



Beyond the White House: Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope

Jimmy Carter

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Acknowledged as having the most important and admirable post-presidential career in the nations history, Carter recounts his adventures over the last 25 years, including founding the Carter Center and his service on behalf of humanity. Photos throughout.

Beyond the White House: Waging Peace, Fighting Disease, Building Hope Details

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Author : Jimmy Carter

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Nora says

Although Carter's style is a bit dry (and I have to confess I didn't closely read the chapters on topics/geographic areas I wasn't interested in), overall this book is a fascinating account of he and wife Rosalynn's years after they left the White House. I have always admired Carter's commitment to democracy and human rights abroad and I'm sorry it didn't occur to me to read his memoirs of peacekeeping and electoral observation for any of my college papers about these topics. I even felt like a student when I noted the book has both "case study" and "theoretical discussion" chapters.

We forget that Carter was the first president (and arguably, the only until recently) to make human rights the cornerstone of our foreign policy. What he neglected to accomplish as president he certainly made up for with the foundation of the Carter Center, not unlike Al Gore's environmental work after his departure from public office. Overall, I would definitely recommend and think I might like to read another book either about the Carter Center about Carter's life (but probably in someone else's voice).

Delight says

No matter what you thought of Pres. Carter when he was in office, one can't help but admire the work he's done post-presidency. While most former presidents are making millions giving speeches and sitting on corporate boards, President Carter decided he would devote his life to mediating conflict and eradicating diseases that no-one is addressing. The 4 stars are a reflection of the admiration and respect I have for the work he describes. Makes me want to be an intern for the Carter Center.

AlAmmari Mohammed says

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Gloria says

I found this to be poorly written and boring. I think the world of President Carter and his wife and know they have done so many interesting and wonderful things. That did not come through in this book. It felt stilted and did not flow like a book should. I didn't finish though I would like to know more about his life since he was President. This book just did not satisfy that curiosity for me.

Stephen says

Ex-Presidents enjoy many privileges and "Beyond the White House" demonstrates that one of them is getting mediocre books published.

"Beyond the White House," has the feel of many loose-ends, however interesting and worthy of recounting, carelessly stitched together.

There is no narrative to speak of. Only the single-thread of a post-presidency binds these tales of the Carters' (husband and wife) forays into battle against disease, dictatorship and poverty.

As writer/politician, Carter lacks President Barack Obama's literary gift, but his mind is organized and his prose sparing to the good.

This book provides a window on the world of philanthropy with accounts of how money is raised, how staffing is done, and how people who used to have important, official titles (eg; Colin Powell) later leverage them for the benefit of others.

Carter's accounts of political work in places like Haiti, North Korea, and the Sudan make for good inside stuff (if at times dated). Things get particularly interesting when his interventions require vetting or consultation with a sitting American president.

Carter's efforts in fighting disease are simultaneously stomach-churning and heart-warming.

For those not indoctrinated, the reports on the nasty ailments plaguing millions of people in the undeveloped world thanks to ignorance, cultural resistance, or hapless governments give pause and reason for thanks.

The solutions, at times, are mind-numbingly simple and enough to make one curse the world for not applying them more readily.

Carter has done a lot of good in these areas. And so, by the way, have the major drug-makers he prodded into financing massive, free distributions of badly needed medicines in forgotten and miserable backwaters around the world.

In "Beyond the White House," the ex-president pats his own back, but there's no denying his level of achievement and commitment to the less-fortunate. One can't lead by example if nobody's aware of what they're up to.

There are things in "Beyond the White House" worthy of absorbing for Carter fans, presidential scholars, or politics junkies, but on the whole, there is no whole.

So, if you're so inclined, go forth with this brief foreshadowing of what lies ahead.

Shawn Sorensen says

This is one of the most important books written in the last ten years, and should serve the American voter, student, professor - and leader of any level - for a long time to come.

Jimmy Carter has done more in each year of his post-presidency than most presidents do in a full four-year term (the jury's still out on Obama). The issues and issues are simple but profound - ensure free and fair elections in HUNDREDS of countries, fight diseases that save TENS of MILLIONS of lives mainly in lower-income countries, and broker peace between warring leaders or leaders and their populace. Carter urged Daniel Ortega - a leftist - to step down from power after he lost a monitored election in Nicaragua, and ensured Hugo Chavez - another leftist - stayed in power after a free and fair recall election in Venezuela. Among many other things, Carter has built homes for Habitat for Humanity, has kept up a work-out routine to stay healthy (a good example for others), and has encouraged senior citizens to make their remaining years productive and positive. Think of what American presidents and other leaders could do with even a fraction of Carter's efforts and ideas.

Part of how Carter operates, in addition to being issues-based instead of partisan, is to let leaders of other countries take credit for any instances of progress in peace or prosperity (instead of the Carter Center) and to get at least tacit support from Washington before any major foreign policy initiatives.

The audio book is read by President Carter in a confident, urgent tone. It is abridged, so maybe in the full version Carter examines his deeper personal motivations for spreading peace and prosperity throughout the world, or shows more about how the rest of us can make a positive difference in our increasingly inter-connected international environment.

Still, this is a book that Americans should and will come back to often.

At the end, when Carter mentions stepping down slowly from his wide-ranging activities, he comments clearly about how the Carter Center will continue to run efficiently and how it will boldly continue to keep taking on intransigent and broad-based challenges.

All I can say is Thank God Carter is an American president who has done so much good throughout the world. Whatever the media reports, the millions of people Carter has helped won't forget. And neither should we.

May this book be a stepping stone for even greater endeavors.

Darren says

It was a bit deep at times and got really down into the specifics of what Jimmy Carter has been up to since losing the presidential election over 30 years ago. To be honest I knew that President Carter was involved in Habitat for Humanity and I'd heard of The Carter Center but this book gave me a strong appreciation for the hard work he and the former first lady have been doing the last 32 years.

It may be more enjoyable for a policy wonk as opposed to someone who is interested in the feelings and emotions of a former president.

His work on fair elections is, for me, most impressive.

The book jumped around but was nicely divided up into chapters about conflict/war, democracy, health and diseases and a chapter on The Carter Center's future.

He stayed non-partisan as he's done (for the most part) since leaving the White House but does seem to have some strong feelings toward the George W. Bush administration.

Devon says

An interesting look into the humanitarian work that the Carters have done in the time since his presidency. The book, surprisingly enough, wasn't overtly political except for a few comments regarding foreign policy. I learned quite a bit regarding issues in developing nations, particularly health-related, that I previously had no idea were even a concern. Not as motivating as Three Cups of Tea, but still a worthwhile book to read.

Jeremiah says

An inspiring read on President Carter's second act as a humanitarian. From its inception in 1982, the Carter Center has brokered peace and combated disease and hunger in all parts of the world. Of course not all of the Carter Center's attempts at peace bore fruit and it is tempting to be a little cynical at Carter's international do-gooding efforts, the upshot is that probably thousands of lives were saved due in Haiti and elsewhere in part due to the work of the Carter Center.

Michael says

A good read. While it took me a while to get over the name-dropping and general comfort Carter has with speaking about and celebrating his own accomplishments, once I got past it I found myself respecting the guy more and more. The Carter Center's work eradicating tropical diseases is particularly impressive, but even just generally hearing about an ex-President who has clearly devoted his life to helping others is inspiring.

Mike says

Jimmy Carter is an absolute hero to me. The work that's he's done through and with The Carter Center is

nothing short of amazing. This book does an excellent job of illuminating exactly what goes into the progress that The Carter Center has effected.

There were at least half a dozen times that this book caused me to think, "My God, Jimmy Carter is more amazing than Batman." I'm not joking.

I listened to the audio version of this book, which is read by Carter himself. I've always admired the way he speaks. Even though his words are devoid of lofty rhetoric, his passion for the well-being of others is evident in his voice.

Here's what strikes me most about Carter's reading: On one hand, the text steers far, far clear of any emotional appeals that feel cheap or manipulative -- Carter trusts that he and the reader share similar values, including the importance of the well-being of others. His work uses a logical rather than an emotional appeal to those shared values, and this is reflected in his even-keeled, level-headed speaking style. There's none of the urgent tempo or rising crescendos that I tend to associate with "gifted" orators. But the normally even-keeled and molasses-paced speaking lends an incredible gravity to the barest expressions of emotion. (And yeah, I realize the inherent irony of the non-emotional appeal actually increasing the emotional appeal of the argument.) There is one passage in particular whose reading I found very moving:

"We had copies of a number of genuine tally sheets, each one carefully filled out and signed by at least ten polling officials and party observers. The ones now being used were partial, containing only numbers in the totaled slots, and most with only two or three signatures, often in the same handwriting. Noriega's candidates were being announced as winners by a two-to-one margin. I was very angry and climbed onto the stage. In Spanish, I shouted, 'Are you honest officials or thieves? You are stealing the election from the people of Panama.' Soldiers forced me off the stage and ushered me to my hotel, which was across a broad street. I was informed that I could not return to the election headquarters, where dozens of local and international news reporters were assembled."

First: "I was very angry and climbed onto the stage" is a sentence worthy of Hemingway.

Second: Because of Carter's soft-spoken nature and tendency to avoid easy emotional appeals, hearing him say "I was very angry" carries much more weight than the same statement from, say, Bill O'Reilly. The slight inflection in the line "You are stealing the election from the people of Panama" communicates how strongly Carter feels about the importance of free and fair elections. There is something about his subtle change in pitch that laments the injustice not from a standpoint of self-righteousness, but from a perspective of sadness and confusion.

Third: I have a hard time imagining another American president doing the same thing in this situation. I have a hard time imagining *Batman* doing the same thing in this situation. (I have no idea why I kept thinking of Batman; I'm not even that much of a fan of his.)

Anyway, super-duper highly recommended.
