

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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PROSPECTS FOR A SUMMIT MEETING

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Sidney E. Smith, over the CBC Radio Network Sunday, April 20, 1958

As Secretary of State for External Affairs, I daily deal with the broad range of external relations with which Canada is concerned in this complex age. Among these, the need to find some means of working out peaceful solutions for issues which divide the Western world and the Soviet Union is at the present time uppermost in my mind. The prospect of another world conflagration that could let loose modern weapons of horrifying destructive force and risk the extinction of our civilization is not one which any responsible government can contemplate today. The course of both reason and self-interest for East and West alike lies in the search for a durable peace. The pressing need is, therefore, to explore ways in which existing tensions can be reduced and then to lay a firm foundation for mutual understanding on which the ultimate settlement of outstanding differences can be built.

During recent months, there has been much discussion in the press, on radio and on television as to the value of convening a high level conference at which the world's leaders might discuss some of the major problems in a spirit of compromise. This matter has gained prominence through the extensive exchange of correspondence between heads of government on the question of a summit conference. I propose this evening to give you some indication of Canadian thinking on such a meeting.

Canada's general approach to the concept of a summit conference has been developed in concert with our NATO allies. At the conclusion of the meeting of heads of government held in Paris last December, it was stated that "We are always ready to settle international problems by negotiation taking into account the legitimate interests of all... and we seek an end to world tension". In particular, we again stressed our willingness "to examine any proposal, from whatever source, for general or partial disarmament". This is perhaps the key question in any negotiations with the Soviet Union. Canadian representatives shared in many months of negotiations on this issue with the Russians and helped