's International Policies in an Age of Uncertainties*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hamilton, H. 1964. *Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Haydon, P. T. 1993. *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies.

Heeney, A. D. P. 1967. "Washington Under Two Presidents: 1953–57, 1959–62." *International Journal* 22 (3): 500–511. https://doi.org/10.1177/002070206702200311.

Hinckley, B. 1994. *Less Than Meets the Eye: Foreign Policy Making and the Myth of the Assertive Congress*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Holloway, S. K. 2006. *Canadian Foreign Policy: Defining the National Interest*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

IRPP [Institute for Research on Public Policy]. 2003. "Ranking Prime Ministers of the Last 50 Years: The Numbers Speak." *Policy Options*, June. https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-best-pms-in-the-past-50-years/ranking-prime-ministers-of-the-last-50-years-the-numbers-speak/.

Jervis, R. 2013. "Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?" *Security Studies* 22 (2): 153–179. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.786909.

Jockel, J. 1987. *No Boundaries Upstairs: Canada, the United States and the Origins of North American Air Defence, 1945-1958*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Johnson, L. H., III. 1989. "Abraham Lincoln and the Development of Presidential War-Making Powers: Prize Cases (1863) Revisited." *Civil War History* 35 (3): 208–224. https://doi.org/10.1353/cwh.1989.0048.

Keating, T., and L. Pratt. 1988. *Canada, NATO, and the Bomb: The Western Alliance in Crisis*. Edmonton, AB: Hurtig.

Kellerman, B. 1984. *The Political Presidency: Practice of Leadership*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Keohane, R. O., and J. S. Nye Jr. 1974. "Introduction: The Complex Politics of Canadian-American Interdependence." *International Organization* 28 (4): 595–607. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300005762.

Keohane, R. O., and J. S. Nye Jr. 1989. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition*. 2nd ed. Boston: Little, Brown.

King, J. D., and J. B. McConnell. 2020. ""It's the War, Stupid!": Determinants of Retrospective Evaluations of American Presidents." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 50 (4): 796–810. https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12675.

Krasner, S. D. 1978. *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Krog, C. E., and W. R. Tanner, eds. 1984. *Herbert Hoover and the Republican Era: A Reconsideration*. New York: University Press of America.

Kynerd, T. 1971. "An Analysis of Presidential Greatness and 'President Rating'." *Southern Quarterly* 9 (April): 309–329.

Landy, M., and S. M. Milkis. 2000. *Presidential Greatness*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Laulicht, J., and J. Paul. 1963. *In Your Opinion: Leaders' and Voters' Attitudes on Defence and Disarmament*. Clarkson, ON: Canadian Peace Research Institute.

Link, A. S. 1967. "The Case for Woodrow Wilson." *Harper's Magazine* 234 (April): 85–93.

Longmore, P. K. 1988. *The Invention of George Washington*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lonnstrom, D. A., and T. O. Kelly II. 2003. "The Contemporary Presidency: Rating the Presidents: A Tracking Study." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (3): 625–634. https://doi.org/10.1111/1741-5705.00009.

Lyon, P. 1968. *Canada in World Affairs, 1961-1963*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Mackenzie, H. 2014. "King's Last President: A Canadian Prime Minister's Perspective on Harry S. Truman's First Term." In *Perspectives on Presidential Leadership: An International View of the White House*, edited by M. P. Cullinane and C. F. Elliott, 132–144. New York: Routledge.
Maloney, S. M. 2007. *Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons During the Cold War*. Washington: Potomac Books.
Maranell, G. M. 1970. "The Evaluation of Presidents: An Extension of the Schlesinger Polls." *Journal of American History* 57 (1): 104–113. https://doi.org/10.2307/1900552.
Maranell, G. M., and R. A. Dodder. 1970. "Political Orientations and the Evaluation of Presidential Prestige: A Study of American Historians." *Social Science Quarterly* 51 (September): 415–421.
Martin, L. 1982. *The Presidents and the Prime Ministers*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.
McCann, S. J. H. 1995. "Presidential Candidate Age and Schlesinger's Cycles of American History (1789-1992): When Younger Is Better." *Political Psychology* 16 (4): 749–755. https://doi.org/10.2307/3791890.
McCormick, R. L. 1982. *The Presidential Game: The Origins of American Presidential Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
McDonald, F. 1994. *The American Presidency: An Intellectual History*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
McGoogan, K. 2017. "It's Time for Scotland to Find a New Home – in Canada." *The Globe & Mail* 5 April: A11.
McKercher, A. 2011. "A 'Half-hearted Response'?: Canada and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962." *The International History Review* 33 (2): 335–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2011.555450.
McKercher, A. 2012. "Principles and Partnership: Merchant, Heeney, and the Craft of Canada–US Relations." *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 42 (1): 67–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2012.649923.
McKercher, A. 2016. *Canada and Camelot: Canadian-American Relations in the Kennedy Era*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
McKercher, A. 2024. "'Three Whores at a Christening': The North Atlantic Triangle Beyond Suez." *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 35 (3): 565–588. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2024.2382997.
McKercher, A., and M. D. Stevenson. 2020. "'Under Your Inspired Leadership': Dwight Eisenhower, Canadians, and the Canada–United States Consensus, 1945–1961." *International Journal* 75 (4): 471–486. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020978409.
McKercher, A., and M. D. Stevenson. 2024. *Building a Special Relationship: Canada-US Relations in the Eisenhower Era, 1953-61*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
McLin, J. B. 1967. *Canada's Changing Defense Policy, 1957-1963: The Problems of a Middle Power in Alliance*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
McMahon, P. 2009. *Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
McPherson, J. M. 1991. *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Meacham, J. 2008. *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. New York: Random House.
Memorandum of Conversation. 1994. In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963*, edited by C. S. Sampson and J. E. Miller. Vol. 13. Washington: United States Government Printing Office.
Merry, R. W. 2010. *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War and the Conquest of the American Continent*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
Mitzen, J. 2006. "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma." *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (3): 341–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066106067346.
Morgan, I. 2011. "UK Survey of US Presidents: Results and Analysis." University College London, United States Presidency Centre. http://community-languages.org.uk/US-presidency-survey/pdf/analysis.pdf.
Morgan, I. 2014. "Rating America's Presidents: A UK Perspective." In *Perspectives on Presidential Leadership: An International View of the White House*, edited by M. P. Cullinane and C. F. Elliott, 1–7. New York: Routledge.

Morini, M. 2013. "How U.S. Presidents Are Regarded Historically: The Contrast Between Historians' Rankings and the Retrospective Public Opinion Approval Ratings." *RSA Journal* 24:119–135.
Morris, R. B. 1987. "The Origins of the Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 17 (October): 673–687.
Mueller, J. E. 1973. *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*. New York: Wiley.
Munton, D., and D. A. Welch. 1997. *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Murray, R. K., and T. H. Blessing. 1983. "The Presidential Performance Study: A Progress Report." *Journal of American History* 70 (3): 535–555. https://doi.org/10.2307/1903482.
Nash, K. 1990. *Kennedy and Diefenbaker: Fear and Loathing Across the Undefended Border*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
Neeley, M. E. 1991. *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Neustadt, R. E. 1990. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: Free Press.
Neustadt, R. E. 1999. *Report to JFK: The Skybolt Crisis in Perspective*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Newman, P. C. 1963. *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
Nichols, C. 2012. "The Presidential Ranking Game: Critical Review and Some New Discoveries." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 42 (2): 275–299. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2012.03966.x.
Nossal, K. R. 2023. *Canada Alone: Navigating the Post-American World*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.
Nye, J. S., Jr. 2013. *Presidential Leadership and the Creation of the American Era*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
O'Brien, P. G., and P. T. Rosen. 1981. "Hoover and the Historians.: The Resurrection of a President." *Annals of Iowa* 46 (2): 83–99. https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.8816.
Parliament of Canada. 1963. *House of Commons* Debates. 25 January. Ottawa: Queen's Printer.
Patterson, J. T. 1976. "The Rise of Presidential Power Before World War II." *Law & Contemporary Problems* 40 (2): 39–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/1191370.
Pederson, W., and A. McLaurin. 1987. *The Rating Game in American Politics*. New York: Irving.
Perras, G. R. 1998. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Origins of the Canadian-American Security Alliance, 1933-1945: Necessary, but Not Necessary Enough*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
Peskin, A. 1977. "President Garfield and the Rating Game: An Evaluation of a Brief Administration." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 76 (1): 93–102. https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-76-1-93.
Peskin, A. 2012. *Garfield*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
Pfiffner, J. P. 2003. "Ranking the Presidents: Continuity and Volatility." *White House Studies* 3 (1): 23–34.
Phelps, G. A. 1987. "George Washington and the Founding of the Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 17 (April): 345–363.
Pierson, P. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Pious, R. M. 1996. *The Presidency*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
Posner, E. A., and A. Vermeule. 2010. *The Executive Unbound: After the Madisonian Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Priest, A. 2011. "The President, the 'Theologians' and the Europeans: The Johnson Administration and NATO Nuclear Sharing." *The International History Review* 33 (2): 257–275. https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2011.555437.
Radchenko, S., and V. Zubok. 2023. "Blundering on the Brink: The Secret History and Unlearned Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis." *Foreign Affairs* 102 (May/June): 44–63.
Reedy, N., and J. Johnson. 2009. "Evaluating Presidents." In *Rating Bush*, edited by R. Maranto, T. Lansford, and J. Johnson, 3–20. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Reid, S. 2019. "Of the Many Potential Ballot Questions for the Canadian Election, None are Bigger Than Donald Trump." *The Globe & Mail*. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-of-the-many-potential-ballot-questions-for-the-canadian-election-none/.

Reynolds, D. 1982. *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-41: A Study in Competitive Co-Operation*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
Riccards, M. P. 2012. *Destiny's Consul: America's Ten Greatest Presidents*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
Richards, S. 2020. *The Prime Ministers: Reflections on Leadership from Wilson to Johnson*. London, UK: Atlantic Books.
Richter, A. 2002. *Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons, 1950-63*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
Ridings, W. J., Jr. 2001. *Rating the Presidents: A Ranking of U.S. Leaders, from the Great and Honorable to the Dishonest and Incompetent*. Charleston, SC: Citadel Press.
Robinson, H. B. 1989. *Diefenbaker's World: A Populist in Foreign Affairs*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Rockman, B. A. 1984. *The Leadership Question: The Presidency and the American System*. New York: Praeger.
Romasco, A. U. 1965. *The Poverty of Abundance: Hoover, the Nation, the Depression*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Romasco, A. U. 1975. "Hoover-Roosevelt and the Great Depression: A Historiographic Inquiry into a Perennial Comparison." In *The New Deal: The National Level*, edited by J. Braeman, R. Bremmer, and D. Brody, 3–26. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.
Ross, D. 1982. "Woodrow Wilson and the Case for Psychohistory." *Journal of American History* 69 (3): 659–668. https://doi.org/10.2307/1903142.
Rossiter, C. 1948. *Constitutional Dictatorship*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Rottinghaus, B., and J. S. Vaughn. 2024. "Official Results of the 2024 Presidential Greatness Project Expert Survey." https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/.
Sayle, T. A. 2023. "Living Dangerously: Canadian National Security Policy and the Nuclear Revolution." In *North of America: Canadians and the American Century, 1945-60*, edited by A. McKercher and M. D. Stevenson, 66–89. Vancouver: UBC Press.
Schlesinger, A. M., Sr. 1962. "Our Presidents: A Rating by 75 Historians." *New York Times Magazine*, July 29. https://www.nytimes.com/1962/07/29/archives/our-presidents-a-rating-by-75-historians-a-poll-of-exports.html.
Schlesinger, A. M., Jr. 1973. *The Imperial Presidency*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Schlesinger, A. M., Jr. 1997. "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton." *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (2): 179–190. https://doi.org/10.2307/2657937.
Schwartz, B. 1987. *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol*. New York: Free Press.
Simonton, D. K. 2006. "Presidential IQ, Openness, Intellectual Brilliance, and Leadership: Estimates and Correlations for 42 U.S. Chief Executives." *Political Psychology* 27 (4): 511–526. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2006.00524.x.
Simpson, E. 2001. *NATO and the Bomb: Canadian Defenders Confront Critics*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
Skidmore, M. J. 2004. *Presidential Performance: A Comprehensive Review*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
Skowronek, S. 1993. *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Skybolt Programme Cancellation – 22 December. 1962. Vulcan to the Sky Trust. Doncaster, UK. https://vulcantothesky.org/articles/skybolt-programme-cancellation-22-december-1962/.
Smith, D. 1995. *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker*. Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter and Ross.
Sokolsky, E. 1964. *Our Seven Greatest Presidents*. New York: Exposition Press.
Sommers, P. M. 2002. "Is Presidential Greatness Related to Height?" *The College Mathematics Journal* 33 (1): 14–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/07468342.2002.11921912.
Steele, B. J. 2008. *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*. London, UK: Routledge.
Stevenson, M. D. 2014. "Tossing a Match into Dry Hay: Nuclear Weapons and the Crisis in U.S.-Canadian Relations, 1962–1963." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16 (4): 5–34. https://doi.org/10.1162/JCWS_a_00514.

Strauss, R. 2016. *The Worst. President. Ever. James Buchanan, the POTUS Rating Game, and the Legacy of the Least of the Lesser Presidents*. Lanham, MD: Lyons Press.
Stuart, R. C., and M. Behiels, eds. 2010. *Transnationalism: Canada-United States History into the Twenty-First Century*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
Sundquist, J. L. 1981. *The Decline and Resurgence of Congress*. Washington: Brookings Institution.
Suri, J. 2017. *The Impossible Presidency: The Rise and Fall of America's Highest Office*. New York: Basic Books.
Taranto, J., and L. Leo, eds. 2004. *Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and Worst in the White House*. New York: Wall Street Journal Books.
Thach, C. C., Jr. 1969. *The Creation of the Presidency, 1775-1789*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Theakston, K., P. 't Hart, and J. Walter. 2013. "Evaluating Prime-Ministerial Performance: The British Experience." In *Understanding Prime-Ministerial Performance: Comparative Perspectives*, edited by P. Strangio, 220–241. Oxford, UK: Oxford Academic.
Trubowitz, P. 1998. *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Tucker, R. C. 1977. "The Georges' Wilson Reexamined: An Essay on Psychobiography." *The American Political Science Review* 71 (2): 606–618. https://doi.org/10.2307/1978353.
Tucker, R. W., and D. C. Hendrickson. 1990. *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Urban, M. C. 2015. "A Fearful Asymmetry: Diefenbaker, the Canadian Military and Trust During the Cuban Missile Crisis." *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 21 (3): 257–271. https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2015.1070275.
Walsh, M. 2024. "No Need to Be Concerned by Trump or Harris Victory: Ambassador." *The Globe & Mail* 28 August: A1, A15.
Wildavsky, A., and R. J. Ellis. 1989. *Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership: From Washington Through Lincoln*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books.
Wilson, J. H. 1975. *Herbert Hoover, Forgotten Progressive*. Boston: Little, Brown.
Winand, P. 1993. *Eisenhower, Kennedy and the United States of Europe*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
Winock, M. 1999. *La France politique: XIX^e^-XX^e^ siècle*. Paris: Seuil.
Zakaria, F. 1998. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Zeidenstein, H. 1978. "The Reassertion of Congressional Power: New Curbs on the President." *Political Science Quarterly* 93 (3): 393–409. https://doi.org/10.2307/2149531.