

October Surprise: Peace Prize to a War Criminal

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

The Nobel Committee's tradition is long and inglorious, but for the well-informed no surprise. Consider its past honorees:

- Henry Kissinger;
- Shimon Peres;
- Yitzhak Rabin;
- Menachem Begin;
- FW de Klerk;
- Al Gore;
- The Dalai Lama, a covert CIA asset;
- Kofi Annan, a reliable imperial war supporter;
- UN Peacekeeping (Paramilitary) Forces that foster more conflicts than they resolve;
- Elie Wiesel, a hawkish Islamophobe;
- Norman Borlaug, whose "green revolution" wheat strains killed millions;
- Medecins Sans Frontieres, co-founded by rabid war hawk Bernard Kouchner, now France's Minister of Foreign and European Affairs;
- Woodrow Wilson who broke his pledge to keep "us out of war,"
- Jimmy Carter who backed an array of tyrants and drew the Soviets into its Afghan quagmire that took a million or more lives;
- George C. Marshall, instrumental in creating NATO and waging war against North Korea;
- Theodore Roosevelt who once said "I should welcome almost any war, for I think this country needs one;" and
- other undeserving winners...."War is peace," what Orwell understood and why the award legitimizes wars and the leaders who wage them.

After the October 9 announcement, The New York Times quoted 2007 winner Al Gore saying it was "thrilling" without explaining it was as undeserved as his own. Writers Steven

Erlanger and Sheryl Gay Stolberg called it a “surprise.” For others it shocked and betrayed.

Palestinian Muhammad al-Sharif asked: “Has Israel stopped building settlements? Has Obama achieved a Palestinian state yet?”

Iyad Burnat, one of the West Bank’s non-violent protest leaders, “started to go crazy” after hearing about the award. “I asked myself why. The Americans are still in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Palestine is still occupied....Why didn’t (they) give the prize to (George Bush. He) worked very hard (for) eight years killing children, starting wars and supporting the occupation, and they gave the prize to (other choices). I think (the) prize makes the people more violent. Do you think that Obama can make peace....why didn’t (they) wait until he actually made” it.

Straddling both sides, The Times said that the “unexpected honor....elicited praise and puzzlement around the globe.”

It called it a rebuke of Bush’s foreign policies instead of explaining it legitimizes wars and conflicts, the same ones Obama’s pursuing more aggressively in Afghanistan and Pakistan under a general (Stanley McChrystal) James Petras calls a “notorious psychopath” - responsible for committing war crime atrocities when he headed the Pentagon’s infamous Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). No matter, according to Erlanger and Stolberg’s Times-speak:

“Mr. Obama has generated considerable goodwill overseas (and) has made a series of speeches with arching ambition. He has vowed to pursue a world without nuclear weapons; reached out to the Muslim world (and) sought to restart peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, at the expense of offending some of his Jewish supporters.”

In fact, his speeches are disingenuous and lie-filled. He disdains peace. The renamed “Global War on Terror” is now the “Overseas Contingency Operation.” Torture remains official US policy. His administration reeks of Islamophobes. The Israeli Lobby remains comfortably dominant. Muslims are still target one. His ambition is global dominance. His method - imperial wars with a first-strike nuclear option.

The Nobel Committee’s Twisted Logic in Announcing the Award

It reflects Obama’s “extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.”

Fact Check:

In less than nine months in office, Obama has been confrontational through destabilizing belligerence towards numerous countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, China, Occupied Palestine, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Somalia, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Honduras by deposing a democratically elected president and obstructing efforts to reinstate him.

“Obama’s vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons.”

Fact Check:

America has the world's largest, most threatening arsenal and global delivery systems. Besides Israel, it's the only major power with a first-strike nuclear policy against any country called a threat. Its drawdown plans will replace old weapons with better new ones, and so-called "missile defense" is solely for offense.

"Obama has as President created a new climate in international politics. Multinational diplomacy has regained a central position, with emphasis on the role that the United Nations and other international institutions play."

Fact Check:

Obama is pursuing the same policies as George Bush:

- permanent wars and occupations;
- record amounts of military spending at a time America has no enemies;
- supplying arms and munitions to rogue state allies;
- confronting independent ones with sanctions, belligerent threats, and more war;
- subverting the rule of law;
- pursuing a global jihad against human rights and civil liberties;
- using Security Council pressure and intimidation to enforce policy and block constructive measures through vetoes; and
- overall continuing America's hegemonic pursuit of "full spectrum dominance" over all land, surface and sub-surface sea, air, space, electromagnetic spectrum and information systems with enough overwhelming power to fight and win global wars against any adversary, including with nuclear weapons preemptively.

Under Obama, "the USA is now playing a more constructive role in meeting the great climate challenges the world is confronting."

Fact Check:

Obama's House-passed "American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009" is environmentally destructive, lets corporate polluters reap huge windfall profits by charging consumers more for energy and fuel, and creates new Wall Street bubble potential through carbon trading derivatives speculation.

According to Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists, the "US stance retards progress at Bangkok climate talks" the way it's obstructed earlier efforts.

"Democracy and human rights are to be strengthened."

Fact Check:

Obama's policies have weakened them at home and abroad. Torture remains official US policy. Muslims, Latino immigrants, and environmental and animal rights activists are repeated victims. So are peaceful protestors. Police state measures are still law and tough new ones are planned. Civil and human rights issues are nonstarters. Warrantless illegal spying continues. Health care reform schemes will ration a human right, and the new Swine Flu vaccines are covert bioweapons.

"Only 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."

Fact Check:

Under Obama, growing millions in America face poverty, unemployment, hunger, homelessness, despair, ill health, and early deaths at a time of permanent wars.

"For 108 years, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has sought to stimulate precisely the international policy and those attitudes for which Obama is now the world's leading spokesman."

Fact Check:

Skirting the truth, the Committee's twisted logic picks honorees who should face prosecutions for their crimes.

A 110-Year Tradition

Alfred Nobel (1833 - 1896) began it in 1901. Swedish-born, he was a wealthy 19th century chemist, engineer, dynamite inventor, armaments manufacturer, and war profiteer, later reinventing himself as a peacemaker.

Past nominees included Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Tony Blair, Rush Limbaugh and George W. Bush. Mahatma Gandhi got four nominations but never won. Nor did three-time nominee Kathy Kelly and other deserving choices, passed over for war hawks like Henry Kissinger whose credentials include:

- three - four million Southeast Asian deaths;
- many tens of thousands more worldwide;
- backing coups and despots;
- stoking global conflict and violence; and
- compiling an overall breathtaking criminal record.

Others like:

- Israeli leaders Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin matched him against Palestinian civilians;

— Kofi Annan backed Western imperialism, years of genocidal Iraqi sanctions, the 2003 invasion and occupation, and the same lawlessness against Afghanistan; and

— Al Gore, the 2007 choice, was infamous for putting politics above principles and made a career out of being pro-war, pro-business, anti-union, and no friend of the earth - credentials descriptive of Obama and his national security team, ideologically stacked with hawks.

As a result, American war making continues, sanctified and legitimized under Obama's peacemaker mantle. Or as CounterPunch's Alexander Cockburn put it in his October 10 "War and Peace" article:

The award is "a twist on the Alger myth, inspiring to youth (and future Nobel hopefuls): you too can get to murder Filipinos, or Palestinians, or Vietnamese or Afghans and still win a Peace Prize. That's the audacity of hope at full stretch." Nobel hypocrisy also by scorning peace in favor of war. The tradition continues.

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