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6. The Secretary shall provide administrative support for the IGIA.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former President Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter in Atlanta

August 9, 1999

President and Mrs. Carter, members of the Carter family, including grandchild number 10, Hugo, who's right outside—[*laughter*]—members of the Cabinet who are here, friends of the Carters, Mr. Mayor. Let me say to all of you what a great pleasure it is for me to be here today. I flew down on Air Force One today with a number of former Carter administration members who, many of them, are in our administration, many others are mutual friends; and we relived old stories.

I remember in 1974, Governor Jimmy Carter had a role in the Democratic Party, and he was trying to help us all win elections. And I was running for Congress, and he sent Jody Powell to northwest Arkansas to help me. I should have known something was up. [*Laughter*] Thank goodness he failed, and I lost that election. [*Laughter*]

In 1975, Jimmy Carter came to Arkansas to give a speech, met with me and my wife and others, and we signed on. In 1976, my home State was the only State besides Georgia where President Carter got more than 65 percent of the vote. So it's a great personal honor for me to be here today.

Over the past several years, the President and Mrs. Carter have received many awards, all of them well-deserved. Rosalynn has received more than a dozen just from children's organizations alone. President Carter has been knighted in Mali, made an honorary tribal chief in Nigeria and Ghana. There are at least three families in Africa he's met who have named their newborn child Jimmy Carter. [*Laughter*]

Now these are hard acts to follow. [*Laughter*] But today, it is my privilege, on behalf of a grateful nation, to confer America's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, on Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.

Twenty-two years ago, when presenting this same award posthumously to Dr. Martin Luther King, President Carter said, ''There are many Americans who do great things, who make us proud of them and their achievements, and who inspire us to do better ourselves. But there are some among those noble achievers who are exemplary in every way, who reach a higher plateau of achievement.''

It is in that spirit that we look back on two extraordinary lives today. In the past, this award has been presented to people who have helped America promote freedom by fighting for human rights or righting social wrongs or empowering others to achieve or extending peace around the world. But rarely do we honor two people who have devoted themselves so effectively to advancing freedom in all those ways. Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have done more good things for more people in more places than any other couple on the face of the Earth.

To be sure, there have been other Presidents who have continued to contribute to the public good once they left office: Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia; John Quincy Adams returned to Congress for eight terms and fought slavery; William Howard Taft became Chief Justice.

But the work President Carter has done through this extraordinary Carter Center to improve our Nation and our world is truly unparalleled in our Nation's history. We've all gotten used to seeing pictures of President Carter building homes for people through Habitat for Humanity. But the full story lies in pictures we don't see, of the 115 countries he's visited since leaving office, to end hunger and disease and to spread the cause of peace; by the more than 20 elections he's helped to monitor, where democracy is taking root, thanks in part to his efforts; of the millions in Africa who are living better lives thanks to his work to eradicate diseases like Guinea worm and river blindness; of the dozens of political prisoners who have been released, thanks in part to letters he has written away from the public spotlight.

I was proud to have his support when we worked together to bring democracy back to Haiti and to preserve stability on the Korean

Peninsula. I am grateful for the many detailed, incisive reports he has sent to me from his trips to troubled nations all across the globe, always urging understanding of their problems and their points of view, always outlining practical steps to progress.

To call Jimmy Carter the greatest former President in history, as many have, however, does not do justice either to him or to his work. For, in a real sense, this Carter Center is not a new beginning, but a continuation of the Carter Presidency.

The work President Carter did in those 4 years not only broke important new ground, it is still playing a large role in shaping the world we live in today. One of the proudest moments of my life was the day in 1993 when Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands on the South Lawn of the White House. That day was made possible by the courage of the people of the Middle East and their leaders, but also by another handshake 20 years before and the persistence of President Carter as he brokered the Camp David Accords. I know it is a great source of pride for him that, 21 years later, not a word of that agreement has been violated.

If you talk to any elected leader in Latin America today, they will tell you that the stand President Carter took for democracy and human rights put America on the right side of history in our hemisphere. He was the first President to put America's commitment to human rights squarely at the heart of our foreign policy. Today, more than half the world's people live in freedom, not least because he had the faith to lend America's support to brave dissidents like Sakharov, Havel, and Mandela. And there were thousands of less well-known political prisoners languishing in jails in the 1970's who were sustained by a smuggled news clipping of President Carter championing their cause. His role in saving the life of the present President of South Korea, President Kim, is well known.

His resolve on SALT II, even though it was never ratified, helped to constrain the arms race for a full decade and laid the groundwork for the dramatic reductions in nuclear weaponry we have seen today. By normalizing relations with China, he began a dialog which holds the promise of avoiding a new era of conflict and containment and, instead, building a future of cooperation with the world's most populous nation.

Here at home, his work on deregulation helped free up competitive forces that continue to strengthen our economy today. His work on conservation, particularly the Alaska Lands Act, accelerated a process that has created the cleanest air and water in a generation. His advocacy of energy conservation and clean energy will loom even larger in the years ahead as our Nation and our world finally come to grips with the challenge of climate change. And by hiring and appointing more women and more minorities than any other administration to that point, he set a shining example of the one America we all long to live in.

During the Carter years, Rosalynn Carter also brought vision, compassion, tireless energy, and commitment to the causes she advanced. Just as Eleanor Roosevelt will be remembered for her work on human rights, Rosalynn Carter will always be remembered as a pioneer on mental health and a champion of our children.

For more than 30 years, she has made it her mission to erase the stigma surrounding mental health. As First Lady of Georgia, she used to travel dusty backroads to meet with people and volunteered her time at a State hospital. She took what she learned to the White House, where she chaired the President's Commission on Mental Health with style and grace. Afterwards, she initiated the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy and has worked to promote action on mental health worldwide.

We have made some progress in the last few years in extending health coverage and health insurance policies to mental health conditions, thanks in large measure to Tipper Gore's efforts, and in broadening public understanding and support for further action. It would not have happened if Rosalynn Carter hadn't done what she did first. Thanks to her work, I believe we will see the day not too long away when mental illnesses are treated just like any other illnesses and covered just like any other illnesses.

We also owe her our gratitude for her efforts to ensure that all our children are immunized. Two decades ago, she helped

America see that while many vaccines were being discovered, too few children were being vaccinated. She traveled across our country and became so recognized as a leader on immunization that people used to joke that every time she showed up, the kids would start to cry, because they knew somebody was going to get a shot. [*Laughter*]

Her work inspired President Carter to launch a nationwide campaign to immunize all children by the time they enter school, an effort we have built on. I can tell you that in the last 2 years, we can say for the first time in history, 90 percent of America's children have been immunized against serious childhood diseases. That would not have happened if Rosalynn Carter hadn't started this crusade more than two decades ago. We have seen this kind of commitment in all of her endeavors, from her work to organize relief for Cambodian refugees to her constant efforts to ensure that women get equal pay for equal work.

The extraordinary partnership between these two remarkable Americans has remained strong for more than 50 years now. To see it merely as a political journey tells only part of the story. At its heart, those of us who admire them see their journey as one of love and faith. In many ways, this Center has been their ministry.

In his book ''Living Faith,'' President Carter recalls a sermon that says, when we die, the marker on our grave has two dates: the day we're born and the day we die—and a little dash in between, representing our whole life on Earth, the little dash. To God, the tiny dash is everything.

What a dash they have already made.

By doing justice, by loving mercy, by walking humbly with their God, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter are still living their faith, still making the most of the dash in between the numbers.

It will be hard for any future historian to chronicle all the good work they have done. It will be quite impossible for anyone to chronicle all the good works they have inspired in the hearts and lives of others throughout the world. Today, we do all we can; a grateful nation says thank you.

Colonel, read the citation.

[*At this point, Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. in the chapel at the Carter Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta; former Presidential Press Secretary Jody Powell; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President and Mrs. Carter.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on BusinessLINC

August 10, 1999

The President. Well, hello, everyone. I have a few remarks, but I want to be brief so we can get on to the business at hand. But first, I'd like to thank James Powell for making us feel welcome in his place of business, and his family and his co-workers and the instruction that he gave me on making a mop. I'm always looking for new skills since I have to acquire some pretty soon. [*Laughter*]

And the Vice President appreciates the fact that he buys the cord from Tennessee.

The Vice President. Humboldt, Tennessee.

The President. And I want to thank the Mayor and the two councilpersons, and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, for making us feel welcome up here. We're always glad to be out in DC, but this is a special opportunity. And I know that the Mayor and Councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis and Kevin Chavous—Councilman Chavous—are excited about what's going on here.

I want to thank Dana Mead, the president and CEO of Tenneco; the gentleman to my right who is the chair of the Business Roundtable; and Peter Bijur, the president and CEO of Texaco, who is going to chair our BusinessLINC National Coalition, for their willingness to undertake this project with gusto; and all the others around here who are proving that this kind of thing works and who will be introduced as we go through,