

## Assassination: The Hitler Argument

Adolf Hitler is often cited as a good argument in favor of assassination as an occasional but highly exceptional policy option. But when would a policy maker have made the decision to have him killed? Hitler assumed power legally in 1933. Throughout the 1930s, he was not the only dictator in Europe who repressed civil liberties or arrested and killed large numbers of his own population. Josef Stalin probably killed more Soviet citizens during collectivization and the great purges than the number of people sent by the Nazis to death camps. Deciding to kill Hitler prior to his attacks on the Jews or the onset of World War II would have required a fair amount of foresight as to his ultimate purposes. Little about Hitler was extraordinary until he invaded Poland in 1939 and approved the "final solution" against the Jews in 1942.

Britain revealed in 1998 that its intelligence service considered assassinating Hitler during the war, even as late as 1945. The British abandoned the plan not because of moral qualms or concerns about success but because they decided that Hitler was so erratic as a military commander that he was an asset for the Allies.