

Avenue towards Peace: Kennedy's U.S.-Russia Joint Space Vision Must be Revived

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Global Research, September 22, 2020

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 20 September 2020

Region: [Russia and FSU, USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

September 20th marks the anniversary [of the last speech John F Kennedy delivered](#) to the United Nations' General Assembly. This event bears more relevance upon our present crisis than most people could possibly imagine. This is true not only because it is wise to pay homage to great ideas of the past which lesser souls allowed to slip away and get buried under the sands of time, but also because history provides many of the solutions to seemingly impossible problems in our own time.

During his short speech, Kennedy outlined the very same fundamental obstacles to survival faced by our own world 57 years later: The spectre of nuclear annihilation looming overhead, poverty and the evils of colonialism staining humanity on earth, and the dominance of destructive modes of thinking which have prevented honest dialogue between the west and east who have so many common interests and yet have been blocked from acting upon them for want of creativity, understanding and faith.

Although it is far too rarely displayed in history, great leaders (those who are beholden to their consciences) recognize that there are solutions to every problem. From Plato to Cicero to Confucius and Christ in ancient times or Thomas More, Benjamin Franklin, Lincoln, and Kennedy in our modern age, these rare but vitally important individuals demonstrate through their words and deeds that when the dominant social rules of the game prevent those necessary and possible solutions from manifesting, then only one course of action becomes possible: Change the rules of the game.

The martyred Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin eloquently touched on this truth in 1992 shaking the hands with Yasser Arafat and advancing a two-state solution saying: *"The future belongs to those who have the courage to change their axioms."*

Kennedy Breaks the Rules of the Great Game

Such was the case of John F. Kennedy who recognized early on in his short-lived presidency that the geopolitical "closed system" thinking dominant among the military and foreign policy experts of the west held only the seeds for humanity's destruction. In his speech of September 20, 1963, Kennedy revisited a theme which he first unveiled on the day of his inaugural address in 1961: A joint U.S.-USSR space program to transform the rules of the Cold War and usher in a new creative age of reason, win-win cooperation and boundless discoveries.

In his [1961 inaugural speech](#), Kennedy ushered in the theme that would animate his next

three years saying:

“Together let U.S. explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce. Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to “undo the heavy burdens . . . (and) let the oppressed go free.”

Ten days later, Kennedy re-iterated this idea during his first state of the Union inviting Russia *“to join with U.S. in developing... a new communication satellite program in preparation for probing the distant planets of Mars and Venus, probes which may someday unlock the deepest secrets of the universe”*.

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, and other leaders in the east heard these words with a mix of hope and trepidation.

The priests of the Cold War also heard these words... however hope was not among their feelings. Their hearts sank under the profound fear that the zero sum game theory models that they spent so much effort to bring online as substitutes for creative diplomacy would become obsolete in a new age of positive cooperation among sovereign nation states.

These latter priests who were then led by such figures as the State Department’s Dean Rusk, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, Joint Chiefs’ head Lyman Lemnitzer and the powerful Dulles brothers lit dangerous fires on multiple fronts in an effort to kill JFK’s vision in the cradle.

The form this attempted murder took was the Bay of Pigs Invasion of April 17-19 [which was put into motion weeks before](#) the young president had stepped into the White House. Even though Kennedy outflanked the Dr. Strangeloves among the Joint Chiefs of Staff by not providing air support for the invasion, grave damage was done to U.S.-Soviet relations. When he finally met Khrushchev on June 4, 1961 in Geneva, the president’s offer for space cooperation was rejected by the Russian leader who demanded America commit to arms reduction and other acts of good will before any positive cooperation could possibly take place.

Did Khrushchev recognize that Kennedy’s November 1961 firing of Allan Dulles and his threat to shatter the CIA into a thousand pieces demonstrated a potentially trustworthy partner during this period? We may never know for sure.

Despite these setbacks, Kennedy’s requests for joint U.S.-Russian cooperation in space went on unabated and we do know that Khrushchev’s letter congratulating the USA for putting their first man into orbit conveyed a strong reciprocal hope [saying on February 21, 1962](#):

“One more step has been taken toward mastering the cosmos and this time Lieutenant Colonel John Glenn, a citizen of the United States of America, has been added to the family of astronauts. The successful launching of spaceships signaling the conquest of new heights in science and technology inspire legitimate pride for the limitless potentialities of the human mind to serve the welfare of humanity. It is to be hoped that the genius of man, penetrating the depth of the universe, will be able to find ways to lasting peace and ensure the prosperity of all peoples on our planet earth which, in the space age, though it does not seem so large, is still dear to all of its inhabitants.

If our countries pooled their efforts—scientific, technical and material—to master the universe, this would be very beneficial for the advance of science and would be joyfully acclaimed by all peoples who would like to see scientific achievements benefit man and not be used for “cold war” purposes and the arms race.”

On September 12, 1962 Kennedy electrified the aspirations of both Americans and the world delivering his famous “Moon Speech” at Rice University saying:

“We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people. For space science, like nuclear science and all technology, has no conscience of its own. Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man, and only if the United States occupies a position of pre-eminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new terrifying theater of war... We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to 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, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.”

This speech and the accompanying top down federal spending needed to realize these goals ushered in a momentum and excitement which was nearly destroyed by the greatest nuclear confrontation humanity had ever faced only one month later as America and Russia nearly unleashed hell on earth during the 9 day Cuban Missile Crisis.

Although it took an immense effort, JFK overcame immense opposition from the Deep State to negotiate the test ban treaty on August 5, 1963 co-signed by the USA, the USSR, UK and joined by over 100 other nations prohibiting nuclear test explosions in the atmosphere, underwater or in outer space. By that time, word was circulating among JFK’s closest staffers that the president was planning to visit Moscow either during his presidential campaign or in the earliest moments of his 2nd term in office.

Never content to mechanistically focus on one policy at a time, Kennedy’s holistic approach to statecraft always opened multiple flanks simultaneously which was witnessed in his October 1963 efforts to pull America out of Vietnam with his NSAM 263, as well as his efforts to bypass the Federal Reserve by issuing Silver backed treasury notes to finance his growth policies both at home and abroad. A fuller exposition of Kennedy’s battle is outlined in the class “Montreal’s Permindex and the Deep State Plot to Kill JFK”:

The September 20 Offensive for Cooperation

This brings U.S. to the decisive moment on September 20, 1963 as Kennedy gave [his loudest impassionate call for a U.S.-Russian joint space program](#) with the goal of putting a Russian and American on the Moon by the end of the decade. Kennedy opened his speech acknowledging the existential dark threat wrapped tightly over humanity saying:

“The world has not escaped from the darkness. The long shadows of conflict and crisis envelop U.S. still. But we meet today in an atmosphere of rising

hope, and at a moment of comparative calm. My presence here today is not a sign of crisis, but of confidence.”

Kennedy lays out the two opposing versions of peace (negative/deterrence vs positive/win-win) and clearly described which one was the only sustainable and legitimate form compatible with natural law:

“If either of our countries is to be fully secure, we need a much better weapon than the H-bomb—a weapon better than ballistic missiles or nuclear submarines—and that better weapon is peaceful cooperation.”

The president poetically builds an understanding within his audiences’ mind to understand the possibility and necessity for positive peace conceptions that would require an end to Cold War thinking and usher in a new age of reason saying:

“In a field where the United States and the Soviet Union have a special capacity—in the field of space—there is room for new cooperation, for further joint efforts in the regulation and exploration of space. I include among these possibilities a joint expedition to the moon. Space offers no problems of sovereignty; by resolution of this Assembly, the members of the United Nations have foresworn any claim to territorial rights in outer space or on celestial bodies, and declared that international law and the United Nations Charter will apply. Why, therefore, should man’s first flight to the moon be a matter of national competition? Why should the United States and the Soviet Union, in preparing for such expeditions, become involved in immense duplications of research, construction, and expenditure? Surely we should explore whether the scientists and astronauts of our two countries—indeed of all the world—cannot work together in the conquest of space, sending someday in this decade to the moon not the representatives of a single nation, but the representatives of all of our countries.

“All these and other new steps toward peaceful cooperation may be possible. Most of them will require on our part full consultation with our allies—for their interests are as much involved as our own, and we will not make an agreement at their expense. Most of them will require long and careful negotiation. And most of them will require a new approach to the cold war—a desire not to “bury” one’s adversary, but to compete in a host of peaceful arenas, in ideas, in production, and ultimately in service to all mankind.”

How Did Khrushchev Respond?

Everyone knows that Nikita Khrushchev, who frequently battled leading figures among Russia’s politburo during his last years in power, was deposed in a coup in 1964. But it is worth asking: how did he respond to Kennedy’s final call to cooperation? As far as this author can tell, history largely remained silent on this point for many years, until Sergei Khrushchev (Nikita’s son) delivered a revealing interview to [Space Cast magazine on October 2, 1997](#).

In that interview, Sergei revealed that after the success of the partial test ban treaty and Kennedy’s UN speech, his father had decided to accept Kennedy’s offer saying: “my father decided that maybe he should accept (Kennedy’s) offer, given the state of the space programs of the two countries... He thought

that if the Americans wanted to get our technology and create defenses against it they would do it anyway. Maybe we could get technology in the bargain that would be better for U.S. my father thought.”

Sergei also reported to Space Cast that like Kennedy, Khrushchev *“was also planning to begin diverting weapons complex design bureaus into more consumer and commercial, non-military production.”*

Sergei ended his interview saying: *“I think if Kennedy had lived, we would be living in a completely different world.”*

The Aftermath of Kennedy’s Murder

Kennedy’s murder on November 22, 1963 ended this potential and pulled humanity back into the iron grip of the Cold Warriors who sought to keep humanity’s creative potential locked under the heavy chains of nuclear terror, consumerist decadence (today called Globalization) and never-ending wars that wrecked havoc upon the next five decades.

Under this closed system paradigm, creativity’s power to change our carrying capacity through scientific and technological progress was all but banned as vast financial resources were redirected away from NASA (whose budget peaked in 1965 and was only strangled continuously thereafter) into the military industrial complex and the growing debacle in Vietnam. This war which both Kennedy and his brother had fought to stop went far in annihilating the spirit of optimism in the hearts of the young and old alike while CIA-sponsored drugs flooded the campuses of America ensuring the growth of a new ethic of escapism, anti-humanism, post-truth modernism and rejection of Judeo-Christian traditions that infused western society its moral vitality for 2000 years.

Vital investments into nuclear fusion R & D were slashed and [educational reforms](#) under control of British imperial operatives steering the OECD (like Sir Alexander King) ensured that engineering/physics and other “practical sciences” were replaced with sociology and humanities courses which would be more “relevant” in a post-industrial Brave New World.

Humanity’s Second Chance

Second chances of this magnitude do not come often, but sitting as we are once more upon the precipice of nuclear Armageddon (the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has set the [Doomsday clock mere seconds to midnight](#)), the choice of global annihilation or survival has again been put before U.S..

Today, the spirit of JFK’s vision has come alive through the leadership of Russia and China who together have re-activated bold space missions to revisit the Moon with the full backing of the powers of sovereign nation states. This has manifested in the form of [the Russian-China joint program](#) to co-develop lunar missions, which have included the European Space Agency’s participation in the upcoming Luna 25, 26 and 27 missions to the Moon scheduled to occur between now and 2025.

[Roscosmos officials stated on August 27](#) that this program (which is open for the USA to participate in as an equal partner) “includes missions to study the Moon from orbit and surface, the collection and return of lunar soil to Earth, as well as in the future, the construction of a visited lunar base and full scale development of our satellite.” Roscosmos

representatives went further [to announce their plans](#) to establish a permanent lunar base by 2030 with China following suite soon thereafter.

This orientation obviously dovetails the [American Artemis Accords](#) which president Trump and NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine (a long time friend of Roscosmos' Dmitry Rogozin) recently unveiled to promote international partnerships in lunar and mars development standing in stark contrast to the military industrial complex's plans to militarize space.

The spirit of JFK's space vision has certainly come alive in new and exciting ways, but one question still remains unanswered: Does America have the ability to withstand the forces seeking to dissolve the republic and join this new open system paradigm or are those forces which killed JFK and sunk humanity into an age of war and closed-system thinking too powerful to stop?

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