

**Agostino von Hassell and Sigrid MacRae, *Alliance of Enemies: The Untold Story of the Secret American and German Collaboration to End World War II*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006, 391 pages, \$24.95 (hardcover).**

*Alliance of Enemies* is a well-researched, persuasively argued account of German opposition to the Nazi regime. The book's particular focus is on resistance from within the ranks of the traditional German elite that included highly placed individuals such as Army General Ludwig Beck, Abwehr (Military Intelligence) chief Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, diplomat Ulrich von Hassell (grandfather of one of the authors), and, of course, Claus von Stauffenberg, the mastermind of the nearly successful July 1944 bomb plot against Hitler. The authors emphasize both the opposition's longevity—an early assassination scheme dates back to 1938—as well as the plotters' protracted quest for Allied support during the war.

Through their agent networks and secret channels across Europe, the Abwehr and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) became the prime movers in this Allied-German exploration. In Switzerland, OSS representative Allen Dulles keenly listened to German opposition agents who provided him with valuable intelligence on the development of the V-2 rocket program and anti-Nazi plots. In return, Dulles recommended U.S. support for the Resistance in order to end the war as quickly as possible through a coup d'état. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, however, rejected this option and insisted on unconditional surrender, partly because he despised the Resistance, whose members were often Prussian nobility, as exponents of an undemocratic, militarist German tradition. In exasperation, Dulles concluded, "it sometimes seemed that those who determined policy in America and England were making the military task as difficult as possible by uniting all Germans to resist to the bitter end." Frustrated by Hitler's initial military successes and repeated Allied rebuttals, the opposition grew increasingly desperate.

The authors contend that active Allied support of the German Resistance through intelligence channels could have tipped the balance in favor of the conspirators. "A short, efficient fuse or explosives"—extremely difficult to procure inside the Reich—"slipped to one of the Abwehr couriers would have done the trick." This is speculation, of course, but nevertheless intriguing, because a successful coup in 1943 or even 1944 would have spared the world the worst of World War II; in the final ten months of the war, more people perished than in the previous four years combined. The opposition effectively ended when the Nazis arrested, tortured, and executed thousands in the wake of the failed Stauffenberg plot.

*Alliance of Enemies* is a story of missed opportunities and tragic failure as well as moral stamina and incredible courage in the face of overwhelming odds. While the Resistance ultimately failed to rid the world of Hitler, their valiant efforts nevertheless command respect and hold valuable lessons beyond World War II. Looking at current affairs, von Hassell and MacRae stress the necessity of international intelligence cooperation and the inherent danger of policy makers' refusal to carefully listen to the intelligence community. As a study of the past and a warning for the future, *Alliance of Enemies* makes fascinating reading.

**Reviewed by Thomas Boghardt, Ph.D.**, historian at the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C.