

There is one other element I want to touch on tonight. That is the question of what this agreement does for Canada as a distinctive country.

There have been some pretty extreme things said about the consequences for our sovereignty and for our independence, in this free trade arrangement. I quote the most extreme single statement and it is that made by Mr. Broadbent who actually suggested that this agreement could mean the end of Canada for the next twenty-five years.

Well, calmer people know that it isn't true. But calmer people nonetheless fear that this agreement may somehow limit our independence.

Ladies and Gentlemen the exact opposite will be the case. In my considered view, the view of someone who is responsible not simply for protecting but for exercising the independence of Canada in our foreign policy, this agreement when it comes into effect will increase the practical independence of Canada. It will extend our ability to pursue our own goals in the world. That will happen for two major reasons.

One of them is affordability; a fact that I referred to earlier. You will remember the incident of the Polar Sea. What was our problem with the Polar Sea. It wasn't a problem of water; it wasn't a problem of notice. It was a problem that we didn't have an icebreaker that could keep up with their icebreaker. Icebreakers cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Countries that can't afford icebreakers and want to claim sovereignty in their North have no means to assert that sovereignty. Yet, sovereignty is not inexpensive. Independence is not inexpensive. Being an independent nation as being an independent family or individual means being able to stand on your own. It means being able to have a sound economic base.

Take another example. One of the things we are proud of in our foreign policy is that in a world that is too often marked by wars, we are the peacekeepers. We are the people who have been imaginative enough to say that our army, our military personnel, will not only be reserved for use in cases of conflict, we will use them to try to stop conflicts or to try to keep peace where it has been established. As we are in the Sinai, as we are in Cyprus; as we are elsewhere in the world. Now, peacekeeping doesn't cost a lot of money, but it costs money, as everything does. If we are going to be able to pursue that little aspect of our independence as a country we have to be able to afford to do it.