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DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION

Statement to be made in the General Assembly by the Canadian Representative, Mr. Hugh Faulkner, M.P., on December 1, 1967, on the Need to Expedite the Drafting of a Definition of Aggression in the Light of the Present International Situation (Item 95)

Mr. Chairman,

I do not wish to speak at any length on this item at the present time. My Delegation intends to present Canada's views in greater detail when this subject again receives consideration in the Sixth Committee, the forum which in our views is the more appropriate one for discussing it. Nevertheless there are certain remarks of a preliminary nature which we would like to place on record at this stage.

The search for a generally acceptable definition of aggression has been going on now for a considerable time. It can be traced back at least to the earliest days of the League of Nations. For over forty years, therefore, it has proved impossible to achieve any broad measure of agreement on a definition of aggression. This surely indicates the extreme complexity of the problem. It is no wonder that it has been the clearly-expressed view of certain delegations in the past that such a definition simply is not possible. A definition would have meaning only if agreed upon by the Security Council, including all its permanent members, and by at least a two-third majority in the General Assembly. The past history of this question gives little reason to hope that this will prove possible.

On previous occasions, notably during the Seventh and Twelfth sessions of the General Assembly, Canada expressed certain reservations about the possibility of obtaining general agreement on a single definition of aggression and in fact questioned the desirability and utility, in light of international atmosphere, of continuing the search for such a definition. Nothing has happened during intervening years to cause us to change this opinion, though, as in the past, Canada would, of course, not wish to oppose any decision in favour of making a renewed effort to draft a useful definition.