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JFK'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CRISES, 1961-1963



Originally microfilmed as JFK and Foreign Affairs, 1961-1963, this collection provides insights into President Kennedy's views on foreign affairs, U.S. leadership of the "West," and various worldwide crises. There are more than just documents on the Bay of Pigs, Berlin, and Cuba. There are documents that highlight American efforts to support Third World countries, balance of payments and foreign trade, Alliance for Progress and relations with Latin America, nuclear weapons and testing, NATO and the Multilateral Force in Europe, Southeast Asia and regional security, foreign aid and military assistance, and the international space race.

Date Range: 1958-1964

Content: 64,126 images

Source Library: John F. Kennedy Presidential Library

Detailed Description:

"...And nowhere is this need more critical than in the conduct of our foreign affairs. For Pennsylvania Avenue is no longer a local thorough-fare. It runs through Paris and London, Ankara and Teheran, New Delhi and Tokyo...the road from the White House that encircles the globe is freedom's way-the artery that makes all the Free World neighbors as well as allies. And if Washington is the capital of the Free World, the President must be its leader. Our Constitution requires it-our history requires it-our very survival requires it. In foreign affairs, said the Supreme Court, "the President alone has the power to speak or listen as the representative of this nation..."

John F. Kennedy, inaugurated as president on January 20, 1961, devoted his entire inaugural address to international affairs. He spoke of the need for 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 also 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." In closing, he expanded on his desire for greater internationalism: "Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you."

President Kennedy took office in a time of rising international tension. The struggle of hundreds of new nations to break from their colonial past and establish modern institutions set loose chaos across much of the globe. The rhetoric and actions of the erratic Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev suggested a new Communist boldness, even recklessness, and a determination to exploit the prevailing instability. The development of new weapons systems added an especially frightful dimension. The fate of the world thus seemed to hang in the balance, and Kennedy assumed power certain that the survival of the United States depended upon its ability to defend "free" institutions.

These new National Security File collections provide insights into President Kennedy's views on foreign affairs, U.S. leadership of the "West," and various worldwide crises. There are more than just documents on the Bay of Pigs, Berlin, and Cuba. These files highlight American efforts to support Third World countries, balance of payments and foreign trade, Alliance for Progress and relations with Latin America, nuclear weapons and testing, NATO and the Multilateral Force in Europe, Southeast Asia and regional security, foreign aid and military assistance, and the international space race.

Originally microfilmed as JFK and Foreign Affairs, 1961-1963, this digital collection consists of all three sections of the microfilm product. These sections include:

Subject File

This series contains files on a variety of subjects such as: Alliance for Progress, civil defense, foreign aid, hijacking incidents, nuclear weapons, policy planning, and space Activities.

Regional Security File

This material is divided by geographic region, treaty organization or subject such as: Latin America, Southeast Asia, NATO, and Multilateral Force.

Departments & Agencies

This series is divided alphabetically by the name of department or agency such as: Arms Control & Disarmament Agency, Defense Department, National Security Council, and State Department

Publisher's Note: This collection comprises, in their entirety, the Primary Source Media microfilm collections entitled *John F. Kennedy and Foreign Affairs, 1961-1963, Part 1: National Security Files, Section 1: Subject File; John F. Kennedy and Foreign Affairs, 1961-1963, Part 1: National Security Files, Section 2: Regional Security File;* and, *John F. Kennedy and Foreign Affairs, 1961-1963, Part 1: National Security Files, Section 3: Departments and Agencies.*