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# A PROFILE IN COURAGE

## PROJECT REPORT

1999 – 2000

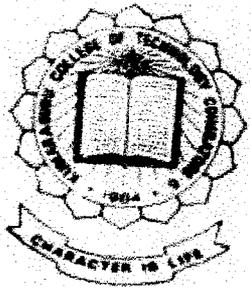
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**KUMARAGURU COLLEGE OF  
TECHNOLOGY  
COIMBATORE - 641006**

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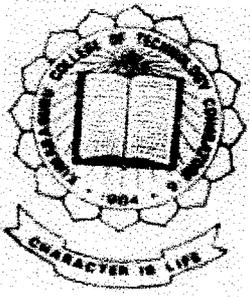
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## **CERTIFICATE**

**This is to certify that the  
dissertation entitled “ A Profile in Courage” is a  
bonafide record of studies carried out by this group  
under the guidance of Mr. JIJU VARGHESE JACOB,  
Lecturer, Department of English at Kumaraguru  
College of Technology in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the completion of the first year  
B.E English paper.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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**We also extend our kind thanks to our other fellow students for helping us in many ways during the course of this project.**

## INTRODUCTION

For sheer human drama and historical sweep few families this century match the KENNEDY'S of America. Over four brief generations, the clan prepared itself for greatness, achieved it and lived with its legacy all the while experiencing extremes of political triumph and personal tragedy. with its mix of political triumph and human tragedy, the Kennedy saga enthralled the nation and made them America's most powerful family – a family that managed to retain its bonds despite all the disintegrating forces of the twentieth century life. Reams have been written about the Kennedy mystique and the Shiny Camelot. Here's an intimate look at one of the most important leaders and personalities of our era – JOHN FITZGERALD FRANCIS KENNEDY.

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## CHAPTER 1

### A PRESIDENT IN MAKING

The UNITED STATES under PRESIDENT Woodrow Wilson had just entered WORLD WAR I when John Fitzgerald Francis Kennedy was born on May 29, 1917, in Brookline, Massachusetts. Brookline was the suburb of Boston where his grand fathers Patrick J. Kennedy and John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald had been elected to many public offices. John F. Fitzgerald had been mayor of Boston and had served in Congress. Joseph P. Kennedy father of the future President was the son of a Bay state politician and grand son of an Irish immigrant.

A freckled, vigorous man whose horn-rimmed spectacles gave him a slightly owlish look, Kennedy was a bank president at age 25 and a millionaire at 30. He became a ship builder, a motion picture tycoon and a heavy contributor to the Democratic party. Joseph married Rose Fitzgerald, the daughter of John F. ("Honey Fitz") Fitzgerald, Mayor of Boston. Rose bore her husband nine children the second of whom was the President, and taught them love, compassion and serenity. The Kennedy children were reared in a family that demanded intense physical and intellectual competition among them and schooled in the religious teachings of the Roman Catholic church and the political precepts of the Democratic party. From their father the children acquired a fierce competitive drive and a yearning for distinction.

Joseph Kennedy was a politician too, though not the candidate type. In the 1930's he became deeply committed to the policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom he served in three important posts including that of Ambassador to Great Britain.

When the first Kennedy child , Joseph Jr., was born father Joe was reported to have said , “He’ll be the first Kennedy to become President of United States”.

Young Joe, likable , outgoing and aggressive , developed all the characteristics of a successful politician . But he was killed while piloting a bomber in World War II , and the leadership of the rising Kennedy generation passed to John .

Thus young Kennedy inherited a background of politics, wealth and determination. The family circle was close and warm . Prodded by their parents , the children were competitive and cohesive . They vied with one another in sail boat races , touch football games , tennis matches and rough and tumble fights .No quarter was asked or given. The important thing was winning – a family trait in sports and politics all their lives. Jack , as he came to be known , was often over shadowed by his older, sturdier brother . But a buoyant family spirit more than made up for the individual hurts that occurred in competition.

Although father Joe could provide all the money his children needed , he insisted they learn that work and study had its values and rewards. If Jack’s school reports were not always what they should have been – and sometimes they were not – his father would encourage him to try harder. When the reports improved , the boy was left in no doubt about his parents’ pleasure.

Once, when Jack was a child , he asked for a raise in his allowance of 40 cents a week . His father told him to write a letter to justify a raise . Jack, writing as though fresh from a reading of Saint Paul’s letter to the Corinthians , drafted a petition .

It was studded with bad spelling and errors of grammar , but the youngster's intellectual resourcefulness was evident :

A plea for a Raise by Jack Kennedy  
Dedicated to my father , Mr. J.P.Kennedy.  
Chapter I.

*My recent allowance is 40 cents . This I used for aeroplanes and other playthings for childhood but now I am a scout and I put away my childish things. Before I would spend 20 cents of my 40 cents allowance and in five minutes I would have empty pockets and nothing to gain and 20 cents to lose. When I am a scout I have to buy canteens, haversacks, blankets, search ligcs ( lights), poncho things that will last for years and I can always use it while I can't use chocolate marshmallow Sunday ice cream and so I put my plea for a rise of 30 cetns (cents) for me to buy schut (such) things and pay my own way around.*

*Finis,  
John Fitzgerald Francis Kennedy*

There is no document to prove the results, but it is likely that Jack got his raise.

Young Kennedy attended private schools in Brookline and New York City; and then in 1931 he entered Choate school , in Wallingford, Connecticut, to prepare for college. He chose Princeton University. His father was a Harvard man, and brother Joe was at Harvard. Father Joe kidded the young man about fleeing his older brother's shadow. Jack simply said that he wanted to be with his Choate friends, who were going to Princeton. First, though, Jack's father insisted that he spend the summer at London School of Economics, where he could learn how people in other environments thought. Jack went to London in 1935, but in a short time jaundice, a liver ailment, forced him to return home. He entered Princeton as planned the following fall, but a second attack of jaundice forced him to leave school. He spent months recuperating and the following year re-entered college. This time it was Harvard.

Harvard professors found Jack Kennedy “a pleasant, bright, easygoing student.” His marks were seldom higher than C in his first two years. He worked on the college newspaper and went out for swimming, football, sailing, and other sports. One day in a junior varsity football scrimmage he had trouble getting off the ground after a pile – up. His back had been hurt. Not until years later did he realize how difficult and painful that injury was to be.

Political movements at home and abroad apparently did not concern young Kennedy. But a visit to Europe in the summer of 1937 increased his interest. He decided that most Americans were completely uninformed about affairs abroad. In Spain the relationship between Church and State was much too close, he wrote. He was to take a strong position on this issue in his campaign for the Presidency 23 years later. Kennedy thought his travels gave him greater incentive to study. But the improvements in his grades at Harvard did not become striking until his senior year. Another trip, this time to Eastern Europe in 1939, sharpened his intellectual interests noticeably. In 1940 he graduated from Harvard *cum laude* (with honor). World War II had begun in Europe, with young Kennedy almost an on-the-spot witness. His senior thesis reflected his observations so well that he turned it into a successful book, *Why England Slept*. It was his explanation of the dawdling by democratic nations in the face of Hitler’s threats of war.

Out of college, Kennedy groped for his future. He thought about attending Yale Law School, went to business school at Stanford University for 6 months instead, then toured South America. In 1941 he tried to enlist in the Army but was rejected because of his old back injury. After five months of exercise to strengthen his back, he tried the Navy and passed the fitness test. He found his assignments mostly paper work, dull. When the Japanese attacked pearl harbor on December 7, 1941, he applied for sea duty. But more than a year passed before he shipped out for the South Pacific. There Lieutenant John F. Kennedy became the central figure in one of the dramatic episodes of the war.

In the dark hours before dawn on August 2, 1943, Kennedy, in command of the torpedo boat PT-109, was on patrol near the Solomon Islands. Suddenly the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri* ploughed through the blackness and knifed Kennedy's boat in half. Two of the 12 men crew disappeared, a third was badly burned by the gasoline flames that sprang up on the water. Others were injured, and some of the men could not swim. Kennedy himself was thrown to the deck, and his back was re-injured. Nevertheless, he gathered his men on the bobbing bow, all that remained of his boat. As the hours passed and it seemed as if the bow would sink, skipper Kennedy made a decision. He ordered all hands to make for an island about 3 miles away. Those who could were to swim. The others were to hang on to a plank, once part of the gun mount, and push. Kennedy grabbed the burned crew member, McMahon, clenched his teeth on the straps of the man's life vest, and swam for the island. They all made it about 5 hours later.

The next problem was how to summon help without arousing the enemy. Kennedy swam to other islands, got caught in a current on the return trip, and passed out. His life vest saved him. Kennedy and Ensign Rose repeated these swimming explorations and eventually found two natives in a canoe. Scratching a message on a coconut, Kennedy handed it over to the natives and pointed to Rendova, a United States Navy Base 38 miles away. The message was delivered and the men were rescued after 5 days on the island. For his courage and leadership Kennedy won the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. He refused a chance to quit active duty. But malaria and his old back injury eventually forced him into hospital in the summer of 1944. After a disk operation and recuperation he retired from the Navy.



THE KENNEDY FAMILY IN 1934. STANDING FROM LEFT: JOSEPH JR., JOHN, MRS JOSEPH KENNEDY, JEAN, PATRICIA. SEATED FROM LEFT: ROBERT, EDWARD, MR JOSEPH KENNEDY, EUNICE, ROSEMARY, KATHLEEN



LIEUTENANT JOHN F. KENNEDY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC IN 1943

## CHAPTER 2

### THE POLITICAL CAREER BEGINS

In 1945 the Hearst newspapers hired Kennedy to cover the United Nations preliminary conference in San Francisco. There he first saw the Russian diplomats in action. He was pessimistic. He covered the British elections that year, then decided he had had enough of journalism. He did not know whether he would like politics, but decided to try it. In 1946 he ran for Congress as a Democrat, in a Boston district. Though he did not live there, Kennedy by hard campaigning defeated a large field of rivals. He was re-elected twice, then he tried for election to the United States senate against Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, who was supposed to be unbeatable in Massachusetts. It was a big Republican year in 1952, in Massachusetts and else where, but Jack Kennedy beat Lodge by 70,000 votes.

On September 12, 1953, Kennedy and Jacqueline Bouvier were married at Newport, Rhode Island. They had three children – Caroline, John Jr. whom his father called John-John; and Patrick Bouvier, who lived but a few days.

Kennedy's legislative record – 6 years in the house of representatives, 8 years in the senate defied easy labeling. His strong liberal streak led him, for instance to oppose the loyalty oath that students had to take to get a loan. His support of workmen's demands for higher minimum wage laws and other welfare benefits also stamped him as a liberal. But when some of his liberal friends resisted union reform legislation, Kennedy disagreed. He did not join the anti-union reformers, but took a moderate position. Only a master of the art of politics could, in those days, insist on any union reforms at all and still command the strong support of most union leaders, as Kennedy did.

Kennedy displeased the Liberals by failing to take a strong position against McCarthyism. He was in the hospital when the Senate voted on December 2, 1954, to censure (reprimand) its Wisconsin Republican member, Joseph R. McCarthy. McCarthy's method of investigating communism had led to one of the great controversies of the decade. Liberals felt that McCarthy had violated rules of fair play and had unjustly damaged reputations. They criticized Kennedy for evading the issue. Later Kennedy accepted all or most of the Liberal position on McCarthy. He said he would have voted for McCarthy's censure if he had not been in the hospital. However he had a hard time convincing the liberals of his sincerity.



THE NUPTIALS OF JACQUELINE BOUVIER AND JOHN. F. KENNEDY

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ELECTION OF 1960

If the REPUBLICANS had not tied their own hands by pushing through amendment XXII limiting presidential terms to two, Eisenhower could easily have won a third; and the improvement that he showed during his last two years, as well as the vigor that he had exhibited since his retirement, suggested that it would have been his best term.

Nevertheless, political considerations decreed that Vice President Richard M. Nixon had to have it, and he got it on the first ballot. Nixon had been "groomed" for the Presidency for eight years. He had sat in cabinet meetings, gone on difficult and dangerous missions for the President, and behaved with good taste and circumspection when Eisenhower's illness suggested that he was only "a heartbeat" from being called upon to take over the Presidency. Nixon, too, was a young man for a presidential candidate, only four years older than Kennedy; but his appearances suggested someone well over fifty and his oratory was ponderous. Nevertheless, enough of "Ike's" popularity might have rubbed off on "Dick" to ensure victory but for John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Kennedy did not particularly distinguish himself in the senate. Elder statesmen told him, "The way to get along is to go along," and for about two years he did. On McCarthy for instance, his attitude was equivocal, possibly because his father supported Joe, probably because he feared to offend his Irish Catholic constituents who regarded McCarthy as a hero. In any case, an operation and a long convalescence in 1954 raised Kennedy's sights and gave him time to write *profiles of courage*, a series of thumb nail sketches of politicians from John Quincy Adams

to Robert A. Taft who had exhibited that rare quality. And it is possible that Theodore Sorenson, the unitarian from Nebraska who became Kennedy's intimate friend and private secretary, indoctrinated him with the views of the Middle-west farm belt and the idealism of George W. Norris. Kennedy's victory over Lodge made him "Presidential Timber," and his appearance and personality were enhanced by his marriage to Jacqueline Bouvier who belonged to the highest social circles of New York and Newport.

In the democratic convention of 1956, senator Kennedy was a candidate for the Vice Presidential nomination but, fortunately for himself, did not get it. In 1960 he became an avowed candidate for the Presidential nomination of his party, and hard he worked to get it. Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, leader of the Democrats in the senate for several years, a one-time protégé of Franklin D. Roosevelt, representing the moderate rather than the "Dixiecrat" south, and with an abundance of friends in the north as well, looked like the logical candidate. But Kennedy liberally subsidized by his wealthy father, supported his hustings by his pretty sisters and handsome brothers – for the Kennedys were not merely a family but a clan – entered the democratic primaries of seven widely separated states and handily won them all.

Kennedy's reply to leading questions on church-state relations satisfied most of the protestants that if elected, he would not invite the Pope to Washington. And his youth, candor, quick wit, and grasp of political realities overcame religious prejudice. He was nominated for the Presidency on the first ballot. Characteristically, he persuaded the convention to nominate for second place his chief rival Senator Johnson; and Johnson, at his earnest request, accepted.

Kennedy made an ideal candidate. His "Harvard accent" may have offended some, but his fine presence, youthful vigor, words well chosen and phrased, delivered in a strong, virile voice, appealed to voters who cared little for religion and programs but appreciated personality and character. The election as far as issues were concerned, was not exciting, as both candidates promised about the same things- peace from strength, continuation of welfare, streamlining the federal government, etc. The most interesting feature was a TV debate between Nixon and Kennedy, in which nimble Jack ran circles around somber, jowly Dick. The popular vote, heaviest ever cast, was very close - 34.2 million for Kennedy, 34.1 million for Nixon; had New York's 45 electoral votes gone the other way, Nixon would have won. Kennedy took 303 electors to Nixon's 219. In addition, 14 "Dixiecrat" electors from the lower south voted for Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, and one Oklahoma Republican who hated Nixon "crossed over" and did likewise. The religious aspect was by no means absent from the campaign.

Probably about as many Protestant Democrats Voted against Kennedy as the Catholic Republicans who voted for him. In any case, there was a big switching of voting habits. Other political experts believe that Kennedy and Johnson were put over by the young; for they were the first Presidential team to have been born in the twentieth century. Nixon thought he had been defeated by a recession in the fall of 1960, which he and one of the economists on Eisenhower's staff predicted, but were unable to persuade the president to enlist federal credit control and public - works spending to stop.

Whatever the cause, here was something fresh and new, yet in the pattern of tradition. Millions of spectators and TV viewers felt just that on 20 January 1961 when they saw <sup>AND</sup> heard venerable, white-haired Robert Frost read "The Gift Outright", and the young

President – just half the age of the poet - fling out a challenging inaugural address. He opened with a promise that his administration meant “renewal” as well as change. He said “the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought<sup>1</sup> are still at issue around the globe-the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.”

“We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. Let the word go forth this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage - and unwilling to witness permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world”.

He pledged American allies “the loyalty of faithful friends,” to the poor everywhere “our best efforts to help them help themselves,” to “our sister republics south of our border . . . to convert our good words into good deeds – in a new alliance of progress,” to the United Nations, support and strength, to “those nations who would make themselves our adversary . . . that both sides may begin anew the quest for peace,” to get away from “that uncertain balance of terror that stays the hand of mankind’s final war.”

“So let us begin anew<sup>2</sup> – remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear . But let us never fear to negotiate.”

Addressing again his compatriots, he said, “Now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to bear arms, though arms were needed – not as a call to

**battle, though embattled we are – but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle year<sup>3</sup> in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation’ – a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself. . . . And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.”**

**There had been no inaugural address like this since Lincoln’s second. Kennedy’s moving inaugural address reflected the idealism of the younger generation as well as an understanding of the country’s heritage.**

**NOTES:-**

- 1) The principles of 1776 were liberty and freedom.**
- 2) The recurrent theme – new, anew, renewal recalled the motto on the great seal of America, NOVUS ORDOSECULORUM, and Shelly's : “ The world's great age begins anew, . . . .”**
- 3) The solemn warning “ The long Twilight struggle year in and year out,” was the note on which president Kennedy's life closed.**



SENATOR AND MRS KENNEDY DURING THE 1960 PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTION CAMPAIGN.



JOHN F. KENNEDY IS SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT BY  
CHIEF JUSTICE EARL WARREN

## THE 1961 INAUGURATION

*“In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility – I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people and any other generation . . . And so my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. Finally, whether you are citizen of America or citizen of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength . . . which we ask of you. With good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love . . . knowing that here on earth God’s work must be truly our own.”*

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CABINET AND DOMESTIC POLICY

Kennedy followed Eisenhower's principle of cabinet appointments, but with greater success in the selection. Whilst "Ike" for defense secretary chose the head of General Motors, "Jack" selected Robert S. McNamara, graduate of the University of California, president of Ford motor company, and a Republican; and McNamara made so acceptable a defense secretary that he was continued in office by President Johnson. C. Douglas Dillon, chairman of the board of Dillon, Reed, Eisenhower's under secretary of state when Christian Herter was promoted, became Secretary of the treasury. Dean Rusk of Georgia, a former Rhodes scholar at Oxford, and in subordinate positions of state and war departments since 1946, became secretary of state. Arthur J. Goldberg of Chicago, a leading labor lawyer, became secretary of labor; J. Edward Day a California insurance man, postmaster general. These major appointments were generally approved throughout the country, but there were some misgivings when the President made his fellow Harvardian, thirty-five year old brother Robert F., attorney general. Bob Kennedy however had plenty of experience, as he had practised in Washington and had been counsel to the senate investigation of the labor rockets which exposed Jimmy Hoffa of the teamster's union. For special assistants, under secretaries and diplomats the President called to Washington any number of the despised members of the Harvard faculties, such as McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Archibald Cox, and others that the newspapers were inquiring. "Who is left in Cambridge to teach the students?"

There was no "gray eminence" in the Kennedy's administration. He abolished the position of

Assistant to the president, which Sherman Adams had held. He also abolished the staff system that President Eisenhower had installed in the White house. Instead of plans and programs being worked out by the staff and reaching the President on one sheet of paper for his approval or disapproval, Kennedy worked directly with his staff. He took an active part in an hour-by-hour work of the White House on almost every subject, and often talked on the telephone to subordinates in the department who had never before heard a presidential voice. Although this did make the executive department seem disorderly, as in the Roosevelt administration, it enabled the President to exert his power of decision all along the line and made him extraordinarily well informed as to what was going on. His display in his press conferences of being well informed was a most important political asset.

There had been never been such youthful euphoria in Washington since the early days of New Deal. Kennedy's theory of the presidency was a dynamic leadership like Roosevelt's, rather than the "Laodicean drift" of Eisenhower. He hoped to recreate the spirit of the Hundred days and push through congress a series of reform measures which he called the New Frontier, similar to those of March - June 1933. To the first session of the new congress, Kennedy sent no fewer than twenty-five messages directed toward economic recovery, stepped-up national defense and foreign aid, conservation of natural resources, federal aid for housing and schools. Comparatively few of these measures reached enactment because neither Congress nor public felt any sense of urgency, as they had in 1933. The country was prosperous, there had been an apparent thawing of cold war, and despite Democratic majorities in both houses the coalition of southern democrats and conservative northern republicans which existed during the second Eisenhower administration still held firm. Only about 180 of 260 Democrats in the

house could be depended upon to vote for the New Frontier measure , and a similar number to vote against them. It became blatantly evident in the Kennedy administration what had been adumbrated in the less demanding Eisenhower administration, that the two party system had broken down, so far as congress was concerned. The two ends of both parties, liberal and conservative, were close together than the parties themselves, and the committee system, by putting senior members of each party on key committees like rules , and ways and means, enabled the conservatives to kill Presidential proposals before they even came to vote.

Since the principal point where presidential proposals were done to death was the rules committee, presided over by Howard W. Smith of Virginia, a member since 1931 who hated the New Deal and all welfare legislation, speaker Ray Burn got through a bill increasing the membership of the rules committee from 12 to 15. That helped a little, but not much: a federal aid to educational bill finally emerged from the rules committee in 1963, but the civil rights bill on which Kennedy had set his heart - " this nefarious bill" as Smith called it - remained bottled up until after Kennedy's death.

Kennedy was keenly sensitive to the "Negro Revolution" that was going on, and eager to help colored citizens to secure their political rights and realize their potentialities through education. The great crisis in that revolution during his term arose over the efforts of one Negro to enroll in the hitherto lilywhite University of Mississippi. By the fall of 1962, Mississippi, South Carolina and Alabama were the only states which operated completely segregated school systems. Their resistance to integration was challenged by a Supreme court order directing the university of Mississippi to admit James.H.

**Meredith, a Negro resident of that state. University trustees and officials decided to obey the court order, but governor Ross Barnett refused to let Meredith register. President Kennedy and the Attorney General acted decisively to uphold the Supreme court order. Federal marshals accompanied Meredith to the campus, and the President made a special appeal to the people of Mississippi to comply with the law. But rioting broke out on the University campus, leaving two people dead and many injured. Nevertheless, Meredith was registered and eventually became the first known negro to graduate from the University of Mississippi. In 1963, Alabama and South Carolina also admitted negro students to their universities thus, bringing integration to Public universities of the southern states.**

**The President used Patronage and personal talks to win support of the middle – of – the – road group in Congress. He exhibited the tact and patience of an old campaigner, but had to be content with some what less than half a loaf. A new minimum wage law raised the hourly rate from \$1 to \$1.25 and covered some 3.6 million more people than the old one. A housing act allotted \$ 4.9 billion in grants or loans, for four years, to develop local transportation systems and build middle income housing. “Medicare” for the aged failed, federal aid to education and school building failed when it became clear that no such bill would pass unless it excluded parochial and non-integrated public schools from its benefits. Sam Rayburn, speaker for seventeen years but a friend to progressive legislation, died before Kennedy had been President a year. The new speaker John W. McCormack, a septuagenarian who had served in Congress since 1927, came from the same background as the Kennedys and bound to Jack by all manners of ties, used his shrewd knowledge of parliamentary law to further the Presidential program. But not much grist**

emerged from the congressional hopper. The Southern Bourbon – Northern Republican alliance was too strong.

Kennedy entered office on the upswing from a middle slump, but the economy was sluggish; GNP(Gross National Product) was not rising as fast as in several European countries. One of the President's

economic advisers, Paul A. Samuelson from M.I.T., recommended more government spending, lower interest rates to stimulate building, aid to depressed areas, and a tax cut as ace – in – hole. The President did not ask for the first and last of these, but he got most of those in between; and Khrushchev indirectly helped the American economy by resuming nuclear weapons testing, which he had promised Eisenhower not to do. This induced Congress to add another \$ 4 billion to the defense budget. Unemployment remained fairly constant – 4.4 million or 5 percent of the civilian working force, in March 1962. About half of it was due to automation in textiles, coal mining, motor cars, and aircraft. Kennedy tried to fill this gap by establishing new industries in chronically depressed areas and retraining the workmen replaced by machines; but very little was accomplished.

On the Conservative side Kennedy's leadership succeeded in checking the inflation which had continued, despite republican promises, throughout the previous administration. The only time he lost his temper was in April 1962 when United states steel and other companies announced a 3.5 percent increase in prices after the President had persuaded striking unions to accept an infinitesimal wage increase. Steel backed down and rescinded the price raise. Big business, which had regarded Kennedy with a somewhat tolerant mistrust since his inauguration, now decided that it had an enemy to deal with, like "that man in the White House." Nevertheless, at the New

year the President came out for a \$13.5 billion cut in income taxes over three years, hoping that this would produce more venture capital and more jobs. The republicans said in effect , O.K., if the budget be reduced at least \$ 10 billion . Kennedy retorted that this could not be done, unless by weakening national defense. So nothing was done.



PRESIDENT KENNEDY JOKES WITH REPORTERS  
DURING A WHITE HOUSE PRESS CONFERENCE

## CHAPTER 5

### DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY

Kennedy was no less determined than Truman and Eisenhower to keep civilian control over the military establishment, which at the time of his accession consumed half the federal budget, almost 10 percent of GNP, and employed 3.5 million people. Secretary McNamara asserted firm control over the joint chiefs of staff and the complicated defense forces. He even brought in computers and cost analysis techniques to plot policy changes. The main difference between the Kennedy and Eisenhower defense policies was a transition from an all-out "strategic" deterrent by bombers and missiles to a "balanced" build up of navy, marine corps, and ground forces to cope with limited wars. The number of combat divisions was raised from 11 to 16, the air force "tactical"<sup>1</sup> wings were increased in number. And profiting by experience in Indochina, a substantial contingent of the army was trained to fight guerrillas.

During the 1960 campaign it was charged, and generally assumed that the United States was at the short end of the missile competition. In February, 1961, the secretary McNamara let it be known that in his opinion there was no "Missile gap". The public, however, was more interested in the lunar race with the Soviets. Russia won the first round by the 1957 Sputnik and the second by sending an astronaut around the globe in April 1961. Alan Shepherd the American answer, did it in May; and John Glenn became such a hero by orbiting the globe thrice in five hours on 20 February 1962 that he almost ran for the senate. Russia then sent a satellite so near the moon as to photograph its dark back side. The contest now took form of which nation would first land a man on the moon

and get him back safe. Kennedy recommended , and congress appropriated, a few billion dollars for "Project Apollo" to compete with the Soviets.

Khrushchev congratulated Kennedy for his assurance of peaceful intentions toward Russia in the inaugural address, but continued the Cold war. His renewal of open air nuclear testing despite a "gentleman's agreement" with Eisenhower to call off testing, started in 1961, and some fifty nuclear devices were exploded. Kennedy retaliated after much deliberation. On 25 April 1962 he announced that, after examining every alternative and , unable to persuade the Soviet government to abstain , he had ordered America's armed forces to resume testing.

In April 1961 Cuba flared up again. A force of about 1500 anti - Castro Cubans, trained in central America with logistic support from the United States, invaded Cuba at the Golfo De Cochinos, or the Bay of Pigs. This force was not nearly strong enough for invasion, much less a counter revolution. In the show down , Kennedy refused to commit the United States Airforce to help the invaders , who were routed by Castro's forces, supported by recently arrived T - 33 jets. The whole affair was badly bungled in Washington. Kennedy should either have gone all-out to support the invasion ,prevented it from taking place by denying the rebels troop-lift.However the invasion had been planned and assisted by President Eisenhower , and the new President, in office only for three months, was reluctant to risk another Korea, and was badly advised by the experts.

In the aftermath of this fiasco, Kennedy and Khrushchev met for the first time at Vienna in June 1961. Warily each took the other's measure. The younger man realized that he faced a ruthless, shrewd opportunist dedicated to promoting world communalism by a series of

**“national liberation” wars to bring the leading raw material producing regions of the world under communist control. The elder apparently thought he could outwit the President. His next move seemed to confirm this. At Kurushchev’s orders, on 13 August 1961 a great a great concrete and barbed – wire began knifing through Berlin between the Eastern and Western zones .Khurushchev’s object, to stop the flight of Germans from communism was attained by breaking all prior agreements to preserve free access through partitioned Berlin. Once again the Russians had called the tune, and the western powers, balancing fears of an all–out nuclear war against the risk of appeasement, did nought but protest, protest , protest .**

**Kurushchev took heart and tried another aggressive move. In July – August 1962, while the United States was trying to tighten her economic blockade of Cuba, some thirty Russian ships ,laden with technicians , fighter planes, and ballistic missiles, landed their cargoes on Castro’s shores. President Kennedy authorized high level photographic flights to find out what was going on. On 14 October a U 2 plane brought back evidence that new missile sites were being constructed, and photographs made on succeeding days showed that this was being done faster than anything ever before accomplished in Cuba. The photos revealed short range missiles, which could have hit any where within an arc from Washington to Panama, and the medium range missiles with a range north to Hudson’s bay and south to Lima. On 18 October, Russian foreign minister Gromyko assured Kennedy that the installations were “purely defensive,” but the photographs proved his lie. Kennedy called in his Principal Military and Civilian advisers to discuss the situation. They recommended a tight blockade. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> the President , after briefing leaders of Congress and calling a meeting of the Organization of American states, presented over television the convincing photographic evidence of the missiles on their recently**

prepared sites, and announced that this “deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo . . . cannot be accepted by this country.” Several days of acute tension followed. Army, Navy, and Marine corps were mobilized in Florida and several Gulf ports. The council of the Organization of American States on 23 October approved the blockade unanimously. The United States Navy threw an armed ring about Cuba, air force and carrier based planes patrolled its shores; 12,000 marines stood ready, the strategic air command had nuclear armed b-52s in the air ready to bomb, 156 ICBMs were in readiness, as well as Polaris missiles from submarines. Every thing was set for an all-out invasion of Cuba and an equally massive nuclear attack on Russia if Khrushchev chose to make Castro’s cause his.

Then Khrushchev crawled. On the 26 October he offered to evacuate the missiles if Kennedy would promise not to invade Cuba, and Kennedy accepted. He also turned back Russian ships which were approaching Cuba. The crisis was over. By the clarity and boldness of his policy Kennedy had seized the advantage, but he was careful not to put Khrushchev in a position from which withdrawal would have been impossible. And the risk of millions of American lives was incommensurate with the advantage of ousting a dictator from Cuba. The country breathed the sigh of relief, the Russians did remove their missiles, much to Castro’s rage and disappointment, and the President reached a peak of popularity at home and abroad.

Simultaneously with the Cuban crisis, Red China again made trouble launching a series of surprise invasions over the northern Indian frontier. This was a serious blow to Jawaharlal Nehru who, ever since World War II had followed a neutralist policy between the western and eastern power blocs. Nehru proved an irritating ruler to deal with because of his constant assumption that India’s superior spiritual qualities would protect her, and that the

United States was hopelessly materialistic and aggressive. He prevented settlement of the Kashmir border province dispute with Pakistan by a UN supervised plebiscite; he gobbled up Portuguese Goa, whose people wished to stay Portuguese, without any right or reason. Nehru fancied that he could mediate peace in Asia and please the Chinese by letting his Defense minister Menon vilify the United States on every possible occasion. When any westerner pointed out to a leading Indian the menace of his northern neighbor, which had already grabbed Tibet, the Indian would answer with a superior smile, "*Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*" – "Indians and Chinese are buddies." Now, in September 1962, Mao's army, with neither provocation nor warning, advanced across India's northern border. Nehru screamed for help from the UN and the United States, and Indian public opinion forced him to dismiss Menon. The United States under president Kennedy promptly responded. Within a few days, airforce transport planes were ferrying weapons and supplies to the Indians in the Himalayan front. China announced a truce, and Nehru went so far as to thank the "deep sympathy and practical support received from the United States," and to admit, "There is much in common between us on essentials."

Foreign aid to undeveloped countries continued through an Agency of International Development (AID), promoted by the President. Some AID projects were sheer waste; others, such as the expenditure of \$ 43,000 in Greece under the direction of California soil reclamation expert, were a spectacular success. Greece, a rice – importing nation, was soon providing her own needs and exporting a surplus valued at \$ 5 million. The alliance for progress in Latin America encountered many snags from the Latins themselves; and in 1963 Senator Hubert Humphrey well said, "In terms of where it was a year ago, the *Alianza para el progreso* has taken a giant leap

forward. In terms of where it has yet to go, it has taken only a short ,faltering step.”

More successful and far less expensive is the peace corps organized by President Kennedy’s brother-in-law Sargent Shriver. It trained and sent abroad thousands of young men and women to help undeveloped people to realize their potentialities. In South America , in the emerging nationalities of Africa , in the Philippines and , in Asia , these youths turned to and helped the people build schools, roads, sanitary systems, hospitals; taught in their schools and marketed their handicrafts. By 1966 the Peace corps had 15,000 volunteer’s in 46 countries. The peace corps was the best thing done in the Kennedy administration to restore the old beneficent image of the United States , after its successive blackenings by enemies abroad and extremists at home.

So many fruitless attempts to lay a basis for permanent world peace have been made by so many Presidents that one hesitates to give unqualified approval to John F. Kennedy’s principal effort in that direction , the Nuclear test – ban treaty with Russia. But that treaty certainly inaugurated a thaw in the cold war , and if it is succeeded by really amicable relations between the soviet union and the west, it may eventually be regarded as the dawn of a better day. Kennedy at the same time, smoothed matters by approving the sale of 250 million dollars’ worth of American wheat to Russia.

What seems to have happened in the diplomatic nuclear sphere is that the President and Dean Rusk shrewdly profited by the growing tension between Russia and China to renew a search for that solution which Presidents Truman and Eisenhower had sought in vain. Few thought success possible, so shortly after the hullabaloo over the U 2 being shot down. As the negotiation

was drawing to a close, on 10 June 1963 the President made a notable public address in Washington. He rejected the concept of peace imposed on the world by his own country, or by Russia. He recognized the necessity for living together in diversity : “Let us not be blind to our differences, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which these differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.”

After many conferences between British , American, and Russian scientists, Khrushchev was convinced by his experts that he had more to gain than lose by mutual renunciation. The troublesome inspection issue was shelved because any country could now be photographed, and nuclear testing detected, from unmanned satellites. Finally, on 5 August 1963, the nuclear test ban treaty was signed by Russia, Great Britain, and the United States at a ceremony in the Kremlin. The signatory nations agreed to hold no more open-air or under-water tests of nuclear explosives. Next day President Kennedy announced: “Yesterday , a shaft of light cut into the darkness . . . . For the first time an agreement has been reached on bringing the forces of nuclear destruction under international control . . . . It offers to all the world a welcome sign of hope. It is not a victory for one side – it is a victory for mankind. It ended the tests which befouled the air of all men and all nations.”

The United States Senate gave its advice and consent to this treaty by the emphatic vote of 80 to 19, and it went into effect on 10 October. Almost every member of the United Nations has since adhered.



*PRIME MINISTER NEHRU OF INDIA WITH PRESIDENT KENNEDY  
AND VICEPRESIDENT JOHNSON*

## CHAPTER 6

### THE NEW PICTURE AND END

President Kennedy was remarkable not only for his courage and wisdom in meeting the challenges of the day; he chose to take the most important steps ever made by a president of the United States to foster literature and the arts. His admiration for accomplishment in every field led him to cultivate artists and writers. He did his best to impart to the public his respect for excellence and dislike of mediocrity. He made a good beginning of what J.Q. Adams tried and failed, the transplanting of high cultural values to the federal city. To a newly created post, special consultant on arts, he appointed August Hecksher. Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, the President's fair partner in these enterprises, by her excellent taste and boundless energy, and through persuading collectors to give appropriate pieces of furniture, transformed the White House into a residence worthy of the chief magistrate of the great republic. She redid the place replacing routine reproductions with authentic period pieces and fabrics. In behalf of her cause she was able to skillfully persuade rich collectors to part with their treasures in the name of history. The redecoration was a triumph celebrated on TV when 80 million Americans tuned in to watch the First Lady lead correspondent Charles Collingwood through the rooms and explain her inspirations. The Kennedy's were the first Presidential couple within the memory of White House gardeners to care about the flower gardens. Pablo Casals was invited from Puerto Rico to give a 'cello recital at the White House, his first visit to Washington since Theodore Roosevelt's time. Not only did the Kennedys by their example enhance public interests for the arts, they surrounded themselves with gay, active, intelligent people

who imparted a verve and style to Washington society that it had not known in fifty years. During the 1000 days of the presidency, the First Lady's greatest impact was on style. She revolutionised dress for a female public figure. "Mrs. Kennedy's style was not vanity but a way of living, not simply adorning herself but expressing her vision of beauty". At the same time they were an image of the typical American family, frolicking with their children and taking pleasure trips to the country or New York. American winners of Nobel prizes, never before given official recognition in Washington, together with writers, scholars, and artists of many races, were given a dinner and reception in the White House, conducted with good taste that no European court could have surpassed; and it was typical of the President that instead of greeting his guest with solemn address, he set a gay note by announcing, "This is the most extraordinary collection of talent . . . that has ever been gathered together at the White House – with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone!"

It is to Kennedy's credit that he aroused the enmity of racial, religious and political bigots. He gave no aid and comfort to the superpatriots who wanted to get out of the United Nations, or the left wingers who followed the soviet party line. But, by and large, the country, and the young and perceptive people in every country, adored the presidential couple and their little children Caroline and "John-John," as the President called his son. Everything that the Kennedys did was done with grace elegance and style, and it all seemed natural and not forced; this was what Washington and White House should always have been but almost never had been. Through all the crisis and complexities of his short career, President Kennedy managed to seem relaxed, unhurried and confident.

In November 1963, a few months after his forty sixth birthday, the President decided to visit first

Florida and then Texas to court votes for the election of 1964. Florida had voted against him in 1960; and Texas, though carried through the exertions of Vice-President Johnson, was a stronghold of the ignorant but affluent "extreme right," which hated his policies. His visit to Florida was a continual ovation. Thence he flew to Fort Worth, where he delivered his last speech and perfected the one that he was to have given next day. In it he begged his country men to exercise their strength "with wisdom and restraint – that we may achieve in our time and for all time the ancient vision of Peace and Earth, Good will toward men." For, "As was written long ago, 'Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.'" American policy, he wrote, must be guided by learning and reason," or else those who confuse rhetoric with reality, and the plausible with the possible, will gain the popular ascendancy with their swift and simple solutions to every world problem . . . . We cannot expect that everyone . . . . will 'talk sense' to the American people, but we can hope that fewer people will listen to non-sense. And the notion that this nation is headed for defeat through deficit, or that strength is but a matter of slogans, is nothing but *just plain non-sense.*"

Friday, 22 November 1963, *dies irae* for America and the free world, dawned. The President and his wife made the short flight from Fort Worth to Dallas, arriving at 11:40. From the airport, accompanied by Governor Connally of Texas, they drove towards the center of the city in an open car. At 12:30 p.m. shots rang out. A wretched<sup>2</sup> young man, a returned expatriate from Russia, firing a rifle from a sixth floor window overlooking the Presidential route, hit the President in the neck and the back of his head and wounded the Governor. Jack Kennedy, his head cradled in the lap of his indomitable wife, was rushed to a hospital where he was pronounced dead one hour after noon.

Vice-president Johnson, fortunately, was on hand. Not knowing whether the assassination was an

isolated act or part of a conspiracy to wipe out the federal government, he insisted on accompanying Kennedy's body promptly to the Presidential plane at Dallas airport, and taking of for Washington.

In that plane, in the presence of Mrs. Kennedy, still wearing her blood stained suit, Lyndon B. Johnson at 2:38 p.m., 22 November 1963, took the oath of office as President of United States. The plane bearing the former president's body, Mrs. Kennedy, president and Mrs. Johnson and presidential aides took off for Washington. For the next three days a grief-stricken nation and millions of overseas viewers watched the solemn pageantry of a state funeral unfold on their television screens. Following a foreign heads of state and diplomats, John F. Kennedy was buried in Arlington cemetery on a hillside overlooking the Potomac river. A flame burning at the grave in Arlington cemetery became a symbol of the memories and hopes of the thousand days of John F. Kennedy's presidency.

The only consolation for many Americans in November, 1963, was the smooth transition of power to the new administration. "Let us continue!" was the theme of President Johnson's first message to congress five days later.

With the death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy something seemed to die each one of the Americans. Yet the memory of that bright, vivid personality, that great gentleman whose every act and appearance appealed to their pride and gave them fresh confidence in themselves and their country, will live for a long, long time.

## **NOTES :-**

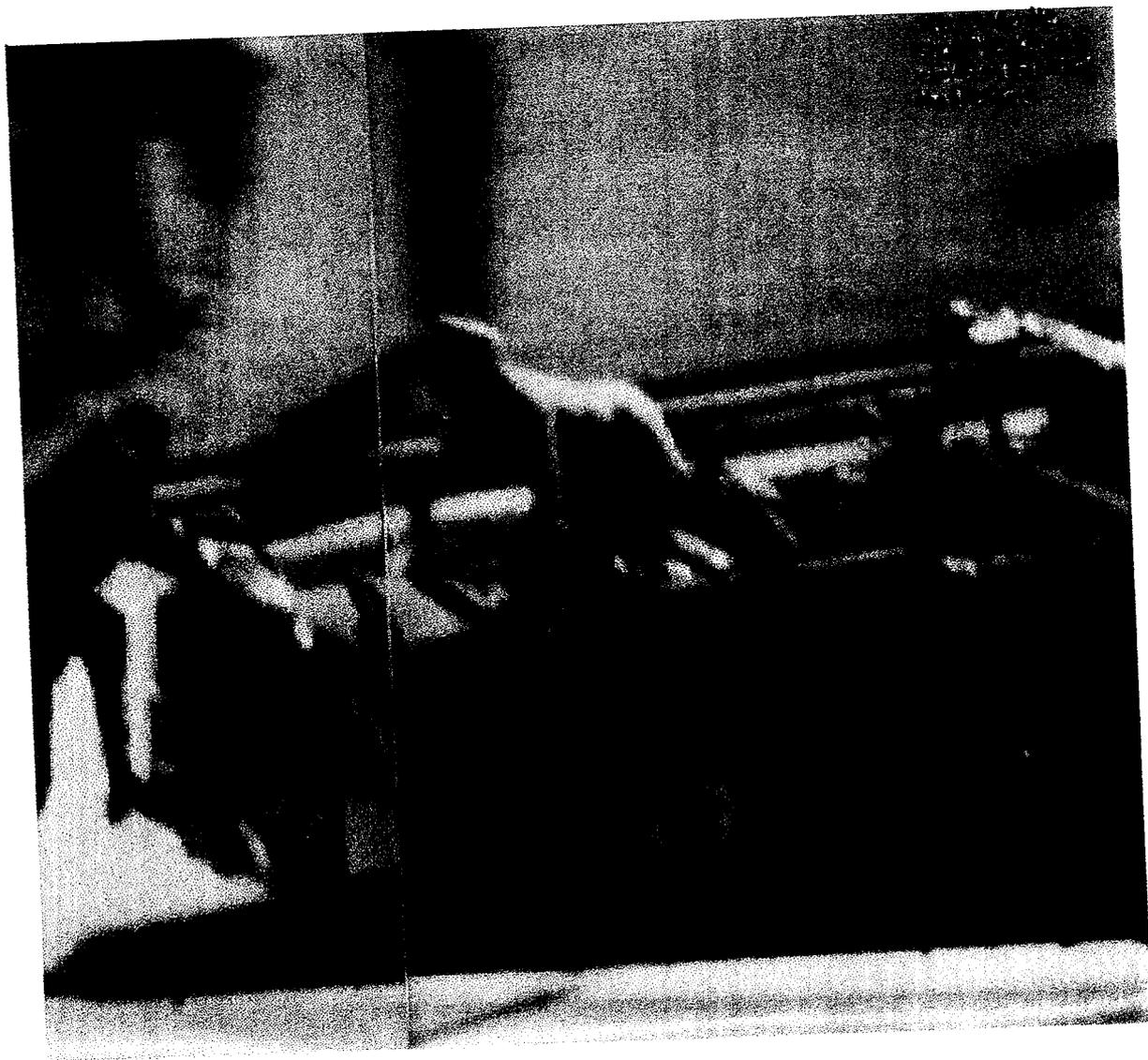
- 1) Said by Mr. Richard Martin , associate curator of the metropolitan museum of Art's costume Institute.**
- 2) The President's assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald, an emotionally disturbed former mariner who had once defected to the Soviet Union. Two days after the assassination, as Oswald was being transferred from the city jail to the country jail in Dallas, he was shot by a Dallas night - club operator, Jack Ruby. President Johnson appointed a commission, headed by chief justice Earl Warren, to investigate the circumstances surrounding the assassination. The commission's report confirmed that Oswald alone had planned and carried out the murder of President Kennedy.**



MR AND MRS KENNEDY WITH CAROLINE



PRESIDENT KENNEDY IN HIS WHITE HOUSE OFFICE WITH HIS  
DAUGHTER CAROLINE AND SON JOHN JR.



DALLAS - 22 NOVEMBER 1963

## CHAPTER 7

### THE MYTH PERSISTS

In May 1996 an auction of the Kennedy's personal belongings drew throngs eager to pay a premium for history. The occasion was the public sale of 5,914 personal items that belonged to the estate of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy. The outcome was the tribute to the allure of nostalgia of the family which single handedly and in many ways involuntarily, redefined the culture of celebrity.

The posthumous chance to enter the auction and maybe buy one of the Kennedy's personal possessions figured out to be irresistible to plenty of people and Sotheby's was not disappointed in its expectations .

During the five days that the objects were on public view before the sale, roughly 40,000 people stood in line to make their way through the Sotheby's galleries, eyeing the merchandise. Many of those who showed up to bid on the desiderata of celebrity were themselves celebrities.

The internal revenue service was most delighted because it stood to pick up a large chunk of the \$ 30 million that was raised.

July 1998 in Dublin more than 30 years after his death, a tribute to U.S. President John F. Kennedy stormed the Irish charts.

The single, entitled green machine, was released to intense interest in Ireland by EMI. The project was the brain-child of RTE producer John O. Regan , who re-mixed a celebrated speech JFK made when he visited Wexford in June 1963 and set it to music. The backing music was a re-mix of The Lonesome Boatman, a tune made famous by the Chieftains.

The speech, in which Kennedy praised Ireland's role in the world , was made just six months before he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, in November 1963. O' Regan revealed to The Irish News that the tune was packed away in a box for five years before he rediscovered it. He said "I heard this speech about Ireland on a program commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of his visit and I thought it was tremendously powerful and evocative."

Out of interest, he came up with a track and recorded a demo. Afterwards, he forgot all about it until just recently. He said "I had moved back to Ireland to work for RTE and when I was unpacking my old Granada TV files and boxes , I found the demo tape. With the help of some colleagues at RTE, we got the tape to EMI Ireland, who expressed an interest . we've since re-recorded and re-mixed the track."

In his speech Kennedy says, " Other people see things and say why – but I dream things that never were and say ' why not?' ,it is that quality of Irish - a remarkable combination of hope, confidence and imagination that is needed more than ever today. Ireland has already set an example and a standard for other nations to follow. This has never been a powerful or rich country – and yet since earliest times its influence on the world has been rich and powerful. No larger nation did more to keep Christianity and western culture alive in their darkest centuries."

The legend of president John F.Kennedy has been seared in the Dallas death throes. Three decades after his death the Kennedy mystique is still alive and it cannot be forgotten that "ONCE THERE WAS A SPOT - FOR ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT THAT WAS KNOWN AS CAMELOT".<sup>1</sup>

**NOTES:-**

- 1) Lyrics by Allan LERNER from the Broadway hit "Camelot" (1960) cited by Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy in remembrance of <sup>her</sup> ~~his~~ husband's Presidency.

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