Tension Mounts As Russian Ships Approach Cuban Blockade Line

By EUGENE KEILIN

Tension mounted today as 25 Russian ships, some believed to be carrying crated missiles and missile parts, continued to approach the line of American warships and planes which surround Cuba.

Soviet officials indicated that the ships would refuse to stop or be searched. In this event, the United States forces are expected to carry out President Kennedy’s promise to sink any shipping refusing to honor the military quarantine of Cuba.

The quarantine and six other steps were ordered Monday in retaliation for what President Kennedy described as a “provocative threat to world peace” on the part of the Russians.” Kennedy was referring to the construction and stocking of missile bases in Cuba capable of attacking most of the major cities in the Western hemisphere.

THE QUARANTINE went into effect at 8 am this morning, Houston time, following its official proclamation yesterday at the White House.

In addition to the quarantine, the President ordered increased military surveillance of the island fortress, and called upon the Organization of American States to support our action and the United Nations to require and supervise the dismantling and removal of all offensive missiles now in Cuba.

THE OAS, by a vote of 19-0 with Uruguay abstaining, endorsed yesterday the President’s actions. Meeting intermittently since yesterday afternoon, the UN Security Council has adopted an agenda placing the U.S. request before counter proposals by Cuba and the Soviet Union and has been debating the U.S. resolution ever since.

Cuba, though not a member of the Security Council, has been allowed to sit in on the discussion under procedural rules which allow parties to a question before the Council to do so.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the speech was its clear-cut branding of the So-

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viet Union as responsible for the crisis.

NOT ONLY did the President explicitly request Chairman Khru-schev to “halt and eliminate” the threat to peace but also he made it clear that the U. S. would consider an attack by Russia “requiring a full retaliatory response.”

The President defended his actions by citing historical precedent.

“THE 1930’s,” he said, “taught us a clear lesson: Aggressive con-duct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war.’

Such a precedent is primarily a defense of the action in terms of American self-interest. There is little if any legal background for the use of the “quarantine” but international law often consists of what other nations will allow.

MOST U.S. ALLIES were quick to give approval to the President’s speech and actions.

The President had special words for the Cuban people to whom the broadcast was directed by a special “Voice of America” hookup, and he concluded with a somber warning to the people of the United States.

“THE PATH we have chosen for the present,” Kennedy said, “is full of hazards as all paths are—but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commit-ments around the world.