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Prophet from Plains: Jimmy Carter and His Legacy

Frye Gaillard

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Prophet from Plains covers Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter's major achievements and setbacks in light of what has been at once his greatest asset and his greatest flaw: his stubborn, faith-driven integrity. Carter's remarkable postpresidency is still in the making; however, he has already redefined the role for all who follow him.

Frye Gaillard, who wrote extensively about Carter at the *Charlotte Observer*, was among the first to take the Carter postpresidency seriously and to challenge many accepted conclusions about Carter's term in office. Carter was not an irresolute president, says Gaillard, but rather one so certain of his own rectitude that he misjudged the importance of "selling" himself to America. Ranging across the highs and lows of the Carter presidency, Gaillard covers the energy crisis, the Iran hostage situation, the Camp David Accords, the Panama Canal and other treaties, and the new diplomatic emphasis on human rights.

Carter's established priorities did not change once he was out of office, but he was far more effective outside the strictures of presidential politics. Gaillard's coverage of this period includes Carter's friendship with Gerald R. Ford, his work through the Carter Center on disease control and election monitoring, and his association with Habitat for Humanity.

Prophet from Plains locates Carter in the tradition of Old Testament prophets who took uncompromising stands for peace and justice. Resisting the role of an above-the-fray elder statesman, Carter has thrust himself into international controversies in ways that some find meddlesome and others heroic.

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