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Gore and U.N. Panel Win Peace Prize for Climate Work

By WALTER GIBBS

OSLO, Oct. 12 — The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded today to Al Gore, the former vice president, and to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for its work to alert the world to the threat of global warming.

The award is likely to renew calls from Mr. Gore's supporters for him to run for president in 2008, joining an already crowded field of Democrats. Mr. Gore, who lost the 2000 presidential election to George W. Bush, has said he is not interested in running but has not flatly rejected the notion.

Mr. Gore "is probably the single individual who has done most to create greater worldwide understanding of the measures that need to be adopted," the Nobel citation said. The United Nations committee, a network of 2,000 scientists, has produced two decades of scientific reports that have "created an ever-broader informed consensus about the connection between human activities and global warming," the citation said.

Mr. Gore, who was traveling in San Francisco, said in a statement that he was deeply honored to receive the prize and planned to donate his half of the prize to the Alliance for Climate Protection, a nonprofit climate group of which Mr. Gore chairs the board.

"We face a true planetary emergency," Mr. Gore said in the statement. "The climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity. It is also our greatest opportunity to lift global consciousness to a higher level."

Kalee Kreider, a spokeswoman for Mr. Gore, said he received the news with his wife, Tipper, early this morning in San Francisco, where he spoke on Thursday night at a fundraiser for Senator Barbara Boxer of California, a fellow Democrat.

Ms. Kreider said Mr. Gore would hold strategy meetings with the Alliance for Climate Protection in San Francisco today and return to his home in Nashville over the weekend.

In New Delhi, Rajendra K. Pachauri, an Indian scientist who leads the United Nations committee, said that the award was "not something I would have thought of in my wildest dreams."

In an interview in his office at the Energy and Resources Institute, Dr. Pachauri cast the award as a vindication of science over the skeptics on global warming.

"The message that it sends is that the Nobel Prize committee realized the value of knowledge in tackling the problem of climate change and the fact that the I.P.C.C.

has an established record of producing knowledge and an impartial and objective assessment of climate change."

He said he thought the award would now settle the scientific debate on climate change and that governments would now take action.

He said it was "entirely possible to stabilize the levels of emissions but that climate change and its impact will continue to stalk us."

"We will have to live with climate change up to a certain point of time but if we want to avoid or delay much more serious damage then its essential that we start mitigation quickly and to a serious extent," he said.

The Nobel award carries political ramifications in the United States, which the Nobel committee tried to minimize after its announcement today.

The chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Ole Danbolt Mjoes, addressed reporters after the awards were announced and tried to dismiss repeated questions asking whether the awards were a criticism — direct or indirect — of the Bush administration.

He said the committee was making an appeal to the entire world to unite against the threat of global warming.

"We would encourage all countries, including the big countries, to challenge, all of them, to think again and to say what can they do to conquer global warming," he said. "The bigger the powers, the better that they come in front of this."

He said the peace prize is only a message of encouragement, adding, "the Nobel committee has never given a kick in the leg to anyone."

In this decade, the Nobel Peace Prize has been given to prominent people and agencies who differ on a range of issues with the Bush administration, including former President Jimmy Carter, who won in 2002, and Mohamed ElBaradei, the director of the United Nations' nuclear monitoring agency in Vienna, in 2005.

In Washington, a White House spokesman, Tony Fratto, was quoted by Reuters as saying: "Of course we're happy for Vice President Gore and the I.P.C.C. for receiving this recognition."

Global warming has been a powerful issue all this year, attracting more and more public attention.

The film documenting Mr. Gore's campaign to increase awareness of climate change, "An Inconvenient Truth," won an Academy Award this year. The United Nations committee has issued repeated reports and held successive conferences to highlight the growing scientific understanding of the problem. Meanwhile, signs of global warming have become more and more apparent, even in the melting Arctic.

Jesse McKinley contributed reporting from San Francisco, Somini Sengupta from New Delhi, and James Kanter from Paris.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said global warming "may induce large-scale migration and lead to greater competition for the earth's resources."

"Such changes will place particularly heavy burdens on the world's most vulnerable countries," it said. "There may be increased danger of violent conflicts and wars, within and between states."

The Bay Area has been the staging area for an online movement to draft Mr. Gore to mount another campaign for the White House. A San Francisco-based Web site, www.Draftgore.com, claims more than 165,000 signatures and comments on an online petition, including several placed early this morning congratulating Mr. Gore on his win.

The same group also placed a full-page advertisement in The New York Times on Wednesday, pleading with Mr. Gore to rectify his bitter defeat in 2000, when he won the national popular vote but lost the electoral college after the Supreme Court ruled against a recount in Florida.

"I'll actually vote for you this time," wrote one signee, Joshua Kadel of Virginia, on the Web site this morning. "Sorry about 2000!"

The Gores keep an apartment in San Francisco, where their daughter Kristin lives. The city is also the headquarters of Current TV, Mr. Gore's Emmy-award winning television and online news venture.

Others dedicated to the fight against global warming said the winners were at the head of efforts to investigate and draw attention to the issue.

Yvo de Boer, the executive secretary of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is based in Bonn, Germany, and oversaw negotiations that led to the Kyoto Protocol, said recent moves by political leaders around the world to find ways of reducing emissions would have been hard to imagine without the contributions made by both the I.P.C.C. and Mr. Gore.

"We can recommend ways for policymakers to move forward, but without the I.P.C.C. data being there, this would be next to impossible," said Mr. de Boer. He said Mr. Gore could use his enhanced stature from winning the Peace Prize to focus on parts of the developing world where politicians need support to spread knowledge about the dangers of climate change. "It's very difficult to advance on these issues without support from the general public," he said.

Jan Egeland, a Norwegian peace mediator and former senior United Nations official for humanitarian affairs, called climate change more than an environmental issue.

"It is a question of war and peace," Mr. Egeland, now director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs in Oslo, told the Associated Press. "We're already seeing the first climate wars, in the Sahel belt of Africa." He said nomads and herders are in conflict with farmers because the changing climate has brought drought and a shortage of fertile lands.