

It is a serious one. It has been necessary and will always remain necessary to weigh the risks both of action and inaction in such circumstances. I need not refer to the record of Canada in two World Wars, in the NATO Alliance and in Korea as demonstrating the fact that Canadians stand by their allies and their undertakings, and we intend in the present crisis to do the same. On the other hand, we shall not fail to do everything possible to seek solutions to these problems without war. We shall seek to avoid provocative action. Our purpose will be to do everything to reduce tension.

I think I should summarize some of the principal actions which have been taken by the Government to date to deal with the question. The first, which was referred to by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, was to exercise a control over Soviet-bloc aircraft bound for Cuba. He has explained these measures to the House in some detail; I would add simply that, commencing even before the President's speech, we had acted to ensure that Canadian air-space and Canadian air-transport facilities were not being used to carry arms to the Soviet bases in Cuba.

Second, all Canadian military forces have taken necessary precautionary measures to improve their readiness to meet any serious developments. The Canadian component of the NORAD forces has been placed upon the same level of readiness as the United States forces under NORAD operational control. Furthermore, as was stated by the Minister of National Defence, we have deferred any further movement of dependants of armed services personnel overseas. We have held up the authorization of any long leave for armed services personnel. The Government today approved the measures which the forces would have to take in the event that the present crisis led to a more serious situation. Our civilian departments have been instructed as a matter of urgency to bring up to date the measures which they would need to take in any emergency. They are doing so. The ministers and key civilian officials have been asked to remain available during this period of crisis.

On other occasions I have informed the House of preparations for carrying on government should the worst occur. These preparations cover not only the public service but also provincial governments and municipalities which we have been financing and assisting with information and advice. I do not think I should go any further into detail in dealing with the measures which we have taken or would be prepared to take should circumstances require us to do so.

I wish the House and the Canadian people to know that the Government has taken such precautions as are necessary at this stage to co-operate with our allies, and to be prepared for contingencies that might arise. As I said a moment ago, the Government is seeking to find means by which the dangerous, threatening situation can be settled without recourse to arms. On the other hand, we recognize the fact that the free world as a whole cannot afford to permit its essential security to be endangered by offensive weapons mounted on bases adjacent to North America. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs said last evening during the course of his interview on the television facilities of the