

For Immediate Release
Veterans For Peace: www.veteransforpeace.org

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VETERANS REACTS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA RECEIVING NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

“Once you had to help lead one of the most important social movements in U.S. history or minister to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying to receive a Nobel Peace Prize. Now you can promise change and international cooperation while ordering more drone bombings that kill innocent civilians -- and still get a Nobel Peace Prize. There’s something wrong with this picture.”

That was how the head of a national group of military veterans today reacted to the news that President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Mike Ferner, a former Navy Hospital Corpsman and president of Veterans For Peace, said “I’ve seen what happens to people at the receiving end of bombs. For two years I took care of hundreds of wounded and dying soldiers coming back from Vietnam and Cambodia. Sadly, President Obama continues to rely on violence to carry out foreign policy. Moving from 'go it alone' rhetoric and pledging to reduce nuclear weapons is good, but not enough -- not even close. He’ll have to do far better than that to deserve even a nomination for this prestigious award.”

Past Peace Prize awardees include Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, major forces in eliminating South African apartheid; Lech Walesa, who, as leader of the "Solidarity" union, defied the power of the Communist Party to win rights for Polish workers; Mikhail Gorbachev, who presided over the end of the Soviet Union and helped end the Cold War; Rigoberta Menchu Tum, campaigner for human rights in Guatemala during the reign of the death squads; Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines; Dr. Linus Pauling, early leader in the movement to oppose the nuclear bomb; Doctors Without Borders; Mother Teresa and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Others have been nominated, sometimes more than once, like Kathy Kelly, coordinator of Voices in the Wilderness. This Chicago-based group organized over 70 citizen delegations to Iraq to report how sanctions were affecting people in that country during the 1990's. In addition, Kelly twice led delegations that literally camped out in the way of the U.S. invasions of Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

“These are the kinds of people who have taken huge risks for peace over many years of their lives. They inspire us to look inside ourselves to find the best of our natures and change how we live our lives. President Obama has the ability to turn away from violence and two of the longest wars in our history. He appears to be interested in doing so. That is the sort of thing for which Nobel Peace Prizes should be reserved.”

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Founded in 1985, Veterans For Peace is a national organization of men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations spanning the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts cold or hot. It has chapters in nearly every state in the union and is headquartered in St. Louis, MO. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Veterans For Peace is an official Non- Governmental Organization (NGO) represented at the U.N.

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