

The very scale of our involvement with the United States in economic matters naturally brings some problems, along with major benefits. Some argue that, in time, economic involvement on this scale will submerge our independence.

I believe that there are some simple and effective answers to this prediction. I do not accept this type of political or economic fatalism. We shall not lose our independence in this way unless we want to. We are engaged in a process of economic development which should render us basically stronger, not weaker, both in a continental and in a world sense. Where our exposure to the much greater forces of the American economy creates particular problems for some part of our economy, we take remedial action. On the basis of friendship and mutual respect, we bargain with representatives of the United States to obtain the best conditions for our country, as they do for theirs. We have certainly not ignored other possibilities for developing our country and our businessmen contest world markets as vigorously in competition with close friends as with anyone else.

It is important that we should see these basic conditions of an alliance and of close economic relations as being, on balance, means of fortifying our independence in world affairs, not as limitations upon it.

The third basic objective I mentioned is that we must be able to exert influence on others. We should have a wide association with other nations and we should systematically cultivate friendly relations with allies and other nations as a means of developing our capacity to influence the course of events. These may appear to be obvious diplomatic objectives not necessarily related to the specific questions on independence being discussed. It is, however, particularly important for a middle power to make such an effort if it wishes to understand and to exert its own influence upon current events. We are more fortunate than some nations in the range of our relations. We have valuable associations with other Commonwealth and NATO members, with France and French-speaking nations, with the countries involved in our aid programmes, with many nations sharing in special tasks in the United Nations. These associations heighten our status in world affairs and prevent us from becoming unduly influenced by any one nation or group.

We must make use of our position of military security, economic strength and wide contacts to play a creative role in world affairs, not only in our immediate interests but in the long-term interests of the world community. I believe that the number of fields in which we take a constructive role provides ample evidence not only of an independence of thought or publicly-declared policy in controversial matters but of action in taking initiatives or accepting responsibilities which are not always well known. I am thinking of our role in all the major peace-keeping operations of the United Nations, in disarmament discussions, in international development aid and relief and in cultural and