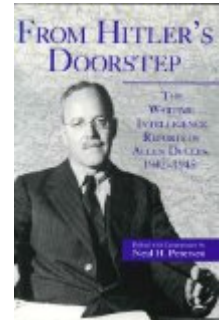


Neal H. Petersen, ed.. *From Hitler's Doorstep: The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942-1945*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. x + 684 pp. \$85.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-271-01485-2.



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On 8 November 1942, Allen Dulles crossed the Swiss border, hours before the Gestapo closed it, to assume duties in the American Legation at Bern as Head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Here he inherited an already well-built intelligence operation nurtured by Legation head and old colleague, Leland Harrison. For the next thirty-two months until Germany's surrender Dulles developed an office that in retrospect seems embryonic of the future CIA (of which he was to become Director, 1953-61), transiting from pre-war concepts of political information-seeking to the interactive practices of the future National Security State. As evinced by the selections chosen and edited by Neal H. Petersen (Deputy Historian in the U.S Department of State), Dulles's Bern mission engaged in intelligence-gathering, psychological operations, counter-intelligence, covert actions, extensive funding of resistance groups, and--although here Dulles as an intermediary stayed on the right side of a fine line--near negotiations with the German military.

Dulles at age fifty was superbly qualified for this assignment. Shaping him were a Princeton

education, travel to India and the Far East, a grandfather and uncle (Robert Lansing) as Secretaries of State, a distinguished early career (1916-26) in the Foreign Service (Central Europe, Paris Peace Conference, Turkey), work as a lawyer (along with older brother John Foster Dulles) at the New York firm of Sullivan & Cromwell (1926-41) with many financial missions to France, Switzerland, and Germany (where in 1933 he met Hitler and Nazi leaders), membership on the Council of Foreign Relations, close contacts by the war's beginning with William Stephansen ("Intrepid") and the British Security Coordination office in New York, and eventual recruitment into the OSS by its chief, William Donovan. Personal attributes of charm and collegial loyalty had helped create a wide-cast and crucially advantageous international infrastructure. Petersen observes: "The man who went to Switzerland bore scant resemblance to the partially self-created avuncular buffoon image of later years. His power base rested ... on twenty-five years of accumulated contacts, friends, associates from the East

Coast, international business, finance, and especially the Department of State" (p. 5).

Immediately Dulles generated a flood of reports, sent by radio from the neutral vantage point of Switzerland. The bulk comprised military intelligence: order of battle information (deemed by the JCS as most unreliable at first), results of bombing strikes, and troop movements. A later success was the accurate pinpointing of development and launch sites for the V-1 and V-2 terror weapons. Such material went to the British ("Zulu" or "our British cousins"), where at his London desk, the premier Soviet mole Kim Philby cross-checked it against Ultra reports. To what extent Philby relayed such information to the Russians or what use they made of it is still not known, but the circumstance presages the post-war Dulles intelligence disasters via the same opening to Moscow.

The second-most frequent staple of the Bern reports, Petersen notes, consists of funding messages. Dulles was adept at obtaining monies from government sources and private individuals to support resistance groups, clandestine presses, labor organizations, and various destabilizing projects, often managing to get money to Reich opponents who would have rejected open funding from a Western source. Such disguised funding was a technique the later CIA would assiduously cultivate.

Petersen has selected his choice of messages in *From Hitler's Doorstep* (several hundred out of many more now made accessible by the transfer of the OSS records to the National Archives) to reflect Dulles's contacts with resistance movements of all stripes (to de Gaulle's fury, Dulles supported and sustained the far left Maquis of the resistance in Southeastern France); his appraisals of situations in Italy and France as the Allies prepared and mounted their invasions; the rise of German opposition to Hitler with its culmination in the failed plot of 20 July 1944; his concerns on the impact of the war's conduct and unconditional sur-

render policy on the shaping of postwar Europe; and his culminating intrigue and achievement in helping effect the German surrender on the Italian front.

From the beginning we encounter Allen Dulles the self-appointed grand strategist. An early communication (6 December 1942, Document 1-4) finds Dulles assuming Hitler's eventual defeat, stressing the Fuehrer's military ineptitude ("Hitler, our best friend" becomes a theme in these reports), urging final policies that will afford hope and succor to the German people, and fretting that "America may be too distant and the British too feeble to restrain the Soviets from exploiting the social chaos after the war in Europe and from imposing their brand of domination on Europe" (p. 25). Although Dulles dutifully signed off on Casablanca's unconditional surrender policy, he continually pressed for clarifications stating that such surrender would not imply the ruin, dismemberment, impoverishment, and long-term political domination of Germany. Otherwise the Germans would fight (as they did) to the verge of annihilation (e.g., 19 August 1943, Doc 1-20; July 13, 1944, Doc 4-16). A constant fear was an "Eastern solution:" that German coup-plotters or the Wehrmacht itself would depose Hitler and settle with the Russians, perhaps even inviting a Russian-imposed government on Germany and hence into the heart of Europe. There is no evidence, as Petersen notes, that any of Dulles's opinions or recommendations ever affected any high level decisions or ever directly impacted Roosevelt, although they had wide circulation among a group of later early cold warriors. In bulk, fifty years afterwards, Dulles's opinionating seems fixed and repetitious: two prescient notes, however, on the European and German situations (7 October 1944, Doc 4-87) foresee the later Cold War polarities and complexities of German alignment.

Among Dulles's successes were the recruiting of Fritz Kolbe, a German Foreign Ministry officer who had access to key military and diplomatic

documents, some revealing *Cicero*, the German spy who served as valet to the British Ambassador to Turkey, and the "Breakers" contacts which enabled Dulles accurately to describe the members and growing determination of the circles involved in the 20 July 1944 assassination attempt. Dulles's precise memorandums about the plot marked the true ascendancy of his reputation in Washington and were revelant when passed, only after the fact, to the British cousins with whom a wary Dulles was often at odds. Intelligence that the Americans in Bern had had contact with German plotters who hoped to deal with the West thus went to Philby and no doubt to Moscow where presumably it helped fuel Russian fears about the solidity of the Coalition.

These fears erupted in bitter exchanges between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, with Stalin very much provoked at war's end by Dulles's enterprise in paving the way for the German military surrender on the Italian front. Even a purely military surrender helped the Western allies in the nascent postwar polarization, allowing them access to Trieste and Austria, while vitiating the (bogus) threat of the Alpine Redoubt. Both Dulles and Stalin recognized the advantages. Denied access to the Bern preliminaries, the Russians, suspecting a possible war settlement on the Western front, became harsh in their objections: FDR's famous last message of 11 April 1945 endeavored to soothe Stalin and eventually the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered Dulles to break off contact (21 April 1945, Doc 5-108). When German approaches continued via the Swiss, Dulles, staying a fine line short of insubordination, arranged on 29 April for the eventual surrender at Caserta. The early surrender saved lives but the rancor and suspicion it engendered in Stalin both forewarned of and fed into early cold war animosities.

A major, curious, disturbing, and certainly deliberate omission in Dulles's Bern reports is the virtual lack of any material relating to the fate of Jews in Nazi Europe and of the mechanisms of

Nazi genocide. Switzerland was a major conduit for institutions and individuals reporting on the Holocaust; industrialist Eduard Schulte, a key informant whom Dulles used for other matters, gave early warning elsewhere. The editor speculates that Dulles feared Allied priority given to Holocaust warnings would overwhelm Switzerland with refugees (thus hindering covert operations), and might, given European anti-Semitism, backfire on his own projects. Still, Dulles's "reticence [on Jewish matters] ... is among the most controversial and least understandable aspects of his performance in Bern" (p. 570).

Petersen's masterful selections in *From Hitler's Doorstep* are a distinguished and essential addition to the growing number of recent books dealing with resistance and intelligence in wartime Europe. Among its praiseworthy features are the full explanatory notes, references, bibliography, and precise indexing without which many of Dulles's intelligence reports would be opaque if not unintelligible. Petersen and the Penn State Press are to be congratulated on a meticulous, well-produced publication.

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