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African Americans and the African world.

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Nobel Prize for Obama Deserved? Yes! African American Leadership By Dr. Ron Walters, PhD BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board

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When the world woke up on Friday October 10 it was surprised that Barack Obama had won the Nobel Prize, but surprise should not have been a cause for derision. Instead, it should have been a cause for national pride, but right away, many in the media raised questions about whether it was deserved since he had been in office so few months that he had accomplished nothing and Republicans like Michael Steele dismissed it as "meaningless."

I agree with those who believe that the Nobel Committee's action was "aspirational" in the sense that it wanted Obama to continue the course that he had set. But I also think they had concluded that in setting a different and positive course for America that he also exercised the kind of outstanding leadership for the global system that merited the award.

He had, in fact, turned the corner on the approach of George Bush to the international system by announcing to the world in Berlin that the United States would renew its collaboration with nations to resolve important problems, rather than rattle our sabers and go it alone. He followed up by adopting a common approach in dealing with Iran's nuclear capability. The surprising result is that Iran has agreed to six-party talks in Geneva and given Russia the right to enrich its uranium. Obama's message to the Islamic world was that America sees them as friends and allies rather than enemies and that it would join them in any venture for peace if they would open their hand in friendship rather than the hand of jihad. Then he followed it up by adopting a negotiating framework with Iran to address its nuclear capability and re-starting the dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians that was dropped by Bush until the last

minutes of his time in office.

Obama, announced in Prague that the United States policy would work toward the elimination of nuclear weapons in April of this year and followed up in September by proposing a resolution that was adopted by the UN Security Council and by beginning negotiations with Russia to reduce nuclear stockpiles. He also eliminated the defensive nuclear shield in Eastern Europe which won him instant credibility with the Russians and their assistance in dealing with Iran's nuclear capability. Obama, far different from the Bush administration, took the position that climate change was an urgent priority and that it could not be resolved by the U. S. alone. So he followed up by reaching out to China and other countries that have recently industrialized and folded this priority into his own domestic policy to create a green revolution and manage energy differently.

In his own country, Obama has continued to manage the actions begun by the Bush administration that have resulted in moving the American financial system back from the brink of disaster and toward solvency again. His actions have not affected a total recovery, but Obama should be given enormous credit for trying to stabilize the banking system, affecting a Stimulus Package to prop up areas of the economy and start job creation, stabilize the auto industry and obtain universal health care coverage, pull out of Iraq, reject torture and etc. Instead, here his actions have received persistent criticism at every turn.

So, in nine months he has not only given some great speeches, but done some good things to back them up. Fundamentally what we are witnessing is the difference of opinion between American elites and Europeans who harbor a profound dislike for the fact that George Bush ruthlessly violated the common standards of democracy shared by his allies and aspired to by other states in the global system.

For many Americans this as a sign that there is some serious hang-over from the Bush years. I keep reminding my readers not to forget that 57% of whites voted for John McCain which means that an awful lot of them were wedded to Bush politics and now feel some resentment that the international community has repudiated them so soundly by rewarding Barack Obama for changing course.

For the many Blacks who support Obama, but also appeared surprised about Obama's Nobel Prize, not to understand the basis of the Nobel Committee's decision is a sign that they may have been so mired in the crises that face America they have not paid much attention to the genuinely pro-American attitudes that Barack Obama has re-kindled in Europe and around the world.

So, why not join the Nobel Committee in saying "well done" so far, even as we push the President to do better?

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