

# A History of Dubious Nobel Peace Prizes

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Why do we have to worry when the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Director General were declared as the winners of the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize? Certainly not because of ill will on behalf of the independent Norwegian committee members, possible corruption, external political influence, and the like. It is more that the committee wants to influence political outcomes in the world and encourage future developments in a directions it deems appropriate. This, in contradistinction to other Nobel Prizes that are awarded solely on the basis of recognizing credible and verifiable past achievement.

The Committee clearly states the Nobel Peace Prize is indeed a political prize: "To decide who has done the most to promote peace is a highly political matter, and scarcely a matter of cool scholarly judgment. The task requires an ability and a will to view conflicts in the world community as objectively as possible while keeping a strong commitment to certain common moral and political principles." In other words it rewards efforts not achievements.

But take a look at who won it since WWII. There were a few humanitarians such as Albert Schweitzer (1952), Mother Theresa (1979), and Elie Wiesel (1986). Human rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. (1964) and Andrei Sakharov (1975). There were also humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of The Red Cross (1944 and 1963), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (1997), and Doctors Without Borders (1999). All are surely well deserving of the Prize.

But examine the preponderance of awards to the UN, an organization that did not favor Israel (and the U.S.): to Ralph Bunche (1950) for "Acting Mediator in Palestine 1948" - clearly a colossal failure. To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1954) - which has institutionalized the Palestinian "refugee" problem to date and ended up supporting terrorism. To Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the United Nations (1965). To Amnesty International (1977) - like the UN it has often singly mistreated Israel. The United Nations Peace-keeping Forces (1988) - a body that in 1967 has shamefully retreated from the Gaza strip under the threat of the Egyptians thus placing Israel under mortal danger. To the UN and its Secretary General Kofi Annan (2001) - a bloated, corrupt and ineffective organization (and leader).

After several nominations it also rewarded former President Jimmy Carter (2002) - who tried to prove his "evenhandedness" in the Middle East by rebuking Israel every chance he got. The Egyptians defined the cost they had to pay for "peace" (compared to what they got) as that of an apartment in Cairo (for the Israeli Embassy). The worst award was the one given to Yasser Arafat (1994), who shared it with Itzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, and has never stopped his terror campaign until his death.

And now the award is going to an agency and its director "for their efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way." If these efforts deserve the peace Prize we ought to be concerned. Not because the good committee members are wrong in recognizing such efforts. But in declaring that they are worthy of a prize, believing that this would perhaps impact the Iranians to discontinue their declared efforts to tear down the "apartheid nuclear wall" and develop their own nuclear capability. Why would a country that holds 132 billion barrels of proven world oil reserves (close to 15%) need nuclear capability if not for weapon purposes?

The naive Nobelian approach assumes that giving an award to a watch-dog agency (ineffective as it has proven to be in Iraq) might influence the Iranians, is of the same quality as elevating Arafat into a personality of peace when all facts have proven otherwise. The Nobel peace Prize Committee would do the world a great favor if it would stick to awarding the prize to humanitarian efforts or to proven peace achievement (not only efforts) and simply stay out from such political meddling. Awarding the Prize to the likes of Arafat, Carter, Annan, the UN and its bodies like the Peace Keeping Forces or the IAEA only devalues the very notion it is based on and proves that peace is far more elusive than the pretentious award is willing to acknowledge.

Shimon Peres could demonstrate great leadership by returning the Prize (it is never too late to do so) and thus signifying his disappointment with the award that might actually hasten the likelihood of materializing the horror of a nuclear threat. It would also rightly place the Nobel Peace Prize more than a couple of notches lower than it currently purports to be. The Iranian threat is serious enough and it certainly does not need any encouragement from the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.