

## [National Security Archive: In Memoriam: John Prados, 1951-2022](#)

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### **[The H-Diplo editors and community join the National Security Archive in mourning the passing of Dr. John Prados - ed.]**

**Washington, D.C., November 30, 2022** - We are deeply saddened to announce the passing on Tuesday of National Security Archive senior fellow Dr. John Prados, a celebrated military and intelligence historian who ranks as one of the founders of the Archive.

A prodigious author and researcher, John leaves behind a whole bookshelf of highly informed, well documented volumes covering military and intelligence history from the battle of Leyte Gulf in World War II, through Dien Bien Phu, the entire Vietnam War, the invasion of Iraq, and so much more—including a before-its-time collection (on CDs) of presidential recordings from Roosevelt through Nixon. John also edited a number of well-received, major document compilations in our own Digital National Security Archive series, especially covering Vietnam and the history of the CIA. Among his 27 books, several of them translated into French, a highlight was his biography of William Colby, which argues that the CIA director's accommodating approach to congressional investigations in the 1970s of Agency wrongdoing actually saved the CIA.

At frequent public events featuring notable former officials from the Vietnam era such as Robert McNamara, John could be counted on to calmly fend off temptations to color the historical record by presenting factual and analytical correctives that were utterly unassailable. Among his uncountable public presentations, he was a key scholar-participant in the historic Brown University-sponsored conference in Hanoi in 1997 where McNamara and a number of other former top U.S. and North Vietnamese decision-makers convened to hash out lessons from the American War.

Fellow historians have already begun registering the loss of one of their most prolific colleagues. James Hershberg, professor at The George Washington University, called him "one-of-a-kind" and an early influence dating back to the 1980s with the appearance of his seminal *The Soviet Estimate*. Fred Logevall of Harvard remembered him as "a historian's historian" who "could appear intimidating at the lectern (and from the floor in the Q&A), but underneath was a warm man with a ready smile and a hearty laugh."

Today, we remember John and his many contributions to transparency and national security scholarship in a special web posting to honor his life and work.

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