

My Fellow Americans --

Forty-eight years ago, a new President stood where I stand today, and inspired our nation with words that urgently echo today:

"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

Today, I renew that call.

President Kennedy ignited our economy and secured our future by unleashing the Apollo Project. A new generation of engineers and mechanics -- working harder and thinking smarter -- landed Americans on the moon. He said we would pay any price in defense of freedom, and then brought the best of America into tiny villages and remote farmlands as volunteers in the Peace Corps. He asked more of us, my fellow Americans. And we gave of ourselves because we loved our country and we knew that the fruits of our labor would be a better world for ourselves and our children.

It was that same selflessness that propelled the ships that brought our parents and grandparents from distant shores to settle our towns and cities and till our farms build our schools and our bridges and roads.

It was that selflessness that brought thousands of men on different kinds of ships -- on the far end of the Atlantic and onto the beaches of Normandy.

It was an American selflessness that said we can bear any burden, pay any price, and oppose any foe when it came to the strength and the enduring mission of our nation.

To establish justice. To promote the general welfare. To provide for the common defense. To secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

Today we face a troubled economy and a turbulent world. These challenges are just as grave and as great as the Cold War, the Space Race, and World War II. To some, these challenges cause distress and insecurity.

Not me, my fellow Americans. I am comforted by our own history. I am optimistic by the lessons of our parents and their parents.

That no burden, no challenge, no hardship can defeat America when Americans are willing to do the great things. When they are asked to do more for their country. When they are asked to do is fair. And when the government that serves them serves them competently.

Today, my fellow Americans, the task falls to this generation.

Today, I will not ask you to send Americans to the moon within a decade. I am asking you to

join me in a new partnership that will create the jobs and build the technologies to end our dependence on foreign oil and reignite the entrepreneurial spirit of America.

And to do that within the decade.

Today I will not ask all of you to storm beaches and leap hills in the defense of freedom. I am asking that you join me in a partnership that will make sure that our young people can go to the college of their choice if they give back a year of service to their country or to their community. Either by wearing the uniform of the United States military or tutoring a struggling child in an underserved community. Volunteering in a hospital or a senior center.

Today I will not ask you to engineer a new interstate highway system as we did under President Eisenhower, or to build a new Erie Canal or a new Hoover Dam. I am asking you to join me in a new partnership that will create jobs by investing in America's infrastructure so we can reclaim our world leadership and competitiveness.

On election night, I told you solving these problems won't be easy. Won't be quick. Might not even be solvable in one year of even one term.

It will be hard. It will require sacrifice. It will require challenge.

On the day that President Kennedy dared our nation to leap into the darkness and the emptiness of Space, he challenged us by saying this:

"We choose to go the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, an one which we intend to win, and the others, too."

My fellow Americans, today we recommit ourselves to a partnership that will achieve the great things again.

Not because they are easy. But because they are hard.

Not because our best days are behind us. But because they are just ahead.

God bless our country.