

Did Obama deserve the Nobel Peace Prize?

By Mary Zakheim
Staff Writer

A storm swept through the world Friday, October 9, when the nations and countries learned that our president, Barack Obama, had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Thunderous criticism and bright patches of praise blew across blogs, newspapers, television, which brought forth a question to be addressed: what had President Obama, nominated a mere month into office, done to deserve such a prize?

"If you look at the history of the Peace Prize, we have, on many occasions, given it to try to enhance what many personalities were trying to do," Thorbjørn Jagland, the committee chairman said of awarding President Obama the peace prize. "It could be too late to respond three years from now" (www.timesonline.co.uk).

Over the past three decades, scholars have noticed the trend that the committee is following: awarding individuals not for all they've achieved, but to support the cause being fought for.

British newspapers are claiming something larger than a worthy cause is at work here. They've noticed, whether by chance or intention, of the last seven prizes the committee has awarded, four went to Bush adversaries. The British Times called Obama's peace prize a "clear swipe at his predecessor." In 2002, Jimmy Carter

received the prize, which they assert was "an explicit rejection on the Bush presidency in the build-up of the Iraq war" (www.timesonline.co.uk). 2005, Mohamed El Baradei, the UN atomic agency chief, who had clashed with Washington regarding over search of weapons of mass destruction, received the prize; and in 2007, Al Gore accepted the prize for bringing awareness to global warming. And now Barack Obama.

Most are outraged, critics claimed that Obama hasn't done anything extraordinary, the kind of prerequisite that this prize requires. "What has he done?" they challenged the world; and even his most fervent follower must relinquish a mutter that sounds like, "nothing." Former prize

winner Lech Walesa (1983) spoke for many when he stated, "So soon? Too early. He has no contribution so far" (www.timesonline.co.uk).

Support for our President is not in short supply, however. Kofi Annan (2001) and Desmond Tutu (1984), two past prize winners, voiced their praise of the committee's pick,

the latter commending the choice, stating the decision was a "surprising but imaginative choice" (www.timesonline.co.uk). Not to mention the committee chairman telling the public that their choice was one meant to support the causes President Obama is fighting for, namely, strengthening international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.

It's easy to sympathize with both sides. Yes, we all have to admit that President

But he has, and doesn't that say something?

When Barack Obama spoke, at rallies, at conventions, at his inauguration, not only our great nation listened, but the world. And they were impressed, they were moved, they were touched by a man promising change and promoting international diplomacy and peace. Hadn't the committee said it themselves? That they awarded this prize in support of the causes being fought for, the causes Obama promised fighting for when he was nominated, and has fought for since then.

Isn't it about time America is finally seen in a good light after decades of being viewed as the enemy? And if that takes our president winning a Nobel Peace Prize to get that good publicity, then so be it.

President Obama said, upon hearing that he won the prize, that he viewed his reception as less of recognition of his own achievements, and more of a "call to action." (www.cnn.com)

Yes, he didn't necessarily deserve the prize, but it's earned America a better name and given our President a new incentive to succeed and achieve the causes he was acknowledged for fighting for. And with that said, what American could possibly argue with that?

I hope nobody answered.



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Obama hasn't done anything extraordinary yet; he hasn't dug us out of this economy or fixed healthcare or any other problem facing our country currently. Yes, he was nominated one month into office, when he literally had done nothing. Yes, he probably shouldn't have won this award this year.

The H1N1 scare, should we worry?

By Rachel Robinson
Staff Writer

On October 26, 2009, President Obama officially declared H1N1 a national emergency. When asked what finally pushed the national emergency, he said, "The 2009 H1N1 pandemic continues to evolve. The rates of illness continue to rise rapidly within many communities across the nation..." There are now 48 states infected with the swine flu, all of which had increasing numbers throughout the week of October 18-24th.

Most, who are not well enough informed, believe that the H1N1 virus is the direct cause for death. In those cases, it isn't the virus itself, but the virus that causes pneumonia that can result in death. Pneumonia can develop as soon as five days after contracting the swine flu. Inflammation of the lungs occurs, which causes serious restrictions to the lungs, until it's so severe that you internally

suffocate.

Now that sounds horribly frightening. But the fact is that this is completely avoidable, and that's what people don't generally see

when it comes to a nationwide spread illness such as the Swine Flu. Even if you do become sick with this flu, it doesn't mean that you will catch pneumonia and die as well. If the Swine Flu isn't completely avoidable, it is preventable and you can keep yourself from contracting too severe of a case.

Like the common cold, washing your hands frequently, coughing in your elbow, and avoiding sharing drinks and food with other people who are sick will help in keeping yourself away from the Swine Flu. There is now a vaccine that comes in two forms: the shot and the nasal mist. Depending on if you fall in a high risk category, you may obtain the vaccine in one form instead of the other.

When one hears a national emergency is declared, panic may ensue. Just because there is an "emergency" is declared, doesn't mean something has caused the spread of the virus to increase so rapidly that something anymore severe is going to occur.

President Obama declared the H1N1 a national emergency to lift some federal regulations on medical providers, and health officials said "the action provides greater flexibility

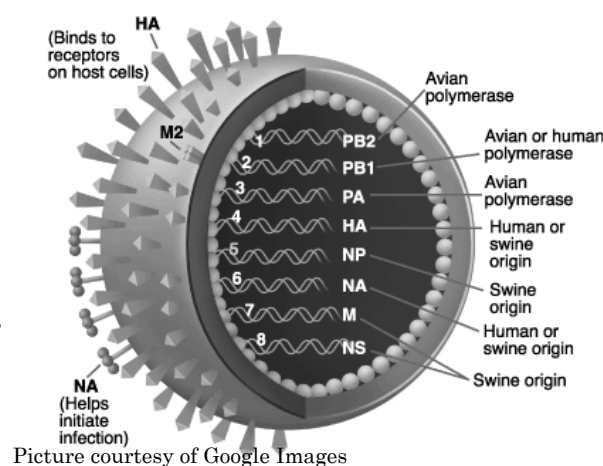
for hospitals that may face a surge of new patients as the virus sweeps through their communities."

Throughout all this uproar of the Swine Flu, there has been speculation that the vaccine can cause autism in children who receive it. But, it has not been proven to be related at all. The CDC states that "in 1976, an earlier type of swine flu vaccine was associated with cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Since then, flu vaccines have not been clearly linked to GBS."

Now that that isn't so much of a worry, we can concentrate more on our community's efforts in preventing the spread of the virus. Freeman School District is asking that if your child is showing symptoms of the flu (fever, cough and/or sore throat), then it's recommended that they remain at home "until symptoms have diminished

and they have been free of fever (less than 100°F, without using fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours or as directed by your health care provider," (www.freemansd.org).

So, it is important that the nation and our community is aware of the H1N1 virus, but we should not treat it any differently than the common flu because the likelihood of complications are just as likely (or unlikely) in the Swine Flu as the common flu. With that in mind, wash your hands often, cough in your elbow, and remind your kids to do the same.



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