KENNEDY AND JOHNSON LESSON 2: KENNEDY’S NEW FRONTIER

KENNEDY’S DOMESTIC POLICY

Vocabulary

- **New Frontier** – President Kennedy’s proposals to resolve economic, educational, health care, and civil rights issues and to explore space
- **Equal Pay Act** – 1963 law that required both men and women to receive equal pay for equal work
- **deficit spending** – practice of a nation paying out more money than it is receiving in revenues
- **space race** – the competition between the Soviet Union and the United States to develop technology to land on the moon
- **Warren Commission** – the official government commission that investigated the assassination of President Kennedy

The Kennedy Style

- President Kennedy had a special style that made him seem different from other politicians.
- The new First Family charmed Americans with their youth and energy.
- The president surrounded himself with distinguished men from the country’s best businesses and universities.

Kennedy’s Domestic Program

- Kennedy promised that his administration would bring American to a **New Frontier**.
  - He pledged to create economic opportunity and expand health care and civil rights.
  - He also wanted to jump-start the space program.
- Some of President Kennedy’s New Frontier proposals succeeded. Kennedy was able to:
  - Increase the minimum wage.
  - Extend Social Security benefits.
  - Improve the welfare system.
  - Pass the first **Equal Pay Act**, a crucial step toward fair employment.
- However, a conservative Congress prevented Kennedy from enacting all of the programs he proposed.
- Kennedy made several proposals related to the economy.
  - Increased military spending
  - Tax credits for business and tax cuts for the middle class.
  - **Deficit spending** to stimulate the economy.
  - Kennedy’s economic initiatives led to tremendous economic growth in the late 1960s.
- Kennedy pursued a timid approach to civil rights.
  - Civil rights marches and demonstrations took place all across the country. In 1961, “freedom rides” aimed to desegregate the south.
  - Kennedy introduced a civil rights bill in 1963. He also proposed to strengthen civil rights in response to further violence in the South.
- Kennedy recognized the need for the U.S. to beat the Soviet Union in the space race.
  - He made it a national goal to place a man on the moon before 1970.
  - Congress gave generous funding to NASA.
  - In July, 1969, an American flag flew on the moon.

Kennedy’s Assassination

- In November, 1963, while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas, President Kennedy was assassinated.
  - The senseless murder deeply saddened Americans.
  - To many, it seemed that America’s innocence had died with Kennedy.
- After Kennedy’s death, Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ) was sworn in as the new President.
  - The nation moved to resolve the economic and equality issues Kennedy had identified.
  - Johnson also appointed the **Warren Commission** to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy.