



I stand here tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch three thousand miles behind us, the pioneers gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build our new West.

They were not the captives of their own doubts, nor the prisoners of their own price tags. They were determined to make the new world strong and free – an example to the world, to overcome its hazards and its hardships, to conquer the enemies that threatened from within and without.

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 assemblage would agree with that sentiment; 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 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 problems of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus.

It 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'm asking each of you to be pioneers towards that New Frontier. My call is to the young in heart, regardless of age – to the stout in spirit, regardless of Party, to all who respond to the scriptural call: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be [thou] dismayed."

For courage, not complacency, is our need today; leadership, not salesmanship. And the only valid test of leadership is the ability to lead, and lead vigorously. [...]

All mankind waits upon our decision. A whole world looks to see what we shall do. And we cannot fail that trust. And we cannot fail to try.

It has been a long road from the first snowy day in New Hampshire many months ago to this crowded convention city. Now begins another long journey, taking me into your cities and homes across the United States. Give me your help and your hand and your voice.

John F. Kennedy, *Address Accepting the Democratic Nomination for President at the Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles, California*