

Text of CBC Dominion Network Broadcast "Press Conference" Monday, January 11, 1954, on which the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, was interviewed by Blair Fraser (Maclean's Magazine), Miss Ann Francis (Independent Commentator), Mr. Robert McKeown (Weekend Magazine), Mr. Jacques Lambert (CBC French Network), and Mr. Raymond Daniell (New York Times).

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Mr. McKeown: Russia has recently consented to a Big Four meeting in Berlin on January 25. I think the Soviet Government has also expressed its willingness to exchange views at a conference on President Eisenhower's idea of an atomic energy pool. Now, does this really indicate a change of attitude? In other words, is there reason for hope that the cold war is about to cool off?

Mr. Pearson: Well, it may indicate a change of attitude and that is about as far as I would like to go. But it is, as far as it goes, encouraging that agreement has been reached at least to discuss things in Berlin and to talk about the President's atomic proposals in Washington. I think before we become too happy about this, however, we had better wait and see what results from the conferences. The fact that they are taking place is encouraging.

Mr. McKeown: What exactly are they going to talk about in Berlin, Mr. Pearson?

Mr. Pearson: Germany, I should think would be the main topic of conversation!

Mr. McKeown: Is that determined or is that speculative? That is really what I meant.

Mr. Pearson: I think it is more than speculative that they are going to talk about Germany and Austria. What else they are going to talk about, I really don't know.

Mr. McKeown: Would you say also that this Soviet willingness to talk may be a stall to prevent France from joining the European Defence Community.

Mr. Pearson: If you want to take a pessimistic view of Soviet politics and tactics, you could interpret it that way but I would hope that such an interpretation would not be justified.

Miss Francis: Do you think that it is going to be possible for the Western Powers and Russia to reach any agreement on Germany or are they too widely divided in their aims. Will this just be another discussion which will come to naught?

Mr. Pearson: They are widely divided in their aims and there is no reason to go overboard with optimism that they will be able to close that wide gap in one discussion. However they are at least going to make the attempt and we must hope for the best.