Text of Obama's Nobel Peace Prize speech

Mr. President, Dr. President, Madam Chairperson:

I accept this prize as a humble recognition of the work that so many have done to promote peace, justice, and opportunity. As I see it, this Prize is the collective humanity's testimony to the power of nonviolence and the ability of a generation of activists to transform the post-war world. This Prize is a reminder that the most enduring peace is not a dictate of arms but the commitment of men and women to build a better world for all. And it is a demonstration of the belief that the human spirit can overcome the forces of war and hate.

This Prize is also a recognition of a moral imperative. As President, I have a specific obligation to advance the cause of peace. Our nation's security depends on it. The world's future depends on it. And it is a moral obligation that all of us share.

Some people have asked whether this Prize is appropriate for someone who leads a nation still at war. I would argue that the Prize is even more appropriate for someone who leads a nation in war.

At the heart of my argument is the idea that war is never a final answer. The alternative to peace is not perpetual violence, but perpetual tension. War is often used in an attempt to impose peace, but that strategy is rarely successful. For there are no winners in a war of annihilation. There are only losers, and the loser of a war of annihilation is usually the world.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

I believe I speak for all Americans when I say that the American people do not want war. We have suffered too much and paid too high a price for enmity and conflict. Our war dead and our war wounded, they continue to remind us that war is not an answer to a conflict. They remind us that war is not a solution to a problem.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

First, I believe that we must hold to high standards in a world that often seems to prefer low means. As President, I must sometimes confront difficult questions about how to prevent the slaughter of civilians by their own government, or to stop a civil war whose violence and suffering can engulf an entire region.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Second, I believe that there is a link between our engagement in the world and our own national interest. We see that link every time we lose our men and women who were serving their country.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Third, I believe in a just peace. A just peace includes more than just the absence of war. It demands the protection of human rights.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Fourth, I believe in a just peace that includes civil rights and political freedoms. But I also believe that we cannot deny the suffering of the oppressed.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Fifth, I believe that freedom is the fruit of human dignity. But I also believe that freedom is the foundation of human dignity.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Sixth, I believe that the end of war is not just the absence of conflict. It is also the presence of cooperation.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Seventh, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Eighth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Ninth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Tenth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Eleventh, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Twelfth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Thirteenth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Fourteenth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Fifteenth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.

Sixteenth, I believe that the world can work for peace together. But I also believe that the world can work for peace alone.

And yet, I must be honest. There are times when my assumptions are challenged. There are times when the practical politics of peace face the challenges of war. There are times when my commitment is tested.