

1- SPACE EXPLORATION as a narrative of national prestige and quest for power**DOC 1: the historical context of US space exploration**

⇒ *underlined words are explained below the text*

The **Cold War** rivalry between **the United States** and **the Soviet Union** lasted for decades (1945-1991) and resulted in **anti-communist suspicions** and **international incidents** that led the **two superpowers** to the brink of nuclear disaster.

During **World War II**, the United States and the Soviet Union fought together as **allies** against **the Axis powers**. However, the **relationship** between the two nations was a **tense** one. Americans had long been wary of Soviet communism and concerned about **Russian leader Joseph Stalin's tyrannical, blood-thirsty rule** of his own country. For their part, the **Soviets** resented the **Americans' decades-long refusal to treat the USSR as a legitimate part of the international community** as well as their **delayed entry** into **World War II**, which resulted in the deaths of tens of millions of Russians.

After the war ended, these grievances ripened into an overwhelming sense of **mutual distrust** and **enmity**. **Postwar Soviet expansionism in Eastern Europe fueled** many **Americans' fears** of a **Russian** plan to **control the world**. Meanwhile, the **USSR** came to dislike what they perceived as American officials' **bellicose rhetoric**, **arms buildup** and **interventionist** approach to international relations.

On October 4, **1957**, a Soviet R-7 intercontinental ballistic missile launched **SPUTNIK 1** (Russian for "traveler"), the world's **first artificial satellite** and the **first man-made object** to be **placed into the Earth's orbit**. **Sputnik's launch** came as a **surprise**, and not a pleasant one, to most Americans. **In the United States**, space was **seen as the next frontier** (see **CULTURAL NOTES**), a **logical extension** of the **grand American tradition of exploration and expansion**, and it was **crucial not to lose too much ground** to the **Soviets**. The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were **massive natural barriers** between the USA and the rest of the world and provided a **sense of security** which was **shattered** by the presence of satellites. In other words, Sputnik marked the beginning of the Space Race.

Not wanting to fall too far behind, President Eisenhower ordered the navy to speed up its own project and launch a satellite as soon as possible. On **December 6, 1957**, the nation tuned in to watch the live broadcast as the **Vanguard TV3 Satellite** took off and crashed to the ground two seconds later. The Vanguard **failure** was a huge **embarrassment for the USA**. Newspapers printed out headlines like *Flopnik* and *Kaputnik* and a Soviet delegate at the UN mockingly suggested that the US should receive foreign aid for developing nations.

The army had been working on their own project, the Explorer, which was successfully launched in January **1958**. But US had barely managed to catch up before they were surpassed again. On April 12, **1961**, aboard the spacecraft Vostok 1, **Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin** completed the first manned space flight, orbiting the earth for 108 minutes. This was yet another major **propaganda coup** for the **Soviet Union**.

On **May 5, 1961**, the US launched the **first American astronaut, Alan Shepard Jr.**, into space, on a 15-minute, 22-second suborbital flight. That same year, on **May 25**, President **Kennedy declared the American space objective to put a man on the moon and return him safely back to Earth** by the end of the decade.

The **Apollo 11** spacecraft with US astronauts **Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins on board** was a dramatic feat which occurred on July 16, 1969. The journey took three days. **On July 20, 1969 the Eagle** (*the Lunar module of the Apollo 11 spacecraft*) landed on the Moon and Neil Armstrong stepped outside the Lunar module and became the first man to walk on the Moon, as the whole world watched the event on TV in complete awe. The moon mission fulfilled President John Kennedy's dream along the famous lines pronounced by Neil Armstrong: **"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"**.

After the first 20 years of exploration, focus shifted **from competition to cooperation** epitomized by the **International Space Station (ISS)**, a habitable artificial satellite, in low Earth orbit, visited by cosmonauts from **18 different nations** since its creation in **1998**.

To be on the brink of: être sur le point de – **be wary of** [eə]: être sur ses gardes/méfiant – **to resent** /rɪˈzɛnt/ : éprouver du ressentiment contre – **to ripen into** [aɪ]: aboutir à – Ø **enmity** : inimitié/hostilité – launch (N + V) /lɔːntʃ/ : le lancement /lancer dans l'espace – **the Space Race**: la course à l'espace – **to crash to the ground**: s'écraser – **manned** (ADJ) – humaine/avec des hommes à bord – **a coup** l'ku:l: un beau coup – **in complete awe** l'ɔ:l: plein d'admiration – **to ease** l'i:z/: faciliter

① **Extract:** Kennedy's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention (July 1960)
(see CULTURAL NOTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUXuV7XbZvU>

*For 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 determined to make the new world strong and free.*

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.

*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. [...] 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. [...]

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.

② **Extract:** *Landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely*, Kennedy's address to Congress (1961)

PHONOLOGY EXERCICE (HOMEWORK)

- ◀ **Listen to** the speech once again and pay attention to **intonation/stressed words** (see document *Man to the Moon Speech – intonation/stress*)

- 🗣️ **Train repeating** each sentence after JFK's (.mp3) and **record your voice via audacity**. You can send me the file.

The dramatic achievements in space which occurred in recent weeks should have made clear to us all as did the Sputnik in 1957 the impact of this adventure on the minds of men everywhere who are attempting to make a determination of which road they should take. Since early in my term, our efforts in space have been under review with the advice of the vice president who is chairman of the National Space Council, we have examined where we are strong and where we are not, where we may succeed and where we may not. Now it is time to take longer strides, time for a great new American Enterprise, time for this nation to take a clearly leading role in space achievement, which in many ways may hold the key to our future on earth. I believe we possess all the resources and talents necessary, but the facts of the matter are that we have never made the national decisions or marshaled the national resources required for such leadership. We have never specified long-range goals on an urgent time schedule or managed our resources in our time so as to ensure their fulfillment. I therefore ask the Congress above and beyond the increases I have earlier requested for space activities to provide the funds which are needed to meet the following national goals: first I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal before this decade is out of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind or more important for the long-range exploration of space and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.

DOC (VIDEO) : We are NASA (clip from 2018) (see CULTURAL NOTES)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeAzedXsU4o&t=69s>