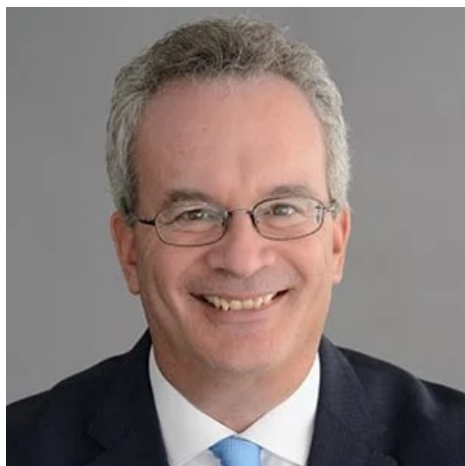


The Heravi Legacy Editorial

Jim Goldgeier

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I have been studying and teaching about war and peace for many decades, from my time as an undergraduate at Harvard University and a PhD student at the University of California, Berkeley, to my work as a professor at Cornell University, George Washington University, and American University, where I served as dean from 2011-2017

It was as dean that I first met Dr. Mehdi Heravi and came to understand his deep commitment to peace. We need that level of commitment now more than ever, and the types of cross-cultural understanding that the Heravi Peace Institute at Utah State is providing students will help shape our future leaders

The School of International Service at American University, where I am currently professor emeritus, was founded through a call by President Dwight Eisenhower for a school to be established to “wage peace.” President Eisenhower understood that peace doesn’t just happen. It requires that individuals commit to pursuing peace to solve their disputes. We can’t wish away conflicts of interest. Those occur all the time in our personal relationships and in relations among countries. We each have our

own perspectives and needs. To wage peace, we need a commitment to resolving these conflicts of interest peacefully. That requires above all understanding where the other side is coming from. Perhaps the greatest example of this effort to understand the other side came during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev placed missiles in Cuba in the summer of 1962 capable of reaching parts of the United States armed with nuclear weapons. The United States discovered the missiles through overhead reconnaissance flights and imposed a blockade around the island. But while a blockade would stop further Soviet missile shipments to Cuba, it would not by itself get rid of the missiles already located there. Khrushchev could still give orders to launch the missiles, and the United States might then have responded with a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union.

President John F. Kennedy later stated that he believed during the crisis that the chances of a nuclear war between the superpowers had been between one-third and even. Kennedy was determined to end the crisis peacefully, and there were moments of high drama throughout. When communications came in from the Kremlin to Washington, JFK and his advisers had to try to understand what they meant, and whether they were even written by Khrushchev or by hardliners within the Soviet Politburo. Kennedy’s most helpful adviser was former ambassador to the Soviet Union, Lewellyn Thompson, who had served in Moscow in the late 1950s and had come to know Khrushchev personally. His direct experience with the Soviet leader enabled him to advise Kennedy on what Khrushchev might be thinking, and he helped Kennedy determine the best way to respond to Khrushchev’s communications.

With Kennedy’s ability to understand how best to move forward, and Khrushchev’s own fears of nuclear war, the Cuban Missile Crisis moved toward a resolution. The missiles and nuclear warheads were soon removed from Cuba and sent back to the Soviet Union

Less than a year later, in June 1963, only a few short months before he was assassinated, President Kennedy delivered the American University commencement address. It was titled A Strategy of Peace. Kennedy declared, “I have...chosen this time and this place to discuss a topic on which ignorance too often abounds and the truth is too rarely perceived--yet it is the most important topic on earth: world peace.”

He continued, “What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of

the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children--not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women--not merely peace in our time but peace for all time."

At a time when the United States is at war once again in the Middle East, let us hope that Kennedy's call not simply for peace in our time but peace for all time once again animates our leaders.

Jim Goldgeier, Professor and Former Dean of The American University School of International Service