

President Carter's Mission of Peace

By Sharon Fabian

The year 2002 added two big events to former President Jimmy Carter's impressive life story. One was his visit to Cuba. The other was his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. These were two high points in his long career as a peacemaker.

Jimmy Carter was president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. One of the biggest events of his presidency was a peace settlement that he arranged between the leaders of Israel and Egypt. President Carter invited Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to meet at the presidential retreat in Camp David, Maryland. There they talked about issues and conflicts that had plagued their countries for years and signed agreements called the Camp David Accords. The agreements said that the leaders of Israel and Egypt would get together again to sign a real peace treaty. And they did.

Carter was good at getting opposing sides to talk and to find areas that they could agree on. He continued to use those skills even after his term as president was finished. In 1982 he established the Carter Center. Its purpose was to help countries solve conflicts by mediation and cooperation. The Carter Center set goals of advancing democracy and human rights and also of promoting economic and social development around the world.

The Carter Center participated in important negotiations around the world. Jimmy Carter himself traveled to many nations to help to solve conflicts. He was also called on often to monitor elections in many of those countries. Jimmy Carter and other people from the Carter Center helped many nations make progress towards democracy and human rights.

In 2002, Carter, with his wife Rosalynn, planned a trip to Cuba. The purpose of his trip was to improve relations between Cuba and the United States.

In Cuba he would meet with Fidel Castro, Cuba's president. It would not be an easy trip; Cuba and the United States had been on opposing sides in the Cold War and had remained suspicious of each other ever since.

However, the meeting between Carter and Castro started on a cordial note and stayed that way for the entire visit. Carter arrived at Havana airport on a Sunday. That day he was given a tour of Havana's historic district. Carter gave a speech in which he called for more freedoms for Cubans. He also suggested an exchange program for college students from Cuba and the United States.

On the second day of his visit Carter met with human rights leaders in Cuba. He learned more about the changes they hoped to see in Cuba.

During his visit, Carter toured colleges and a medical school. He visited an agricultural cooperative where one hundred fifty-one families worked a seven hundred acre farm. Since Cuba was a communist country, there were few private businesses or farms there.

At the invitation of Fidel Castro, Carter also attended an All-Star baseball game and threw out the first pitch.

Carter and Castro exchanged gifts. One evening they attended a fancy banquet. Carter's son Chip and his Friendship Force exchange group were also invited.

In between all of the tours and dinners, Carter and Castro had some serious meetings. Castro pointed out areas in which Cuba had made the most progress. Carter made suggestions for other changes.

Another evening Carter gave a speech at the University of Havana. Afterwards it was said that that was the first time in over forty years that Cubans had heard a speech given in Cuba itself that was critical of the government.



Name _____



Date _____

Just before he left, Carter made another speech. He said that Cuba and the United States had not found a way to work together for many, many years. He said that he hoped that situation would change. He even said that he hoped the United States would make the first move.

No other former president has been able to do what Jimmy Carter has done. His diplomacy has brought many positive changes here at home and in countries around the world. He was recognized for his accomplishments in 2002 by being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

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Questions

- _____ 1. Jimmy Carter visited Cuba _____ he was president.
- A. after
 - B. when
 - C. before
 - D. while
- _____ 2. Carter arranged the meeting between Sadat and Begin at Camp David _____ his trip to Cuba.
- A. after
 - B. at the start of
 - C. during
 - D. before
- _____ 3. Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work _____.
- A. in Cuba
 - B. at Camp David
 - C. in other countries
 - D. all of the above
- _____ 4. _____ Carter visited Cuba.
- A. Jimmy
 - B. Rosalynn
 - C. Chip
 - D. all of the above
- _____ 5. Although he was not an ambassador to a foreign country, Carter could be described as a _____.
- A. diplomat
 - B. democrat
 - C. president
 - D. military leader
- _____ 6. Which is NOT a goal of the Carter Center?
- A. Expand U.S. military presence in foreign countries.
 - B. Mediate conflicts.
 - C. Promote economic and social development.
 - D. All of the above are goals of the Carter Center.

