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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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No. 67/22 TOWARD THE CONTROL OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Address by Mr. Donald S. MacDonald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian-American Assembly on Nuclear Weapons, Scarborough (Ontario), June 18, 1967.

This Assembly has been a very useful sequel to the International Assembly held almost exactly a year ago in this place. While our terms of reference have been more limited, emphasizing the continental as opposed to the global aspects of last year's seminar, they are nonetheless pertinent and topical. The Canadian Institute of International Affairs and the American Assembly deserve special commendation for the imagination, persistence and expedition with which they have pursued the issues of nuclear-arms control and have enabled us to apply the knowledge and experience gained last year to issues which affect our two countries at this very critical juncture.

I think Canadian and American observers of the arms-control scene too often jump to the conclusion that, because they share one continent, a common culture, similar broad political interests and a common approach to defence through two important alliances, Canada and the United States take an identical approach to questions of nuclear-arms control. It is true we strike a very similar posture on most fundamental strategic and political issues. However, there are important differences of emphasis of which you will, I am sure, be well aware. These differences are also apparent in the way we each tend to look at specific arms-control measures.

Similarities of Approach

It is probably fair to say that both Canada and the United States agree that nuclear-arms control can and should contribute to the reduction of international tension. Neither is so naive, however, as to believe that nuclear-arms control or disarmament can be achieved overnight in a dramatic sweeping gesture. Rather we both maintain that it can be achieved only by careful, gradual and systematic steps. Since, in the final analysis, military confrontation is only symptomatic of underlying political conflict, we should not dispute the proposition that a resolution of outstanding international political issues is more fundamental to disengagement and détente than agreement on specific measures of arms control and disarmament. Nor should we question the proposition that our mutual security rests on a balance of military power, which it would be