

MARTHA BARNETT:

I want to give you my reaction to the first several hours of the day. I think this has been one of the most stimulating moments in my life, and I want to thank those of you who have made presentations. They've been focused, articulate, informative and inspiring. And so, I think the day is going well. So far, I think this has just been a wonderful program, and the lunch hour proves to be what will be the highlight of the entire program.

When we first started talking about a call-to-action--an actual call-to- action for a **moratorium**--the planning committee wondered, "Would anyone care? Would anyone come? And if they would, where would they want to come? Where would be the place that we should have it?" It was our hope that we could have it at the Carter Center, for obvious reasons. The Carter Center and the Carter family stand for the kind of principled commitment to human rights that we believe is the underpinning of a call for a **moratorium** on the **death penalty**. And we were absolutely thrilled when that hope became a reality and we were able to have this program here.

But the dream was that we would get Mrs. Carter to participate and to join us. We knew of her commitment to a **moratorium** and her opposition to the **death penalty**. And it was our dream that we could have her join us and talk with us about some of the things they do in the Carter Center and simply just be in the room with us as an inspiration. And indeed, she's here.

When President Carter was running for President, Mrs. Carter came to Tallahassee, Florida for a campaign stop. And I don't remember why, but I was in the room where the program was going to be early. I think it's probably because I wanted to get a front row seat, and was eager to be there and hear her. I got asked to stand at the podium while they got the microphone ready, to make sure that the mike was the right height for Mrs. Carter and that the lights hit her just right. And so for 20, 30 seconds, I got to pretend I was Mrs. Carter.

It never, ever dawned on me that I would have an opportunity in my life to actually stand at a podium and ask her to come to the podium and introduce her to some of the best lawyers and best people in America. But it is a privilege beyond belief to be able to do that. And so, I introduce to you all someone who everyone in this room knows and loves and respects. Rosalynn Carter.

ROSALYNN CARTER:

I am pleased to have you here. I enjoyed being with you last night, and I am just so happy that you're here to talk about the **death penalty**. And I want to thank Martha and

the **American Bar Association** for bringing you all together.

I thought before I got into my subject, however, I would tell you a little bit about the Carter Center and the things that we do here. We began the Center in the early 1980's. (Somebody just asked me how old Amy is. That shows you how long we've been gone. Next week, she'll be 33 years old).

So when we started trying to decide what to do at the Carter Center, Jimmy said, "We can have a place to resolve conflicts, because if there had been such a place, I would not have had to take Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat to Camp David." And so that was the idea for the Carter Center.

But you don't just go out and resolve conflicts. So, we had a chance to work on agriculture problems in Africa. Being a farmer, that appealed to Jimmy, so we began agriculture programs. Then Dr. Bill Foege, who had been at the Center for Disease Control while Jimmy was President, came to be our Executive Director, and he attracted health programs. We found that these programs gave us an entrée to the leaders. We got to know the leaders in various countries. So then if there was a conflict, or a potential conflict, Jimmy could talk to the head of state and the leaders in the country and say, "Maybe I can help you with this problem." And so it all works together.

Today all of our programs fall into two categories: peace and health. Our peace programs consist of conflict resolution and promoting democracy. We monitor elections, and we only monitor elections where authoritarian governments are becoming democracies, or in countries where democracy is really fragile. Our health programs are aimed at eradicating and controlling diseases. We're eradicating a horrible disease called Guinea worm, which will be only the second disease ever eradicated. Now, 98% of the cases are already gone. We're working on controlling river blindness and trachoma, which is the leading cause of preventable blindness in the world. It comes from filth and dirt, and it is so sad to see these little children with flies in their eyes and dirty hands. It's really an educational program. But pharmaceutical companies have helped us so much in giving us medications for river blindness and for lots of these programs that we have. We're working on lymphatic filariasis, which is the same as elephantiasis, schistosomiasis and other diseases. And then our agricultural programs, which we continue--we have about 600,000 small farmers in Africa in our agricultural programs. We consider that a health program because of the value of nutrition and trying to help people have enough to eat. We're in 65 countries in the developing world, 35 of those in Africa. We travel an awful lot working with our programs. Then I have my mental health program here, which is something I've been working on since Jimmy was Governor early in 1971, trying to make life better for people with mental illnesses.

So the overarching policy of the Carter Center--the basic core of our commitment--is human rights. And I think you can see by our programs that we work towards freeing people from oppression and persecution. But we also believe that human rights includes a decent place to live and food to eat and adequate medical care--the basic necessities of life--as well as freedom from discrimination and injustice at home and abroad.

Having been involved for so long in human rights efforts around the world and familiar with the conventions and declarations that make human rights a part of international law, I see the **death penalty** as an obvious violation of human rights. It's an issue that I feel so strongly about, and one that has bothered me for a very long time. We have had meetings here at the Carter Center to discuss the issue. We had a conference on the 25th anniversary of Furman vs. Georgia. [FN36] I have called on the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court. I write to Governors all the time about people in their states on death row. I worry about the issue.

But I am heartened now by the attention that the **death penalty** is getting. It's in the news, as you know, regularly. This morning the New York Times had an editorial on **death penalty** victims. These victims are those who are in the prisons and have to strap people to the tables and to have to deal with those horrible things. We also see stories about high profile cases and articles about the way the **death penalty** is carried out, with racial discrimination and poor legal representation. We read about judicial errors in cases and attorneys pictured as incompetent or indifferent and uninterested.

And we read about the killing of mentally ill and mentally retarded people, and even children. It grieves me that our country has not signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of the reasons we have not signed it is because we want to continue to execute children. The United States and Somalia, I believe, are the only two countries that have not signed that Convention. There are 80 offenders on death row now that were under the age of 18 at the time of their crimes.

Our country is facing bitter criticism from overseas. Felix Rohatyn, after he became ambassador to France, said that he was surprised and shocked at the harsh criticisms that he hears. He said, "The **death penalty** has cast a shadow over America." All 15 members of the European Union have outlawed the **death penalty**. And the accession of new members--Turkey, for instance--is conditioned in part on their abolition of capital punishment.

Our position on the issue puts us in the same category as China, Iran and Iraq. I don't think that's where many of us in our country want to be.

I think all of these things are making an impression on people. I believe people are beginning to recognize that something needs to be done about the system. Myself, I am morally and spiritually opposed to the **death penalty**. For those who don't share my feelings, the questions that have been raised clearly call for a **moratorium** on executions, so we can step back and look at all of these issues.

I commend Governor Ryan for having the courage to declare a **moratorium** in his state and to appoint a commission to review the use of capital punishment. And I commend and support the **American Bar Association** in calling for a **moratorium**.

Well, again, I am so pleased that you're here, and so pleased that you're working on this issue, and that the issue has gained the attention it demands so it may be possible for all of us working together to make a difference. Thank you.

MARTHA BARNETT:

Thank you so much. Thank you for caring and for being such a strong voice-- quiet and dignified, but a strong voice on this subject.

[FN36]. Furman, 408 U.S. 238.