



## President John F. Kennedy: Fort Worth, Texas and the Cold War

### Introduction

During the fall of 1963, President John F. Kennedy began to prepare for the next presidential campaign. By the end of September, he had traveled to the West, speaking in nine different states in less than a week. In November he planned to tour Texas, a “must win” state, and visit five cities within two days. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy accompanied the President and Vice President as they spoke first in San Antonio and Houston before landing at Carswell Air Force base in Fort Worth on the night of November 21, 1963. The next morning, President Kennedy first spoke to a crowd of approximately two thousand outside Hotel Texas before addressing a Chamber of Commerce breakfast with another two thousand people. This Chamber of Commerce speech is considered President Kennedy’s last speech.

### Objectives

Students will: analyze political speeches and letters  
discover President Kennedy’s plan to win the Cold War  
identify the role that citizens of Fort Worth, Texas played in that plan  
prove that the U.S. was a “keystone in the arch of freedom”

### Standards

National Standards

U.S. History: Era 9 Standard 2

World History: Era 9 Standards 1, 2

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

U.S.: 8A, 8B, 8D, 29A-G

World History: 13C

### Procedure

Have students read *Remarks at the Breakfast of the Ft. Worth Chamber of Commerce, November 22, 1963* speech or watch the YouTube clip, *President Kennedy’s Breakfast Speech Part 3* and discuss the following:

- What was the tone of the speech?
- How does the introduction draw in the listener?
- What role did Fort Worth play in creating “a national security policy and a national security system which was second to none...”?
- What has the federal government done to increase national security?
- How do the following words help define the Cold War: strategic, intercontinental, counter insurgency?
- What sacrifices have citizens of the United States, especially those in Fort Worth, made in order to have a secure nation or world?
- Why did President Kennedy call the United States the “keystone in the arch of freedom”? Explain the purpose of a keystone in an arch and discuss the definition of freedom.

To review or introduce students to the major foreign policy events during the Kennedy administration, divide the class into six groups. Assign each group one of the following topics: Alliance for Progress, Bay of Pigs Invasion, Cuban Missile Crisis, Berlin Wall, Vietnam, Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Students may use their textbooks or the JFK library website to read background information on the assigned topic.



After learning about the major foreign policy events, have students read the excerpt taken from JFK's speech on their topic and discuss how it relates to the words, "we are still the keystone in the arch of freedom." Ask each group to present its findings about the event and to explain how their findings support the quote.

### **Conclusion**

Pretend you attended the Chamber of Commerce breakfast and write a letter to the local newspaper explaining why President Kennedy's policies were working to win the Cold War.

### **Teacher Note**

For a two page overview of the Cold War from 1945-1963, go to the JFK Library at:  
<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Cold-War.aspx?p=2>.

### **Extension**

Analyze and interpret point of view for the following editorial cartoons concerning the Cold War during JFK's administration.

Bay of Pigs April 19, 1963 by Gib Crockett "Home to Roost":

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web14/features/see\\_it\\_now/1960.0142.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web14/features/see_it_now/1960.0142.html)

Berlin Wall August 9, 1961 by Len Norris "Sidney, dear, I realize the word 'crisis' has lost some of its impact these days ...": <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Cartoons?CartoonID=998>

Fallout Shelters Oct 26, 1961 by Len Norris "D'you realize, if our horse comes in, we can build that little fallout shelter we always wanted.": <http://edocs.lib.sfu.ca/cgi-bin/Cartoons?CartoonID=1014>

Cuban Missile Crisis October 30, 1962 by Edmund Valtman "This hurts me more than it hurts you"

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/swann/valtman/presentation.html>



## **REMARKS AT THE BREAKFAST OF THE FORT WORTH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NOVEMBER 22, 1963**

*Mr. Buck, Mr. Vice President, Governor Connally, Senator Yarborough, Jim Wright, members of the congressional delegation, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Attorney General, ladies and gentlemen:*

Two years ago, I introduced myself in Paris by saying that I was the man who had accompanied Mrs. Kennedy to Paris. I am getting somewhat that same sensation as I travel around Texas. Nobody wonders what Lyndon and I wear.

I am glad to be here in Jim Wright's city. About 35 years ago, a Congressman from California who had just been elected received a letter from an irate constituent which said: "During the campaign you promised to have the Sierra Madre Mountains reforested. You have been in office one month and you haven't done so." Well, no one in Fort Worth has been that unreasonable, but in some ways he has had the Sierra Madre Mountains reforested, and here in Fort Worth he has contributed to its growth.

He speaks for Fort Worth and he speaks for the country, and I don't know any city that is better represented in the Congress of the United States than Fort Worth. And if there are any Democrats here this morning, I am sure you wouldn't hold that against him.

Three years ago last September I came here, with the Vice President, and spoke at Burke Burnett Park, and I called, in that speech, for a national security policy and a national security system which was second to none--a position which said not "first, but;" not "first, if;" not "first, when;" but first. That city responded to that call as it has through its history. And we have been putting that pledge into practice ever since.

And I want to say a word about that pledge here in Fort Worth, which understands national defense and its importance to the security of the United States. During the days of the Indian War, this city was a fort. During the days of World War I, even before the United States got into the war, Royal Canadian Air Force pilots were training here. During the days of World War II, the great Liberator bombers, in which my brother flew with his co-pilot from this city, were produced here.

The first nonstop flight around the world took off and returned here, in a plane built in factories here. The first truly intercontinental bomber, the B-36, was produced here. The B-58, which is the finest weapons system in the world today, which has demonstrated most recently in flying from Tokyo to London, with an average speed of nearly 1,000 miles per hour, is a Fort Worth product.

The Iroquois helicopter from Fort Worth is a mainstay in our fight against the guerrillas in South Viet-Nam. The transportation of crews between our missile sites is done in planes produced here in Fort Worth. So wherever the confrontation may occur, and in the last 3 years it has occurred on at least three occasions, in Laos, Berlin, and Cuba, and it will again--wherever it occurs, the products of Fort Worth and the men of Fort Worth provide us with a sense of security.

And in the not too distant future a new Fort Worth product--and I am glad that there was a table separating Mr. Hicks and myself--a new Fort Worth product, the TFX Tactical Fighter Experimental--nobody knows what those words mean, but that is what they mean, Tactical Fighter Experimental--will serve the forces of freedom and will be the number one airplane in the world today.

There has been a good deal of discussion of the long and hard fought competition to win the TFX contract, but very little discussion about what this plane will do. It will be the first operational aircraft ever produced that can literally spread its wings through the air. It will thus give us a single plane capable of carrying out missions of speed as well as distance, able to fly very far in one form or very fast in another. It can take off from rugged,



short airstrips, enormously increasing the Air Force's ability to participate in limited wars. The same basic plane will serve the Navy's carriers, saving the taxpayers at least \$1 billion in costs if they built separate planes for the Navy and the Air Force.

The Government of Australia, by purchasing \$125 million of TFX planes before they are even off the drawing boards, has already testified to the merit of this plane, and at the same time it is confident in the ability of Fort Worth to meet its schedule. In all these ways, the success of our national defense depends upon this city in the western United States, 10,000 miles from Viet-Nam, 5,000 or 6,000 miles from Berlin, thousands of miles from trouble spots in Latin America and Africa or the Middle East. And yet Fort Worth and what it does and what it produces participates in all these great historic events. Texas, as a whole, and Fort Worth bear particular responsibility for this national defense effort, for military procurement in this State totals nearly \$1 1/4 billion, fifth highest among all the States of the Union. There are more military personnel on active duty in this State than any in the Nation, save one--and it is not Massachusetts--any in the Nation save one, with a combined military-civilian defense payroll of well over a billion dollars. I don't recite these for any partisan purpose. They are the result of American determination to be second to none, and as a result of the effort which this country has made in the last 3 years we are second to none.

In the past 3 years we have increased the defense budget of the United States by over 20 percent; increased the program of acquisition for Polaris submarines from 24 to 41; increased our Minuteman missile purchase program by more than 75 percent; doubled the number of strategic bombers and missiles on alert; doubled the number of nuclear weapons available in the strategic alert forces; increased the tactical nuclear forces deployed in Western Europe by over 60 percent; added five combat ready divisions to the Army of the United States, and five tactical fighter wings to the Air Force of the United States; increased our strategic airlift capability by 75 percent; and increased our special counter-insurgency forces which are engaged now in South Viet-Nam by 600 percent. I hope those who want a stronger America and place it on some signs will also place those figures next to it.

This is not an easy effort. This requires sacrifice by the people of the United States. But this is a very dangerous and uncertain world. As I said earlier, on three occasions in the last 3 years the United States has had a direct confrontation. No one can say when it will come again. No one expects that our life will be easy, certainly not in this decade, and perhaps not in this century. But we should realize what a burden and responsibility the people of the United States have borne for so many years. Here, a country which lived in isolation, divided and protected by the Atlantic and the Pacific, uninterested in the struggles of the world around it, here in the short space of 18 years after the Second World War, we put ourselves, by our own will and by necessity, into defense of alliances with countries all around the globe. Without the United States, South Viet-Nam would collapse overnight. Without the United States, the SEATO alliance would collapse overnight. Without the United States the CENTO alliance would collapse overnight. Without the United States there would be no NATO. And gradually Europe would drift into neutralism and indifference. Without the efforts of the United States in the Alliance for Progress, the Communist advance onto the mainland of South America would long ago have taken place.

So this country, which desires only to be free, which desires to be secure, which desired to live at peace for 18 years under three different administrations, has borne more than its share of the burden, has stood watch for more than its number of years. I don't think we are fatigued or tired. We would like to live as we once lived. But history will not permit it. The Communist balance of power is still strong. The balance of power is still on the side of freedom. We are still the keystone in the arch of freedom, and I think we will continue to do as we have done in our past, our duty, and the people of Texas will be in the lead.

So I am glad to come to this State which has played such a significant role in so many efforts in this century, and to say that here in Fort Worth you people will be playing a major role in the maintenance of the security of the United States for the next 10 years. I am confident, as I look to the future, that our chances for security, our



chances for peace, are better than they have been in the past. And the reason is because we are stronger. And with that strength is a determination to not only maintain the peace, but also the vital interests of the United States. To that great cause, Texas and the United States are committed.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 a.m. (c.s.t.) in the Texas Hotel in Fort Worth. In his opening words he referred to Raymond Buck, president of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, and to Governor John B. Connally, Senator Ralph W. Yarborough, Representative Jim Wright, Byron Tunnell, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, and Waggorier Cart, State Attorney General, all of Texas. He later referred to Marion Hicks, a vice president of Fort Worth General Dynamics and vice president of the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.



## Excerpts from the Speeches of JFK

### Group One: Alliance for Progress

Background Information from the JFK Library

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Alliance-for-Progress.aspx>

Excerpt from the Alliance for Progress proposal, March 13, 1961

*. . . political freedom must accompany material progress. Our Alliance for Progress is an alliance of free governments, and it must work to eliminate tyranny from a hemisphere in which it has no rightful place. Therefore let us express our special friendship to the people of Cuba and the Dominican Republic -- and the hope they will soon rejoin, the society of free men, uniting with us in common effort.*

*This political freedom must be accompanied by social change. For unless necessary social reforms, including land and tax reform, are freely made -- unless we broaden the opportunity for all of our people -- unless the great mass of Americans share in increasing prosperity -- then our alliance, our revolution, our dream, and our freedom will fail. But we call for social change by free men change in the spirit of Washington and Jefferson, of Bolivar and San Martin and Martin -- not change which seeks to impose on men tyrannies which we cast out a century and a half ago. Our motto is what it has always been -- progress yes, tyranny no -- progreso sí, tiranía no! . . . .*

### Group Two: Bay of Pigs

Background Information from the JFK Library:

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Bay-of-Pigs.aspx>

Excerpt from JFK's speech assuming responsibility for failed Bay of Pigs invasion, April 20, 1961

*. . . The message of Cuba, of Laos, of the rising din of Communist voices in Asia and Latin America--these messages are all the same. The complacent, the self-indulgent, the soft societies are about to be swept away with the debris of history. Only the strong, only the industrious, only the determined, only the courageous, only the visionary who determine the real nature of our struggle can possibly survive.*

*No greater task faces this country or this administration. No other challenge is more deserving of our every effort and energy. Too long we have fixed our eyes on traditional military needs, on armies prepared to cross borders, on missiles poised for flight. Now it should be clear that this is no longer enough--that our security may be lost piece by piece, country by country, without the bring of a single missile or the crossing of a single border.*

*We intend to profit from this lesson. We intend to reexamine and reorient our forces of all kinds--our tactics and our institutions here in this community. We intend to intensify our efforts for a struggle in many ways more difficult than war, where disappointment will often accompany us.*

*For I am convinced that we in this country and in the free world possess the necessary resource, and the skill, and the added strength that comes from a belief in the freedom of man. And I am equally convinced that*



*history will record the fact that this bitter struggle reached its climax in the late 1950's and the early 1960's Let me then make clear as the President of the United States that I am determined upon our system's survival and success, regardless of the cost and regardless of the peril!*





## Group Three: Cuban Missile Crisis

Background Information from the JFK Library

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Cuban-Missile-Crisis.aspx>

Excerpt from JFK radio/tv speech to American people, Oct. 22, 1962

*. . . 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 of 1948. . . . My fellow citizens: let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can see precisely what course it will take or what costs or casualties will be incurred. Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead--months in which our patience and our will will be tested--months in which many threats and denunciations will keep us aware of our dangers. But the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing.*

*The path we have chosen for the present 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 commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high--and Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission.*

## Group Four: Viet Nam

Background Information from the JFK Library

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Vietnam.aspx>

Excerpt from JFK personal letter to Bobbie Lou Pendergrass, March 5, 1963

*. . . Americans are in Viet Nam because we have determined that this country must not fall under Communist domination. Ever since Viet Nam was divided, the Viet Nameese have fought valiantly to maintain their independence in the face of the continuing threat from the North. Shortly after the division eight years ago it became apparent that they could not be successful in their defense without extensive assistance from other nations of the Free World community.*

*In the last summer of 1955, with the approval of President Eisenhower, an Advisory Group was established in Viet Nam to provide them with adequate weapons and equipment and training in basic military skills which are essential to survival in the battlefield. Even with this help, the situation grew steadily worse under the pressure of the Viet Cong. By 1961 it became apparent that the troubles in Laos and the troubles in Viet Nam could easily expand. It is also apparent that the Communist attempt to take over Viet Nam, is only part of a larger plan for bringing the entire area of Southeast Asia under their domination. Though it is only a small part of the area geographically, Viet Nam is now the most crucial.*

*If Viet Nam should fall, it will indicate to the people of Southeast Asia that complete Communist domination of their part of the world is almost inevitable. Your brother was in Viet Nam because the threat to the Viet Nameese people is, in the long run, a threat to the Free World community, and ultimately a threat to us also. For when freedom is destroyed in one country, it is threatened throughout the world. . . . ”*





## Group Five: Berlin Wall

Background Information from the JFK Library

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Cold-War-in-Berlin.aspx>

Excerpt from JFK speech at the Berlin Wall, June 26, 1963

*. . . Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in, to prevent them from leaving us. I want to say, on behalf of my countrymen, who live many miles away on the other side of the Atlantic, who are far distant from you, that they take the greatest pride that they have been able to share with you, even from a distance, the story of the last 18 years. I know of no town, no city, that has been besieged for 18 years that still lives with the vitality and the force, and the hope and the determination of the city of West Berlin. While the wall is the most obvious and vivid demonstration of the failures of the Communist system, for all the world to see, we take no satisfaction in it, for it is, as your Mayor has said, an offense not only against history but an offense against humanity, separating families, dividing husbands and wives and brothers and sisters, and dividing a people who wish to be joined together.*

*What is true of this city is true of Germany--real, lasting peace in Europe can never be assured as long as one German out of four is denied the elementary right of free men, and that is to make a free choice. In 18 years of peace and good faith, this generation of Germans has earned the right to be free, including the right to unite their families and their nation in lasting peace, with good will to all people. You live in a defended island of freedom, but your life is part of the main. So let me ask you as I close, to lift your eyes beyond the dangers of today, to the hopes of tomorrow, beyond the freedom merely of this city of Berlin, or your country of Germany, to the advance of freedom everywhere, beyond the wall to the day of peace with justice, beyond yourselves and ourselves to all mankind.*

*Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free. When all are free, then we can look forward to that day when this city will be joined as one and this country and this great Continent of Europe in a peaceful and hopeful globe. When that day finally comes, as it will, the people of West Berlin can take sober satisfaction in the fact that they were in the front lines for almost two decades.*

*All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner."*



## Group Six: Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Race

Background Information from the JFK Library

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty.aspx>

Excerpt from JFK television speech on the nuclear test ban treaty. July 26, 1963

*. . . I speak to you tonight in a spirit of hope. Eighteen years ago the advent of nuclear weapons changed the course of the world as well as the war. Since that time, all mankind has been struggling to escape from the darkening prospect of mass destruction on earth. In an age when both sides have come to possess enough nuclear power to destroy the human race several times over, the world of communism and the world of free choice have been caught up in a vicious circle of conflicting ideology and interest. Each increase of tension has produced an increase of arms; each increase of arms has produced an increase of tension. . . .*

*Yesterday a shaft of light cut into the darkness. Negotiations were concluded in Moscow on a treaty to ban all nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water. . . .*

*The treaty initialed yesterday, therefore, is a limited treaty which permits continued underground testing and prohibits only those tests that we ourselves can police. It requires no control posts, no onsite inspection, no international body. . . . Nevertheless, this limited treaty will radically reduce the nuclear testing which would otherwise be conducted on both sides; it will prohibit the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and all others who sign it, from engaging in the atmospheric tests which have so alarmed mankind; and it offers to all the world a welcome sign of hope. . . .*

*This treaty is not the millennium. It will not resolve all conflicts, or cause the Communists to forego their ambitions, or eliminate the dangers of war. It will not reduce our need for arms or allies or programs of assistance to others. But it is an important first step--a step towards peace--a step towards reason--a step away from war. . . .*

*First, this treaty can be a step towards reduced world tension and broader areas of agreement. . . . Second, this treaty can be a step towards freeing the world from the fears and dangers of radioactive fallout. . . . Third, this treaty can be a step toward preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to nations not now possessing them. . . . Fourth and finally, this treaty can limit the nuclear arms race in ways which, on balance, will strengthen our Nation's security far more than the continuation of unrestricted testing. . . . We have, and under this treaty we will continue to have, the nuclear strength that we need. . . . The United States has chosen, deliberately, to concentrate on more mobile and more efficient weapons, with lower but entirely sufficient yield, and our security is, therefore, not impaired by the treaty I am discussing. . . .*

*The familiar contest between choice and coercion, the familiar places of danger and conflict, are all still there, in Cuba, in Southeast Asia, in Berlin, and all around the globe, still requiring all the strength and the vigilance that we can muster. Nothing could more greatly damage our cause than if we and our allies were to believe that peace has already been achieved, and that our strength and unity were no longer required. But now, for the first time in many years, the path of peace may be open. No one can be certain what the future will bring. No one can say whether the time has come for an easing of the struggle. But history and our own conscience will judge us harsher if we do not now make every effort to test our hopes by action, and this is the place to begin. According to the ancient Chinese proverb, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." . . .*

