



By: [Nina L. Khrushcheva](#)

Why does Trump want a Nobel Peace Prize?



There is nothing new about prominent people – in particular, ambitious men – campaigning for a Nobel prize. Scientists, economists, and even poets do it.

But the world has never witnessed as brazen and farfetched a campaign as the one Donald Trump has mounted for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Nobel Peace Prize is the world's most prestigious accolade for the restoration or consolidation of peace.

Its recipients are selected by a committee of distinguished Norwegians, appointed by the Norwegian Parliament. It is hard to imagine they would indulge Trump's belief that he is worthy of being chosen.

One reason is that Trump belittles and betrays Europe, of which Norway is a part, at every opportunity.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to take over Greenland, an autonomous territory of Norway's neighbor, Denmark, and he seems eager to undermine the NATO alliance (of which Norway is also a part).

Meanwhile, Trump kowtows to the autocrat responsible for Europe's largest land war since World War II, while patronizing the president of the defending country.

The Oslo Accords

Trump seems to stand up for autocrats in general. He recently imposed harsh tariffs on Brazil as punishment for its efforts to hold former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro accountable for fomenting a Trump-inspired coup attempt in 2022.

And he has stridently supported Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, even as Netanyahu has ramped up his brutal assault on Gaza and driven the final nail into the coffin of the Oslo Accords, Norway's foremost diplomatic achievement of the past half-century.

Trump not only defends Netanyahu's actions; he punishes Netanyahu's critics

Though the Oslo Accords did not explicitly endorse the future establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, they did lay the groundwork for a two-state solution, by establishing self-governing Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and Gaza.

Now, beyond razing Gaza and starving its population, Israel has approved a new settlement project in the West Bank that will effectively block the creation of a Palestinian state there.

But Trump not only defends Netanyahu's actions; he punishes Netanyahu's critics – a group that **includes** Norway.

Trump's world

Trump's behavior at home shows a similar contempt for dialogue and reconciliation.

During his first presidency, he **reportedly** asked the chair of his Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, whether the troops Trump had called into Washington, DC, could shoot protesters in the legs.

Today, he is deploying National Guard troops to cities where they are neither needed nor welcome, while detaining and deporting asylum-seekers, legal immigrants, and even US citizens, including **children**, without due process.

In Trump's world – where accountability is labeled a “witch hunt,” facts are dismissed as fiction

Of course, in Trump's world – where **accountability** is labeled a “witch hunt,” facts are **dismissed** as fiction, and lying is a constant – anything could happen.

We have already seen one world leader after another kissing up to Trump and capitulating to his bullying.

And, in fact, he has already received nominations for his coveted Nobel. One, Pakistan, is not exactly a beacon of peace, and another, Cambodia, is led by the sort of authoritarian Trump admires.

The Munich Agreement

But the Nobel Committee has seen through even more grotesque pretenses of peacemaking than what Trump has offered.

In 1939, a dozen members of Sweden's parliament actually **nominated** then-British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain for the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in negotiating the Munich Agreement with Adolf Hitler the previous year.

Ultimately, the Nobel Committee decided not to award the prize to anyone that year.

It was a prescient decision: Chamberlain's deal, which gave the Nazi regime the green light to annex Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland region, only emboldened Hitler to launch his blitzkriegs against other European democracies.

Unlike Trump, the Nobel Committee is more likely to side with authoritarianism's opponents than its champions

It is ironic that Trump thinks his best chance of securing a Nobel Peace Prize lies in a Munich-like "peace" agreement that **forces** Ukraine to cede swaths of its sovereign territory to Russia, which is unlikely to be satisfied until the country is fully subjugated.

Unlike Trump, the Nobel Committee is more likely to side with authoritarianism's opponents than its champions.

In 2010, it **awarded** the Peace Prize to the jailed Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo for his "long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China."

Chinese officials denounced the decision, which opened a lasting rift between China and Norway, but the Nobel Committee held to its values.

Giving Trump a Nobel for encouraging the dismemberment of Ukraine would send the opposite message, potentially even emboldening Chinese President Xi Jinping to invade Taiwan.

Why does Trump want a Nobel Peace Prize?

So, why does Trump even want a Nobel Peace Prize, given his apparent disdain for the principles (and hard work) of peacemaking?

The most likely answer is that Barack Obama has one. From **peddling** the lie that Obama was born outside the United States to **accusing** him of treason, Trump's pettiness knows no bounds when it comes to America's first Black president.



Whereas Obama's Nobel Peace Prize was premature, Trump's would be parodic

And yet Obama is a Nobel laureate, and Trump, unbearably, is not.

Admittedly, it is not entirely clear why Obama was given the prize, which came only a few months after he took office in 2009, when his

only real achievement was inspiring hope through soaring rhetoric.

Perhaps he was being rewarded mostly for having little in common with his predecessor, George W. Bush, who invaded Iraq in 2003 on the basis of the fabricated claim that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction.

Whereas Obama's Nobel Peace Prize was premature, Trump's would be parodic. If he somehow managed to browbeat the Nobel Committee into giving him one, the Peace Prize would become a punchline.

Nina L. Khrushcheva is a Professor of International Affairs at The New School.