

A Biography of President James Earl (Jimmy) Carter, Jr.

Peanut Farmer, President, Preacher

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Abstract

The caricature of the blue-eyed, widely-grinning, “peanut farmer, to President, to preacher” as the worst ex-president ever and an abysmal failure is finally giving place to a kinder, gentler evaluation of the 39th President of the United States, James Earl (Jimmy) Carter. While there is consensus that Carter has been our greatest ex-President, it is time to acknowledge in his lifetime what his Presidency achieved and its continued legacy. The news that Carter has brain cancer has led many to consider his life's work, as a controversial president and a dynamic former president. This paper challenges the popular caricatures of Jimmy Carter that he was ineffective as a president by examining the areas in which his accomplishments as a president are still benefitting the local, national and, global arena. This paper focuses on the successes, the triumphs, the accomplishments, of the 39th President of the United States as seen through the lens of his Christian, humanitarian, and moralist point of view. These views are juxtaposed with the views of those who perceive him as a failure. Rather, framed by his successes as President, to this day he continues to impact the global economy, promote cultural diversity, and build lasting partnerships locally, nationally, and globally. The research question is answered that President Jimmy Carter is not the worst ex-president ever.

Keywords: President, Christian, humanitarian, moralist, global leader

Introduction

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Peanut Farmer, President, Preacher

To answer the critics of the Carter presidency, Fallows (1979) his former speechwriter opined: “After two and a half years in Carter's service, I fully believe him to be a good man. Instead of constant focus on situations that had no real ability to be resolved differently, focus on the successes, the triumphs, the accomplishments, of the 39th President of the United States. With his moral virtues and his intellectual skills, he is perhaps as admirable a human being as has ever held the job. Carter is usually patient, less vindictive than the political norm, blessed with a sense of perspective about the chanciness of life and the transience of its glories and pursuits. I left his service feeling that if moral choices faced him, he would resolve them fairly. When questions of life and death, of nuclear war and human destruction were laid upon his desk, he would act on them calmly, with self-knowledge, free of interior demons that might tempt him to act rashly or to prove at a terrible cost that he was a man.”

The opinions concerning Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, vacillate between him being the worst ever president to him being the most misunderstood president and in need of vindication from the chains of history. Several authors, academics, and historians (e.g., Eizenstat, 2018; Kissinger, 1994; Brooks, 2015; Brinkley, 2003) see Carter in a positive light and the opinions of several authors, academics, and historians (e.g., David, 2015; Moen, 1990; Glad, 1980; Domin, 2003) who see President Carter as a failure, though in need of a second look, concede that President Carter should be viewed in light of his immense contribution to global health and National diplomacy. His Christian faith will help to conclude that history will vindicate the erroneous thinking that President Carter was not an effective president.

An essential aspect of Carter was his Christianity. Through his political power he believed he could help people as a Christian. It is interesting to examine how Carter's ideology influenced his presidency, and especially his foreign policy. His dedication to human rights can serve as an example of the merging of his ideology and his foreign policy. The findings of this research could perhaps lead to a reevaluation of his presidency. Carter's style of leadership was and is more religious than political. He was and is a moral leader more than a political leader. Carter's leadership style helps explain not only some of his successes as President but also some of his failures. This paper challenges the popular caricatures of Jimmy Carter that he was ineffective as a president by examining the areas in which his accomplishments as a president are still benefitting the local, national and, global arena. This paper contends that it is time to acknowledge that Jimmy Carter also had significant accomplishments that need to be known far and wide as part of painting a complete picture of the Carter record in the Presidency. The local, national and, global successes that he still experiences as a leader prove that he is not the worst ex-president ever.

Methodology

Most of the sources I used were history books and works focusing on foreign policy. I reviewed several books by various historians, academics and scholars. I compared and contrasted the positive and negative analyses of each group. I read articles on specific subjects, such as how his upbringing shaped his personal beliefs and what is written about his religion. I read information on his political life before he became president. I read books written by him and interview articles in which he gave his personal opinions on certain issues pertaining to his political and religious life. I looked at Carter's speeches, especially his inaugural address, and other political speeches. I looked at some of his Sunday school discussions. I looked at Carter's

life after his presidency, especially his winning the Nobel Peace prize for: “his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development. I read the works of several authors, academics, and historians (e.g., Eizenstat, 2018; Kissinger, 1994; Brooks, 2015; Brinkley, 2003) who opined that President Carter should be viewed in light of his immense contribution to global health and National diplomacy, driven by his Christian faith juxtaposed against the works of several authors, academics, and historians who see President Carter as a failure (e.g., Brooks 2015; David 2015; Moen, 1990; Glad, 1980; Domin, 2003). Finally, in the conclusion, I answered the research question and concluded that Carter is not the worst ex-president.

Biographical Sketch

Early Life and Education

Bourne (1997) provides a narrative of the early life of Jimmy Carter. James Earl Carter Jr. (Jimmy), thirty-ninth president of the United States, was born October 1, 1924, in the small farming town of Plains, Georgia, and grew up in the nearby community of Archery. He is still alive to this day and he is 93 years of age. James Earl Carter's ancestors had lived in America since the 1630s. They were residents of Georgia since just after the Revolution. “Jimmy” Carter’s parents, Earl and Lillian Carter, owned a peanut farm and warehouse and a store outside the small town of Plains, Georgia. Earl was bright, hardworking, and a very good businessman. "Miz" Lillian had been trained as a nurse, but abandoned her career when she became pregnant soon after marriage. She named the first of her four children James Earl, for his father. Jimmy's mother, well read and curious about the world around her, crossed the then-strict lines of

segregation in 1920s Georgia by counseling poor African American women on matters of health care.

The family became moderately prosperous, but when Jimmy was born in 1924, the first American president to be born in a hospital, he was taken back to a house that lacked electricity and indoor plumbing. By the time he was ten, the boy stacked produce from the family farm onto a wagon, hauled it into town, and sold it. He saved his money, and by the age of thirteen, he bought five houses around Plains that the Great Depression had put on the market at rock-bottom prices. These homes were rented to families in the area.

Jimmy was educated in the public school of Plains, attended Georgia Southwestern College and the Georgia Institute of Technology, and received a B.S. degree from the United States Naval Academy in 1946. In the Navy he became a submariner, serving in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets and rising to the rank of lieutenant. Chosen by Admiral Hyman Rickover for the nuclear submarine program, he was assigned to Schenectady, New York, where he took graduate work at Union College in reactor technology and nuclear physics, and served as senior officer of the pre-commissioning crew of the *Seawolf*, the second nuclear submarine. Carter's rustic childhood didn't only frame his political challenges as opportunities for perfection, but also developed him into a fiercely independent problem-solver.

Carter's summation of his childhood and upbringing is that he "was born into a Christian family, nurtured as a southern Baptist, and [had] been involved in weekly Bible lesson all [his] life, first as a student and then, from early manhood, as a teacher. This level of intimacy with the church is nearly unparalleled in presidential history, as Mr. Carter even maintained his Bible lessons through his presidency.²⁹ For Carter, religion wasn't merely a part of life—it was a way of life (Carter, 2005).

The Peanut Farmer

On July 7, 1946, he married Rosalynn Smith of Plains. They are celebrating 72 years of marriage. They had four children. When his father died in 1953, he resigned his naval commission and returned with his family to Georgia. He took over the Carter farms, and he and Rosalynn operated Carter's Warehouse, a general-purpose seed and farm supply company in Plains. He quickly became a leader of the community, serving on county boards supervising education, the hospital authority, and the library.

In 1954, as segregationist organizations were springing up all over the South in response to *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the chief of police and a Baptist minister in Plains, Ga., visited a peanut farmer, Jimmy Carter, at his warehouse and urged him to join the local White Citizens' Council. Carter refused. The men returned a few days later and told the farmer he was the only white man in Plains who hadn't signed up. That didn't change his mind. The men returned a third time with some of the farmer's customers, who threatened to boycott his business. If he couldn't afford the \$5 dues, they would lend it to him. "I've got \$5," Carter responded. "And I'd flush it down the toilet before I'd give it to you." (Berman, 2015).

Early Political Career

In 1962 he won election to the Georgia Senate. He lost his first gubernatorial campaign in 1966, but won the next election, becoming Georgia's 76th governor on January 12, 1971. As governor, he signed into law a bill ensuring that all areas of Georgia would have equal state aid for education. Carter also worked to cut government waste, combining three hundred state agencies into only thirty. The number of African American appointees on state boards and agencies increased, and the number of African American state employees rose by 40 percent.

During his term, laws were passed to protect historical sites, to conserve the environment, and to encourage openness in government.

Carter showed his commitment to the environment by an unprecedented decision (with shades of the water wars he would fight in Washington) to block the Sprewell Bluff Dam, a job- and park-creating project of the Army Engineers that would have damaged the swamps, streams, and wild rivers Carter prized as God's creation. No governor in any state had ever blocked a water project fully paid for by the federal government. His willingness to take on vested interests, combined with his stellar civil rights record, made it unlikely that he would have been reelected if the Georgia Constitution had permitted governors to serve two consecutive terms. But Carter was already setting his sights higher than that (Eizenstat, 2018).

Zeliger (2010) postulates that Governor Carter's initiatives were noteworthy for another reason: they were difficult to label. This wasn't unusual throughout Carter's political career, as he often "refused to be pinned down by preconceptions of what a liberal or conservative should do." A political maverick from day one, Carter would have a particularly difficult time garnering support for his many legislative proposals from the people who had ultimate authority over them: the legislators.

President of the United States

Carter became increasingly involved in national Democratic Party politics. In 1972 he headed the Democratic Governors Campaign Committee, and in 1974 he was chair of the Democratic National Campaign Committee. That same year Carter officially declared his intention to run for president in 1976, even though he was still little known outside the state of Georgia. As late as October 1975 a public opinion poll on possible Democratic candidates did not even list his name. Carter's rise to national prominence began in January 1976 with his

intensive and industrious campaigning. By March he was the top choice among Democrats to run for president. At the Democratic convention in New York City in July 1976, Carter received the nomination on the first ballot. As his vice-presidential running mate, he chose Walter F. Mondale, a United States senator from Minnesota. He won his party's nomination on the first ballot at the 1976 Democratic National Convention. In 1976, Jimmy Carter was elected president of the United States. With the memory of Watergate still fresh in the public's mind, President Carter appealed to voters by calling for honesty and integrity in government—the need for basic values guiding the country's leaders.

Leadership Strengths and Weaknesses

There is a case that can be made that Jimmy Carter had many areas of policy that were major negatives, but every President, when carefully evaluated, has failures. The only Naval Academy graduate to serve in the White House, President Carter has an enormous foreign policy legacy but, Feinman (2015) suggests that it is time to acknowledge that Jimmy Carter also had major accomplishments that need to be known far and wide as part of painting a complete picture of the Carter record in the Presidency.

Observers who label Carter inept preface their judgment with the notion that, at least, he deserves credit for his admirable intentions. Despite once claiming that “Carter never really got a fair shake,” Kissinger (1994) claimed that Carter's righteousness occasionally threatened his policies. Diamond and Mazlish (1979) conclude that while admiral, Carter's moral fiber was unfit for national leadership. Moens (1990) sees Carter's failure as resting not in his idealism but in his decision-making process; he was too limited in his options by the fact that he consulted only a select group of close associates. Domin (2003) argues that Carter favored integrity over

expediency in politics and, while this may have made him immediately unpopular, Carter has gained respect in hindsight and the world is a better place for his efforts.

Brinkley (1998) sees Carter's morality as his "greatest strength and bane," having produced good and tragic results that Americans will appreciate in hindsight as Carter continues to work for peace and justice.

Eizenstat (2018) argues that it is time to re-evaluate his four years in the White House too. Carter may seem like a transitional figure between scandal-tarred Richard M. Nixon and venerated Reagan, but in "President Carter: The White House Years," Eizenstat makes the case that the 39th president changed the course of the country for the better. "He has more than redeemed himself as an admired public figure by his post-presidential role," Eizenstat writes. "Now it is time to redeem his presidency." Eizenstat (2018) surmises that Carter was a thoroughly decent, well-intentioned idealist who tackled tough issues like energy, wrestled with economic troubles and advanced human rights, all with drive and determination. He made peace between Israel and Egypt, ratified the Panama Canal treaty and started the military buildup in response to Soviet aggression that Reagan would accelerate. Despite punishing inflation and unemployment, economic growth under Carter was nearly as high as it was under Reagan, and he added less to the national debt as a percentage than either Reagan or the two Bushes (2018).

While in office, President Carter successfully championed a long and comprehensive legislative agenda, including passage of a national energy policy, deregulation of transportation industries and banking, and civil service reform. President Carter also negotiated a historic peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, established diplomatic relations with China, concluded the SALT II treaty, and gained ratification of the Panama Canal treaty.

Carter's emphasis on human rights and use of the CIA to smuggle in pro-democracy texts into the Soviet bloc played an important role in fostering the anti-Soviet activism that led to the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe.

The Iran hostage crisis and failed rescue attempt was an albatross that hung over Carter, no more so than on election day which happened to be the first anniversary of the hostage crisis. Carter deserves credit for getting all hostages home safely and would have done so sooner but for a deal that the Reagan campaign had agreed to provide arms to Iran in exchange for delaying the hostage's release.

Domestically, Carter had to deal with an economy in a state of shock from two Arab oil embargoes, the release of Nixon-era price controls and the continued decline of manufacturing jobs due to foreign competition. Once again, he did so forcefully with an aggressive energy policy that included establishing the Department of Energy, promoting alternative fuels and the establishing fuel efficiency standards in automobiles.

His legacy also includes the creation of the Department of Education, expanding Pell Grants to an additional 1.5 million families, airline deregulation which has made air travel more affordable and doubling the size of the National Parks through the addition of 43 million acres in Alaska.

Accomplishments

The Camp David Accords

Carter's greatest accomplishment during his administration is most often considered to be his role in the Camp David Peace Accords between Egypt and Israel. These two countries had been at war with one another since Israel was established in 1948. In 1978, President

Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel met with President Carter at the presidential retreat that is known as Camp David.

President Carter took office after a decade that saw three Arab-Israeli wars and the murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics. Jimmy Carter brought together the leader of Egypt, Anwar El Sadat, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, to Camp David, Maryland, and managed to convince both of them to recognize each other's government and establish diplomatic relations which survive after almost four decades. It is one of the most significant and lasting diplomatic accomplishments of any President in American history.

The Panama Canal Treaty

President Carter reshaped Latin America, with the Panama Canal Treaty and cut off military aid to repressive regimes in Argentina and Brazil. Jimmy Carter resolved an issue that was festering for the entire century, and had not been accomplished by negotiations under other presidents. Turning over the Canal in the midst of the fear that Fidel Castro's Cuba would end up controlling it took courage.

Diplomatic Recognition of Mainland China

While Republicans often cite Reagan's military buildup as contributing to the collapse of the Soviet Union, rarely do they mention that it began under President Carter. When the Soviets challenged Carter, he acted forcefully by arming those engaged in Jihad in Afghanistan to give the Soviets their own Vietnam-like catastrophe, proceeding on the MX Missile Program, reinstating draft registration and boycotting the Moscow Olympics. More importantly, unlike past Presidents who did little to prevent Soviet military action in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as 27 Soviet and Warsaw Pact divisions amassed on the Polish border ready to invade to crush the nascent Solidarity movement, Carter publicly and privately signaled to the Soviets that there

would be “very adverse consequences”. Carter’s strategy with key allies that included a plan to immobilized much of the Soviet merchant fleet led to their abandoning invasion plans.

Human Rights in Foreign Policy

Carter transformed American foreign policy values by holding military dictatorships accountable for human rights, and cutting foreign assistance when it was not promoted. Carter was the first U.S. president to put human rights at the forefront of foreign policy. Carter’s emphasis on human rights and use of the CIA to smuggle in pro-democracy texts into the Soviet bloc played an important role in fostering the anti-Soviet activism that led to the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe.

Establishment of Three Cabinet Agencies

Carter reorganized the Health, Education and Welfare cabinet agency begun under Dwight D. Eisenhower, with the Health and Human Services Department and the Education Department replacing that gigantic agency. The Department of Energy was created in reaction to the oil crises under Nixon and Carter, and emphasis was placed on pursuing alternative sources of energy, including solar and wind.

Environmental Advancements

Carter became the President to accomplish the most in only one term in office on environmental reforms, and has been rated as the third most successful President in that area of policy making, trailing only Theodore Roosevelt and Richard Nixon in the judgment of environmental activists.

Selection of Walter Mondale as Vice President

The best appointment Jimmy Carter ever made was Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale to be his Vice President. Mondale became as close to a co-President as any Vice President has, and he set a standard for the further growth in influence and impact of that office.

In the final analysis, although President Carter was unable to convince congress to support most of his social programs, he was an integral force behind many treaties that impacted world peace and human rights.

Carter- the Moralist

Jones (1988) posits that Carter was not an enigma, he was a "moralizer" from beginning to end. From the day he formally declared his candidacy on December 12, 1974, Carter ran for president on a promise not to lie, not to mislead, not to avoid the tough, controversial issues, and not to betray the trust of the American people. He said he would be different from day one of the campaign. Right out of the gate, the former Georgia governor promised a government of love, compassion, and a restoration of "the basic integrity of our nation.

It might be said that Carter's faith-based perceptions might have been compatible with those of the conservative right. Though Carter was indeed religious, he belonged to the religious Left—"a very different beast," (Cadwaladr, 2012). Carter supported many of the positions around which the Left rallied, such as environmental legislation, healthcare, and a dovish aversion to military intervention. Even so, Carter examined certain issues, such as abortion, through the same religious lens that the right would. These political incongruities made for a slightly awkward leader of the Democratic Party. Indeed, Carter's religious identity made him more of an outsider once in Washington, standing between even him and his party (2012).

His determination to promote the rights of women led him in 2000 to sever ties

with the Southern Baptist Convention, after six decades, over its rejection of women in leadership. He explained his decision to quit the church by suggesting that women and girls have been discriminated against for too long in a twisted interpretation of the word of God (Carter, 2014).

Morris (1996) asks people to take a look at Carter's moral leadership and judge him that way. However, moral leadership may not have the payoff that most people want. In this in-depth portrait of Carter, Morris argues that Carter's unique moral outlook was critical to his career as a politician, from his election as governor of Georgia through his presidency to his statesmanlike contributions to national and international policy today. On July 15, 1979, Jimmy Carter gave his memorable "malaise" speech (though that word was not used in the address). Ostensibly a talk about the energy crisis, it became a sermon about a "crisis of confidence" born of a national spiritual decay. It was, Morris asserts, quintessential Carter, treating private morality as a public problem. Morris uses this speech as a springboard for a discussion of Carter's morality, which he believes animated many of his actions as a politician. Carter's beliefs are a mixture, Morris suggests, of concepts drawn from his fervent evangelical Christianity and from an old-fashioned southern populism. As a young man, his emerging racial liberalism estranged him from white society in Georgia, and together with a fragmented family life, fostered in him a yearning for community that, Morris argues, propelled much of his political life. Morris argues that he consistently attempted to use private spirituality as a moral basis for addressing world problems, including poverty, human rights, and world hunger (1996).

Carter- the Humanitarian

Brinkley (2009) claims that Carter's emphasis on human rights helped end the Cold War, that he was the first president to challenge the legitimacy of the Soviet's rule at home and that

this encouraged dissidents to eventually overturn the communist system. Carter was the first U.S. president to put human rights at the forefront of foreign policy. Carter's emphasis on human rights and use of the CIA to smuggle in pro-democracy texts into the Soviet bloc played an important role in fostering the anti-Soviet activism that led to the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe. Carter believed in peace--in preventing war--and in human rights. These two values were the lodestars by which he guided his conduct of foreign affairs. And again, these values were expressions of his sense of religious and moral duty.

The nation's 39th president and former Georgia governor earned the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize and has achieved folk-hero status in some of the world's poorest countries for his tireless work spearheaded through the Carter Center, a non-profit organization headquartered at Atlanta's Emory University. Truly a citizen of the world, he is widely considered to be the best former president in recent memory for his humanitarian efforts. Twenty-three years after he left the White House, Carter is doing some of the most important work of his life.

The Carter Center, which he established in 1982 with his wife, Rosalynn, has helped improve life for people in more than 65 countries. He has helped mediate disputes in Bosnia, Ethiopia, Haiti, North Korea, and Sudan, and has monitored 44 elections—sometimes putting his own life in harm's way—in 22 countries, including the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Zambia. In July, Carter will monitor an election in Indonesia.

In 1986, the Carter Center discovered that 3.5 million people in 23,000 African villages were suffering from Guinea worm disease, a painful and crippling disease that is spread through parasite-contaminated water. Thanks to the Carters' efforts, the Guinea worm, which has been around since biblical times, is close to being eradicated through educational programs, which will make it the first parasitic disease to be eradicated.

Post-Presidency

The Carter Center

Carter has devoted his career since leaving office to trying to achieve peace and help humanity. In 1981 he established the Carter Center, which sponsors a number of programs, including the promotion of human rights in third-world countries and maintaining detailed medical records for local Atlanta children. The Carter Center also monitors elections in newly democratic countries and works to fight disease. The Carter Center in Atlanta Georgia is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public institute founded by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, in 1982 (Carter Center). The Center is dedicated to fighting disease, hunger, poverty, conflict, and oppression. At present, the Center operates 13 core programs, which have touched the lives of people in 65 countries, including the U.S. Habitat for Humanity began in 1984 when Carter led a work group to New York City to renovate a six-story building with 19 families in need of decent shelter. Each year, Jimmy and Rosalynn give a week of their time to build homes.

The Presidential Medal of Freedom

Nearly twenty years after he left office, former President Jimmy Carter was honored for promoting freedom both while president and after he left office. On August 9 1999, President Bill Clinton bestowed America's highest civilian award on the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter in a ceremony at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia. In presenting the award, President Clinton (Clinton,1999) stated, "In the past this award has been presented to people who have helped America promote freedom, by fighting for human rights, by righting social wrongs, or empowering others to achieve or extending peace around the world. But rarely do we honor two people who have devoted themselves so effectively to advancing freedom in all those ways.

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have done more good things for more people in more places than any other couple on the face of the earth." President Clinton noted that one of the greatest accomplishments of Carter's term, his work on Middle East peace, and particularly the Camp David accord, was one of the many ways Carter has promoted peace and democracy around the world. "One of the proudest moments of my life was the day in 1993 when Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands on the south lawn of the White House. That day was made possible by the courage of the people of the Middle East and their leaders, but also by another handshake twenty years before, and the persistence of President Carter as he brokered the Camp David accords. I know it is a great source of pride for him that twenty-one years later not a word of that agreement has been violated," (1996).

The Nobel Peace Prize

In 2002 President Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his continuing efforts to bring peace to warring countries, to advance human rights, and to promote global economic development in poor countries. Carter, Begin, and Sadat negotiated the Camp David Accords, the greatest single step in 70 years toward bringing peace to Israel and Egypt, thereby making room for Jordan and Israel to do the same. Technically he received the 2002 prize for his work through the Carter Center. Begin and Sadat had shared the 1980 prize, partly because Carter allegedly demurred, considering the risks the other two were raking, and partly because no one besides Carter had much confidence it would work. His work with the Carter Center has raised the level of legitimacy of elections worldwide, and his intervention has both prevented and reduced the levels of violence in a number of regional wars, particularly in Africa.

The Teacher-Preacher

Ex-presidents are supposed to gently retire. But for nearly 40 years, Jimmy Carter has refused to fade away. The Secret Service ferries him through town in a black car, past the gas station that was once his brother's, past his old campaign headquarters in a little warehouse, past the home Rosalynn was born in, to Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia.. About 40 Sundays a year, at age 93, he still spends most weekends in his hometown, preaching wise and powerful sermons. Sermons that speak to our current national crisis. When he teaches, he transforms from whatever your vision of Jimmy Carter is into someone different. In his tenth decade on earth, he still possesses that rarest of airy commodities: hope. "Hope is something that he thinks about a lot—and faith, too, from which hope rises in the first place, he explains (Carter, 2005).

Carter remains involved in international relations as well. In 1990 he persuaded Nicaraguan opposition leader Daniel Ortega to step down and let an elected president step in. In the early 1990s Carter brought messages from Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid to President Bill Clinton that helped avoid a military conflict. In June 1994 Carter negotiated with North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung to freeze his country's nuclear weapons program. Carter has continued to monitor closely our militarism.

Carter's Impact on the Global Economy, Cultural Diversity, and Building Partnerships

Despite a largely unsuccessful one-term presidency, Jimmy Carter later rehabilitated his reputation through his humanitarian efforts after leaving the White House. He is now widely considered one of the greatest ex-presidents in American history. Former President Jimmy Carter was one of the youngest ex-presidents ever when he left office in 1981 at 56 years old. Carter

and wife Rosalynn have channeled their time and energy into resolving conflicts, fighting disease and defending human rights around the globe.

His work with the Carter Center has raised the level of legitimacy of elections worldwide, and his intervention has both prevented and reduced the levels of violence in a number of regional wars, particularly in Africa

In particular, Carter has worked effectively as an ex-president to develop community-based health care systems in Africa and Latin America, to oversee elections in fledgling democracies and to promote peace in the Middle East. Carter remains involved in international relations as well. In 1990 he persuaded Nicaraguan opposition leader Daniel Ortega to step down and let an elected president step in. In the early 1990s Carter brought messages from Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid to President Bill Clinton that helped avoid a military conflict. In June 1994 Carter negotiated with North Korean dictator Kim Il Sung to freeze his country's nuclear weapons program.

Carter had been criticized for his handling of foreign relations during his presidency, but his tireless work on all kinds of issues since leaving office has earned him great praise. In 1999 Carter was awarded with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest honor for private citizens. President Bill Clinton bestowed America's highest civilian award on the Carters in a ceremony at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Carter has continued to monitor closely our militarism

Add to those the eradication of the guinea worm. In 1986, when Carter undertook to organize support for the token U.N. eradication program, most Europeans and Americans had never heard of the parasitic disease that disabled 3.6 million people each year in Africa and Asia.

So far one disease, smallpox, has been eradicated. Guinea worm, mentioned in the Torah, may be the second.

All presidents want history to judge their presidencies a success. Carter is no exception. Carter says it does not bother him that in the public's mind he is the best ex-president ever or that he used his presidential experience to improve his post presidential reputation (Carter, 2004).

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Conclusion

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Brinkley (1996: pp. 505-29) argues that Carter's foreign policy was highly successful, and that Carter's human rights policy gave the United States moral credibility around the world. He concludes that it has allowed Carter to become a highly respected international statesman and the most successful ex-president Brinkley. Strong (2000: 274-5) also argues that Carter's foreign policy was consistent and that he was an "active, intelligent, and sincere individual in command of a complicated foreign policy agenda."

This paper concludes that President Jimmy Carter was not the worst ex-president of the American people. He also continues to have a great impact on the global economy, cultural diversity, and building partnerships.

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