

All Americans own a piece of this prize

While it took everyone by surprise — like a natural disaster — after my initial bewilderment, I decided to take stock of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to President Barack Obama. I am a legal immigrant to America, 10 years, silent lips, turning always the other cheek, giving always the second coat, observing always the laws of both my country of adoption and origin.

In my time here, I wrote passionately against one nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, (“Former Malaysian Leader Poor Choice For

Nobel Peace Prize,”

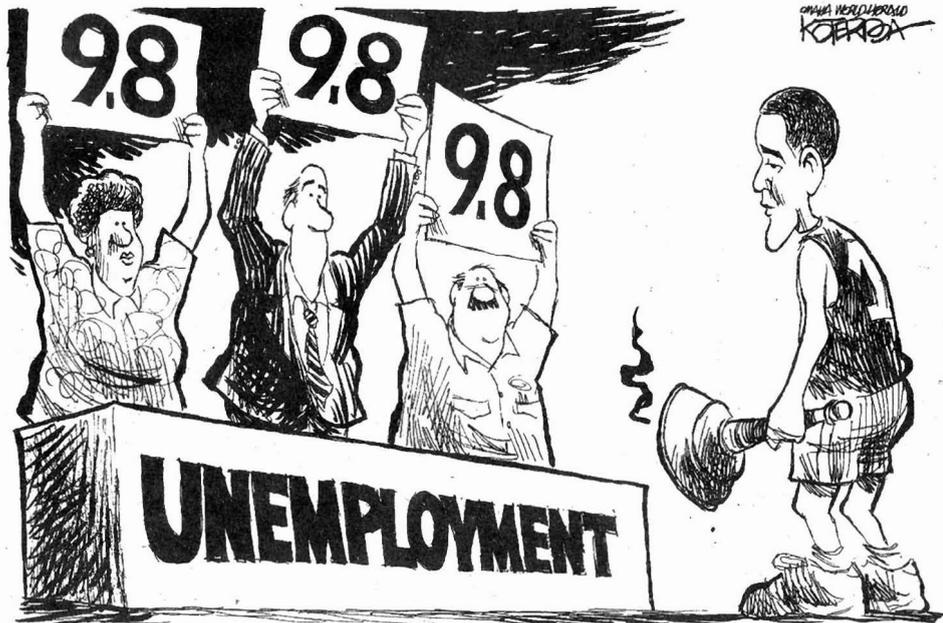
The Denver Post, December 2007.)

American poet friends called to congratulate me locally when the prize went to

another American, Al Gore, and the people rejoiced. For me, I was writing the truth. The late William Safire called Dr. Mahathir Mohammad a “tin-pot

tyrant.” Ah, American freedom, the right to call a spade a spade.

Now the question arises, does Obama deserve the Nobel Peace Prize? This question is rather more difficult to answer. Speaking as one honored by Amnesty International for speaking out against “human rights abuses in the face of repression,” there are always the more deserving. MalaysiaKini.com, for example — and



many unknown Malaysians who risk voicing their dissent and support there, people too numerous to mention.

So why at this time is there rancor, in free America, over Obama’s nomination and award? Obama’s award, like his presidency, is a message to the nations that the tide has turned. That Americans have overcome their racist past, publicly and for all to know; that this American president has learned sufficiently from the mistakes of his predecessor and his own African-American past not to demonize any people of any nation; that he is committed to accord to them the dignity that belongs to all people.

The Nobel Committee has chosen to

honor one of us. This prize for peace is one that belongs to the American people, from whom has sprung a leader who will be only as great as we make him and allow him to be. We, the people, make America. Why not say thank you kindly to the good people who nominated our president and return for once to that era when manners maketh a man?

Have we, the American people, who speak always of grace, not yet learned to be gracious?

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