

Nigeria: Why Obama Bagged Nobel Peace Prize, By Prof. Akinyemi

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Former external affairs minister and presidential aspirant, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, has hailed the choice of the American president, Barack Obama, as this year's winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Akinyemi made it clear that there is no substitute for leadership by inspiration, an attribute which he said, must have been responsible for the choice of Obama by the Nobel Committee as winner for the peace prize.

Speaking to Sunday Vanguard, the former minister, who recently took part in fashioning a reform agenda for Nigeria via his membership of the Electoral Reform Committee, explained that the efforts of Obama in the last nine months marked him out as a leader with great commitment to and unflinching support for global peace and unity.

Asked how he felt on hearing of Obama's choice, he said, "The feeling is one of pride for him. I felt pleased because I am one of the people who have always believed that there is a place and time for recognition of inspiration. Obama is an inspirational leader and he has inspired multi-racialism in US and in the world, just as he has also repaired America's battered image abroad.

US reputation in the moslem world has been burnished by reaching out to moslems all over the world. He has also reached out to Russia on the nuclear defence system. Here is a man who has also caused the UN Security Council to issue a consensus statement on non-proliferation; and all these within nine months as president."

He made it clear that "once you can inspire people, you will get positive results. Inspiration is a key element in all of these." The foreign affairs expert said Obama has "sent two powerful messages to Africa by visiting Ghana and Ghana alone, thereby sending a signal that functioning democracies in Africa can attract the US. US expects democracy to thrive in Africa.

Just last week, he held a special meeting with African leaders in New York which, again, created, if you like, a kind of special interest he is showing that he is prepared to devote attention to Africa. And this is in line with what I was expecting from him"