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Canada is an Arctic nation. The international community has long recognized that the Arctic mainland and islands are a part of Canada like any other. But the Arctic is not only a part of Canada. It is part of Canada's greatness.

The policy of this government is to preserve that greatness undiminished.

Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic is indivisible. It embraces land, sea, and ice. It extends without interruption to the seaward-facing coasts of the Arctic islands. These islands are joined and not divided by the waters between them. They are bridged for most of the year by ice. From time immemorial Canada's Inuit people have used and occupied the ice as they have used and occupied the land.

The policy of this government is to maintain the natural unity of the Canadian Arctic archipelago, and to preserve Canada's sovereignty over land, sea, and ice undiminished and undivided.

That sovereignty has long been upheld by Canada. No previous government, however, has defined its precise limits or delineated Canada's internal waters and territorial sea in the Arctic. This government proposes to do so. An order in council establishing straight baselines around the outer perimeter of the Canadian Arctic archipelago has been signed today, and will come into effect on January 1, 1986. These baselines define the outer limit of Canada's historic internal waters. Canada's territorial waters extend 12 miles seaward of the baselines. While the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act requires 60 days' notice only for the establishment of fisheries limits, we consider that prior notice should also be given for this important step of establishing straight baselines.

Canada enjoys the same undisputed jurisdiction over its continental margin and 200-mile fishing zone in the Arctic as elsewhere. To protect the unique ecological balance of the region, Canada also exercises jurisdiction over a 100-mile pollution prevention zone in the Arctic waters. This too has been recognized by the international community, through a special provision in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.