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**JFK: The Assassination of a Symbol of Courage  
and Idealism (1961-1963).**

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## **Dedication**

*In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful  
All the Praise is due to God alone, the Sustainer of all the worlds*

*I would like to dedicate this extended essay to my beloved parents, and  
to my brothers Ali and Hocine.*

### **Acknowledgement**

*Above all, I thank Allah the Almighty for having given me the strength to undertake and complete this work.*

*I would like also to thank my supervisor Mr. Sebbah*

*Djamel for his help, precious advice and patience.*

*I would like also to thank my dear friend Benhamou Souhila for her help and for her emotional support.*

### **Abstract**

In essence, the present dissertation seeks to highlight president Kennedy's political career through demonstrating his domestic and foreign policies as well as to shed some light over his tragic death .president Kennedy introduced a set of proposals with the aim of improving the living standards of the American people, notably at the level of economy, education, healthcare and his support for the rights of the African American. Towards the end of this work we will be discussing the tragic death of the president and the reasons behind his assassination.

Key words: JFK- conspiracy-democrat-republican-assassination.

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# *General Introduction*

## General introduction

Much has been written about President Kennedy's political as well as private life; about both his great achievements and his blasphemes. John F Kennedy, who has become a historic figure in the US history, has been to this day one of the most admired personalities that gained the respect and the popularity among several generations. His political career evolved between the end of fifties and the early sixties. This period is considered as the most stunning era of the twentieth century since it marked multiple social and political changes. The Cold War was fought as well as the Vietnam War, Berlin Wall was constructed and the globe faced the threat of a nuclear war.

Regardless of these challenges in foreign affairs, Kennedy was also concerned with domestic issues during his presidency particularly those related to economy, poverty, and Civil Rights issues. The United States' Thirty Five President managed to solve most of these economic and social problems by undertaking several reforms. Kennedy's New Policy has been subject of heated debates and hard talks by numerous politicians, scholars, and writers. While some see Kennedy as a myth, being the youngest person ever to be elected for the highest office of the American nation, and whose policy brought about a number of undeniable successes, many others, however, argued that his presidency was filled principles 'statements and photo opportunities than with real concrete initiatives to treat long-neglected domestic issues such as poverty and race discrimination. Throughout his presidency,

JFK managed to create a public image immensely attractive to much of America.

JFK inspired in many a powerful optimism and idealism, and he seemed poised to carry the U.S. out of trying times. His life and presidency were cut short, however, by an assassin's bullet on November 22, 1963, plunging the country into mourning. Within this course of thought, the present dissertation examines Kennedy's administration and the programs he undertook during his presidency. So, the questions that seem important to ask are:



1. What did Kennedy believe was the essence of good leadership?
2. What were the strategies he adopted to boost the economy and to fight poverty and inequality?
3. The reason behind JFK's tragic death.

In order to answer the questions mentioned above the study makes use of the historical descriptive research the general layout of the study comprises three parts:

The first part provides background information relevant to John F. Kennedy, his childhood and early life, his early political career, his election as the president of the United States of America. The second part introduces both the president's foreign and domestic policies. Finally the third part we will see the tragic death of the president.

## *Chapter One*

# *John F. Kennedy Timeline: From Childhood to Presidency.*

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of John F. Kennedy from his childhood throughout his presidency. JFK was a descendant from the well known Irish family “The Kennedys” who were considered at one point to be America’s Royal Family, a rich and a powerful dynasty that was also beloved and admired by the public.

The president was rewarded the Navy and the Marine Corps medal for heroism during World War 2. John F. Kennedy was the youngest to be ever elected as president in the history of the United States of America. The path to the White House was not easy ; he had a hard way in his bid to the presidency.

## **1.2. Family background and education:**

John Fitzgerald Kennedy or « Jack » as his friends and family preferred to call him, also commonly known by the initials JFK. He was born on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1917 in Brookline Massachusetts, he was the second of nine children grand son of John Francis Fitzgerald, the popular mayor of Boston known as Honey Fitz. His parents were members of two most prominent Irish Catholic, and political families, they were preoccupied with social status and legitimizing their place in Boston's privilege society. Joseph the father was a successful businessman, stock trader, movie producer, and US Ambassador to England in 1937. The Kennedy children lived luxurious life style included sailing, summer homes on the coast, lavish meals and aristocracy schools.

During his childhood little Jack often suffered from health problems and several illnesses such as Diphtheria, whooping, cough, jaundice, asthma and pneumonia. With just four weeks before his third birthday, Jack contracted scarlet fever<sup>1</sup> and was hospitalized for two months. Although he made a full recovery, he was never very healthy, sickness would remain a constant challenge in Jack's life accompanying him throughout college, military service, and during his presidency. And because he was most of the time unhealthy his family used to joke about the great risk a mosquito took in biting him. "With some of his blood the mosquito was almost sure to die!"

In 1936, Jack graduated from Choate, a private school in Connecticut; while he was there he enjoyed playing sports such as: football, tennis, basket ball and golf, he was not good an athlete but he had a lot of determination and preservance. Jack preferred reading than doing anything else; he worked very hard in his history and government classes. Once he graduated and with the help of his father connections, he was immediately accepted at Harvard. JFK became extremely influenced by his father's occupation, European politics and world affairs became his new interest. JFK constantly received letters from his father Joseph P. Kennedy who informed him with the latest events that were happening in Great Britain and the rest of Europe. Pre graduate Jack started to gather information in order to prepare his senior thesis, the content of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jack became sick with Scarlet Fever; a highly contagious and then potentially life-threatening.

thesis was on why Great Britain was unprepared for war with Germany which later became the basis for his first bestselling book entitled “Why England Slept”<sup>2</sup>.

After graduating from Harvard in 1940, Jack went to Stanford University for graduate studies. The Second World War was about to break out in Europe. Kennedy registered at university campus with some discomfort not because he didn’t want to serve but he feared that he couldn’t be recruited due to his health problems<sup>3</sup>, as wrote to his friend Lem Bilings,” they will never take me in the Army and yet if I don’t go, it will look quite bad. Within a year Joseph P. Kennedy managed to pull some strings, and Jack would finally enter the navy on October 1941. Jack was made a Lieutenant (LT) and assigned to the South Pacific as commander of a patrol torpedo boat: PT-109.

*“Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, I served in the United States Navy.”*

President John F. Kennedy in August 1963

Lt Kennedy directed a crew of twelve men; their main job was to make sure that no Japanese ships would deliver supplies to their soldiers. After more than two years in the South Pacific, Jack’s life was calm and easy. However; he nearly faced his own death on the night of August 2, 1943, when a Japanese destroyer crashed into PT 109, killing two of Jack’s men and severely injuring everyone else on the crew. Kennedy was once again hurt in his back as he slammed hard against the cockpit; yet he didn’t panic neither did he give up upon his men, “.....*he conducted himself with courage, poise, and stoicism*”(Derraj 34). Kennedy led his men to a nearby island, where the crew hid. Several days later two native islanders found them and went for help delivering a message that Jack had carved so proficiently on a shell of a coconut. Shortly after Jack and his crew were rescued

What Jack did was patriotic and heroic to say the least, consequently: he was later rewarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.”*Jack was a unifying example of American egalitarianism*” (Dalleck 98).

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<sup>2</sup> It was written by Kennedy in 1940 and reprinted in 1961. The book presents in depth analysis with the intention of aiding his country to learn from England’s mistakes.

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy had a back injury received while playing football.

Two years after the PT 109 incident, Jack and his family suffered the loss of his oldest brother “Joe”<sup>4</sup> in August of 1944. Joseph was described as being handsome, athletic, intelligent and ambitious; he had been nominated by his father to become president one day. Upon his death, all the Kennedy’s political ambition was dropped on Jack’s shoulders, as he explained: “*I never thought at school or college that I would ever run for office myself. One politician was enough in the family and my brother Joe was obviously going to be that politician*” (Dalleck 117)

### **1.3. Early Political Career :**

By the end of the Second World War, Jack was building a career of a writer or a journalist. In 1945; he was offered a job as a journalist at the United Nations’ Conference in San Francisco<sup>5</sup>. After in the press field John shifted his attention towards politics, though JFK was having mixed feelings about being a politician, James Macgregor Burns said that his friend “*Jack did have political views, and strong political, but for his own psychological reason he wished to hide them from his family, friends, and perhaps even from himself*” (Schwab 59).

The death of Joseph Kennedy was the main reason that pushed JFK to consider running for a public office, after having serious discussions, Joseph Patrick Kennedy convinced his son that he should run for congress in Massachusetts’s eleventh congressional district, which was inhabited “liberal and conservative Harvard intellectuals” (Silvestri17). But most of its citizens were dock workers and fishermen living in quite poor housing conditions in the industrial areas of the district. In order to win over working class voters, Jack campaigned hard; meeting with local organizations, spotlighting his military service, and appearing with his grandfather, Honey Fitz, who had represented the same area forty years earlier. Joe Sr “handled all money matters” (Ibid18) hiring a public relations to manage Jack’s image and “bombard voters with pro-Kennedy bill boards and mailings.” (Lasky98).

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<sup>4</sup> Navy pilot, who was killed when his plane, carrying over two tons of dynamite, suddenly exploded.

<sup>5</sup> This was the founding conference of the United States of America.

Given the amount of money put into the campaign, it was no surprise when Jack, only 29 years old, was elected to Congress in June 1946 “*people saw, Kennedy, heard Kennedy, ate Kennedy, drank Kennedy slept Kennedy ....*” (Ibid98)

Jack was viewed by many as “...millionaire’s son from Harvard trying to come into an area that is longshoremen, waitresses, truck drivers and so forth...” (dalleck127). Some of his opponents called a carpet beggar and many others of them criticized on how young and inexperienced was.

The twenty nine years old won the primary election “He earned forty percent of voters”(Silvestri24) and on November 5<sup>th</sup>,1946, Jack won the election against his republican opponent Lester Brown. “*Through the event “eighty three years old Honey Fitz danced a gig on a table when the news came in.”*”(Darraj44)

Jack served three terms in the House of Representatives<sup>6</sup> he consistently supported social programs such as Housing Unemployment and Civil Rights for the African Americans. Once again with the help of his father’s connections, Jack was appointed to the house of education, labor committee and veteran’s affairs committee, by these appointments his political visibility had increased.

With six years of congressional experience, Jack was too ambitious to remain in the house, he decided to run for a more prominent position in the federal government.

In November 1951.Jack was elected in the Senate, his competitor candidate was Senator Henri Cabot Lodge Jr<sup>7</sup>. Due to his family effort, senatorial campaign was well organized, “*they played a critical role not only in terms of financial support but also with Robert Kennedy as campaign manager and the Kennedy sisters along with Rose Kennedy hosting series of tea parties throughout the state ...*”(Kenney 28).

On June 1952, Jack’s younger brother, Robert F. Kennedy named also “Bobby”, was called upon to manage Jack’s campaign. Under Bobby's leadership, large groups of supporters were enlisted and assembled, and Jack's "I'll do more for

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<sup>6</sup> Kennedy served in the House from 1947 to 1953.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924) was an American Republican Senator whose father had been a sworn political Enemy of Honey Fitz and historian from Massachusetts.

Massachusetts" message thrived. One observer of Jack's campaign wondered, "What is there about Kennedy that makes every Catholic girl in Boston between eighteen and twenty-eight think it's a holy crusade to get him elected?"(Wolffe191).

As in the previous campaigns, Jack drew attention to his heroism during the Second World War. Despite frequent attacks of Addison's disease and increasing back pain Jack campaigned harder than he ever had in his life.

After four years in the Senate, Jack began to grow restless<sup>8</sup>. In 1956, hoping for higher political office, he sought to secure democratic vice president nomination. His father Joe Sr did not appreciate what he was about to do, he considered him as "An idiot who was ruining his political career" (Dalleck207). In August Jack faced difficulties to campaign for the position and he failed; however the experience was positive one in the long term.

During Jack's Senate years, he fought for labor reform, and supported Civil Rights legislation. In one of his first speeches he declared:

I want to go to the Senate to join those who are really fighting for a change in the present Senate rules – which permit empty words to kill all attempts to protect the constitutional rights of minority groups of Americans. I want to go to the Senate to continue my fight for Civil Rights legislation (Bryant 36).

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<sup>8</sup> Back problems forced him to use crutches, which he tried to hide from the media. In 1954 and 1955 he underwent two major spinal surgeries.

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Moreover, in the 1950s as a member of Senate Committee on foreign relations, he advocated assistance to the emerging nations in Africa and Asia; his friends were surprised when he called upon France to grant Algerian independence.

At the age of thirty five, the successful politician was on top of the world, the only thing he was missing, everyone agreed, was a wife. On 12, 1953 Jack married Jacqueline Bouvier, a George Washington University student, writer, and photographer. The wedding was celebrated at St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Newport. The couple looked not only noticeably attractive but quintessentially American as well.

They seemed perfect to each other "...she loved literature and the arts. She seemed to be a perfect match for Jack, who also loved to read and had once dreamed of becoming a writer... Rather than court her with flowers and jewelry, Jack often gave her his favorite books as gifts."(Darraj51)

In 1954, Jack was inspired by Herbert Agar's The Price of Union<sup>9</sup>; it was a passage from that book, about an act of courage by an earlier senator from Massachusetts, caught Jack's attention, and gave him the idea of writing an article about political courage. Jack's "article" idea quickly became a book idea; he began working on his book during his time of recuperation from surgery. Jackie, as a good wife, helped her husband research it, making the countless trips to the library that Jack's health weakened situation prevented. The book, Profiles in Courage was published in 1956 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1957, and quickly became a bestseller. Jack was quoted as saying "I would rather have the Pulitzer than be President" (Darraj59).

#### **1.4 Presidency:**

Although Jack failed to win the vice presidential nomination in 1956, his ambition for higher political position only raised; by the end of the 1950s numerous speculations had occurred about Kennedy's presidential nomination.

Running for president presented several obstacles for Jack, the major one was religion. Roman Catholicism was a very prominent issue in the USA. Most of Americans were worried that the Roman Catholic Church did not recognize the separation of church

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<sup>9</sup> Agar's (1897-1980) book The Price of Union was one of John F. Kennedy's favorite books.

and state, and that nominating a Catholic for presidency might shape a risk because it would impact his decision making. Though Jack was occasionally criticized and discouraged by many, he campaigned with confidence, winning over voters across the country with his charm and easy nature. Therefore his chances of becoming the presidential nominee enhanced noticeably. (Schlesinger11).

Jack's health struggle also made an issue. However Jack masked his pain, letting people to think he was in a good health, and whenever he had to be hospitalized, the press was told that his sickness was related back to old war injuries

Kennedy surrounded himself with a very skilled team "his campaign organization may well have been the most efficient in American political history" (Heath39). Jack's brother Bobby played a key role in managing Jack's campaign, he focused on Jack's role as a congressman, war hero, accomplished author, and loving father<sup>10</sup>.

Jack Kennedy was sworn in as the 35<sup>th</sup> president at noon on January 20, 1961. In his inaugural address he spoke of the need of all Americans to be active citizens, famously saying *Ask not what your country can do for you ask what you can do for your country*. He asked the nations of the world to join together to fight what he called the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty disease and war itself" Jack's impressive speech confirmed his status not only as a great rhetorician but also as an iconic symbol of new era in American life.

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<sup>10</sup> Jack's daughter, Caroline, had been born in 1957.

## **1.6. Conclusion**

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the youngest to be ever elected as a president in the history of the United States of America and have rendered one of the shortest presidential services in the country; he projected a public image of a healthy and a vibrant leader; although he suffered from multitude of sickness. JFK was one of America's most admired presidents. During his short leadership he faced a number of global challenges; however JFK dedicated most of his time attempting to solve internal issues such as: economic instability, poverty and inequality.

*Chapter two:*

*Kennedy's Domestic and Foreign Policies.*

## **2.1. Introduction:**

In addition to his charismatic look and confidence, it was President Kennedy's devotion to domestic policy actions that turned him to a historic figure. During his thousand days in office, Kennedy supported many social as well as economic programs.

During Kennedy's presidency, the United States of America was facing its fourth major recession since World War 2. The reason that made Kennedy's administration to impulse for an economic and social stimulus programs for the aim of improving Americans' Welfare.

## **2.2. Economy Stimulation :**

President Kennedy strongly believed that increased prosperity would help fix some of the nation's social problems. Therefore, when he took office, his first priority was to reinforce economic growth. Unfortunately, his ability to take potent actions to stimulate the economy were hampered by the congress. It is worth noting that his most famous economic actions were: steel price roll-back, and tax cut.

### **2.2.1. Steel Price fixing:**

It is a known fact that Steel is a key raw material used in many products, and when the cost of steel increases, every steel-made product such as cars and tanks increased in price. As Walter Heller had explained to the president in summer 1961, "Steel bulks so large in the manufacturing sector of the economy that it can upset the applecart all by itself." (Reeves 294). Thus, President Kennedy was very anxious about the inflation. That is why he did his utmost to stabilize the steel price; he asked labour negotiators to make simple demands to improve wages. However, the labour negotiators brought few improvements in pension contributions by the companies and did not, on the ground, push for extra wage increases. In so doing, Kennedy expected that steel industry would forgo a steel price increase.

On April 10, 1962, Kennedy was shocked when Roger Blough<sup>11</sup> gave him a piece of paper announcing that "a 3.5 percent across-the-board increase in steel prices" (Meagher, Gragg120). Kennedy felt betrayed and was very angry and cursed the steel administrators. The following words expressed his public frustration and anger with steel administrators "My father always told me that all businessmen were sons of bitches, but I never believed it till now." (Giglio132). In addition to this, Kennedy declared at a press conference that "corporations, like individuals, have obligations to their country. Short-term gains by the corporation must be foregone in order to strengthen the nation. The long-term interest of the corporation was linked to the health of the national economy." (Meagher, Gragg121). He stated that the price increase announced by United States Steel was a "wholly unjustifiable and irresponsible defiance of the public interest" (Ibid121) and ordered the

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<sup>11</sup> Roger m blough (1904\_1958) was the chairman and chiefexecutive of the united states steel corporation from may 1955 through January 1969

Justice Department to investigate the steel companies, as he also asked the IRS<sup>12</sup> to investigate the actions of the steel directors. Eventually, the pressure was too high for the steel administrators to resist. The efforts used by Kennedy were effective; the steel executives were forced to renounce and declare a price rollback.

## **2.3 Social Programs**

Beyond advancing the cause of equal rights, President Kennedy's objective from New Frontier contained new social programs, these included federal aid to education that was allocated for school construction and federal aid to education that was allocated for school construction and teachers' salaries, medical care for the elderly known as Medicare, and economic aid to rural regions. However, Like President Harry Truman, Kennedy was unable to get major parts of his domestic program approved with the conservative alliance of Southern Democrats and Republicans in control of Congress.

### **2.3.1. Education**

Kennedy had long supported affording financial aid to education. During his fourteen years in Congress, he proposed bills to support grants for school construction, pedagogical materials, and a group of supplementary services, such as medical equipment for school infirmaries and items for the disabled. When he ran for presidency in 1960, he was far more uttered than his competitor Nixon in calling for "general aid" to schools. Although Kennedy's victory was among the smallest of the century, he kept his numerous campaign promises he had made to schools. Indeed, he was a man of his word, shortly after his inauguration in 1961; he proposed a wide-range package of general aid for school construction and teacher salaries.

However, Kennedy proposal for education funding was opposed by both Democratic and Republican conservative forces and Catholic members of Congress as well "Catholic

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<sup>12</sup> The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is responsible for collecting taxes and the administration of the Internal Revenue Code.

Democrats and many from the North and inclined to support education funding, objected to any proposal that did not provide funding for Parochial schools” (Meagher, Gragg114)

Without the encouragement of Northern Catholic Democrats, Kennedy’s 1961 proposal for providing funding for teachers’ salaries and constructing public schools as well as constructing loans to parochial schools had no chance of success; both democratic and republican conservatives and catholic democrats voted against him.

### **2.3.2. Medical care:**

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there had been notable demands for the need of national health insurance. In 1912, President Theodore Roosevelt was the first who proposed national health insurance for all Americans. In spite of this, nothing had been concretely done. Both the American Medical Association and the professional organization for the nation’s doctors expressed their disapproval with Roosevelt’s proposal. Yet, during Kennedy’s campaign for presidency, public opinion polls showed that public health insurance for the elderly had highly been supported because of rising health care costs. As Irving Bernstein has elucidated “By the spring of 1960 health care under Social Security was probably the hottest issue of the gathering presidential campaign.” (Bernstein, 249)

Once Kennedy took office, the chances of success with Medicare were been limited by the Congress. The American Medical Association continued its strong opposition and refusal to any health bill. The House Ways and Means Committee led by Wilbur Mills strongly objected to the Medicare legislation. As a consequence, the plan for national health insurance for elderly failed. (Meagher, Gragg115).

Although Kennedy’s biggest defeat was Medicare, this last became law on July30, 1965; when President Johnson signed the Social Security Act of 1965.



Despite the resistance Kennedy faced in Congress, he did push through: an increase in the minimum wage, an extension in social security benefits, alongside an improved welfare system during his thousand days in office.

## **2.5. Civil Rights:**

When Kennedy reached presidency in 1961, he did not give a much concern to Civil Rights during his early years of presidency. Some historians suggested that Kennedy's attitude vis-à-vis this sensitive issue was due to the fact that he did not want to expose America's negative image to the international community, particularly to the Soviet enemy, and alienating southern voters in his quest for reelection, as well as tensing relations with southern Democrats in Congress.

However, Civil Rights' concern could not be disregarded. Kennedy's first challenge of leading a socially chaotic nation was in May 1961, when a group of white and black Civil Rights advocates known as The Freedom Riders boarded buses and attempted to break separation codes by traveling through purely racist zones of the South. Once they reached Montgomery, Alabama, they were attacked by a large group of white people. Following the incident, President Kennedy intervened by ordering U.S. Marshals to protect the Freedom Riders. But he was reluctant to take any other federal action.

On September 25, 1961; an African American man, named James Meredith, attempted to register as a student at Ole Miss University of Mississippi, but the ruler of that University, Ross Barnett, was a purely racist man, he immediately blocked Meredith's effort.

People were really anxious about the incident, and the tensions in the college town grew inflammably. Kennedy was looking for a solution to avoid such kind of bad publicity; he decided to negotiate with Governor Barnett by exercising some of his

presidential authority. Unfortunately, Kennedy was incapable to reach any real concrete deal.

Five days later, President Kennedy delivered a televised speech, in which he guaranteed to the nation that the African American, James Meredith, was registered in the University and he was also living safely in the Campus. As reaction to Kennedy's speech, violence and riots broke out in the town and president Kennedy was obliged to call in the National Guard, something that he had longed to avoid. At four in the morning, as the rioting intensified in Mississippi, Kennedy deployed 16,000 military policemen to bring peace in the Campus. It was a success for the military policemen, but two people were killed, two hundred federal marshals and soldiers were injured by the rioters and two hundred people were arrested. Luckily for Kennedy; the nation was so focused on the drama of the crisis that he was not asked or blamed for his mishandling the situation. (Reeves263)

The summer of 1963 was synonymous of real change in Kennedy's attitude toward Civil Rights, when another Southern governor Alabama's George tried to stop and prevent two African American students, James Hood and Vivian Malone, from enrolling at the University of Alabama. Wallace declared in his inaugural speech "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever" and he stood at the door of the main building of the University in order to physically prevent James Hood and Vivian Malone -the two African American- from getting in the campus. Once again President Kennedy was obliged to send the National Guard. The same day; 11june1963, John Fitzgerald Kennedy more known as JFK delivered a televised address in which he exposed the late incidents of violence that were racially motivated, as he outlined a general proposal for a Civil Rights Bill. Even though he secretly summed up his desire for the bill to include "the minimum they can ask for and the maximum they can stand behind" (Ibid518), it was not really a progressive attitude, but it was the first crucial and definitive action that firmly aligned him with the Civil Rights Movement.

In 23 September 1963, President Kennedy offered to the Congress the most radical Civil Right legislation since Reconstruction. He commented on the fact that fifty percent of the nation, thought he was pushing too fast on integration, saying:

“This is not a matter on which you can take the temperature every week or two... you must make a judgment about the movement of a great historical event which is taking place in this country... Change always disturbs.” two months later, JFK was assassinated and the president who came after, Lyndon Johnson, pushed the bill through Congress and signed it into act in 1964.

## **2.4. Kennedy’s Foreign Policy:**

Jack had a strong interest in foreign policy since his undergraduate days at Harvard; he was interested in the issues of war and peace. During his short tenure as President, his foreign policy saw diplomatic and military strategies in Europe, Southeast Asia, Latin America and other regions amid considerable Cold War tensions. In his inaugural address Jack summarized his attitudes toward the cold war as follows: "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate"(Meagher, Gragg145).

The United States faced several international challenges in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Jack was eager to take on the challenges.

### **2.4.1. Bay of Pigs:**

Within just a month of becoming President, Jack faced the Communist challenge on every front. On America’s southern boundary, the new communist authority of Fidel Castro’s<sup>13</sup> Cuba challenged the United States; he ordered the running of a watered-down plan that the previous president, Eisenhower, had approved to topple Cuban leader Fidel Castro. The CIA<sup>14</sup> was anxious to take swift action and urged Kennedy to authorize an invasion. Kennedy gave the green light and expected that the invasion would succeed. The mission was set to start on 15 April 1961, unfortunately for Kennedy the news of

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<sup>13</sup> Fidel Castro was a Cuban politician and revolutionary who served as Prime Minister of Cuba from 1959 to 1976.

<sup>14</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is an external intelligence service of the U.S. Government, tasked processing and analyzing national security information from around the world.

approaching invasion was leak in several newspapers. The newspapers' leak was only one in series of stumbling, and luckless development from the beginning. On 17 April 1961, when approximately 1,500 Cuban refugees landed at Bahia de Cochinos on Cuba's southern coast, they met a strong, well organized Cuban army defeated the refugee force, and announcing the failure of Jack's mission; hundreds of Cuban refugee were killed and thousands were captured. The Bay of Pigs' disaster was a humiliation for the new president. Throughout the rest of his presidency, Jack was cursed by the missteps made in the Bay of Pigs Fiaxo.

Still recovering from this humiliating political defeat, two months after the Bay of Pigs, Jack had regained confidence, and was set to meet in Vienna with Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union. On June 1961, Kennedy travelled to Vienna for the Summit with the Soviet leader. During the Summit, Khrushchev criticized American foreign policy, defending communist revolution in Southeast Asia and described the United States as a domineering force in world politics, and renewed his threat to cut off Allied access to West Berlin. Jack was shocked by Khrushchev's aggressive style and tone, and respond in turn by ordering fundamental increase in American international ballistic missile forces, adding five new army air visions, and increasing the nation's air power and military reserves. The summit not only ended without resolution, but it also increased tension between the two powers.

#### **2.4.2. The Cuban missile crisis:**

After the disastrous Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Soviet Union began sending its weaponry and military personnel to Cuba, under the intents of protecting Cuba from further invasions. On October, 1962 President Kennedy was shown photographs about the installation of nuclear missiles in Cuba. It was clear that the Soviet Union was searching to provoke the United States and endeavoring to shift the balance of power in the West. After their discovery Kennedy found himself under pressure, he had to act decisively and wisely. Thus he formed with his top advisers an emergency working group named the EX-COMM in the white house, conducting top-secret meeting. The main point of disagreement was whether to initiate with a military attack against the Cuban missile sites or to send a letter

of warning to Khrushchev notifying him of a U.S blockade. On October 22, 1962 Kennedy made a televised speech informing the public of the crisis demanding the removal of Soviet missiles.

By 26 October, the blockade had proved effective; Soviet ships that contain nuclear weapons turned back before facing American battleships off the coast of Cuba. However, the tensions continued to rise between the two nations. On 27 October, Khrushchev offered Kennedy a deal that the Soviet Union would remove its missiles from Cuba, only if the United States would remove its own nuclear missiles from Turkey<sup>15</sup>. Jack accepted the deal, he sent Bobby to arrange for the removing of U.S. missiles from Turkey, under the condition that the plan remains secret. Khrushchev responded by agreement and assured the world that the Soviet Union would begin removal of the missiles on 30 October. Jack's strategy to negotiate Khrushchev's deal ended in success. (Meagher, Gragg101)

By early November 1962 Jack's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis was considered by most Americans as a political success in foreign policy in which Jack showed talent as a leader, decision-making abilities, and crisis management skills.

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<sup>15</sup> In 1961, the U.S. had installed missiles in that country the USSR's southern border.

## 2.5. Conclusion:

*“Kennedy entered office with ambitions to eradicate poverty and to raise America’s eyes to the stars through the space programs”* Robert D.Marcus

JFK was an inspiration not just to the American people but also to politicians and leaders around the world, his policies both internal were to a certain extent successful; however The most high-profile and obvious failure was the Bay of Pigs Invasion. In this incident, the US clearly failed to bring off the invasion of Cuba that it was supporting. This made JFK look weak because he allowed the invasion but failed to support it enough to make it work. Although we did not know it at the time, another failure (one can argue) was JFK's policy towards Vietnam. It was during this time that the US got more deeply involved in that conflict.

The major success was the Cuban Missile Crisis. This incident made JFK look much more effectual than he had the year before in the Bay of Pigs incident. Here, JFK's leadership prevented nuclear war and also made the USSR back down. This was the major foreign policy success of JFK's time in office.

## **Chapter Three:**

*Kennedy's assassination: conspiracy theories.*

### **3.1. Introduction:**

*“Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air we all cherish our children’s future. And we are all mortal”*

John f. Kennedy

the death of the president JFK was one of the most devastating tragedies in the US history. This chapter will present the assassination of the president JFK which was a shock that shook the American people and plunged the whole country into a long period of mourning. Many theories were given to elude the tragedy but none of them could satisfy the public opinion curiosity. Be as it may, the secret is well-kept and the American archives will give the final truth by 2023 the period permitted to consult them.



### **3.2. The definition of conspiracy theory:**

Conspiracy theory is an explanation of an event or situation that invokes a conspiracy without warrant, generally one involving an illegal or harmful act carried out by government or other powerful actors. Conspiracy theories often produce hypotheses that contradict the prevailing understanding of history or simple facts.

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines it as being a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators.

In another definition; the Black's law mentions in the US law that conspiracy is a combination or confederacy between two or more persons formed for the purpose of committing, by their joint efforts, some unlawful or criminal act, or some act which is innocent in itself, but becomes unlawful when done by the concerted action of the conspirators, or for the purpose of using criminal or unlawful means to the commission of an act not in itself unlawful.

### **3.3. The CIA Theory:**

The CIA JFK assassination theory is a prominent one according to many sources for instance the ABC agency news,, the (CIA) is represented in nearly every theory that involves American conspirators The secretive nature of the CIA and its reputation for high level political assassinations in the 1960s has made it a plausible perpetrator for those who believe in a conspiracy. Conspiracy believers have ascribed various motives to CIA involvement in the assassination of Kennedy, included his refusal to provide any air support to the famous Bay of pigs invasion, his plan to cut the agency's budget by 20 percent, and the belief that he was weak on communism.

Other speculation was that Oswald was a CIA agent or had some relationship with the Agency, the Warren Commission stated in 1964 that their investigation "revealed no evidence that Oswald was ever employed by the CIA in any capacity. The House Select Committee on Assassinations reported similarly in 1979 that there was no indication in

Oswald's CIA file that he had ever had contact with the Agency" and concluded that the CIA was not involved in the assassination of Kennedy.

An investigator named Gaeton Fontzi for the House Select Committee on Assassinations wrote that investigators were pressured not to look into the relationship between him and the CIA. He stated that CIA agent; yet Oswald was involved prior to the Kennedy assassination in connection with anti-Castro Cuban groups

In 1995, former U.S. Army officer and National Security Agency executive assistant John M. Newman published evidence that both the CIA and FBI deliberately tampered with their files on Lee Harvey Oswald both before and after the assassination. Furthermore, he found that both agencies withheld information that might have alerted authorities in Dallas that Oswald posed a potential threat to the President. Subsequently, Newman expressed a belief that CIA chief of counter-intelligence James Angleton was probably the key figure in the assassination. According to Newman, only Angleton "had the access, the authority, and the diabolically ingenious mind to manage this sophisticated plot." However, Newman surmised that the cover operation was not under James Angleton, but under Allen Dulles (the former CIA director, and later Warren Commission member, who had been dismissed by Kennedy after he failed in the incident of Bay of Pigs invasion.

### **3.4. Cuban exiles :**

The House Select Committee on Assassinations wrote: "The committee believes, on the basis of the evidence available to it, that anti-Castro Cuban groups, as groups, were not involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, but that the available evidence does not preclude the possibility that individual members may have been involved"

In 1959 a revolution broke in Cuba that brought Fidel Castro to power, many Cubans left Cuba to live in the United States. Many of these exiles hoped to overthrow Castro and return to Cuba. Their hopes were dashed with the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion in 1961, and many blamed President Kennedy for the failure

The House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded that some militant Cuban exiles might have participated in Kennedy's murder. These exiles worked closely with CIA operatives in violent activities against Castro's Cuba. In 1979, the committee reported:

### **3.5. The Israeli government conspiracy:**

Immediately following Kennedy's death, speculation that he was assassinated by a "Zionist conspiracy" was prevalent in much of the Muslim world. Among these views were that Zionists were motivated to kill Kennedy due to his opposition to an Israeli nuclear program, that Lyndon B. Johnson received orders from Zionists to have Kennedy killed, and that the assassin was a Zionist agent.

According to Michael Collins Piper in *Final Judgment: The Missing Link in the JFK Assassination Controversy*, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion orchestrated the assassination after learning that Kennedy planned to keep Israel from obtaining nuclear weapons. Piper said that the assassination "was a joint enterprise conducted on the highest levels of the American CIA, in collaboration with organized crime—and most specifically, with direct and profound involvement by the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad. The theory also alleges involvement of Meyer Lansky and the Anti-Defamation League. In 2004, Mordechai Vanunu stated that the assassination was Israel's response to "pressure [Kennedy] exerted on...Ben-Gurion, to shed light on Dimona's nuclear reactor in Israel". In a speech before the United Nations General Assembly in 2009, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi also alleged that Kennedy was killed for wanting to investigate Dimona.

### **3.6. The Federal Reserve Conspiracy Theory:**

Another strong speculation that is believed by huge number of Americans the system of federal bank was the one behind the assassination of JFK. The theory is that Kennedy was trying to rein in the power of the Federal Reserve, and that forces opposed to such action might have played at least some part in the assassination. According to Marrs, the issuance of Executive Order 11110 was an effort by Kennedy to transfer power from the Federal Reserve to the United States Department of the Treasury by replacing Federal Reserve Notes with an alternative of silver certificates. Actor and author Richard Belzer named the responsible parties in this theory as American "billionaires, power brokers, and bankers ... working in tandem with the CIA and other sympathetic agents of the government".

An article issued in research magazine in 2010 discussing various controversies surrounding the Federal Reserve stated that "the wildest accusation against the Fed is that it was involved in Kennedy's assassination." Critics of the theory note that Kennedy called for and signed legislation phasing out Silver Certificates in favor of Federal Reserve Notes, thereby enhancing the power of the Federal Reserve; and that Executive Order 11110 was a technicality that only delegated existing presidential powers to the Secretary of the Treasury for administrative convenience during a period of transition.

### **3.7. Conclusion:**

John F. Kennedy led the country through tragedy and triumphs and did so with compassion and intelligence. He is arguably one of the best presidents the United States has ever seen and was loved by the nation; as evidenced by the Americans' emotional devastation after his assassination. He shall always live in infamy as his leadership was still treasured.

## **General conclusion**

During the presidential campaign of 1960, John F. Kennedy delivered his most influential and legendary “New Frontier” address in which he promised a package of reforms that would help regain America’s place in the world and lead it to a prosperous future. This very ambitious intention was clearly reflected in his

“New Frontier” philosophy that basically sought to advance the country at all levels.

Once he reached the presidency, President Kennedy rolled up his sleeve and started working to solve U.S’ major domestic issues; his highest domestic priority was to save economy from recession of the Eisenhower’s years. But in 1962,

Kennedy lost the confidence of business leaders when he sought to roll back an extreme price increase in the steel industry. After his undeniable success in rolling back steel prices, he called for a large tax cut to stimulate the economy. Although conservatives in congress opposed Kennedy’s tax cut proposal at the beginning, the tax bill ultimately became a law after his death.

Kennedy’s administration was very ambitious to come up with a series of domestic improvement programs at the social sphere in particular. Kennedy provided significant financial support devoted to school construction and teachers’ salaries. He also showed a significant commitment to guarantee health care insurance for the elderly. What is more, he introduced an increase in the minimum wage aiming at extending social security benefits. In brief, he intended to set up a welfare system.

Race discrimination, as a sensitive issue in the American nation, had long been one of Kennedy’s major concerns. Though he made some gestures toward

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## Appendix



President john f kennedy (1917-1963)



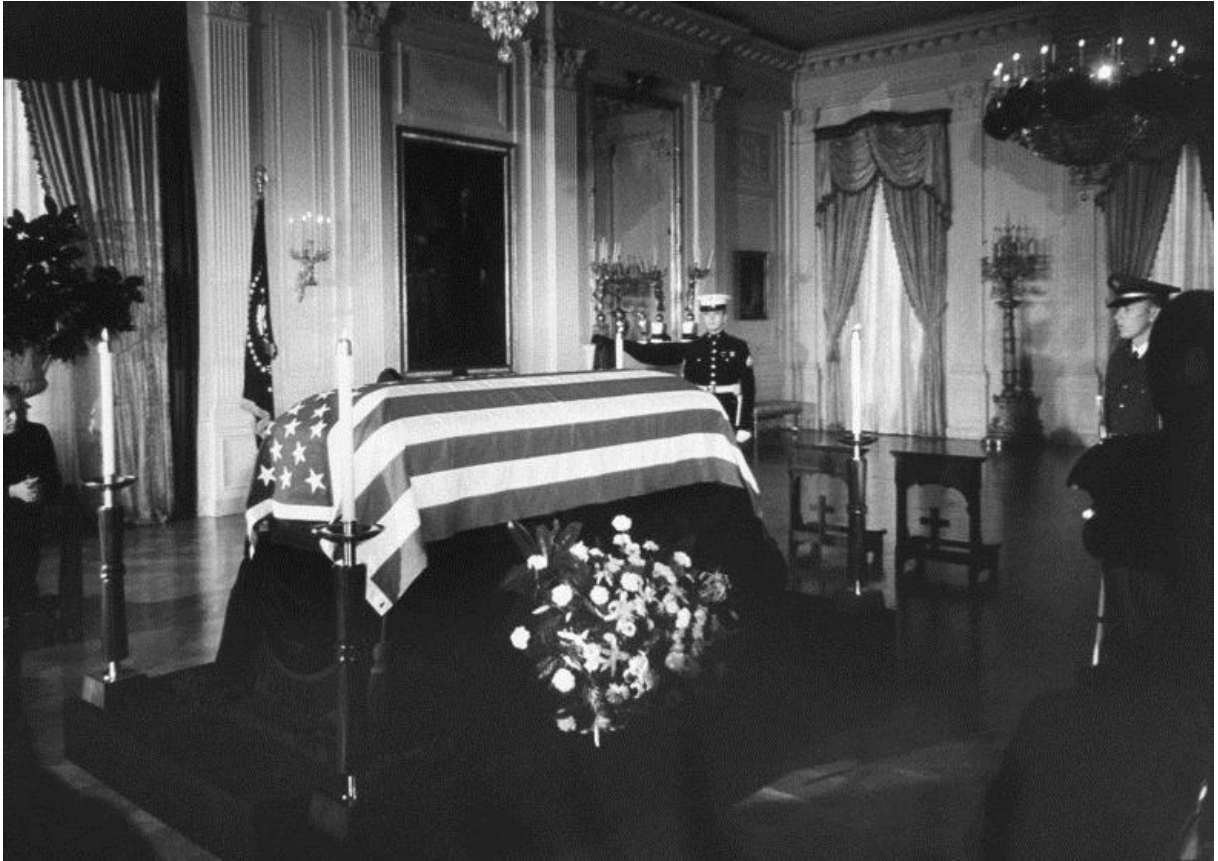
**United States Navy Lieutenant Junior Grade John F. Kennedy, 1942**



Wedding of Jackline Bouvier and John F. Kennedy .September 12, 1953 in St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Newport.



**Inaugural address 20, January 1960**



**The state *funeral* of *John F. Kennedy*, 35th President of the United States November 22, 1963**



**John F. Kennedy Eternal Flame at Arlington National Cemetery**

