MEDIA ADVISORY: Arms Control Experts See Nobel Peace Prize as Call to Action

Pressroom

Experts from the Washington-based Arms Control Association (ACA) congratulated President Barack Obama for being awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, highlighting that the Nobel Committee's announcement "attached special importance to Obama's vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons."

"The 2009 Nobel Peace Prize underscores the value and impact of U.S. leadership to reduce and eliminate the threat posed by the potential use and spread of nuclear weapons," said Daryl G. Kimball, ACA's executive director.

"In his first year in office, President Obama has called for and advanced action on a range of concrete nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and nuclear materials security initiatives that are supported by senior, bipartisan national security leaders here in the United States and abroad," Kimball noted.

"Beginning with his April 5 speech in Prague outlining his concrete action agenda to his leadership in achieving the unanimous UN Security Council Resolution on nonproliferation and disarmament on September 24, Obama has put the goal and the task of eliminating the nuclear weapons threat front and center on the national and international agenda," noted Greg Thielmann, senior fellow with ACA.

Equally important, he has begun work toward realizing concrete steps toward that goal that serve the mutual interests of the United States and the world. These include:

- reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security strategy;
- restarting talks with the Russian Federation on further verifiable reductions in the two countries’ bloated Cold War nuclear stockpiles;
- aggressively pursuing the reconsideration and approval for U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by the Senate;
- jumpstarting efforts to negotiate a new, verifiable treaty to end the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons; and
- engaging in direct diplomacy with the governments of Iran and North Korea to bring those two countries’ nuclear programs into compliance with their treaty obligations and commitments.

"When Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, the committee recognized not that the world had suddenly ended the plague of landmines, but that 'a vision' had become 'a feasible reality'," noted ACA Deputy Director Jeff Abramson. "Similarly, in selecting President Obama, the Nobel Committee is reminding us of the work that still needs to be done to reduce and eliminate the nuclear weapons threat," Abramson said.

"The cynics believe action toward a nuclear weapons-free world is an exercise in wishful thinking. They are out of touch. There is a growing bipartisan consensus that we can only reduce the dangers of nuclear weapons with bold, concrete U.S. leadership to reduce the role of these weapons and to strengthen global nonproliferation rules," ACA Research Director Tom Z. Collina said.

"The Peace Prize is a recognition of the need to transform--not simply tinker with--outdated thinking..."
about nuclear weapons. Unless President Obama and other world leaders succeed in significantly reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons to better fit the realities of the 21st century, we will not succeed in preventing the use and spread of the world's deadliest weapons," Kimball concluded.

**Relevant Resources:**


- Nuclear Nonproliferation

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