Hitler Aides “Puzzled,” “Saddened” by von Stauffenberg Assassination Attempt

By Marty Kaplan

Wolf’s Lair, Prussia, July 21, 1944 — “This isn’t the Claus von Stauffenberg I knew,” said puzzled SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler about today’s unsuccessful assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler, echoing sentiments heard across the Nazi high command.

Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels was equally perplexed. “If Claus disagreed with the Fuhrer, why didn’t he say something?” said Goebbels. “He had plenty of opportunities to speak up.”

“I had lunch with Claus just a month ago,” noted Party chancellery head Martin Bormann. “I thought I knew him. We were colleagues. Friends. He didn’t have a single negative word to say about Hitler. Sure, he was pissed at [Josef] Mengele, but that you could understand. This is so — so sad. So disappointing.”

Luftwaffe general staff chief Werner Kreipe was less circumspect. “Total scheisse [crap],” he called von Stauffenberg. “He owed everything to Hitler. Trying to kill him was a complete betrayal of his trust.” Asked why von Stauffenberg turned against Hitler, Kreipe’s only comment was, “Follow the money.”

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