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Political leadership presents a puzzle difficult to unravel. Highly skillful leaders are most effective when they have an abundance of political support. Jimmy Carter is one of the successful and effective leaders of the United States who served as the President of the country. Carter made the most of his opportunities against the backdrop of historical context and available political resources. The impressive features of Carter are his management of policy development within the administration and his style as a decision maker . Carter’s effectiveness as a President matches his skills and strategies of leadership to his historical opportunities. He followed a deeply rooted personal style and a belief system to govern the country. His basic philosophy and actions were evident from his previous actions. His conceptions of leadership inform the way in which he organized the administration, structured policy development and decision-making strategies.

Born as James Earl Carter Jr., in the plains of Georgia to Lillian and James Earl Carter grew up with two younger sisters and a brother . Jimmy took his father as an inspiration and worked as hard at school as he did on the farm. He became the first person to earn a college degree. In his childhood, Carter told his high school friends that he would become the governor of the country. As a young naval officer, Carter aspired to become the Chief of naval operations. His role models were his father Earl Carter and Admiral Hyman Rickover. As a young adult, Carter brought all his energy, drive and ambition to forge his professional identity. Carter’s father Earl Carter instilled two traits in Jimmy, his propensity to exaggerate accomplishments and his ability to smile in almost any situation. Carter implemented these traits in

most of the occasions as the President of the United States. He developed a second professional identity at the age of twenty-nine.

Carter was a man of character, cognitive skills and values right from his childhood. His style of leadership developed through intuitive fumbling and trial and error. The core patterns of Carter's character and style were apparent by 1970 when he became the governor of the United States. He became a tyrant of peace and championed the cause of human rights all over Latin America both during his presidency and afterwards. Carter became a beloved hero of Latin America as well as in many other embattled parts of the world. He journeyed to Africa to mediate a civil war, which was destroying and starving the population. During his presidency, Carter formed a team of twenty-five experts from the Democratic as well as the Republican parties to study the challenges that would face the next President. For his efforts to bring peace in the world, Carter received the noble peace prize in the year 2002 .

Carter's eventual success as a farmer and businessman increased his conviction and self-confidence that he could master any difficult task.

Though Carter was not a leader in the school, college or Annapolis, he stood out in the group with his organizational skills. His first independent political success was his victory as the Georgia state senate against the attempt to deprive him fraudulently of his legal victory. He pledged to read every bill before he voted on it and searched for comprehensive solutions to problems by introducing measures on school finance education, taxation of utilities, election laws, overcrowded state mental hospitals, budgeting procedures and uniform salaries for state officials . As a virtuous leader, Jimmy Carter

articulated the interests of the vast, unorganized public against the demands of groups. He evoked tremendous efforts of drive and skill to overcome obstacles. Carter attained a certain serenity of his kind by deepening his religious faith to cope with the crisis of middle life.

As a governor and President, Carter was able to detach himself from his successes and failures by justifying his actions by his desire to do right. Carter's patterns of character and style showed strong needs for autonomy and achievement. His political leadership called for independent action in behalf of the public interest. His cognitive aspect of political style was evident from his actions. He thoroughly understood the issues for which he assumed primary responsibility. Carter regarded knowledge as a recourse for political persuasion and used his intelligence and capacity for homework to his advantage. One of the best examples is Carter's presence in the informal meeting of the two houses of the Georgia legislature, in which he answered questions on the reorganization of the state government . Carter's values were consistent and emphasized on the public good derived from the southern political traditions. His commitment to the agricultural values and his personal association with the military tradition of the South were appreciable.

Carter's religious faith was central to his life. His beliefs about political purposes in government and his style of authority inspired him to throw himself into the world's battles. Carter practiced charity, forgiveness, humility and tolerance as political virtues. His commitment to doing good in the world and his optimism that good could prevail not only provided direction, but reinforced his intellectual self-confidence and his need to

achieve . The governorship of Georgia provided a testing ground for Carter as a mature politician. Carter had the ability to speak to a wider diversity of groups than did his opponents and to appeal to people, such as the small farmers and small-town people, whom the government represented insufficiently. He managed to evoke both the traditional values of morality and community and modern values of efficiency and progress through his desire for the modernization of the state's governing structure.

In articulating the public interest, Carter focused on the reorganization of the state government in areas, such as public health, education, consumer protection, judicial reform and overhaul of tax policy . He emphasized equity and improved procedures to permit long-range planning and efficient delivery of services. He presented proposals to the legislature and implemented the strategy of pushing as hard as possible in the beginning to give away as little as possible at the end. However, ambiguities in style made Carter politically vulnerable. Basing political support upon a diffuse public rather than on a coalition of groups meant that Carter progressively lost public support as his actions alienated segments of the population. His opposition with the special interest groups and his refusal to accommodate the interests of strong legislators failed to bring success to Carter as a governor . Carter did not develop policies in order to win the popular support, but hoped that support would come from bold attacks on unresolved problems.

Carter's desire to reorganize the federal bureaucracy, rationalization and efficiency in the system of public welfare for the poor, practical and comprehensive national health insurance system and greater efficiency in

the defense programs gave every reason for the public to believe that Carter's style of leadership emphasized on the needs of the public. He fashioned executive decision making processes and ignored the intermediaries, who might intervene the process of exploration; however, he preferred to work directly with small groups of advisors who could focus their knowledge upon specific problems . He understood the importance of politics in government and ought to go for an incremental rather than a comprehensive welfare reform as the latter was expensive and would create administrative problems. He consciously believed in his political strengths. Carter knew himself well and realized that his strengths and weaknesses were the opposite sides of the same coin.

Carter's fusion of policy and politics was reactive rather creative. He neither assessed political resources in relation to major policy initiatives nor programmatic themes to broad political appeals. He hoped that the public would reward him in 1980 for resolving a number of major problems. Carter was the first modern Democratic President to face the dearth of ideas in the Democratic policy agenda. He consciously attempted to create new policies for the Democratic coalition that would combine liberal goals and conservative means . He sought to balance and reconcile opposites in his approach to foreign policy as well. He wished to guide the American foreign policy by the broad theme of human rights. Carter believed that the President's most important task was to make intelligent decisions, which emerged from a process of policy development based on the search for comprehensive policies that attacked problems at the roots.

Carter set an example for his associates by being on the top of issues. He

had a great belief in unity in diversity and integrated competing values, such as liberal goals and conservative means, international cooperation and competition, as approximation of public goods . Carter’s strategy of presidential leadership was to combine knowledge as a political resource with the evocation of shared values in the society. He did not want politics to drive policies but wanted policy objectives to drive politics. Carter thought to combine the ideals of international cooperation and national competition. He hoped to evoke the best in his lieutenants and in the public. In 1979, Carter described American culture as a nation locked in spiritual crisis. On one occasion, Carter shocked the crowds and the nation when he ordered his secret service agents to stop the limousine so that he could join the parade on foot with his family . His independence and lack of interferences were welcome relief just years after the Watergate scandal had weakened public confidence in the political system.

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