

Do we lose either to free trade? Do we become less willing to act independently? Less able? No, we don't. In fact, we become more able to pursue Canadian goals simply because a stronger economy means we can afford more initiatives. In concrete terms, it means we can afford an icebreaker. We can afford to be among the first countries to pay our dues to the United Nations. We can afford to pay for peace-keeping in the Middle East; or railway lines in the Front Line States; or development projects in Nicaragua; or emergency assistance in Bangladesh. Free trade with the United States helps Canada's economy grow, and so increases our capacity to pursue a distinctive Canadian foreign policy.

What about commitment? What about our will? Does a trade deal dilute our will to pursue an independent foreign policy?

Well, during negotiation of this trade treaty, Canada and the United States disagreed on a number of foreign policy questions.

Consider some examples.

The United States would have preferred Canadian government participation in the strategic defence initiative. We declined.

The two countries have sharply different approaches to the United Nations.

We have different policies on South Africa.

In Central America, the governments of Canada and the United States disagree basically about the source of the problems. The Americans have boycotted Nicaragua, while we maintain aid and commercial activities throughout the region. Because of that difference, Central American Foreign Ministers want Canada to help them design a peace keeping system.

Those policy differences, and others, exist today, existed throughout the negotiations, and will continue tomorrow, precisely because we are different countries with different cultures, different histories, a different sense of who we are.

Many of the qualities the modern world requires are qualities which Canadians refined in building our own country. The skill of conciliation, the virtue of tolerance, the respect for diversity, are all more important in a world where superpowers are less dominant, and the consequences of conflict are more dangerous.