

Why did President Obama receive the Nobel Peace Prize?

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President [Barack Obama](#) won the Nobel Peace Prize on 9th October in a stunning decision that honored the first-year of his tenure as U.S. President.

The bestowal of one of the world's top accolades on Obama was greeted with gasps from the audience at the announcement ceremony in Oslo.

The President, who will travel to Oslo to receive the award on December 10, plans to donate the prize money of 10 million Swedish crowns -- roughly \$1.4 million -- to charity, the White House said.

Third Sitting US President for Nobel Prize:

President Obama is the fourth U.S. President (Third sitting President) to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize after Carter won in 2002, Woodrow Wilson picked it up in 1919 and Theodore Roosevelt was chosen for the 1906 prize.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee praised Obama for "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples," citing his fledgling push for nuclear disarmament and his outreach to the Muslim world.

"Very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future," the Nobel committee said in its citation.

Obama has been widely credited with improving America's global image after the eight-year presidency of George W. Bush, who alienated both friends and foes with go-it-alone policies like the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Describing himself as surprised and deeply humbled, Obama said he would accept the award as a "call to action" to confront the global challenges of the 21st century

Some analysts saw it as a final slap in the face for Bush from the European establishment, which had resented what they saw as his arrogant "cowboy diplomacy" in world affairs.

The award won praise from statesmen such as Nelson Mandela, Mikhail Gorbachev and Jimmy Carter, and all Nobel laureates including Prof Yunus. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, "His commitment to work through the United Nations gives the world's people fresh hope and fresh prospects.

Chief Palestinian peace negotiator Saeb Erekat, expressed hope Obama would help achieve Middle East peace.

Why did he get the Prize?

President Obama brought fresh air in American foreign policy on the basis of 3 Ds-- defence. diplomacy and. development.

First, he has shown olive branch to the Muslims and in his Cairo speech on 4th June, he said that “ America is not and never will be at war with Islam.”

On 27th January, the President in his first interview with Dubai-based Arab TV Al Arabiya said to the Muslim world “the Americans are not your enemy”. He offered a dialogue with Iran and what he depicted as a new readiness to listen rather than dictate.

Under his direction, the US has started face –to-face dialogue on nuclear proliferation with Iran in Geneva after a lapse of 40 years.

Second, matching words with deeds, the President within days outlined the new US priorities by naming three envoys: former senator George Mitchell for the Middle East; senior diplomat Richard Holbrooke for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Todd Stern, a former adviser of President Clinton to deal with Climate Change.

Third, he repaired the US-Russia relations by scrapping the plan of installing of missile shield defence in the Czech Republic and Poland which was vehemently opposed by Russia.

Fourth, it the President who in recent times has dramatically shifted US policy towards Burma (Myanmar). He rejected the policy of isolating Burma by imposing further sanctions and initiated direct engagement with Burma. In New York the representatives of both countries met to discuss how to resolve the stand off between te two countries. The opposition Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi welcomed the policy-shift.

Fifth, it has been heartening to note that he, as the President of the US, has advocated the elimination of nuclear weapons across the world and chaired a UN Security Council meeting on September 24th that adopted a unimous resolution to this effect. The draft resolution also calls for the creation of a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material made specifically for nuclear weapons. This is a 180-degree turn of America’s earlier policy.

The resolution urged "all states to refrain from conducting a nuclear test explosion and to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), thereby bringing the treaty into force."

All these steps by President Obama changed the global environment for reconciliation and peace and were unthinkable during the Bush administration.

Critics:

The award was attacked in some quarters as hasty and undeserved. Nobel Committee Chairman Thorbjørn Jagland rejected suggestions from journalists that Obama was

getting the prize too early. "We hope this can contribute a little bit to enhance what he is trying to do," he told a news conference.

Critics called the Nobel committee's decision premature, given that Obama has achieved few tangible gains as he is still searching for breakthroughs on [Iran](#)'s disputed nuclear program, on stalled Middle East peacemaking and the fight against climate change.

Afghanistan's Taliban mocked the award, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, speaking to Reuters by telephone from an undisclosed location, said it was absurd to give a peace award to a man who had sent 21,000 extra troops to Afghanistan”

Liaquat Baluch, a senior leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami, a conservative religious party in Pakistan, called the award an embarrassing "joke."

.Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki called the award premature, but at the same time contrasted Obama with the Bush administration.

Summing up:

It is noted that Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994 but the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains even today. They were awarded for the commencement of a peace process of a very intractable dispute.

Long-standing disputes do not admit easy solution but takes time for resolution. The most significant point is the beginning of process towards resolution and the President has created the right environment for settlement of inter-states disputes

President Obama has brought breath of fresh air in bringing a shift from hard power (military power) to soft power (diplomacy, aid in social work, health and education), winning hearts and minds of people across the world.

President Obama is an inspirational figure across the world. He deserves the Nobel Peace Prize than anyone else because he changed the direction of US foreign policy towards cooperation and inclusiveness in place of confrontation and dialogue with adversaries.

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