

LEFT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, WASHINGTON, DC; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; MIDDLE: BETTMANN/CORBIS; BOTTOM: US NATIONAL ARCHIVES

him that FDR would object to any contacts with German officials for fear of angering America's Soviet ally. Any hint of such an arrangement was bound to enrage Stalin and play into his fears of an Anglo-American scheme to enlist Germany in an anti-Bolshevik crusade. [*The Unseen War in Europe* by John Waller, Random House, 1996, and personal interviews] Moreover, Donovan

The second consultant, William Langer, head of the OSS Research and Analysis Branch and a history professor at Harvard in civilian life, took the opposite position. He disputed the existence of a "fairly large, well-organized, and influential" opposition group in Germany that was "in a position to have its orders carried out." In Langer's opinion, "nothing can be done in Germany until the Nazi

and to make use of any of Moltke's connections who might be helpful to the invasion of the continent "without any regard whatsoever for any further consideration such as the future of Europe or the future of Germany." Then came two stern final warnings: "But consider the possibility that the group is a possible instrument of double agents and have no regard whatsoever for the German individuals involved."

[NARA RG 226, Entry 110, Box 47]

## **"ARCH F. COLEMAN, SECOND IN COMMAND OF OSS (U.S. INTELLIGENCE OFFICE) IN ISTANBUL, SENT A SERIES OF MEMORANDA PROMOTING THE GERMAN CONSPIRATORS' PLAN TO HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON."**

**Nine months was a long period of indecision.**

Yes. And by that time all the men on Moltke's list were involved in or at least had some advance knowledge of the July 20, 1944

himself was well aware of FDR's hatred of Germans, whom he saw as congenitally aggressive and imperialistic. Widely quoted among the OSS and U.S. diplomats at the time was a remark Roosevelt was said to have uttered: "An anti-Nazi German is only a shade better than a Nazi German."

### **What, then, did Donovan do?**

He referred the question of the credibility of Moltke's offer to two German affairs experts, one within and one outside the OSS. The outside consultant, Professor Karl Brandt of Stanford University, welcomed the German High Command offer, warning the OSS that more than half a million American boys would die battling Germany on the French coast "before the fortress will fall by military assault only" and praising Moltke and his co-conspirators as "the most respectable revolutionary group inside Germany, lodged in vital strategic positions" capable of assuring Anglo-American occupation and keeping the Russians out of Central Europe in a "practicable and politically permissible [way]." Dismissing the possibility of a "slick ruse" by the High Command, Brandt gave "full credence" to the "sincerity" of the conspirators' efforts, and proposed that the U.S. military establish a formal liaison group with the conspirators. [NARA RG 226, Entry 190, Microfilm 1462, Roll 52, February 28, 1944]

regime collapses, and no such collapse is probable in the immediate future unless the armies are defeated decisively." Langer did allow that certain elements "must be thinking of surrender to the Anglo-Americans to avoid being overrun by Bolshevik armies," but he characterized as "hackneyed" the German idea of enlisting Anglo-American help against the Bolsheviks. He further warned that considering the German generals' plan without Russian "knowledge and agreement" would be a "grave mistake" and contended that the Russians were "prepared to play ball but equally prepared and determined to execute a *volte-face* if the British and the Americans do not play fair." His recommendation, issued on March 15, 1944, was to "keep the wires open" and find out more about Moltke's group in the High Command, but "lay all military plans as though this group [does] not exist." [NARA RG 226, Entry 110, Box 47]

### **Whose opinion did headquarters embrace?**

Langer's. On April 3, 1944, almost nine months after Moltke first contacted the OSS in Istanbul, the OSS Planning Group in Washington formally rejected the offer and decided not to transmit it to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on a technicality: it required no military action. OSS-Istanbul was instructed to explore the possibilities raised by the proposition

attempt to assassinate Hitler in the operation code-named Walkyrie. Moltke himself was already in prison for having organized a circle of anti-Nazi clergy, intellectuals, labor leaders, and government officials, and for drafting a blueprint for a democratic, post-Nazi German state. The Gestapo arrested him on January 19, 1944. He, along with dozens of others, were tried and found guilty of plotting against the Nazi state. He was executed on January 23, 1945.

### **What was the fate of the others on "Moltke's List"?**

Colonel General Beck, among the first of the Walkyrie conspirators to be arrested, shot himself in the head but survived and was reduced to pleading with a sergeant to finish the job. He died on July 20, 1944.

Field Marshal Kluge, commander-in-chief of the German forces in France, tried on August 15 to contact U.S. Army General George Patton to sue for an armistice but could not get a phone connection. [*Hitler's Generals*, edited by Correlli Barnett, Grove Weidenfeld Publishers, 1989] Hitler caught the whiff of treason and fired him, prompting Kluge to swallow a cyanide capsule on August 19, 1944.

Field Marshal List, fired by Hitler in 1942 because of his reluctance to comply with orders to get tough with parti-