

**JIMMY CARTER'S POST-PRESIDENTIAL ACTIVISM FOR AMERICAN
DIPLOMACY**

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Date

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**Jimmy Carter’s Post-Presidential Activism For American Diplomacy**” submitted by me for award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Whatever errors of fact or analysis remain are mine alone.


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PREFACE

Former US President Jimmy Carter has been forging a new path for post-Presidential activism. By launching a public policy institute, he has introduced a vehicle through which he can establish an independent and influential role for himself as a former president. This study seeks to examine a largely under researched topic about what comes next for former American Presidents after leaving office with specific focus on the post-Presidency of Jimmy Carter.

The yearning to find a meaningful role for the former US Presidents that began as early as nineteenth century was answered by the efforts of Presidents themselves by the late twentieth century. The study holds particular value today with the rise of a Post-Presidential era in the backdrop of expansion in the power and responsibilities of the Presidents. It further holds ground in the wake of institutionalisation and internationalisation of former Presidents that promise to benefit people and governments with a transnational view to problem solving. The dissertation aims to examine post-presidential activism with the study of Carter's efforts as an ex-President in the diplomatic arena.

While the nation-state in general and the government in particular have been studied as the most important unit of analysis for understanding international politics and relations, several theoretical studies also include the role of non traditional agencies, such as various kinds of NGOs and non state actors. In this connection the Carter Center can be considered an important NGO and Jimmy Carter an important non state actor in his incarnation as an active Ex-President. The dissertation examines the role of such non traditional agencies in international affairs. It will involve studying Jimmy Carter's Presidential and post-Presidential activities to analyse whether an active political life after Presidency is defined by unresolved issues during the tenure of the President.

This study thus tends to test the following hypotheses:

1. Jimmy Carter's involvement in diplomatic affairs and his initiatives on public welfare programmes were attempts to redeem the failure of his Presidency.
2. Ex-Presidents served as front-men of current administrations to promote American interests abroad.

Following research questions will be raised to aid in testing the hypothesis:

- What has been the general trajectory of post-Presidential activities in the United States?
- To what extent was the expansion of US engagement in global affairs and consequently in Presidential powers responsible for an active post Presidency?
- Did lack of meaningful accomplishments during Carter's presidential tenure motivate him towards a more vigorous post-Presidential career?
- Was Carter more successful in handling foreign policy issues, such as human rights and democracy promotion after leaving the White House?
- Did the institutionalization of post-Presidential role through Carter Center help Jimmy Carter to exercise more influence in public issues?

Policies, decisions, controversies and unresolved issues of Presidents constitute an important background for examining the role of Ex-Presidents. Thus the reports issued by the White House, US Congress, Pentagon, State Department and other relevant agencies have been used selectively as primary source materials. In this particular case speeches by Carter, while in office and after demitting office, and his autobiography have also been used as primary source materials. Available oral history transcripts are yet another significant source material. Several books and articles from journals and news material have been used as secondary source materials. As the period under study is part of modern American history, relevant information and analysis on Carter's post-Presidential activities available on the internet have been analysed.

The dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter gives a brief background of the post-Presidential activities from first President George Washington to George W Bush. The chapter also delves on other facilitating aspects such as age, financial security, health and emergence of global media that has allowed Ex-Presidents to remain more influential in public arena. Second Chapter is a narrative of how Carter dealt with the next phase of his life outside the scrutiny and politics of the White House and established his credibility as a global peacemaker, human rights campaigner and a humanitarian. The third chapter discusses Carter's attempt at brokering the Middle East peace. It traces his accomplishments during the White House tenure in terms of Camp David Accords his post-Presidential initiatives to reach to a peaceful solution to the conflict. The next chapter focuses on Human Rights policy objective of Carter Presidency and his post-Presidential initiatives regarding religious freedom, release of prisoners of conscience in several countries and human rights abuses. The chapter will briefly look into Carter Center's role in the Democratic Republic of Congo in strengthening the justice sector, including the judiciary, police force and various government ministries along with civil society organisations, dealing with human rights protection. The last chapter deals with Carter's democracy promotion initiatives through election monitoring in countries transitioning from authoritarian to democratic governments and compares Carter's post-Presidential democracy promotion in Nicaragua to that of his Presidential interference in the country.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: LIFE AFTER RETIREMENT FOR AMERICAN
PRESIDENTS

Since the World War II, the US Presidents are arguably the most powerful persons in the world. Not only within the borders of the United States, but their influence has also extended around the world. However, following the inauguration of their successor they re-appear as private citizens who are even more zealous to deal with critical situations confronting society, polity, national and international. In such a scenario, it remains to be probed how far they are able to leverage their influence to continue their political activism even after demitting office.

The President of the United States does not only serve as the head of the government and that of the state but also as the symbol of the US for the rest of the world. His leadership involves capability to deal with crisis situations at domestic as well as international level. The first President of the United States George Washington had the task of shaping a new government and strengthening a newly independent state. President Abraham Lincoln had to preserve the unity of the Union in the midst of a civil war on the issue of slavery, and President Franklin Roosevelt had to instil confidence in American people, the labour class and even corporate America when the Great Depression and World War II struck the country. Theodore Roosevelt set the stage for America's emergence from a regional power to one with global influence, and deal with the issues of increasing urbanisation and unbridled capitalism on society. These leaders have been revered by the American public, some up to 'mythical proportions' (Edwards 2000:12). Even those whose works did not achieve so much prominence continued the work undertaken by George Washington.

When a President Leaves Washington...

Retiring from high office had been one of the demands of a democratic system that needed leaders, respected and followed them but did not worship them. Representative government was an effective method of apportioning blame for poor political performance and encouraging the rotation of leadership guided by merit and humility.

This type of government had been against pandering to the powerful. It created space for dissenting political minorities and provided a level playing ground to the competition for power. This enabled elected representatives to test their political competence and leadership skills in the presence of others equipped with the power to sack them. Democracy thus required willingness to accept political defeat: to leave office upon losing an election and follow rules even when they work against one's own interest. However, this created dilemma for both the leaders as well as those they lead when they had to leave the positions of power (Schenker 1985: 501; Keane 2009:2; Anderson 2010: 65).

The uneasiness of not being able to define a role for their ex-Presidents remained with the American public for a long time. During the early years of the Republic, there were involved in the debate about how should a republic rope in ex-presidents in public life so that the democratic ethos is not challenged? (Benardo and Weiss 2009:2) Questions were raised regarding the responsibility of the state towards ex-Presidents. Whether former Presidents needed an 'emeritus' status to define what they did after leaving office? Was it beneficial for the nation to keep ex-Presidents at the helm of affairs or was it inappropriate on their part to influence American polity after their term expired? Even as former politicians continue to make them useful in the present scenario there has not been a clear guidance on how their services should be used. This is not only restricted to the United States. Since the 1970s, about 1,160 individuals have served as Head of the State or Government in approximately 190 countries. Of these, about 30 have been ruling (as opposed to merely reigning) monarchs, who are neither obliged nor typically expected to

leave office; an additional 85 or so died in office; about 115 have been ousted by military action (coups, revolutions, or invasions), and 190 are currently in office.¹ This leaves at least 700 leaders at the apex of their careers confronting the question of occupying themselves after office (Anderson 2010: 65). However, none of them can match the influence of US Presidents.

The old pattern for former US Presidents, it is said, was, “Writing books, playing golf and get sent to funerals”. President William Howard Taft (1908-1912) during his tenure had wryly proposed “a dose of chloroform” as a means to protect his countrymen “from the troublesome fear that the occupant [of the White House] could ever come back.”² Lord Bryce in *The American Commonwealth* published in 1888 for the first time advocated emulating Roman practice and inviting ex- Presidents to the Senate to exploit their experience and skill. His argument was rubbish in favour of the requirement of a popular government rather than “turning Senate into a rich man's place or a monarchical institution”. Several other measures were discussed such as making ex-Presidents “permanent representatives at large” to avoid the need of pension for them. This bill introduced by US Senator from Florida William Bryan in 1912 if passed would have entitled them to all the rights of members of the House of Representative, except voting, along with an annual salary of 17,500 dollars (New York Times 1912). This legislation got nowhere and met its end after the final variation of theme of making ex-presidents members of national Security apparatus failed to gather the required support. Even in this century suggestions were made to convene a council of former Presidents or make them heads of commissions for social security or health care reforms but no concrete steps

¹ These figures were compiled with the help of a database constructed by Guy Grossman. The ambiguity in these data is considerable, since some presidencies are largely ceremonial (Israel, Ireland) while some premiers are merely the instruments of presidents or kings (Tunisia, Jordan). Moreover, over the 35 years for which this data was collected, the number of countries and thus the number of executive offices changed, the number of democracies changed, and, in some places, the relative powers of presidents and premiers changed. Thus the conclusions drawn from these data should be treated as suggestive rather than definitive of the universe.

² Schelsinger (1973: 485) cited President Grover Cleveland as saying that ex-presidents would be relieved from any embarrassment if every President died at the end of term. Benardo & Weiss (2009: 2) reiterate another one of his ironic quote, “It has been suggested that they be taken out in a five-acre lot and shot. It seems to me however that they have already suffered.”

were taken in this regard. The need to find a more fruitful role was answered by the leaders themselves in the post- World War II era. Contemporary times have seen ex-Presidents containing large portfolios of diplomatic and humanitarian activities which do not allow them to retreat to oblivion.

Skidmore cites two reasons behind this development. First is the intent of restoring the image loss during the Presidency (Skidmore 2004: 3). Leaders often do not leave office as contented people or in a manner of their own choosing. They often have a deep need for remaining in the political game. While some indulge in activities and interests beyond politics there are others who dream of a comeback. This can be the reason which could have impelled Presidents John Quincy Adams, Jimmy Carter, Herbert Hoover, Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton to play a more active role after Presidency. Another factor that plays a role in this regard is that of influence. The kind of influence Heads of the State, especially the US Presidents hold over world polity in the present scenario has been outstanding and does not necessarily leave them with much choice or intent to fade away in obscurity.

Post-Presidency and Political Influence

Richard Neustadt defined presidential power as the “power to persuade”. He stated that a President’s power comes from ‘political influence and not constitutional language’, along with the status and authority of the office and the ‘rituals of the nation’. His approach gained favour because it made presidential leadership personal and dynamic rather than structural and rigid (Smith & Smith 1994: 3). Keane defined influence as the “ability to motivate citizens to do things for themselves, an intelligence that includes level-headed focus; inner calm; courteousness; the refusal to be biddable; the ability to listen; accept criticism and a certain radiance of style” (Keane 2007: 18-19). It also involves showing the dependence of the leaders upon the led - that true leaders lead because they manage to get people to look up to them, rather than leading them by the nose.

This ability to persuade has further been used in President's position as 'Diplomat in Chief' due to foreign policy making tactics, communication with other Heads of the States, visits to the US by foreign leaders, presidential trips and tours abroad, summit meetings and conferences etc. In foreign affairs noteworthy images regarding Presidents remain. For example, "era of good feeling" is attributed to James Monroe, the spirit of a "new internationalism" to Woodrow Wilson, the "good neighbour" to Franklin Roosevelt, containment of Communism to Harry Truman, and the international promotion of human rights to James Earl Carter. (Plischke 1985: 549) This holds ground even when Presidents leave office. Even though they command no formal powers yet their influence remains. It is believed that ex-Presidents know the contours of presidential power and retain skill and influence of presidency post-retirement.

As the United States became more active in world affairs, Presidents have personally become global actors, playing active role in conflict prevention, management of conflict and peacemaking efforts. This involvement extends beyond retirement. Adding to this, the advent of electronic media, improvement in transport and communication in the era of globalization have presented opportunities for ex-Presidents to remain in public eye and influence politics and policies. Ex-presidents also enjoy a 'cult status' which cements their influence. Even if a President retired with poor ratings, his legitimacy remains. For instance, when Nixon and Carter retired both of them had very low approval ratings (Gallup Polls). Yet, Nixon was regarded an authority on foreign policy and Carter an expert on human rights. Their experience in the high office carved a space for them to remain active globally.

World history has numerous examples of even non-American political leaders who have remained active in their post-retirement life and have made remarkable contributions towards conflict management and conflict resolution. Former Irish President Mary Robinson became the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; former Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland served as Director General of the World Health Organization; Mali's two-term President Alpha Oumar Konaré became chairperson of the

African Union; Among the former leaders who have served recently as UN “special envoys” are Ricardo Lagos of Chile, Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique. Nelson Mandela has established himself as African continent's foremost elder statesman by working in the field of conflict resolution, education and rural development. Russian ex-President Michael Gorbachev has an impressive second act by speaking out on issues ranging from nuclear disarmament to water quality in the developing world, fighting cancer and working for protecting environment and Kofi Annan's peace negotiation efforts (most recently in Kenya) are a few examples among many working in the field (Keane 2007: 21). Nonetheless, it has always been American Presidents whose influence remained dominant in the world of diplomacy partly because they happened to have administered the most powerful country in the world and are supposed to have greater insights into the working of global diplomacy.

US Presidents: Life after Retirement

In the United States, George Washington as the first President set the tone for what American Presidents do or not do in Office as well as after leaving White House. His “orderly” departure was meant to secure the foundations of the new government — the rules and procedures of democracy: the Government of laws and not men.

For George Washington retirement meant leaving the public stage and going home to attend to one's business. By this definition, Washington retired thrice. The first was in 1759 when he gave up his military career and began the life of a planter at Mount Vernon. This lasted for about sixteen years. In December 1783, after nine years away from home as Commander in Chief of the Continental army, he was engaged in securing his country's freedom. He resigned his Commission and returned to Mount Vernon for five years before his departure to New York to become the first President of the US. After eight years in the Presidency, Washington retired for the last time, in March 1797 to his farm in Virginia. Notably, he was not only the first President but also the first ex-President. The ambiguities and uncertainties of the role of ex-President lay alongside his

status as hero of the Revolution and Father of His Country. Washington's career in retirement exemplified motives that would characterize the activity of many ex-Presidents in future. He was anxious about his successor's management of the institutions and could not resist meddling in affairs of the State after retirement. This led to lending prestige to policy positions about which he might have been ill-informed. Anderson states, "These were not his finest judgments, and they tarnished an otherwise sterling political record (Anderson 2010: 67).

At Washington's initiative, men in his successor's cabinet provided him with frequent confidential reports on developments in foreign relations. Upon his return to Mount Vernon, Washington wrote Secretary of War James Mc Henry asking him "to communicate to me occasionally such matters as are interesting, and not contrary to the rules of your official duty to disclose?" (Abbot 1999) Reacting to French hostility in the seas, Washington even gave rhetorical support to John Adams' *Alien and Sedition Acts* that established criminal charges for forms of public criticism of the president and Congress. During this period, Washington could not even stand any criticism of his administration and any such attempt was replied in an angry, sarcastic and contemptuous tone³. His life after retirement also points to the problems faced by successive ex-Presidents. Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson and Dwight Eisenhower faced the issue of loss of political influence, concern over managing finances, etc in their post-presidential years.

They were others who remained more active. President Andrew Johnson was re-elected to the office of Senate in 1875 but died only months into his term. President William Howard Taft enjoyed nine years of his post-presidential life as the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court. Grover Cleveland was the only President to have non-consecutive terms

³ James Monroe's published a bitter attack on Washington administration foreign policy in "*A View of the Conduct of the Executive in the Foreign Affairs of the United States*". Washington's remarks after reading the book suggest how strongly persuaded he was that his opponents were not just wrongheaded but had in fact become dangerous and even treasonous. It also reveals great personal and emotional stake in the conduct of American foreign policy.

of Presidency and thus experienced two terms of post-Presidency. Several ex-Presidents such as Martin Van Buren, Millard Fillmore and Theodore Roosevelt have campaigned unsuccessfully after retirement for Presidential re-election but only Cleveland could recapture the post. John Quincy Adams served the House of Representatives in his ex-Presidential years. He criticised President James K Polk policy for accepting slavery. Adams also termed the 1846-1848 war with Mexico as the “most unrighteous war”. His opposition to Polk's policies stretched after terms of four intervening Presidents (Andrew Jackson, Van Buren, Henry Harrison and John Tyler). Tyler also spoke against President Polk's strategy of empire building through land grabs. Tyler became a member of the Confederacy's Provisional Congress and swore an oath of loyalty to a nation at war with the US. He also won election to the South's House of Representatives but died in 1862 before taking his seat there (Benardo & Weiss 2009: 127).

The roles of former presidents in the early years of the Republic were largely confined to domestic issues and this explains the orientation of ex-Presidents. The US was not very active on global political and economic issues till it started emerging as a superpower since World War I. The policy took its first body blow with World War I that paved a new platform for the President in world politics. Woodrow Wilson worked hard to create the League of Nations but the domestic factors prevented ratification of the Treaty of Versailles by the US Senate. Yet, this created space for ex-Presidents to show activism in foreign affairs. While Wilson was playing a very proactive role in Europe after World War I, Theodore Roosevelt as an ex-President was dead opposed to Wilson's approval to the German question and did not hesitate to speak out against the administrative policy. He made a compelling case for intervention by promoting the policy of preparedness through speeches, articles, book *America and the World War* and provided behind the scenes contributions to a film the *Battle Cry for Peace* while skewering Wilson for “supine and coward response to German hostility” (Benardo & Weiss 2009: 135). Taft, on the other hand, backed Wilson's plan for a negotiated peace settlement through the League to enforce peace. Even though he was disappointed at Wilson's failure to appoint him as the Peace Commissioner at the Paris Peace Conference of January 1919, where the

League of Nation's proposal was up for debate, yet he remained committed to the nonviolent judicial settlement of the international conflict (Benardo & Weiss 2009: 134-136).

The Second World War led to the US adopting an active international role under Franklin Delano Roosevelt who committed the nation to an unalterable position against Nazism, Fascism and Japanese militarism. This marked the rise of modern presidency where the President became a champion of “American values” (Gould 2003). Harry S Truman, as the post-war President, worked for the reconstruction of Europe, democracy promotion in Germany & Japan, formation of NATO and containment of communism. Beginning with Wilson’s diplomatic activism during and after the World War I, Roosevelt’s spectacular leadership during the World War II and Truman’s Himalayan venture to shape world order in the post-war period, there was no going back for the US Presidents from playing a global leadership role. This US involvement abroad led to unprecedented growth in Presidential power. Simultaneously, it also created space for them to remain in public forum after retirement. In the post- Cold War period, internationalism got intertwined with the character of the US President as he responded to threats of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, environmental degradation and diseases and apparently worked towards promoting freedom, good governance and prosperity. While responsibilities of Presidents grew more than the resources at hand; there were instances where the post of Presidency and the office acted as restraining factors rather than facilitators.

Ex-Presidency in the Post- War era

The United States since the initial years of the Republic relied on special representatives to maintain international alliances and execute diplomatic missions outside the conventional channels. Former US presidents in the post-war era became international celebrities. They were sought as international statesmen who could have an effect on the policy by acting as American emissaries, ambassadors or conduits to the current US administration. The incumbents sought the help of former Presidents for advisory

purposes and surrogate diplomatic prowess to legitimize their own policies towards international and events. Personal representatives are believed to offer certain advantages over resident diplomats when it comes to communicating and negotiating with foreign parties and assessing local conditions and personalities. It is believed that they are better equipped to speak more candidly than career diplomats and negotiate with full residential authority. Information may also be more forthcoming to them. They often have access to former staffers who might still be in positions of power. They might also have influence through members of the family in top positions such as between George W Bush and George Bush, Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton etc. By relying on former President an administration can overcome bureaucratic constraints, avoid entrenched beliefs and standard operating procedures (Fullilove 2005:16).

Relationship with incumbents

The post-presidential activism has a direct bearing on the former Presidents' relationship with their successors especially if they have to exercise influence in American politics after their retirement. For example, in 1981 when Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter went to Egypt President Anwar al Sadat's funeral to represent President Ronald Reagan, the then White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig called it the 'presidential hat trick'. In 2005, former President Clinton attended the funeral of Pope John Paul II at the request of President George W Bush. Ford, Carter and Bush were photographed 'shoulder to shoulder with President Clinton at the White House to show their support of the North American Free Trade Agreement, forming a 'united presidential front'. Carter through his peacemaking skills acted as the diplomatic liaison and succeeded in easing tensions with North Korea and Haiti and helping Clinton administration to sidestep crisis in these countries.⁴ Recently, George H W Bush and Clinton undertook Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina and Rita relief work at the request of Bush administration (Updegrave 2006: xvi, xvii).

⁴ However, Carter's tactics of upstaging administration in both the cases alienated him from the administration

One of the first instances of an ex-President being approached by his successor was Theodore Roosevelt consulting Grover Cleveland on the miners' strike and even promising to have him chair a panel to mediate but then not doing it. During the World War I, former President Herbert Hoover became the Chairman of the Commission for relief in Belgium in 1914 and helped to feed nine million people in Belgium and northern France in two and a half years. During the Second World War, he intervened to protect the domestic food supplies of Norway, Poland, Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands in the face of blockades. In the Cold War period, Hoover was called upon as an elder statesman of the Republican Party to chair the two prestigious 'Hoover' Commissions on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government. President Truman adopted three-quarters of the two hundred and seventy three public administration's proposals.

The post-White House years of Dwight D Eisenhower were spent advising President John F Kennedy and President Lyndon Johnson while trying to move the Republican Party towards a more central political position. Feldman (2000:120). Eisenhower gave tactical advice to Kennedy on how to negotiate with Khrushchev during the Cuban Missile Crisis. He recommended that American plans should involve blockade, intense surveillance and military action if the Soviets refuse to remove the missiles. President Johnson also recruited advice from Eisenhower during the 1965 Vietnam escalation (Benardo & Weiss 2009:144; Updegrave 2006: xviii). The Watergate scandal initially prevented successors from tapping Nixon for diplomatic delegation or to serve on government commissions. Despite being excluded or probably because of it, Nixon influenced international politics by publishing dozens of articles and books on Vietnam, superpower politics, China and Soviet Union (Schaller & Williams: 195). Nixon undertook a highly touted trip to Beijing to meet Chinese President Mao Zedong which did not sit too well with the Ford administration. During Carter administration, he criticised Carter's "rhetoric on human rights" and hammered him for his "values based foreign policy" (Benardo & Weiss 2009: 215). He was deeply critical of administration's failures in Afghanistan and Iran and stated, "You can never let a terrorist think you don't have any other recourse except diplomatic protest" (Benardo & Weiss 2009: 215). What really served as rehabilitation

for Nixon in political affairs was Reagan's invitation to him in 1981 to attend Anwar Sadat's funeral. Reagan kept consulting Nixon on great power diplomacy. He even cited verbatim Nixon's summation of the play between the superpowers: "We want peace. The Soviet Union needs peace." (Benardo & Weiss 2009: 154) Nixon shored up support for Reagan during the Iran Contra affair. President Clinton also solicited Nixon's advice on the post- Cold War politics.

These instances claim an ever increasing influence of ex-Presidents in the global arena. The developments in contemporary politics have shown their systematic involvement within governmental and non-governmental structures. The ex-office holders are taking advantage of regionalizing and globalizing trends by getting involved in cross-border business, think tanks, charities, media and public affairs. In several cases it is the administration in power that supports former Presidents' activism. However, it is contentious whether this bid to congregate their support at the international front is actually a political game to get rid of the former Presidents from the domestic politics. It should be kept in mind that ex-Presidents of contemporary times are more opportune to pursue their agenda independent of incumbents and current administration. There have been numerous instances when former Presidents have been critical of their successors. Theodore Roosevelt harangued Woodrow Wilson for his reluctance to get the US involved in the First World War. In the post-War period, Hoover criticised Truman's Marshall Plan for economically and militarily burdening the US. Clinton, George W Bush and George H W Bush were irritated by Carter's "freelance" diplomacy and one-upmanship. Carter was critical to Bush administration policy of "pre emptive strike" in Iraq, detention in Guantanamo. He also referred Dick Cheney "a militant and a disaster" (Cohen 2007) to which the Bush administration replied by calling him "irrelevant" (Schaller and William 2003). This highlights the extent to which former presidents are thought, at least by incumbents, to have a moral obligation of representing their country's administration at the international level.

Post-Presidential politics can get personal as well. George H W Bush made clear that if Clinton tried to attack George W Bush during 2000 election, Bush Senior would tell people what he thought of Clinton. Clinton returned the favour after leaving office by criticising Bush's policy in Iraq, growing federal deficits and other issues (Schaller & Williams 2003). Yet, “peer to peer counselling” (Anderson 2010) has been effective in the international arena. Incumbents collaborate with former Presidents for their strategic presence in American diplomacy abroad but often this has been marked by lack of planning and continuity. In 2010, Obama called on Bush and Clinton to spearhead a fund raising effort to provide aid to earthquake hit Haiti. However, the partnership fizzled as soon as the crisis was over. Similarly, President Bush in 2005 asked Clinton to raise money for the hurricane Katrina victims but the ex-President offered harsh criticism of the administration's disaster- relief effort saying the policy did not favour lower-income Americans. Thus, it has been seen that former Presidents act as visible public opinion leaders providing strategic advice, counsel and even criticism to their successors. This more active and independent post-presidency has been a by-product of a rise of modern presidency. Several other factors have also played a crucial role in this development.

Age and Health

One of the most decisive factors for post-presidential activism has been age and overall health of the President at the time of leaving Office. It is considered that the topmost jobs in the government are gruelling and stressful resulting in fast ageing of the US Presidents. Adding to that, loss of power and public attention can take a toll on ex-President's health.

The phenomenon of ‘younging of politics’ (Weller & Fraser 1987) i.e. -- declining average age of retirement in politicians has allowed former Presidents to live relatively healthier lives and continue as important political figures. They are more likely to exert influence in the US and global arena. Theodore Roosevelt was the youngest President to leave office. Carter was 56 when he left office in 1981, and has now been an ex-President

for 25 years; Clinton left office in 2001 at the age of 54.⁵ In the post-World War period, Hoover had a record setting post-presidential tenure of 31 years. He once said of his political foes and critics, “I have outlived the bastards” (Skidmore 2004:118). Jimmy Carter this year surpassed Hoover in post-presidential tenure. Even though it is true to some extent that the young leaders out of office have more chances and intent to get actively involved than older fellows, this may not always be the case. Skidmore compared Franklin Pierce whose post-presidential life starting at the age of 52 was hardly a concern for anyone with that of John Quincy Adams who left office at the age of 61 but continued with his political career in the US House of Representative Skidmore (2004: 3). (See Annexure 2)

Money Matters

The improved material condition of former Presidents with the passage of Former Presidents Act of 1958 (CRS Report), an office to cater to their ex-presidency, mail privileges, security and staff salaries have all played crucial role in their after office involvement in public sphere. During the early years of the Republic, even as Congress allocated separate funds, Presidents were expected to finance the standard funds of the White House which left them indebted by the time they left offices. Thomas Jafferson and Ulysses S Grant worried about mounting debts in their retirement. Grant suffering from cancer had to finish autobiography before his death which was to earn 500,000 dollars for his nearly destitute family. The Virginia planters returned to their estate but many like Jafferson, Madison and Monroe lost them to their creditors (Hetch 1976). Monroe spent his post-presidential half decade fighting for Congressional reimbursement for his work as Minister to France and died empty handed and destitute. Benardo & Weiss argue that the institution of slavery also added burden on earlier ex-presidents. The early southern presidents-- Jafferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Tyler and Polk -- remained wedded to slavery regardless of its human and economic costs. This remained a drag on the already

⁵ See Annexure 1: Age of ex-presidents

deteriorating plantation life of former presidents. Only George Washington willed to manumit all his slaves (at his wife's Martha's death) Benardo & Weiss (2009: 9).

Every time the matter to introduce legislation for securing pension for former chiefs was introduced in the Congress, it was met with stiff resistance. To many legislators a pension was tantamount to royal privilege, something a democracy would not allow. In the fall of 1912, steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie had offered an annual pension of twenty five thousand dollar to living former presidents and their widows. His offer was perceived as an attempt to shame Congress into action. Some members of the Congress and the public believed that it was inappropriate for a private company to pay pensions to former Presidents. Legislation was introduced that year to grant public pensions to former Presidents but was not supported by the Congress. William Howard Taft, the only former President who was then eligible for Carnegie's offer, refused the pension⁶ (Congressional Research Service 2008).

When Truman left office he was given a pension of 110 dollars a month for his service as a World War I veteran. The government offered no financial assistance, no administrative aides, no office space and Secret Service Protection for the former President. Truman had to sell portions of farm for shopping centre and suburban development. He has been quoted as telling the then House Speaker, Sam Rayburn, "I am so poor; I don't have a pot to piss in or a window to throw it out of" (Benardo & Weiss 2009:11). In 1958 Presidential Act was passed providing life time benefits for the former Presidents. The Presidential Transition Act was passed in 1963 allotting ex-presidents with funds to cover expenses in the first six months out of office.⁷ After President Kennedy's assassination, the bill for Secret Service Protection for former presidents and their spouses estimated was passed⁸ (Updegrove 2006:120).

⁶ It was later revealed that Taft had accepted an annuity of ten thousand dollars annually by the industrialist. On being probed he had said "Mrs Taft is an interested party." Later on, the financial support was redirected to Yale University.

⁷ Richard Nixon spent two hundred thousand dollars in transition expenses. Clinton received \$1.8 millions for the 2001 transition (Congressional Research Service 2007).

⁸ Nixon gave up his secret service protection in 1985 but Ford's bodyguards, shadowing him round golf courses in the US, used to boast of having the best jobs in government.

By 1980s, the pendulum had swung back in the opposite direction. Former US presidents nowadays are millionaires. Money was not a problem for Lyndon Johnson who was then the richest ex-President and owner of TV stations, banks, property and ranches worth 20 million dollars. Gerald Ford has been described as the first person to make ex-presidency a lucrative job through speaking engagements and sitting on corporate boards (Updegrave 2006: xxii). Besides the \$183,500 received from presidential pension, Ford also received \$120,247 in a Congressional pension. Over the years, the Congressional provisions have unduly escalated and yet are pittance to what former presidents are now earning. Former Presidents Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton each received presidential pensions of \$183,500 in 2006. Clinton secured a record breaking book deal of 9 million dollars in his first post-presidential year alone.⁹ The prosperity of the new age former Presidents have been instrumental in creation of an unofficial office of ex-presidency which allows them to be a part of policy making. This was not possible till the mid 20th century where the need to provide financial security for themselves and their families occupied much of their private lives. The increase in facilities not only amounts to prescribing pensions and annual office allowances, state funerals and burials with military honours but facilities such as Secret Service protection also point out how valuable they are considered to the nation.

Rise of Mass Media

Rise of mass media has turned former Presidents into celebrities. Even after leaving office, they are sought by newspapers and journals for comments on news events and interested in their post-presidential activities. The relative ease of travel, the ability to

⁹ According to the Congressional Research Service's Report to Congress, Clinton will receive a pension of US \$201,000 plus, for example, rental payments \$516,000, travel \$50,000 and telephone expenses of \$79,000, with total expenses of \$1,162,000; Carter will receive a pension of US\$191,000 plus rental \$102,000, travel, \$2000 and telephone, \$10,000 and total expenses of \$518,000 Smith, S. (2007). *Former Presidents: Federal Pensions and Retirement Benefits*. Washington DC, Congressional Research Service. The most recent salary increase, to \$400,000/year from \$200,000/year, took effect when George W. Bush became President. The President also receives a \$50,000 non-taxable expense account. The compensation

communicate quickly, and the almost instantaneous exposure to issues have transformed them into marketable assets. Theodore Roosevelt owns up a high degree of credit for this development. His flamboyant ex-Presidency kept him in the national spotlight. As a result of the emergence of mass media and the mechanisms of celebrity the President had become famous and familiar to his fellow citizens. Out of office he found audiences gathered to hear his reflections, and reporters covered his activities (Anderson 2010).

Truman became the first President for officially receiving a hefty fee for his appearance on a television programme '*See it*' even as he did not accept posts on corporate boards, commercial endorsements and consulting deals. In the coming year, almost all the former presidents made use of their status to secure themselves financially through book deals and television interviews etc. The status of former Presidents has been likened to that of the First Lady. None has power but both have influence. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was proclaimed 'eyes and ears' of the President as polio had prevented him from walking and inspecting the various conditions around the country. Lady Bird Johnson, Betty Ford, Hillary Clinton became stalwarts of environment protection, women rights and health care policies respectively. Later on Hillary became the first spouse to run for Presidency but could not win. She is currently serving as the Secretary of State and is the only member of Congress who has been the First Lady. While the First Lady exercises her influence through the President who is accountable, a former President works without such accountability. In this way the power of contemporary Ex-Presidents rests in the capacity to exercise informal and indirect influence in a political system in which they no longer have direct and formal control.

Institutionalising Presidency

In recent decades former Presidents are being re-evaluated and re-analyzed in the light of their present activities. The change in the role of former Chief Executive has led to a debate about how much responsibility is to be given to them in a democratic set up. Ex-

of the President is controlled by law, specifically [3 USC 102](#) ("Compensation of the President", Title 3,

Presidency has evolved in the Post-Cold War era to include former Presidents like Carter, Ford and Clinton who are engaged in public diplomacy, advocacy and activism. They have set up foundations and think tanks to capitalize on their legacy and contacts. Carter Center and Clinton Global initiative, Ford's Vail Group, which included ex-chancellor of Germany Helmut Schmidt, ex- British PM James Callaghan and ex-French President Giscard D'Estang to discuss international issues, are a few examples in this regard (Theakston 2008:16).

There has been much talk about institutionalizing or formalising the role of ex-Presidents such as a non-voting senate position or a Council of ex-Presidents to discuss 'serious issues' of the day. US Senate in 1963 amended rules to allow former Presidents to address that body but no President has made a formal address so far. Walch suggests convening a "council of former Presidents" to raise public awareness of critical issues like the future of social security or even health care reform. Walch, Theakston and Updegrove differ as they prefer former Presidents using personal, informal and private tactics to tap their advice, experience and judgment. Moreover, they believe that model of 'all-star teams' of 'hipster statesmen' cannot work for all policy problems. Often, these organisations are also seen as challenging the authority of government or international organisations like the UN. Benardo and Weiss, however, see such organisations as championing multilateralism which they believe is, "need of the hour considering America's waning hegemony" (Benardo and Weiss 2009: 290). A council or not but it is a fact that presidents today are leading productive lives and have ample opportunity to contribute to the nation and the world if so they wish.

Section 102, of the US Code).

CHAPTER II

JIMMY CARTER: WHITE HOUSE YEARS AND AFTER

When Jimmy Carter left White House in 1981 at the age of 56, defeated in his bid for re-election, his popularity was at an all time low. He was rejected for “deficient” leadership qualities in the wake of political problems that dogged his administration. At the personal front, he stood indebted due to a ruined family business. Within a few years, however, Carter staged a comeback in American diplomacy with a commitment to human rights, democracy promotion and peace mediation that were the cornerstones of his administration’s policies (Tengel 2010: 2). While briefly charting Carter’s Presidential beliefs and performances, this chapter will look into how Carter performed outside the scrutiny and politics of the White House, his relationship with incumbents and the Press. The ex-President has been carrying forward American diplomacy and an active public service role not just alone but institutionally and through massive public-private fundraising and coordinated efforts.

Carter’s Presidency

When Carter became the President the trust on Presidency and authority was at an all time low with disasters in Vietnam and Watergate scandal involving President Richard Nixon. In 1976, his candidature came as a whiff of fresh air to the electorate: “an outsider and honest candidate expected to mark the return to more simplistic form of the government.” His campaign was based on the need for a President who could bring morality to the office.

Carter’s campaign was a shot away from the usual Cold War politics that had given the concepts of collective security, massive retaliation, domino effect, credibility and deterrence. From the 1940s, the policy makers had followed an ideological approach to foreign policy and responded to every international incident as a direct threat to nation’s most fundamental interests. This collapsed with humiliation in the Vietnam War and moral bankruptcy of Watergate scandal involving President Richard Nixon Spencer

(1988: 15). However, post-Vietnam and post-Watergate ethos made Carter's "moralism" attractive. People supported a candidate whose basic statement on foreign policy was, "if elected to pursue a policy as good and honest and decent and truthful and fair and compassionate -- and filled with love -- as the American people." Domin explains that Carter's statements about businesslike administration, simplified, fair and compassionate welfare programmes were not issue stands but abstract statement of principles acceptable to large masses. This allowed him to duck on controversial issues and appeal to a sufficiently large group to win an election (Domin 2007:18).

He assumed the role of a "citizen president" while showing disdain for pomp when he decided to walk from the Capitol to the White House at the time of inauguration (Carter 2010: 7). He also adopted several other populist gestures such as selling the presidential yacht, carrying his own luggage, abolishing limousine service for top White House staff, asking the Marine Band to refrain from playing "Hail to the Chief" and "Ruffles and Flourishes" at formal ceremonies in the beginning of his administration.¹ In an effort to administer a transparent Government, Carter tried to be open to public in several other ways. He was remarkably accessible to press and held about 59 solo conferences in four years. Carter also initiated a series of radio call-in programmes called "Ask President Carter", in which ordinary citizens could seek answers from the President.

Carter in his Presidential inaugural address had stated human rights to be the cardinal principal of global governance. "Because we are all free we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere. Our commitment to human rights must be absolute." Several authors sympathetic to Carter have traced Carter's stance to human rights to his Baptist missionary sensibility. Bergrenn and Rae have termed it as an "evangelical style" of Presidency which was mixing religion with politics. This often justified his interaction with foreign leaders, especially his close friendship with Egypt's leader Anwar Sadat. Religion often served as an indispensable guide for his Presidential behaviour. Carter stated, "Americans have a responsibility to try to shape the government so that it exemplifies the will of God. However, it should be noted that his commitment to God did

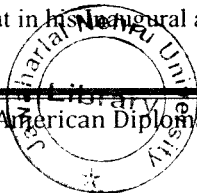
¹ Carter later on allowed Hail to the Chief and agreed that he enjoyed it

not rule out politics. Whatever talent God gave me should be used to the maximum degree. I believe God wants me to be the best politician I can possibly be” (Bergrenn & Rae 2006: 612).

Carter’s stance as an anti-segregationist has also been traced to his childhood experiences at his farm and town. In his inaugural address, as the Governor of Georgia, he surprised listeners by promising to steer Georgia into a new era of racial equality and economic and social justice. He did achieve an impressive list of reforms.² During his tenure the number of black state employees increased from 4,850 to 6,684. He established a special commission to improve services of mentally and emotionally handicapped and worked for environment protection, tax, welfare and judicial reform and consumer protection. President Carter in his statements sought the role of the US as a superpower in not just “material sense of military and economic prowess but authority and influence due to moral factors” (Berggren and Rae 2006: 617). Thus, values such as peace, human rights, freedom, democracy, environment quality and alleviation of suffering were the best foundation for the exertion of American power and influence for Jimmy Carter.

Human rights became the cornerstone of his foreign policy decisions even as he was disparaged by many for taking it up. As a matter of fact, his emphasis on the subject was often described as a political strategy for finding an effective issue that could be made acceptable to moderates and conservatives alike. Carter, on the other hand owed his opinion regarding human rights to his early childhood experience as a Southerner and early political career as the Governor of Georgia. Events like the Civil Rights Movement of 1960s, his refusal to join White Citizens Council in school and Carters’ opposition to the decision of their church congregation closing doors for black worshippers shaped his views on the matter. President Carter staffed the Human Rights Bureau in the Department of State with activists and set up mechanisms to ensure that performance in the area of human rights was considered in connection with decisions concerning foreign aid, arms sales and diplomatic contacts.

² For his gubernatorial race Carter had showed a conservative side towards segregationist policy. It was believed that he would support the status quo. But in his inaugural address, he stated, “the time for racial discrimination was over.”



Carter announced shifting goals from fighting communism to human rights and attempted to make moral consideration paramount over geopolitical considerations. Authors sympathetic to Carter have stated in defence that Carter could never fit in the capital because his leadership style was religious by nature that made him a preacher more than a politician. As President he spoke openly of his Christian faith which entailed daily prayers, abhorrence of violence etc. His foreign policy was based on open diplomacy and a linkage of morality and power. He had a vision for creation of a community of nations in which the US would work closely with her allies. Carter sought better relations with the Soviet Union as well as the rest of the communist world.

His foreign policy was not to be exclusively focused on the Cold War rivalry between Washington and Moscow. Rather, he visualised global interdependence taking the place of global confrontation and a new world order based on mutual cooperation, stability, justice and peace. Yet, Carter was firm in his beliefs that détente should not be pursued at the expense of human rights. Carter also tried improving relations with neighbouring countries in Latin America. He negotiated and signed Panama Canals Treaties stressing the “ethics of fairness”. He considered the earlier Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903 unfair for Panamians because no Panamian signed it. Carter argued that the new treaties provided a vehicle for the “purification of national soul by allowing demonstration of innate sense of fairness. This agreement is something we [Americans] want because we know it is right for us and fair to others” (Smith 1986). Even from a national security point of view, the treaties enabled the US to maintain the defence of the canal while not having to maintain military presence on Panamanian soil that would have assured a generation of nationalistic upheaval in the Latin American country (Rodman 2009: 136).

Carter further took steps to reduce the military force and enforcing arms limitation treaty. Carter has recounted his pre-Presidential naval experience at Chalk River that shaped his views on nuclear power and nuclear weapons, including his decision not to pursue completion of the neutron bomb. Disassembling a damaged nuclear reactor at Chalk River had resulted in Carter’s team absorbing a year’s maximum allowance of radiation

in 1 minute and 29 seconds. “We were fairly well instructed then on what nuclear power was, but for about six months after that I had radioactivity in my urine” (Carter 1976).

Carter administration had a number of achievements to its credit, amid a turbulent period in international and American politics. The Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel were a historic milestone in the diplomacy of Arab-Israeli peace. The Carter Doctrine proclaimed the vital US interest in the security of Gulf. Relations with China reached a new stage with full normalization and providing new leverage against Soviet Union. In the defence field there were advances in defence modernisation, including progress in stealth aircraft technology and deployment of MXICBM and Trident missile armed Submarine. The administration even began a substantial program of aid to anti-Soviet insurgents in Afghanistan that ultimately inflicted a significant strategic defeat on the Soviet Union.

The administration made human rights a criterion to deal with other countries. It focused on diplomatic actions through public sanctions in Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina etc. The individual security in these areas was jeopardized by their respective administrations. The fundamental civil and political liberties such as freedom of speech, press, assembly and association etc were either restricted or denied. While America’s policy did result in strained relations with Argentina or loss of exports to Chile, countries such as Ecuador and Peru showed tentative signs of moving towards Civilian role (Cohen 1982). He continued his diplomatic relations with China and helped oversee a white ruled Rhodesia into black controlled Zimbabwe. He worked to restore stable relations between Greece and Turkey, reduced the US ground troops in South Korea, pardoned Vietnam War draft resisters, made diplomatic overtures to Cuba and Vietnam and scrapped B-1 bombers among other things. In championing environment causes, he opposed several dam projects and issued executive order to protect wetlands, floodplains and desert ecosystems. Just before leaving White House he got Alaska Lands Act passed, which doubled the size of America’s national parks and wildlife refuges and tripled the amount of US land designated to wilderness along with protecting Alaskan rivers.

Yet, Carter's presidency was constantly mired in difficulties and contradictions. Even those sympathetic to Carter agree that even though his ideology might be based on morality but he nevertheless failed in "political massaging" necessary to get things done in Washington. The qualities that got him elected – being an outsider, honesty and religious certitude made it more difficult for him to govern. While Carter's policy goals and personal style were worthy of attention, he could not pass the political, institutional and social constraints (Kaufmann 1993:2-3). He was so tied in his beliefs that he could not see limitations that would create for him as President. Spencer criticised Carter's amateur style of governance as being responsible for the huge gap between the objectives stated and the tools he was willing to employ to achieve them (Spencer 1988).

Revisionist scholars, however, argue that anyone entering the White House in the 1970s had a herculean task to face. The Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, breakdown of historically strong party system, cracks in the Congressional system of seniority and appearance of hundreds of politically action committees (PACs) had compromised the power of Presidency. The re-evaluators of Carter administration policy believe he had championed a post-Cold War foreign policy before the Cold War was over but it was met with staunch resistance from the hawkish Washington establishment. It was considered too soft on the Soviet Union and too hard on "moderately repressive regimes" on the right (Brinkley1998: 20).

Carter's political ineptitude and cultural conflict are counted as his biggest failures. While he projected himself as a Southerner and outsider, Members of the Congress remember him as an "inexperienced and arrogant" leader who demanded immediate action on numerous comprehensive proposals. He has been attacked for his naivety in foreign policy matters which led to the decline in American diplomatic prestige and military strength. For example, his policy based on the Helsinki accords to end violations of human rights especially in Soviet Russia was aimed at liberalising Soviet's internal policy and deter imprisonment of political prisoners in psychiatry hospitals.³ However,

³ The US State Department warned the Soviet government that if it tried to silence Soviet physicist Dr Andrei Sakharov, it would be violating international standards of human rights.

this was ignored by Russia and her satellites who disparaged Carter for meddling in their internal policy (Johnson 1997: 931). The US administration's outspoken criticism of Kremlin paranoid the Soviet government which was also responsible in failure of SALT II talks. Carter was also attacked by France and Germany for his inflexibility in foreign affairs. European leaders found him too preachy reminding him that few nations had spotless record. They accused him of unnecessarily provoking Moscow and blamed for the end of detente (Kaufmann 1993: 47-48).

According to Annual House Freedom Survey of Democracy and Liberty, there was no increase in freedom during Carter's presidency. Instead both Iran and Nicaragua, principal targets of Carter administration became human rights disasters. The US administration's unclear policy in Nicaragua led to overthrow of Somoza regime and its replacement by a Marxist and pro-Soviet Sandinista regime. During Carter's administration there was an expansion of Cold War as Soviet naval power expanded greatly moving not only to Northwest Atlantic and North-west Pacific but also South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. He was also blamed for alienating friends and allies but failing to develop any coherent response to the extension of Cold War. It should, however, be granted that in some respects Carter was less conciliatory towards Soviet Union than predecessors Nixon and Ford. Nixon administration had cut military spending but Carter endorsed a build up roughly to that proposed by Ford. His decisions to cancel B-1 bomber and slow development of MX missile were largely technological judgments (Ribuffo 1988: 21). His sympathetic concern towards the Third World can be viewed as American tradition of spreading democracy, enhancing stability, and gaining access to raw material along with cultivating market.

Nonetheless, ebbing prosperity and perceived decline in American power shattered Carter's political coalition. Welfare state liberals chided him for tinkering with government machinery instead of fighting unemployment, while democratic cold warriors saw in Shah's fall and in Sandinista victory proof that his naïve concern for human rights had undermined vital interests. Soviet invading was a sign of communist expansion due to America's curbed defence expenditure. Iran turned out to be the

Achilles' heels for Carter administration already reeling under economic weakness. In the fall of 1978, when Iranian revolutionary students stormed the US embassy in Tehran and abducted 52 Americans, Carter's presidency was held hostage with them. As days turned into months with no possible solution, the public faith in Carter was blown apart. The failed rescue attempt that led to death of eight American servicemen⁴ and pulling back of commandos led to a general feeling that Carter had lost control of his own administration. The negotiation settlement to free the 52 citizens held captive was not confirmed till Ronald Reagan took over presidency. Year 1980 was the time when the country was swept in "Reagan Revolution" (Ribuffo 1988: 23).⁵ Most of the Deep South, except Georgia, also went Republican.⁶ It is a fact that Carter's policy did not find much room in the Cold War infested environment. Yet, these served as the intellectual underpinnings for Carter's post-presidential career. Carter's farewell addresses focusing on environment, nuclear disarmament and human rights outlined his journey after the Presidency.

Carter in Plains

Upon returning home, Carter was not interested in sitting on corporate boards or making money on speaking circuit. He wanted to use his influence to work on the same issues he espoused during his Presidency. "Without attempting to represent the government of my own country as a former President, there was perhaps, a world-wide forum, I might address which could influence the actions of political leaders" (Carter 1982:584). The transition phase for the Carters was difficult. Jimmy Carter briefly succumbed to a spell of depression, exacerbated by his bleak financial situation. Carters had to deal with the mundane tasks of renovating his house that had been badly neglected since Jimmy Carter had become the Governor, take parental decision regarding the education of their youngest daughter's who was studying in Washington and wanted nothing to do with small-town life Plains had to offer. These decisions were the reminders of the dramatic

⁴ The bodies of the dead commandos were left on the ground which were later paraded around Tehran and put on display outside US Embassy.

⁵ Regan beat Carter by a huge margin 43,904,152 to 35,483,883

⁶ Regan said while addressing audiences, "A recession is when your neighbour loses his job; depression is when you lose yours. Recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his". See Brinkley (1998: 12)

changes in circumstances for the Carters. Carter had also accrued a debt from the presidential campaign that amounted to 1.4 million dollars and realized that his family business was mismanaged and had led to a debt of 1 million. The failed Iran rescue operation⁷ and above all defeat at the hands of Reagan whom he considered “intellectually lightweight and immoral to the core” (Updegrave 2006: 150) along with the rejection of the American electorate hurt him deeply.

Gradually, Carters started working on book deals to write their memoirs.⁸ In terms of politics, however, Jimmy Carter was considered a non person. Yet this isolation was misunderstood. The same year he welcomed Egypt’s President Anwar Al Sadat to his town, visited China and Japan for two weeks. He reassured Chinese officials that Reagan administration policies were not pro-Taiwan. At the behest of Amnesty International, Carter even took up the case for releasing Chinese dissidents who were unjustly imprisoned by the administration. He also raised the issue of American officials being denied access to research materials as well as interactions with Chinese citizens. Carter also discussed rise in OPEC prices during his visit to Japan. The momentous events of 1981, Sadat’s assassination, journeying to the Middle East, establishing funds for Carter Center helped the ex-President formulate an activist agenda. He realized that he had a role to play in both national and international affairs and that there was life beyond the White House. Meanwhile, Carters got involved in Habitat for Humanity. This made Americans see them in a different light. In 1984, they began working to building low-cost housing for the poor. They journeyed to New York City to rebuild a tenement. The sight of the hammer-wielding former President caused many Americans to reappraise the man they had voted out of office four years before.⁹ Now that Jimmy Carter no longer served

⁷ “I wish I had sent one more helicopter on that rescue mission”, Carter has confessed this on a number of occasions. See Updegrave (2006: 151)

⁸ Carter had maintained diary entries during his presidency often focusing his impressions of the world leaders visiting oval office. The Presidential Records Act of 1978 stipulated that all presidential papers after Carter's term would become the property of the federal government would fall under the Freedom of Information Act provisions and would be subject to public disclosure after twelve years. These diaries have served as the most valuable records for his books *Keeping Faith* and *White House diary*. Mrs Carter worked on *First Lady from Plains*. Later on they also published a joint book effort *Everything to Gain: Making the most of the Rest of their Life*.

⁹ They shared rooms with multiple roommates and slept in bunk beds. Mrs. Carter was a bit dismayed to discover that she would be sharing bathroom with twenty other women.

from the White House, people seemed freer to appreciate his acts. Media also resurrected Carter to some extent. It created an image of Carter as a humanitarian construction worker something that public had not seen from any ex-President in the past. He also directed programs to make harvest more bountiful in countries facing agriculture ruin in sub Saharan Africa, encouraging better health care programmes in the Third World countries through immunisation programmes, reduction of polio, measles, yaws, rabies and launched urban rehabilitation programmes.

Carter realised that he was no longer bounded by the bureaucratic and structural impediments that often prevented him from taking spontaneous action in the White House years. He did not have to deal with the press on a daily basis nor is he compelled to confer with Members of his Cabinet before making decisions. The ability to dictate his own agenda became a major factor in his post-presidential success, "He was doing it all by himself. That was the key. He didn't have to drag his administration, the press, and a confused public along with him. He was a lone ranger" (King 1989).

Carter Center: Germination of an Idea

Rosalynn Carter stated that the idea of Carter Center came to Jimmy Carter in the middle of the night,

"One night I woke up and Jimmy was sitting straight up in the bed. This is after we'd been home about a year, or maybe not quite that long. And I said, 'What's the matter?' I thought he was sick because he always sleeps all right, even in the White House, he can turn things off and go to sleep. And he said, 'I know what we can do at the library. We can have a place to resolve conflicts. If there had been such a place, I wouldn't have had to take Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat to Camp David. And so that was the germ of the idea for what became the Carter Center."

He decided that the library was to be used more than to just store reading materials. It had to be developed into a place where conflict resolution theories will be used to resolve intractable conflicts. Carter believed that his library could provide perfect setting for countries who wanted to solve matters through negotiations without going to the United

Nations and get one hundred and fifty countries involved. The ex-President was of the opinion that mediators could be arranged that both sides could trust. Meetings could be arranged with no publicity, no fanfare, sometimes in total secrecy (Carter and Carter 1995: 31). Carter wanted to duplicate Camp David to resolve civil wars and legal disputes which fell outside the ambit of UN or the US government.

Rationale behind the Carter Center

The need for such an arrangement arose as the Cold war came to an abrupt end. The changes in the global political environment created foreign policy difficulties for President George H W Bush and President Bill Clinton in dealing with changing events and world order with not only the fall of Soviet Empire but also the end of Soviet backing for its allies. Clinton's foreign policy combined brinkmanship with indecision along with Democratic Party's difficulties with using military force in the post- Vietnam era. All these changes led to a series of crisis that allowed Carter to act as peacemaking mediator (Chambers 1998: 413). He also recognized that the increasing problem was that of the ethnic conflicts and Civil Wars and the charter of the United Nations precluded it from intervening in the internal affairs of member nations. Thus, Carter saw this as an opportune moment to solve these issues drawing upon his prestige and skill. Moreover, Washington's comparative neglect of Africa and of health and human rights issues in the Third World provided another opportunity for Carter (Chambers 1998: 419). The Center did not have a strictly defined mission and evolved around the desires of Jimmy Carter, particularly several foreign policy items in his unfinished presidential agenda.

The Carters spent some time researching existing foundations. They visited fifty benevolent foundations, and looked at Harvard and Stanford Universities' connections with non-profit institutions. Carter, however, wanted "something less academic but more result oriented" (Carter and Carter 1987:30; Brinkley 1998:77). The idea involved raising millions of dollars which turned out to be excruciatingly painful for him. Before leaving the White House, Carter's approval rating stood as low as 34 per cent. Those who had financed his 1980 campaign felt cheated by his loss. Several foundations told his fund

raiser James M Brasher “Jim, let’s not embarrass ourselves or the President by having him come in. My board possibly couldn’t give you money.” (Chamber 1998: 418)

This problem was solved by 1980s as a result of enormous fund raising efforts by Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter. Carter made personal visits to big donors, invited them on vacation excursions and held regular auctions of Carter made furniture. During the first decade of leaving the Oval Office, he raised more than \$270 million in private donations. However, ethical questions have been raised on Carter for accepting donations from some controversial sources such as gambling czar and former Japanese militarist Ryoichi Sasakawa, and shadowy Pakistani financier Agha Khan Abedi. Sasakawa was an ardent rightist who encouraged Japan’s anti foreign policies and supported military expansion in Asia. His gambling operations also involved the Yakuza criminal gangs in Japan. Carter emphasised that the Japanese magnate had given funds for health causes such as eradication of small pox and guinea worm. Abedi was found to be involved in fraud, arms deals, laundering drug money and other criminal activities.

By 1994, Carter Center partnered with Emory University that gave the Center an academic affiliation without being reined in by government constraints as might have been the case with collaborating with a State university. Since then the Center has not faced any financial problems. The Center seeks to work in three broad policy areas: international democratization and development, global and domestic health and urban revitalization. The Center’s peace work includes conflict resolution, election monitoring, and the promotion of human rights and democracy. Health programs include agricultural initiatives to eliminate hunger in Africa, Rosalynn Carter’s mental health task force, and programs to control or eradicate preventable diseases afflicting the world’s poorest people. Carter Center programs have reached 65 countries, with the greatest impact on the developing world.

Carter has done election monitoring in more than a dozen lands such as Liberia, Jamaica, Mexico, etc and pursued programmes aimed at child immunization, mental health, gun control and reduction of tobacco use, mediating labour disputes. His global 2000

programme—an agricultural and health initiative—seeks to improve living conditions in more than 20 impoverished countries by promoting food self reliance, improving health care, sponsoring reforestation efforts and encouraging sound population policies. Carter Center has succeeded in eradicating the Guinea Worm disease 98 per cent making it potentially the second disease after smallpox to be wiped out by human effort. Guinea worm disease is spread by a parasite carried by water fleas in contaminated drinking water. This disease had affected about three and a half million people in Asia and Africa. Its history can be traced back to Egyptian mummies and is commonly believed to be the ‘fiery serpent’ described in the Old Testament. The worm can grow more than two feet long eventually working its way out from the body through blisters in the skin. Its remains and sores can affect victims fatally and cause crippling in children. The Center has fought the disease by distributing water filters. Carter acknowledges it as the Center’s biggest success and states that it ‘is unique’ in being able to mobilise ‘political will, financial support, technical expertise, and strong partnerships’, access world leaders to gain support for the eradication campaign and additionally, empower village communities to improve their own health (The Carter Center 2007d:6).

Another disease, River Blindness affects 18 million people visually impairing half a million and blinding 27,000. The control of River blindness became a central focus of Carter’s health programmes. The Center has provided 70 million treatments in eleven American and Latin African countries. Carter Center has worked on policy changes in the field of health in several countries. Carter had a direct, and almost immediate, influence on the domestic health policies of the countries he visited. The effectiveness of Carter’s initial work was demonstrated in December 1988 in Ghana where within days of Carter’s visit, the Ghanaian Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Center’s Global 2000, started working with the Department of Community Development of the Greater Accra Region to educate the 800 inhabitants of two villages on GWD and its prevention (Bennett 2007:41).

Another Project, The Atlanta Project (TAP) launched by Carter was to work with residents of poor neighbourhoods in Atlanta and help them gain access to tools that can solve the problems of teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, school

dropouts, homelessness and unemployment. In the arena of more active politics, he created the Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government in 1986 to promote free and fair elections and stressing human rights issues in Latin American countries. In this regard Carter has been working closely with Mikhail Gorbachev to develop models of fair media coverage of elections for nations in which freedom of the press is a novelty.

Carter's Relationship with Incumbents

Carter began his post-presidential activism mainly under the Bush and Clinton administration because they gave him a chance to return to diplomatic political life. Carter has also given credit to George H W Bush stating, "George Bush succeeding Reagan was like opening a new door for me" (Updegrave 2006: 160). Bush was more receptive to Carter's diplomatic overtures than Reagan had ever been. Almost invariably when Carter would return from a sensitive overseas mission he was invited to the White House for a briefing with the President and his advisors, including Secretary of State James Baker, with whom he had established a productive collaboration.

However, the relationship was not without problems. In 1990 just before the eruption of Persian Gulf War, Carter addressed letter to members of the UN Security Council and heads of foreign governments attempting to thwart Bush administration request for UN authorization of hostilities against Iraq. Carter wanted the administration to explore a negotiated solution before choosing war. The letter was seen by the Bush administration as interfering with the official American policy during international tension.¹⁰ In the Clinton administration, he has been accused of following one-upmanship. In quite a few cases he has gone beyond his mandate in negotiations. During Pyongyang mission, where he visited as a private citizen, Carter told North Korean dictator Kim II Sung that sanctions would not be imposed on the country. He even briefed the CNN that "nothing should be done to exacerbate the situation now". In response the US administration officials clarified their position stating that the US would continue to push for sanctions

¹⁰ Though Carter had sent Bush a copy of the letter, the administration was not informed that it had also been sent to Bush's counterparts throughout the world. They found out when Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney tipped off US Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney, forwarding Carter's letter.

until North Korea backed down. In Haiti also he stayed past his official deadline refusing to leave until he reached the agreement with General Raoul Cedras. After returning, Carter organised a last minute interview with CNN even before meeting the administration and defended Cedras' Human rights to remain in Haiti as part of the settlement much to the angst of Clinton administration.

Re-evaluation of Carter

Carter's life after Presidency has been discussed by several authors, many of whom believe that he made post-Presidency a cult symbol. At the time he left office his popularity was as low as 34 per cent. By 1992, however, the Gallup poll reported that Carter's ranking had gone up to 74 per cent. He turned out to be more popular than he was in White House. Winning the Nobel Prize also erased public's scathing anger towards him for his performance during Presidency. The character traits that alienated him during his presidency—his self-righteousness and stubbornness-- benefitted him in his post-presidential humanitarian activities. For example, Carter's headstrong determination and his uncompromising views played an integral role in helping him strike accords with some of the world's dictators. However, his post-Presidency has not gotten a free ride from critics. His intentions have often been questioned. It has often been asked whether he was undercutting incumbents or trying to become a one man UN or eyeing Nobel Prize. His freelance diplomatic gambits and public good works were seen as an act of redemption of his failed presidency. There were those who raised objections on his willingness as a human rights activist to kowtow to dictators and despots like North Korea's Kim II Sung, Haiti's general Reoul Cedras and Bosnia Radovan Karadzic. Carter in his defence has stated that he does not paint the picture in black and white. "Often we select favourite side in a dispute and the other side becomes satanic."

Carter and the Media

Carter's post-presidential relationship with press has been much more harmonious than when he was the President. The adversarial relations between President and the press was

one of the effects of Vietnam War and Watergate Scandal. The President was no longer a kind, understanding leader, but a scheming politician, who lied at every turn and whose sole motivation was to strengthen his political power. Or worse, he was a bumbling incompetent, who gained office because he was the grudging choice from a field of losers. From its zenith in the last year of the Kennedy era, the presidency had sunk to a new twentieth-century low. The repudiation of Lyndon Johnson for Vietnam War, followed closely by the Watergate scandal that brought down both Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, damaged the Presidency for a generation to come. (Liebovich 2000: 65-66)

This led to journalistic trend of focusing at president's flaws. These flaws were evident after Carter administration's first year. Moreover, Carter during his campaign had told the public that he would never lie to them. This was humanly impossible to achieve. Throughout Carter's presidency, journalists only grew more critical of him, highlighting what they saw as the president's inept and indecisive handling of the major crises that plagued the country. With each new foreign and domestic crisis, the critiques by the press reinforced some familiar themes. Carter was seen as an inept and weak leader, lacking in a clear and consistent vision for the future of the country. Time condemned Carter's failure to persuade Western European nations to sanction Iran during the hostage crisis in 1980, Time noted in an editorial that "Probably no factor has more impeded America's ability to lead the alliance in the current crises than the disdain that allied leaders have for Jimmy Carter. He is generally regarded as being inept and naive." (Time 1980:15)

He was the outsider who lacked political know how to work around the government. His advisors, like time blatantly attacked Carter's commitment to moral conduct which was unsuited to national and international politics and reprimanded him for failing to live up to the ethical standards that he espoused¹¹ (Rozell 1993: 319-320). In the last two years of his office, the press was relentless in criticising his administration and his decision making abilities. Carter left office bitter and frustrated with reporters' assessments of his

¹¹ Carter administration was mired in ethics controversies ranging from Office of Management and Budget Director Bert Lance's financial probity to Billy Carter's efforts on behalf of the Libyan government.

Presidency. The news coverage of Iran fiasco largely focussed on the inability of the administration to take a decisive action. This created embarrassment for the government in the domestic as well as international arena. After the death of eight military servicemen —Time ran a cover story titled “Debacle in the Desert.” The magazine wrote that “his image as inept had been renewed”. Post ran a story in 1981 suggesting that the Carters had installed listening devices in the Blair House, the official residence of visiting foreign dignitaries, in order to eavesdrop on the Reagans while they were in Washington for some pre-inaugural activities. Even as Carter threatened to sue the Post if it did not retract the story and offer a public apology, the newspaper’s response was unapologetic in tone initially and only two and a half weeks later did it publish an apology and retracted the story (Gailey 1981). Lance Morrow also criticised Carter stating that he was irrelevant to his own party and that four years of Republican Rule would give the Democrats the “internal discipline and philosophical coherence” (Morrow 1980:44).

The press often inflated Carter's admiring remarks about the wives of men with whom he was negotiating and kept going back to the pre-election interview for his Playboy magazine in which he admitted to having “lust in my heart”. He was also reprimanded for “coddling” dictators as well as his modus operandi to achieve peace at any cost. Despite that Carter's ex-presidential lifestyle has hardly come under the ire of the press that has criticised fashionable lives led by other former presidents such as Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. Carter administration performance has also been re-evaluated in the new light after Reagan years in the White House. The Iran Contra Affair of Reagan administration contributed in relative improving of Carter administration’s image (Rozell 1994: 323-324). By that time he also started receiving favourable press coverage for his post-presidential works in several countries.

Nevertheless, Carter has earned the image of being the most controversial ex-president. In the last twenty-five years, his intense activism on behalf of the Palestinians has alienated many people, especially American Jews, who allege that he pins disproportionate blame on the Israelis for preventing an enduring peace settlement in the Middle East. Carter’s strong views on the conflict date from even before his presidency.

During his Presidency, Carter found himself more in tune with Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat than with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. He, however, did not incur major damage to his reputation until the 2006 publication of "Palestine Peace Not Apartheid". This book generated anger in the press and among certain sections of the public. Carter in the book had asserted that Israel's separation wall between the West Bank and Israel proper enforced what he termed a system of "apartheid," under which the Palestinians were deprived of their basic human rights.

Carter has also been blamed for placating dictators. He was attacked for being naïve about accepting North Korean dictator Kim II Sung's assurances of a nuclear freeze at face value and consequently jettisoning Clinton's diplomatic threat of sanctions. Times columnist William Safire wrote that Carter's self-righteous and stubborn moralising could blind him to the duplicitous and cruel nature of some foreign leaders (Safire 1994). Critics like Hayward have attempted scathing attack on Carter saying that he had been the worst ex-President ever. He argued that his Presidential accomplishments remained negative yet Carter could not leave foreign policy to elected governments of the United States. He travelled around the world speaking ill of his successors in the White House. According to Hayward, Carter zealously wanted to remain in spotlight so as to recuperate his deep wound from the 1980 electorate rejection. His activism has been driven by ego rather than public interest (Hayward 2004: 228).

While there are innumerable viewpoints on Carter dealing with his Presidency and post-Presidency, it cannot be ignored that Carter redefined the post-Presidency and established new dimensions of public service for former presidents by creating a public policy institute that combined financial resources, expertise and leadership to play an important public service role.

CHAPTER III

SEARCHING FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

It was the success of the 1978 Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel that Jimmy Carter brokered during his Presidency which led him to believe that a common ground existed on which a more secure future could be built in the Middle East. This desire for peace led him to create— the Carter Center after his Presidency. It was to be a place where the parties to the world's most stubborn conflicts could come together and work out solutions through peaceful negotiations.

The Camp David was the first major attempt by any American President to have invested so much energy, thought and political capital to settle decades of bitter conflict. Jimmy Carter in several books and interviews has mentioned the issues that he faced bringing Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin to the negotiating table. These early experiences have been utilised in his post-Presidential career to develop programmes to resolve global conflicts, promote democracy and make personal efforts with world leaders through second-track diplomacy. As President, Carter had placed high priority on the Middle East Peace building on Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy (Brinkley 1999: 100). After Presidency, Carter began studying the Middle East history more closely while teaching in Emory University. Carter grew critical of the British chaotic domination in the Middle East. Carter believed the arbitrary borders imposed by the British were the reason for the constant disputes in the Arab world.

Thus, Carter planned to travel to the region and meet regional leaders to take a deeper look into the Palestinian issue. This was also construed as an effort to fulfil his unfinished presidential legacy in the Middle East.

Middle East: A Backgrounder

Understanding the problems gripping the Middle East is tricky. These have existed since ancient times. Due to the importance of the region primarily due to the natural resources, geopolitical interests have seen immense power-play at work affecting local populations. A military confrontation involving nuclear and biological weapons also renders the region more unstable. Yet, even in such times, hope persists among people within the region who want peace efforts to succeed. One of the notable developments in the region has been the repeated proposal by all 22 Arab nations to have normal diplomatic relations with Israel, provided major resolutions are honoured. The Arab nations have agreed to allow modifications concerning controversial key issues. This peace offer has been accepted by all Islamic nations and lauded by the US officials. Israelis have also accepted it as a good basis for discussion (Carter 2009: xvi). To hope for a peaceful future and understand present circumstances in the Middle East, it is necessary to look at the history of the region.

The Greeks conquered the region three centuries before the birth of Christ and Jews established an independent Judea until Roman conquerors came about 50 years later. A Jewish revolt broke out in AD 70 but was crushed. The next big revolt took place in AD 134 in which thousands of Jews were forced into exile. Roman conquerors changed the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina. Judea became the province of Syria-Palaestina and later came to be known as simply Palaestina. After Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in AD 313, he imposed his religious beliefs on the region. During that time, the name of Jerusalem was revived. The name Palaestina survived the seventh century Arab conquest when Prophet Muhammad founded the Islamic faith and united the Arabian Peninsula spreading political domination and religion throughout Syria-Palestine, Persia, Egypt, North Africa and Southern Europe. By the time of his death in 632 AD, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam, and he had united the tribes of Arabia into a single Muslim religious polity. The name Palaestina prevailed even as the borders of the region have fluctuated through the centuries.

Palestine—also called the Holy Land—consisted of warriors who could prevail over extremely powerful enemies. A succession of Turks, Kurds, and European crusaders ruled the state until the Ottoman Turks incorporated Palestine into their empire. After they lost to the British in the World War I, the area—which now constitutes of Israel, West Bank, Jordan and Gaza—came under the supervision of the Great Britain. The area was inhabited by Muslim Arabs and Christians but there was no concept of nationhood. Nationalism started taking root after Arabs realized that increasing numbers of Zionists had started purchasing tracts of land in the region. Jews for centuries had suffered pain of the Diaspora and persistent persecution. After suffering mass exodus from Western Europe, their goal was to establish their own nation to escape oppression and fulfil an interpretation of biblical prophecies. In 1939, Britain announced severed restrictions on the Zionist movement and land purchases in Palestine. In 1947, the UN approved a partition plan for Palestine — 55 per cent of which was to go to form Israel, while Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to be internationalised as holy sites and the rest of the land was to constitute an Arab state (UN Resolution 181: 1947). While the Jewish community in Palestine and other Zionist representatives approved the plan, Arabs were unanimous in their opposition. When Jews declared their independence as a nation, the Arabs attacked militarily and were defeated. The 1949 armistice demarcation line, also known as *Green Line*, became the borders of the new nation of Israel. Israelis had taken 77 per cent of the disputed land and Palestinians got West Bank and Gaza. This became the official border recognised by the UN. According to the UN estimation, during and after the 1948 war, about 710,000 Arabs left voluntarily or were ejected from Israel and more than five hundred ancestral villages were razed in the process. The Arabs termed this mass exodus as '*naqba*', or catastrophe. The treatment of these refugees has remained a major source of dispute within the region.

While Arabs continued to oppose the 1949 demarcation line, it was only in 1964 that the first summit of Arab leaders took place and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was formally organised. In May 1967, there was a six-day war between Egypt, Jordan and Syria against Israel that resulted in sweeping victory of Israel's advanced military forces and occupation of the Golan Heights, Gaza, Sinai, Jerusalem and the West Bank. As a

result of the conflict, more than 320,000 Arabs were forced to leave from Israeli occupied areas. After the 1967 war, UN Resolution 242 was adopted, which called for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in the recent conflict. It urged repatriation of refugees to their former homes.

The resolution also called upon the neighbours to accept Israel's territoriality, sovereignty, political independence and right to exist within secure and recognised boundaries (UN Resolution 242: 1967).¹ After the 1967 war, most Arab leaders acknowledged the pre-eminence of the PLO as representing the Palestinians and a quasi government was formed to deal with matters of welfare, education, information, health and security. A strong Palestinian leader – Yasser Arafat emerged who turned attention for raising funds for the support of refugees. He helped conducting diplomatic missions in more than a hundred countries inspiring worldwide contributions to their cause. Meanwhile, PLO militants settled in several Arab countries such as Lebanon and Jordan. They launched frequent attacks across the border against Israel but also started challenging the host governments. The retaliations from Israel fell on Lebanese and Jordan civilians. The casualties on both the sides enhanced fear, mutual hatred and suspicion as well as alienation. This has made reconciliation more difficult.

Carter's Role in the Middle East

Carter's tryst with the region started in his childhood Bible lessons. He could visit the region only in 1973 as the Governor of Georgia. This visit was a preparation for his future role as the President of the United States. During the visit, Carter met General Menachem Begin with whom he was to negotiate in Camp David as they would both secure highest Offices in their respective countries (Carter 2009: 11). Only four months

¹ UN resolution 242 in simple terms meant land for peace. That is Israel would withdraw from territory taken in 1967 if the neighbours would accept Israel's territoriality, sovereignty, political independence and right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries. However, the resolution has several problems couched in simple definition. For Israel giving up Sinai which was sparsely populated was one thing but giving up militarily strategic Golan Heights another thing. There were other problems like whether Gaza and West Bank would be returned to the countries from where they were taken. Role of Palestinians living in Israel and those living as refugees, having an armed or a disarmed Palestinian state and the problems associated with it etc.

after he returned from Israel, Anwar Al Sadat of Egypt and Hafez Al Assad of Syria launched simultaneous attack on Israel in the Sinai and the Golan Heights with the help of Soviet arms. Israel was supported by the US. The timely negotiations on part of the US and the USSR, however, saved the region from getting embroiled in a long term armed conflict.

The incident, nonetheless, left a deep impression on Carter who listed peace in the Middle East region among his major foreign policy goals. In his first state of Union Address, Carter (1978) stated that maintaining peace in the Middle East was a foreign policy objective for the new President. Carter believed that the first pre-requisite for a lasting peace was the Israel's recognition by her neighbours. He was also worried about the plight of Palestinians. He deplored Israeli's Prime Minister Menachem Begin's decision to build settlements in West Bank denouncing them as illegal and obstacles to peace. Weeks after inauguration, Carter went on to support a Palestinian state (Carter 2007:39). Carter also felt constrained by earlier American commitments not to recognise the PLO or acknowledge its legitimacy. Thus, the only alternative left to deal with the Palestinians was through Egypt, Syria, Jordan and their surrogates. Neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis were willing to consider the peaceful existence of the others as a governmental entity.

Carter administration from its side issued a joint communiqué with the Soviet Union calling for a new Geneva conference. However, the communiqué was rubbished on three grounds. First, it referred to the legitimate "rights" of the Palestinian people instead of the commonly accepted "interests". Secondly, it made no reference to UN Resolution 242 which had been approved post-1967 war, recognising Israel's right to exist in secure borders. Finally, it seemed to include Soviet Union in mid East events something that Israelis as well US policy makers wanted to prevent. As a result the convention could never materialise. Meanwhile, Egyptian President Sadat visited Jerusalem on a three-day trip with a peace message. He said, "I have come to break the barrier of suspicion, fear, illusion and misrepresentation between the two nations (Strong 2000: 186). The

subsequent meetings and initiatives between Egypt and Israel, however, remained unsatisfactory. Sadat during one of the visits to the US criticised Israeli Prime Minister Manchem Begin as “negative and backward”² (Glad 1982: 431). Sadat expressed disappointment that the US was not playing the role of a mediator. Over the months, Carter tried to include the leaders of Syria, Jordan and even PLO in his peace effort but they all declined. In the middle of these events, Saudi Arabia was forcing Sadat to improve relations with Syria’s Hafez Assad. Assad was known for his hard line policy on the Middle East conflict. The negotiations were also marred by attacks and counter attacks from both the PLO and Israel (Burton 1993: 89).

Against this background, Carter abandoned his option for open diplomacy. In September 1978, Carter invited Sadat and Begin for a secret round of talks for 13 days, in isolation with press and the outside world. Carter should be credited with assessing that a separate peace between Israel and Egypt was possible. For Carter, Camp David was not only crucial to peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict but also an attempt to improve the public opinion that had dipped since he became the President.

Thirteen Days at Camp David

Camp David was a 143-acre presidential hideaway sealed-off from the world offering an ideal setting for secret negotiations. The White House cancelled all press interviews and not even senior White House officials were informed about the discussions so as to prevent news leaks. Both the sides involved teams of about fifty people who were to delve on a number of issues such as Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, Palestinian rights, Israel’s security etc. The negotiations were also to include end to Arab trade embargo, open borders between Israel and Egypt and the rights of Israeli ships to move from the Suez Canal along with sensitive issues regarding right of Jerusalem and other holy places.

² Begin was the head of Likud party which remained more wary of the peace process and committed to permanent possession of Jerusalem and settlement expansion on the West Bank.

Carter held first talk with Begin and then with Sadat. After that all of them met for two joint sessions which proved so ineffective that the third joint session took place only on the last day of the summit. This session also turned into a shouting match between Begin and Sadat. Carter kept on shuttling between the two while Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, National Security Advisor Brzezinski and Defence Secretary Gordon Brown were left to conduct negotiations with other officials. Carter realised that he had to do away with the idea of a comprehensive proposal. His initial idea was to convince both the leaders to sign two landmark agreements – a framework for peace between Israel and Egypt. This involved restoration of Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, normalisation of the Palestinian problems, and a future commitment to work on solution finding to the Palestinian homeland issue. Carter decided to concentrate solely on Sinai issue but the negotiations did not proceed smoothly. On the evening of the tenth day, Sadat dropped hints of returning back. Carter had to instruct his officials not to let Sadat board the plane without his written authorisation. Carter met the Egyptian leader to apprise him of the political damage that the failure of the summit would mean for the American President. Sadat was deeply touched by Carter's personal intervention and decided to stay back.³

Carter's talks with Begin seemed to be even more difficult. The Israeli Prime minister spent a great deal in the minute details of the treaty. While Begin agreed to discuss Sinai issue, he refused to negotiate on West Bank and Gaza. Thus the status of Jerusalem and interests of Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza were left for future negotiations. According to the treaty, the future negotiations were to build up on the framework agreed at Camp David. The Arab citizens of the West Bank and Gaza were to be given "full autonomy" with a "self governing authority" to replace Israeli military and civilian administrators.⁴ Israel also gave a verbal commitment about not building any more settlements in the occupied territories — West Bank and Gaza.

³ He later confessed that he had a soft spot for the American President. Sadat and Carter went on to build a very strong friendship later on.

⁴ There were considerable differences among both the parties regarding the terms like autonomy, self governing etc.

It should, however, be noted that this Arab-Israel contact was not the first. King Hussein of Jordan had been holding secret talks with Israelis since the 1950s but these were kept most secret. Egypt was a leading Arab nation and thus any peace treaty between Israel and Egypt carried more weight. However, the outcome of Camp David was loaded in Israeli favour and contributed to Sadat's assassination and almost a decade-long estrangement between Egypt and the rest of the Arab world.

Limitations of Camp David Agreement

Euphoria and rhetoric for peace aside, it was a fact that the problems still persisted. Most Arab states remained sceptical of the agreements. Golan Heights was not mentioned beyond a brief reference of the expectation that Israel would negotiate peace agreements with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Even as Carter was successful in selling the negotiations, the success offered little to him in domestic politics. The only reward for Carter was that Egypt was ready to sign a peace deal with the Jewish state reducing the danger of war in the region. But Israel and Egypt still remained deadlocked on several issues. The main reasons for this were not technical matters but a deep mistrust between the two nations. The agreement cannot be termed as a peace treaty but only a long framework for general peace. Yet Strong stated that Israel gained more with the treaty. The treaty removed Egypt's considerable strength from military equation of the Middle East. Sadat was worried that in the absence of threat from Egypt, Israel would try to hold on to West Bank and Gaza. This would make Sadat's isolation from rest of the Arab world permanent. On Israel's part, any reluctance to exchange ambassadors promptly, or give priority to the soon to be signed peace treaty suggested that agreement with Israel would not be strong enough to survive some future Middle East crisis (Strong 2000: 183-190). The overthrow of Shah of Iran at the end of 1978 made matters worse as there was an emergence of a radical Islamic fundamentalism. Israelis also lost their only reliable oil supplier in the region and watched the replacement of a government supportive of America to one that was hostile to the US.

Working on the final draft also proved difficult. Carter had lost control over both the negotiating parties. The President's decision of going to the Middle East was a gamble. In a normal situation, if the parties failed to work out a negotiation, the burden would fall on either or both of them for missing an opportunity that Carter had provided to them. If Carter travelled to the Middle East, his prestige would be at stake if the deal did not work out. Thus, Carter sent his advisors to the region. They reported that the negotiations were "appallingly tedious" with both sides squabbling over details (Strong 2000: 193). However, after Begin visited the US, Carter was more confident about sealing the deal and planned to visit Cairo and then Jerusalem to complete the negotiations. Sadat being friendly with Carter assured the US President that he would do everything to bring the negotiations to a triumphant conclusion. Talks with Begin remained frustrating for Carter. Israeli Prime Minister stressed that any discussion with the US President will be discussed by the Cabinet and approved by the Knesset. Any peace proposal referring to future negotiations to Gaza and West Bank was objectionable to Israelis. However, Israel accepted the negotiations and suggested that autonomy for Gaza was to be discussed in subsequent negotiations but travel restrictions on Egyptians to and from Gaza would be removed. Yet, these were just verbal assurances. Despite that Sadat agreed to the terms that Carter had secured for his country.

The negotiations were undoubtedly the most important foreign policy accomplishment of the Carter administration. Camp David provided a much needed thrust to Carter presidency, which had suffered a steady decline in polls. His approval ratings of Gallup polls rose from 31 to 51 per cent. There were talks of nominating Carter for Nobel Peace Prize.⁵ Berge in the Nobel Prize Presentation Speech for Carter stated that, "It was in fact a mere formality that prevented the US President from receiving Peace Prize at that time: he had not been nominated by the February 1 deadline. And no member of the Committee nominated him at the Committee's first meeting. In September, the Committee wanted to add Carter's name to the list, but the statutes of the Nobel Foundation made that

⁵ The Norwegian Nobel Committee does not release the official list of nominees and their nominators for fifty years, but Douglas Brinkley has found in Jimmy Carter's papers the copy of a letter Sadat wrote to the Committee dated April 11, 1981, after Carter had left office, nominating him for the Peace Prize. See Brinkley (1999: 27, 490)

impossible” (Berge 2002). Yet the accords did little to garner political rewards for Jimmy Carter.

Post-Presidency Peace Initiatives

Jimmy Carter had regarded resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict as among the most important foreign policy objectives. This continued in his post-presidential tenure as well. He has written more than two dozen articles and commentaries on the subject. The year 1982 was the time when the Middle East region was changing dramatically. Israel had shown a more militaristic policy by invading Lebanon and Golan Heights. It failed to comply with Camp David and continued building settlements in Gaza and West Bank. In Lebanon, President-elect Bashir Gemayel was assassinated in a bomb explosion and a two-day massacre of hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims in Shabra and Shatila refugee camps was launched. Israel was blamed for this massacre which led to Egypt withdrawing its ambassador from Tel Aviv. Through Carter Center, Carter remained informed and continued to probe for openings for peace in the region. Reagan had also invited Carter to work on a clear declaration of his policies in the region. Reagan wanted to work on the Camp David Model which based negotiations involving exchange of land for peace building on the UNSC Resolution 242 (Carter 2009: 44).

Carter gave public approval to the Reagan plan while privately presenting his own case stating that he might be the best candidate to solve the crisis as a freelance ex-President. He would report his observations to the National Security Adviser and the Secretaries of the State. However, Begin rejected the Reagan plan. His purpose for invading Lebanon was aimed at weakening the Palestinian movement. Even PLO dismissed Reagan’s proposal as a pro-Israeli propaganda (Carter 2007: 104-105). Carter states that did not give up hope and looked at the entire issue with a combined view of international affairs analyst and a Biblical scholar. He went back to Sadat’s words “*both Arab and Jew are sons of Abraham.*” He also started reading the Quran and the Torah and consulted leaders of Islam and Judaism while preparing for his visit to Middle East in 1983. During the preparations, Carter’s tilt towards Palestinians became apparent (Brinkley 1999: 102).

Around the same time, ex-President Gerald Ford and Carter wrote an article accusing Israel for not living up to various commitments made during the Camp David. They blamed Israel for failing to grant real autonomy to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza areas (Readers Digest 1983). The article attacked Begin and recommended that Tel Aviv should follow Camp David accords and open negotiation with Jordan. Having two former US presidents — one Republican while one Democrat criticise Begin, put extra pressure on him. In 1983, Carter undertook travel to the Middle East region. But even before he left, he was notified by the Reagan administration not to meet PLO leader Yasser Arafat.⁶ Reluctantly, Carter agreed but stated that he would interact with other PLO leaders. It was during his visit to the region that he became passionate regarding the Palestinian cause. Carter's meeting with Begin during his visit to Tel Aviv was courteous, yet forced. He said, "It was not a warm exchange. Rather cool, distant and non-productive" Carter (2007:106).

While visiting West Bank and Jerusalem, Carters noted that the Palestinians were not able to enjoy basic human rights such as freedom of speech, travel without restrictions or own property without fear, etc. Once incarcerated, they had little hope of free trial and often no access to families or legal counsel (Carter 2007: 118). On his visit to Saudi Arabia, King Fahd assured Carter his help in resolving the Palestinian issue. He also gave a donation of \$1 million to be counted as the founding members of the Carter Center. Carter's visit to Syria was also considered a success. But, critics back home blamed Carter for dealing too comfortably with autocratic leaders in the name of peace proposals.

Carter's Middle East trip was the beginning of his post-presidential career that gave him two caricatures: that of a peace outlaw who was working on his inner drive, selflessness and uncanny timing. But, he was also viewed as seeking political redemption for his "failed presidency". The trip gave Carter a renewed sense of self worth, even as some thought his presence meddlesome to policy making. To take forward his Middle East

⁶ The US policy, first formulated by Henry Kissinger in 1975, was to refuse to deal with the PLO until it does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

peace agenda Carter also organised a consultation for the Middle East Peace Process. While the gathering turned out to be the unprecedented with international experts from ten nations, including Soviet Union, Egypt and Jerusalem assembling at the same platform to discuss the issue. Israel, however, backed out citing the presence of Palestinian historian Walid Khalidi of Harvard University who was referred to as the intellectual spine of the PLO. The consultation helped Carter to figure out key players who could be made a part of peace strategy.

The initial years of the 1980s saw expulsion of the PLO leadership from Lebanon to Tunisia after the Israel-Lebanon military conflict in 1982. Jordan also abandoned its claims on the West Bank. Moreover, preoccupation with the Iran-Iraq war removed Palestinian issue from the top consideration of the region. This aroused the inclination among Palestinians to take independent action within the occupied territories to end Israeli occupation. Thus 1987, saw starting of 'intifada'-- shaking up or waking up, which continued for several years. Intifada saw the formation of Hamas with its PLO like charter, pledging to remove Israel from the Holy Land using violence if necessary. On the other hand, the PLO was indicating willingness to accept the UN Resolution recognising Israel's right to exist within its 1967 borders.

Carter's role in the region was strengthened as Arafat agreed Camp David to be the basis for future negotiations with Israel. Even President George H W Bush condemned the Israeli settlements on Palestinian territory as "illegal and key obstacles to peace". In May 1989, Secretary Baker announced to members of American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), "Now is the time to lay aside once and for all the unrealistic version of a Greater Israel... Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbours who deserve political rights" (Carter 2009: 46). Post 1991, the peace talks resumed with conference in Madrid, formation of International Quartet⁷ and mediation by Norwegians. While the first two did not produce any actual peace agreements, the last one registered success and even paved way for future negotiations.

⁷ Representatives of Russia, the US, the UN and the EU

Oslo Negotiations

These peace talks were a drift away from the conventional wisdom that only the US would be an indispensable partner in carrying out peace dialogues between Arab and Israel. Even as Carter was kept informed about the talks, he was not directly involved. The background of the peace talks was such that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was busy with new settlements in West Bank and Gaza and closing every prospect of Palestinian homeland. However, Gaza reeling under economic depression was heaving the prospects of violent revolt against a harsh Israeli suppression. On the other hand both Israel as well as the US had adopted legislations which forbade any negotiation with the PLO leaders. Thus, the Norwegians came to fill the vacuum. They roped in officials from both the sides changing the Oslo track from academic, exploratory to genuine official negotiations. Norwegians posed as ideal mediators who were free from pretensions and were bent on facilitating a dialogue. Oslo Peace talks took place in 1993 between Israel and PLO and the agreement was signed in the White House⁸ (Eban 1998: 143-149).

The agreement led the US to waiver legislations prohibiting contributions to the United Nations from funding any PLO activities, threatening to withdraw US membership from international organisations that recognised the PLO, prohibiting US government employees from negotiating with the PLO, and labelling the PLO a terrorist organisation (CRS 2005). It provided for a phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces from the West Bank, establishment of a Palestinian governing elected body and a five year interim period in which more specific issues would be dealt with. The treaty remained more profitable towards Israel that maintained the authority over any questionable area.

The celebratory mood of the Oslo negotiation was overshadowed by a series of terrorist assaults by suicide bombers who exploded themselves in buses taking away life of several Israelis with them. There was a parallel indignation from right wing Jews who

⁸ Jimmy carter was also present during the ceremony and noted that the role of Norway was unfairly overshadowed by the US administration. "They sat in the third row and were never mentioned in the ceremony." See Carter (2009, 50)

preferred 'secure' borders to the newly-available opportunities of the peace. A Jewish orthodox murdered 29 Arab Muslims as they prostrated themselves in prayer. In 1995, a young man assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin murdering him by shots at the closest possible range. Yet the peace process moved forward as Israeli troops were withdrawn from six of the West Bank cities — Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho. A peace treaty was also signed between Israel and Jordan.

Such attitudinal shift took place not in Arab- Israel isolation but coincided with the broader movement towards international conciliation with the end of Cold War. This also provided space for mediators to negotiate peace. Carter Center was called to monitor elections for President and Legislative Council in West Bank and Gaza. The Center noted that Israelis had complete control over every aspect of political, military and economic existence of the Palestinians within the region. However, Israeli administration assured the Center's officials that Israeli soldiers would not enter voting places and voters would not be intimidated. The election turned out to be victorious for Arafat. However, the peace process suffered a setback with Palestinian terrorists carrying out lethal bombings in 1996, a few weeks after the elections. Even as negotiations such as Wye River Memorandum, peace talks at Sharm al-Sheikh, at Bolling Air Force Base and then at Camp David in 2000 took place, the proposals in general involved redeployment of Israeli troops, security arrangements, prisoner releases and permanent status negotiations. None could reach a desired ending. There was an avoidance of the full compliance of Oslo agreement or the UN Resolution 242 and 338 from Israelis while Palestinians were not ready to abandon them as the basis for peace.

Violence increased during Second intifada beginning in late 2000, costing the lives on both the sides and creating an impasse with both sides accusing each other for sabotaging the peace process. In June 2002, President George W Bush announced a two-state solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict, which was the first time that an American leader had described the future Palestinian government as potentially sovereign but called for the need of a new Palestinian leadership, so that a Palestinian state could be born. The onus for a failed peace process and violence was, however, put on Palestine.

While the peace talks could show no positive result, a group of Palestinians and Israelis continued to engage through Taba Talks. These talks worked on three issues: settlements, including permanent boundaries; right of return of Palestinians; and Jerusalem. Carter was also involved in this unofficial arrangement that did not ask for official Israeli and Palestinian endorsement. It rather agreed to build upon fair, balanced and potentially acceptable agreements on both the sides. The leadership in both the countries, however, continued to build talks on the Taba negotiations. Their talks produced a point of accommodation, including a potential boundary. Proposals like shared access to Jerusalem and the limited right of return of Palestinians were also included (Carter 2007: 164; Carter 2009:59-65).

Carter was interested in presenting the Taba findings and report during his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance ceremony in Oslo and Stockholm but was not allowed because of the “seemingly controversial nature” of the talks. Yet, Carter included Middle East issue in his Nobel peace prize acceptance speech saying, “The only reasonable prescription for peace is United Nations Resolution 242. It condemns the acquisition of territory by force, calls for withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, and provides for Israelis to live securely and in harmony with their neighbours” (Irwin 2007). He also published several articles and speeches presenting the findings of Taba talks. The initiative provides secure borders, recognition of Israel by the Arab world and a sovereign state for Palestinians recognised by the international community. The dividing border would be based on the 1967 lines with mutual exchange of land, giving Israel some of its largest settlements, Jewish neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and the Jewish quarter of the Old city. An international religious authority would control central holy sites, with Temple mount officially under Palestinian sovereignty and Western Wall and Jewish quarter under Israel sovereignty (Miguel 2001). This agreement if taken into practice could have become a durable two-state solution being approved at people to people level. Yet it has faced stringent opposition from top political leaders from both the sides till now.

International Quartet's Roadmap was also given a new life with the step by step process. The final phase was scheduled to be completed by 2005. It was aimed at ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reach agreement on final borders and the status of Jerusalem, removal of Israeli settlements, solution of refugee issue and peace between Arab nations and Israel. However, holdups to the talks remain. The 2004 Palestinian elections were monitored by Carter Center. However, severe limitations on voter registration, campaigning and voting in East Jerusalem were recorded. During this time the Center observed the happenings in the entire region and studied the nuances of peace proposals. Carter explained that Palestinian internal politics was caught in the factions between Arafat's party Fatah and Hamas. The Hamas has a clean record with respect to administration and politics unlike Fatah, which is embroiled in bureaucracy and corruption. Moreover Fatah's successive leader Abbas does not have any control over the party as well the international scenario. The election saw Hamas' unexpected victory (Carter 2009: 70-75).

But Hamas was precluded from forming the Government as it had participated in suicide bombing and acts of violence against Israeli civilians and forces. During this time, the spasmodic peace efforts, including the truce between Hamas and Fatah, could not be of major significance. Rather failure of the agreements led to an end of two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. Palestinians are beginning to prefer becoming Israeli citizens rather than being subjected to unending occupation. They have started to see their future in one state.

This period has seen the interest of 'Elders' in the region. Elders comprises of persons like Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan, Mary Robinson, etc. Even Carter is a part of the organisation which seeks to offer collective experience and reputation along with independence from political constraints of nations and international organisations. They aimed at possibilities of reconciliation and tangible moves towards a peace agreement. Elders and Carter Center is trying to stay in contact with the political leaders, key representatives to peace organisations, leaders of youth groups, students and scholars

encouraging a non-violent and aggressive striving for peace. However, there are several unresolved issues in Palestinian problems:

First is the occupation of Jerusalem. Palestinians maintain that Israel must withdraw from east Jerusalem, seized by Israel in the 1967 war along with the rest of the West Bank. According to them, the east Jerusalem will become the capital of the Palestinian state. Israel claims that Jerusalem's status is not negotiable. Notably, no other country recognises Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem. Despite the Israeli claim, Israel signed the 1993 Declaration of Principles, which calls for negotiations on the future of Jerusalem (CRS 2005).

Second is the boundary issue. The Palestinians would prefer a return to the boundaries recommended in 1947. Since 1974, however, they have accepted the 1948-1967 boundaries between the West Bank/Gaza and Israel. However, the wall or "security fence" or "separation barrier" being built by Israel mostly in the West Bank has been an impediment to peace. This wall, meant to deter suicide bombers attacking Israeli civilians, penetrates as much as thirteen miles into Palestinian territory to encompass existing and growing Israeli settlements. When completed it is expected to be 435 miles long and has been preventing Palestinians' access to their fields, grazing lands, schools or places of worship. The construction has been declared contrary to the international law but has been ignored by the Israeli government. While Israelis cite their need for security, Palestinians on the other side have been blaming them for further encroachment on the land. This deters any peace process. The Palestinian-Israeli Interim Agreement, September 1995, partitioned the 2,200 square mile West Bank into three different jurisdictions. Area A, 1 per cent of the total, is under full Palestinian control. Area B is under shared Palestinian and Israeli control, about 27 per cent of the West Bank, comprised of Arab villages around the cities. Area C, about 72 per cent of the total is under full Israeli control. It comprises of Israeli settlements, highways, public areas, and Israeli military bases. At Camp David in 2000, Israel offered to withdraw from a total of 90 per cent area of the West Bank. The Palestinians rejected the Israeli Camp David offer because Israel retained sovereignty over all of Jerusalem. The Palestinians sought

sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem. The Israeli proposal divided the West Bank into three non-contiguous zones which according to Palestinians would have impaired Palestinian nationalism and stymied economic growth (CRS 2005).

The Arab nations maintain that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are illegal under the International Law. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in the time of War states, “The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into territories it occupies.” Israel maintains that the regions are not “occupied territories,” and are not subject to the Geneva Convention. This has been condemned by several nations, including the US.

Another issue that hampers peace process is the Compensation/Repatriation for Palestinian Refugees. Palestinians argue that the UN Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948 states, “The Arab refugees have a choice between returning to the homes now in Israel that they left during the 1947-1948 war (the “right of return”), or receiving compensation for the lost property.” Israel argues that the Arabs abandoned their property voluntarily, and that the international community should provide funding for resettling the Palestinian refugees in Arab countries. Some Israelis counter with a claim for compensation for property abandoned by Jews who left or were driven from Arab countries in the aftermath of the 1948-1949 war. Palestinians counter that Jews who fled Arab countries should take their claims to those countries, not to the Palestinians. The initiative was supported by Carter who blamed the US administration for failure in securing a comprehensive peace proposal for Palestine. “As an alternative to deadlock a stalemate now, we reluctantly support the Palestinian move for recognition,” he said (Bluestein Associated Press).

In 2011, in what can be termed as garnering a global support for statehood, the PLO submitted an application for Palestinian state membership to the UN Secretary-General to bring about a Security Council vote on whether to recommend membership. Abbas cites a lack of progress on the peace process with Israel as the driving factor behind PLO consideration of alternative pathways towards a Palestinian state. The Obama

Administration had vetoed a Security Council resolution in favour of statehood (CRS 2011). Considering the ongoing political changes in Arab world there is a fear among Israeli leaders that any concessions from their side are likely to embolden and not assuage Palestinians and other Arabs and encourage them to seek greater gains.

Carter cites two obstacles in the Middle East Peace Process.

Firstly, some Israelis believe that they have a right to confiscate and colonise Arab land and try to justify the sustained subjugation and persecution of Palestinians. Secondly, Palestinians honour suicide bombers as martyrs and consider the killing of Israelis as victories. This has led to a vicious cycle of killing and retribution from both the sides and has created a system of “apartheid⁹ with two people occupying the same land but completely separated from each other” (Carter 2007: 215).

Carter coined a major part of the blame on Israel stating that peace would come to the region only if the Jewish state complied with International Law, the Roadmap for peace and the official American policy and honoured its previous commitment by accepting legal borders.¹⁰ He also blamed the US administrations for their limited influence and believed that if the US government reduced or stopped its support for Israel, it would be more malleable in negotiations.

Carter, on the contrary, was blamed for siding with dictators of oil-rich Gulf States who gave generous contributions to the Carter Center. In holding Israel responsible for depriving Palestinians of basic human rights, Carter was criticised for ignoring terror attacks by Palestinian groups against Israeli people and facilities.

⁹ Carter’s book *Peace not Apartheid* drew a lot of flak from Jewish quarters for being one-sided and controversial, plagiarized, racist and supportive of terrorism.

¹⁰ In an interview in 2006, Carter spoke while talking to Spiegel that I don't think that Israel has any legal or moral justification for their massive bombing of the entire nation of Lebanon. What happened is that Israel is holding almost 10,000 prisoners, so when the militants in Lebanon or in Gaza take one or two soldiers, Israel looks upon this as a justification for an attack on the civilian population of Lebanon and Gaza. I do not think that's justified, no.

Many of his statements rather pointed towards legitimising Palestinian groups' suicide bombing. He appeared to stand by their statements that acts of terrorism would end if international laws and ultimate roadmap for peace would be followed.

CHAPTER IV

HUMAN RIGHTS

America did not invent human rights. In a very real sense, it is the other way round. Human rights invented America.

Jimmy Carter, Farewell Address, Jan 14, 1981

The modern sense of human rights can be traced to Renaissance Europe and the Protestant Reformation, alongside the disappearance of the feudal authoritarian and religious conservatives who dominated the Middle Ages. Although ideas of rights and liberty existed in some form for much of human history, they do not resemble the modern conception of human rights. The precedents in ancient codes such as the Code of Hammurabi, the Cyrus Cylinder, and the reforms of Ashoka did pave way for modern conception of human rights. Human rights gradually established the rights of the individual in relation to the state rooted in the notion that all individuals are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These rights were expressed in legal terms in documents such as the English Bill of Rights of 1688, the US Declaration of Independence of 1776, the US Bill of Rights added to the US Constitution in 1789, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen added to the French Constitution in 1791. In the post-World War II period, the issue gained prominence in international affairs. Several international human rights organizations and treaties flourished during the period. The signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was referred to as International Magna Carta by former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Human rights not only focus against summary executions or torture of political prisoners but also include the promotion of democratic principles such as right to emigrate, reunite families and protection against discrimination based on race, sex, religion, or ethnic origin. Moreover, right of people to food, shelter, medical care and education also forms

a part of basic human rights. The debate for human rights has gone beyond listing rights in the United Nations. The area of discussion includes who decides human rights and taking action against the oppressive regimes? Is the support only reserved to a rhetorical claim or does it entail direct action? Moreover, when can a nation intrude on the sovereignty of the other and when are human rights abuses purely a domestic matter? All these questions have been raised as human rights developed as a lasting part of American (for that matter any nation's) national agenda.

The American activism in the advocacy for growth of human rights at the international level has been noteworthy. Presidents such as Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt and John F Kennedy particularly made a strong rhetorical commitment to representative government and human rights and attempted to convert these ideal into principles of foreign policy. However, commitment to human rights took a back seat for the next two decades with the Cold War politics and superpower rivalry. The focus on international Human rights saw revival in the US in the 1970s as American public began to fear about the “degrading” moral authority with the reverses of Vietnam War and domestic issues gripping the nation in the form of Watergate scandal etc. While the revival of the concept cannot be attributed to a particular person or policy, but the role of Jimmy Carter cannot be completely sidelined. Notably, Carter was criticised duly for selective intervention and failed initiatives of his policy.

Carter's admirers traced his sensitivity to human rights to his religious beliefs, experiences while growing up in racially segregated South and Georgia politics. Carter himself linked his support for Civil Rights for African Americans as being instrumental in his staunch promotion of human rights abroad. His policy was viewed as an attempt to side track Cold War lens to deal with foreign countries and inducing human rights values for the same. President Carter brought the cause of international human rights into the executive branch of government. The new State Department office, Bureau on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, was headed by an assistant Secretary of the State.

It will be discussed in sufficient detail in the subsequent pages that the policy was not a deviation from the Cold War politics. Moreover, the inconsistency led to the failure of the policy and cost Carter a second term as President. What cannot be ignored though is that Carter succeeded in bringing back the moral credibility of the United States that was shaken during the 1960s and 1970s. As part of his Post-Presidential initiative, Carter through Carter Center worked for religious freedom, release of prisoners of conscience in several countries, election monitoring and human rights abuses. The chapter will critically analyse Carter administration's stated policy of Human Rights. It will look at the ex-President's role in various countries. The chapter will take up the case study of the Democratic Republic of Congo tracing Carter's work in strengthening the justice sector, including the judiciary, police force and various government ministries along with civil society organisations dealing with human rights protection. The chapter will also deal with the criticisms about Carter's selective choosing of Human Rights issue during his Presidency and even as an ex-President.

Carter's Human Rights Agenda

The United States incorporated human rights as a national agenda in the Post World War II world. It was Lyndon Baines Johnson's influence that led to shaping welfare and civil rights legislation in 1964. In 1965, he passed a second civil rights bill – the Voting Rights Act — which allowed millions of black citizens to vote for the first time. However, his human rights efforts faded in America's bullish war-mongering in Vietnam. The Cold War period of 1960s and 1970s led to ignoring human rights principles with regard to America's interaction with other countries. It was the era of seventies that brought Human Rights back to the centre stage. The reverses of the war, collapse of the Nixon Presidency due to Watergate scandal, the CIA revelations and an all-pervading economic crisis breached the ideological consensus that had earlier marked American foreign and domestic policies since 1945. There was a growing realisation that the only way to restore US' moral authority at the world stage was to incorporate same values and principles that America stood for, human rights being one of them.

Presidential candidate Carter succeeded in catching the existing mood by stating his philosophy of human rights which was an anti-thesis of the existing realpolitik of the Nixon administration. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had maintained that it was important to de-ideologise foreign policy altogether, “. . . imperatives impose limits on our ability to produce internal changes in foreign countries. Consciousness of our limits is recognition of the necessity of peace.” (Freidburt 1989: 705) It should not be judged however that Carter was a lone ranger against the stated approach of Kissinger. This change in mood was first seen in Congress that started linking military aid to human rights in several countries and began cutting back aids to Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Angola and Ethiopia. By 1973, Congressman Donald Fraser promoted and held hearings on human rights conducting 150 hearings over five years with more than five hundred witnesses. Fraser’s subcommittee was a foundational element in the integrating of human rights NGO’s into the policymaking process (Schmidli 2011).

The Trade Act – Jackson-Vanik Amendment of 1973/74 made the Soviet Union’s Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status conditional to Moscow permitting certain numbers of Jews to emigrate. Eventually, this led to the Moscow abrogation of its trade agreement with the US, dealing a considerable blow to Kissinger’s detente policy. Ford’s refusal to meet Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn caused another nation-wide uproar. In 1975, a section of the International Development and Food Assistance Act debarred assistance to governments who had shown a “consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognised human rights”. The American public opinion during the time wanted a leader who was “untainted” by Washington, the “outsider” who could bring transparency back (Joshi 82: 83). The ground was thus prepared for Carter who explained his upbringing in a racially segregated South and shared experiences of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. He painted himself as an outsider to Washington’s politics. Carter was both a witness and participant in the major social and political transformations that accompanied the civil rights movement. He claimed that early experiences shaped his thinking about human rights at domestic as well as international level. He felt that if the American South could end legal segregation in a matter of years it was possible for other parts of the world to enjoy similar social and political changes (Strong 2000:74).

Notably, Carter's stance on the matter was earlier hazy during his gubernatorial campaign. As the Governor of Georgia he stated, "The time for racial discrimination was over". As the Presidential candidate he claimed that if chosen he would make American Moralism return to White House. This gave Carter an edge over Ford. Yet, his take on human rights remained somewhat ambiguous. In particular, he denounced the Jackson-Vanik amendment stating, "I think that the so-called 'Jackson Amendment' was ill-advised. . . . Russia is a proud nation, like we are, and if Russian Communist leaders had passed a resolution saying that they were not going to do this or that if we didn't do something domestically, we would have reacted adversely to it" (Muravchik 2007). Carter was also initially cold to the subject of human rights. His 1975 book, '*Why Not the Best?*' issued as a launching pad for his presidential campaign, made no mention of it. He did not comment on human rights during the 1976 primaries. But Carter caught on an already felt indignation for the war. He strategically used the human rights agenda to criticise Soviet Union policies so that he was not considered too soft on Communism.

The strategy was a unifying factor for the Democratic Party. It helped in finding an effective foreign policy issue. This made him acceptable to liberals who felt that the denigration of human rights required reconsideration. The liberals wanted to limit America's support to the right wing dictators like Ferdinand Marcos in Philippines, Somoza in Nicaragua and the Shah of Iran, whose only virtue was the fact that they not were abusing their citizens in the name of Karl Marx. On the other side, conservatives standing against Communism wanted to abandon détente and step up actions against Soviet Union and allies. Carter's response was seen parallel to other moralists who had cited Vietnam as an "immoral war". On several occasions Carter stated that it was the "inordinate fear of Communism that led us to the intellectual and moral poverty of the Vietnam War"¹ (Buckley Jr 1980: 780).

¹ At Notre Dame University in 1977

Human Rights Issues during Carter Presidency

President Carter in his Inaugural Address stated, “Our commitment to human rights must be absolute.² Because we are free, we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere. Our moral sense dictates a clear cut preference for those societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights” (Carter 1977). For Carter, these rights were mostly confined to protect the integrity of a person. These included the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, summary executions, torture, disappearance or acts of genocide. Just six days after the inauguration, the State Department criticised the persecution of the Charter 77 human rights group in Czechoslovakia³, a group of intellectuals, which demanded compliance with “basket three” of the Helsinki final act (Pflueger 2009).

The second decision was supporting Russian nuclear physicist Andrei Sakharov who had helped develop the Soviet Union’s hydrogen bomb and then became an internationally renowned critic of his nation’s political system. He addressed a letter to Carter exhorting him to work for human rights. Before Carter’s response the State Department, however, published a declaration on its own taking side of the Soviet dissident, “All attempts on the part of Soviet authorities to intimidate Mr. Sakharov will not silence legitimate criticism within the Soviet Union and stand in contradiction to internationally recognised norms of behaviour” (Pflueger 1989: 707). But, the Department was censured by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance for taking an independent stand. Carter eventually addressed a public letter to Sakharov promising US support in the release of political prisoners (Strong 2000: 86).

Carter’s human rights policies from the outset were not limited to Eastern Europe. Roughly 30 countries were punished for human rights infringements during his time in

² Carter’s use of word “absolute” reflects verbal imprecision. To be absolute would mean declaring war on nations flouting Human Rights.

³ One of them was Vaclav Havel who later became president of post-communist Czechoslovakia

office, including Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Nicaragua and Guatemala. There were 2000-3000 disappearances and killings in Argentina of psychiatrist, professors, students, journalists and even priests and nuns. More than 800 children born or abducted along with their parents were sold to strangers. Uruguay reported the highest number of political prisoners and torture victims at the beginning of Carter administration. Both in Chile and Uruguay the military governments failed to protect personal security and destroyed democratic institutions such as Parliament assembly, press, associations etc. Political activists were imprisoned, murdered or exiled or prevented from taking part in the political life. A similar situation prevailed in Paraguay with respect to political prisoners since the last 23 years (Cohen 1982: 213).

The Southern cone's violation of human rights became an immediate focus of the administration policy. The "shared political and historical traditions" (Cohen 1982:217) with the Latin American countries was cited for America's particular interest to promote human rights in the region. Carter followed "quiet diplomacy" which meant raising the issue vigorously in diplomatic channels often backed by public sanctions. This ran in the opposite direction to Kissinger's "silent diplomacy" which was aimed at ignoring human rights abuses (Cohen 1982:217). The administration raised specific incidents of human rights abuse on regular basis urging release of political prisoners and on-site inspections of prisons and other places by the human rights officials.

Carter's foreign policy, however, met with staunch criticism not only from Moscow but also from other European countries that feared the demise of detente and a possible strain on East-West relations. Russia considered these acts as interference in internal matters. The initial attack on the Soviet Union and its allies for alleged violation of human rights boomeranged with Vance's failure to get through the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II. Vance was told by Moscow in no uncertain terms by Leonid Brezhnev that the US interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union was a serious breach of international etiquette. The Soviet Union was especially irked by the American support to political dissidents. They considered it a thinly veiled attempt to attack the USSR. The Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A Gromyko too declared that while the human rights

issue did not form the subject of the Moscow discussions, it certainly “poisoned the atmosphere” (Pflueger 2009).

Carter, nonetheless, viewed the detente policy as a process to bring about peaceful change leading to freedom in Eastern Europe. He also tried to defend himself stating that human rights issue was not a direct cause of failure in working with the Soviets but did admit that, “it created tension between us and prevented a more harmonious resolution to some of our differences” (Carter 1982: 149). Within a year, the United States ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva was being privately instructed by the administration, “Under no circumstances even to mention the name of Yuri Orlov”-- who had just been packed off to jail for the crime of monitoring Soviet non-compliance with the provisions of the Helsinki Accords’ Basket Three.

Another attack against Carter was launched against his policy to bind American aid to the human rights record in the receiving country. Carter’s policy was criticised for being utopian and purist. Publicly criticising and denying aid to “friendly” human rights violators was not effective because it made the allies more susceptible to opposition groups. It happened in the case of the Philippines where Carter stopped aid for the Marcos-regime which fought back by threatening to close two large American sea-bases (Carlton & Stohl 1985). Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Indonesia or South Korea Brazil cancelled their long-standing mutual assistance treaty with Washington as a direct response to the US cuts in military aid.

Carter in his defence stated that his policy was aimed at distancing the administration from dictatorships. He believed that active human rights policies would prevent weak dictatorships from being turned by radical forces into Communist regimes. For him it was a preventive diplomacy. Even in his farewell speech Carter said, “Our common vision of a free and just society is our greatest source of cohesion at home and strength abroad, greater than the bounty of our material blessings” (Carter 1981).

Critics believed that Carter's policy was only rhetoric and short on action. Washington behaved differently with different countries to enable human rights along with taking into account the interests of national security and the cultural givens of the individual countries. The administration was accused of hypocrisy. Carter was scoffed at for praising Shah's Iran as an "Island of Stability"⁴. There was demand for a more rigorous human rights policy towards countries like the Philippines, Indonesia or South Korea. Economic assistance continued to flow to most of these countries, as did assistance for military spare parts and support equipment.

The policy was not a great departure from the norm. Carter's foreign policy framework was influenced strongly by an institution founded in 1973 - the Trilateral Commission. The commission had learnt the lessons of the impact of the oil embargo on the capitalist world. It sought to foster closer economic and political co-operation with Japan, North America and Western Europe. Several key members of the Carter team such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Cyrus Vance, W. Michael Blumenthal, Harold Brown and Leonard Woodcock were associated with the Commission. Thus they knew how to adapt new strategies to the changing times (Joshi 1982: 39). In a similar vein, Carter's strategy was not a complete change of existing tune. It was a part of the larger picture involving firstly, a general confrontation with the Soviet Union, but a limited cooperation to reduce global tension. Secondly, a 'global security policy' involving an anti-Soviet military alliance was to be carried out with Western Europe, Japan, Australia, South Africa, Israel, Iran and the Latin American dictators. Thirdly, the policy was to be formulated so that it could tackle the third world countries who were sometimes viewed as allies and other times as enemies in the global power game.

The Carter administration's commitment to human rights was received well in the initial phase. Soon the honeymoon phase was over and it ran into difficulties. The earlier implementation of the policy was slow which took away the momentum. The administration failed to explain the policy to even the friendly governments (Bloomfield 1982: 5-6). The policy also suffered from differential treatment. The administration

⁴ He made the statement during visit to Tehran on New Year's Eve of 1978

wanted to balance crucial interests with values that led following the policy on a case by case basis. For example, human rights became a crucial point on sales of arms to Latin America while it was not given much attention in case of Egypt, Israel, North Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Carter was condemned for his delay in criticising Khymer Rouge's atrocities in Cambodia. Inaugurated 13 months after Indonesia's December 1975 invasion of East Timor, Carter stepped up the US military aid to the Jakarta regime even as it continued to murder Timorese civilians. By the time Carter left office, about 200,000 people in Indonesia had been slaughtered.

The President was charged with maintaining close relationship with several dictators of the Third World, something that he has been exhorted for even as an ex-President. In El Salvador, the Carter administration provided key military aid to a brutal regime. On the other hand there were accusations that the President's policy was undermining friendly governments in Nicaragua and Iran. In Nicaragua, however contrary to the myth, Carter backed Dictator Anastasio Somoza almost until the end of his reign.⁵ In Guatemala also US military shipments to tyrant never ended. Human rights regimes in several friendly regimes were raised only in private.

However, this inconsistency in foreign policy which resulted in differential treatment has been praised as a way to deal with the complex international environment. It has been maintained that the Carter administration was not concentrating on a single foreign policy objective and was juggling for compromise of various goals, results could not always be repeated (Pfluger 1989: 709). In a lot of places, the policy of sanctions could not bring in desired results. The administration failed to influence the dealings of the American private sector and banks who kept on providing loans to these countries. The countries turned to West European suppliers and Israel for aid. There was also an increasing self reliance in the developing countries (Pfluger 1989: 709; Cohen 1982: 232).

While the administration policies hardly helped to improve the human rights conditions, it often led to souring relations especially with security alliances. Argentina, Uruguay and

⁵ He wrote Somoza a letter appreciating his actions in improving human rights record in the country.

Ethiopia snubbed the US saying they would not accept aid even if it was offered to them. The main reason for this was availability of credit from multinational agencies. Quiet diplomacy in several places was ineffective. Governments became defensive and stonewalled. Despite the constitutional provision granting political prisoners to leave the country, the “right of option”- Argentina, Chile and Uruguay refused to allow most prisoners who sought to go the United States.

Yet countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic showed a few signs of improvement. There were no new disappearances after 1977 in Argentina and Chile and long term detainees were released in Uruguay. There was a transition to the democratic forms of government. Political prisoners were released or their prison conditions were improved. Philippine opposition figure Benigno Aquino was allowed to migrate to the United States. There was somewhat restoration of trade union rights and press was freer in writing against these governments. The policy also led to securing release of the prisoners from African nations (Cohen 1982: 231-233).

According to Annual Freedom House Survey, however, there was no increase in global freedom during Carter presidency. The opinion was nonetheless divided. The International League of Human Rights, in its 1978 annual report, contended that discussion on human rights had increased world-wide due to the policy formulation of the Carter administration. But, critics like Hayward have alleged that, “the aftershocks of Carter’s foreign policy failure can be seen in the Islamic fundamentalism that the world had to grapple with” (Hayward 2004: 230-231). The Iran hostage crisis showed Carter’s inability to tackle the situation. Criticism of Soviet Union’s record on human rights boomeranged with failure of SALT II, the responsibility of which was put on Carter administration. The policy came to an end with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. From that point onwards, Carter took up the neo-Cold War rhetoric. Whereas the State of Union Message in 1978 and 1979 squarely projected the “human rights” campaign, the one delivered in January 1980 had a tone that was similar to message delivered by any other President at the height of the Cold War. It is noteworthy to remember that Carter’s human rights policy was praised for the breadth of vision which paved way for Carter

working on it after his Presidency. It did not achieve much in the short term but in the long term the policy has shown its competence with Carter showing his influence in the field even after leaving office. The policy helped America to improve its image at the world stage. It even “eroded the burning anti-Americanism” (Nielson 1981) that was so common in Latin America.

Human rights talk gained importance because the problem was too big and hard to ignore. Repression was at an all time high during the ‘70s with almost 2/3rds of the UN member states being autocratic. The international tensions of human rights were to affect every nation including the US. Carter however failed in creating a consensus for this policy in the Cold War era.⁶ The policy, however, found more room for operation in the post Cold War era. 1990s was a period when the need for human rights was felt with urgency with growing ethnic cleansing, separatist movements, mass rapes, genocide acts and terrorism. Former President Carter saw the issue of human rights not independent but in consonance with democracy promotion and mediation of international conflicts.

Post-Presidential Activities in Human Rights Arena

After leaving office he worked to end the ethnic conflict between Bosnian Muslims and orthodox Serbs in Bosnia which had left more than 200,000 people dead. In handling Bosnian crisis and brokering a “temporary” and the “thirtieth” cease fire, Carter was criticised for cozening up to Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. Yet, the Carters visited Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya and Ghana to discuss health issues as well as human rights in the civil war stricken region. Their human rights programme extended from diplomatic negotiations to teach farmers methods to achieve subsistence and organising humanitarian programmes to save lives. During his visit to the Middle East after his presidency, he was informed that Coptic Christian Pope Shenouda III was unfairly placed under house arrest by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat before his assassination. He studied the matter closely and followed it up with then President Hosni Mubarak who

⁶ See Jimmy Carter a man before his time

ordered release of the Pope at Carter's behest. This was a prime show where Carter put his moral conviction to work. Foreign leaders knew that once Carter was on their soil he would raise the issue of human rights and bring up the plight of prisoners of conscience (Brinkley 1998: 105).

Carter through Carter Centre has worked for civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights and freedoms enumerated in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Carter Center also stands in support of human rights defenders -- activists for the rights of others often face great risks in countries where basic human rights are still ignored. President Carter was a strong proponent for establishing the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations, and as an ex-President he has worked closely with each of the high commissioners through his Centre. In 2006, Carter and other Nobel Peace Prize laureates were instrumental in reforming the UN Commission on Human Rights, now the UN Human Rights Council. The Center also has endorsed the work of the International Criminal Court and voiced concerns about torture and other critical human rights issues.⁷ Other human rights initiatives of the Center include forums to strengthen the voices of human rights defenders worldwide and a push for stronger international protections for human rights through the United Nations. In this section I will look at Carter Center working in Congo providing training and networking resources to local human rights groups as well as assisting a review of the fairness of national mining contracts in the mineral-rich nation.

Democratic Republic of Congo: A Case Study

The Democratic Republic of Congo has experienced crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and other gross human rights abuses. The recent wars in Congo were particularly ruinous for the country and its people. These contemporary conflicts involved several overlapping and interrelated factors including ethnic strife, a weak state, regional

⁷ Notably, US administration has registered objections to the International Criminal Court (ICC) so much so that it limits U.S. government support and assistance to the ICC; curtails certain military assistance to many countries that have ratified the Rome Statute establishing the ICC; and most controversially among

politics, and struggle for country's rich resources. The colonisation of the country was first taken up by King Leopold II of Belgium who instituted a rigid class structure and also ensured the stratification of ethnicity (as certain ethnic and racial groups were favoured over others). The Democratic Republic of Congo became independent in 1960 but within a week the army mutinied and Belgium also intervened militarily. This led to a thirty-two year dictatorship by Joseph Mobutu resulting in corruption and ineffectiveness of state. Congo was rendered a failed state where the government did not exercise its core functions to distribute resources appropriately and peacefully manage conflict. In 1994, the Rwandan genocide occurred. Mobutu not only provided shelter and protection to the nation's two million refugees in Eastern DRC, but also a safe haven for the armed forces who had conducted the genocide. Several refugees were ex-Rwandan soldiers or members of extremist groups who started launching attacks against Rwanda and Tutsis within Congo. This led to military intervention by coalition groups supported by Rwanda and Uganda in 1996.

In 1997, DRC rebel leader Laurent-Desire Kabila ousted Mobutu and eradicated the strong Rwandan influences in the government. This caused Rwanda and Uganda to invade again, this time to support the Rwandan rebels they had originally fought against. Upon their second invasion, the foreign forces became very interested in the natural mineral resources of the East Congo and wanted to control and exploit the area. Kabila recruited forces from Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia. The war in the Congo thus became an internationalised internal armed conflict with external states using proxy forces to wage war within another state. The major ethnic divisions in Congo were also responsible for the situation. This was termed as "African World War" due to its regional character with the involvement from several quarters mentioned above.

Even as peace agreements were signed sporadic fighting continued costing a total of about four million lives. Each of the states that intervened aggressively in Congo during the period of hostilities has engaged in the serious and systematic repression of its own

European allies, authorizes the President to use "all means necessary and appropriate to bring about the release" of certain U.S. and allied persons who may be detained or tried by the ICC. See CRS (2006)

population, violating fundamental human rights in the process. Crimes against civilians were used as a tactic to create fear, gain control, and achieve ethnic cleansing. Sexual violence against women was among these civilian target methods and became increasingly common. The rich resource endowments proved to be a curse for Congo. In particular, diamonds not only provided motivation for countries to become involved in the conflict but also served to sustain the conflict by funding further arms purchases. Some 5.4 million people died in the war. It was considered the world's deadliest conflict since World War II. The vast majority died from non-violent causes such as malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition. These were typically preventable in normal circumstances, but came about because of the conflict. Many returned home when violence slightly decreased but there are 1.5 million internally displaced or refugees and more than 45,000 continue to die each month.

Carter Center's work in Congo

Committed to the long-term stability of the DRC, the Center has remained engaged through the Human Rights House to provide direct support to 154 Congolese NGO partners who work against child trafficking, with victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Through the legal system, they demand the transparent and equitable use of natural resources through mining policy reform and promote electoral reform. Carter realised that a large part of country's future would depend on how it dealt with the massive inflow of mining investment. Thus, an effort was made for opening mining contracts to public and international scrutiny. The Center also created an alert system for human rights defenders who faced intimidation and threats of violence. In case of any emergency or threat of violence, they send messages by phone, text or e-mail to partner organisations and the groups convene to decide next steps. The Centre conducts police and judges training initiative to improve the ability of these actors to carry out their jobs in accordance with Congolese and international human rights law. It offers training in both human rights legal frameworks as well as professional skills needed for the daily application of human rights standards, including the investigation and prosecution of

crimes of sexual and gender-based violence, the rights of minors, and the right to due process for all detainees.

In 2011, the Carter Center pitched in as an observer of the second presidential elections since the Civil War. It also supported the deployment of more than 6,000 domestic observers to reach the remotest areas. However, the elections were fraught with irregularities. Carter Center observers reported that the “quality and integrity of the vote tabulation process varied across the country, ranging from the proper application of procedures to serious irregularities, including the loss of nearly 2,000 polling station results in Kinshasa (Carter Center 2011). Based on the detailed results released by Commission Electorate National Independent (CENI), it was observed that several locations, notably Katanga province constituencies, reported impossibly high rates of 99 to 100 per cent voter turnout, with all the votes going to incumbent President Joseph Kabila. These and other observations pointed to mismanagement of the results process and compromised the integrity of the presidential election. The election campaign was also mired by human rights violations leaving at least 18 people dead.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is still mired in intimidation, sexual gender based violence to that in war zones and conflict zones and human rights abuses, social inequalities and absence of political rights. The Center works with the civil society organisations to enable them to protect the rights of the citizens or claim those rights through advocacy and lobbying. It is also trying to strengthen dialogue with the existing administration and is advocating a more effective way to government reform and protecting the rights of citizens (Carter Center 2012).

Critics’ View of Carter’s Human Rights Activities

Critics have often reprimanded Carter for humanitarian interventions in selective countries only. After moving out of the White House, Carter developed a reputation of an ex-President with a conscience. He set about building homes for the poor. News media often depicted Carter as a skilful negotiator on behalf of human rights. He has been

termed as a “peace outlaw” and promoter of democratic values. But many have questioned his self proclaimed avatar of the world-wide human rights patrolman. According to them, it goes against the very democratic principles of America that shunned him from leading the country for the second time. Thus his participation is often viewed as meddling in the incumbent’s work. He is criticised for his open admiration for dictators. At the time of his Presidency, Carter compared himself to Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu saying, “Our goals are the same: to have a just system of economics and politics . . . We believe in enhancing human rights” (Muravchik 2007).

Since he left the presidency, Carter has praised the virtues and humanitarianism of Syria’s late Hafez al-Assad who is alleged to have killed at least 20,000 in Hama and the Ethiopian tyrant Mengistu Haile Mariam who ruled for 17 years and is claimed to have ordered execution of tens of thousands of citizens. He was accused of even blocking food aid during the catastrophic famine of Ethiopia to punish his opponents (David 2002). Questions have been raised regarding Carter's Center's financial connections to controversial sources which include recently killed Al Qaida chief Osama bin-Laden. Saudi Arabia King Fahd supplied 1 million. Saudi arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi underwrote a fund-raising auction. Another donor was Hasib Sabbagh, close to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who hoped that Carter would help propel the Middle Eastern peace process. He even made his private aircrafts available for Carter to travel the Middle East. Carter has often been accused of supporting the Palestinian cause glossing over acts of terrorism and blaming Israel out rightly for failure in the Middle East Peace process. Critics have disdained Carter for favouring “stability to justice”. Yet, he claims to be neutral rather than attributing which side in a civil war is guiltier of past atrocities while stating, “Justice can prevail only once order has been established” (Brinkley 1995: 96).

CHAPTER V
PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY: A CASE STUDY OF
NICARAGUA

The term *democracy* comes from the Greek words *demos* that mean ‘people’ and *crails* means ‘to rule’. Today, democracy is an abstract term that is difficult to define and can have different meanings, depending on the speaker and context. This also affects policy formulation. It cannot be ascertained whether or not a country has attained an acceptable level of democratic reform. In the most common understanding democracy refers to a political system with certain minimum elements: effective participation by the people (either directly or through representation) under a constitution, respect for human rights, and political equality before the law for both minorities and the majority. Democracy is not only about conducting elections. It is a diffusion of power where no group within a society is excluded from full participation in political life (CRS 2007: 4). It requires checks and balances within the government, among various levels of government (national, state and local) and between the government and the society. Independent media, unions, political parties etc. provide checks on government power over society. A democratic government must face an electable opposition and leaders must hand over power peacefully.

The period after the World War II saw a flourishing of democracy. This, however, might not always result into the extension of liberty. Zakaria points out the context of free and fair elections creating racist, elitist, fascist and separatist governments. “The phenomenon of this illiberal democracy is visible from Peru to Palestine, Ghana and Venezuela” (Zakaria 2003: 17). It has been viewed that countries like Yugoslavia and Indonesia were far more tolerant and secular when ruled by strongmen like Marshal Josip Broz Tito and Suharto than they are as democracies. The elected governments claiming to represent the people many a times have encroached on the powers and rights of other elements in society, whether from other branches of the national government or regional and local authorities as well as private businesses and non-governmental groups as well. Yet, the world is going through a process of ‘democratization’ where hierarchies are breaking

down and closed systems are opening up. It has been seen that masses have acted as a catalyst for social change.

Fostering Democracy has been one of the most important political goals for America. In World War I the United States “fought to make the world safe for democracy”, the American leadership has always been of the view that spread of democracy serves its national interests in the most powerful ways. The World War II was pitched against fascist tyrannies. US officials of the post-war period emphasized democracy promotion in Marshall Plan as they formulated a policy toward Japan and Germany. The Cold War was framed as a struggle to preserve “the Free World”. In the early 1960s, President John Kennedy embraced the idea of a ‘noble’ campaign to advance democracy in the developing world and established the United States Agency of International Development (USAID). Two decades later, President Ronald Reagan founded the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), casting his ardent anti-Soviet policy as a crusade for democracy. In the 1990s, President George Bush allotted \$300 million annual Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) fund.

In favour of America’s democracy promotion ideal, Muravchik argued that democracies hardly go to war saying, “America has been at war with dictatorships left and right but no democracy” (Muravchik 1996: 173). US democracy promotion is viewed more as value than interests contributing to peace, economic opportunity and civil rights. Those in favour believe that democracy would bring forward the notion of human dignity and secure the rights of the governed. Thus, not only the official government agencies in America work to promote democracy but even the non-governmental agencies are engaged in different programmes and methods.

Soft-power approaches such as jazz music broadcast in Poland in the 1980s or Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to reach out to the dissidents in Central and Eastern Europe is regarded as the accepted form of democracy promotion. On the other hand a dominant or a militant foreign policy such as deployment of troops to Iraq in 2000 or supporting coup against a leader is generally considered ill-conceived. For example, when Salvador

Allende was elected in Chile in 1970, Henry Kissinger had famously said, “I don’t see why we need to stand by and watch a country go Communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people” (McKelvey 2011). Three years later, Allende was deposed in a US-backed coup. In such circumstances, the US has been accused for attempting to remake the world in their own image and graft their views onto other societies. It cannot be ignored that democracy would be able to secure freedom and liberty when it is ushered from inside in a participatory manner with outside support only in terms of financial help, civic education initiatives, training for local officials, etc. This chapter will trace Carter’s attempt of democracy promotion in office and as an ex-President, by looking at his efforts of democracy promotion in Nicaragua.

Carter Administration

Carter’s time was resonant of the third wave democratization¹ that began in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s and spread to Latin America and parts of Asia in the 1980s. While Carter administration did not define democracy per se but his human rights policies put the government back in the habit of paying attention to the domestic behaviour of other governments. In his inaugural address Carter stated, “...the best way to enhance freedom in other lands is to demonstrate here that our democratic system is worthy of emulation.” (Carter 1977) Carter administration officials generally believed in political non-interventionism. Their human rights advocacy was not aimed at producing particular political outcomes in other countries² (Carothers 1999). The administration, nonetheless, resorted to a carrot and stick policy. It would criticise a government backtracking from human rights democracy, praise a pro-democracy leader, granted or withdrew high-level diplomatic contacts in response to positive or negative developments

¹ The term ‘third wave of democratization’ was coined by Samuel Huntington. First wave of democratization took place in the second half of the 19th century and second wave in the two decades after World War II.

² It was President Reagan who through ‘Project Democracy’ raised high the democracy banner, seeking a moral dimension for his heightened anti-Soviet approach. Even though the actual role of democracy was uneven with acceptance of anticommunist dictators as necessary allies to a limited but growing willingness to support democracy against tyrants of either the left or the right.

and so on. Economic sanctions or pressure as in the case of Nicaragua was also applied on governments that crushed democracy movements. Yet, the inability to take a more proactive approach in Nicaragua led to failure of American diplomacy and a subsequent Communist rule for a decade.

Dealing with Nicaraguan Crisis

Nicaragua was ruled since 1934 by military dictatorship of the Somoza dynasty. It enjoyed strong support from the United States government. Anastasio Somoza Garcia was the leader of the National Guard, which the US had helped to create in 1932. It was hoped that the guard would provide the country with enough military stability to allow the development of democratic political institutions and end the need for interventions by American marines. The guard, however, became the most powerful institution in Nicaragua and subverted any democratic reform that the country had a shot at. Garcia also amassed wealth involving huge land holdings, monopolies and substantial interests in many sectors of Nicaraguan economy. Political opponents were bribed, harassed or murdered. Several officeholders not conforming to the regime were made to resign or killed. Garcia himself was assassinated in 1956 and his eldest son succeeded him as the President. In 1966, his brother Anastasio Somoza Debayle was elected President as a result of rigged polling. He continued to build the family fortune by using political power for private profit.³

Despite semi-regular elections, Nicaragua's government under Debayle could not be considered democratic. Most elements common to modern democracies such as recourse under the law, fair and meaningful elections, and popular participation in government were absent (Wood 2003: 3). The Somoza family benefitted from an electoral system which was manipulated through the presence of a token opposition which never won elections. Debayle's cruelty and avarice was unprecedented even by the standards of his forefathers.

³ According to an estimate, Somoza family in 1961 earned 10 per cent of the entire Nicaraguan gross national product and controlled 40 per cent of its sugar and alcohol output, 10 per cent of the coffee crop, 100 percent of the national airline and 50 per cent of the cement business. Diederich, Bernard (1981, 73)

In the 1970s the regime was weakened due to three reasons. First, a devastating earthquake after which the disaster relief from abroad was siphoned off by corrupt government officials. It destroyed government's legitimacy, if any. Debayle used the international relief for enhancing his personal wealth. Second, Debayle suffered a heart attack in 1977 that put him in a vulnerable position. Third, US government and Carter administration took various measures, including reducing aid to Nicaragua, to censure Debayle. These weakened the regime not only militarily but also politically (Muravchik 1991: 162). The regime lost ground further when political opponent Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal was gunned down. This was followed by anti-government protests and a strike was called on by the business sector. A new generation of guerrilla opponents named 'Sandinistas' began fighting in the hills. The murder also solidified opposition to the Somoza dynasty among the leaders of neighbouring countries such as Panama, Costa Rica and Venezuela.

During this time, Venezuelan President Carlos Andrez Peres approached Carter administration for joint action to oust Debayle. While Carter shared Peres' concern, he was not willing to engage US in the policy of changing governments. Thus, Perez started providing arms to the Sandinista rebels. Strong cites US policy of 1930s of "Good neighbour" that meant that it would refrain from carrying out military interventions⁴ (Strong 2000: 84). Moreover, Nicaragua had supported and helped the CIA in overthrowing a leftist regime in Guatemala. Franklin Roosevelt has reportedly described the elder Somoza as, "He may have been a son of a bitch, but he was, at least, our son of bitch"⁵ (Drum 2006). In 1978, Carter came across reports in which Debayle had indicated willingness to cooperate with the Inter American Human Rights Commission and consider the ratification of the Inter-American Convention of Human Rights. He also declared that opposition leaders often termed as 'The Twelve', who had been living in exile, were free to return to Nicaragua. On this Carter sent a "confidential" laudatory

⁴ When Carter spoke to the OAS about human rights in 1977, he promised to "respect the individuality and sovereignty of each Latin American and Caribbean nation".

⁵ Roosevelt scholars have denied that statement from FDR. It is seen more as an illustrative of the relation between the US and Nicaragua.

letter to Debayle commending these announcements Strong (2000: 90). The letter was leaked to the Press which even led to a subsequent uproar and criticism of Carter's move.

The same year, a band of Sandinistas led by Eden Pastora brought about a coup, took several government officials hostage and released their comrades from the Somoza prisons. They launched military offensive in major cities. Somoza national guard defeated them eventually but only after a fierce fighting. This widened the already existing gap between the public and the regime. At this point, the US administration gave a mild suggestion about replacing Debayle Somoza. However, White House came under attack from several Congress leaders on this stance. Several of them did not want the US to engage in toppling government in Nicaragua and believed that it would lead to the Latin American country becoming a new Vietnam. Opposition to the dictator, however, mounted after a correspondent from ABC news Bill Stewart was shot by Somoza's National Guard. This infuriated American public who demanded ousting of the regime. But Debayle had his own backers who argued that Sandinistas were Marxists and that their victory would create another Cuba in the Western Hemisphere.

As many as 125 members of Congress called the Sandinistas "Soviet surrogates who will assist the USSR in controlling an area bordering on two oceans stretching from Panama to the vast oil reserves of Mexico" (Cottham 1994: 130). Other senators referred to them as Marxist-Leninists who sought to impose a "Cuban-style regime in Nicaragua." The political divisions within the revolutionary movement were ignored and the non-communist revolutionaries were either regarded as non-existent or weak leaders. Carter was also against an all out push to remove Debayle fearing the leftist leanings of Sandinistas. He instead asked leaders of Latin countries to undertake mediation between Somoza and his opposition. This failed to garner much success. As the mediation failed, the US was left with no policy towards Nicaragua. Kaufman explains that the administration had anticipated rejection of its plan but had no acceptable alternative. The sanctions that included termination of military aid programme rejection of new economic assistance, withdrawal of State corps and recall of more than half embassy personnel did not yield much result. They were mostly demonstrative and more in sync with Americans

restoring their credibility than as a punishment or attempting to change Somoza's stance. (Kaufman 1993: 158)

Carter's failed diplomacy and non continuation of mediation tactic while slapping sanctions only added to the worsening of the situation. Sandinistas continued to gain recruits and get arms from Venezuela and Cuba. America continued its embargo on arms for Somoza Guard and pressed other governments to follow suit. It also asked OAS (Organisation of American States) to call for a cease fire and Debayle's departure. While this was accepted, the resolution for stationing an OAS peace keeping force in Nicaragua was out rightly rejected by other OAS states. Somoza declared his intention to leave. The US government did not wish for an outright Sandinista victory and wanted to add moderates. The goal was to create a transitional government to preclude a Sandinista victory. The United States proposed the formation of an interim government acceptable to all opposition groups. This provisional government was to have been composed of a junta appointed by the Nicaraguan Congress and representatives of the major opposition groups. The Sandinistas would have had to negotiate with that junta to form a new government. However, Carter administration was not in the favour of dismantling of the National Guard even though it was hated throughout Nicaragua. All these efforts were in vain because even as Debayle Somoza did leave, the new government was captured by the more radical wing of the original Frente Sandinista de Liberacin Nacional (FSLN) coalition.

Through the entire gamut of events, Carter administration was blamed for not keeping Nicaragua on its radar scale so much so as was required. The President, nonetheless, tried working with the new regime by sending emergency food and medical assistance and asking Congress 75 million dollars in economic aid. But Sandinistas continued taking military aid from Cuba. The country was oriented politically more to the left. Sandinistas also objected earlier aid to the Somoza dynasty. Debayle Somoza on the other hand blamed Carter for not saving him and allowing Sandinistas to take over. As reports circulated that Sandinistas were lending support to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, the censure of Carter became ever more strident (Kaufman 1993:158).

Cottham points out that Carter's administration policy towards the Nicaragua was schizophrenic. The incoherence and inconsistency with the policy was due to competing interests between human rights policy advocates and national security advocates (sometimes divided between liberal and conservative factions). Supporting human rights meant opposing pro-US dictators of the right as well as repressive left-wing governments and supporting national security goals meant supporting pro-US right-wing dictators regardless of their human rights records. While the administration believed in the human rights policy it would never place it above national security goals; it therefore shifted between the two (Cottham 1992: 124). This failure of American diplomacy led to a decade-long Communist rule in the country. This period saw American administration under Ronald Reagan providing arms to Nicaraguan rebels to fight the Sandinistas. Reagan administration toppled Carter administration's policy of avoidance of "policy wars" and embraced US commitments to policy wars larger and more dangerous than ever before (Muravchik 1986: 381).

Looking at the history, Carter Center's effort at democracy promotion through election monitoring in Nicaraguan elections in the 1990 is viewed by many as Carter's attempt of rehabilitating himself on Nicaraguan policy front in his post-presidential tenure. While it was the disintegration of the Soviet Union that triggered a change in the approach, US diplomacy took skilful advantage of the situation. This was also taken by non-governmental organisations like the Carter Centre who took the baton of US democracy programmes to other countries. One of the major reasons has been the end of the Cold War that led to relaxation of ideological tensions. This combined with movement of democracy in several countries. Thus, democracy promotion was put on the global agenda in a much more far-reaching way than ever before.

Monitoring of International Elections in the Third World

After the fall of Berlin wall, election observation grew wider in scale. Election monitors in huge numbers were sent to observe elections ranging from Cambodia to South Africa and Nicaragua to Mozambique. The activity of international election observation can be traced to as far as the second half of nineteenth century. The first election with international monitoring was in 1857 when French, British, Prussian, Russian, Austrian and Turkish representatives supervised a plebiscite in Moldavia and Wallachia (Brahm 2004). Decolonization phase set in at the end World War II. Newly independent countries started holding elections. It was the responsibility of UN to ensure that elections were free and fair and reflected the will of the electorate.

The "second generation" election monitoring missions took place in the Post-Cold War years. They have become more comprehensive with the growing global consensus on democracy. Peacekeeping was broadened to include election monitoring in 1989 starting with the elections in Namibia. International election observation is seen as one way of rebuilding the political systems of undemocratic or countries in transition to democracy. In the post-Cold War period, the leaders of left-wing dictatorial governments were also eager to legitimize their political leaderships by allowing multi-party elections in their respective countries. They consented to the desire of international community to ensure democratic transition and allowed missions of international election observers to oversee the elections in their countries. It was also a pre-requisite for donor assistance and recognition (Spinelli 2005). Between late 1980s and early 2000, international electoral monitors were present in about 86 per cent of the countries in democratic transition.

The Carter Center working in the field of election monitoring hosted a conference on democracy in the Americas in 1986. It led to formation of Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government consisting of twelve former and current heads of the governments from the Americas. The aim was to build solid foundations for good governance and democratic development. Among the council's founding goals was "to promote

multilateral democratic transitions and to reinforce the consolidation of new and re-emerging democracies in the region." (Santa Cruz 2005: 681) Its first monitoring mission was in Haiti in 1987 at the request of the transitional government of Haiti. The Carter Center also played a prominent role in the 1989 Panamanian elections, with Carter denouncing the electoral fraud carried out by the government of Manuel Noriega. Center's next stop was Nicaragua.

Fall of Sandinistas and Experiment with Democracy

Nicaragua was ravaged by a decade long conflict between Sandinista and US backed rebels known as Contras. The country had become a polarising issue with Reagan administration providing overt and covert political, financial and military support. However, the Iran-Contra affair and subsequent objection by the Congress led to reduced American financial and moral support for the Contra guerrillas. By that time, even Nicaragua was exhausted from decade-long Civil War. As Communism collapsed in Soviet Union, elections in Nicaragua were considered the best alternative. The Sandinista government took the opportunity to strengthen the electoral process to reduce any opportunity for the United States to claim that the elections had been fraudulent.

In 1989, Carter was invited by Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega for the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Sandinista revolution. Carter in his reply encouraged "free and fair elections" to end conflict and divisions within Nicaragua. In August 1989, Carter Center was called to monitor Nicaraguan elections. Carter set out to strengthen his relationship with President Ortega and Defense Minister Humberto Ortega so as to build a rapport of mutual trust with the leaders. This was particularly crucial after his experience with Panama's leader Noriega to whom he had failed in persuading the acceptance of the result of Panamanian elections.

Carter was allowed to visit Nicaragua as many times as he wanted to observe all elections and the preparations before. He assembled a delegation of more than fifty "meticulously

impartial” observers to monitor elections and they were encouraged to pay at least one pre-visit each to the country. Carter also planned to station three full time staffers of the Carter Center’s Council of Freely Elected heads of Government to monitor the six-month campaign. (Brinkley 1998: 297) The move was criticised by far Right Republicans who believed that this was Carter’s attempt to legitimise the Sandinistas. Even the Bush administration was initially sceptical about Carter Center’s agenda. However, later the administration accepted the earmarking of 500,000 dollars for Carter Center by the majority Democratic Congress.

Carter was known for his closeness to Ortega, who publicly called him “a good friend.” The two met at length during Carter’s trip to Nicaragua in 1986 and a year later Ortega was Carter’s guest at one of the Habitat for Humanity projects in New York. Carter tried to foster better relations between Bush administration and Sandinista government in the hope that Washington will recognise the Nicaraguan government before the election.

By that time, even the Sandinista government had realised the importance of playing by the rules. This was essential to lift the US embargo and unlock aid from the Western Europe (Brinkley 1998: 299). The Carter Center along with NDI and OAS spearheaded a mass voter registration drive in Nicaragua which led to registration of 1.75 million citizens—a full 89 per cent of estimated population of about 1.9 millions.

In the run up to elections, there were reports of Sandinista monopolised campaign control on television and radio. They were also blamed for employing “dirty tricks” to gain an electoral edge, including conscription of UNO activists into the military, detention of political prisoners, state-sponsored violence at UNO rallies and towards UNO supporters, etc. Accusations were also made against Carter for not being impartial. Carter, at least publicly tried to win confidence of both the parties. Yet, his preference for Ortega was not hidden. He was blamed for not taking Sandinistas’ intimidation tactics seriously. To improve his image Ortega, however, agreed for Bush administration’s ‘overt’ financial support to the opposition. He even chose to ignore Bush administration’s refusal to disarm the Contras and in turn breached the Esquirol agreement. The reason for such a

conciliatory mode was his confidence in winning the elections. He was making plans for post-election negotiations with the Bush administration. Not only the Sandinistas but even Carter was convinced that status quo would be maintained. The news polls of Washington Post and ABC News also predicted Ortega's landslide victory.

On the Election Day, the country had 2,578 accredited foreign observers from 278 organisations and 1500 correspondents making it the most directly monitored elections in the world history. The OAS fielded 435 observers for 3,064 voting sites while the UN had 207 observers for 2,155 voting sites. Eleven US senators and Congressmen of both the parties joined the Carter Center delegation. The Carter Center delegation split into fourteen teams that fanned across all nine of Nicaragua's electoral districts before the polls opened. While a few irregularities were noted, violations were not very significant.

The elections saw Violeta Chamorro winning with a 55 per cent to 41 per cent landslide. Ortega was shocked with the result and started plotting to stay in power. Carter, however, convinced Ortega to relinquish power peacefully saying, "I have won an election and I have lost an election. I can tell you from my experience that losing is not the end of the world." He encouraged Ortega to lead a peaceful transition to power. On the other hand Carter convinced Chamorro to appoint Ortega the head of the military (Gizzi 2012: 4). This was viewed by far right Republicans back home as Carter's allegiance to Ortega. They made subsequent efforts to force Bush administration to withhold economic aid to Nicaragua. Though the elections were widely celebrated as the triumph of democracy over socialism in a free and fair contest, sceptics maintained that democracy and its principles had not been the cause of Chamorro's victory but the Nicaraguan people had voted in order to stop the civil war. Violeta Chamorro's UNO coalition just happened to be the non-Sandinista ticket (Wood 2003: 6).

After Nicaraguan election, Carter was also invited to oversee elections in Dominican Republic. As the invitation was extended at the last minute, Carter was unable to evaluate irregularities during the campaign. The election turned out to be the most disputed in the history of the country. However, Carter encouraged all parties to use legal channels and

avoid violence by resolving the dispute. The Carter Center delegation though concluded that accusations of fraud were not substantiated. Carter went back to the region to discuss elections in Haiti and Guyana. In Guyana, he recommended change in vote counting process. Rather than moving ballots to a central place for counting, he urged counting the ballots immediately after the election was over at the poll station itself. This prevented stuffing, switching or tampering with the ballot boxes bringing transparency to the process. Carter also took the model to Zambia in Africa. (Bjornlund 2004: 82)

However, he also learnt a lesson in Zambia that a democratic government might not mean good governance. Zambia administration in the coming years jailed opponents and ignored rampant corruption. In Nicaragua also, the country passed through foundational elections but faces ongoing problems in democracy promotion and completion. Steady progress toward full and stable democracy is still missing. Instead of the transition from authoritarianism to procedurally correct elections which should have led to a "second transition" towards full political democracy, there are erratic ups and downs and democratic deficits. The recently held 2011 polls in the country, while not monitored by Carter Center under restrictive regulations, were criticised for institutional weakness. The study group of the Center that went to Nicaragua pointed out the need to strengthen the electoral process. The problems with party poll watcher access, the refusal to allow experienced national observer groups and limits on international observers made it difficult to independently verify the official results. Last minute changes in rules, absence of information for citizens and political parties, and vague regulations also affected confidence. All of these things produced suspicion and distrust in the process.

These crevices show how international monitoring might not necessarily lead to ushering of democracy in the country. But it should not be ignored that the presence of observers makes governments answerable to following rules. Their presence increases voter confidence, provides legitimacy to the elections, and promotes democratization. Carter's monitoring of elections is a way of democracy promotion in these countries. The Center along with the UN Electoral Assistance Division and the National Democratic Institute produced the Declaration of Principles for International Observation in 2005 which

established professional standards for election observers. The Declaration has been endorsed by more than 30 observer organizations. Now the Center is spearheading efforts to identify and foster consensus on common international standards for what constitutes a genuinely democratic election. As of 2010, the Carter Center reports observing 86 elections in 35 countries, emphasizing that it must be invited by a country's election authorities and welcomed by the major political parties to ensure it can play a meaningful, non-partisan role.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Retiring from high office is one of the inevitable demands of democratic system which makes it necessary for leaders to relinquish powers over their countrymen and make way for another. While these leaders once represented the majesty of their High Office, the official majesty did not extend to them. Yet, whenever a US President retires from Office, questions are often raised as to how history will remember him (and in future, probably her!). The question on the role of ex-Presidents within the Republic has long provoked an impassioned debate. The generous provision that the Congress and public have made suggests that they do not want ex-presidents to cease from playing a role in public life. It can however be argued that in American public acceptance and yearning for keeping former Presidents in the limelight goes against the very democratic principle that respects leaders but do not worship them as being blessed with metaphysical powers.

Former Presidents in the post-World War II environment have remained active as public and political figures as well as celebrities. The influence they wield on public, the access they enjoy within the administration and relations with the incumbent as well as leaders around the world helps them to remain active in domestic as well as international politics. Before World War I, ex-Presidents largely confined themselves to domestic affairs. The possible reason for this was America's relatively limited role in global affairs. By the 20th century, however, many US ex-Presidents began to adopt an active international role spreading "American values" and promoting American diplomatic intervention. This involvement marked its own aspects of celebrity and show business that stayed with them even as they demitted office. As Presidential activism rose, it also carved a leg room for the retired ones to remain involved in the public arena as they started responding to the threats of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, ethnic cleansing, environmental degradation and spread of various diseases.

In the Post-Cold War world, they were required as international statesmen and conduits to current administration. With their surrogate diplomatic prowess they were expected to support and carry on the policies of the sitting Presidents in international affairs and serve as front-men to American administration's interests abroad. They, nevertheless, have been pursuing their own agendas, which many a times is independent of those in power. At times they even challenge incumbents to re-establish their stature or legitimise the decisions taken by their own administrations. In the process they have also been accused of meddling with the democratic set up. This sort of post-Presidential activism has been reverberant in the past few decades and can signal a direction for future ex-Presidents.

The *raison d'être* of the study was to ascertain what comes next for a former President after leaving office. The study holds a crucial value in the field of Political Science and International Relations because till date, the lives of ex-Presidents have not been able to provide much fodder for scholars who focus largely on incumbents. With age and financial security on their side, the ex-Presidents today are more active and thus have become interesting subjects of study. While the focus of this dissertation was to study the post-presidential career of Jimmy Carter to better understand the role of ex-presidents in the public sphere, the question can be extended to the international level, which since 1970 has seen about 700 leaders world-wide grappling with possibilities of keeping themselves busy and remaining at the centre stage even after demitting office.

The study sought to analyse values, beliefs, accomplishments and failures of Carter that reflected into the selection of issues in his post-Presidency and see whether his post-presidential activism was aimed at redeeming the "failure" of his Presidency. A central theme of Carter's post-Presidential existence has been to mediate peace, promote democratic values and human rights through track II diplomacy in selected parts of the world. Carter's post-presidential venture is being run through a public institute—Carter Center, which has been taken forward through public-private fundraising and kept away from government scrutiny. On more than one occasion, he has served as the front-man for Bush and Clinton administrations to promote American interests abroad. Notably, Carter's post-presidential activities have largely remained a continuation of what he did

as President. The policies that could not be pursued with consistency and vigour during his Presidency were to serve as intellectual underpinnings for Carter's post-presidential career. One of the major reasons for this was his need to resurrect himself in the eyes of American public. He got the opportunity with the post-Cold War environment springing up problems of human rights, ethnic cleansing and Civil wars which made his policies, which he worked for during Presidency, more acceptable at domestic and global level.

Understandably, Carter's election was a shot away from Cold War politics to a world view committed to human rights, peace, freedom and democracy. Human Rights policy, for example, as a campaign issue brought full marks for candidate Carter from within the liberal camp that wanted to limit America's support to the right wing dictators as well as with the conservative bloc which saw the policy as cracking a whip on left wing violators. The policy in practice, however, failed to take off due to administrative failures after an initial honeymoon period and did more harm to Carter's reputation so much so as to cost him a second chance.

He was attacked from several corners. Some believed that the human rights issue was not enacted with consistency. It was high on rhetoric and short on action when it came to dealing with countries like Iran and Nicaragua. Some stated that it acted against friendly countries such as the Philippines, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, etc thus making them susceptible to opposition groups. Others blamed him for violating the code of detente and poisoning the atmosphere between US and the Soviet Union. He was attacked for his foreign policy in Iran that led to the Iranian hostage crisis, which was seen as a decline in American diplomatic prestige. Soviet intervention in Afghanistan reinforced public perception of declining military strength. Even in Nicaragua, the US administration failed to device a more coherent policy regarding democracy and human rights which led to a decade-long Marxist and pro-Soviet regime whose human rights approach was even more contemptuous.

Critics rejected Carter for his “political ineptitude” and failure to forge a consensus over his policies in the Cold War infested environment. His raking up these issues shows a psychological desire to do what he could not in Presidency. He has been working on human rights in consonance with democracy promotion and mediating conflicts in parts of the world such as Sudan, Bosnia, Kenya, Nicaragua, Congo, etc. Another policy that has found a continued and relentless presence in Carter’s presidential as well as post-presidential tenure has been securing a permanent solution to the Middle East conflict, which till now has remained elusive. The success of Camp David Accords that he had brokered between Israel and Egypt during his Presidency acted as his initial lessons in negotiations. It instilled a conviction in him that even in cases of intractable conflicts; a common ground exists on which a more secure future could be built through mediation. While achieving limited success, the accord opened doors for similar initiatives which led him to create Carter Center with a view that it would provide a meeting ground for world leaders to solve their intractable conflicts through second-track diplomacy.

Carter’s deep interest in the Middle East peace led him to write several books on the subject. However, most of his writings particularly ‘*Peace not Apartheid*’ invited a tsunami of tsk-tsking from several quarters’, especially American Jews. While he has coined major part of the blame on Israel, he has also held subsequent US administrations responsible for failing to assume leadership in solving the region’s imbroglio. Carter in the process has himself been chastised for siding with Arab dictators and legitimising their use of arms against innocent civilians or Israel or nations known for supporting the Jew nation.

While it was the Bush and Clinton administrations that opened doors for him to carry forward his diplomatic activism with full vigour, following his own diplomatic instincts did cost him a chance of having closer official relations with his successors. The officials in the administrations have often complained about his freelance diplomacy and attempt to sidetrack the government at international level. On several instances Carter has also criticised his successors such as condemning Bush’s pre-emptive strike against Iraq and human rights violations in Guantanamo. At times he has showed one-upmanship and in

turn embarrassed the administrations such as at the time of providing diplomatic solutions during Haiti and North Korean crisis etc. He has also been blamed for not standing up against the dictators such as Cuba's Fidel Castro, North Korea's Kim Jong II, Nicaraguan dictator Daniel Ortega and praised leaders of Syria and Ethiopia. Even as it involved a certain amount of ill-will with both the administrations, Carter did help in breaking the diplomatic log jams and solving the issues amicably. While this would have established him as an international "folk hero" (Updegrave 2006:172), but at home the Bush and Clinton administrations reached to a point to calling him "irrelevant".

Even as he has denied that his post-Presidential activities have been a vindication or an attempt to refurbish his Presidency, his conduct in international affairs since the last thirty years clearly point to an impulse of "redemption" of his Presidential years. The deeds of the ex-Presidents do provide opportunities to wax up their Presidential contributions. Nixon's efforts to influence foreign policy after resignation helped to dim Watergate and put spotlight back to innovative foreign policy of his Presidential tenure. Clinton's humanitarian and diplomatic efforts can also help in lessening the blot on Presidential record due to impeachment and Lewinski scandal. George Bush's Policy Institute is also aimed at promoting some of the domestic and international priorities of his presidency. Similarly, Carter's deeds as a peacemaker and a humanitarian have somewhat removed the stigma attached to his one-term presidency.

The present opportunities available for the ex-presidents do not allow them to retreat into oblivion. Whether it is Carter's work on global peace agenda away from the White House directions, or Nixon's diplomacy in foreign affairs or Clinton or Ford making large sums of money due to speaking circuits or memoirs, there has been an evolution of post-presidency in the US. The future as we see now seems good and opening of new doors for ex-Presidents not only in the US but leaders retiring all around the world. Presidents deal with the nation-state in general and the Government in particular. The activities of ex-Presidents are seen as non-state actors working with the help of non-traditional agencies such as Carter Center and Clinton Foundation. The suggestions like giving them an honorific position in Senate, making them members of some council, giving them

pensions and occasionally showing them off as a national resource or sending them off to diplomatic foreign policy tours could apparently make them toe the line of the current administrations, which in present scenario seems a difficult task as ex-Presidents have tended to be more independent minded.

The present dissertation has been written on the basis of two hypotheses:

1. Jimmy Carter's involvement in diplomatic affairs and his initiatives on public welfare programmes were attempts to redeem the failure of his Presidency.
2. Ex-Presidents served as front-men of current administrations to promote American interests abroad.

After examining the available source material both the hypotheses have clearly been vindicated. At times, some American Presidents have entrusted significant diplomatic assignments on ex-Presidents to promote the administration's policies towards a hot spot or critical issues of international politics. At the same time ex-Presidents, particularly Jimmy Carter have also sought an independent role in whatever diplomatic assignments they accept. In fact, President Carter did things which always remained an important segment of his ambition, especially those which failed to materialise due to constraints of office. With media and technology, money and age on their side, ex-presidents have become more innovative in their roles to remain in public eye.

The new world of post-presidential activism is interlocking in structure and global in scale with independent associations, peer to peer councils such as the Elders addressing issues of global concern, providing strategic support and technical advice for democratic development, peaceful resolution of the conflict and humanitarian activities, etc. With the fast spread of globalization, American leaders are better equipped to support themselves, secure their legacies, and create a space for them to work after retirement. The present opportunities make it easier for them to harness the rules of democratic politics—"to

accept political defeat: to leave office upon losing an election, to follow rules even when they work against one's own interest.”

F Scott Fitzgerald had once stated that there are no second acts in American lives. The ex-presidents today have proven it wrong!

Annexure One: Table of Presidents of the United States

Compiled from: (Skidmore 2004: vii - ix)

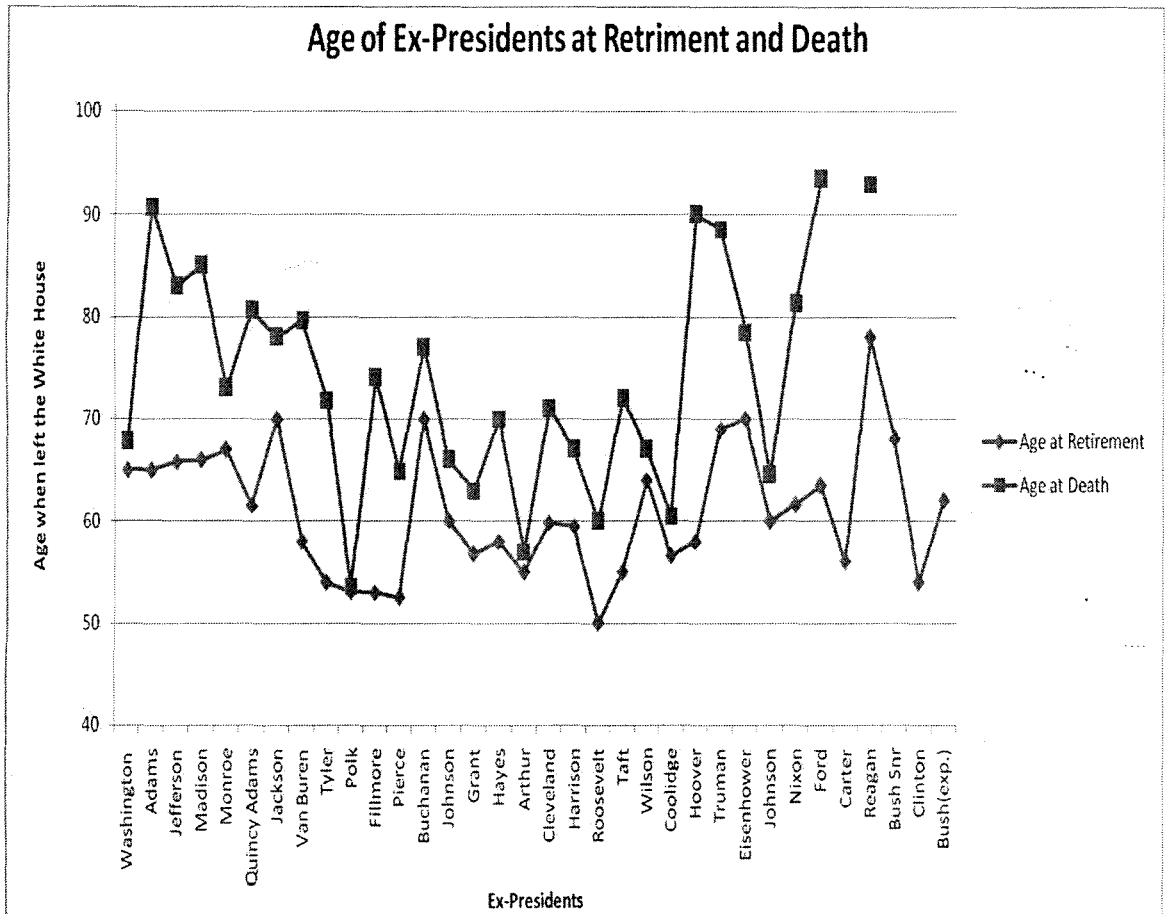
Fig A1: Table of Presidents of the United States President	Bor n	Died	Dates of Presidency	Age when left office	Number of years as ex-president
George Washington	1732	1799	Apr 1789 – Mar 1797	65	2 ½
John Adams	1735	1826	Mar 1797 – Mar 1801	65	25
Thomas Jefferson	1743	1826	Mar 1801 – Mar 1809	65	17
James Madison	1751	1836	Mar 1809 – Mar 1817	66	19
James Monroe	1758	1831	Mar 1817 – Mar 1825	67	6
John Quincy Adams	1767	1848	Mar 1825 – Mar 1829	61	19
Andrew Jackson	1767	1845	Mar 1829 – Mar 1837	70	8
Martin Van Buren	1782	1862	Mar 1837 – 1841	58	21
William Henry Harrison	1773	1841	Mar 1841 – Apr 1841	Died in office	0
John Tyler	1790	1862	Apr 1841 – Mar 1845	54	17
James K. Polk	1795	1849	Mar 1845 – Mar 1849	53	¼
Zachary Taylor	1784	1850	Mar 1849 – Jul 1850	Died in office	0
Millard Fillmore	1800	1874	Jul 1850 – Mar 1853	53	21
Franklin Pierce	1804	1869	Mar 1853 – Mar 1857	52 ½	12 ½
Abraham Lincoln	1809	1865	Mar 1861 – Apr 1865	Assasinated	0
Andrew Johnson	1808	1875	Apr 1865 – Mar 1869	60	6 ½
Ulysses S. Grant	1822	1885	Mar 1869 – Mar 1877	56	8 ½

Rutherford B. Hayes	1822	1893	Mar 1877 – Mar 1881	58	12
James A. Garfield	1831	1881	Mar 1881 – Sep 1881	Assas sinate d	0
Chester A. Arthur	1830	1886	Sep 1881 – Mar 1885	55	1 ³ / ₄
Grover Cleveland	1837	1908	Mar 1885 – Mar 1889	51	4
Benjamin Harrison	1833	1901	Mar 1889 – Mar 1893	59	8
Grover Cleveland	1837	1908	Mar 1893 – Mar 1897	59	12
William McKinley	1843	1901	Mar 1897 – Sep 1901	Assas sinate d	0
Theodore Roosevelt	1858	1919	Sep 1901 – Mar 1909	50	11
William Howard Taft	1867	1930	Mar 1909 – Mar 1913	55	17
Woodrow Wilson	1856	1924	Mar 1913 – Mar 1921	64	3
Warren G. Harding	1865	1923	Mar 1921 – Aug 1923	Died in office	0
Calvin Coolidge	1872	1933	Aug 1923 – Mar 1929	56	4
Herbert Hoover	1874	1964	Mar 1929 – Mar 1933	58	31 ¹ / ₂
Franklin Delano Roosevelt	1882	1945	Mar 1933 – Apr 1945	Died in office	0
Harry S. Truman	1884	1972	Apr 1945 – Jan 1953	69	14
Dwight D. Eisenhower	1890	1969	Jan 1953 – Jan 1961	78	8
John F. Kennedy	1917	1963	Jan 1961 – Nov 1963	Assas sinate d	0
Lyndon B. Johnson	1908	1973	Nov 1963 – Jan 1969	60	4
Richard M. Nixon	1913	1994	Jan 1969 – Aug 1974	61	19 ³ / ₄

Gerald R. Ford	1913	2006	Aug 1974 – Jan 1977	63	39
Jimmy Carter	1924	Jan 1977 – Jan 1981		56	Ongoing (32 3/4)
Ronald Reagan	1911	2004	Jan 1981 – Jan 1989	77	15 ½
George H.W. Bush	1924	Jan 1989 – Jan 1993		68	Ongoing (19)
William Jefferson Clinton	1946	Jan 1993 – Jan 2001		54	Ongoing (11)
George W. Bush	1946	Jan 2001 – Jan 2008		66	Ongoing (4)

Annexure Two: Age of Ex-President at Retirement and Death

Source: (Skidmore 2004: vii-ix)



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