

Obama Receives Nobel Peace Prize

U.S. President Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway on Thursday after having spent less than a year on the job.

"I accept this honor with gratitude and humility," Obama said at the presentation ceremony. "I have no clear solutions to conflicts around the world... What I do know is that we need to think differently and work hard. To find new ways to instill the vision of a just peace."

According to the Nobel committee, the decision to award the prize to Obama had been made simply on the merit of his aspirations for change in America's foreign policy, rather than on the record of his achievements. They cited his call for increased U.S. activity to fight global warming, a world free of nuclear weapons, his support for the United Nations, for multilateral diplomacy and for his ability to capture the world's attention and give people "hope."

"I cannot think about anyone else who has done more for peace during the last year than Barack Obama," Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg as he stood beside the U.S. president. "I think it's a very bold and important decision."

According to a survey conducted by the University of Kinifk, only 26 percent of Americans, and only 35.9 percent of Norwegians believe that Obama deserved to receive the award.

The \$1.4 million prize will be given to charities, according to White House sources, although no decision has been reached as to which ones will receive the funds.

The controversy over awarding such a prestigious prize to a man who has done little other than enter office was not lost on Obama, who commented, "the goal is not to win a popularity contest or to win an award -- even one as esteemed as the Nobel Peace Prize. The goal is to advance American interests."

Part of that goal appeared to be expressed in the president's schedule: he is slated to return to the White House by midday Friday, skipping the second day of the Nobel prize festivities. The move allegedly offended some officials in Norway but offered a nod to those who wondered about a peace prize given to an American president who had just announced an increase of 30,000 more troops being sent to war in Afghanistan, despite a July 2011 deadline for full U.S. withdrawal from the region.

Past Nobel Peace Prize winners have included Israel's President Shimon Peres, the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, former PLO terrorist chief Yasser Arafat, South Africa's Nelson Mandela, and the U.S. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., among others.

Prior to the ceremony, Obama told reporters that he was not concerned about proving his detractors wrong. The issue, he said, was whether he would be able to measure up to the honor bestowed on him. "If I'm not successful, then all the praise in the world won't disguise that fact." - israelnationalnews