

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

in the

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Tuesday, 23rd October, 1962

Honourable Members will be aware of President Kennedy's broadcast in relation to Cuba.

It is a declaration of historic importance. He has demonstrated that offensive nuclear weapons are being installed by the Soviet Union in Cuba and that the Americas are therefore being submitted to a very grave threat, at close quarters. The President has demonstrated the deceit practised by the Soviet Union, and its determination by threat of aggression to terrorise nations whose only wish is for peace.

We commend the President's statement. Though inevitably dramatic, it was in essence defensive. We appreciate his reference to the vital importance of regional defensive agreements - agreements which are authorised by the United Nations Charter and which are necessary for the common safety of those living within the region. We welcome the readiness of the U.S.A. to bring the matter promptly before the United Nations.

Both in his broadcast and in a personal communication to me this morning, the President has indicated that he is requesting an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council at which the American Ambassador would present, on behalf of the United States, a resolution calling for the withdrawal of missile bases and other offensive weapons in Cuba under the supervision of United Nations observers. We have instructed our own Ambassador to the United Nations to do all in his power to support the passing of this resolution.

We do not under-estimate the gravity of the situation, a gravity profoundly demonstrated by both the tone and substance of the President's broadcast. We hope that his statement and the steps to be taken pursuant to it will bring home to the Soviet Union the nature of the consequences which may flow from its overseas policies. Indeed the whole matter will serve to test whether the Soviet Union's constant advocacy of peace possesses either sincerity or substance.

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