

## Target helps renovate child wing of Salvation Army facility in ailing St. Paul neighborhood

Written by Marc Morial, NNPA Columnist  
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(NNPA) - There has been such a whirlwind of analysis, criticism and even some derision among certain segments of the chattering class about President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize that I decided to go to the source for some answers.

First of all, let me say that I was just as shocked as anyone, including the President himself, to wake up to the surprise announcement two weeks ago. After all, the President has only been in office for nine months and many of the problems he inherited, both domestic and foreign, are far from being solved. But in choosing Obama, the five-member Norwegian Nobel Committee reaffirmed the importance of America in the world and recognized the transformative spirit of both our new president and these times. Here's how they put it: "Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future. His 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."

The Committee's decision was influenced in large part by the dramatic change of course in American foreign policy since Obama took office. This includes the President's commitment to end the war in Iraq, his concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament, his outreach to the Muslim world, his work for Middle East peace, his repudiation of the use of torture and his determination to act decisively on issues like the global economic crisis and climate change.

Every eye on the planet looks to America for leadership in these areas. President Obama not only understands that fact, he is personally leading the charge for change. From Berlin to Cairo to Ghana, he has consistently emphasized that there is much more that unites the people of the world today than divides us. The Nobel Committee specifically cited the words from his recent speech before the United Nations General Assembly: "Now is the time for all of us to take our share of responsibility for a global response to global challenges."

While it was a tremendous surprise for President Obama to win the Nobel Peace Prize, it is not unprecedented. He joins Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Jimmy Carter as the fourth American president to win the award. And he stands alongside Ralph Bunche and Martin Luther King, Jr. as the third African American Peace Prize winner.

The President said he was "deeply humbled" by the honor. And seeming to sense the storm of questions to come, he acknowledged that "throughout history, the Nobel Peace Prize has not just been used to honor specific accomplishments, it's also been used as a means to give momentum to a set of causes. And that is why I will accept this award as a call to action...for all nations to confront the common challenges of the 21st century."

We share that hope and we applaud and congratulate President Obama on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. It is a win for the nation and reaffirmation to refocus America's foreign policy on diplomacy and dialogue.

Marc Morial is president and CEO of the National Urban League