

Nobel Prize to 'encourage' Obama's ME peace efforts

AFP, Paris The 2008 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize said yesterday he believed the Nobel committee had awarded the 2009 prize to US President Barack Obama to "encourage" his Middle East peace efforts.

ment to do something on this issue. I wish him good luck." Obama won the prize despite taking office less than a year ago. The jury hailed his "extraordinary" diplomatic efforts on the international stage.

The committee attached "special importance to Obama's vision and work for a world without nuclear weapons" and said he had created "a new climate in international politics."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. The Obama administration has demanded a complete freeze to Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, land the Palestinians want to turn into a future state. But Israel has so far balked.



Photo taken on September 22 shows US President Barack Obama (C) looking on as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas shake hands before a trilateral meeting at the Waldorf Astoria in New York.

US winners of Nobel Peace Prize

- 2009: Barack Obama
2007: Al Gore, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
2002: Jimmy Carter
1997: Jody Williams, with International Campaign to Ban Landmines
1986: Elie Wiesel
1973: Henry A. Kissinger, with Le Duc Tho (Democratic Republic of Vietnam)
1970: Norman E. Borlaug
1964: Martin Luther King
1962: Linus Carl Pauling
1953: George Catlett Marshall
1950: Ralph Bunche
1946: John Raleigh Mott and Emily Greene Balch
1945: Cordell Hull
1931: Jane Addams and Nicholas Murray Butler
1929: Frank Billings Kellogg
1925: Charles Gates Dawes, with Austen Chamberlain (Britain)
1919: Thomas Woodrow Wilson
1912: Elihu Root
1906: Theodore Roosevelt.

Nobel for Obama 'too fast', says Walesa

Poland's anti-communist leader and 1983 Nobel Peace Prize winner Lech Walesa expressed surprise Friday that US President Barack Obama won this year's award just months after taking office. "Who, Obama? So fast? Too fast -- he hasn't had the time to do anything yet," Walesa told reporters in Warsaw where he was attending the funeral of Marek Edelman, the last surviving leader of the doomed 1943 Warsaw ghetto uprising against Nazi Germany.



A file photo taken on August 26, 2006 shows then US Illinois senator Barack Obama welcomed by his 82-year-old paternal grandmother Sarah Obama at her rural home in Siaya, in Kisumu, 365 km west of Nairobi.

Obama's Kenyan family 'honoured'

AFP, Nairobi The Kenyan family of US President Barack Obama on Friday said they were honoured by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to their favourite son. "It is an honour to the family... we are very happy that one of us has been honoured. We congratulate Barack," said Obama, the president's stepbrother, told AFP.

first black US president was widely celebrated. His family's village in western Kenya has been declared a protected area by the government. The then Illinois senator was given a hero's welcome during his last visit to the village in 2006 when he visited his grandmother, Sarah Obama. Sarah was the third wife of Obama's paternal grandfather, Hussein Onyango Obama. Although not a blood relation, Obama often refers to her as his grandmother.

Obama: President and Nobel laureate

AFP, Stockholm Obama, 48, has vowed to talk to US enemies, though not necessarily to make concessions to them, and has set out to engage Iran, and North Korea, both of which are testing the world with their nuclear crusades. He has vowed to end the US war in Iraq, and is currently immersed in an exhaustive policy review on whether to escalate the eight-year US war in Afghanistan, launched after the September 11 attacks in 2001.

The president has also launched a fresh US drive for peace in the Middle East, but his personality has so far been unable to make any breakthroughs in the deep distrust that lingers between Israelis and Palestinians. Obama's political style is rooted in his own cosmopolitan personality, as the son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas, who grew up mostly off the US mainland in Hawaii and Indonesia.

World hails surprise win

AFP, Paris World leaders urged Barack Obama to seize on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to intensify his diplomatic efforts to forge peace in the globe's trouble spots. "The prize marks 'America's return to the hearts of the world's peoples,'" French President Nicolas Sarkozy said.

tures to Washington's enemies, rather than a recognition of the achievement of peace by a leader in office for only nine months. "We do not yet have peace in the Middle East... this time it was very clear that they wanted to encourage Obama to move on these issues..." said the 2008 winner, former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari.

Hillary Clinton? For giving up the missile shield and cheering up the Iranians? For preparing a surge of troops and weaponry in Afghanistan?" said the paper in an editorial. "Of course, traditionally it has been standard procedure to encourage Obama to move on these issues..." said the 2008 winner, former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari.



The chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize Committee, Thorbjørn Jagland, shows a picture of 2009 Nobel peace prize laureate, Barack Obama, after the announcement of the winner in Oslo yesterday.

Yet the young president's foreign policy, though a sharp turn from the swaggering US unilateralism of the early years of the century, has yet to yield any major results, other than mending the US image on the world stage.

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US lawmakers call for Obama's report on Iran by Jan 31

AFP, Washington The US House of Representatives called Thursday on President Barack Obama to report by January 31 the progress of his diplomatic outreach with Iran over its controversial nuclear drive. In a provision of the 2010 defence budget bill, lawmakers said they required Obama "no later than January 31, 2010, to deliver a report to Congress on US engagement" with Tehran.

The bill, which still needs Senate approval, also requires Secretary of Defence Robert Gates "to submit an annual report to Congress on the current and future military strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Democratic Senator Christopher Dodd said on Tuesday he was strongly in favour of ratcheting up the pressure on Tehran, and revealed he was crafting "comprehensive sanctions legislation" to be unveiled later this month.

UN talks to end without deal on climate issues

AP, BANGKOK UN climate talks ended in a whimper yesterday without progress on the pressing issues of emission cuts for wealthy nations or financing for the developing ones, both of which are crucial to reaching a global warming pact. Negotiations have been deadlocked for months and delegates have raised doubts whether a new climate pact to rein in greenhouse gases can be reached by the time world leaders gather in Copenhagen in December. The pact would replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

distrust between the two sides. "The stark reality out there is that unless we see an advance on the key political issues, it is very difficult for negotiators in this process to continue their work in good faith," de Boers said. Even before the talks ended Friday, environmentalists including the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace were already criticizing the United States, the European Union, Australia and Canada for failing to deliver on the key pieces required for any new climate pact. "We can't continue to waste time on missing political mandates," the WWF's Kim Carstensen said. "My concern is that without political clarity from capitals on issues like finance (and) emission reduction targets... the next meeting in Barcelona will be another talk shop without the political breakthroughs we need."

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