

1. My fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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. (Kennedy is referring to cooperation between the US and other countries.)

5. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. (Kennedy is saying that technology can either save mankind or end mankind. Indeed, man possesses both enough nuclear weapons to eradicate the world several times over and the capability to feed, clothe, and house the entire human population).

6. 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. (Interestingly, this statement echoes the message of the Monroe Doctrine.)

7. 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. (Kennedy is referring to the relationship between the US and the Soviet Union.)

8. 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. (Again, the relationship between the US and Soviet Union).

9. In the past, those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside. (Kennedy is saying dictators who abuse the people will eventually be overthrown.)

10. 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.