

John F Kennedy
Inaugural Address

20 January 1961

exigency - being sworn in
as 35th president of the US.

Vice President Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, President Truman, Reverend Clergy, fellow citizens:

We observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom - symbolising an end, as well as a beginning - signifying renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three-quarters ago.

The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought 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 from 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 a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or 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.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

This much we pledge - and more.

To those old allies whose cultural and spiritual origins we share, we pledge the loyalty of faithful friends. United there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do - for we dare not meet a powerful challenge at odds and split asunder.

To those new states whom we welcome to the ranks of the free, we pledge our word that one form of colonial control shall not have passed away merely to be replaced by a far more iron tyranny. We shall not always expect to find them supporting our view. But we shall always hope to find them strongly supporting their own freedom - and to remember that, in the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside.

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required - not because the Communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right. If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

To our sister republics south of our border, we offer a special pledge: to convert our good words into good deeds, in a new alliance for progress, to assist free men and free

metaphor - shaking off their poverty to be free. *oxymoron*
 governments in casting off the chains of poverty. But this peaceful revolution of hope *metaphor* *high modality* *exclusive becoming inclusive*
mixed metaphor → become the prey of hostile powers. Let all our neighbors know that we shall join with them to
 oppose aggression or subversion anywhere in the Americas. And let every other power know
 that this hemisphere intends to remain the master of its own house. *combining to become one*
confusing as they're in different hemispheres - does he mean the 'west'?
 To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last best hope in an age
 where the instruments of war have far outpaced the instruments of peace, we renew our
 pledge of support - to prevent it from becoming merely a forum for invective, to strengthen
 its shield of the new and the weak and to enlarge the area in which its writ may run. *parallelism & juxtaposition/contrast* *reiterating opening statement*
metaphor symbolising protection
 Finally, to those nations who would make themselves our adversary, we offer not a pledge
 but a request: that both sides begin anew, the quest for peace, before the dark powers of
 destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-
 destruction. *insulting, abusive or critical language* *metaphor* *doesn't declare war but peace*
allusion - referring to the idea of "mutual assured destruction"
people pledged support for the Americans already
 We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt
 can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed. *weapons/nuclear warheads* *this negates*
high modality *extreme high modality* *even though we have the weapons, we won't use them*
 But neither can two great and powerful groups of nations take comfort from our present
course - both sides overburdened by the cost of modern weapons, both rightly alarmed by the
 steady spread of the deadly atom, yet both racing to alter that uncertain balance of terror that
 stays the hand of mankind's final war. *communists vs capitalists* *including energy*
cold war *nuclear war*
 So let us begin anew - 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. *if these weapons were used the world would end* *being nice to others* *high modality*
if it is better to be sincere *isocolon - clever & straight to the point*
 Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which
 divide us. *inclusive* *isocolon again*
 Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection
 and control of arms, and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute
control of all nations. *we need to get together & work out how to keep a track of weapons* *parallelism*
ever (implied) *serious diction*
 Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us
 explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths, and encourage
 the arts and commerce. *we need to be interested in science & not scared of it* *listing everything they do & have in their control*
space race
 Let both sides unite to heed, in all corners of the earth, the command of Isaiah - to "undo the
 heavy burdens, and [to] let the oppressed go free."¹ *allusion to bible - spiritual & god-fearing*
let people who aren't free be so

¹ Isaiah 58:6 (King James Version of the Holy Bible)

defended position on a shore/beach

metaphor meaning dark & scary nothouse of suspicion

And, if a beachhead of cooperation may push back the jungle of suspicion, let both sides join in creating a new endeavor – not a new balance of power, but a new world of law – where the strong are just, and the weak secure, and the peace preserved.

clear direction for the future

powerful & strong. Use words. Humble & yet hopeful

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days; nor in the life of this Administration; nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

amplification

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our course. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

allusion to war front

high modality to fight

Now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need – not as a call to battle, though embattled we are – but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation,"² a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

isocolon in juxtaposition to show the difficulty of the current situation.

metaphor implying they're in the dawn of a new day or the dusk of an old day

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

personal pronouns.

rhetorical questions to engage audience.

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 or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it. And the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

urgency metaphor to suggest US can change the world.

amplification

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

isocolon – famous line – having people realise they need to give & not take.

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.

isocolon repeated – same idea but extended.

clear conclusion & draws all arguments to its final meaning

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

parallelism/isocolon

God can't always be who we fall back on.

God.

forwards – direction of hope even against all odds.

² Romans 12:12 (King James Version of the Holy Bible)