

# Rev. M. L. King Preached Nonviolence. To Observe Birthday, His Church Hosts Guest Sermon by Our Violent President

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*The guest preacher last Sunday at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta – the spiritual home of the **Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.** – praised King as “a nonviolent warrior for justice.” That preacher was **President Joe Biden**, a warrior, period.*

“We come to contemplate his moral wisdom and commit ourselves to his path,” said Biden in his [sermon](#) in honor of the celebrated minister, assassinated in 1968. But King's path was nonviolent, which does not describe the President (as we will see below).

King would have been 94, had he lived to the present. His birthday was observed nationally on Monday, the 16<sup>th</sup>. Senator Raphael Warnock, the church's senior pastor, had invited Biden to highlight the church's annual King commemoration.

A bust of King rests in the Oval Office. “He was my inspiration as a kid,” said the President. He called on churchgoers to make King's “dream a reality.”

An argument is made that the King speech [most significant](#) for today's world is not the famous “I Have a Dream” but the one he gave on April 4, 1967, pleading for peace. Delivered at New York's Riverside Church one year to the day before his murder, it was titled “[Beyond Vietnam](#): A Time to break Silence.”

Half a million U.S. soldiers had been sent to fight in Vietnam. The US had already dropped more ordnance on Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos than it did on Europe during World War II. King condemned “an illegal and unjustifiable war.” Many condemned him for having done so, inasmuch as he was a civil rights leader. He needed to explain.

At a time of black unrest, King tied racism to war. “We have been repeatedly faced with the

irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has not been able to set them together in the same schools.,... So we watch them in brutal solidarity, burning the huts of a poor village but to realize that they would hardly live on the same block in Chicago....

“As I walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles will not solve their problems ... that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked, and rightly so, ‘What about Vietnam?’ Their questions hit home.

“I knew I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government.”

## **King’s war views**

King touched on the war’s history. He cited US support for up to 80 percent of war costs of the French in protecting their colonies from an indigenous, revolutionary movement seeking land reform; and US support for corrupt, inept, dictators, who lacked popular support and who resisted that revolution.

It was officially a war against Communist aggression. But King saw irony for the world’s most powerful nation to complain of “aggression as it drops thousands of bombs on a poor, weak nation more than 8,000 miles from its shores.” He pulled no punches in describing at length what the US was doing to Vietnam, in the name of democracy and defense against aggression. A few excerpts:

“... We herd them off the land of their fathers, into concentration camps.... we poison their water ... kill a million acres of their crops ... destroy the precious trees. ... So far, we have killed a million of them, mostly children.... Thousands of the children homeless, without clothes.... They beg for food ... selling their sisters to our soldiers, soliciting for their mothers.... We test out our latest weapons on them.... We have destroyed their two most cherished institutions, the family and the village.... We have corrupted their women and children and killed their men.”

The US ended its direct involvement in the Vietnam War fifty years ago this month, with the signing of a peace agreement in Paris. The war had taken the lives of as many as two million civilians and over 58,000 Americans.

King wanted a revolution of values that says of war, “This way of settling differences is not just.” He called for an end, not only to the Vietnam War, but to “this business of burning human beings with napalm”; causing people to hate; and sending men to bloody battlefields.

“We have a choice today: nonviolent co-existence or violent co-annihilation,” King said – still a meaningful statement today.

## **Biden’s violent acts**

During the Vietnam War, Joe Biden escaped the draft through student deferrals. While viewing it as “lousy policy,” he admittedly had a “lack of [moral outrage](#)” at the war.

He has long supported [some wars](#), though not others. In the nineties he encouraged President Bill Clinton to bomb Yugoslavia. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, Biden in 2002 eagerly pushed through the measure that let President Bush Jr. decide whether to attack Iraq. Bush's aggressive war of "shock and awe," begun in 2003, caused over a million deaths, by some estimates. Though the war supposedly ended in 2011, we may not be done with the killing.

In aspiring to the presidency, Biden pledged to end "forever wars." In February 2021, 37 days after his inauguration, he started [bombing Syria](#). His first attack killed 22 people. They were supposedly "militants," but how does a bomb distinguish one from a child or woman or peaceful man? Biden's periodic attacks in Iraq and Somalia, as well as Syria, have taken many more victims.

Biden did end the Afghan war, as he said he would. But contrary to promise, he continues to aid the Saudi Arabian monarchy in its bombings of [Yemen's people](#) in their homes, hospitals, markets, schools, buses, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Biden continues his predecessors' program of "[modernizing](#)" the nuclear arsenal, instead of trying to eliminate it in accord with the aim of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. His pledge to renew the Iran nuclear agreement, abandoned by Trump, remains unfulfilled. Nor has Biden sought to renew the Reagan-Gorbachev INF treaty to scrap nuclear missiles up to intermediate range, which Trump tore up too.

In March 2022, risking a global conflagration, Biden promised that the US would defend "every inch" of NATO countries against Russia; and in May, he pledged to defend Taiwan against China. Warships approach both lands provocatively. His threats against two nuclear-armed, major powers were not authorized by Congress, nor were any of his bombings.

He sends arms to Ukraine continually, raising questions; What is the end game? Is he prepared to fight to the last Ukrainian - or until nukes start dropping? So far, the word "peace" evades his lips.

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