

Nobel Nonsense: Nominating Donald Trump for the Peace Prize

By [Dr. Binoy Kampmark](#)

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It seems like rich nonsense, but should peace be attained on the Korean peninsula, with arrangements entrenched to ensure durability as opposed to unconvincing window dressing, President Donald Trump might well join the list of frauds and charlatans who have obtained the Nobel Peace Prize.

The nomination for the 2019 prize came in [a letter](#) from 18 of Trump's Republican supporters in the House of Representatives to the Nobel Committee chair Berit Reiss-Andersen, which starkly resembled the narrative of fakery the President delights in. Trump, went the signers, should receive the prize "in recognition of his work to end the Korean War, denuclearize the Korean peninsula, and bring peace to the region."

The Republicans seem to have things the wrong way around. Rather than incite instability, Trump supposedly calmed the waters. Rather than creating teeth-chattering fear amongst allies, he brought accord where there was disagreement. "Since taking office, President Trump has worked tirelessly to apply maximum pressure on North Korea to end its illicit weapons programs and bring peace to the region." He was the great unifier, bringing on powers such as China "to impose one of the most successful international sanctions regimes in history." (Never let history get in the way of a good tale.)

All this, despite sketchy details of a as yet unplanned summit between Trump and Kim Jong Un to take place at the end of this month or early June. Agendas are also in their infancy: where to with the actual issue of denuclearisation, and what lasting security guarantees might be put in place.

There have been some howlers in the hall of Nobel Peace Prize recipients, and Trump's addition to the role would be perversely fitting. Henry Kissinger retains the mantle of the manifest absurd, despite being the blood spatted lagoon of US foreign policy. Under his sagaciously poisonous direction, democracies were withered in favour of murderous regimes. Countries - Laos and Cambodia - were subjected to illegal bombings. Murdering high officials was condoned.

Importantly, he was given the Nobel for supposedly concluding the war in Vietnam despite frustrating the Johnson administration's efforts to do so in 1968. (Fun if cruel fact: the Vietnam War would only conclude in 1975, two years after Kissinger's award.) Along with that dark lord of mendacity and cunning Richard Nixon, Kissinger [sabotaged peace talks](#) between North and South Vietnam in an effort to gain an advantage over Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey in the elections that year. (Nixon's order to his close aide H. R. Haldeman on October 22, 1968 was to "monkey wrench" the efforts of the Democrats.)

Closer in precedent, though not quite stratospherically venal as that of Kissinger was the award given to President Barack Obama in 2009. Still presidentially virginal, more than a few eyebrows were raised. “What has he done?” came the obvious question [from Nicholas Kristof](#) of *The New York Times*. Obama had to agree, though accepted the award. The Committee had obviously decided to convert the prize into something of a big push to achievement, an act of pure counter-intuition.

In 2015, former secretary of the Nobel committee Geir Lundestad [admitted regret](#).

“Even many of Obama’s supporters believed that the prize was a mistake. In that sense the committee didn’t achieve what it had hoped for.”

What stands out in Trump’s meaningless nomination is a suggestion that the players on the ground – the Moon Jae-in administration of South Korea, and the Kim Jong Un regime of the DPRK – are mere marionettes directed by Trump and social media mist. Tweets matter. Targeted indignation count. Never mind that the Koreas have taken the first steps and initiated discussions that have been viewed with suspicion by members of Congress.

Nominations, however, remain that. They do not necessarily yield the fruit of an award. President George W. Bush had been floated as a contender at some point, and Thomas E. Ricks [would write](#) with acid reflection in 2015 that he probably deserved one.

“The actions of the United States have successfully bolstered the influence of Iran over the region. Now Iraq and Iran, who in the 1980s fought a long and bitter war, are reconciled!”

A delightful spoof of the inner world of the peace prize committee, veering dangerously close to its naff rationales can be found in the *Pan-Arabian Enquirer*. The [satirical publication suggested](#) that the Nobel Committee would award the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize to Bush and former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.

“These two statesmen have been absolutely instrumental in stopping the Syrian war from escalating into a terrifying global conflict and, for this, they must be congratulated.”

Such is the rationale. Those who start wars and wage campaigns of terror one day will, at some point, be seen in a different light. Peace achieved, even over graveyards, can be acknowledged by way of awards. But in Trump’s case, the resume of extensive violence waged against other states and peoples is still in its infancy. For all that, the Nobel Prize Committee may still have a risible surprise in store, something appropriate for a proclaimed age of Fake News.

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Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research and Asia-Pacific Research. Email: bkampmark@gmail.com

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Kampmark](#)

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