

iNobel

(October 13, 2007)



Al Gore, 59 years old: former Vice-president of the United States, businessman, Hollywood superstar, media mogul, high-tech guru, environmental crusader and Nobel Peace Prize winner. What is this man made of? (and what is he looking for?)

After winning an Oscar and an Emmy award, former Vice-president Albert Gore jr can put on his shelf the most prestigious prize in the world, the Nobel Peace Prize. This shows how somebody who was virtually destroyed as a public figure only a few years ago can come back right into the spotlight, and in much better shape than before.

The Nobel prize awarded to Gore raises a number of interesting issues. First of all, why was the

Peace prize granted to someone dealing with environment issues? Definitely, the importance of Mr. Gore's environmental crusade should not be overlooked. However, you would not award a peace prize to a scientist who discovered the cure for cancer – not because the cure for cancer is not extremely important, but just because it has little to do with world peace.

The international media are now pointing out that in the past the Nobel Peace Prize has been assigned for achievements in fields a little far away from traditional peace and war issues. But the Civil and Human Rights activists and the fighters against world poverty who received the award were in fact operating in areas where the connection to peace issues was indeed visible.

No doubt concern about global warming is equally important and so is Mr. Gore's contribution in enhancing world awareness about this issue; the whole thing may well deserve a Nobel prize... it is the connection with the eminently political issue of world peace that is not clear.

This is why many are asking now: does this choice conceal a political criticism of the current US President, not only for being notoriously insensitive to environmental issues, but also for its "original sin" of gaining power in 2000 despite the fact the Al Gore had won the majority of the popular vote? Is the Nobel committee suggesting that global peace (and environment) would be in better shape today, had not Bush "stolen the vote" in 2000? The Nobel organization denies such insinuations, but the whole situation remains at least unusual.

Now, however, the main point is to understand what will be Mr. Gore's next steps in the political field. His popularity is something incredible for a politician. The one person to wear similar shoes in the postwar years was General Dwight Eisenhower, the most popular World War II hero. Coming home after the war, Ike met with President Harry Truman, who offered to help him to obtain any honor he wanted, even the Presidency. Indeed Eisenhower was offered the presidential nomination by both parties in 1948: he refused, only to accept four years later, eventually winning the general elections of 1952. And that was a man who had probably never thought he would become President one day!

But Mr. Gore's situation is quite different: the son of an important US Senator from Tennessee, he was raised to become President one day. He had the perfect, spotless political career, became the deputy to a very popular President at an extremely early age, and would have been President in 2000, had not the Supreme Court torn his dreams apart disregarding his popular-vote majority and assigning the Presidency to the now extremely unpopular George W. Bush.

In 2000 Gore was not unpopular. Even worse for a politician, he was virtually invisible. Few liked him, few disliked him. He was considered somewhat unsympathetic, and used to inspire apathy at best. Now, just 8 years later, he is a former Vice-president, a businessman, a Hollywood superstar, a new-media mogul who invented Current TV's "Viewer Created Content" strategy, a high-tech guru who helps Steve Jobs promote his wonderful iPhone, a brave man that fights for the environment – and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. And he is only 59 years old!! What is this man made of??

Interestingly enough, Gore seems quite uninterested in running for President. Pundits keep saying that he would never be able to bridge the money gap with the other contenders, that he is happy with his new non-political celebrity life, and so on. The truth is that a "normal" presidential candidate does not need Clinton's or Obama's 70 million dollars to guarantee the nomination; just about 30 million are usually enough. Moreover, Mr. Gore is no longer a normal candidate and must not be underestimated. He is as popular as a superstar but comes with the experience of a life-long political career. Are we sure he is not interested in a second bid, now that he is – for the world at large – "AL GORE"?

All we can say is that rarely has a single US politician been so popular. At this point we can only sit tight and wait for Mr. Gore's next surprise...

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