President John F. Kennedy was one of the world's great peacemakers. He led a peaceful solution to the Cuban Missile Crisis and then successfully negotiated the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the Soviet Union at the very height of the Cold War. At the time of his assassination, he was taking steps to end US involvement in Vietnam.

In his dazzling and unsurpassed Peace Speech, delivered exactly sixty years ago on June 10, 1963, Kennedy laid out his formula for peace with the Soviet Union. Kennedy's Peace Speech highlights how Joe Biden's approach to the US and the Soviet Union needs a dramatic realignment. Until now, Biden has not followed the precepts that Kennedy recommended to find peace. By heeding Kennedy's advice, Biden too could become a peacemaker.

Kennedy was very clear: “we must reexamine our own attitudes—as individuals and as a Nation—for our attitude is as essential as the acts we perform.”

Kennedy attacked the prevailing pessimism at the height of the Cold War that peace with the Soviet Union was impossible, “that war is inevitable—that mankind is doomed—that we are gripped by forces we cannot control. We need not accept that view. Our problems are man-made—therefore, they can be solved by man.”

Kennedy emphasized the importance of direct communications between the two adversaries. Peace, he said, “will require the understanding will require increased confidence and communication. One step in this direction is the proposed arrangement for a direct line between Moscow and Washington, to avoid on each side the dangerous delays, misunderstandings, and misreadings of the other's actions which might occur at a time of crisis.”

Kennedy knew that since peace was in the mutual interest of the US and the Soviet Union, a peace treaty could be reached. To those who said that the Soviet Union would not abide by a peace treaty, Kennedy responded that “both the United States and its allies, and the Soviet Union and its allies have a mutually deep interest in a just and genuine peace and in halting the arms race. Agreements to this end are in the interests of the Soviet Union as well as ours—and even the most hostile nations can be relied upon to accept and keep those treaty obligations, and to work toward the peaceful change we must bring about.”

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“as the necessary rational end [goal] of rational men.” Yet he acknowledges that peacemaking is not easy: “I realize that the pursuit of peace is not as dramatic as the pursuit of war—and frequently the words of the pursuer fall on deaf ears. But we have no more urgent task.”

The deepest key to peace, in Kennedy’s view, is the fact that both sides want peace. It is easy to fall into the trap, warns Kennedy, of blaming a conflict only on the other side. It is easy to fall into the trap of insisting that only the adversary should change their attitudes and behavior. Parents misuse it, fight over it, and demonstrate how Ukraine War needs a dramatic reorientation of wealth?

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