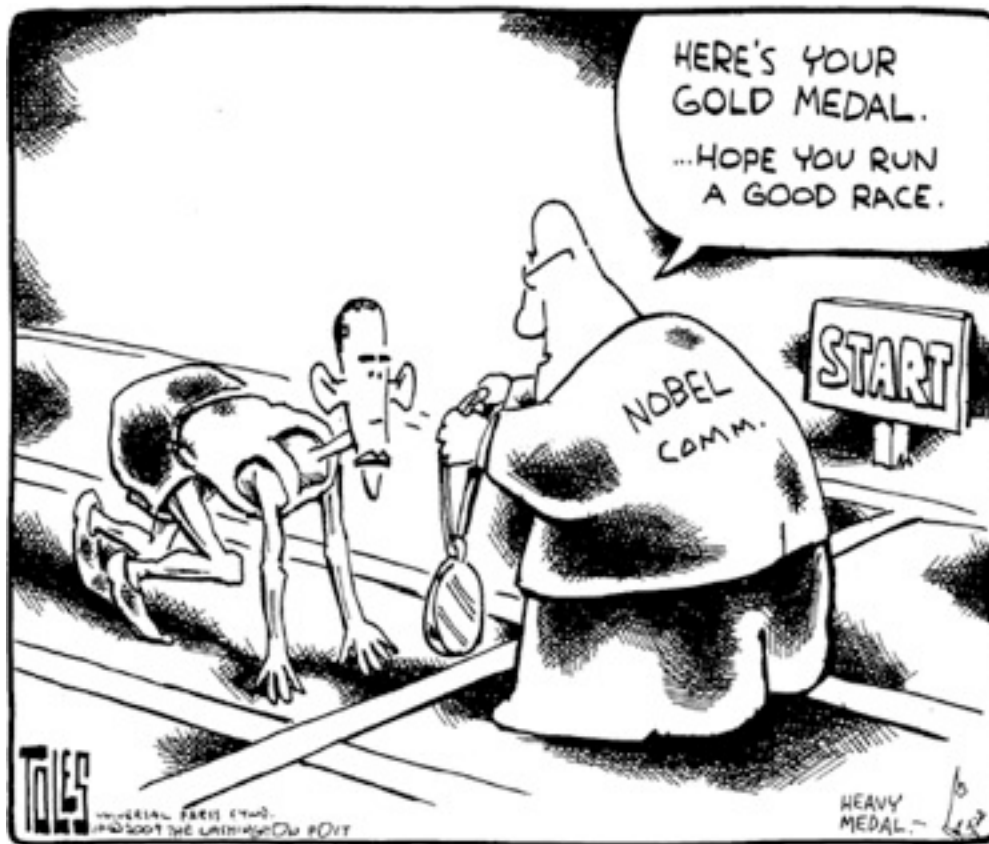


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Friedensnobelpreis für Präsident Barack Obama – Reaktionen in den USA



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A Wide Range of Reactions

The Washington Post, Saturday, October 10, 2009

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) "I congratulate President Obama on receiving this prestigious award. I join my fellow Americans in expressing pride in our president on this occasion."

Virginia Gov. Timothy M. Kaine, Democratic National Committee Chairman "The Nobel Committee's decision to award this year's Peace Prize to President Obama is an affirmation of the fact that the United States has returned to its long-standing role as a world leader."

Former Bush U.N. Ambassador John R. Bolton "The Nobel Committee is preaching at Americans, but they won't be deceived. He should decline it and then ask to be considered again in three or four years when he has a record. . . . The Nobel Peace Prize should be for achievement, not effort."

Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) "I congratulate the president on this tremendous honor that he has earned with his dedication to a new type of politics based on hope instead of fear."

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R) "I know there will be some people who are saying, 'Was it based on good intentions and thoughts, or is it going to be based on good results?' But I think the appropriate response is, when anybody wins a Nobel Prize, that is a very noteworthy development and designation, and I think the appropriate response is to say, 'Congratulations.' "

Conservative radio personality Rush Limbaugh "The Nobel gang just suicide-bombed themselves. . . . Obama gives speeches trashing his own country and for that gets a prize, which is now worth as much as whatever prizes they are putting in Cracker Jacks these days. This fully exposes the illusion that is Barack Obama. It is a greater embarrassment than losing the Olympics bid."

Republican National Committee Chairman Michael S. Steele "The real question Americans are asking is, 'What has President Obama actually accomplished?' . . . One

thing is certain -- President Obama won't be receiving any awards from Americans for job creation, fiscal responsibility, or backing up rhetoric with concrete action."

DNC communications director Brad Woodhouse "The Republican Party has thrown in its lot with the terrorists -- the Taliban and Hamas this morning -- in criticizing the president for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) "President Obama is working to restore American leadership worldwide and build bonds of friendship across the globe. The Nobel Peace Prize is a testament to his leadership and vision and a tribute to American values."

The Nobel Down Payment

By [Jim Hoagland](#)

The Washington Post, Sunday, October 11, 2009

Gobsmacked by President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize? You have come to the right place. Chalk it up to the national character of my ancestral homeland.

Norwegians have spent centuries living down the Vikings' lust for conquest and adventure. But they have never quite exterminated it. The result is a nation of well-meaning idealists who cannot resist meddling if they can insist it is all in a good cause. Perfect background for a columnist, did I hear you mutter? Or for a committee telling Americans how much they should honor and support their new president?

The election of the first African American president deserves global recognition. But if that is the committee's intent, the Nobel should have been given to the American electorate.

Instead, my compatriots several generations removed intend this award to a first-year U.S. president as a down payment on peace agreements to come, to encourage even more splendid speeches and U.N. votes for multilateralism. The prize committee members are applying the definition often attributed to Winston Churchill of gratitude as an expression of thanks for favors yet to come.

But they neglect, at our risk, the doctrine of unintended consequences. They are dealing the award to a White House that micromanages perceptions and vote-maximizing images and to an American nation that is far more pragmatic than the Norwegians

assume. This premature Nobel may well empower Obama, a calculating left-of-centrist, to become even more muscular in deed while continuing to talk about a peaceful, denuclearized world. See Afghanistan, Guantanamo, rendition, etc., etc.

I wonder what the 1989 Nobel laureate, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, really thinks about Obama being awarded the prize during the same week the president put off receiving the Tibetan spiritual leader for fear of offending the Chinese dictatorship. Come to think of it, wonder what Bill Clinton, who did receive the Dalai Lama while negotiating with China, is saying about a Nobel awarded for intentions rather than for the kind of hard work Clinton put in on Northern Ireland, Haiti, the Balkans and the Middle East? On second thought, we probably don't want to know.

There will also be the unintended consequence of producing resentment or envy among Obama's fellow world leaders -- particularly in Europe, where the U.S. president has already developed a reputation for showing indifference or personal arrogance toward some of his most important peers.

Obama's increasingly tense relationship with President Nicolas Sarkozy recently made headlines in France after the two clashed over Iran at the United Nations, the shrine of Norway's beloved multilateralism. British newspapers have played up what was described as the snubbing of Gordon Brown during the Group of 20 and U.N. summits.

The prime minister's office reportedly had to ask five times before Obama grudgingly agreed to see Brown, widely expected to be voted out of office next year. There is no sentiment to spare in Obama's Oval Office for wounded politicians.

Fair enough. But much of the bubbling resentment in European chanceries has to do with something that can be easily fixed: a deepening frustration over Obama aides rushing the president into the spotlight at the expense of other national leaders and offering misleading interpretations of major events to make their boss look good. See the U.S. press accounts of Iran's Geneva "agreement" to enrich uranium abroad, which European officials describe as little more than an Iranian willingness to talk about that idea some day.

In Germany, Obama is faulted for neglecting this 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. He is skipping the Nov. 9 ceremonies in Berlin and did not take the opportunity to stop by Berlin for Unification Day celebrations while in nearby Copenhagen to push Chicago's bid for the Olympics. Now he will be able to find time to travel to Oslo to celebrate, well, himself.

The Nobel committee does get it right (Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk, Desmond Tutu, Lech Walesa, Elie Wiesel and, let us hope some day, a more meritorious Barack Obama) as well as wrong (Frank B. Kellogg and Aristide Briand for their intentions to outlaw war a little more than a decade before World War II). So it can recover.

These politically correct Vikings may have given Obama not the boost toward greatness they intend but rather a crippling burden -- if he and his staff take the award too seriously. This is, after all, a White House still in campaign mode and engaged in continuous Obamacentric perception management.

Ultimately, harsh realities trump such self-centered message control. Ultimately, perceptions come to manage such image-obsessed administrations, Nobels or no.