

Cuba Quarantine

John F. Kennedy

"Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and of the entire Western Hemisphere,

I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

First: To halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back. This quarantine will be extended, if needed, to other types of cargo and carriers. We are not at this time, however, denying the necessities of life, as the Soviets attempted to do in their Berlin Blockade in 1948.

Second.- I have directed the continued and increased [aerial] surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup.

Third.- It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo [Cuba], evacuated today the dependents of our personnel there, and ordered additional military units to be on a standby alert basis.

Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric security. . . . Our other allies around the world have also been alerted.

Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations, we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our resolution will call for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of U.N. observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.

Seventh and finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations. I call upon him further to

abandon this course of world domination, and to join in an historic effort to end the perilous arms race and to transform the history of man." Source: Public Papers of the President of the United States, John E Kennedy: pp. 807-808 (October 22, 1962).

Based on the passage above, complete the following tasks:

1. Briefly explain the author's purpose.
2. Place this document in historical context. What events provoked the writing of this document?
3. What is the "point of view" the writer?