Translator’s note:

This is a recent translation that I made of Hitler’s radio address to the German people after the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944. I have linked to another translation at the bottom of the piece, along with a transcript of the German. I decided to retranslate because, while correct, I found it overly literal.

By 1943 it had become clear to many officers in the Wehrmacht and even to many German civilians that the war was lost, and that Hitler was leading Germany to destruction. Some officers had plotted to remove Hitler as early as 1938, but in part because officers and soldiers had been forced to swear allegiance to Hitler personally, a tradition of honor and obedience kept many from reneging on their oath. The conspirators who planned to assassinate Hitler’s July 20, 1944 came from many different political and social backgrounds. Many were authoritarian aristocrats. It is unclear what motivated Count Claus von Stauffenberg, whom Hitler singled out in his address. In any event, he was one of the first to be executed.

In the months after the coup attempt, some 7,000 people were arrested and almost 5,000 executed. Many if not most of these had not in fact been connected with the plot. In some instances entire families were arrested, so-called *Sippenhaft*. Some 75 to 100 of the actual conspirators were executed.

**Hitler invokes Providence** three times in this short address, and I have bolded each instance. He and the Nazis hated the concepts of God and Christianity generally, but having found that they could not do without an all-powerful and all-knowing entity, the Nazis frequently referred to Providence in a way that treated Hitler as an analogue of Jesus Christ. Specifically, Hitler became the Savior of the German Volk.

It has become clear that among the Christian Nationalists who support Donald Trump, many view the failed assassination attempt of July 13, 2024 as evidence of God’s will that Trump be reelected. In their view, the failure of the assassination was a miracle, an act of Providence. And he alone can serve as the Savior of this country. At this pivotal point in American history I do not think it inappropriate to compare these two events – almost exactly 80 years apart – and the conclusions drawn from them.[[1]](#footnote-1)

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**Adolf Hitler’s radio address of July 21, 1944 regarding the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944.**

German national comrades![[2]](#footnote-2)

I do not know how many times plans have been made and carried out to assassinate me.[[3]](#footnote-3) There are two reasons why I am speaking to you today:

1. So that you may hear my voice and know that I am uninjured and healthy.

2. So that you may learn more about a crime that is without parallel in German history.

A tiny clique of officers, both ambitious and unscrupulous and unwise and criminally stupid, conspired to get me out of the way while at the same time eradicating the top staff of the German Wehrmacht. The bomb placed by Colonel Count von Stauffenberg[[4]](#footnote-4) detonated two meters to my right. It severely injured a number of my esteemed colleagues, one of whom died. I myself came away completely uninjured, except for a few minor abrasions, bruises, and burns. I consider this a confirmation to carry out the **mission of Providence** [*Auftrages der Vorsehung*], to pursue my lifework as I have done up to now. I can now admit solemnly before the entire nation that since the day I moved into the [offices in the] Wilhelmstrasse,[[5]](#footnote-5) I have had but one thought: namely to fulfill my duty to the best of my understanding and conscience. And ever since it became clear to me that the war was an unavoidable one and could no longer be postponed, I have lived, worked, and worried only for my Volk through countless days and sleepless nights!

And in this hour, when German armies are engaged in the fiercest battles in Italy, and now also in Germany, a tiny group organized itself, believing that they could stab us in the back as in 1918.[[6]](#footnote-6) But this time they deceived themselves badly. The claim made by these usurpers, that I was no longer alive, is refuted, because I am now speaking to you, my dear national comrades. The circle the usurpers represent is a very small one. It has nothing to do with the German Wehrmacht, and, in particular, not with the German army. It is a very small clique of criminal elements who will now be eradicated mercilessly. I therefore now decree:

1. That no civil authority may accept an order from any of the administrative offices that the usurpers have arrogated to themselves.

2. That no military authority, no leader of a troop, no soldier may obey any order given by these usurpers. On the contrary everyone is duty-bound to arrest immediately anyone who transmits or gives such an order, and if he resists, to kill him straightaway.[[7]](#footnote-7)

To restore order, I have named Reich Minister Himmler commander of the domestic army. I have ordered Colonel General Guderian to take a seat in the General Staff, replacing the Chief of Staff, who is currently ill. I have also appointed a second leader [Führer], proven on the Eastern Front, as his assistant.

There are no changes in any of the other authorities of the Reich. I am convinced that the elimination of this tiny clique of traitors and conspirators will finally create the atmosphere in the rearguard [*Rücken*] of our *Heimat[[8]](#footnote-8)* that the fighters at the Front need. Because it cannot be that hundreds of thousands and millions of good men give their best at the Front, while at home a tiny clique of ambitious, pitiful creatures[[9]](#footnote-9) attempts to undermine their efforts. This time we will deal with them the way we are accustomed to as National Socialists.[[10]](#footnote-10)

I am convinced that every honorable officer, every brave soldier will understand that in this hour.

What fate might have afflicted Germany if the attack had succeeded only a very few could perhaps imagine. I myself **thank Providence and my Creator** [*danke der Vorsehung und meinem Schöpfer*], not because he preserved me – my life consists solely of my concern and work for my Volk. Rather, when I give thanks it is only because he has given me the opportunity to bear these burdens, and to continue my work, as well as I can reconcileit with and for my conscience.

For me it is a pleasure to greet my old comrades-in-arms once again, with joy that I was yet again granted the privilege of escaping a fate that, though it did not hold terrible things for me, would have brought horror for the German Volk.

In this circumstance also I perceive the **hand of Providence [***Fingerzeig der Vorsehung*], signaling that I must continue my work, and continue it I will!

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German transcription from the radio recording:

<https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument_de&dokument=0083_ahr&object=translation&l=de>

Translation on “Tracesofwar”:

<https://www.tracesofwar.com/articles/5311/Hitlers-radio-proclamation-about-the-assassination-attempt-on-20-July-1944.htm>

1. See, for example, [“After Saturday, Trump’s Devotees See ‘God’s Protection,’”](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/16/us/politics/trump-followers-devotion-shooting.html) NYT, July 16, 2024. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The German term is *Volksgenossen*. Depending on context, it can also be translated as “racial comrades.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Apparently, Hitler survived at least 42 documented assassination attempts. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Claus von Stauffenberg was the leader of a group of Wehrmacht officers who planned the assassination, which was to take place at a meeting at the Wolf’s Lair military headquarters in East Prussia. The conspirators also had contacts in the underground civilian resistance. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This was where Hitler’s cabinet met. The Gestapo and the Security Service were located nearby, as were other ministries. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hitler is here referring to the “Stab in the Back” accusation that Germany lost WWI only because liberals, communists, and Jews hindered the war effort in the home front. There was no truth to it, but the argument was used by the right, and especially by what became the Nazi party, in their organizing. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Part of the plot involved a coup in Berlin, once the signal was given that Hitler was dead. The plotters were quickly rounded up, arrested, and executed. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I think that Hitler is saying that all civilians form an army of defenders within the country (home front) in support of the front soldiers. The term *Heimat* connotes ancestral belonging to a region and its soil. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Today such a leader might refer to them as “losers.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Such threats and the numbers of people arrested and executed were meant to intimidate the population and enforce obedience. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)