

John F. Kennedy Vs. the Empire

by Anton Chaitkin

This Nov. 22 is the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's murder, a crime from which our country has never recovered.

Investigators normally consider who benefitted from a crime, and what changed as a result of that crime.

In this case, we must first understand who Kennedy was, and what he fought for; who we were as a nation, and where we were headed when he was shot. Knowing that will make plain who killed him and why. It will help guide us to what we must now change for our survival.

Kennedy's Nationalism

When Kennedy returned from his celebrated World War II Naval service and plunged into politics, he aimed to set the world back on the path of his late Commander-in-Chief, Franklin Roosevelt, and to bury imperialism.

In his first political speech, to the American Legion



President Kennedy at Rice University, Sept. 12, 1962: "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade. . . . And as we set sail we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked."

between the very rich and the very poor. That arch Tory, Benjamin Disraeli, . . . once stated that England was divided into two nations—the rich and the poor. . . . With

post in Boston, Nov. 18, 1945, in anticipation of a run for Congress, he explained Winston Churchill's recent electoral defeat by contrasting the outlook of Churchill's party with that of Franklin Roosevelt.

Churchill's Conservative Party had governed England "during the years of the depression when poverty stalked the Midlands and the coal fields of Wales, and thousands and thousands lived off the meager pittance of the dole. Where Roosevelt made his political reputation by his treatment of the depression, the Conservative Party lost theirs."

And the English voters had been jolted by that contrast when soldiers from Roosevelt's America were stationed there in wartime: "England traditionally has been a country with tremendous contrasts be-

the ... coming of the American troops with their high pay, with their stories of cars, refrigerators, and radios for all, a new spirit—a new restlessness—and a fresh desire for the better things of life had become strong in Britain.”

But Kennedy warned that even if the Labour Party were in power, “Britain stands today as Britain has always stood—for the empire.”

In that speech, Kennedy spoke also of the heroic Michael Collins, leader of the 1922 Irish armed revolt against Britain: “This young man, who was killed in his early thirties, looms as large today in Ireland as when he died.”

In the view of the post-World War II Irish leaders, “everything that Ireland has ever gotten from England has been only at the end of a long and bitter struggle. . . . All have been in British and Irish prisons and many of them have wounds which still ache when the cold rains come in from the west.” Kennedy named “the fundamental problem behind all Irish politics—the problem of ending the partition, which divides the twenty-six counties of the south, which form Eire, and the six counties of the north known as Ulster which are attached directly to Great Britain. That this partition must be ended . . . all Irishmen agree.”

John Kennedy’s own family had been shaped over many generations in Ireland’s bitter conflict with the British.

Descended from Ireland’s 11th-Century High King Brian Boru, the Kennedys had been stripped of their lands and made tenant farmers. Several family members were casualties in the 1798 Irish uprising. County Wexford, the Kennedy ancestral home, was that insurrection’s center, and briefly held out as its own Wexford Republic.

The 1847-48 “Great Famine” was known to the Irish as deliberate genocide under British Prime Minister John Russell, who stationed half of the British Army in Ireland to oversee the export of masses of food, and to keep the captive population quiet. Hunger, disease, and emigration in slave-like ships cut the population from 9 million to 2 1/2 million. The devastation forced JFK’s great-grandfather Patrick Kennedy to emigrate,



Courtesy of Christopher Fogarty

Union Jacks indicate British regiments enforcing the export of food from starving Ireland in 1848. White crosses mark mass graves. JFK’s great-grandfather was driven to emigrate.

and led to his death in Boston of hardship-induced disease.

British mass murder was burned into the minds of the Kennedy family, and all the Irish. Kennedy cousins who had fought with the Irish Republican Army were among those with whom President Kennedy met on his 1963 visit to Ireland as U.S. President.

JFK was named for his maternal grandfather, the revered Boston Mayor and Congressman John F. Fitzgerald. “Honey Fitz” strongly supported Ireland’s struggle and published a weekly newspaper called *The Republic*. John’s Boston-born paternal grandfather, P.J. Kennedy, became the political boss in an Irish-American ward.

John embraced this Irish heritage. But his father, Joseph P. Kennedy, partnered with British and Wall Street financiers, pushed and shoved his way up into im-

mense wealth, and finally thrust himself alongside the highest ranks of the British imperial oligarchy. John's political career would be based on passionately held views opposite to the reactionary ideas for which his father became infamous. And yet in that close-knit family, Joe Kennedy would later put his money and connections behind all of his son's electoral efforts.

Papa Joe supported Franklin Roosevelt for President, and on Jan. 7, 1938, FDR nominated him to be Ambassador to Britain. Three days later, Roosevelt began a secret correspondence with the British, warning them they risked arousing in America "a feeling of disgust" by the "corrupt bargain" they were making in backing the fascist regimes of Mussolini and Hitler. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain termed FDR's proposals "preposterous." Joe Kennedy was confirmed by the Senate in the midst of this frosty exchange, which is now available from the British archives.¹

A year later, after the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, the President sent an ultimatum to the British government threatening that the U.S. would cut off aid to Britain if the Empire continued to sponsor Hitler's takeover of Europe.²

But Ambassador Kennedy attached himself worshipfully to the hyper-aristocratic Foreign Minister Lord Halifax, to the royal family, and the whole set of Britain's fascist strategists. He moved with John and his other eight children into the English neo-gothic castle, Wall Hall, owned by pro-fascist Wall

1. [British National Archives](#)

2. Drew Pearson, Robert S. Allen, "Washington Merry-Go Round," syndicated column, April 15, 1939. The authenticity of Pearson's column about FDR's warning is easily confirmed from many sources. The British were full partners in Hitler's war machine and looting. Roosevelt's demand that this Anglo-Nazi onslaught be called off helped force a British commitment to Poland, and a September 1939 war declaration against Germany—but the British didn't mean it, and launched no significant offensives. Hitler turned his army westward on May 10, 1940, aiming at France and Britain; on that day Chamberlain resigned and was replaced by Winston Churchill.

In His Own Words

I saw an area in which . . . poverty and sickness and disease are rampant . . . injustice and inequality are old and ingrained, and the fires of nationalism . . . are now ablaze [after being] for 100 years and more . . . the source of empire for Western Europe—for England and France and Holland. . . . The East of today is no longer the East of Palmerston and Disraeli. . . .

Congressman Kennedy, 1951, report back from Asia-Mideast tour

...[M]an 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. . . .

President Kennedy, 1961 Inaugural Address

Today we may have reached a pause in the Cold War. . . . And if we fail to make the most of this moment and this momentum, . . . then the indictment of posterity will rightly point its finger at us all. [Let us] stretch this pause into a period of cooperation. . . .

President Kennedy, Sept. 20, 1963 speech to the UN General Assembly after securing a treaty banning atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons.

And in His Enemy's Words...

We . . . have witnessed three . . . attempts at world domination, first by Hitler, then by Stalin . . . and now by President Kennedy.

Letter to the London Daily Telegraph, Jan. 9, 1963, as the U.S. won a proxy shooting war against the British empire in the Congo.

Street banker J.P. Morgan, Jr. Morgan's servants took care of the Kennedy family.

The outraged Roosevelt told his aide James Farley in 1939, "Joe has been taken in by the British government people and the royal family. He's more British than Walter Hines Page [American Ambassador to Britain in World War I] was. The trouble with the British is that they have for several hundred years been controlled by the upper classes. The upper classes control all trade and commerce; therefore the policy of the British government relates entirely to the protection of this class."³

3. James A. Farley, *Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1948), p. 199.

Empire and Cold War

After President Roosevelt's death, Winston Churchill and his American followers—notably the bipartisan clique of Democrats Dean Acheson and Averell Harriman, and the Republican brothers John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles—wielded the apparatus of the Truman government to wrench American policy away from Roosevelt's pro-nationalist, anti-imperial peace policy. British double agents, led by Kim Philby, meanwhile fed Russian paranoia with anti-American scare stories.

Churchill's Cold War policy confronted a fearful U.S.A. with Soviet Russia's aggressive moves on its periphery. America's 1776-bred sympathy for the sovereign rights of colonial subjects was thus trumped by the contrived need to ally with London and the other European financier imperialists in the name of fighting Communism.

While viewing Soviet Communism realistically as a distortion of history and human nature, John Kennedy understood his father's tragic blunder, and knew the British Empire and Wall Street were continuing the fascist policy that Roosevelt had fought against. He attacked both the Truman Democrats and the Dulles Republicans for blocking America's support for the aspirations of the world's poor. This betrayal of Roosevelt was handing the vulnerable nations to the Communists posing as anti-imperialists, and threatening nuclear-war annihilation.

Kennedy toured Asia and the Middle East in 1951 as a Congressman and Senate hopeful, accompanied by his younger brother Robert. In his radio report-back to the nation, we can see the intellectual fire and the sure grasp of history he would show a decade later in the Presidency:

"...It [the post-war colonial world] is an area in which poverty and sickness and disease are rampant, ... injustice and inequality are old and ingrained, ... the fires of nationalism ... are now ablaze.... [F]or 100 years and more [it] has been the source of empire for Western Europe—for England and France and Holland....

"A Middle East Command operating without the cooperation and support of the Middle East countries ... would intensify every anti-western force now active in that area, [and] from a military standpoint would be doomed to failure. The very sands of the desert would rise to oppose the imposition of outside control on the destinies of these proud peoples....

"The true enemy of the Arab world is poverty and want....

"Our intervention in behalf of England's oil investments in Iran, directed more at the preservation of interests outside Iran than at Iran's own development.... [O]ur failure to deal effectively after three years with the terrible human tragedy of the more than 700,000 Arab refugees [Palestinians], these are things that have failed to sit well with Arab desires and make empty the promises of the Voice of America....

"In Indo-China [Vietnam] we have allied ourselves to the desperate effort of a French regime to hang onto the remnants of empire.... To check the southern drive of Communism makes sense, but not only through reliance on force of arms....

"[One] finds too many of our representatives toadying to the shorter aims of other Western nations, ... too often aligning themselves too definitely with the haves and regarding the actions of the have-nots as not merely an effort to cure injustice, but as something sinister and subversive.

"The East of today is no longer the East of Palmerston and Disraeli and Cromer.... We want ... allies in ideas, in resources, even in arms, but if we would have allies, we must first of all gather to ourselves friends."⁴

Senator Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* was his declaration of independence from the London-Wall Street power axis and his defiance of dangerously deluded public opinion. The 1955 book is built around its first chapter on John Quincy Adams, which begins: "The young senator from Massachusetts stirred restlessly...."

He depicts Adams coming under attack from the wealthy Anglophiles and Boston public opinion. The Catholic Kennedy celebrates Adams the Puritan, who "believed that man was made in the image of God," had "lofty courage," and "never ... flinched before human antagonist ... exile, torture, or death....

"An American nationalist, ... he could not yield his devotion to the national interest for the narrowly partisan, parochial and pro-British outlook which dominated New England's first political party.... He denied the duty of elected representatives 'to be palsied by the will of their constituents.... [T]he magistrate is the servant not of his own desires, not even of the people, but of his God."

Speaking on St. Patrick's Day, 1956, in Chicago,

4. JFK Library



JFK Library

French President Charles de Gaulle came to agree with Kennedy that the imperial war against Algerian Arabs was a blunder. British/Dulles-sponsored hit squads repeatedly tried to kill de Gaulle. The two Presidents are shown here in Paris, June 2, 1961.

Kennedy gently asked Irish-Americans to help reverse the betrayal of America's revolutionary heritage; and to broaden the Irish national resentment of wrongs in favor of the *universal* task of ending the imperial system.

In Kennedy's most famous pre-Presidential speech, entitled "Imperialism the Enemy of Freedom," in the Senate July 2, 1957, he demanded that the U.S. side with Algerian Arab rebels against French imperialism. Attacking the Dulles policy, he likened the North African situation to Vietnam, into which we had "poured money and material . . . in a hopeless attempt to save for the French a land that did not want to be saved, in a war in which the enemy was both everywhere and nowhere

at the same time. . . . We accepted for years the predictions that victory was just around the corner. . . ."

Senator Kennedy worked out that speech in close cooperation with the Algerian rebel leadership. It thrilled the Arab world, and heartened all those who hoped for an American return to the outlook last seen with Franklin Roosevelt. It put Kennedy into a crucial tandem relationship to the Italian industrialist Enrico Mattei, an anti-imperial strategist of petroleum and nuclear energy, who was helping to fund the Algerian revolt.

The speech was denounced by the Anglophile establishment of his own Democratic Party.

Although Kennedy attacked French imperial policy, that policy began to change. After Charles de Gaulle became the President of France in 1959, he recognized the futility of the overseas colonial wars, and worked toward granting Algeria independence. De Gaulle began to withdraw France from its imperial alliance with the British.

Kennedy now focused increasingly on the whole of Africa: on Black Africans' fight for independence and an escape from centuries of European-enforced backwardness and poverty. He sought and won the chairmanship of the Africa Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee.

To the Presidency

In his role as the unique anti-imperial U.S. political leader, the outside world knew him better than did most Americans when he began his run for the Presidency.

During that 1959-60 campaign he met with Guinea's nationalist President Sékou Touré, and became his close confidant.

Most importantly, Kennedy opened channels of communication with Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah, the father of African nationalism. Candidate JFK met with Ghana's Minister of Economy and with Ghana's UN representative.

Nkrumah had led Ghana in the first successful Black African anti-colonial revolt, against British rule, in 1957; Touré had followed in breaking Guinea from France in 1958.



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Senator Kennedy campaigning for President in Mullins, West Virginia, April 1960, inspired faith that Franklin Roosevelt's legacy was alive. Here, he speaks with a mineworker.

Kennedy attacked the post-Roosevelt U.S. policy for demonizing Nkrumah and Touré as Cold War neutrals, and thus driving them towards the Soviet bloc.

Africa was politically red hot: During the 1960 U.S. Presidential campaign season, 13 Black African countries won their independence from France; Britain recognized Nigeria and Somalia as independent.

Belgium gave the Republic of Congo nominal independence, but British finance and intelligence organized an armed secession attempt in Congo's Katanga province, site of the vast Belgian/British copper and uranium mining company Union Minière, with white mercenaries coming in from neighboring Northern Rhodesia.

Nkrumah shared two urgent concerns with Kennedy: imperial intrigues against Congo's new Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, Nkrumah's political follower; and his plan to build a great dam to industrialize Ghana, and electrify all of West Africa.

Presidential candidate Kennedy used Africa to challenge the "Anglo-American" world order, which had been established over the dead body of President Roosevelt.

He told Stanford University students in 1960, "Call it nationalism, call it anti-colonialism, ... Africa is going through a revolution. ... Africans want a higher standard of living. Seventy-five percent of the population now lives by subsistence agriculture. They want an

opportunity to manage and benefit directly from the resources in, on, and under their land. ... The African peoples believe that the science, technology, and education available in the modern world can overcome their struggle for existence, ... that their poverty, squalor, ignorance, and disease can be conquered. ... [The] balance of power is shifting ... into the hands of the two-thirds of the world's people who want to share what the one-third has already taken for granted. ..."

The Kennedy election platform called for a sharp increase in America's industrial, scientific, and military power, a negotiated peace with the Soviet Union, and the uplifting of mankind out of poverty and war.

When Kennedy won the 1960 race, as President-elect he sent representatives to Africa to announce America's return to national sovereignty—for ourselves and others. The Kennedy team reported African crowds everywhere were chanting "Kennedy! Kennedy! Kennedy!"

During the Presidential campaign, and into the early days of his administration, Kennedy's enemies acted to corner and destroy him.

- Long before the inauguration, CIA Director Allen Dulles cooked up a militarily insane invasion of Cuba by a force of 1,400 exiles from Fidel Castro's Communist regime. This plan was sprung on the new President as blackmail: Kennedy was told if he did not sign on to the invasion, the exile forces would be disbanded within the U.S. and, disappointed and enraged, would deploy themselves politically against him. Dulles agreed to Kennedy's condition that no U.S. armed forces would participate, but lied to the exiles that their landings would have military backing.

- With the connivance of Dulles and British Secret Service station chief Daphne Park in Congo, Prime Minister Lumumba was covertly assassinated. The crime was carried out only three days before Kennedy's Jan. 20, 1961 inauguration, with the knowledge that Kennedy, as President, would not allow it.

- Contrary to JFK's well-known Algerian independence policy, the Dulles-led CIA collaborated with

French fascists resisting de Gaulle's peace with the Arab rebels.

- Before and after the election, London-led gold withdrawals and speculation threatening the dollar brought pressure on Kennedy's plans for sovereign national economic development, and forced his hand in choosing his Cabinet: It was "the decisive influence on his choice of [international banker C. Douglas Dillon for] Secretary of the Treasury. . . . [Kennedy] also had some evidence to back his suspicions that the gloomy rumors which triggered the gold withdrawals of 1960 had been deliberately spread by American bankers to embarrass him politically. . . ."⁵

Once in office, Dillon informed Kennedy that his budget programs must be curtailed to allay foreign bankers' doubts about the dollar.

When Lumumba's murder became known to Kennedy and the world in mid-February, the U.S. and Kennedy were blamed for it.

The invasion at Cuba's Bay of Pigs April 17-19, was a terrible fiasco and embarrassment to the new President.

The Algiers Putsch of April 21-26, the French fascist generals' failed coup d'état attempt against President de Gaulle, came a week after an Allen Dulles representative in Madrid had assured the generals that the U.S. would recognize their new government, if they overthrew de Gaulle to stop Algerian Arab independence.

British intelligence and the Dulles faction were now jointly managing an apparatus of assassins and insurrectionists throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

By the end of April, Kennedy made it known that this situation was intolerable, that the CIA was disloyal, and constituted "a reactionary state-within-a-state."⁶ Kennedy soon fired Allen Dulles, along with CIA



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Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah, the first foreign head of state to visit the Kennedy White House, March 8, 1961. They were partners in building the Akosombo Dam to electrify West Africa.

deputy directors Richard Bissell, a Harriman protégé; and Charles Cabell, brother of the mayor of Dallas.

Over the next two years, the Organisation de l'armée secrète (OAS) based in Algiers and Madrid, murdered Kennedy's Italian ally, the industrialist Enrico Mattei, and made several brazen, headline-grabbing attempts to assassinate President de Gaulle.

Inauguration and Action

Kennedy's Inaugural Address was entirely devoted to reasserting America's rightful place in the world. He immediately began reversing the national surrender that had made the U.S. government under Truman and Eisenhower-Dulles an enforcer of the will of London and its Wall Street annex.

JFK's ambassadors were sent throughout the underdeveloped world, and, for the first time, to every African state. The President told each ambassador, you (*not the CIA*) are in charge of the mission in the country to which you are accredited, and you are not to defer to European imperialists.

On the day he learned of the imperial murder of Lumumba, Feb. 13, 1961, Kennedy issued top secret National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 16, directing that, contrary to previous policy, U.S. aid to "newly independent areas" would be provided inde-

5. Theodore Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 405-407.

6. Thomas F. Brady, "Paris Rumors on C.I.A.," *New York Times*, May 2, 1961.

pendently of “Western Europe support ... whenever such action is in the United States’ interest.”

NSAM 60 (July 14 and 18, 1961) ordered the squeezing of Portugal’s fascist Salazar regime into ending its bloody war against rebels in Angola and Mozambique, and JFK began aiding the rebels.

Ghana’s President Nkrumah got red-carpet treatment as the first foreign head of state to visit the Kennedy White House, March 8, 1961. He and JFK began a personal correspondence and permanent collaboration.

Nkrumah had lived in the U.S. under Franklin Roosevelt, whose Tennessee Valley Authority inspired his proposed great dam project on the Volta River. Kennedy took up the financing of the project, construction to be supervised by Kennedy’s friend Edgar Kaiser of Kaiser Industries. Kaiser had led teams building the Hoover, Bonneville, and Grand Coulee dams. Engineering work on the Volta project was by Italian personnel developed under Enrico Mattei, who had met with Nkrumah five days before Kennedy’s inauguration.

The Akosombo Dam on the Volta River created the world’s largest artificial lake and provided the electricity to power Ghana’s drive to enter the modern world. The project was dedicated in 1966, with a plaque honoring the martyred John F. Kennedy. A week later, Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup planned in London.⁷

Egypt’s President Gamal Abdel Nasser was, with Mattei, a sponsor of the Algerian Arab rebels. JFK’s election had excited his hopes for a return to American support for Nasser’s own secular nationalism, in Egypt’s long war against Britain and the British-created Muslim Brotherhood. U.S. aid for Nasser’s great dam project on the Nile had been promised by President Eisenhower, and withdrawn by his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, pushing Egypt toward the Soviets, and leading to the 1956 British-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt in the Suez Crisis.

Nasser and Kennedy immediately began a personal correspondence. Later, Kennedy reversed the Truman-Dulles policy and actively took Nasser’s side against the British-Saudi royalist axis in the Middle East.

Kennedy had warm personal relations with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Indonesian Pres-

ident Sukarno, who had led their countries’ independence victories over the British and Dutch empires, and who aspired to neutrality between the East and West.

Against the howls of “Cold Warriors,” JFK fought for U.S. aid to build India’s modern Bokara steel mill. U.S. funding was cancelled when Kennedy was killed; the Soviets then funded it.

JFK sent Attorney General Robert Kennedy to Indonesia in 1962, where he spoke movingly on the central place of anti-imperialism in the modern world; RFK then went on to the Netherlands to demand that the Dutch remove their remaining military from Indonesia’s West Irian province on the island of New Guinea. Furious at the Kennedys, the Dutch were forced to pull out.

JFK immediately began organizing aid for Indonesia’s industrial development (NSAM 179, Aug. 16, 1962).

The first aid package for Indonesia was approved by the Senate in November 1963, a few days before Kennedy’s murder. The U.S. policy was then changed to joint action with the British for chaos in Indonesia and Sukarno’s overthrow.

Steel Showdown: Kennedy and the American System

In the Steel Crisis of April 1962, Kennedy successfully warded against the British/Wall Street Morgan banking interest, controller of the U.S. Steel Corporation. Seeking huge new investments in American industry and non-inflationary growth, the President prevailed upon the Steelworkers Union to agree to a new no-wage-increase contract, with the understanding that the companies would not raise steel prices. Just after signing the contract, the U.S. Steel chairman Roger Blough came to the White House and handed Kennedy a press release he had just issued, announcing a big price increase. Other steel companies followed suit immediately.

JFK held a no-holds-barred press conference, roasting the unpatriotic corporations for betraying the public interest. Anti-trust suits were pressed; defense contracts were switched to the few companies which had not raised prices; and Kennedy sent an emissary to read the riot act to the Morgan bankers directly.

Edgar Kaiser, then supervising construction of the Nkrumah-Kennedy Akosombo Dam, chaired Kaiser Steel in California—one of the three sizeable compa-

7. “Exiles in London Led Ghana Revolt; Nkrumah Foe Tells of Plot Mapped by Secret Group,” *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 1966.

nies which worked with JFK and put competitive pressure on Morgan to back off the attack. Morgan had its own war on against Kaiser, spurred by Kaiser's generous treatment of its workers. U.S. Steel had set up operations in Utah to try to shut the "rebel" Kaiser out of Western states' business.

After 72 hours, U.S. Steel was forced to rescind the price increase, all the other companies following along. In this showdown, the Anglo-Wall Street axis was particularly worried about Kennedy's alliance with authentic American industrial interests.

Behind this crisis was the fact that Kennedy's program was causing the greatest economic expansion in modern U.S. history, a halving of idle manufacturing capacity, strong profits, and a record increase in wages.

A key policy was the investment tax credit, giving the steel industry and others tax breaks for investment in new plant and equipment. Yet U.S. Steel opposed this tax break, in line with the strategy of the British and their Wall Street outposts to convert America into a post-industrial dump, and to reduce the world's population. Once Kennedy was dead, and new wars consumed all optimism, the financier apparatus would push the "green agenda" of Malthus and the British imperial system, upon the depressed American population.

This article focuses on Kennedy's direct clashes with the extended British imperial system, to efficiently illuminate the background of his murder.

But the battle against the empire has taken place equally within America, as in foreign policy.

Lincoln's economic advisor Henry C. Carey explained the universal issue in his 1851 *Harmony of Interests*:

"Two systems are before the world. . . . One looks to pauperism, ignorance, depopulation, and barbarism; the other to increasing wealth, comfort, intelligence, combination of action, and civilization. One looks towards universal war; the other towards universal peace. One is the English system; the other . . . the American system, for . . . elevating while equalizing the condition of man throughout the world."

JFK's own preference of this American System may perhaps be summed up in his remarks at a dinner given in his honor by Italian President Antonio Segni:

"We [the U.S.A. and Italy] both believe in the achievement of social justice and in progress for all our people. We both believe in democracy at what Americans call 'the grass roots'—placing the individual

ahead of the state, the community ahead of the party, and public interests ahead of private. . . .

"During the 1930s, when despair and depression opened wide the gates of many nations to [fascism and communism], my own nation adhered to the course of freedom under the leadership of Franklin Roosevelt. His administration introduced a higher degree of social, economic, and political reform than America had previously seen—including tax and budget reforms, land and agricultural reforms, political and institutional reforms. Workers were assured of a decent wage—older citizens were assured of a pension—farmers were assured of a fair price. Working men and women were permitted to organize and bargain collectively. Small businessmen, small investors, and small depositors in banks [thanks to the Glass-Steagall law—ed.] were given greater protection against the evils of both corruption and depression. Farms were electrified, rivers were harnessed, cooperatives were encouraged. Justice—social and economic justice as well as legal—became increasingly the right and the opportunity of every man, regardless of his means or station in life."

JFK's policies for new jobs, higher minimum wages, and an industrial renaissance are pure American System. Kennedy's passion-stirring Apollo space program pitted him against the imperial hatred for American leadership in technological progress; his Civil Rights action took on racial oppression—the legacy and echo of empire. We will see below the coherence of these initiatives with his directly anti-imperial objectives.

Strategy for Peace, and a Quick War with Britain

The October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis arose from Fidel Castro's request for Russian nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba to block any U.S. invasion, and the Russian gamble that placing offensive missiles close to the U.S. might help them overcome their growing strategic disadvantage in the face of Kennedy's economic/science/military buildup and foreign policy.

His special counsel Ted Sorensen wrote a stirring day-by-day account, showing JFK's precise, personal control of every aspect of the showdown, needed to prevent a fiasco like the Bay of Pigs which would this time incinerate the planet.⁸

8. Op. cit., Sorensen, pp. 667-718.



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Signing the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union, Oct. 7, 1963. JFK was murdered the following month, as he was taking steps to end the Cold War.

A personal correspondence which Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchov had begun in 1961 was crucial in winning the Soviet stand-down, a retreat accomplished without Russia's humiliation.

With public support from the peaceful Cuban outcome, JFK began immediately—within days—to apply his full leadership powers to spring the world out of the imperial, Cold War nightmare.

His first target was the festering crisis in Congo.

Kennedy pulled the colonialist Belgian government into public alignment with U.S. insistence on the unity of the independent Congo, and against the backing of its imperial senior partner, Britain, for Katanga's secession.

On Nov. 27, 1962, one month after the Soviet stand-down in Cuba, JFK and Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak issued a joint statement threatening "severe economic measures" against Katanga unless secession were quickly ended. That same day, with his finger in the British eye, Kennedy arranged that he would meet British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan on Dec. 19.

Two weeks before that scheduled meeting, newspapers reported that President Kennedy had decided to cancel the planned production of the Skybolt air-to-ground nuclear missile. Since a 1960 agreement with Eisenhower-Dulles, the British had been counting on this American weapon to give them their only credible independent nuclear war capability.

Sorensen reported, "The President ... saw no point to a small independent British deterrent anyway.... [Kennedy's decision] posed a major political crisis for Macmillan's already shaky government.... In previous years Macmillan ... had ... praised the Skybolt agreement as the key to Britain's 'special relationship' with the U.S.'.... Latent resentment of Kennedy's refusal to consult more [with the British] on the Cuban missile crisis [now] boiled to the top...."⁹

On the day Kennedy arrived in Nassau, Bahamas, to meet with Macmillan, the United Nations announced the United States decision to rush American arms and military advisors to the UN peacekeeping forces in Congo—to equip them to defeat the British-backed secession.

The President would not budge on Skybolt. He "considered ... the development of nuclear [weapons] capabilities by more countries, even allies—as a most dangerous development." The Nassau Pact signed Dec. 22 specified that the U.S. would sell Polaris missiles to the British, but they would have to be carried on submarines under NATO, not independent British, command.¹⁰

With the British regime on its heels politically, the U.S. began rushing trucks, armored personnel carriers, and mine-clearing equipment to Congo.

Two weeks later the U.S. government declared, "the United Nations forces in Katanga now occupy most key

9. Ibid., pp. 564-565.

10. Ibid., pp. 566-567.

populated areas and mining centers. . . . We expect Mr. Tshombe to end promptly the Katanga secession by recognizing the U.N.'s full freedom of movement throughout Katanga, [and by] advising all foreign mercenaries to disband and leave the country."¹¹

During the following week, American-equipped UN troops put Katanga leader Moise Tshombe under house arrest. The Congolese government demanded the withdrawal of the British Consul in Katanga province. Hundreds of Congolese students stormed and sacked the British Embassy, destroying Queen Elizabeth's portrait. The students then marched to the U.S. Embassy and cheered for America.

The British oligarchy's fury over Kennedy's threat to the imperial order, and American "arrogance," was reported to their New York partners. The *New York Times* noted on Jan. 14, that "in London, at least, there is a strongly developed fear that a Congo regime supported by the United Nations would use its position to subvert the present regimes in the Rhodesias, the Portuguese colonies . . . and South Africa."

While Britain's Congo secession leader Tshombe was being arrested, the chief Soviet negotiator on nuclear weapons issues quietly arrived in the United States, on Kennedy's request. The Administration then leaked to the press that the "United States and the Soviet Union are actively and privately exploring new approaches to a nuclear [weapons] test ban agreement that has been eluding their negotiators for years," the *Washington Post* reported Jan. 11, 1963.

Kennedy now pushed this peace initiative with all his powers.

He carefully built a consensus for progress, which would put political muscle behind his efforts—a new Roosevelt coalition.

By June 1963, Kennedy was moving the country into a new era. On two successive days, he asked Americans to examine their own wrong and dangerous attitudes, and announced new measures for a better world.

At American University in Washington, D.C., June 10, JFK asked, "What kind of peace do we seek?" He answered: "Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. . . . Our problems are man-made—therefore, they can be solved by man. And

man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man's reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable—and we believe they can do it again. . . .

"Let us re-examine our attitude toward the Soviet Union. It is discouraging to think that their leaders may actually believe what their propagandists write . . . to realize the extent of the gulf between us. But it is also . . . a warning to the American people not to fall into the same trap as the Soviets, not to see only a distorted and desperate view of the other side, not to see . . . communication as nothing more than an exchange of threats.

"No government or social system is so evil that its people must be considered as lacking in virtue. As Americans, we find communism profoundly repugnant as a negation of personal freedom and dignity. But we can still hail the Russian people for their many achievements—in science and space, in economic and industrial growth, in culture and in acts of courage. . . .

"[Our] two countries have . . . [a] mutual abhorrence of war. . . . [W]e have never been at war with each other. And no nation . . . ever suffered more than the Soviet Union suffered in . . . the Second World War. At least 20 million lost their lives. . . . A third of the nation's territory, including nearly two thirds of its industrial base, was turned into a wasteland—a loss equivalent to the devastation of this country east of Chicago.

"Today, should total war ever break out again . . . all we have built, all we have worked for, would be destroyed in the first 24 hours. . . . We must conduct our affairs in such a way that it becomes in the Communists' interest to agree on a genuine peace. . . .

"I am taking this opportunity . . . to announce two important decisions. . . .

"First: . . . that high-level discussions will shortly begin in Moscow looking toward early agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty. Our hopes must be tempered with the caution of history—but with our hopes go the hopes of all mankind.

"Second: . . . I now declare that the United States does not propose to conduct nuclear tests in the atmosphere so long as other states do not do so. . . . We will not be the first to resume. . . ."

Kennedy's speech was greeted with enthusiasm by the Soviets, who reprinted it in its entirety for Russian citizens.

The Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was soon signed by the U.S., U.S.S.R., and Britain (the British did no

11. "U.S. Statement on Congo," Jan. 4, 1963, *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1963.

negotiating, by Kennedy's insistence), and subsequently, by 100 nations.

The day after the Strategy for Peace speech, Kennedy went on television to report enforcement of a court order requiring that Alabama Gov. George Wallace allow the enrollment of two African-American students to the University of Alabama.

He asked his national audience, "If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, . . . then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?"

"One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free . . . from the bonds of injustice . . . from social and economic oppression. . . ."

He asked, who are we, and what is America to the human race?

"We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish our freedom here at home; but are we to say to the world, and much more importantly, to each other, that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes? . . ."

"The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand. . . . We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and as a people. . . ."

"Next week I shall ask the Congress of the United States to act, to make a commitment it has not fully made in this century to the proposition that race has no place in American life or law."

His bill was given additional support from Martin Luther King's March on Washington on Aug. 28, which the Administration worked to make a success. Kennedy's bill was passed as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, after he was killed.



NASA

Dr. Wernher von Braun explains to the President the Saturn Launch System for the Moon program, Nov. 16, 1963.

The Shift in the Space Program

President Kennedy spoke to the UN General Assembly on Sept. 20, as the U.S. Senate was considering the test-ban treaty.

He said we had achieved a pause in the Cold War, and that we must work for a genuine détente between the great powers through cooperation in our mutual interest.

Two years earlier, he had proposed to Congress that the United States send men to the Moon by the end of the 1960s. In that same speech, Kennedy announced that we would "accelerate development of the Rover nuclear rocket. This gives promise of some day providing a means for even more exciting and ambitious exploration of space, perhaps beyond the Moon, perhaps to the very end of the Solar System itself." The world was inspired and remembers John F. Kennedy most vividly, in connection with the fulfillment of the lunar landing phase of this ultimately aborted project.

Until then, American preeminence in the contest with Soviet Communism was the public rationale for the proposed leap in the space program. But by 1963, Kennedy had shifted his objective to a joint space mission with the Russians. Throughout his Presidency—after his Inaugural Address had urged, "Together let us explore the stars"—he had NASA Deputy Administrator Hugh Dryden exploring with Soviet scientists the



National Archives

JFK and Attorney General Robert Kennedy, March 28, 1963. Bobby's support aided his brother's increasingly successful leadership and personal control over the Presidency.

possibilities of joint work in space.¹²

This dialogue persisted despite the Bay of Pigs invasion and crises over Berlin and missiles in Cuba.

In his Sept. 20 UN address, Kennedy had said, "I include among these possibilities [for great power cooperation] a joint expedition to the Moon.... Why ... should man's first flight to the Moon be a matter of national competition? Why should the United States and the Soviet Union ... become involved in immense duplications of research, construction, and expenditure? Surely we should explore whether the scientists and astronauts of our two countries—indeed of all the world—cannot work together in the conquest of space, sending

someday in this decade to the Moon not the representatives of a single nation, but the representatives of all of our countries."

The prospect of U.S.-Russian collaboration, or indeed of any dramatic space objectives, had drawn the hostile fire of those politically invested in Anglo-American geopolitics.

To outflank resistance within the Executive branch, on Nov. 12, Kennedy directed NASA Administrator James Webb "to assume personally the initiative and control responsibility within the Government for the development of substantive cooperation with the Soviet Union in the field of outer space ... as a direct outcome of my September 20 proposal ... including cooperation in lunar landing programs.... [The] channel of contact ... between NASA and the Soviet Academy of Sciences has been quite effective.... I would like an interim report on the progress of our planning by December 15."¹³

Fidel Castro began putting out feelers to Kennedy in 1963, making known, in the words of William Attwood, JFK's advisor on African affairs, that "he was unhappy about Cuba's [Soviet] satellite status and was looking for a way out, ... that he wanted an accommodation with the United States and would make substantial concessions to this end; also that a rift was developing on this issue between Castro and his chief pro-Communist associate, Che Guevara, who considered him dangerously unreliable."¹⁴

President Kennedy deployed Attwood to pursue contacts with Castro aimed at normalizing Cuban-American relations. The dialogue proceeded through channels under the President's personal control, including Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the liaison to Castro's personal aide Major René Toledo, who said Castro wanted a meeting with U.S. representatives without the presence of Guevara.

On the morning of Nov. 19, Attwood was told that Kennedy wanted a report from him following upcoming meetings at the UN, preparatory to the President's face-to-face with Castro; and that the President "would not be leaving Washington, except for a brief trip to Dallas."¹⁵

12. History will rightly note that the anti-Newtonian scientific expertise of Dryden (airflow, turbulence, problems of the boundary layer) and his chief Soviet counterpart Leonid Sedov (continuum mechanics, non-steady motion of a wing, discontinuous velocity fields, turbulent flows, boundary conditions) are implicitly anti-imperial.

13. [NSAM 271](#)

14. William Attwood, *The Reds and the Blacks* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 142-144.

15. *Ibid.*

Vietnam

As with Cuba and Congo, the Vietnam conflict was a bomb that had been planted in Kennedy's path by the Churchill faction before he had assumed the Presidency.

Vietnam's Sept. 2, 1945 Declaration of Independence from the French empire was modeled on the U.S. Declaration. It began with these words: "All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. . . ."

Six months after Vietnam's Declaration, while JFK was an anti-imperial Congressional candidate, on Feb. 16, 1946, Vietnamese nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh wrote a letter to U.S. President Harry Truman, asking the U.S. to honor the late Franklin Roosevelt's policy. Ho wanted American protection, like that given to the Philippines, under which Vietnam could proceed to national independence:

"...Our Vietnam people, as early as 1941, stood by the Allies' side and fought against the Japanese and their associates, the French colonialists. . . .

"But the French colonialists, who had betrayed in war-time both the Allies and the Vietnamese, have come back and are waging on us a murderous and pitiless war in order to reestablish their domination. . . .

"This aggression . . . is a challenge to the noble attitude shown before, during and after the war by the United States Government and People. . . .

"Our Vietnam people . . . need security and freedom, first to achieve internal prosperity and welfare, and later to bring its small contribution to world-reconstruction.

"These securities and freedoms can only be guaranteed by our independence from any colonial power, and our free cooperation with all other powers. It is with this firm conviction that we request of the United States as guardians and champions of World Justice to take a decisive step in support of our independence.

"What we ask has been graciously granted to the Philippines. Like the Philippines our goal is full independence and full cooperation with the United States. We will do our best to make this independence and cooperation profitable to the whole world."

But the Truman Administration supported the British in restoring French rule over Indochina. Ho's movement, relying on Communist support, defeated

the French and by 1954 had set up a government in North Vietnam. A U.S.-backed regime was installed in South Vietnam under President Ngo Dinh Diem with U.S. military advisors, and a new Indochina war ensued.

The incoming President Kennedy was under pressure to send U.S. combat troops and expand the war. He continued to consult ex-President Eisenhower, who counseled restraint. In the first of two celebrated meetings, Gen. Douglas MacArthur conferred April 20, 1961 with former PT-boat captain Kennedy in the White House. The discussion was later summarized by Ted Sorensen: "MacArthur. . . warned him against the commitment of American foot soldiers on the Asian mainland, and the President never forgot his advice."¹⁶

Kennedy had previously negotiated an agreement with the Russians on the neutrality of Laos, which borders Vietnam.

By 1963, he had learned through the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis that avoiding betrayal and disaster depended on his personal control of the Administration's actions. Kennedy relied on South Vietnam President Diem to keep the U.S. role in the conflict there limited to U.S. advisors, and planned to gradually withdraw the limited American military presence.

With American industrial, scientific and military power at its height, Kennedy aimed for an eventual Vietnam settlement under the umbrella of the *détente* he was building with the Soviets.

Kennedy's betrayal by Averell Harriman, then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, led to the escalation of the war in Vietnam after Kennedy's murder. Under confused circumstances engineered by Harriman and his followers within the government, Harriman initiated a message approving Diem's overthrow.

President Diem was assassinated Nov. 2, 1963, just 20 days before Kennedy himself was killed.

Kennedy for Posterity

John F. Kennedy's Presidency announced to mankind that the 1960s and the life of the rising generation should be the era of peaceful cooperation to explore the stars, to advance man's scientific powers, to end imperial resource-grabs and reverse colonial poverty.

The British Crown disagreed.

Two months after Kennedy's inauguration, a royal

16. Op. cit., Sorensen, p. 641.

family project issued a document aimed at organizing the ultra-rich and world opinion to prevent precisely this American objective.

Their “Morges Manifesto” of April 29, 1961, proposed to deal with the “crisis” and “emergency” in the Congo and throughout Africa, and the “vast numbers” who “are losing their lives, or their homes, in an orgy of thoughtless and needless destruction.”

But the “crisis,” in the British view, was that “advancing civilization” was bringing farms and dams to what they viewed as useless dark-skinned people. The dying “vast numbers” they were concerned about were animal wildlife—not impoverished humans.

This was the founding document of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), whose founders were Prince Philip, consort of Queen Elizabeth II, and Prince Bernhard, husband of Netherlands’ Queen Juliana, and a former intelligence officer for Hitler’s SS.¹⁷

The royals’ Manifesto stated that “a supporting Club of leading citizens of many countries, ... an active group of men of affairs,” was to finance “an international Trust.” A “sort of ‘war room’ at the international headquarters” was to coordinate “all the main international bodies concerned in this world campaign ... to raise massive support for the cause” of the royals’ new, Green movement, or “environmentalism.”

The indicated sponsoring group, later called the “1001 Club,” was comprised of members of the financier families in the City of London, billionaire owners of natural resources in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, and leading strategists of imperial covert action.

President Kennedy showed his dedication to the ad-



Dept. of Energy/Ed Westcott

Sen. John F. Kennedy, Oak Ridge Director Dr. Alvin Weinberg, Tennessee Senator Al Gore, Sr., and Jacqueline Kennedy, at the Oak Ridge Graphite Nuclear Reactor, Feb. 2, 1959.

vancement of man’s powers over nature in his commitment to nuclear energy, based on the breeder reactor, fuel reprocessing, and the use of thorium, as well as uranium. Kennedy announced on Sept. 26, 1963, at the Hanford Nuclear station, that “by the end of this century ... half of all electric energy generated in the United States will come from nuclear sources.” After 2000, virtually all new electric power installations would be nuclear.¹⁸

As the use of nuclear power was being accelerated, Kennedy said at Hanford, “We must maintain an aggressive program to use our hydro resources to the fullest. Every drop of water which goes to the ocean without being used for power or used to grow, or being made available on the widest possible basis is a waste...” He supported the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) program to divert rivers from Arctic and North Pacific flow for the use of all North America.¹⁹

President Kennedy brought about the construction of a nuclear power research reactor in Vietnam. U.S. funding was announced on Aug. 9, 1963; the reactor

17. “Manifesto” author Julian Huxley, Britain’s senior African strategist, and president of the British Eugenics Society, had written, in *Man in the Modern World* (1947), “The lowest strata are reproducing relatively too fast. Therefore ... they must not have too easy access to relief or hospital treatment lest the removal of the last check on natural selection should make it too easy for children to be produced or to survive; long unemployment should be a ground for sterilisation.”

18. Atomic Energy Commission, “Civilian Nuclear Power—Report to the President”; requested by Kennedy March 17, 1962; issued Nov. 20, 1962.

19. This program is urgently needed today to provide millions of jobs, and triple the water table of the American West, and Mexico (see www.larouchepac.com).

was dedicated by President Diem on Oct. 28, five days before he was murdered.

Kennedy also financed a nuclear research reactor for his ally President Sukarno of Indonesia, and the U.S. sent scientists to help with the experiments. Indonesia set off its first sustained nuclear chain reaction on Oct. 17, 1964, before post-Kennedy intrigues led to Sukarno's overthrow.

The Kennedy space program aimed for manned landings on Mars by the 1980s. Nuclear rockets essential for this journey were being developed during Kennedy's administration at the Rover project test site in Nevada.

Throughout his Presidency, Kennedy promoted with great eagerness the desalination of seawater for world development and peace. He reorganized the Atomic Energy Commission to carry out research for nuclear-powered desalination. He arranged nuclear desalination work with Russia, Mexico, Israel, Egypt, and several other Arab countries, pushing particularly for joint Arab and Israeli nuclear water projects as the basis for peace.²⁰

This had been his goal for some time. As a Senator in 1957, Kennedy proposed "a Middle Eastern Nuclear Center, similar to the Asian Nuclear Center already proposed, which could bring untold benefits in energy utilization to former deserts and wasteland. These projects would be developed and administered under the auspices and control of the nations in the region. . . . [T]he benefits . . . would be mutual."²¹

During the showdown with Governor Wallace over Federal intervention for civil rights, Kennedy spoke—with Wallace present—at the 30th anniversary celebration for the Tennessee Valley Authority at Muscle Shoals, Ala. The TVA had long been racially integrated, and the workers, white and black, cheered for their President.

Kennedy detailed the tremendous economic growth of the region, of its private industry and income, under this Federal program. He cited the thousands of past and future world leaders who visit the TVA installations, "from nations whose poverty threatens to exceed their hopes . . . and they leave here feeling that they, too, can solve their problems in a

system of freedom."

Without mentioning Wallace, Kennedy said, "From time to time statements are made labeling the Federal Government an outsider, an intruder, an adversary. . . . Without the National Government, the people of the United States, working together, there would be no protection of the family farmer. . . . [H]e never would have been able to electrify his farm, to insure his crop, to support its price, and to stay ahead of the bugs, the boll weevils, and the mortgage bankers. . . . [T]here would be no Hill-Burton hospitals, which have helped develop the best hospital system in the world today. . . . Only a great national effort . . . can explore the mysteries of space . . . and mobilize the human, natural, and material resources of our lands."

JFK closed by citing the favorite phrase of Sen. George Norris, TVA's co-founder with Franklin Roosevelt: ". . . his reference, and his dedication, to 'generations yet unborn.' The first of those generations is now enjoying the fruits of his labor, as will others for decades to come. So let us all . . . resolve that we, too, in our time, 30 years later, will, ourselves, build a better Nation for 'generations yet unborn.'"

NAWAPA 1964



Released on Thanksgiving 2011, the LPAC-TV documentary "NAWAPA 1964" is the true story of the fight for the North American Water and Power Alliance. Spanning the 1960s and early '70s, it is told through the words of Utah Senator Frank Moss. The 56-minute video, using extensive original film footage and documents, presents the astonishing mobilization for NAWAPA, which came near to being realized, until the assassination of President Kennedy, the Vietnam War, and the 1968 Jacobin reaction, killed it

... until now.

<http://larouchepac.com/nawapa1964>

20. Testimony of JFK's nuclear advisor James T. Ramey at Senate hearings on Saline Water Conversion, May 19, 1965.

21. John F. Kennedy, *The Strategy for Peace* (New York: Popular Library, 1961), p. 151.