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Press Office
Suite 250
866 United Nations Plaza
New York, N. Y. 10017
PLaza 1-5600

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DISARMAMENT

Text of Statement to be made in the First Committee by the Canadian Representative, E. L. M. Burns, in the General Debate on General and Complete Disarmament: A Comprehensive Test Ban and the Elimination of Foreign Bases, Wednesday, December 13, 1967.

I should like first to say a few words about Item 29b, the report which has been prepared by the Secretary-General on the effects of the Use of Nuclear Weapons, and on the Security and Economic implications for States of the Acquisition and Further Development of these Weapons, document A/6858. The Honourable Paul Martin, Secretary of State for External Affairs for Canada, has described the report as "an important and constructive contribution to the continuing international discussion on this question." These are a few points in the report which our delegation feels should be emphasized.

The Canadian delegation would like heartily to commend the members of the Secretariat concerned with this report, and also to thank most warmly the experts who participated in compiling it. We think that they have succeeded admirably in the first part of the task which was set before them; to put in clear and unmistakable language, with all the weight of their renown as authorities on the subject, the horrific effects which will be produced by nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons if they are ever used. No one can deny that if the thousands of weapons in the stockpiles are loosed, they will cause horrible, almost inconceivable death and destruction. But the impact of this knowledge has been softened by much repetition. It is a truth which has regrettably become a platitude, and perhaps a bore. The world would like to ignore it, to forget about it. To offset this dangerous tendency it would be good if all of us in this Committee would read and re-read the first chapters of the Secretary-General's report. It would, I hope, bring us to a realization of the sort of questions we are dealing with. These are questions of the life or death of hundreds upon hundreds of millions