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US should disarm first, says ex-US President Carter

AFP [SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2002 03:57:37 PM]

WASHINGTON: Former US president Jimmy Carter, this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, called on Friday for disarmament by the United States, which has taken the lead in urging such countries as North Korea and Iraq to destroy their weapons of mass destruction.

"One of the things that the United States government has not done is to try to comply with and enforce international efforts targeted to prohibit the arsenals of biological weapons that we ourselves have," Carter said on CNN's *Larry King Live* programme broadcast late Friday.

He also called for more stringent efforts by Washington "to reduce and enforce the agreement to eliminate chemical weapons, and the same way with nuclear weapons."

"The major powers need to set an example," Carter said, as the United States confronts Iraq over its possession of such banned weapons.

"Quite often the big countries that are responsible for the peace of the world set a very poor example for those who might hunger for the esteem or the power or the threats that they can develop from nuclear weapons themselves," the former US president continued.

"I don't have any doubt that it's that kind of atmosphere that has led to the nuclearisation, you might say, of India and Pakistan," he said.

Carter, who will receive the Nobel prize on December 10 in Oslo, Norway for his efforts in seeking negotiated settlements to head off violent conflict, also noted that the United States gives only one one-thousandth of its gross national product for international assistance, while the average European country gives four times as much.

"For every time an American gives a dollar, a citizen of Norway gives 17 dollars," he said.

"Foreign aid in this country has a bad name, but in other countries, it's a right thing for the government to do. And that's where we at the Carter Center quite often have to turn," the former president said, referring to the Atlanta-based Carter Center he founded some 20 years ago, and which now operates humanitarian projects in 65 countries.

Carter also said the United States has given many nations around the world cause for resentment and scorn.

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"There is a sense that the United States has become too arrogant, too dominant, too self-centered, proud of our wealth, believing that we deserve to be the richest and most powerful and influential nation in the world," the 78-year-old former president said.

"I think they feel that we don't really care about them, which is quite often true."

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