"WE ARE . . . THE WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS OF FREEDOM"

The text of the speech President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was scheduled to deliver in the Trade Mart in Dallas, Texas, at noon on November 22, 1963.
I am honored to have this invitation to address the annual meeting of the Dallas Citizens Council, joined by the members of the Dallas Assembly—and pleased to be here at The Graduate Research Center of the Southwest.

It is fitting that these two symbols of Dallas' progress are appearing simultaneously, for they represent the best qualities, I am told, of leadership and learning in this city—leadership and learning are each a part of the other. The advancement of learning depends on community leadership for financial support and on the support of the community for the free play of creative forces, or influence in the Congress, or swell West Berlin, or any area where we are at war. But our purpose was at least temporarily abandoned in those and other instances. Our successful defense of freedom was due to the courage and sacrifice of our forces and the courage and sacrifice of our people. But our nation is not yet ready to take on behalf of the principles we stand ready to defend.

This strength is composed of many different elements, ranging from the most massive deterrents to the most subtle influences. And all types of strength are needed—no one kind can do the job alone. Let us take a moment, therefore, to review our nation's progress in each major area of strength.

First, as Secretary McNamara made clear in his address last Monday, the strategic nuclear power of the United States has been so greatly modernized and expanded in the last 1,000 days, by the rapid production and deployment of the most modern missile systems, that any and all potential aggressors are clearly confronted now with the impossibility of strategic victory—and the certainty of total destruction—if by reckless attack they should ever force upon us the necessity of a strategic reply.

In less than three years, we have increased by 50 per cent the readiness of our nations. We have in force by the new fiscal year—increased by more than 70 per cent our total Polaris purchase program—increased by more than double our effective anti-submarine capability—increased by more than 50 per cent the portion of our strategic bombers that are 15 minutes ready to fly—increased by 100 per cent the total number of nuclear weapons available in our strategic alert forces. Our security is further enhanced by the steps we took last year to improve the speed and certainty of their response, their readiness at all times to respond, their ability to attack and survive an attack and their ability to be carefully controlled and directed through secure command operations.

But the lessons of the last decade have taught us that freedom cannot be defended by strategic nuclear power alone. We have, therefore, in the last three years accelerated the development and deployment of tactical nuclear forces. Nor can Europe or any other continent rely on nuclear forces alone, whether they are strategic or tactical.

We have increased by 50 per cent the total acquisition and operational forces—increased by 100 per cent the procurement of modern army weapons and equipment—increased by 100 per cent our ship construction, conversion and modernization program—increased by 100 per cent our procurement program to buy aircraft, improved the number of tactical air squadrons and increased the strength of the Marines. At last month's "Operation Big Time," we completed the first 10 per cent—increased Spanish language broadcasting to Cuba and Latin America from one to nine hours a day, including the extension to over $1 billion in cash aid, the number of American books being translated and published for Latin American readers and taken a host of other steps to carry our message of truth and freedom to all the far corners of the earth. And that is also why we have regained the initiative in the exploration of outer space—making an annual effort greater than the combined total of all space activities undertaken during the 50s—making more than 130 vehicles available to do this year alone.

This effort is expensive—but it pays its own way, for freedom and for America. For there is no longer any question that if we maintain nuclear and strategic defense, the Communist lead in space will become a permanent assertion of supremacy and the basis of a serious strategic threat. The effort may not longer any doubt about the strength and skill of American science, American industry, American education and the Americans. This effort represents a great gain in, and a great resource of, our national strength—and both Texas and Texas is contributing greatly to this strength.

Finally, it should be clear by now that a nation can be no stronger abroad than it is at home. Only an America which has fully educated its cities is fully capable of tackling the complex problems and perceiving the hidden dangers of the world in which we live. And only an America which is growing and prospering economically can sustain the world-wide defenses of freedom, while demonstrating to all concerned the opportunities of our system and society.

It is clear, therefore, that we are challenging our security as well as our economy by our recent record in increases in national income and output—surging ahead of most of Western Europe in the rate of business expansion.

And the margin of corporate profits—by maintaining our economic strength—will enable almost any of our overseas competitors—and by cutting personal and corporate income taxes by some $11 billion, as we have proposed, to assure our nation the longest and strongest expansion in our peace-time history.

This nation's total output—which three years ago was at the $300 billion mark—will soon pass $400 billion, this year alone, a record rise of over $100 billion in three years. For the first time in our history, we have a balanced Federal budget. For the first time in history our average factory earnings have exceeded $100 a week. For the first time in history, our nation has even the tools with which we can afford to buy and sell as we please. For the first time in history, the Federal Reserve has shown a record of 11.3 billion in surplus. For the first time in history, we can buy and sell as we please. For the first time in history, our nation has a balanced Federal budget. For the first time in history, we have the power and the strength to assure our nation the longest and strongest expansion in our peace-time history.

I have spoken largely in terms of the deterrent aspects of our strength. But in today's world, freedom can be lost without a shot being fired, by ballots as well as bullets. The success of our efforts for freedom is measured not by the size of our military forces or our arms production but by the respect we command for our institutions in the world as well as our missiles on a cleaner recognition of the virtues of freedom as well as the evils of tyranny.

That is why our information agency has doubled the shortwave broadcasting power of the Voice of America and more than doubled the number of American books being translated and published for Latin America. We have continued our efforts to carry our message of truth and freedom to all the far corners of the earth. And that is also why we have regained the initiative in the exploration of outer space—making an annual effort greater than the combined total of all space activities undertaken during the 50s—making more than 130 vehicles available to do this year alone.

But American military might should not and need not serve in isolation. The United States is part of the world community. And we are committed to democracy and the strengthening of democratic institutions. Our security and strength, in the last analysis, depend on the security and strength of others—on the strength of the free and independent people. By our assistance we can be certain that the nations we support can deal with the threat to the task. But, by our assistance we can be certain that the nations we support can deal with the threat. And that is also why we have regained the initiative in the exploration of outer space—making an annual effort greater than the combined total of all space activities undertaken during the 50s—making more than 130 vehicles available to do this year alone.