



Daily Message by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Hon. Evarist Bartolo

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One of the difficulties faced by small countries like ours, that were governed for centuries by others in their own interests, is to think with our own mind, feel with our own heart and see through our own eyes what our true interests are.

We import almost all we need but surely, we shouldn't also import how we think, how we feel and how we see ourselves and the world.

Surely, we shouldn't import our ideas and feelings like we import shoes and clothes. Instead we need to produce these with our minds and hearts, in our own interest and for our own good. It's easy to lower the flag of your former coloniser and hoist your own.

It's easy to play your national anthem instead of your old ruler's.

But real independence is being able to think with your own mind and feel with your own heart, see with your own eyes, and not the mind, heart and eyes of others.

It doesn't mean we should retreat into shells like limpets clinging to the rocks with their backs to the world.

Independence today requires a prudent and sensible interdependence.

No island and no country can cut itself off from the world, let alone us who survive and thrive in direct proportion to how well we develop our links with the rest of the world.

We can love our country without hating other countries.

We can have the kind of national sentiment and love of our country that is inclusive, that doesn't turn in on itself and feel besieged by the rest of the world.

The kind of nationalism where we withdraw into ourselves and think we are the best in the world also does a lot of harm.

It does as much damage as if we think we are inferior to others. In a small pond, even a small fish may think it is a whale.

Neither should we feel like Gulliver in Lilliput: a giant amongst little people.

But nor should we feel like Gulliver in Brobdignag; a little man in the midst of giants six floors high, mice as big as big dogs and flies as big as turtle doves.

The nationalism of a big country crushes the nationalism of small ones.

The true nationalism of a small country tries not to let bigger countries crush it.

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