

The 50th Anniversary of Margaret Chase Smith's World Tour

Evaluating the Cold War Climate: Fear, Communism, and Foreign Aid



Senator Smith is filmed in front of the Eiffel Tower by CBS cameraman Charlie Mack. October 1954.
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A new exhibit at the
Margaret Chase Smith Library

Featuring photographs, artifacts,
and clothing from around the world

On view
through May 2005

In 1954 and 1955, Senator Margaret Chase Smith traveled to 23 countries to interview prominent leaders such as Winston Churchill, Francisco Franco, and Chiang Kai-shek. She sought first-hand knowledge about conditions in a rapidly changing postwar world, especially on the spread of communism and the effectiveness of American foreign aid.

Free Admission

The Margaret Chase Smith Library
56 Norridgewock Avenue
Skowhegan, Maine 04976

Open Monday - Friday
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
207.474.7133

www.mcslibrary.org

New Exhibit Opens at the Margaret Chase Smith Library

Evaluating the Cold War Climate: Fear, Communism, and Foreign Aid

Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Margaret Chase Smith's World Tour

During my service in Congress I have made trips abroad every three or four years. I have done this so that I could see, first-hand, world conditions that present problems of world leadership that have been thrust upon us, whether we like it or not - leadership that cannot be abdicated without abdicating our own freedom and safety. I expect that some of what I see and hear I will not like. I expect that much of what I see and hear will not be popular back here. But one of the things I shall tell the people in these foreign lands is that there is still room for unpopular opinions in our country.

- Senator Margaret Chase Smith to CBS Television Network
September 1954

The Margaret Chase Smith Library is pleased to announce the opening of its newest exhibit, **Evaluating the Cold War Climate: Fear, Communism, and Foreign Aid**. It commemorates the 50th anniversary of Senator Margaret Chase Smith's world tour. Photographs of her journey are on display along with the artifacts she acquired abroad. The exhibit is on view through May 2005.

On October 7, 1954, Senator Margaret Chase Smith began her journey, traveling to twenty-three countries and over 50,000 miles to interview prominent postwar leaders such as Winston Churchill of England, V.M. Molotov of Russia, Chiang Kai-shek of Taiwan, Gamal Abdel-Nasser of Egypt, and Francisco Franco of Spain. As a ranking member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Smith wanted to gain first-hand knowledge about conditions in a rapidly changing postwar world, especially the spread of communism and the effectiveness of American foreign aid. During her personal, unofficial fact-finding tour, Senator Smith was one of the first U.S. senators to travel behind the Iron Curtain to visit Moscow and the first to have a foreign interview with Franco, the dictator of Spain. She visited many countries that gained independence at the end of World War II, such as India and the Philippines. During each of her interviews, she assessed the country's stability and friendliness to the United States. She evaluated the threat of the spread of communism. She asked leaders what their country was doing to fight communism and sought advice about how the United States could most effectively exert world leadership.

This retrospective of her tour illustrates 13 of the 23 countries she visited - Great Britain, the USSR, Germany, France, Taiwan, the Philippines, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Egypt, Spain, and Turkey – and examines the interviews with leaders in those countries. It is a photographic tour of her trip, supplemented by a display of artifacts she acquired while abroad. Many of the artifacts were gifts, such as a set of handcrafted papier-mache dolls given to her by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

The world has changed in the fifty years since Margaret Chase Smith embarked upon her world tour. Communism is no longer the global enemy of the United States. However, in a post-Cold War era of international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and the doctrine of pre-emption, debates on national security and defense are at the forefront of American foreign policy decisions. The questions and issues of the Cold War that Margaret Chase Smith sought to address in 1954 and 1955 are remarkably similar to ones faced today in a post 9/11 world.