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current events in this country knows how lost a cause that has often been.

American reason and justice have been inexact and halting, painfully and sometimes sinfully lacking.

And anyone minding the delirious nightmare of legislation working its way inch-by-painstaking inch through congress and the spiraling tenor of pseudo-news commentary knows the glaring and many shortcomings of our system.

To those of us convinced of climate change and of what must be done, of the various other moral imperatives involved in the healthcare mire, the denials of equal rights to our soldiers, our various complex international commitments, et cetera, the pace of action and reform is ruinous and

maddening.

But despite the many frustrating imperfections, many around the world rightly recognize the vital changes taking place.

Bodies like the United Nations and NATO, the G8 and G20 exist and function only insofar as we and other nations support and invest in them.

These are organizations, by the way, on which we will one day have to rely for reason and equity in a changing world in which we cease to be the only super-power.

And our new administration's commitments to international relationships, conventions and establishments have illustrated critical leadership in supporting, and thereby immediately raising the mandate and worth of these institutions.

It is through such international cooperation, and only so that we will be able to deal with the staggering issues facing our world, including climate change and peace in the Middle East, both cited in the Nobel

announcement, not to mention poverty, famine and skyrocketing population growth which violently afflict our world.

And though it is easy for our imperfect leaders to lose track of or ignore such vast and amorphous problems in their petty arguments and campaigns, and perhaps because of this, the Nobel Committee has gone all in.

We have to realize that the stakes are terminal. We can change our world, but the chances are finite, and the time to act is short.

"It could be too late to respond [to Obama's leadership] three years from now," said Nobel Committee member Thorbjørn Jagland.

Mr. Obama's prize is not deserved for his present achievements, but is warranted by the present circumstances, and by the hope and promise his leadership and methods of reason and intelligent engagement offer an eager world.

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Comic by Dabney Farmer

