

« to boldly go where no man has gone before »

Captain James T. KIRK (Star Trek)

# SPACE DISCOVERY

## KENNEDY'S NEW FRONTIER

A NEW LEADER  
FOR THE 60's



KENNEDY  
FOR  
PRESIDENT

On July 16, 1960, John F. Kennedy came to the podium of the Los Angeles Coliseum to accept the Democratic Party's nomination as candidate for President. As is customary in

- 5 American political oratory, Kennedy used his acceptance speech to provide a slogan that would characterize his administration's style of thought and action. "I stand tonight facing West on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch 3000 miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West..
- 10 Kennedy's invocation of the Myth of the Frontier was more than an advertising ploy. It was designed to suggest the kind of « heroic » action that was to be expected of the new President and to establish the terms in which the historical and moral significance of those actions might be appreciated. In several important respects, administrations's approach to policy was based on premises adapted from Turner and Theodore Roosevelt. Like
- 15 Roosevelt, Kennedy projected a vision of the President as a heroic figure tested and qualified for power by deeds in battle and prepared to take a militant stance toward the nation's concerns. Like Roosevelt, he saw the United States as standing on the edge of a « frontier », facing a new world of vast potential for either unlimited progress or ultimate disaster — « the frontier of the 1960s, a frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a
- 20 frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats. » But unlike Roosevelt, who summoned the wealthy members of Hamilton Club to engage in political life, Kennedy's inaugural called on a whole « new generation of Americans » to face up to its « destiny », to « ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country, » and to commit its energies to serve the Republic in its « long twilight struggle » against the worldwide forces of
- 25 oppression and poverty. Kennedy's foreign policy called for a counter-offensive against Communism on the « frontiers » of the Third World: the New Frontier's frontier; the stage for the expansion of American influence and power; the site in which the ideology of the « liberal consensus » would be proved; the scene in which an American model of development would be tested.

Places and  
Forms of  
Power

Myths  
and  
Heroes

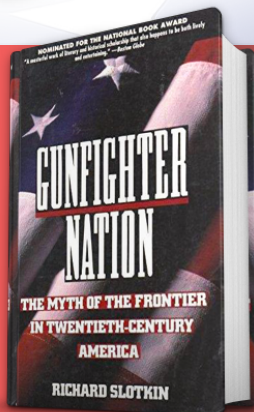
The idea  
of  
Progress

Space  
and  
Exchange

Richard Slotkin, 1992

Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier  
in Twentieth-Century America

By invoking the Frontier as a symbol to trademark his candidacy, Kennedy also tapped into one of the most resonant and persistent American myths. As Richard Slotkin shows in this extraordinarily informed and wide-ranging new book, the myth of the Frontier has been perhaps the most pervasive influence behind American culture and politics in this century.



1. Introduce the document.
2. Who is John F. Kennedy?
3. At what moment does he deliver this famous speech?
4. Do you understand the reference made to the «last frontier» on the «West» ?
5. So, what is the «New Frontier»?
6. What kind of symbol is it?
7. How does he see the role of the President?
8. « Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country » Explain.



WATCH THE VIDEO

[myenglishclass.net/classes/terminales](http://myenglishclass.net/classes/terminales)

**boldly** = de manière intrépide / audacieuse





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Some would say that those struggles are all over. That all the horizons have been explored, that all the battles have been won, that there is no longer an American frontier. But I trust that no one in this vast assemblage will agree with those sentiments. For the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won, and we stand today on the edge of a New Frontier: the frontier of the 1960's. The frontier of unknown opportunities and perils, the frontier of unfilled hopes and unfilled threats.

Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom promised our nation a new political and economic framework. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal 5 promised security and succor to those in need. But the New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises, it is a set of challenges. It sums up not what I intend to offer to the American people, but what I intend to ask of them. It appeals to their pride, it appeals to our pride, not our security. It holds out the promise of more sacrifice instead of more security.

The New Frontier is here, whether we seek it or not. Beyond that frontier are uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered province of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus. It 10 would be easier to shrink from that New Frontier, to look to the safe mediocrity of the past, to be lulled by good intentions and high rhetoric, and those who prefer that course should not vote for me, or the democratic party.

But I believe that the times require imagination and courage and perseverance. I am asking each of you to be pioneers for that New Frontier. My call is to the young in heart, regardless of age, to all who respond to the Scriptural call: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed."

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**John F. Kennedy, July 16 1960**

Acceptance speech - Democratic National Convention



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