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On Summit Conference

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "On Summit Conference" (1960). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 411.

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The breakdown of the meeting at the Summit calls for a re-assessment in the field of diplomacy. Perhaps what has happened at Paris is in a sense a blessing in disguise. It may well bring about an end to summit meetings which are mostly ceremonial and have a tendency to provide propaganda field days for the press, the radio, TV, and even for some of the countries concerned.

It would be far better if we returned to ~~skatylk~~ quiet diplomacy based on conferences in private, good faith on the part of the negotiators, and real authority vested in our accredited ambassadors by ~~the~~ ^{those constitutionally responsible.} ~~skatylk~~ ~~officials.~~ In this way the hard, dogged, and determined work which must be done on any question leading up to a solution can be performed by those most knowledgeable in the affairs of the country concerned. It can be done on a mutual-trust, give-and-take basis, and perhaps in this way marginal differences in the beginning can be accommodated, and as time goes on larger problems faced, discussed and perhaps settled.

Summit meetings at best are too short on diplomacy, too long on pageantry, and too limited in time. If they are to be held, they should be held for the purpose of allowing the chiefs of state to put their final stamp of approval on agreements which had already been reached at lower levels, and certainly not, as in this recent summit meeting, for the purpose of downgrading and humiliating the chiefs of state of the Western powers and, most especially, President Eisenhower.

In subsequent remarks the Senator suggested that President Eisenhower visit the Philippines and Vietnam in connection with his forthcoming trip to the Far East. He also suggested that the three conferences in Geneva on the banning of nuclear testing, disarmament and surprise attack (in suspension since 1958) be continued.