

Court orders and bulldozers have left Guyanese homeless. One man can own hundreds of acres of land while others squat. We have witnessed women in handcuffs covered in mud as years of hard work and sweat was destroyed in a matter of hours. Those were the tears of Mocha and now Hill Foot cries. Hill Foot where two hundred families were displaced and there were cries of confused and frightened children. Bulldozers destroyed the places where they dreamed of a better life and left them traumatized. Hill Foot where parents with babies had nowhere to sleep when the sudden destruction of their homes occurred. Hill Foot where the people claimed they were assaulted by the police, and who do we believe when some of them were arrested for documenting what was happening? Is this what oil production and a fast-growing economy does to poor people? Must we expect that the displacement of the poor will continue in the most inhumane ways and those under a spell will continue to sing praises to their oppressors? How can we watch the tears of children who must now wait to have a place to call their home and believe that it is just, and we are a wholesome society? Aren't the children the future? They will remember how rubble lay where their pillows once were like in a war zone. But perhaps it is a war zone as the battles for the minds of the people have increased. When the children remember, how bulldozers left their books in sand and dust, how will it change the course of their lives? How do children whose lives are interrupted under such harsh circumstances heal their scars? How are those who are rejected by society expected to build that society?

Children were left to sleep under the stars where the rain will amalgamate with their tears and the sun will dry them. This is Guyana where we claim we care about our children and their future. "Because We Care" cash grants I guess are supposed to assuage the suffering of our children. Cash grants which I am sure children of Hill Foot received even with no place to call their home. Dreams wrapped in cash grants, forty thousand dollars (US200) this year for every school child. A once-a-year contribution to help send children to school while some parents misuse it, fight over it, and demonstrate how illiterate and daft they are by praising their oppressors. How can we compromise ourselves by believing that our lives are drastically improving because conveniently a cash grant has been distributed just before the Local Government Elections? In the hour of cash grants and

# Bulldozed at Hill Foot



campaigns are we to forget what has been done to the people of Hill Foot? Are we to ignore the incompetence that resulted in the Mahdia fire which claimed the lives of twenty? Are we to ignore disparities in the distribution of wealth? Will the forty thousand alleviate the rising cost of living for an entire year? Why give the people occasional handouts instead of creating a country where even the poorest are paid living wages and can adequately take care of their children? Are cash grants that are usually distributed when school is closed meant to pacify the people to put an X where their oppression emanates, in a never-ending cycle?

Mothers pleaded at Hill Foot while the police followed instructions and subdued the hints of revolution. The hints of revolution are always subdued here. The people give up too easily because they have been abused for so long. Hints of revolution have resulted in their deaths. Hints of revolution have resulted in villages being stigmatized and criminalized. The people are not one in our 'One Guyana' dreams because the people can never unite and look at the same oppressor, hold them accountable and tell them we have had enough. The deception and delusions clothed in red, yellow, black, and green have made many powerless.

Fathers looked in disbelief, felt helpless and bewildered at Hill Foot after the hints of revolution were subdued. Those who dare to think of revolt are often called hooligans, ungrateful, thugs and ignorant and the majority will not stand with them. I guess we love it here – that Guyana runs on incompetence; that Guyanese are being made second class citizens in their country while a minority are becoming wealthier; that Guyanese cannot stand for themselves without being victimized, vilified, and condemned even by some of the people who are encountering the same suffering they are. Where can one turn when those who are to protect and serve are used to subjugate even when it is the people who are wronged? And sometimes to kill the people for reacting to the painful scenarios that continue to hurt them. The backs of men are broken and the spirit and fire in them extinguished.

Amid the people being bulldozed at Hill Foot, the death of convicted murderer Mark Royden Williams known as Smallie was announced. The Guyana Police Force claimed they killed him. Were we to celebrate that? Was that to distract us or make us feel safer when we can be bulldozed at any moment and even assaulted and killed by police? Dead men tell no tales.

The death of Williams reminds us of the painful past. He was convicted for the Bartica massacre. The shadows of the past continue to linger in Guyana. With the escape or release of Williams we were reminded that the hints of plotted unrest make us want a saviour. And the saviours we look to are often our oppressors. Who has eyes to see, sees.

Williams is dead but the people of Hill Foot are still alive in a country where the hearts of many who help to chart our course are cold. With dreams of turn-key homes and some sleeping in tents by the roadside, this is how we treat our people. Is this how we love our people? Is this how we care? The people claimed that they were not given prior notice about the destruction of their homes where many lived for as long as twenty years. In one report some people claimed that the person claiming to own the land had no papers to show them. But there was a court order for them to be removed. This is Guyana. It is often not about the wellbeing of the people but who has money and influence. They will continue to hurt the people, subduing their will to revolt while pacifying them with meagre handouts and the sheeple will blindly continue to mark their Xs.

## How JFK Would Pursue Peace in Ukraine

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

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 Russia and the Ukraine War needs a dramatic reorientation. 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.

A mathematician would call JFK's speech a "constructive proof" of how to make peace, since the speech itself contributed directly to the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed by the US and Soviet Union in July 1963. Upon receipt of the speech, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev told Kennedy's envoy to Russia, Averell Harriman, that the speech was the greatest by an American president since Franklin D. Roosevelt, and that he wanted to pursue peace with Kennedy.

In the speech, Kennedy describes peace



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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.

Kennedy is very clear: "we must reexamine our own attitude—as individuals and as a Nation—for our attitude is as essential as theirs."

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."

Crucially, said Kennedy, we must not "see only a distorted and desperate view of the other side." We must not "see conflict as inevitable, accommodation as impossible, and communication as nothing more than an exchange of threats." Indeed, said Kennedy, we should "hail the Russian people for their many achievements—in science and space, in economic and industrial growth, in culture and in acts of courage."

Kennedy warned against putting a nuclear adversary into a corner that could lead the adversary to desperate actions. "Above all, while defending our own vital interests, nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war. To adopt that kind of course in the nuclear age would be evidence only of the bankruptcy of our policy—or of a collective death-wish for the world."

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 only those treaty obligations, which are in their own interest."

Kennedy emphasized the importance of direct communications between the two adversaries. Peace, he said, "will require increased understanding between the Soviets and ourselves. And increased understanding will require increased contact 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 mis-readings of the other's actions which might occur at a time of crisis."

In the context of the Ukraine War, Biden has behaved almost the opposite of JFK. He has personally and repeatedly denigrated Russian President Vladimir Putin. His administration has defined the US war aim as the weakening of Russia.