



Obama Accepts Nobel Peace Prize

President Barack Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, on December 10, adopting a self-effacing attitude during his acceptance speech as he said, "I receive this honor with deep gratitude and great humility."

The President immediately acknowledged the controversy about whether he deserved the award, saying, "I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the considerable controversy that your generous decision has generated. In part, this is because I am at the beginning, and not the end, of my labors on the world stage. Compared to some of the giants of history who've received this prize — Schweitzer and King; Marshall and Mandela — my accomplishments are slight."



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Obama also addressed the incongruity of receiving a prize for peace just after he escalated the war in Afghanistan: "Perhaps the most profound issue surrounding my receipt of this prize is the fact that I am the Commander-in-Chief of the military of a nation in the midst of two wars.... I come here with an acute sense of the costs of armed conflict — filled with difficult questions about the relationship between war and peace, and our effort to replace one with the other."

Considering that a recent [Quinnipiac poll](#) found 66 percent of Americans do not believe Obama deserves the Peace Prize versus 26 percent who do think he is worthy, the President was wise to downplay his deeds.

In Europe, Obama's decision to deploy 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan has not gone over well. A Norwegian tabloid cover bears the question: "War or Peace President?" [ABC News reported](#) on December 10 that one Norwegian woman told their correspondent, "Sending new troops to Afghanistan, I think it's not.... I don't think he deserves it yet."

Obama devoted much of his speech to a philosophical discussion of a "just war" and a "just peace." Regarding the almost inevitable need to use force when circumstances warrant it, he said: "Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms. To say that force is sometimes necessary is not a call to cynicism — it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason."

But what circumstances necessitate placing American soldiers into harm's way? And when such circumstances arise, who should make the decision?

About peace, Obama spoke of the international community standing united to face those who would disrupt the peace, the need to defend human rights, and the need to work for economic development to feed the hungry. He ended with a call to work for higher principles even though the ideals we strive for



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seem elusive: “We can acknowledge that oppression will always be with us, and still strive for justice. We can admit the intractability of depravation, and still strive for dignity. Clear-eyed, we can understand that there will be war, and still strive for peace.”

Though Obama did attempt to address the controversies surrounding his reception of the Nobel Peace Prize, one controversy was conspicuous by its absence. The President’s acceptance of an honor bestowed by what is essentially an arm of the Norwegian government, accompanied by a significant monetary award, violates the U.S. Constitution.

Article I, Section 9 of the U.S. Constitution clearly states: “No person holding any office of profit or trust under them, shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince or foreign state.”

For Obama’s acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize to be constitutionally valid, Obama needed to seek the consent of Congress to accept the honor. Otherwise, he had no option but to decline the award. His choice to accept the prize without any acknowledgment that it is from a foreign state is a violation of the U.S. Constitution.

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