

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Monday, October 29, 1962

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CUBA—FURTHER STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we meet today in an atmosphere considerably less tense than that which prevailed over the last few anxious days. Members of the house will have watched with attention the rapid developments over the week end which reached their climax yesterday morning in Chairman Khrushchev's decision to order the dismantling of Soviet missile sites in Cuba and the removal of the missiles to the Soviet union. There is no need to recapitulate in detail what transpired except perhaps to clarify one development which was confusing at the time and introduced for a while a dangerous element of uncertainty.

Chairman Khrushchev had sent a message to President Kennedy offering to dismantle the Soviet bases in Cuba in exchange for a United States undertaking to remove the quarantine measures and to give assurance against invasion of Cuba. Within a few hours Moscow radio was broadcasting the text of a further Khrushchev message which seemed to impose a new condition to the Soviet offer by linking the question of Soviet withdrawal of missiles from Cuba with a similar withdrawal by the United States of missiles from Turkey. This attempt to raise the price in circumstances which left unclear just what the Soviet union was or was not prepared to do in order to meet the insistent United States demand that the Cuba threat be liquidated first became for a time a complicating factor which it was feared might upset the hopeful development which had seemed about to be achieved. The uncertainty thus caused was finally removed only when Chairman Khrushchev gave orders to dismantle the missile bases in Cuba under U.N. supervision.

Members of the house will be glad that the threat posed by the long range Soviet missiles in Cuba will be speedily removed. However, I think it is worth while warning again that none of us should take anything for granted in this tense situation, as there still remain a number of potential hurdles. Premier Castro's position is still a factor to be taken into account, and his preliminary reactions are not as encouraging as they might be.

There is still the complex if not difficult question of verification under U.N. supervision to be worked out; and there is little time in which to work out and accomplish what must be done in this connection. U Thant, the acting secretary general, is to go tomorrow to Havana to pave the way for U.N. surveillance of the dismantling of the sites and the withdrawal of the missiles. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Green) went to New York yesterday and has already made known to the acting secretary general Canada's readiness to make its contribution to whatever inspection and verification arrangement the United Nations may undertake.

I think it is well to reiterate the word of caution that I used yesterday when dealing with this matter. While there will be universal relief that the outlook for a peaceful solution has greatly improved, there is a continuing need for negotiation on this and other potential sources of threats to world peace. The introduction of long range missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads to nearly the whole of the western hemisphere has brought the world too close to disaster for anyone to include in complacency at this time. The fact that conflict has been averted can be attributed in very considerable degree to the unity, co-operation and understanding among the western allies in the face of a dangerous threat.

We should all recognize the constructive role that the United Nations has played in this crisis. Once again the world organization has provided a forum where the parties could meet together and where the secretary general could have the opportunity of using his offices.

With regard to the future, the first task is to restore the status quo ante by the complete liquidation of the situation in Cuba which had so dangerously upset the precarious balance of world power. But it will not be enough simply to return to the unsatisfactory stalemate in east-west relations. Even at the peak of the crisis President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev, and Prime Minister Macmillan too, felt the need to speak of the future and the pressing urgency of negotiating other outstanding differences. These acknowledgements of future needs open up new possibilities for progress on a broader front.