



William Colby and the CIA: The Secret Wars of a Controversial Spymaster

John Prados

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It is surprising that no one previous to John Prados attempted a biography of quintessential cold warrior William Colby, because his story is in many ways also the story of the CIA. From Italy to Vietnam, to the military coup in Indonesia, to Watergate, the prosecution of Richard Helms, investigations of CIA assassination plots, and the drugging and surveillance of unwitting Americans, Colby was there, on the ground or deeply involved at headquarters.—The Guardian

William E. Colby was one of the most enigmatic figures of the Cold War and a central player in the operations of the Central Intelligence Agency. While publicly appearing as a calm bureaucrat, behind the scenes Colby helped orchestrate some of CIA's most controversial operations. His mysterious death even added to the aura. In the wake of new questions relating to CIA activities since 9/11—which John Prados discusses in his new preface—Colby's story provides crucial lessons for a nation that still struggles to reconcile intelligence methods with democratic principles.

Prados tracks Colby's life and career from early years in the OSS to his tumultuous tenure as Director of Central Intelligence in the 1970s. Reviled by many outside the CIA for his role in Vietnam—and inside it for his cooperation with probes of the agency—Colby was cast as a scapegoat by the Ford White House during the Church and Pike congressional investigations. In addition, Prados offers fresh insights and new perspectives on Colby's involvement in the notorious Phoenix program in Vietnam and in the bloody Indonesian coup of 1965 that overthrew President Sukarno and brought General Suharto to power, as well as on the CIA's role in the 1963 assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam and on the actions of high-level CIA officials during the final demise of South Vietnam in 1975.

A masterful study of a master spy, William Colby and the CIA also offers a vital and timely history of the inner workings of "the Company" for which he worked. Originally published in a cloth edition under the title *Lost Crusader* and retitled for this first paperback edition, William Colby and the CIA explores dilemmas of intelligence that are of renewed importance today.

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