



The Long View

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The Nobel Peace Prize for 2014

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2014 is to be awarded to Russian president Vladimir Putin and Syrian Baath Party general secretary Bashar Assad for their extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples. The Committee has attached special importance to their vision of and work for a world without chemical weapons.

Vladimir Putin, working alongside longtime ally and fellow peacemaker Bashar Assad, has as president created a new climate in international politics. Multilateral diplomacy has regained a central position, with emphasis on the role that the United Nations and other international institutions can play. Dialogue and negotiations are preferred as instruments for resolving even the most difficult international conflicts. The vision of a world free from chemical weapons has powerfully stimulated disarmament and arms-control negotiations. Thanks to Putin's initiatives towards resolving internal Syrian conflicts, and to the cooperation of Bashar Assad and his willingness to negotiate sweeping chemical- and biological-weapons-reduction agreements, Russia is now playing a more constructive role in meeting the great internal and generational challenges the world—especially the region of the Middle East—is confronting. Democracy

and human rights are to be strengthened, thanks to the tireless efforts of Presidents Putin and Assad, this year's Nobel Laureates.

Only very rarely have two people to the same extent as Putin and Assad captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future. Their diplomacy is founded in the concept that those who are to lead the world must do so on the basis of values and attitudes that are shared by the majority of the world's population.

Together, these two leaders have personally persuaded the world community—a coalition of Great Powers that included the United States and France and the United States, including France—to forgo the use of force and instead utilize the mechanisms of the United Nations to collect and safeguard the (alleged) stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons in the region bounded by the current Syrian borders in an orderly and peaceful process. When that process concludes in 2048, it will be a shining example of the role that diplomacy and calm reason play in the resolution of regional and global conflicts.

The International Ban on Biological and Chemical Weapons, a treaty currently being written—and to be enforced—by a Special Working Group composed of Syrian and Russian peacemaking experts, will once and for all rid the world of these deadly and immoral weapons.

President Putin, appearing blood-smearred and shirtless atop a Russian brown bear, thanked the Nobel Peace Prize Committee by firing 37 rounds from a Saiga semiautomatic rifle into the air and drinking deeply from a bottle of local Russian vodka. He then repaired to a tavern to organize a group to set out to terrorize area homosexuals.

Bashar Assad, currently in hiding,

said via Twitter that he was “gratified and humbled” by the Nobel Committee’s “vote of confidence” and would continue his efforts to bring a “final peace” to the various factions of his country currently “not at peace.” He later Instagrammed a photograph of himself, in native Arab dress, standing on top of a mountain of skulls, holding up a sign thanking the Oslo-based organization for its award and consideration. He is not expected to attend the ceremony.

To be sure, this award will not be received without controversy. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee has long been subject to international scorn and derision for its choices of honorees, most recently for its 2009 choice, President Barack Obama of the United States. History, of course, has borne out the wisdom of the selection. President Obama has been a champion of the peace process, has delivered several dozen speeches on the topic of peace during his administration, and has interrupted countless rounds of golf and innumerable drone attacks to speak passionately on the topic of speaking passionately on the topic.

For 113 years, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has sought to stimulate precisely that international policy and those attitudes for which Putin and Assad are now the world's leading spokesmen. The Committee endorses Assad's appeal that “now is the time for all of us to take our share of responsibility for a global response to global challenges,” which he made several weeks after murdering thousands of his subjects.

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For more information, please go to http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/press.html.