**Leader of the House of Lords, Lord Hill of Oareford**

Your Excellency, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday afternoon, I went back 50 years in time. Back to the tributes made in Parliament 3 days after President Kennedy’s assassination. Back to the introduction of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Bill the following July. Back to the speeches given at the inauguration of this memorial in May 1965.

Breaking through the more formal, restrained language of those days, I found an extraordinary, almost overwhelming sense of shock, of grief, of loss.

But that shock was matched with a determination that we in the United Kingdom should stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends in the United States, and continue to work together to extend liberty, peace and prosperity.

And it was followed, almost immediately, by the wish that something good should come from President Kennedy’s death. That there would be a lasting memorial not just in stone and landscape. But a memorial that would live for ever. That would encourage young talent and scholarship and strengthen still further the bonds that tie our countries together.

So, how proud would those who stood here in 1965 feel if they could see today’s Kennedy Scholars? How vindicated that, half a century on, the alliance between our two countries is as strong and resilient as ever and has faced and overcome so many challenges?

How encouraged that, despite the many problems that remain, the world is safer, more prosperous and more free, the very vision which animated President Kennedy?

Fifty years ago, a great British Prime Minister was made an honorary citizen of the United States. It was President Kennedy himself who said; *“... no statement or proclamation can enrich his name – the name Sir Winston Churchill is already legend.”*

Your Excellency, today, here at Runnymede, the birthplace of our shared liberties, we can say the same of a great American President - the name John F. Kennedy is legend and this, his memorial, will endure.