

What President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize means for America

Written by Brian Townsend, NNPA Guest Contributor
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(NNPA) – When it was announced that President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, within hours, the Republican Party issued a statement declaring he was not worthy of such recognition. Others said the award was based on his potential rather than his accomplishments so far.

Let's look at the record.

During the last two years, President Obama was singularly credited for beginning a much needed dialogue on race with his impassioned speech on the reality of race relations in America. The speech was so inspiring and insightful that it propelled his candidacy forward when the political pundits thought his candidacy was about to come to an end. His speech detailed the cause and effects of racism from both a White and Black perspective, laying the groundwork for America to begin to work through old wounds and allowed it to elect its first African American President.

One of his first acts as President was to order the closure of the detention center in Guantanamo Bay. Serving as an indictment of the United States' fall from its cherished role of moral leadership, he ordered the end of torture and the closing of the torture chambers that forced the world to turn away from this nation in disgust. He found the detention center to be Un-American as did those who voted to elect him President.

As commander-in-chief he has drawn down the troops in Iraq in an orderly fashion so that America can end the war in that country. Around the world, the incursion into Iraq was seen as an offensive move for regime change, rather than a move to defend America's homeland. His first day in office he called for an orderly withdrawal from a war of our choosing so that we can concentrate on a war that we did not choose in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

President Obama has called for unprecedented reform of our health care system, a system one congressman called a holocaust on our own people. He has championed a system that does not bankrupt those with catastrophic diseases or medical needs and has called for health

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coverage for all Americans. Through his domestic policy efforts, he is leading the way for peace and prosperity at home.

President Obama has championed the greening of America and has called on the world (which is ahead of America on this front) to make climate change efforts the highest priority. By working to focus Americans on a green economy, he is laying the foundation for America's economy in the 21st century. It also lays the foundation for protecting interests around the world as nations begin to fight over the availability of water and arable land and raw materials.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not end Jim Crow laws nor guarantee the right to vote for all. But he led the way. Rev. Desmond Tutu did not end apartheid in South Africa. But he helped lead the way.

The Nobel Peace Prize is an affirmation that America is engaged in the world again. As President, Barack Obama has called for renewed peace efforts in the Middle East. He has reduced tensions with Russia, not via acquiescence, but by reassessing real rather than perceived threats. He has reached out to the so-called "Muslim world" to assure them that America is not fighting Islam, but fighting those that have attacked America irrespective of their religious beliefs. And he has correctly noted the positive impact that Muslims have had on our landscape.

President Obama is deserving of recognition for leading America's outreach to world leaders to work together for a more stable and peaceful world. The Nobel Peace Prize award should be celebrated by all Americans because the world sees us as righting ourselves on the track once again.

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