

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC EXCHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

An address by Mr. Sidney E. Smith, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Convocation of the University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, on January 25, 1959.

Some weeks ago, President Henry was kind enough to send to me a copy of the press release issued by the University in connection with this convocation and this document reveals that although my most immediate concerns are now the intricacies of the political scene, both national and international, they have not always been so, and I cannot conceal my pleasure at being present for these familiar academic proceedings. My pleasure is the greater because of the honour which has been done me in inviting me to address Convocation, and in particular in giving me this opportunity to extend greetings and congratulations to today's graduates. That you have as students brought credit to yourselves and to your university has been demonstrated today in the conferring of degrees.

I would remind you, however, that the privileges and obligations of membership in an academic community do not cease with today's formal ceremonies. Indeed, as graduates of this institution of learning, you are entering into a much wider if more diffuse association than the immediate one to which you belonged as undergraduates. As alumni, your first loyalty will be to your alma mater - and your most vivid recollections will be of the experiences, intellectual and otherwise, which were yours during your student days. But it is not what you are leaving behind that I ask you to consider. It is rather the fact that, whatever endeavours you may now undertake, you do so in good company, as members of the commonwealth of civilized thought, as citizens of the republic of learning. The only boundaries to your potential experiences and discoveries are your own personal inclinations and the outermost limits of the mind and spirit, where particular loyalties and national allegiances disappear into a deeper and more comprehensive tradition.