

This dissertation has been
microfilmed exactly as received

69-22,177

McFARLAND, Keith Donavon, 1940-
SECRETARY OF WAR HARRY H. WOODRING
AND THE PROBLEMS OF READINESS,
REARMAMANT AND NEUTRALITY, 1936-
1940.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1969
History, modern

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

©Copyright by

Keith Donavon McFarland

1970

SECRETARY OF WAR HARRY H. WOODRING AND THE PROBLEMS OF
READINESS, REARMAMENT AND NEUTRALITY, 1936-1940

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Keith Donavon McFarland, B.S. in Ed., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1969

Approved by

Harry L. Coles
Adviser
Department of History

VITA

June 25, 1940 . . .	Born - Dover, Ohio
1962.	B.S. in Ed., Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
1963.	M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1963-1965	Officer, United States Army
1965-1968	Teaching Associate, Department of History, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1968-1969	Mershon Dissertation Fellow, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

U.S. Political and Social History, 1789-1850.	Dr. Harry L. Coles
U.S. Political and Social History, 1850-1900.	Dr. Frances P. Weisenburger
U.S. Political and Social History Since 1900.	Dr. Harry L. Coles
Middle Eastern History.	Dr. Sydney N. Fisher
European History Since 1914.	Dr. Andreas Dorpalen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
VITA	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. WOODRING'S CAREER PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY OF WAR	8
II. WOODRING BECOMES SECRETARY OF WAR	43
III. PROBLEMS OF MILITARY READINESS: SEPTEMBER 1936 TO AUGUST 1939	72
IV. POLITICS DISRUPTS THE WAR DEPARTMENT	111
V. PROBLEMS OF REARMAMENT	155
VI. PROBLEMS OF NEUTRALITY: 1936-1939	192
VII. WAR IN EUROPE CREATES THE NEED FOR AN "ARMY IN BEING"	230
VIII. DELAY AND OBSTRUCTION BRING DISMISSAL	258
CONCLUSION	307
BIBLIOGRAPHY	316

INTRODUCTION

Any person familiar with the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt is undoubtedly aware of many of the men who surrounded that well-known Chief Executive. The names of such cabinet members as Cordell Hull, Henry Morgenthau Jr., Harry Hopkins, Harold Ickes, Frances Perkins, Henry Wallace, James Farley, Dan Roper, Claude Swanson and Henry Stimson are all well known. There is, however, a colleague of those individuals who is virtually unheard of. That person is Harry H. Woodring, who served as Secretary of War from 1936 to mid-1940.

It is indeed surprising that Woodring should be the forgotten man of the Roosevelt Administration. In terms of length of service he was by no means a short timer for he served on F.D.R.'s "team" for more than seven years--three as Assistant Secretary of War and four as Secretary of War. Thus, his anonymity does not stem from a short period of public exposure. Neither should the position which he filled have contributed to his obscurity. Although the activities of the Secretary of War and the War Department are generally ignored in peacetime, such was not the case in the late 1930's. With the breakdown of world peace the matter of national defense became a major concern, and the United States military establishment became increasingly important. With the expanding influence of the Army came considerable publicity; before long most Americans knew at least a little about Secretary of War

Woodring and his activities as head of the War Department. Nor should Woodring be forgotten and ignored because he was less significant or less interesting than other figures in the administration. His dealings with Roosevelt were extensive and on many key issues his influence was considerable; and it is doubtful that the story of any of Roosevelt's cabinet members is more interesting than that of Woodring. He was one of the most controversial persons of the period and had the dubious distinction of being the only man Roosevelt ever fired from his cabinet.¹

A primary reason that Woodring is an "unknown" is that nothing has ever been written of his service as Secretary of War. Many members of the Roosevelt Administration who were far less important than Woodring have either written or had written accounts of their activities in that period. Woodring, however, was one of the few individuals closely associated with Roosevelt who did not write an autobiography, memoirs, or some other personal account of what took place in those years. His reasons for never attempting to explain or justify his actions are not entirely clear, but in the years immediately following his removal Woodring did not wish to offend or embarrass President Roosevelt. Several years after the latter's death, Woodring started work on an autobiography; but numerous business ventures along with his

¹Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968. Grace Tully, F.D.R. My Boss (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), pp. 196-197.

political activities kept him from ever getting beyond his childhood years.²

There are at least two good reasons why no one has heretofore attempted a detailed study of Woodring as Secretary of War: during his lifetime he would not allow access to his personal papers, and only recently has the official correspondence of the Secretary of War for the years 1936 through 1940 been opened to the researcher.

Numerous accounts have spelled out in great detail President Roosevelt's pre-war activities relating to national defense and foreign affairs.³ In addition, military historians have written a considerable amount on the Army's activities and the role of the Chief of Staff during that same period.⁴ In every case, however, the role of the Secretary of War is almost completely ignored. Woodring's failure to give any public account of his official actions along with the absence of a

²Interviews with Helen C. Woodring, July 20, 1968 and Cooper C. Woodring, June 10 and July 20, 1968.

³William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation 1937-1940 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952) and Basil Rauch, Roosevelt From Munich to Pearl Harbor (New York: Creative Age Press, 1950) are good secondary accounts to Roosevelt's handling of diplomatic and defense problems in the late thirties. The best primary accounts are from The Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Urgency 1938-1941 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965) edited by John M. Blum and H. H. Arnold's Global Mission (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949).

⁴The best two accounts of the Chief of Staff's activities during the thirties are Mark S. Watson, Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1950) and Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall: Education of a General 1880-1939 and George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope (New York: The Viking Press, 1963 and 1966).

study on his activities as head of the War Department have resulted in few individuals knowing anything whatsoever about him, his accomplishments and his shortcomings.

As Secretary of War from 1936 to 1940, Woodring found himself in charge of the War Department in one of the most critical periods in the nation's history. With the breakdown of peace in Europe and the Far East it was essential that the United States military establishment be prepared for any eventuality. In attempting to provide an adequate military machine, Woodring encountered many difficult problems. Those problems can be divided into three categories: (1) readiness, (2) rearmament and (3) neutrality.

Woodring's problems of military readiness dealt with the need to organize, equip and train the Army so that it would be ready to meet any contingency. From 1936 through 1938 the Secretary of War and the Commander-in-Chief had few disagreements over this matter, but from early 1939 on they rarely agreed on what constituted adequate military readiness.

Problems of rearmament arose after the Munich Conference of September, 1938, and centered on President Roosevelt's plan for a vast "rearmament program" which would establish a large and modern Air Corps. Woodring opposed Roosevelt's plan because he believed "rearmament" should include the reequipping and resupplying of ground forces as well as the air arm.

The third group of problems, those of neutrality, centered around Secretary Woodring's efforts to insure that the War Department adhere to the neutrality legislation which Congress had passed to keep the

United States from becoming involved in a foreign conflict. In this area Woodring also came into conflict with the President, who felt the government should do what it could to aid the Allies, regardless of the provisions of the neutrality acts.

In carrying out his responsibilities as Secretary of War, Woodring was hampered not only by his disagreements with the President but also by a bitter feud with Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson and by the efforts of several of Roosevelt's close associates to replace him as War Secretary.

After war broke out in Europe in the fall of 1939, President Roosevelt and Secretary Woodring openly split over the question of the best way to provide for the nation's security. Roosevelt believed that all efforts should be made to supply Britain and France with the materials they needed to meet successfully the Nazi challenge. Thus, he did everything he could to provide those nations with American arms and munitions. Woodring opposed the President's policy on the grounds that it was tactically unsound to give American military supplies and equipment to foreign nations at a time when the United States Army was in desperate need of such items. The Secretary of War not only disagreed with the Commander-in-Chief's policy, but he made concerted efforts to keep it from being implemented. The President tolerated the actions of Secretary Woodring for a considerable period of time but was ultimately forced to remove him.

Few American Presidents have been more respected, admired and loved than Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the eyes of many he was, and still is, looked upon as a man who could do no wrong. Thus, there has

been a tendency to disregard, ignore or ridicule those administrative officials who disagreed with his policies and did what they could to change them. The numerous accounts of United States foreign and military policy from 1938 through 1940 have been limited to the activities of those members of the Roosevelt Administration who, along with the President, worked to aid the Allies. There were, however, a few men in the War Department and Congress, including Secretary Woodring, who opposed sending military aid to Britain and France as long as the United States Army was so ill equipped. Those men who opposed the President's military aid policy were not ignorant or disloyal, but intelligent, patriotic Americans who believed that such a program was endangering the nation's security. It is time that their story be told.

Following Woodring's removal from the Secretaryship in June of 1940, Duke Shoop of the Kansas City Star wrote: "Some day, when the next chapter of the career of Harry Woodring is written, the letters, reports, and records of the present day international intrigue - all of it centering on the issue of how far we should go in helping the Allies - will make interesting reading."⁵

It is the purpose of this study not only to write that chapter which Mr. Shoop envisioned, but also to examine, for the first time, Woodring's previous activities as Secretary of War. Emphasis will be placed on his successes and failures in handling the problems of military readiness, rearmament and neutrality. There are very few

⁵Kansas City Star, June 21, 1940.

individuals, including historians, who know who Harry Woodring was, what he attempted to do and what he accomplished. This study will attempt to answer those questions. Perhaps with a better understanding of the man, his problems and his actions, it will be possible to place him in proper historical perspective.

CHAPTER I
WOODRING'S CAREER PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT
AS SECRETARY OF WAR

In September of 1936 Harry H. Woodring of Kansas entered the cabinet of President Franklin D. Roosevelt as Secretary of War. As people throughout the country read the background and experience of the newest cabinet member they were amazed, impressed, and surprised. Amazed that a man could accomplish so much by the age of forty six. Impressed by the fact that he had overcome so many obstacles to get where he was. Surprised that the "Aristocratic" Roosevelt should select a "common" man, with only a high school education, to head the War Department. Harry Woodring through hard work, political skill and luck had indeed gone far and accomplished much. Only by examining his career prior to the fall of 1936 can one properly evaluate and understand his service as Secretary of War.

May 31, 1890 was a happy day for Hines and Melissa Woodring of Elk City, Kansas, for after the birth of five daughters they were at last blessed with a son, Harry Hines Woodring.¹ The life of a grain dealer in the small Kansas farm community was not an easy one and it

¹Questionnaire filled out by Harry H. Woodring for use in National Cyclopaedia of American Biography. Copy provided by a son, Cooper C. Woodring.

was all that Hines Woodring could do to keep his family clothed and fed. After fracturing his hip in a fall, the elder Woodring found it impossible to work steadily and as a result the family income became quite meager.² In the years that followed there were many hardships and Harry Woodring came to know the real meaning of poverty. The economic plight of his family forced the youngster out into the hard world of realities at the age of nine when he undertook his first business venture - selling popcorn from house to house on the streets of Elk City.³ Work did not bother the young man, in fact he actually enjoyed it. Any and every part time job which would bring some money into the family coffer was undertaken with enthusiasm and determination. Although the temptation to quit school and pursue full time employment was great, Woodring realized that a high school education would mean more in the long run and so he took only those jobs which enabled him to remain in school. Gaining an education under such adverse conditions was not an easy task, but the hardworking schoolboy stuck with it and finally succeeded in winning a diploma.⁴

Since work took up nearly all of the young man's spare time he had very little opportunity to undertake the activities of other boys his age; however, he did spend as much time as possible reading current

²Kansas City Star, October 5, 1930.

³Washington Post, September 26, 1936.

⁴W. S. Clugston, Rascals in Democracy (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1941).

events.⁵ This habit stayed with him throughout his life, and thus he was always well informed on state and national affairs. With his interest in current events came an interest in politics, and the young man never hesitated to express his views on that subject. From his early school years he maintained that he was a Democrat. Such claims were quite hazardous in a "Republican" state like Kansas, and in later years Woodring was to recall his school days when he was "snow balled and beat up because I was one of the two or three Democrats in the classes."⁶

While still in high school Woodring became a janitor and errand boy at the First National Bank at nearby Neodesha. Following graduation he took a short business course at Lebanon University in Indiana⁷ and then returned to the bank as a bookkeeper. In two years he was made an assistant cashier, and in two more a cashier. While his

⁵Woodring to Gabriel Tenaglia, April 15, 1940, Box 123, Secretary of War - General Correspondence, 1932-1942, National Archives, Record Group 107. Hereafter records in the National Archives are indicated by the symbol NA, followed by the record group (RG) number.

⁶Woodring to John C. O'Laughlin, July 24, 1940, Box 71, John C. O'Laughlin Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷It is uncertain if Woodring did attend such a school. A number of contemporary publications said he attended "Lebanon University in Indiana." The only Lebanon University then in existence was in Ohio and that institution had no record of his attendance. Lebanon, Indiana did have a Presbyterian Academy which could have offered "short" courses. Consensus of the Woodring family is that he did not attend a "University" as such, but his daughter does recall his mentioning taking a short business course at a school in Indiana.

interest in politics remained high during these years he did not attempt to play an active role because the bank job consumed all of his time.

When the United States entered the war in 1917 Harry Woodring was not called into military service. The young bank employee stayed at home and helped care for his elderly parents. In the spring of 1918 his mother died and with the obligation of caring for her now gone he immediately enlisted in the Army.⁸ On his own initiative Woodring had given up the comfortable, secure life of a banker for the uncertain life of a soldier.

In May, 1918, Woodring entered the United States Army as a private in the Tank Corps. His superiors recognized in him certain qualities of leadership and he was selected for Officer Training. Following successful completion of Tank Corps Officer's School at Camp Colt, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. Before he could be shipped overseas the war came to an end and the newly commissioned officer was discharged. This first encounter with the Army had been a very pleasing experience for the young Kansan. He was especially gratified by the many fine acquaintances which he had made. One friendship which started at Camp Colt and lasted for more

⁸Kansas City Star, October 5, 1930. Interview with Cooper C. Woodring, June 10, 1968.

than four decades was with his Company Commander Captain Dwight D. Eisenhower.⁹

Following his military service Woodring obtained a job as an assistant cashier in the Midwest National Bank at Kansas City. In this position he came into contact with J. C. McDonald who was President of Standard Oil of Kansas and, among other things, President of the Bank at Neodesha. McDonald was impressed with the hard working Woodring and responded by making him the managing director of the Neodesha Bank.¹⁰ After a short time Woodring was elected vice president of the institution. The young banker ran the establishment with the utmost efficiency and soon gained the confidence and respect of his employer, friends and the entire community. Then with the assistance of some relatives he purchased a controlling interest in the bank and in a few years became president and sole owner. The respect that he gained from others in his profession was evident when they honored him with a term as vice president of the Kansas Bankers Association.¹¹

Not all of the successful young banker's time was now devoted to business for during these years he became a very prominent member of the local American Legion Post. His very pleasing personality and tremendous enthusiasm soon made him one of the most popular members of the

⁹The Reserve Officer, May 1933, p. 3. Interview with Helen Coolidge Woodring, July 20, 1968.

¹⁰Clugston, Rascals in Democracy, pp. 165-166.

¹¹"From Private to Secretary of War," Recruiting News, November 1936, p. 9.

post and his fellow members rewarded him by electing him post commander.¹² Little did Woodring or anyone else realize that this event would mark the start of a public career which would lead to the governorship and the highest echelons of the Federal Government.

As the local post commander Woodring attended the American Legion state convention where he was placed on the membership committee. This new assignment was undertaken with his usual zeal, and as a result the state organization grew rapidly. His committee position enabled him to travel extensively and before long he had many friends among Legion leaders in all parts of Kansas. All of his hard work bore fruit in 1928 when he entered and won the race for state commander.¹³ This new position not only brought him into contact with Legion officials throughout the state but it also made his name and face familiar to the rank and file members of the large and influential organization.

By early 1929 Woodring was finding the life of a small town banker a little too quiet and tame. Since he had risen from bank janitor to bank president there did not seem to be much more to accomplish in that profession; thus, with a feeling of financial independence he sold his interests in the Neodesha bank and retired from his commercial pursuits at the age of thirty eight.¹⁴ Perhaps some other endeavor would provide more of a challenge.

¹²Clugston, Rascals in Democracy, pp. 166-167.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White and Company), Volume F, 1939-42, p. 353.

It did not take the retired banker long to decide what he wanted to do. In the early spring of 1930 he decided that he wanted to be the next governor of Kansas. Such an accomplishment seemed impossible to everyone except Woodring. The biggest obstacle was his political affiliation. He was a Democrat and to run for political office as a Democrat in "Republican" Kansas was virtually political suicide. The fact that in the past seventy six years only three Democrats had been elected governor of Kansas did not bother Woodring nor was he discouraged by his lack of political experience. These things just seemed to make the chore that much more of a challenge.

In April of 1930 the ambitious ex-banker, with virtually no support, started his drive toward the governorship. He traveled around the state seeking support from old Legion acquaintances and anyone else who might be able to assist him in some way. One afternoon he traveled to Salina, Kansas where he met for the first time an ex-Democratic Congressman, Guy T. Helvering. Helvering, who was doing quite well as a banker, had vowed that he would not become involved in politics again; however, he was so impressed with the personality, frankness and apparent ability of the man from Neodesha that he disregarded his earlier pledge and undertook the management of Woodring's campaign. This was a big break for the hopeful candidate because Helvering was known by nearly every local Democratic leader and thousands of voters; thus, his words carried weight. That summer the two men stumped the state and in the Democratic primary Woodring was easily nominated.

This victory made Helvering the State Party Chairman and he got the state machinery, feeble though it was, working for his candidate.¹⁵

The gubernatorial race of 1930 was one of the most unusual in Kansas history. The Republicans had split over the party's nominee with one faction supporting incumbent Clyde Reed and another supporting a former American Legion state commander, Frank Haucke. The latter finally received the nomination but the party remained split. An independent candidate, Dr. John R. Brinkley, made the contest a real three man race. Brinkley had gained a national following by performing "goat gland" transplants which he claimed restored masculine virility. With a platform wide enough to gain the support of every discontented group he soon came to be a real threat.¹⁶ Election day was November 4 but it was not until the 26th that the results were final. During that period the lead changed hands several times and it was not until all the absentee ballots had been counted that the contest was decided. Final tabulations showed that Woodring had defeated Haucke by a mere 251 votes.¹⁷

In January, 1931, Harry Woodring assumed his new responsibilities as Governor of Kansas. The fact that he was a newcomer to politics did not hamper him. His sincerity and genuine interest in the public

¹⁵James D. Callahan (ed.), Jayhawk Editor: A Biography of A. Q. Miller, Sr. (Los Angeles: Sterling Press, 1955), pp. 226-227.

¹⁶New York Times, November 2, 1930.

¹⁷New York Times, November 27, 1930.

welfare soon won for him the confidence and support of the Republican legislature, and a number of important measures were acted upon. The successful passage of income tax and tax limitation amendments were two major triumphs of the administration. A budget law requiring all districts to publish budgets in advance, a law prohibiting public utilities from engaging in merchandising and legislation giving the state banking commission power to examine the affairs of brokerage houses were among the more important laws placed on the books.¹⁸ As important as these things were, there were two other accomplishments which made the governor even prouder: they were economy and utility rate reduction.

The depression had struck especially hard in Kansas, and as individual incomes had dropped so had state revenue; thus, one of the most urgent problems facing the new governor was that of reducing the expenses of the state government to conform with lowered revenue. Through direct economies Woodring saved taxpayers nearly three million dollars in two years without seriously effecting essential services.¹⁹

The issue which gained the governor the most public support but also brought him some bitter enemies was his effort to bring about lower utility rates. Woodring was bothered by the fact that since the World War, the cost of nearly everything within the state except

¹⁸ William F. Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 246.

¹⁸ William F. Zornow, Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 246.

¹⁹ Topeka State Journal, August 31, 1932.

utilities had dropped; thus, Kansans were paying the same rates then as they had in good times. The new governor handled the matter by calling a conference with representatives from all the utilities companies. He then told them he thought it only fair that they reduce the price of utilities, gas, and electricity a minimum of 10 per cent. In response to this request every representative except Henry L. Doherty, head of the Cities Service Company, responded positively. Doherty not only refused to cooperate but did everything in his power to discredit the governor. The state brought suit against the Doherty interests and the case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court where a decision in the state's favor forced Doherty to reduce his rates.²⁰ It was this fight over utility rates that brought national attention to Woodring.²¹

Ever since his army days Woodring had maintained an interest in military affairs. It was such an interest that led him to work for and bring about the final organization of the 35th Division of the National Guard. This division had not become a reality because ever since 1918 the three states involved, Kansas, Nebraska, and Missouri, had been unable to agree on a Division Commander. With Woodring leading the way a commander was agreed upon and the division was completely organized

²⁰Francis W. Schruben, Harry H. Woodring Speaks: Kansas Politics During the Early Depression (Los Angeles, NP, 1963), pp. 9-10.

²¹New York Times, July 3, 8, 24, 1931.

in accordance with the War Department's policy on National Guard Divisions.²²

His duties as governor had kept Harry Woodring busy but not so busy that he did not have time to play politics. Late in 1931 he made a decision which was to pay big dividends in the future. That decision was to support Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York as the Democratic nominee for President. Woodring was impressed with Roosevelt's progressive ideas and he made several pre-convention trips to Albany to discuss strategy with F.D.R. and his campaign manager James A. Farley.²³ The Kansan was thus one of the first individuals in the Middle West to climb on the Roosevelt bandwagon. Woodring openly voiced his support for the New York Governor and at the state convention in May he effectively muzzled the pro-Baker opposition and delivered the state's twenty convention votes to Roosevelt.²⁴

At the Democratic National Convention, held in Chicago in late June, Woodring worked as hard as anyone for F.D.R.'s nomination. Having been one of the first men in the Roosevelt camp, the Kansas Governor was given the honor of making one of the seconding speeches.²⁵

²²The Reserve Officer, May, 1933, p. 3.

²³New York Times, December 14, 1931, p. 2, February 24, 1932, p. 3.

²⁴Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), p. 287.

²⁵Official Report of the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention held at Chicago, Illinois June 27-July 2, 1932 (Chicago, NP, 1932), pp. 237-238.

When the balloting was complete and his man emerged as the nominee Woodring was overjoyed.

Governor Woodring had given verbal and moral support to the Roosevelt cause but that was not all he had given. Long before the Chicago Convention James Farley had appealed to Woodring and Helvering for financial assistance and they had readily responded. This was possible because the two men had developed a moderately effective state organization which they controlled; thus, they could channel party funds where they wished. These campaign contributions came at a time when the Roosevelt organization was in dire financial need and Roosevelt and Farley were not to forget that.²⁶

Following the convention Woodring wrote to F.D.R. and told him that whether or not the Democratic nominee could carry Kansas depended on his having a concrete proposal for farm relief. Roosevelt agreed to discuss farm policy in a speech at Topeka and asked Woodring for his suggestions.²⁷ In September when the nominee came to Topeka to make his speech he was the personal guest of Governor Woodring, who gave him a state dinner at the executive mansion.²⁸ For the remainder of the campaign Woodring was a leader of the Roosevelt forces in the Middle West, and since he was a Democratic governor in a normally "Republican state" his words carried considerable weight among party strategists.²⁹

²⁶Clugston, Rascals in Democracy, p. 175.

²⁷Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph, p. 346.

²⁸Time, September 19, 1932, p. 11.

²⁹New York Times, June 10, 1933.

Concerned as Woodring was with the presidential election his role in it was restricted because he had a campaign of his own to worry about. Although his record was highly satisfactory there were certain factors that would make re-election difficult. From the beginning of his administration there had been much criticism of his decision to make Guy Helvering head of the State Highway Department - a position which he held along with that of State Democratic Chairman. Republican newspapers charged that Helvering made state employees pay into the party campaign chest and forced contractors who got business from the state to do the same. Many Republicans claimed that Helvering not only controlled the party but Woodring as well.³⁰

The 1932 gubernatorial election was quite similar to that of 1930. It was a three man race with independent candidate Dr. John Brinkley again gaining considerable support, this time with a twenty-eight point platform which promised something to everyone. The Republicans nominated an Independence oil man, Alfred M. Landon. Landon stumped the state claiming things would be better with a Republican back in the Governor's mansion. He avoided attacking the governor directly for as he put it, "Woodring has given pretty general satisfaction and I am afraid he will be a hard man to beat...."³¹ The Republican attitude was typified by William Allen White, of the Emporia Gazette who said, "Woodring has made a good governor and deserves re-election but he is

³⁰ Clugston, Rascals in Democracy, pp. 171-173.

³¹ Donald R. McCoy, Landon of Kansas (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 93.

a Democrat. And this is a Republican state."³² The governor traveled from county to county pointing out the numerous accomplishments of his administration. He ridiculed the idea that a man should be elected because of his party affiliation and asked to be returned to office on the basis of his record.³³ When the votes were tabulated all three candidates had done well but Landon emerged victorious having beaten Woodring by less than 6,000 of the nearly 800,000 votes cast.³⁴ The Kansas precedent of never re-electing a Democratic governor to a second term had been confirmed.

Although Landon defeated Woodring, Roosevelt was victorious in his bid for the Presidency. With F.D.R. headed for the White House the Democratic governor of Kansas was in a good position to secure some of the plums of the presidential victory, and that is what he expected to do. Harry Woodring was a man who believed that when he did a favor for someone then, that person should return the favor whenever he was in a position to do so. This was the practice which he followed throughout his business and political careers and he expected others to do the same.³⁵ This attitude was evident at the 1932 National Democratic

³²Schruben, Harry H. Woodring Speaks, p. 11.

³³Topeka Capital, October 15, 1932.

³⁴Final results were Landon 278,581; Woodring 272,944 and Brinkley 244,607.

³⁵This attitude is evident when one examines Woodring's career and is confirmed by those close to him. Interviews with Cooper C. Woodring June 10 and July 20, 1968. Interview with Melissa Woodring Jager July 20, 1968.

Convention when Woodring approached James Farley and asked if he could be Roosevelt's running mate. The appeal to Farley was based not on his qualifications but on the basis of what he had done for the Roosevelt cause. Farley immediately squelched any hopes which Woodring had for the second spot on the ticket.³⁶

Following his defeat by Landon, Woodring was not concerned about finding a new job for he felt confident Roosevelt and Farley would see that he got a good position. A less ambitious man would have waited to see what job was offered to him but not Woodring. He did not want just any job; he wanted to be Secretary of Agriculture.³⁷

On December 5 Woodring traveled to Warm Springs, Georgia, to present the president elect his ideas on how to solve the farm problem. Apparently the Kansan was not satisfied with this meeting because he asked for another opportunity to present his views.³⁸ His request was granted and in January, 1933, he traveled to Albany to discuss farm policy again. Woodring voiced a violent opposition to a domestic allotment plan. He did not favor restricting production as long as people at home and abroad were going hungry. His solution was to "return to America her foreign markets" by a program of debenture credit

³⁶Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

³⁷Woodring to Louis Howe, January, 1933. The Records of the Democratic National Committee 1928-33, Box 231, Folder "Kansas After Election," Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Hereafter cited as Democratic National Committee, FDRL.

³⁸Woodring to Roosevelt, December 27, 1932. Ibid.

on foreign sales and to exchange agricultural products with other nations.³⁹ Roosevelt listened with interest to these ideas but was not yet ready to commit himself to a farm program or a man to head it.

Woodring returned to Topeka where he continued his efforts to get the Agricultural post. He wrote to some of Roosevelt's advisers and urged them to support him for the post which he felt he deserved. Writing to Louis Howe, one of F.D.R.'s closest associates, he said, "I want to be Secretary of Agriculture...." He then pointed out that "one cannot be elected President without first being nominated. One can be nominated only by the work of loyal friends. Governor Roosevelt was not nominated by the Wallaces, Peeks,...and such bandwagon Roosevelt Republicans. But by the Woodring's, Helvering's, Farley's and Howes."⁴⁰ The point was clear - he had done something for Roosevelt; now the favor should be returned.

In late January, 1933, there were reports that Henry A. Wallace of Iowa would be the new Secretary of Agriculture. This bothered Woodring, but when Roosevelt assured him that no decision would be made until just prior to the inauguration, the Kansan felt he still had a chance to be appointed.⁴¹ Both Howe and Farley supported Woodring, but this meant little because when it came to making cabinet selections Roosevelt had a mind of his own. This was made clear immediately after

³⁹Woodring to Howe, January, 1933. Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Elliott Roosevelt (ed.), F.D.R.: His Personal Letters 1928-45 (New York: Euell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), Vol. I, pp. 323-324.

the election when F.D.R. told his closest advisers, "the members of my cabinet will be members of my family as it were - my official family. They will be very close to me. I don't want anyone naming a single one of them...."⁴²

On February 22 Woodring's dreams were dashed when it was announced that Wallace would be the Secretary of Agriculture. The reason for the appointment of Wallace rather than Woodring had nothing to do with personality or ability but was a matter of philosophy. The domestic allotment plan which Wallace advocated was in line with Roosevelt's ideas of how to solve the farm problem.⁴³

Although Woodring was not aware of it at the time, he was also discussed as a possible choice for Secretary of War.⁴⁴ In the end F.D.R. decided to appoint his personal friend George H. Dern, former governor of Utah, to the War post. The Dern appointment was based to a large extent on the need to include a representative from the Far West in the cabinet.⁴⁵

Woodring was quite upset when he was not made Secretary of Agriculture, but James Farley assured him that many fine positions were

⁴²Lela Stiles, The Man Behind Roosevelt: The Story of Louis McHenry Howe (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1954), p. 231.

⁴³New York Times, February 23, 1933.

⁴⁴Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

⁴⁵New York Times, February 23, 1933.

still open and he would not be forgotten. And so when Inauguration Day arrived, the Kansan's future was still in doubt.

In mid-March Farley approached the ex-governor concerning an appointment as the Assistant Secretary of War. Woodring's first reaction was one of disappointment.⁴⁶ After all, with the domestic and world situation being what they were in 1933 the War Department did not sound like a very exciting place to be. He realized that in peacetime there is almost no interest in the department and thus little opportunity to be in the limelight or to play a role in major policy decisions. John Weeks, President Harding's Secretary of War put it well when he said, "The average American knows scarcely more of the problems and accomplishments of his own War Department than he does of the geography and history of the Netherlands."⁴⁷ If the work of the department was so obscure prior to 1933, what would it be now under an administration whose only real concern seemed to be the depression? In light of these factors it was not surprising that Woodring was somewhat reluctant to accept the post.

Despite all the drawbacks there were other factors which made the job appealing. Woodring's military service had been a pleasant experience and he had been impressed by the type and caliber of leaders he

⁴⁶Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

⁴⁷Charles G. Washburn, The Life of John W. Weeks (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), p. 314.

had come into contact with. Furthermore he had taken an active role in the affairs of the American Legion, an organization quite concerned with national defense, now he could have the opportunity to really do something to provide for the national defense. Another consideration was that if he turned this job down he did not know what the next offer might be. At least the position of Assistant Secretary of War would put him in the "Little Cabinet" where there was some opportunity to become involved in policy making. All these advantages were pointed out by Farley who then suggested that Woodring go and discuss the matter with Secretary Dern before making his decision.⁴⁸ After discussing the nature of his duties with Dern he decided to accept the post.⁴⁹ On March 31 the President submitted his name to the Senate for confirmation; on April 4 the appointment was confirmed and two days later Harry H. Woodring took the oath making him the Assistant Secretary of War.

The organization of the War Department when Woodring entered it was set up in accordance with provisions set down in the National Defense Act of 1920. At the head of the Department was the Secretary of War who was responsible for administering and managing all of its functions. The second ranking man was the Assistant Secretary of War. The Assistant, who like the Secretary was a civilian, was responsible for the procurement of all military supplies and was to insure that industry would be able to provide the supplies needed in time of war.

⁴⁸Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

⁴⁹Army and Naval Journal, April 1, 1933.

The third ranking member of the department was the Chief of Staff, who was a professional soldier. He was the Secretary's immediate adviser on all military matters, and was responsible for planning, developing and executing the Army's plans for national defense.⁵⁰

During the nearly three and a half years that Woodring served as Assistant Secretary, he was damned, praised, criticized, lauded, condemned, and applauded. An overall evaluation of these years is difficult because they were filled with highs and lows, successes and failures; but, one thing is certain: they did serve as a perfect training ground for the number one spot in the War Department.

The year 1933 was relatively uneventful as far as Woodring's official functions were concerned, but there took place an event which was to have a profound effect on his life and career. On July 25 his bachelor days came to an end as he married Helen C. Coolidge, daughter of the junior senator from Massachusetts. The couple had first met in 1931, and in the spring of the following year when the Kansas governor visited Washington the friendship was renewed and romance came into the

⁵⁰To assist the Chief of Staff there was a General Staff which was charged with the preparation of plans and policies for recruiting, mobilizing, organizing, supplying, equipping, paying and training the Army. The General Staff was divided into five divisions: Personnel (G-1), Intelligence (G-2), Operations and training (G-3), Supply (G-4), and War Plans Division (WPD). For a further explanation of Army organization at this time see Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 64-75. Senate Military Affairs Committee, "Army of the United States," Senate Document No. 91, 76th Congress 1st Session, pp. 11-16. United States Statutes at Large, Vol. XL Pt. 1, 1919-1921, p. 765.

picture.⁵¹ Miss Coolidge, who was an artist of some note, was young, attractive, charming and well known in Washington social circles. Her social consciousness and grace along with his pleasing personality soon made the Woodrings one of the most prominent couples in the nation's capital. They were continually entertaining and being entertained by cabinet members, congressmen, ambassadors, politicians, generals and royalty. Before long the new Assistant Secretary had friends all over Washington - on the hill, at the War Department and among newspapermen.⁵² Just how important Helen Woodring was to her husband's career is difficult to determine but it is apparent that she was a major asset.⁵³

Woodring's first eight months at the War Department were quiet, routine, and non-controversial; but things opened with a bang in 1934 and before the end of January the Assistant Secretary of War was one of the most controversial men in Washington. It all started when he wrote

⁵¹New York Times, June 8, 1933.

⁵²Marquis W. Childs, I Write From Washington (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1942), p. 161.

⁵³Although the influence of Mrs. Woodring was considerable it is doubtful that it was as great as some journalists maintained. For example Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, authors of "The Washington Merry-Go-Round" said that the only reason Harry Woodring got to be Secretary of War and remained in that post as long as he did was because of President Roosevelt's fondness for Mrs. Woodring. The two writers put forth this view time and again from 1937 through 1940.

an article entitled, "The American Army Stands Ready", which appeared in the January 6 issue of Liberty Magazine. Woodring started by claiming that the Army was "the only branch of the Government ... organized and available not only to defend our territory, but also to cope with social and economic problems in an emergency." He then proposed that the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps be expanded and placed under the control of the Army. If this were done the Army could organize the CCC men, the veterans of the World War and the people on relief into "a system of economic storm troops that could support the Government's efforts to smash the depression."⁵⁴

To propose such action and to use a phrase like "economic storm troops" was quite unfortunate because the country was becoming increasingly alarmed over the actions of Hitler and Mussolini.⁵⁵ The reaction against the article was immediate. From across the country came letters and telegrams demanding that the President remove Woodring immediately.⁵⁶ Typical of the letters received was one from historian Charles A. Beard who called the article "the first fascist threat from the War Department." Beard warned Roosevelt that such threats "spread distrust of your intentions and your administration." He concluded by

⁵⁴Liberty Magazine, January 6, 1934, pp. 5-8.

⁵⁵Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 339.

⁵⁶See Box 39, War Department 1933-1945, President's Official File 25, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Hereafter cited: OF__, FDRL.

asking the President "to wash your hands of the fascist doctrine and to remove Woodring within fifteen minutes."⁵⁷

Demands for removal grew in number and intensity. On January 24 a letter signed by 200 educators from 30 colleges and universities was made public. It demanded that the Assistant Secretary "be forced to resign his public office" because the Woodring proposals were "not even a thinly veiled advocacy of the German Nazi's dictatorship methods." The signers expressed a fear that if such an attitude prevailed in the War Department it meant that the country was being prepared for "such an abuse of power as is intolerable to contemplate."⁵⁸ On the 26th this letter and the controversy around it were brought up on the Senate floor by Senator Thomas Schall of Minnesota; however, it occasioned no debate or discussion.⁵⁹ Still the demands for removal flowed into the White House.

At first the President had tried to ignore the matter but by early February the controversy had risen to such proportions that he asked his press secretary, Steve Early, to contact Woodring and straighten the matter out.⁶⁰ In the meantime Roosevelt made it clear that it was his steadfast policy to maintain civilian and not military control over the CCC camps. When a reporter asked the President if he

⁵⁷Charles A. Beard to Roosevelt, June 20, 1934, Ibid.

⁵⁸Congressional Record, 73rd Congress 2nd Session, Vol. 78, Pt. 2, p. 1416.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰New York Times, February 8, 1934.

cared to comment on the Woodring article he answered in the negative and added, "I have been very careful not to read it."⁶¹ In this way he kept from becoming involved.

Steve Early, in trying to smooth the matter over, criticized Woodring for saying things that gave the impression that the policies of the Assistant Secretary and President were at odds.⁶² Woodring indicated to Early and then to Roosevelt that he felt the whole matter was not as serious as the press and some administration critics made it seem. The criticism was due to the placing of a literal interpretation on the term "economic storm troops." According to the Assistant Secretary, "I used this term as a figure of speech just as many people currently refer to the recovery efforts of the Government as a war against depression."⁶³ This explanation apparently satisfied the President for he did no more than warn the War Department official to be more careful in the future.⁶⁴ The press was also satisfied with the explanation and it immediately dropped the whole matter.

The controversy over the CCC article did a number of things. First, it made Woodring a nationally known figure. Unfortunately the image which he cast was not a good one. For years a number of

⁶¹Press Conference #95, February 7, 1934, pp. 134-136, President's Personal File 1-P, Vol. 3, FDRL.

⁶²Steve Early to Woodring, January 5, 1933 [?] Box 1, War Department 1933-45, OF25, FDRL.

⁶³Woodring to Louis Howe, February 24, 1934, Ibid.

⁶⁴Charles and Mary Beard, America in Midpassage (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 571.

Americans would remember him only as a man with "fascist type" ideas. Second, it showed that it would take a real blunder on behalf of the Assistant Secretary to bring the wrath of the President down on him. Receiving only a reprimand probably made Woodring feel that he was relatively free to say what he wished. Third, neither Roosevelt nor Woodring were stampeded into action when a faction of the electorate became inflamed. This was evident from the fact that neither man ever considered resignation as a solution. It would seem that all the furor over the article would have taught the outspoken Kansan to be more careful in what he said, but as will be seen it did not.

While cries for Woodring's resignation were still in the air there came the announcement that a District of Columbia grand jury had been called to investigate factors involved in the awarding of army contracts. This February 7 announcement was not too surprising in light of recent rumors over possible irregularities in awarding contracts for \$10,000,000 worth of motor vehicles.⁶⁵ Within a few days there appeared stories of questionable practices in the sale of surplus material and of profiteering among airplane manufacturers.⁶⁶ Since Woodring as Assistant Secretary of War was responsible for all army procurement (including airplanes) and the sale of surplus, his personal integrity immediately became the source of much speculation.

⁶⁵New York Times, February 7, 1934.

⁶⁶New York Times, February 21, 1934.

On February 22 the New York Times reported that Frederick H. Payne, Assistant Secretary of War under Hoover, had ~~made~~ a contract with Joseph Silverman, a New York surplus dealer, to purchase 700,000 suits of underwear at 14¢ each with the stipulation they could not be resold in the United States. After Woodring took over the contract was extended but the price raised to 15¢ and resale in this country was permitted. Silverman then resold the underwear, much of it back to the Army, at a high profit.⁶⁷ Immediately there arose demands that the Congress investigate and find out what was taking place at the War Department.

The House of Representatives responded on March 3 with the passage of a resolution calling on the Military Affairs Committee to make a broad investigation of all phases of army procurement and disposition of surplus material. The Congressional investigation got underway on March 7 with Woodring being called as the first witness. In a series of appearances he answered the charges, complaints and insinuations which had been aimed at his office and himself.

The first matter considered by the committee was airplane contracts. Under oath Woodring explained the new aircraft procurement policy which he had implemented. Formerly the Air Corps had utilized negotiated purchases whereby it would test various planes made available by one or more manufacturers and after selecting one would then negotiate a contract. With this system a few top Air Corps officials

⁶⁷ New York Times, February 22, 1934.

could decide which company or companies would receive the contract. Under Woodring's system airplanes and accessories were being purchased by competitive bidding. By this method the War Department first advertised for planes with certain specifications and performance capabilities. Companies were then given eight to twelve months to develop such a plane. Any firm could enter the competition, the only requirement being that its bid be accompanied by a sample airplane complete and ready to fly. After extensive tests by the Air Corps the contract was awarded on the basis of a predetermined method of evaluation which was known to the bidders beforehand. The evaluation method was so designed as to insure that the contract was finally made to the manufacturer who produced the highest evaluated plane.⁶⁸ Woodring made clear that the new procurement system was being extended to almost all army purchases not just airplanes. The House Investigating Committee seemed to be as impressed with the new system as the Assistant Secretary was proud of it.⁶⁹

Further investigation revealed that Woodring had come into conflict with certain Air Force leaders, including Chief of the Air Corps, Major General Benjamin Foulois, who attempted to discredit competitive bidding because it robbed them of the extensive power and influence which they held under the negotiated purchase method. It was also

⁶⁸Army and Navy Journal, August 22, 1936.

⁶⁹New York Times, April 4, 1934. The Official House Hearings of this investigation were not utilized because they were not distributed to U.S. Government Depositories.

revealed that the new Assistant Secretary had imposed a number of lesser measures to reduce the influence of lobbyists and representatives of special interests groups. This phase of the investigation revealed only that within the War Department many "practices had grown old with custom and he [Woodring] wished to change them."⁷⁰

The Investigating Committee turned its attention briefly to the custom and he [Woodring] wished to change them." sale and distribution of surplus material. Their inquiry revealed that Woodring had indeed permitted Joseph Silverman to resell some surplus underwear in the United States and that much of it was purchased by the War Department. However it was also revealed that this was done because depressed conditions abroad had made their sale impossible and that in line with administration policy of assisting depressed businesses Woodring had approved the contract change. It was also shown that the new policy enabled the army to save \$750,000 by purchasing surplus underwear for CCC from Joseph Silverman rather than buying it new.⁷¹

The probe on surplus revealed that Woodring did deserve some criticism. Upon assuming office in 1933 he had declared some items such as blankets, shoes and underwear as surplus and ordered their disposal. Some of his military advisers warned him that such declarations were seriously reducing reserve stocks that might be necessary

⁷⁰ New York Times, March 14, 1934.

⁷¹ New York Times, February 23, 1934, p. 11. February 18, 1936.

in an emergency; however, he did not heed their advice, and with the rapid growth of the CCC certain of those items came in short supply, and Woodring had to take the blame.⁷²

On March 12 the grand jury probe came to an end with no indictments being returned. Five days later the House Military Affairs Committee indicated that its investigation found Woodring "above reproach" in handling airplane bids. A committee report adopted in early April went further and praised him for "attempting to assure competitive bidding for the airplanes and thereby comply with the law and intent of Congress." The essence of the report was that Woodring should be lauded for the job he was doing as Assistant Secretary.⁷³ This report and the publicity it received helped offset some of the bad publicity which had surrounded the CCC article. The investigation convinced Congress and a large segment of the public that Woodring was an honest and hard working official. The probe also had an effect on the Assistant Secretary because from that time on he was especially concerned over the disposition of surplus material; he did not want to make the same mistake again.⁷⁴

As the Assistant Secretary of War, Woodring had the opportunity to play a key role in the affairs of the Army Air Corps. His connection with that branch was fixed on June 7, 1933, when the post of

⁷²Kansas City Star, June 21, 1940. Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, June 5, 1937.

⁷³New York Times, March 13, 18, and April 4, 1934.

⁷⁴Kansas City Star, June 21, 1940.

Assistant Secretary of War for Air was abandoned and its duties transferred to the Assistant Secretary of War. These new responsibilities were gladly accepted by Woodring and he worked ceaselessly with the Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, to build up the Air Corps. Under the direction of these two men there were completed in July 1934 plans for an "Army Air Service second to none in quality of planes, pilots and morale."⁷⁵ These plans established a goal of 2,320 up-to-date planes by 1936.

The Assistant Secretary and Chief of Staff did more than bring about an increase in the number and quality of aircraft. They did considerable work in establishing the General Headquarters Air Force (GHQAF).⁷⁶ The GHQ was made up of all air combat units trained as a homogenous force and capable of close support of ground forces or independent action. The establishment of the GHQ on March 1, 1935 opened the way to a new place for the Air Corps in the United States military system.

Woodring's "airmindedness" was evident from the time he took office. He loved to travel by air, and his frequent use of military aircraft to travel to and from speaking engagements was looked upon with satisfaction by those who saw bigger and better things ahead for air power.⁷⁷ Through extensive reading and by asking questions Woodring

⁷⁶New York Times, July 28, 1934.

⁷⁷New York Times, June 8, 1933. Also see "With the Secretary of War in his Flying Office", Kansas City Star, January 23, 1938.

soon gained an extensive knowledge of aeronautics. The head of a major aircraft company even commended the Assistant Secretary on his "remarkably clear understanding of the technical details incident to aircraft development and aircraft procurement."⁷⁸ It is hard to believe that the "airminded" Woodring, who took such an active role as Assistant Secretary in strengthening the Air Corps, would as Secretary of War be accused of being anti Air Force.

During the years that he filled the number two spot at the War Department Woodring served as a sort of publicity agent for the Army. He traveled throughout the country making hundreds of speeches to national, state and local organizations. In these addresses two themes predominated - preparedness and patriotism.

As Woodring saw it, preparedness was the way to insure peace because the only way to keep out of any future war was to be so strong militarily that no nation would dare attack.⁷⁹ As the power of Hitler and Mussolini continued to grow and more and more European men came under arms, Woodring stressed more than ever the necessity of providing an adequate national defense.

While Europe was arming there grew throughout the United States numerous anti-war societies which advocated drastic reduction of arms.

⁷⁸J. E. Schaefer (Stearman Aircraft Co.) to Woodring, February 25, 1936, Box 3-A, Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

⁷⁹Army and Navy Register, July 11, 1936,

Some members went so far as to pledge that if the country became involved in war they would refuse to bear arms. The Assistant Secretary became the most outspoken opponent of such groups. He cried out against the threats of "radical organizations" and the "enemy boring from within" and warned Americans that they could not "stand by and watch our great country stripped of its means of defense, ready to be sacrificed on the altar of aggression...."⁸⁰ When the National Peace Conference, an agency of thirty five anti-war societies, was established in Washington in 1936, Woodring did not keep silent.⁸¹ He denounced the Conference's motives and questioned the loyalty of its members by saying, "defense of one's country is the first essential of true patriotism."⁸² Such statements were welcomed by conservative groups like the American Legion but bitterly attacked by **extreme liberals**. The Nation, which billed itself as "The Leading Liberal Weekly since 1965," called the Woodring attacks "a fascist assault on virtually all the church, labor, pacifist, and student groups of the nation...."⁸³ Such criticism did not bother the Assistant Secretary; it only made him more vehement

⁸⁰ New York Times, November 12, 1934.

⁸¹ New York Times, March 5, 1936.

⁸² Army and Navy Register, July 11, 1936.

⁸³ Paul W. Wood, "The Inexcusable Woodring," The Nation, April 29, 1936, p. 539.

in his attacks on "subversive influences opposing adequate military and naval preparedness."⁸⁴

Woodring and the War Department became involved in another political dispute in early 1936. This concerned a department order relieving Major General Johnson Hagood of his command. Hagood in appearing before a House appropriations subcommittee had made certain flippant remarks in criticizing the expenditures of WPA funds.⁸⁵ Representative Thomas L. Blanton of Texas, a member of the subcommittee before which the General testified, took the matter before the House of Representatives. He called for the impeachment of Secretary Dern, Woodring and Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, because they were responsible for the "damnable, infamous, dirty and inexcusable" order. Blanton, however, put the bulk of the blame on the Assistant Secretary. After telling his colleagues that Hagood had "more ability in his little finger than Harry Woodring will have in his whole system when he dies," he concluded by saying, "Harry Woodring...you had better withdraw this damnable unjust order to Johnson Hagood, because I am after you."⁸⁶ The order never was withdrawn. This dispute lasted a few weeks and then faded just as the others had. It did not bother Woodring

⁸⁴New York Times, May 17, 1936.

⁸⁵New York Times, February 25, 1936.

⁸⁶Congressional Record, 74th Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 80, Pt. 3, pp. 2712-2713.

any more than the other controversies, and the outspoken Kansan went on saying and doing what he wished.⁸⁷

As Assistant Secretary of War Harry Woodring had become involved in numerous controversies which brought him enemies among congressmen, churchmen, anti-war groups, and liberal journalists; however, he had also projected a favorable image to many people in Washington and throughout the country.

Woodring had impressed many Congressmen as being a young, energetic and forceful man who had done a masterful job in instituting a competitive purchasing system into the Army.⁸⁸ The Assistant Secretary also impressed many individuals in the War Department. Among professional military men he was well liked and respected.⁸⁹ Both Chief of Staff MacArthur and his successor General Craig thought very highly of Woodring and developed a very close relationship with him.⁹⁰ The President, although embarrassed by some of the Assistant Secretary's verbal

⁸⁷ Interview with Helen Coolidge Woodring, July 20, 1968.

⁸⁸ One such person was Representative Lister Hill (Alabama), a powerful member of the House Military Affairs Committee who felt Woodring "rendered outstanding service as Assistant Secretary of War." Hill to Roosevelt, December 28, 1936, "War Department Endorsements" OF25A, FDRL.

⁸⁹ Army and Navy Journal, October 3, 1936, p. 93.

⁹⁰ Telegram MacArthur to Woodring, October 2, 1935, Box 35, "Chief of Staff", Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-42, NA, RG 107 and John C. O'Laughlin to General Malin Craig, September 1, 1939, Box 35, O'Laughlin Papers, Library of Congress.

blunders, still thought highly of him. Woodring had proved to be a very able administrator who carried out his responsibilities in a most efficient manner. An additional burden was placed on Woodring because Secretary Dern was in ill health and therefore frequently absent from his office. During these periods the Assistant Secretary carried on the Secretary's duties as well as his own and did an admirable job at both. All this impressed the President.⁹¹ Woodring had also found support among members of such powerful organizations as the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, Reserve Officer's Association and other patriotically oriented groups. They looked with favor upon his speeches on preparedness and patriotism.

In the summer of 1936 Harry Woodring could look over the previous forty six years with real pride. His success as a banker, governor, and "Little Cabinet" member proved that he was a man of ability and political skill. Experience had prepared him for bigger and better things - all he needed now was the opportunity. That opportunity was just around the corner.

⁹¹Army and Navy Journal, October 3, 1936.

CHAPTER II

WOODRING BECOMES SECRETARY OF WAR

On August 27, 1936, Secretary of War George H. Dern died at Walter Reed Army Hospital following a lengthy illness. Five days later, following appropriate ceremonies at Washington, funeral services were held at Salt Lake City, Utah. No sooner had Secretary Dern's death been announced than there began to appear speculation as to who would be chosen to take his place. Those most frequently mentioned as possibilities were Frank Murphy, Commissioner to the Philippines, Governor Paul V. McNutt of Indiana, and Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Mayor of New York City. Assistant Secretary of War Harry Woodring's name was occasionally mentioned but he was not considered a prime contender for the job.¹

Upon the death of Secretary Dern, Woodring automatically became Acting Secretary. Political observers expected a replacement to be named within a few days with Woodring remaining at the Assistant Secretary's post.² As the early days of September passed and the President failed to announce who would fill the position, it came to be felt that perhaps no selection would be made until after the upcoming

¹New York Times, August 28, 1936, September 2, 1936, Washington Evening Star, August 28, 1936.

²Ibid.

presidential election.³ In the meantime, Woodring continued to fill both the number one and two spots in the War Department, much as he had in the previous three and a half years. By mid-September President Roosevelt seemed quite satisfied with the existing set up and ~~had~~ apparently decided not to fill the post for at least a few months.⁴

In late September the President traveled to his home at Hyde Park, New York, for a few days' relaxation. On Friday September 25, he received a message from the Executive Clerk at the White House calling attention to a letter just received from Attorney General Homer S. Cummings. The letter informed the President of a law which provided that a cabinet position must be filled within thirty days of a vacancy; therefore it would be necessary to appoint a Secretary of War no later than the following day (September 26). Faced with the necessity of fulfilling a statutory requirement Roosevelt decided to appoint Woodring.⁵

The President immediately wired Woodring and informed him that since he could not remain Acting Secretary for longer than thirty days he was "announcing the temporary selection of you as Secretary." Roosevelt concluded by saying, "I know you will understand my reason

³Army and Navy Journal, September 19, 1936.

⁴Telegram, Roosevelt to Woodring, September 25, 1936, PPF 663, Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

⁵Grace Tully, F.D.R. My Boss (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), pp. 196-197. Memo of Letter, Cummings to Roosevelt, September 24, 1936, OF62, Precedents Index [Retained] in White House, FDRL.

for making this a temporary designation."⁶ Woodring quickly replied, expressing his thanks for the appointment and saying, "I fully understand and approve the temporary designation. My wish ...has been that you would take only such action which gave paramount consideration to your best interests for November."⁷

There seemed to be no doubt that the appointment would be temporary. Roosevelt made that point clear to Woodring and wanted it made just as clear to the press.⁸ The official announcement as released from Hyde Park said that the appointment was "temporarily filling the vacancy" left by the death of Secretary Dern, and it emphasized that the law required the vacancy to be filled. When reporters asked for clarification of the statement, especially the "temporarily filling the vacancy" phrase, White House officials declined. The wording of the announcement was therefore taken to mean that Woodring would be only a "temporary" Secretary of War with a "permanent" Secretary being named sometime in the future, in all likelihood following the election.⁹ Harry H. Woodring was now the Secretary of War but for how long was anyone's guess.

⁶Telegram, Roosevelt to Woodring, September 25, 1936, PPF 663, Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

⁷Telegram, Woodring to Roosevelt, September 25, 1936, PSF, Box 38, Woodring, FDRL.

⁸Memo of Telegram, Marvin H. McIntyre to Stephen Early, September 25, 1940, OF25, Box 4, "War Department and Cross Reference," FDRL.

⁹New York Times, September 26, 1936.

By designating Woodring to serve "temporarily" Roosevelt did himself three good political turns. First, he gave cabinet recognition to the home state of Republican nominee Alfred Landon just six weeks before the election.¹⁰ Second, it enabled him to hold out the Secretaryship for possible political advantage in the Presidential campaign.¹¹ Third, he gained some support by putting a World War veteran and American Legionnaire into the New Deal Cabinet for the first time.¹²

The reaction to the September 25 announcement was mixed, as is the case with nearly all cabinet appointments. For the most part Woodring's promotion to the top spot was looked upon with gratification in official and military circles.¹³ Within the President's official family the reaction was generally favorable, the only exceptions being Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, FERA Administrator Harry Hopkins, and Press Secretary Steve Early.¹⁴ Professional military men were pleased because it put in office a man whom they knew they could get along with and who was familiar with the problems and needs of the War Department.¹⁵ In most cases editorial reaction was in line with that

¹⁰New York Herald Tribune, September 26, 1936.

¹¹Army and Navy Register, October 3, 1936. Newsweek, October 3, 1936, p. 20.

¹²Frederic W. Wile, "Washington Observations," Washington Evening Star, September 28, 1936.

¹³New York Times, September 26, 1936.

¹⁴Harold F. Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.", The Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1948, p. 90.

¹⁵Army and Navy Journal, October 3, 1936.

of the Cleveland Plain Dealer which applauded the selection and said that "Secretary Woodring seems to have what it needs in the war office."¹⁶

Most violent opposition to Woodring's appointment came from the American League Against War and Fascism. The national chairman of the League wrote to Roosevelt and criticized the choice of Woodring because the record showed "he is a militarist."¹⁷ Many local chapters of the organization also voiced opposition toward the "militarist who preaches peace and urges war preparation." One letter expressed fear of the new Secretary because of his "obvious desire for the militarization of our whole system of government."¹⁸ It was apparent that the members of the League remembered well the CCC article which Woodring had written back in 1934.

Opposition also came from anti-war and disarmament advocates. The Christian Century expressed disappointment that the President had selected a man that could "hardly be expected to cooperate with groups interested in promoting disarmament."¹⁹ John Flynn writing in The New

¹⁶Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 27, 1936.

¹⁷New York Times, October 8, 1936.

¹⁸Flatbush Branch (Brooklyn, N.Y.) of the American League Against War and Fascism to Roosevelt, December 17, 1936 and Trenton Branch of American League Against War and Fascism to Roosevelt, December 16, 1936, OF 25, Box 25, Misc. War Department, FDRL.

¹⁹"New War Secretary Pacifist Enemy," Christian Century, October 14, 1936, p. 1373.

Republic, called Woodring "the leader of the jingoes" and expressed fear that he might try to bring about a conscript army such as Hitler had done.²⁰ Criticism also came from more moderate quarters. The Cincinnati Enquirer in its editorial claimed that the new secretary "represents the professional point of view of the army ... [and] a different type of mind is needed in the position."²¹ On the whole, opposition was not as strong as it might have been because the appointment was looked upon as being only temporary.

Throughout the fall of 1936 Woodring continued functioning as both Assistant Secretary and Secretary of War. Despite such a burden he still found time to work for a Democratic victory in the November election. The Secretary had good reasons for devoting so much time to the Roosevelt campaign. First, if the President was not reelected he would be out of a job for sure. Second, if he proved to be a real asset to the party cause and the President was returned to office, perhaps his "temporary" appointment would be made permanent.

Woodring worked long and hard for a Roosevelt victory in 1936. It all started in May when the President sought his assistance in mapping out the Kansas campaign strategy. Kansas was considered to be an important state because it was felt that Governor Landon would probably be the Republican Party nominee. Because of Woodring's

²⁰John Flynn, "Other People's Money," New Republic, October 28, 1936, p. 350.

²¹Cincinnati Enquirer, September 28, 1936.

familiarity with Landon's political strengths and weaknesses he was able to give much valuable assistance in planning the course of the Democratic campaign.²²

In early September Woodring hit the campaign trail, praising Roosevelt and lauding the many accomplishments of the past three and a half years. The smooth-speaking, aggressive Kansan was one of the first administration figures to take Roosevelt's record to the electorate. In mid-September the New York Times observed that except for Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, "Mr. Woodring is the only other high member of President Roosevelt's official family to take up the cudgels for the administration."²³

Throughout September and October the Secretary of War continued to travel around the country urging Roosevelt's re-election. Although personally on good terms with Governor Landon, Woodring did not hesitate to attack him politically. He scoffed at Landon's fiscal record as governor and said that the Republican nominee was offering the American people "a second hand New Deal at second hand prices."²⁴ **Wherever** Woodring spoke he was enthusiastically received by large crowds and local and state party leaders praised him on the "excellent," "wonderful," and "outstanding" speeches which he made. These reports made their way to the Democratic National Committee and then to the White

²²Memorandum by Woodring, May 6, 1936, OF 300, Democratic Committee 1933-45 Kansas, FDRL.

²³New York Times, September 12, 1936.

²⁴Washington Evening Star, October 18, 1936.

House where it was noted with pleasure the fine job Woodring was doing.²⁵ The new Secretary of War also assisted the party financially by contributing \$2,050 to the campaign fund.²⁶

One thing which Woodring urged upon the party strategist was the need "to take an advanced stand on the peace issue." He felt there was a strong sentiment for peace in the West, and in light of recent events in Europe the "peace issue" could bring much support.²⁷ His pleas made little headway with party leaders because at that time the administration was preoccupied with relief and recovery, not peace. Feeling that this was important, Woodring took up the issue and tried to assure the voters that President Roosevelt was "a man who hates war with every fiber of his soul and is devoting his life to keeping America at peace."²⁸ In spite of his efforts peace never became an issue in 1936.

In November Roosevelt was re-elected and his administration prepared for another four years in office. The question now arose as to whether the President would make Woodring's "temporary" appointment permanent or appoint someone else to fill the post. For six months Roosevelt did neither. During that period the status of Secretary Woodring was always in doubt. From November, 1936, to April, 1937,

²⁵ Letters praising Woodring's campaign activities, OF25, Misc. War Department 1936-40, FDRL.

²⁶ New York Times, December 17, 1936.

²⁷ Harold Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes: The First Thousand Days, 1933-1936 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 682.

²⁸ New York Times, September 21, 1936.

rumors concerning the War post filled Washington. One day they had Woodring being retained in the cabinet, the next day they had him on his way out. Journalists, relying on "impeccable sources," predicted time and again what the President would do and when, but the dates came and went and still nothing was done.²⁹

At the time of the "temporary" appointment, P.D.R. gave the impression that he would replace Woodring after the election; but in the weeks that followed he made no move to do so. Roosevelt failed to act because of certain factors which served to complicate his earlier decision. The fine job which Woodring was doing as Secretary of War as well as the excellent job he had done campaigning for the administration certainly caused the President to have second thoughts about replacing him; however, the primary reason for not appointing a new secretary was probably the mounting pressure, from many sources, to retain Woodring. The "temporary" Secretary had gained many friends since coming to Washington, now they came to his aid.

The strongest pressure for retention came from military circles. The Army and Navy Journal, a sort of "unofficial" spokesman for the military services continually urged that the appointment be made permanent. Such action it said, "would be greeted with acclaim by the Army." The Journal continually praised Woodring, claiming he was an "extremely efficient Assistant Secretary," displayed "high qualities of administration" and ran the War Department in a "most capable manner."³⁰

²⁹ Army and Navy Journal, November 7, 28, 1936, January 30, 1937.

³⁰ Ibid.

Other military oriented publications such as The Army-Navy Register, The Reserve Officer and Army Ordnance also voiced editorial support for the former Assistant Secretary.³¹

Some pressure was aimed more directly at the President. Lt. Col. Frank Lowe, National President of the Reserve Officers Association, wrote to Roosevelt: "I do not believe it would be too extravagant to say that every officer ... of the Army would be very much pleased to see Mr. Woodring so rewarded" by making him the permanent Secretary.³² Edgar H. Taber, the Executive Officer of the National Association of Regulars, informed the President that his organization had received "quite a number of letters from service men expressing the hope that our present Secretary of War be reappointed to office...."³³

Woodring was also supported for retention by certain individuals, both military and non military, whose influence was considerable. The Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, wanted Woodring to be retained in the top spot because the Secretary got along so well with him and the General Staff.³⁴ General John J. Pershing, who, although long retired

³¹Army-Navy Register, September 5, 1936. Reserve Officer, October, 1936, p. 3. Army Ordnance, November-December, 1936, p. 166.

³²Lt. Col. Frank Lowe to Roosevelt, September 16, 1936, OF25-A, War Department Endorsements for Secretary Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

³³Edger H. Taber to Roosevelt, December 22, 1936, Ibid.

³⁴John C. O'Laughlin to General John J. Pershing, December 26, 1936, Box 57, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

was still looked to for advice by many top military men, said, "I do not see why F.D.R. should not continue Woodring...he would be better than some man who thought he knew it all"³⁵ Postmaster General James Farley, whose advice the President often heeded, continually urged that the appointment be made permanent. From the House of Representatives came support from Representative Lister Hill, one of the most influential members of the Military Affairs Committee. Hill wrote to Roosevelt stating that he had had the opportunity to observe the work of the Assistant Secretary more closely than anyone else in Congress, and he felt that Woodring had done an outstanding job. Hill then recommended, in the strongest terms, that the President retain Secretary Woodring in his present position.³⁶ This was a key recommendation for it indicated to Roosevelt that his "temporary" Secretary had the confidence and support of the House Military Affairs Committee.

Throughout November and December the President failed to decide what he should do about the War post. He continually wavered between retention and removal. In mid-November Press Secretary Steve Early said confidentially that Woodring would not be reappointed.³⁷ About

³⁵General John J. Pershing to John C. O'Laughlin, December 28, 1936, Ibid.

³⁶Representative Lister Hill to Roosevelt, December 28, 1936, OF 25-A, War Department Endorsements for Secretary Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

³⁷John C. O'Laughlin to General Douglas MacArthur, November 28, 1936, Box 54, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

this time Early and Harry Hopkins approached Jesse Jones, head of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and asked if he would be interested in becoming Secretary of War. When Jones replied that he would not, the matter was dropped.³⁸ As 1936 drew to a close Woodring's status was as uncertain as ever but the newspapers indicated that he was on his way out.³⁹ On December 23 Roosevelt told Secretary Ickes that while he personally thought Woodring was a "nice fellow" he was not going to retain him as Secretary of War.⁴⁰ Despite such indications from Roosevelt that he would remove Woodring, week after week passed and still he did nothing.

In mid-January there were indications that Woodring might be retained in the cabinet. On January 20 the New York Times reported that the Secretary's status was still in doubt, but "there is no certainty that he will be replaced." The following day the same newspaper said that no changes were expected in the cabinet, and Roosevelt's second term would probably end "with his 'official family' composed as at present."⁴¹

³⁸Jesse Jones with Edward Angly, Fifty Billion Dollars: My Thirteen Years With the RFC (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 256. Bascom Timmons, Jesse H. Jones: The Man and the Statesman (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), p. 251.

³⁹New York Times, December 18, 1936. Washington Evening Star, December 17, 1936.

⁴⁰Harold Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes: The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), p. 24.

⁴¹New York Times, January 21, 1937.

As the early months of 1937 slipped by, Secretary Woodring continued to run things at the War Department; and President Roosevelt, who was involved in his fight for court reform, was content to let him do so. While this set up was working satisfactorily, it could not go on indefinitely because Woodring had been appointed when Congress was not in session and had therefore not been approved by the Senate. This meant that unless a nomination for Secretary of War was submitted during the present session, Woodring's appointment would expire when the Senate adjourned, thus leaving the position vacant. This situation made it mandatory that Roosevelt make some sort of decision on what to do with Woodring.

At a White House conference on April 19, 1937, Roosevelt told James Farley that it was going to be an unpleasant task to perform but he definitely was going to remove Woodring. The President explained that he had made it clear at the time of the appointment that it would be only temporary, and therefore the Secretary would not be surprised by the action. To this Farley replied, "General Malin Craig was in to see me about Harry; the Army thinks very highly of him I think Harry is doing a good job and deserves an appointment to prove his fitness for the job."⁴² One week later, for reasons known only to him, President Roosevelt decided to reappoint Woodring as Secretary of War, and on April 27 he sent the nomination to the Senate. The Military Affairs Committee, having no objection to the appointee, reported

⁴²James A. Farley, Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years (New York: Whittlesey House, 1948), pp. 80-81.

favorably on the nomination, and on May 6 the Senate confirmed the appointment without objection.⁴³ At last Harry Woodring was Secretary of War in his own right; the axe which Roosevelt had been holding over his head for the past six months had been removed.

When Woodring became Secretary of War few people knew or cared what he thought about war, peace, size and make up of the army and its role in national defense. Such ideas, concepts, and principles go together to form a sort of "military philosophy." To understand how Woodring looked upon and tried to solve the many problems facing him, especially those of readiness, rearmament, and neutrality, it is essential to know something of the "Woodring Military Philosophy" for it contained the principles which guided his actions as Secretary of War.

Woodring was different from most earlier Secretaries of War in that his "military philosophy" was fairly well fixed before he became Secretary. His Army experience, American Legion activities, work with the National Guard as Governor, and years as Assistant Secretary of War had caused him to think considerably about the Army and National Defense. Having had years to develop his "philosophy" was beneficial because it made Woodring more sure of himself and gave him confidence that the direction in which he was leading the War Department was the proper one.

⁴³Congressional Record, 76th Congress 1st Session, Vol. 8, Pt. 4, p. 4253.

Secretary Woodring's outlook was that of an idealist and a realist. He was an idealist in that he sincerely hoped for and thought there could be understanding among people everywhere, cooperation among nations, and world peace. He was a realist in that he did not see the possibility of such things becoming a reality in the near future. Woodring felt that with world conditions being what they were in the thirties it would take more than hope and understanding to insure peace.⁴⁴

The one thing which Secretary Woodring wanted more than anything else was for the United States to remain at peace. This desire was based on his fear that participation in another war would prove disastrous--to victor and vanquished. Since he believed becoming involved in war would mean the country's destruction he considered it necessary to do everything possible to stay at peace.⁴⁵ In his first speech as Secretary of War, Woodring pledged: "I shall dedicate my efforts to peace."⁴⁶ And he did. For nearly four years he warned against, and took action which he felt would prevent involvement in a foreign war. He was so determined to keep out of war that he ultimately was forced out of office because he would not go along with a policy

⁴⁴New York Times, March 7, 1938. "Army in Being," Time, January 1, 1940, p. 12.

⁴⁵Army and Navy Journal, March 12, 1938.

⁴⁶New York Times, October 5, 1936, March 10, 1938.

which he felt might pull the nation into a European conflict.⁴⁷

Woodring was a man of peace and was recognized as such. The Washington Times Herald editorially praised the Secretary of War because, "Woodring speaks the language of the people - Peace." Columnist Ernest Lindley termed him "a persistent opponent of foreign adventure," and political analyst Ray Tucker called him one of only two "peace minded men in Roosevelt's Cabinet."⁴⁸

Nearly all Americans agreed with Secretary Woodring that peace was desirable, but when it came to deciding how to maintain that peace many could not agree with him. Woodring felt that the best way to insure peace was to provide an "adequate national defense which would act as a powerful deterrent against aggression on our shores." He continually stated that peace without security was impossible and the best security was a military force of sufficient size and strength to keep any nation from even considering an attack. According to the Secretary of War, "Peace and security go hand in hand" and the former cannot be obtained without the latter.⁴⁹

⁴⁷See Chapter VIII.

⁴⁸Washington Times Herald, October 30, 1939. Ernest Lindley, "An Example of Sanity," The Washington Post, October 27, 1939. Ray Tucker, "Washington Letter," The Living Age, December, 1939, p. 381.

⁴⁹Woodring to Mrs. Josephine A. Russell, January 29, 1937, Box 193, Wars, Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-42, NA, RG107. Harry H. Woodring, "Supply Preparedness," Army Ordnance, March-April, 1937, p. 283. New York Times, April 18, 1939.

Woodring's strong belief in preparedness as the way to insure peace caused him to come into conflict with those groups and individuals who felt that a strengthening of defenses would be apt to provoke war. The Secretary believed that the idea "preparedness causes war" was a great misconception and he lashed out at anyone who spoke against proposals to strengthen the military forces. To those who urged a decrease in the size and strength of the Army and Navy he warned of the "folly [to which] a pacifist policy like this leads." On numerous occasions the Secretary warned his countrymen of what had happened to countries, including the United States in 1917, which found themselves forced into a war woefully unprepared: the result was a loss of life and money far beyond what it might otherwise have been; therefore, the nation should never again follow such a "foolhardy policy."⁵⁰ Woodring came to the conclusion that failure to prepare "would be to ignore all past history and openly invite the possibility of a future national conflagration."⁵¹

When occasional fears were expressed about growing military influence in Washington, Woodring reminded such critics that the Army had no voice in making laws, shaping foreign policy, or deciding

⁵⁰ Woodring to Mrs. John Robertson, September 23, 1938, Box 122, National Defense, Secretary of War General Correspondence in 1932-42, NA, RG107. New York Times, April 18, 1939. Harry H. Woodring, "Our Power for Defense," National Republic, December, 1934, pp. 1-2.

⁵¹ Woodring to Mrs. John Robertson, September 23, 1938, Box 122, National Defense, Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

whether or not the nation should go to war. He stated time and again that the army "sought only to serve, never to dominate the country."⁵²

Many of the same individuals who feared increased military influence were also worried about the world arms race which was underway in the mid-thirties. They were especially alarmed by Woodring's continuous demands for increased preparedness because they felt he was urging the United States to join the arms race. Such was not the case and the Secretary of War made this clear in his 1937 Annual Report when he said, "I certainly do not recommend that the United States join in the feverish arms race...however, I do think as an insurance against attack we should strengthen our armed forces."⁵³ Woodring did not feel the country should prepare itself beyond its ability to pay, and he spoke proudly of the fact that in 1937 the cost of the United States military establishment was only 3.2 per cent of the national budget.⁵⁴ To understand this seeming paradox of a desire for stronger defense on one hand and a relatively small defense expenditure and no participation in the arms race on the other, it is essential to understand Woodring's ideas about the size, make up and role of the United States Army.

As Woodring conceived it the peacetime army should be a moderate-size force capable initially of protecting the continental United

⁵²Harry H. Woodring, "Supply Preparedness," Army Ordnance, March-April, 1937, p. 265. New York Times, June 15, 1938.

⁵³Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1937, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁴Army and Navy Journal, July 10, 1937.

States, Panama, and Hawaii and still able to serve as a nucleus for the raising, training and equipping of such additional troops as might be needed in an emergency.⁵⁵ While Woodring believed the Army was to serve as a **deterrent** to war, he also felt that if through some set of unfortunate circumstances it should occur then "it is the duty of our Army to end the war as promptly as possible and regain the peace."⁵⁶

The Secretary favored an Army of quality not quantity. He never advocated a large military force; in fact, he praised the American Legion, because it never made "fantastic recommendations for a huge standing army."⁵⁷ Woodring maintained that the size of the Army was relatively insignificant and should be a matter for Congress to determine; he was more interested in providing the military force with the best equipment and training.⁵⁸

Woodring maintained that a moderate size standing army would be sufficient because its function would be strictly defensive. In speech after speech he made clear his belief in the long standing national policy that contemplated the use of the armed forces only for defensive

⁵⁵ Woodring to Representative Lister Hill, May 22, 1939, Box 176, National Defense. Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

⁵⁶ Woodring to Catherine Barber, January 20, 1938, Box 176, Secretary of War and Ex-Secretary, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-43, NA, RG 107.

⁵⁷ New York Times, September 23, 1937.

⁵⁸ Foreign Policy Bulletin, November 24, 1939, p. 4. Army and Navy Journal, December 30, 1939.

purposes. As the Secretary of War put it, "The kind of Army we have in mind would be of no use as an expeditionary force such as was sent to Europe in the World War. It is designed purely and simply to defend our own territory."⁵⁹

When Secretary Woodring or any other top member of the administration talked of defending the country they were not thinking of just the continental United States but the Western Hemisphere. From 1937 to 1940 plans for the Army were made in accordance with the thesis of hemisphere defense adopted by the Roosevelt Administration.⁶⁰ During this period President Roosevelt thought solely in terms of defense of the Americas. For example, in late 1939 when War Department officials presented plans to provide reserves necessary to equip a large expeditionary force for possible use in Europe the President refused, saying, "Whatever happens, we won't send troops abroad. We need only think of defending this hemisphere."⁶¹ The administration concept held that the hemisphere could only be considered safe from external aggression as long as the Panama Canal remained open for use by the United States fleet and as long as the Army and Navy could keep any non-hemisphere

⁵⁹New York Times, November 19, 1939.

⁶⁰David H. Popper, "The U.S. Army in Transition," Foreign Policy Reports, December 1, 1940, p. 216.

⁶¹Joseph Absop and Robert Kintner, American White Paper: The Story of American Diplomacy and the Second World War (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), p. 65.

aggressor nation from establishing bases in the Americas.⁶² Hawaii was also considered essential because of its importance as a naval base and the fact that its loss would make the West Coast vulnerable to air attack.

Although the size of the Army was not considered by the Secretary to be of great importance, he did feel it was essential that it be organized so that it could expand rapidly. This would require a well-trained standing Army which could serve as the basis for new units which would be made up primarily of personnel from the National Guard and the Organized Reserves. If a large Army were to be created in time of need it would have to be supplied; thus, Woodring considered supply preparedness vital to the Army's ability to expand. His answer to the supply problem was not to be found in large stock piles of arms and ammunition which would deteriorate and become obsolete with age. The solution was to educate and prepare industry in time of peace for its responsibilities in time of war.⁶³ This idea was incorporated in an Industrial Mobilization Plan which Woodring labored so hard to perfect, first as Assistant Secretary and later as Secretary.

While Secretary Woodring considered military preparedness essential to keeping the peace, there was another fundamental which he

⁶²David H. Popper, "The U.S. Army in Transition," Foreign Policy Reports, December 1, 1940, p. 216.

⁶³Harry H. Woodring, "Supply Preparedness," Army Ordnance, March-April, 1937, pp. 263-265.

considered almost as important. It was that the American people as well as all government officials must conduct themselves in such a way as to not incite war nor involve the country in one. Woodring felt this could be done in two ways: legislation and Moral Rearmament.⁶⁴

According to the Secretary of War, the legislative means to avoid war were: taking the profits out of war and controlling neutrality. From 1936 to 1939 Woodring praised efforts by Congress to take the profits out of war and congratulated them on passage of the Neutrality Acts.⁶⁵ He favored such legislation because he felt it could play a major role in keeping the country from being drawn into war. Woodring felt that if another European war came, there would be demands within the United States for the benefits which would come from the war trade as well as cries for the preservation of neutral and international rights. He warned Americans to avoid the mistakes of 1914-1917 and not get involved in a European conflict again "for the temporary profits of war and the protection of a national vanity are not worth the horrors of war" The Secretary of War maintained that if Americans wanted to trade with countries at war or travel on their ships then they should do so at their own risks. He went even further when he claimed that if war came to Europe isolation might be thrust upon the United States as the only alternative to becoming involved, and if this happened he said he was confident the people would accept it and "make the

⁶⁴Woodring to Mrs. Josephine A. Russell, January 29, 1937, Box 193, Wars, Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

⁶⁵Congressional Record, 76th Congress 3rd Session, Vol. 86, Pt. 13, p. 557.

additional sacrifice for the sake of peace." His rejection of upholding neutral and international rights was made crystal clear in a speech at Roanoke, Virginia, when he said, "Let us have peace at any price, except submitting to aggression."⁶⁶

After war came to Europe in 1939 he changed his views to some extent by indicating that the country could not "retreat tortoise-like" within its borders because the social, moral and economic consequences of the war could not be avoided. He continued, however, to maintain that it was possible to insulate the country from Europe militarily.⁶⁷ Woodring was an isolationist only in that he wished to keep the nation isolated from war. On other matters he was an internationalist; thus, he continuously advocated increased foreign trade and urged international cooperation to solve some of the world's social and economic problems.⁶⁸

While Secretary Woodring saw legislation as a way of decreasing the chances of involvement in war, he also felt that it could have the opposite effect; thus, it happened that he became an opponent of one of the most famous proposals ever designed to keep the United States at peace - the Ludlow Resolution. In 1937 Representative Louis Ludlow, an

⁶⁶ Army and Navy Register, September 12, 1936.

⁶⁷ Congressional Record, 76th Congress 3rd Session, Vol. 86, Pt. 13, p. 557.

⁶⁸ Congressional Record, 75th Congress 3rd Session, Vol. 83, Pt. 11, pp. 2318-2320.

Indiana isolationist, layed before the House a resolution to submit a constitutional amendment requiring a popular referendum upon a declaration of war except in case of direct aggression. Woodring spoke out against the proposed amendment claiming it was more likely to lead to war than avoid it, because such a referendum could cause a fatal delay in meeting the threats of a possible aggressor, would be considered a sign of weakness by aggressor nations, and would seriously tie the hands of the President in his conduct of foreign affairs.⁶⁹ In January, 1938, the measure was barely rejected by the House. Defeat came only because President Roosevelt personally intervened to keep it from passing. In 1939 and 1940 the resolution was slightly altered and again introduced, but while it had considerable support it never had enough to pass. On each occasion Secretary Woodring made clear to Congress that he opposed the measure because its passage would "afford encouragement to possible enemies, ... lessen the defensive power of the nation ... and thus result in a national disaster."⁷⁰

Whereas Woodring viewed adequate military defense and proper legislation as essential to insuring peace, he also felt that "we need something more." That something was "Moral Rearmament." Included in this concept was an understanding of one another, recognition of each

⁶⁹Army and Navy Journal, January 8, 1938.

⁷⁰Woodring to Representative Andrew J. May, April 20, 1940, Box 123, National Defense, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-42, NA, RG107. Woodring to Senator Carl A. Hatch, June 9, 1939, Box 90, "Hearings Before Congressional Committees," Ibid.

other's rights, tolerance of other's habits, customs, and religious views, development of a spirit of justice and self-control, and "more of the spirit of brotherly love."⁷¹ The Secretary of War believed that "Moral Rearmament is a great tremendous influence for good and it ought to be encouraged." Furthermore, "It is because the war to end selfishness has never been fought that the war to end wars has never been won." Secretary Woodring felt this concept had great merit but he considered it more in terms of a hope for the future.⁷² He still believed a well-trained Army and proper legislation were the hope for the present.

In addition to the previously examined ideas and concepts which made up the "Woodring Military Philosophy" there was a principle which Secretary Woodring always followed even though it sometimes meant going against his own "philosophy". That principle was: Military men, not civilian leaders, should make military decisions. When the Secretary of War was forced from his post in 1940 the Baltimore Sun said, "It cannot be recalled that Mr. Woodring has ever opposed any of the purely military suggestions of his chiefs of staff."⁷³ That Woodring was

⁷¹Army and Navy Journal, November 7, 1936.

⁷²"Army in Being," Time, January 1, 1940, p. 12.

⁷³Baltimore Sun, June 21, 1940.

proud of this fact was quite evident in a letter which he wrote five years after leaving office:

I have that feeling that I was right in the Office of Secretary of War in following and leaving the military decisions to the General Staff and would like to ... [see vindicated] that principle of National Defense rather than the Civilian Commander-in-Chief idea knowing more than professional military strategists who made it a life study and profession.⁷⁴

Although Woodring was a "yes man" when it came to what he considered to be strictly military matters, he certainly was not when it came to political-military decisions; and that is where the bulk of his decisions lay. From the time he became "permanent" Secretary of War, the outspoken Kansan made it clear to the President, Cabinet, Congress, and other officials that he had a mind of his own.

What then were the ideas and concepts that made up the "Woodring military philosophy" and thus served as guidelines for the Secretary of War's policy decisions? (1) The country must remain at peace at all cost except aggression. (2) An adequate defense is the best way to avoid war. (3) The government is not and should not be militarily oriented; thus, it should not have a large standing Army or enter the arms race. (4) The Army is to be used strictly for defensive purposes. (5) The size of the standing Army is relatively insignificant but it is essential that it be adequately equipped, trained, and capable of rapid

⁷⁴Woodring to John C. O'Laughlin, July 30, 1945, Box 71, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

expansion. (6) Proper legislation can be a key factor in keeping the country out of war. (7) Moral Rearmament is the hope for the peace of the future. (8) Only military isolation is desirable; on economic and social matters the country should cooperate with foreign nations. (9) Military decisions should be made by military men. The effects of this philosophy are quite evident in War Department policies from 1936 to 1940.

When Harry Woodring became Secretary of War in 1936 there were at work throughout the nation certain forces which served to limit his effectiveness. Those forces were isolationism and depression.

Following the World War the United States attempted to turn its back on Europe. Rejection of the League of Nations and refusal to join the World Court were indicative of the growing mood that the United States should not become involved in European affairs. Throughout the twenties and early thirties isolationism became the accepted policy of the President, Congress, and the majority of Americans. This sentiment was further strengthened in the mid-thirties when the Nye Investigating Committee and certain historians, such as Walter Millis and Charles Beard, succeeded in convincing the American people that the United States had entered the World War in order to safeguard the financial interests of a few bankers and munition makers. Feeling that the mistakes of the past could be avoided by legislative means, Congress responded by passing a series of neutrality acts which they felt would insure against the country again being drawn into war.

With the passage of the neutrality legislation there developed a complacent feeling that the chance of being drawn into a foreign war

had been virtually eliminated; thus, prior to 1939 Congress and the American people showed little or no interest in the War Department or its military activities. Even those individuals who were concerned about the nation's defenses paid little attention to the Army because they considered the Navy to be the bulwark against aggression.

The Great Depression also contributed to the difficulties of the Secretary of War. As late as 1938 Roosevelt, Congress, and the public were still primarily concerned with economic recovery; therefore, they had little time for or interest in national defense and foreign affairs. Even if the interests had been there the funds were not. With little concern over defense and an administration economy drive underway, it was not surprising that the Army was the first to suffer from budget cuts. After all, if government expenditures have to be cut in some areas what better place was there to begin than the War Department? Roosevelt himself exemplified this feeling upon entering the Presidency, when he urged Congress to cut the Army's budget \$144,000,000 and reduce its personnel by retiring 2,000 to 3,000 officers and dropping 12,000 enlisted men.⁷⁵ Furthermore, it was no secret that Roosevelt, a former Assistant Secretary of Navy, had a pro-Navy outlook; thus, when he would be in a position to request additional defense funds it would in all likelihood be the Navy and not the Army which would receive first priority.

⁷⁵New York Times, April 18, 1933.

With the President, Congress, and most Americans in an isolationist mood and government spending being slashed, Secretary Woodring faced a real challenge in getting the appropriations and legislation necessary to strengthen the United States Army. These, however, were to be just two of many problems which Harry Woodring faced in his four years as Secretary of War.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS OF MILITARY READINESS:¹ SEPTEMBER 1936 TO AUGUST 1939

When Harry Woodring became Secretary of War in the fall of 1936 he found himself in charge of a small, ill equipped, poorly trained Army. However the new Secretary was not discouraged by the existing conditions; instead he immediately set out to rectify the shortcomings. His goal was to prepare a military force that could successfully meet any challenge from the outside world.

In 1936 the basis of the United States military program was the National Defense Act of 1920. This act provided for a voluntary citizen Army to defend the country. The military force was to be composed of three echelons: a Regular Army with an authorized strength of 280,000 enlisted men and 18,000 officers; a National Guard of approximately 430,000 men; and an Organized Reserve of about 540,000.² In the

¹Military Readiness, meaning the state of being militarily ready. Many times military readiness is provided for by a program of rearmament; thus, some individuals come to see the two phenomena as one. In this study readiness and rearmament are examined as two separate matters. Rearmament will refer to the huge aircraft Rearmament Program which the Army began in the winter of 1938-39, and will be discussed in a separate chapter entitled, "Problems of Rearmament."

²David H. Popper, "American Defense Policies," Foreign Policy Reports, May 1, 1939, pp. 41-42. David H. Popper, "The United States Army in Transition," Foreign Policy Reports, December 1, 1940, p. 217. "Who's In the Army Now," Fortune, September, 1935, pp. 41-44.

years following the passage of the Act the strength provided for never became a reality and in the mid-thirties the figures dropped lower than ever.

In 1936 the Regular Army numbered 147,000 enlisted men and 12,000 officers - a far cry from the minimum set in 1920. The year before Congress had appropriated funds to provide for 165,000 enlisted men, but the President released only enough money for 147,000.³ The National Guard numbered 189,000 instead of the 430,000 agreed to in the Defense Act. The Organized Reserve was even worse off for instead of a force of half a million men it contained less than 120,000. For a nation of 130,000,000 people the United States military establishment was quite small. Its 159,000 man Regular Army placed it in seventeenth place among the world's standing armies;⁴ however, the small size did not bother Secretary Woodring. Just prior to his entering the Secretaryship, Congress appropriated funds to provide 165,000 enlisted men and 14,000 officers by mid-1937, and Woodring felt that under the world conditions prevailing at that time such a figure would be adequate.⁵

³Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 451.

⁴Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1936, pp. 2-6. "America is Arming," The Nation, April 8, 1936, p. 436.

⁵Secretary Woodring - Questions and Answers from Reporters for Army-Navy Journal, September 30, 1936, Box 176, Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

Although the new Secretary was not concerned with the size of the Army, he was quite concerned with its efficiency. He desired a force ready to move into action immediately. An Army's readiness can be judged by examining its: speed and quality of mobilization; equipment and armament; state of training of all ranks.⁶ In 1936 the United States Army was woefully inadequate in all three areas.

That the Army would be unable to mobilize quickly and efficiently was a fact of which the General Staff was well aware.⁷ When Woodring became Secretary the basis for mobilization was the 1933 Mobilization Plan. This plan envisioned the raising and training of an Army of more than one million men within three months of mobilization day (M-Day); a two million man force six months after M-Day (M+6) and an Army of four and a half million at M+12.⁸

The 1933 plan, which included personnel and supply requirements, had come under fire almost as soon as it had gone into effect. As Assistant Secretary of War, Woodrin had given his approval to the plan a few weeks after taking office in 1933, but within a year he felt that it was impractical and could not be carried out.⁹ However, neither

⁶Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, Battle Shield of the Republic (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940), p. 42.

⁷Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, pp. 466-470.

⁸Ibid., p. 443.

⁹Ibid., pp. 466-467.

Secretary Dern nor General MacArthur was convinced of the need for a new mobilization plan. Thus, with no impetus from the top no change was forthcoming.

In 1936 the new Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, whose "greatest concern was the lack of realism in military war plans,"¹⁰ ordered a study on the feasibility of the 1933 Mobilization Plan. After securing reports and evaluations of the plan from commanders at all echelons, G-1 and G-4 concluded that the manpower procurement rate of the plan was, "Questionable of attainment and that for this rate the supply demands are doubtful of fulfillment."¹¹ In October the Planning Branch, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, completed a detailed survey of procurement possibilities under the present plan. Their conclusion was that the supply requirements could not possibly be met.¹² As far as speed and efficiency of mobilization were concerned the Army was not a ready force.

In quantity and quality of equipment and arms the Army was also lacking. Animal drawn vehicles and field artillery were still being used extensively and the War Department still maintained that, "Mounted troops are of great value in certain situations and some horse-drawn

¹⁰Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, 1939 printed in Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1939, p. 23.

¹¹Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 472.

¹²Ibid., p. 475.

light artillery can ... be advantageously used."¹³ The 1903 bolt action Springfield rifle was still the basic infantry weapon. A new semi-automatic rifle, the Garand M-30 had just been approved as a replacement for the Springfield but none had been issued to the troops. The obsolete Browning automatic rifle was being used as a light machine gun while the World War vintage heavy Browning machine gun was not even scheduled for replacement. Tanks and other self propelled mechanized weapons were in pitifully short supply as were all classes of small arms and artillery ammunition. George Fielding Eliot, perhaps the most widely read American military analyst of the 1930's stated: "The condition of the Army as to armament and equipment is far from satisfactory; this is by all odds its worst deficiency."¹⁴

Unfortunately many individuals including numerous congressmen did not feel that the Army was lacking in necessary equipment. They pointed to the large World War surplus of arms, ammunition and other supplies which were stored in Army depots throughout the country and said that those stocks would be sufficient to equip the Regular Army as well as the one million man force to be mobilized in the first three months after M-Day. Furthermore they contended that if the surplus were not sufficient for a large reserve force and shortages did develop the solution was simple: the items could be secured from

¹³Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1937, p. 6.

¹⁴George Fielding Eliot, The Ramparts We Watch (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1938), pp. 314-515.

commercial sources.¹⁵ Such thinking was deficient in a number of ways. First, it failed to take into consideration the rapid changes being made in military technology, organization and tactics, all of which served to make many items in the surplus stock virtually worthless in another war. Second, items like small arms and artillery ammunition which had been in storage for over sixteen years were beginning to deteriorate rapidly. Third, commercial production could not convert to military production overnight. If advance planning was not undertaken it would take considerable time for commercial sources to begin production of items desired by the military.

Another deficiency of the Army at this time was the poor state of training at all levels. That this problem existed and should be corrected was recognized by General Craig, who in his 1936 Annual Report, stated that "greater emphasis is necessary on the training of basic units in maneuvers and combat exercises"¹⁶

The shortcomings of the Army training program were due to the great dispersion of troops, shortages of funds and equipment, lack of time due to the necessity of performing non military functions, and a lack of realism in training exercises. When Secretary Woodring became head of the War Department the Army was spread from the Philippines to Puerto Rico, from China to the Canal Zone and across the United States

¹⁵Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 447.

¹⁶Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, 1936, printed in Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1939, p. 37.

in more than one hundred fifty posts and stations. With such dispersion it simply was not feasible, tactically or financially, to bring together a sizable number of units for large scale maneuvers.¹⁷ The training of small units was seriously curtailed during the depression years because tight budgetary restrictions permitted the use of only a minimum amount of ammunition and other expendable items essential for effective training.¹⁸ A shortage of equipment often served to limit the value of training because only a relatively few individuals could perform their function on the actual piece of equipment they would be utilizing in case of war. A perfect example of this is the fact that as late as 1938 the eighteen National Guard tank companies throughout the country had but one tank each for training purposes.¹⁹

Another deterrent to training was that many personnel were required to expend all their time and energy on non military jobs, thus, leaving little or no time for training. Such functions as care, maintenance and operation of the Panama Canal, care and improvement of harbors and waterways, Civilian Conservation Corps responsibilities, care of national cemeteries, operation of the Military Academy, along with research and development work and a multitude of other tasks were

¹⁷Eliot, The Ramparts We Watch, pp. 312-313.

¹⁸Annual Report of the Chief of Staff, 1933, printed in Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1933, pp. 21-25.

¹⁹Eliot, The Ramparts We Watch, p. 315.

full time jobs performed by Regular Army personnel.²⁰ It was not possible to pull such personnel from their jobs to participate in consolidated field exercises.

Even when the time and equipment were available, the training was often impractical and unrealistic. As one soldier put it, "there is too much tendency in the 'field' to take everything along from the barracks ... including the pool table" and then "too much effort, time and expense is devoted to 'polishing' this and that that should be used to much more advantage in tactical training."²¹ There was no question that the training of the United States Army in the mid-thirties was deficient in both quantity and quality.

No one was more aware of the Army's lack of readiness than Secretary Woodring, but knowing what needed to be done and getting it done were two different things. The basic reason for the Army's lack of readiness was the failure of Congress to provide sufficient funds; however, Congress was only reflecting the mood of the nation. Because of the isolationist sentiment generally characteristic of the country following the World War, the War Department never submitted budget requests which it considered necessary to provide an adequate military force. Instead it found it expedient to ask Congress for what it

²⁰"Army of the United States," Senate Document Number 91, 76th Congress 1st Session, pp. 11-12.

²¹Corporal Leon Denis, "Training for the Next War," Infantry Journal, May-June, 1936, p. 225.

thought it could get rather than what it needed. Even then the Army's modest requests were usually slashed to the bone by the Bureau of the Budget. During these years the Bureau rarely called on the Department to justify the requests it made, but cut those requests on its own judgement. Congress seeing no threat of war was content to accept the Bureau's recommendations.²² Any individual, civilian or military, who advocated or endorsed increased defense expenditures was immediately labeled a "jingo" or a "war monger"; thus, Congressmen found it politically advantageous to avoid defense questions. With the President looking for areas in which to cut expenditures and Congress and its constituents bent on isolationism, Woodring considered the chances of receiving increased appropriations almost nil. Therefore, he set out to increase the Army's readiness with the means available to him at that time.

The first problem the new Secretary turned to was that of mobilization. Since mobilization requires recruiting, training and supplying an Army, the War Department's 1933 Mobilization Plan had two basic schemes, one for recruitment and training and another for supply; however, it was apparent that the 1933 plan was not satisfactory for it called for too much too soon after M Day.²³ Under the initiative and guidance of Secretary Woodring and Chief of Staff Craig there emerged

²²Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 451.

²³"Arms Before Men," Time, August 22, 1938, p. 23.

more realistic mobilization plans in the form of the 1936 revision of the Industrial Mobilization Plan and the Protective Mobilization Plan.

An Army cannot merely be recruited and trained it must also be fed, clothed, equipped and armed. Realizing the importance of supplying a large military force in time of war, the National Defense Act of 1920 gave to the Assistant Secretary of War not only the responsibility of current Army procurement but also the task of preparing plans for the mobilization of American industry in the event of war. During the 1920's the War Department virtually ignored the formulation of plans for industrial mobilization; however, in the 1930's it attempted to work out such a scheme. The solution arrived at was embodied in the 1930 Industrial Mobilization Plan and its 1933, 1936 and 1939 revisions.²⁴

The 1930 plan provided for the creation of four superagencies to handle industrial mobilization: Director of War Industry, Administrator of Labor, Director of Public Relations and Director of Selective Service. Although the key agency was that of War Industry, which would handle requirements, priorities and facilities, it was equal to, not superior, to the others. Coordination of the four agencies was placed in the hands of the President. The 1933 revision added another agency and two independent commissions, but the plan remained essentially unchanged.²⁵

²⁴Albert A. Blum, "Birth and Death of the M-Day Plan," American Civil-Military Decisions, ed. Harold Stein (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1963), pp. 66-67.

²⁵Ibid.

As Assistant Secretary of War and later as Secretary, Harry Woodring was quite interested in the Industrial Mobilization Plan, and he devoted a great deal of time and energy to improve it.²⁶ Woodring, perhaps as well as anyone, realized the importance of "supply preparedness" as he called it. To him this concept included adequate reserve stocks for immediate military needs and plans for the mobilization of industries with a view toward rapid production in time of war. Secretary Woodring indicated his firm belief in the importance of industrial mobilization to military efficiency when he said, "The best general in the world cannot defend his country without troops - the best troops in the world cannot defend their countries without supplies; and supplies cannot be provided without thoroughly efficient preparation and suitable control machinery"²⁷

In 1936 the War Department issued a revised Industrial Mobilization Plan. It was ironical that it received its final approval in September from Acting Secretary of War Woodring who as Assistant Secretary had done so much to bring the new plan about. This plan differed from earlier ones in several respects. First, it dealt solely with matters of industrial mobilization; thus, the provisions for Selective Service and Public Relations which were in the earlier plans were deleted. Second, the War Resources Administration, which was the

²⁶The Reserve Officer, January 1, 1937, p. 13.

²⁷Harry H. Woodring, "Supply Preparedness," Army Ordnance, March-April 1937, pp. 264-265.

new name for old War Industries Agency, was to be established at the outset of war by an Executive Order rather than Congressional legislation. Third, when war appeared imminent, the Army-Navy Munitions Board was to undertake the functions of the War Resources Administration until that agency was able to undertake its duties.²⁸ Fourth, the plan showed a greater degree of coordination and harmony between the War and Navy Departments than in any previous attempts at cooperative planning. In light of the serious conflicts which previously characterized joint Army-Navy mobilization planning this was quite an accomplishment and one of which Secretary Woodring was quite proud.²⁹

For a multitude of reasons the 1936 Industrial Mobilization Plan was attacked from many quarters including the State Department, Bernard Baruch, political analysts and journalists. By 1938 even the War Department was forced to conclude that it contained certain deficiencies which it hoped to remedy in the next revision.³⁰ Poor though the plan may have been, it at least represented an awareness of the complexities of industrial mobilization and presented the most sophisticated approach ever designed to meet those complexities.

²⁸Industrial Mobilization Plan, Revised 1936 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), pp. 15-18.

²⁹Army and Navy Journal, December 12, 1936.

³⁰Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, pp. 530-531.

When Harry Woodring assumed the position of Secretary of War in September, 1936, he did not immediately leave behind the problems of procurement and mobilization planning because he continued to serve as Assistant Secretary. Not until July, 1937, when Louis A. Johnson became the new Assistant Secretary, did Woodring give up his dual role. This meant that during his first ten months as Secretary of War, Woodring was still in charge of industrial mobilization planning.³¹

In fact, it was during this period when he was filling both posts that he laid the groundwork for cooperation between the War Department and private industry that later proved to be of such value in the production of certain military items. He did this by sponsoring a bill to sell, loan, or give to private contractors and firms drawings, plans and samples of equipment to be manufactured for the Army in time of war. The bill was designed to familiarize manufacturers with items not directly related to peacetime production, especially ordnance and chemical warfare items.³² Congress seeing the value of such a program passed the measure with no opposition. Although this legislation did not go as far as to provide small scale "educational orders," whereby limited production of certain items would be undertaken, it did give to many industries a better understanding of what and how it could convert from civilian to military production.

While tremendous progress was to be made in the realm of industrial mobilization planning after July 1937, it was to come under the

³¹Army and Navy Journal, December 5, 1936.

³²Army and Navy Journal, July 24, 1937.

leadership of Assistant Secretary Louis Johnson. Unfortunately Woodring, because of the years spent as Assistant Secretary, found it extremely difficult to divorce himself from his old post. As will later be seen Woodring's tendency to advise and guide his new Assistant was to cause considerable friction between the two and seriously effect the operations of the War Department.³³

As important as Woodring's contributions were to industrial mobilization they were small in comparison with his contributions to military mobilization. On December 8, 1936 Secretary Woodring initiated a major revision of the Army's military mobilization plans. On that day he sent to the Chief of Staff a memorandum which called attention to the fact that in the first several months of a war the supply requirements placed upon industry by the 1933 Mobilization Plan could not be met. In that case, Woodring contended, it would be useless and wasteful to try to achieve the plan's unrealistic objectives. What was needed were goals that were possible of attainment. The Secretary then suggested that the General Staff consider the "advisability and need for two separate and distinct plans. One, a paper plan based on the Staff's present manpower mobilization tables ... and a second, based on what I term a 'defensive policy' plan calling for a speedy mobilization of a much smaller force for which material can be supplied." Woodring felt that to have a large mobilization force on paper meant nothing. The present mobilization plan provided for the formation of a

³³The causes and consequences of the friction between Woodring and Johnson will be covered in Chapter IV.

very large force, but it was just a paper plan which in reality could not be carried out. What Woodring wanted was a plan that could actually be fulfilled. That is why he favored a scheme that called for mobilization of a much smaller force. He believed that to create such a force and have it effective would require that it be fully trained and supplied in peacetime so it would be immediately available at the outbreak of war.³⁴

The Secretary's directive was all the prodding that General Craig needed to begin work on a new, realistic plan for mobilization. On December 16 he directed the General Staff to begin development of a new mobilization plan to be known as the "Protective Mobilization Plan" (PMP). The guidelines presented were quite brief: "The Protective Mobilization Plan will provide for the mobilization of a moderate but balanced force for the protection of the Continental United States including Hawaii and Panama. The size and character of the force should be such as to permit its being speedily and properly armed and equipped." General Craig closed by emphasizing the importance of the plan and asked that it be completed as quickly as possible.³⁵

It took two years to complete the PMP. It was written in sections and as each section was completed in enough detail to be useful it was

³⁴Memo for Chief of Staff from Secretary of War, December 8, 1936, Chief of Staff Papers, 13984-262, NA, RG 165.

³⁵Memo from Secretary of Chief of Staff for Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, December 16, 1936. Chief of Staff, 13984-263, NA, RG 165.

published; thus, the PMP was published in a handful of installments between February 1937 and December 1938.³⁶ As a result of the piecemeal release and publication of the plan it soon became common to read or hear about the 1937 PMP, the 1938 PMP and the 1939 PMP. In reality they were all a part of or a revision of the same plan.

The PMP introduced a new concept in basic mobilization plans. Whereas the earlier plans of 1928 and 1933 provided for the mobilization of a million man force three months after mobilization began, the PMP placed reliance on a much smaller, but better equipped and highly trained Army to furnish immediate protection. In the event additional forces were necessary the plan called for a series of well defined steps of expansion - designed to enable proper equipping and training of new recruits. Under the old plans the order for mobilization brought one million men at once whether they were needed or not, the PMP could mobilize the amount necessary to meet the need.

The first echelon of defense under the PMP was to be a 400,000 man "Initial Protective Force" (IPF). This force, which was to be comprised of units of the Regular Army and National Guard, was to be completely ready for combat within one month of M-Day. If it was apparent that the IPF would not be sufficient there would then be mobilized a "Protective Mobilization Force" of more than 700,000 men. The plan called for this second contingency of troops to be ready eight

³⁶Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, pp. 479-480.

months after M-Day. In the event that still more troops were needed, the PMP provided for a minimum increase of 150,000 men monthly until a four million man force was achieved.³⁷

The primary weakness of the PMP was that it failed to provide a balanced military force. The envisioned Army was made up almost solely of infantry; the Air Force and Armored Force were virtually ignored. Lack of balance is evident from the fact that the plan provided for only one armored division in a four million man force.³⁸

Compared to the earlier plans which called for mobilizing a million men in three months, the PMP seemed to be a step backward, but the goals of the earlier plans could not possibly have been attained, whereas those of the PMP could. When it is realized that it took the United States fourteen months to put one million men in fighting trim during World War I, the PMP appears more impressive.³⁹

The Protective Mobilization Plan had its logistical and tactical shortcomings, but in comparison to previous mobilization plans it marked a real step forward. Secretary Woodring was the first to admit that the plan was not perfect, but he did maintain that there was every

³⁷Ibid., pp. 480-490; David Popper, "American Defense Policies," Foreign Policy Reports, May 1, 1939, pp. 43-44.

³⁸Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, pp. 491-492.

³⁹"Arms Before Men," Time, August 22, 1938, p. 23.

reason to believe that it was "feasible and will meet our national defense requirements."⁴⁰

While the PMP was being prepared in 1937 and 1938 there was little that Secretary Woodring could do to implement even its first phases because Congress was not about to provide funds for a plan that was not yet fully developed. In the meantime Woodring tried in other ways to improve the Army's readiness.

In December of 1936 Woodring issued his first annual report as Secretary of War. This report indicated a general satisfaction with conditions in the War Department and in the Army. The recommendations made were extremely modest, the most significant being an increase in National Guard strength from 189,000 to 210,000; two weeks annual training for 30,000 Reserve Officers instead of the present 20,000; and the establishment of an Enlisted Reserve of 150,000 men.⁴¹ Woodring felt that such modest demands could certainly be met. The Washington Herald stated that the recommendations embraced "a program of minimum requirements" which even if adopted would still leave the nation "perilously weak."⁴² The Washington Evening Star believed that, "Congress is not likely to find any of these proposals unreasonable," and recommended that they be given favorable consideration.⁴³ When the Bureau

⁴⁰Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1938, p. 1.

⁴¹Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1936, pp. 1, 2, 6.

⁴²Army and Navy Journal, January 5, 1937.

⁴³Washington Evening Star, editorial, December 23, 1936.

of the Budget reviewed the increases for the new proposals they were denied. As usual the Secretary of War was not asked to appear before the Bureau or the Congressional Appropriations Committee to justify his budget requests. In the end the National Guard was increased by 3,000 instead of 20,000; two weeks training was provided for an additional 2,000 Reserve Officers instead of 10,000, and no provision at all was made for an Enlisted Reserve.⁴⁴

For several reasons, Woodring's contributions to improved Army readiness were rather insignificant in his first full year as Secretary of War. First, his dual responsibility as Secretary and Assistant Secretary, which lasted until July 1937, consumed a considerable amount of time. Second, the uncertainty as to whether or not he would be made "permanent" Secretary caused him to "go easy" so as to not antagonize the President. Third, with the Protective Mobilization Plan still in preparation and its needs uncertain, he could not yet take steps to implement it. Although he did not bring about any major advancements in the Army during that first year, the year could still be considered a success because, as an Army-Navy Journal editorial indicated, "That year has shown his [Woodring's] ability and capacity and understanding in connection with national and particularly military needs. These qualities necessarily have earned for him the sincere respect and devotion of the forces which, under the President, he directs."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1937, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁵ Army and Navy Journal, editorial, November 6, 1937.

By the end of 1937 Secretary Woodring was examining the Army more closely than before. This close scrutiny resulted from his growing concern over the breakdown of peace throughout the world. Japanese aggression against China, Civil War in Spain, and the growing strength of Hitler and Mussolini caused him to be more critical in his examination of the United States military machine. In his Annual Report, released in December 1937, Woodring informed the President that the Army was more efficient than it had ever been in peacetime history, but it was "relatively weaker, compared with armies of other great countries, than it was a year ago." The loss in relative strength resulted from the other countries strengthening their military forces at a more rapid rate than the United States. Even though Woodring maintained that "at present our Regular Army ... is too small to accomplish efficiently the task for which it is responsible," he did not ask for a sizable increase. He requested only an additional 7,000 enlisted men and 2,300 officers. The Secretary again urged establishment of an Enlisted Reserve program, but this time in much stronger terms than the year before. After warning the President that the nation would be "at a distinct disadvantage during the mobilization period of a major war if we lacked trained men to fill key positions in the ranks," he asked that a start be made toward a 150,000 man Enlisted Reserve.⁴⁶

With one exception the recommendations in the 1937 Annual Report were similar to those of the previous year. That exception pertained

⁴⁶ Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1937, pp. 1, 2, 7, 8.

to the quantity and quality of military equipment. Secretary Woodring stated that he did not consider the size of the Army extremely important but the equipment that force had was of the utmost importance. He emphasized the need to re-equip the Army "with the latest and best in transportation, means of communication and weapons." He also made clear that not only should the best equipment be procured, but sufficient quantities should also be provided. Although the Secretary stressed the importance of and deficiencies in equipment he urged a rather conservative approach to correcting the shortcoming. He said he did not want the country to get involved in the arms race, but it should "accelerate" the program for re-equipping the Army.⁴⁷ The restrained nature of his requests indicated he was not a "militarist" or an "alarmist" but a "realist" who recognized a deficiency and hoped to see it corrected.⁴⁸

By the time Secretary Woodring issued his 1937 Report, events in Europe had caused President Roosevelt to conclude that it was time to examine the defense needs of the nation very closely. In December and early January the President indicated that he would ask Congress to appropriate a large amount for defense needs.⁴⁹ On January 20, 1938, Roosevelt summoned Secretary Woodring to the White House to discuss the

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁸Army and Navy Journal, editorial, December 4, 1937.

⁴⁹New York Times, December 7, 1937, January 6, 1938.

Army's needs. At that conference F.D.R. indicated that the Navy and not the Army was to be the beneficiary of the bulk of the new defense program. Woodring asked that the Army be given more consideration and told the President that to ignore the Army, as was being done, was a grave mistake. A few days later Woodring wrote Roosevelt and again asked that the program place more emphasis on Army needs which were "truly justified under the present world situation". He then recommended that \$30,000,000 be made available to improve the Army's state of readiness.⁵⁰

Secretary Woodring felt that if Congress was going to appropriate a vast sum for defense then the Army should have its fair share. The President, feeling that the needs of the Navy should have first priority, chose to take lightly the advice of his Secretary of War, and in his January 28 Budget message he asked Congress for only \$17,000,000 to strengthen the Army. In looking back at this request a few years later Roosevelt said, "With respect to the Army, I included only those items which had been recommended by the War Department as immediately necessary. It was obviously impossible to do everything at once, and these were the first steps."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Woodring to Roosevelt, January 24, 1938, Box 38, PSF Woodring, FDRL.

⁵¹ The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938: The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 71.

Woodring was not pleased with the President's 1938 defense program. He was especially resentful of Roosevelt's failure to strengthen the Army Air Corps. Feeling that the Navy was being built up at the expense of the Air Corps, he went to Roosevelt and asked that one hundred planes earmarked for the Navy be given to the Army instead.⁵² Roosevelt was not persuaded and the defense program favoring the Navy remained unchanged.

Although Secretary Woodring did not succeed in securing a large share of the 1938 defense appropriations, he was successful in bringing about one of his most sought after goals - an enlisted reserve, or as it came to be called, the Regular Army Reserve. When the first National Defense Act was passed in 1916 it included provisions for a reserve of enlisted men; however, following the World War the provision was rescinded because of the large number of veterans that could be called in case of emergency.⁵³ From the time he came into office, Secretary Woodring stressed the need for a 150,000 man enlisted reserve. In January 1938 he finally succeeded in winning the President's support for such a program, but only for a 75,000 man force.⁵⁴ Next, Woodring set out to sell the idea to Congress. He indicated to the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee that if the Regular Army was called

⁵²Daily Air Corps Record, 1938-1939, February 28, 1938, Box 56, Official File 1932-1946, Henry H. Arnold Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵³Senate Reports, 75th Congress 2nd and 3rd Sessions, Vol. 1, Report 1414, pp. 3-4. House Reports, 75th Congress 2nd and 3rd Sessions, Vol. 1, Report 1828, Part 2, p. 4.

⁵⁴Washington Post, January 29, 1938.

to active duty it would be forced to take to the field with small, depleted, understrength units. Such a dangerous situation could be corrected by either a sizable increase in Regular Army strength or establishment of an Enlisted Reserve. For reasons of economy Woodring recommended that the latter course be taken.⁵⁵ Congress agreed and in April passed the necessary legislation.

The Army Reserve Act provided for the enlistment in the Regular Army Reserve of former Regular Army enlisted men who had returned to civilian life. Since they had previously been trained no further training was considered necessary. As an inducement to sign up each reservist was paid \$24 a year. In return all the individual had to do was keep the Army informed of his present address; no weekly or annual training of any kind was required. The Reservists could be called to active duty "only in case of emergency declared by the President." If called they would receive \$3 for each month in the Reserve, but not to exceed \$150. An age limit of thirty-five was also established.⁵⁶ Plans called for the 75,000 man force to be raised over a period of four years with the cost running \$450,000 the first year and increasing a like amount annually until it leveled out at \$1,800,000 after the fourth year. The Regular Army Reserve did not in any way replace or

⁵⁵Senate Reports, 75th Congress 2nd and 3rd Sessions, Vol. 1, Report 1414, pp. 3-4. House Reports, 75th Congress 2nd and 3rd Sessions, Vol. 1, Report 1828, Part 2, p. 4.

⁵⁶United States Statutes at Large, 1938 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938), Vol. LII, pp. 221-222.

affect any of the reserve forces already in existence. Its sole purpose was "to bolster the Regular Army so that it can better perform its vital task of defense in the first stages of an emergency."⁵⁷

From the time he became Secretary of War in the fall of 1936 until March, 1938, Woodring, while showing a definite interest in increased Army readiness, did not appear alarmed or overly concerned about the shortcomings which he knew existed. As late as February, 1938, he indicated that he considered the nation's new defense program to be modest but adequate.⁵⁸ One month later, when Hitler annexed Austria, Secretary Woodring stated that the United States Army was better prepared than at anytime in its history for "whatever happens."⁵⁹

Apparently the Secretary of War was not as confident as his public utterances indicated for after the Anschluss he ordered a detailed study to determine the requirements for properly arming and equipping the Initial Protective Force. While that study was under way he worked hard to convince Congress of the need for an additional 2,000 Regular Army Officers.⁶⁰ Congress responded in early April by approving the Secretary's request. It was two weeks later that the Army Reserve Act, for which Woodring had worked so hard, was passed.

⁵⁷ Senate Reports, 75th Congress 2nd and 3rd Sessions, Vol. 1, Report 1414, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Army and Navy Register, February 12, 1938.

⁵⁹ New York Times, March 16, 1938.

⁶⁰ Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "National Defense," pp. 250-253.

Apparently the activities of the Secretary of War were making a favorable impression on the public mind. In June, 1938, the Gallup Poll asked the question: "Do you think the following Cabinet members have done a good or poor job in office?" For every person that stated he felt Woodring was doing a poor job, five felt he was doing well. The conclusion of the pollsters was that, "Although there is little that peacetime Secretaries of Navy and War can do to gain public attention, today's survey show that [Secretary of Navy] Swanson and Woodring have substantial approval for their work."⁶¹

In July the War Department revealed that a close study showed an immediate and urgent shortage of critical items of equipment for the Initial Protective Force. It was determined that to supply those items would cost \$142,000,000.⁶² Secretary Woodring and other War Department officials tried to educate Congress and the public on the importance and needs of the IPF. Time and again they pointed out that the quality of the equipment which the units had was good, but there was insufficient quantity. Warnings of the consequences of shortages went unheeded by a Congress and a nation that was convinced it could avoid another war.

Then in September, 1938, came the Munich Crisis followed by Hitler's success at the Munich Conference, and at last the United States was suddenly interested in its Army. It was the events of

⁶¹New York Times, July 3, 1938.

⁶²Army and Navy Register, July 23, 1938. "Arms Before Men," Time, August 22, 1938, p. 23.

September which caused Congress and the American people to realize that they had ignored their military establishment long enough and further delay would be extremely dangerous.

In September the Initial Protective Force was so short of modern arms that had it found itself involved in combat, it could not possibly have been an effective fighting force. Whereas the Protective Mobilization Plan called for a minimum of 227,000 semi-automatic rifles, only 12,500 were on hand; of the called for 1,500 M2-75mm guns only 141 were available. The story was the same for other new weapons: 60mm mortars, required 3,750, on hand 1; 105mm howitzers, 55 required, 0 on hand; light tanks, required 244, on hand 36; medium tanks, 1,100 required, 319 on hand.⁶³ The Chief of Staff, was quite concerned about these shortages, but was even more alarmed by the fact that "most of these items require in excess of one year to produce." This meant that if the shortages were to be overcome by 1940 it would be necessary to act at once.⁶⁴

In November, 1938, Secretary Woodring released his third Annual Report. Pessimistically he pointed out that in spite of recent advances the Army still contained certain "deficiencies in organization, equipment, and personnel which must be corrected before we can be assured of maintenance of a military force fully adequate for our defensive

⁶³Memorandum for Col. Watson from Chief of Staff, November 19, 1938, "Status of Certain Critical Arms and Material," AG580 (10-19-38), NA, RG 407.

⁶⁴Ibid.

needs." His number one priority was perfection of the Initial Protective Force. To accomplish that goal would require additional training and equipment. Woodring emphasized that the IPF was all important because, "If they fail in their protective mission the fate of the reinforcing citizens armies is sealed." The report also stressed the importance of properly equipping those forces which would follow the IPF into the field. The Secretary's conclusion was that there was little need for additional personnel but a great need for additional equipment and training.⁶⁵

Woodring spent November and December working on the President's new Rearmament Program which placed heavy emphasis on a greatly expanded Army Air Corps.⁶⁶ Considerable attention was given to the Air Program but other matters of Army readiness were not ignored. On January 5 Secretary Woodring presented to the President the War Department's recommendations for carrying out the Rearmament Program and increasing the readiness of existing forces. Due to recent events abroad Roosevelt was anxious to strengthen the Army and therefore very receptive to the Department's proposals.⁶⁷ On January 12 the President sent his Budget Message to Congress asking that they appropriate \$450,000,000 for "new needs of the Army." The bulk of the funds were to go for

⁶⁵Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1938, pp. 1-5.

⁶⁶See Chapter V.

⁶⁷Woodring to Roosevelt, January 1939, Box 38, PSF Woodring, FDRL.

increasing air strength but \$110,000,000 was to be used for "critical items of equipment which would be needed immediately in time of emergency, and which cannot be obtained from any source within the time and quality desired."⁶⁸ Pleased as Woodring was with the proposed budget, he indicated to the President that there was still reason to be pessimistic because "while the measures suggested will materially forward the readiness of the Army, nevertheless a serious deficiency of great import to both Army and Navy will still exist after these measures are accomplished."⁶⁹ Furthermore there was no certainty that Congress would grant everything the President requested.

Beginning in mid-January, 1939, Secretary Woodring made appearances before the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee and a House Subcommittee on Appropriations. Before each committee he emphasized the same thing: "Our main problem ... is to assure the complete equipment in critical items of our existing Regular Army and National Guard units and the organization of the initial protective force into a force fully capable of shouldering its heavy burden."⁷⁰ In the committee hearings Woodring was drawn into a discussion of future as well as present needs of the Army. These discussions revealed that the War

⁶⁸The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939: War and Neutrality (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), pp. 71-72.

⁶⁹Woodring to Roosevelt, January 1939, Box 38, PSF Woodring, FDRL.

⁷⁰House Hearings, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, 76th Congress 1st Session, "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill for 1940," p. 3.

Department was following its long standing practice of asking for what they thought they could get and not what was needed. Woodring told the committeemen that it would be desirable if supplies for the 720,000 man Protective Mobilization Force would be made available, but funds for that purpose were not being requested at that time.⁷¹ Recommendations for additional personnel also indicated the Department's fear of being turned down. Woodring informed the Senate Military Affairs Committee that the "War Department has carefully excluded urgent personnel requirements ... because we prefer at this time to invest such money as is appropriated in material"⁷²

At the same time such statements were being made by the Secretary of War, the Chief of Staff admitted: "We urgently need to have always available 5 complete divisions" but at present "we do not have a single division."⁷³ Nevertheless no additional Army troops were requested. All military representatives who might conceivably be called to testify before one of the Congressional Committees were informed by the Chief of Staff that in accord with "Presidential views" no additional increases in ground forces had been requested, and that position

⁷¹Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "National Defense," p. 5.

⁷²Ibid., p. 6.

⁷³Memorandum from Chief of Staff to Assistant Chiefs of Staff, and the Chief of National Guard Bureau, February 7, 1939, AG320.2 (2-7-39), NA, RG 407.

should be maintained by anyone testifying on behalf of the War Department.⁷⁴ The memorandum containing this information also contained advice on how to reply to questions as to the number of ground forces to be provided if and when such an increase should be permitted. The answer to be given was 1,800 officers and 23,000 enlisted men.⁷⁵ This information was brought out in most of the hearings.

While Congress was debating how far they should go in implementing the President's 1939 Defense Program their minds were made up for them by Adolph Hitler who on March 13 sent his troops into Slovakia thus completing the take-over of Czechoslovakia. This act marked the failure of the Munich Agreement and convinced the world that Hitler was indeed a dangerous man who could not be trusted. Congress being convinced of the need for a stronger Army responded on April 3 by authorizing an increase of 2,050 Regular Army Officers.⁷⁶ Later that same month \$540,000,000 was appropriated for a material strengthening of the Air Corps and normal Army operating expenses. Then in early May Congress provided the \$110,000,000 previously requested for "critical items."⁷⁷ It was about this time that the President expressed himself

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Elmer A. Lewis (comp.), Laws Relating To National Defense Enacted During Seventy-Sixth Congress (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 4.

⁷⁷Army and Navy Journal, July, 1939.

as "thoroughly satisfied with the administration he [Woodring] has given to the War Department, and particularly the manner in which he assisted ... in fashioning the Army Expansion Bill and facilitating its passage through Congress."⁷⁸ Woodring was pleased with the Army's recent legislative victories but he hoped for even more in the future.

In June the President asked for a supplemental appropriation of \$293,000,000 for Army use. Again Secretary Woodring appeared before a House Subcommittee on Appropriations and indicated that the funds were urgently needed for additional aircraft and "critical items." He told the committee that he considered the President's proposals "exceedingly conservative and modest" and failure to implement any one on them would endanger the nation's security. He concluded his testimony by saying, "As Secretary of War, I would be sadly remiss in my duty to the American people were I to advise or countenance the reduction of one iota of any item in the President's program."⁷⁹ What caused Congress to act is uncertain, but they responded by appropriating all the additional funds requested and authorized the Army to increase its enlisted strength to 210,000 by June of the following year.⁸⁰

With the new appropriations Secretary Woodring was now able to carry out some of the programs he had long been advocating. One thing which he turned his attention to was an event he had labored so hard to

⁷⁸Army and Navy Journal, editorial, April 15, 1939.

⁷⁹Army and Navy Journal, June 10, 1939.

⁸⁰Stetson Conn and Byron Fairchild, The Framework of Hemisphere Defense (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 3.

bring about -- the largest Army maneuvers ever conducted in peacetime. Although the Army had long recognized the importance of large scale exercises in giving valuable experience to all personnel from field grade officers down to privates, the economy drive of the 1930's had virtually eliminated such training. Woodring was especially concerned over the matter of training because the continual loss from active duty of war experienced personnel meant that more and more individuals without combat experience were coming into command positions. This factor, he claimed, made large scale training very important especially in the United States "where limited forces, limited facilities, and limited funds do not permit those massive peacetime maneuvers and field exercises which characterize ... great armies in other parts of the world."⁸¹ In early 1939, with Congress in a mood to spend money for national defense, the Secretary of War asked for \$20,000,000 to expand the Army training program. Included in this request were funds to conduct the "biggest army maneuvers since 1918." When Congress granted the full amount requested for training the maneuvers were assured.

In August, 1939, Regular Army and National Guard units of the First United States Army assembled at Plattsburg, New York under their Commander, General Hugh A. Drum, for two weeks of "war games." With more than 52,000 men participating this was indeed the largest peacetime military exercise in the nation's history. When the games opened

⁸¹New York Times, February 18, 1939.

General Drum expressed doubts as to the First Army's effectiveness when he said the forces assembled were not an Army "but a collection of individual units partially equipped and woefully short in most of the elements which go to make up an Army."⁸² The two week exercise did nothing to change his mind. In a very pointed critique Drum stressed the "inexperience" of the troops assembled and called the state of affairs which he found "deplorable and inexcusable."⁸³ The New York Times took the statements of General Drum and other Army observers and used them for a front page story that told of the "Deplorable lack of training especially evident in the National Guard" and came to the conclusion that "Neither it nor the Regulars are fit for war."⁸⁴

At first Secretary Woodring was quite upset over the revelations of General Drum because he felt it reflected on him as Secretary of War. Soon however he came to feel that what Drum had done was a good thing for in exposing the deplorable lack of training and equipment he helped make the public mind more receptive to the adoption of recommendations which he as Secretary of War, had been making for the past several years.⁸⁵

⁸²New York Times, August 16, 1939.

⁸³New York Times, August 26, 1939, August 27, 1939.

⁸⁴New York Times, August 27, 1939.

⁸⁵John C. O'Laughlin to General Hugh Drum, September 11, 1939, Box 36, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

The summer of 1939 also brought a new era in Army-Navy strategic planning. Prior to that time the War Plans Division of the General Staff had drawn up war plans which envisioned a future war with a single nation. These plans were called "color plans" because each possible enemy was designated as a color; thus, War Plan BROWN was for war with Germany, War Plan ORANGE for Japan and so forth. The need for more realistic war plans and closer coordination between the two major armed services had long been recognized, but it was not until June 30, 1939, that the Joint Army-Navy Board approved, in general, a new series of basic war plans.⁸⁶ The plans known as "RAINBOW Plans" envisioned waging a war against several foes in more than one area at the same time. The June decision was limited to an outline of the plans, it actually took several years to develop the details.⁸⁷ Secretary Woodring appears to have taken no interest in preparation of the RAINBOW Plans. In part, this was probably because he considered the plans to be of a strictly military nature and therefore not a matter on which he could advise or guide the Joint Army-Navy Board. Another limiting factor was a July 5, 1939 order from President Roosevelt to the effect that in the future the Joint Board would report directly to him as Commander-in-Chief.⁸⁸ From that time on the Secretary of War was

⁸⁶Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 87.

⁸⁷Maurice Matloff and Edwin Snell, Strategic Planning For Coalition Warfare, 1941-42 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 6-8.

⁸⁸The Federal Register, Vol. IV, Part 3, July-September, 1939, p. 2786.

usually "left out in the cold" when it came to Joint Army-Navy strategic planning.

Along with the Army's gains of the summer of 1939 there came a loss. That loss was the retirement of General Malin Craig as Chief of Staff. Although his scheduled retirement from active duty was September 1, the stress and strain of the past several years caused him to take terminal leave on June 30. Considering the strong isolationist and anti-military sentiment which prevailed throughout the country in the mid-thirties, General Craig had done an outstanding job in increasing the strength and efficiency of the United States Army.⁸⁹ When his accomplishments are compared with those of his successor, General George C. Marshall, they seem to be quite small, but when compared with what had been accomplished in the previous fifteen years they appear to be very substantial. No one hated to see Craig leave more than Secretary Woodring. From the time Woodring came to the War Department in 1933, these two men had become the best of friends; and later, as Secretary of War and Chief of Staff, they cooperated to a degree rarely found in military or civilian circles. Woodring, who looked upon the General as his "right arm" and with deep affection stated that the relationship he enjoyed with Craig was that of "a brother, and frequently that of a father and son."⁹⁰

⁸⁹Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 476.

⁹⁰Army and Navy Journal, April 29, 1939.

The importance, influence and significance of the United States Army on the national scene began a new phase in mid-August, 1939. With war in Europe appearing imminent, the War Department introduced plans for enlarging and equipping a military force more powerful than ever contemplated in peacetime.⁹¹ It was not until war finally broke out in early September that there developed a nationwide interest in the Army's readiness. It was then that Congress began to provide, without reluctance, the type of military machine Secretary Woodring had been advocating for the past several years.

Because August marks the beginning of a new era it offers a convenient breaking point in examining Secretary Woodring's efforts to improve the Army's readiness. From September 1936 through July 1939 he had done much to provide a better military machine. In size, planning, training and equipment the United States Army was stronger and better prepared in July 1939 than it had been anytime since 1919.

Whereas in September 1936 there were 147,000 enlisted men and 12,000 officers in the Regular Army there were 175,000 and 13,200 respectively in July 1939. More important than these actual strengths was the fact that Congress had just appropriated funds to raise the "authorized strength" of the Army to 210,000 enlisted men and 16,700 officers.⁹² At last Army strength was headed for a substantial increase.

⁹¹Conn and Fairchild, Framework of Hemisphere Defense, pp. 19-21.

⁹²Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1936, p. 21. 1940, Appendix B, Table C.

In the realm of mobilization planning, Woodring had played a major role in developing a sensible, workable scheme to provide an adequate protective force and any necessary reserves. The Protective Mobilization Plan with its provisions for an Initial Protective Force and a Protective Mobilization Force was quite sound, the only problem was that Congress had not seen fit to appropriate the funds necessary to implement it. A start, however, had been made in the Spring of 1939 when Congress appropriated \$110,000,000 for "critical items" and \$20,000,000 for training the Initial Protective Force.

In addition, there was in the process of formation a Regular Army Reserve, plans had been made for the largest peacetime military maneuvers, the Industrial Mobilization Plan had been revised, new weapons, including a semi-automatic rifle, were being tested and adopted, and substantial progress had been made in strengthening the defenses of Hawaii and the Panama Canal.

Despite such accomplishments the Army was still woefully unprepared to meet any military emergency. Numerically it was far weaker than that of any other major power, and because of rapid military expansion abroad was relatively weaker than it had been several years before. General Craig in his final report as Chief of Staff reported that as of June 30, 1939, "The Army ... was short of much critical armament and equipment There was deficiencies in personnel ... and there was a serious shortage in immediate war reserves" The result of these deficiencies was that, "We have not now a single

complete division of the Regular Army We have four potential divisions and five brigades in various stages of completion, and only a few special units available" This meant that in the summer of 1939 the United States Army did not have one complete division ready for immediate action.⁹³ Although Secretary Woodring had accomplished much, there remained a great deal to do.

⁹³Chief of Staff's Annual Report, 1939, printed in Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1939, pp. 25, 35.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS DISRUPTS THE WAR DEPARTMENT

Throughout its history, in both peace and war, the United States has been a nation firmly committed to the principle of civilian control of the military. This stems from the belief that "... in a Democracy all basic policy, including military policy, is made by officials responsible to the people, with whom sovereignty ultimately rests."¹ While this principle has held true since colonial times, the American attitude toward the military establishment has continually fluctuated.

During periods of war the American people have looked upon the military with trust, respect and appreciation; however, in times of peace, a fear of military usurpation and tyranny have caused them to look upon the establishment with suspicion and distrust. The widespread fear of a militarization of American society has created an "anti-military tradition."² The public attitude toward the American military establishment has therefore been one of admiration and support in war time and scorn and apprehension in peacetime.

¹Harry L. Coles (ed.), Total War and Cold War: Problems in Civilian Control of the Military (The Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 4.

²Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., The Civilian and the Military (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), Introduction, p. vii.

The United States Army has always been expected to provide the nation adequate security against hostile forces, but at the same time has been expected not to be so strong as to present a threat to the society which created it.³ Such attitudes placed the American military man in a difficult position for his fellow countrymen expected him to defend and, if necessary, die for his country, yet they also considered him a potential threat to their cherished ideal of civilian control of the government. Out of all this emerged a widespread belief that the military establishment was a necessary evil.

Fear and distrust of American military leaders have caused them to be isolated from other elements of society so that they have become "... a conscious and coherent group within but largely apart from the larger governmental structure. Such a group has its own distinctive entrance and tenure procedures, its own salary system, its own traditions and group attitudes, its own sensitivity and code of privacy."⁴ Such military leaders rarely took an interest in public affairs and usually found it expedient to avoid expressing opinions on political matters. However, those officers at the highest echelons could not avoid becoming embroiled in politics because they found themselves working under civilians whose decisions were based to a large extent on

³Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1964), pp. 155-157.

⁴Walter Millis, Arms and the State: Civil Military Elements in National Policy (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1956), p. 6.

political considerations. Accustomed to a promotion system based on merit, and working within an organization in which the same regulations applied to everyone, the military men often found it difficult to understand the ways of their politically-oriented superiors.

As Harry Woodring soon found out, carrying out the responsibilities of the Secretary of War was not an easy task. The position was a complex and difficult one not only because of the magnitude of its functions and responsibilities, but also because it placed a politically appointed civilian in charge of an establishment headed by professional military men.

To succeed in the Secretary of War post it was necessary to please and accomodate a politically elected Commander-in-Chief on one hand and the leaders of the military establishment on the other. As President Roosevelt's representative, Secretary Woodring stood for civilian control of the Army; but since the Secretary of War was responsible for the military defense of the nation he had to represent and attempt to carry out the recommendations of his military advisers. In a nation committed to the idea of civilian control of the military it was extremely difficult to represent and please both those who desired a stronger Army and those who feared increased influence of the military.

In an attempt to please both the civilian and the military, Woodring was forced to walk on the fence that divided the two. To fall or even lean too far to one side always brought the wrath of the other. When he urged Congress and the President to strengthen the nation's

Army he was called a "militarist" or "war monger," and when he called for less than the General Staff recommended, military men criticized him for failing to provide an adequate defense. To completely satisfy his superior and subordinates at the same time was an almost impossible task.

One result of having a politically elected Commander-in-Chief and a politically appointed Secretary of War is that politics came to play a key role in the decisions, policies and actions of the War Department. Both President Roosevelt and Secretary Woodring realized their responsibility to provide an adequate military defense, but they also realized that in pursuing that end they must not do anything to antagonize or frighten Congress or the public, for without their support nothing could be accomplished.

In running the War Department it was necessary for Secretary Woodring to deal extensively with the President, Congress, Cabinet and the General Staff. Since the first three categories were politically oriented it was not surprising that politics came to have a great influence on the operations of the War Department, and eventually came to disrupt those operations. To see the effects of politics on Secretary Woodring and the War Department it is necessary to examine his relationship with President Roosevelt, his military advisers, Congress, The Assistant Secretary of War, and those individuals who made up Roosevelt's "inner circle" of friends.

The personal relationship between Harry Woodring and Franklin D. Roosevelt was an extremely close one from the time they first met in 1929 until the latter's death in 1945.⁵ Woodring had the highest respect and admiration for F.D.R. and he did not hesitate to say so both publicly and privately. Roosevelt was very fond of Woodring and treasured his friendship most highly. The fact that Woodring was to remain Secretary of War as long as he did was in large part due to his close personal relationship with the President.⁶

While always on best of terms personally, Roosevelt and Woodring were frequently at odds over official matters. Disagreements usually stemmed from the fact that although Woodring was Secretary of War, President Roosevelt always wanted to be and to a great extent was his own Secretary of War. The President did this by personal intervention and by delegating tasks to his own personal representatives who were outside of the chain of command.⁷ As the New York Herald Tribune put it, "The role of a true executive, functioning through able subordinates possessing both power and responsibility has never appealed to him [Roosevelt] ."⁸

⁵Evidence of their continued friendship is evident from the correspondence which the two continued to carry on until March 1945. See PPF 663 Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

⁶Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, September 2, 1939.

⁷Richard F. Fenno Jr., The President's Cabinet: An Analysis in the Period From Wilson to Eisenhower (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 46-47.

⁸New York Herald Tribune (editorial) June 21, 1940.

President Roosevelt's desire to run "his own show" encountered some difficulty in the War Department because Secretary Woodring "had his own ideas and he worked hard at putting them through."⁹ Woodring was always willing to listen to the other side of an issue; however, once he came to a conclusion as to which policy, principle or line of action to follow, he stuck to it with utmost tenacity.¹⁰ The Secretary liked to tell others what to do but was often resentful of others telling him what to do, even if that other person happened to be the President. When he and the President disagreed on a matter Woodring would use all his knowledge and oratorical skill to win him over, and if the Commander-in-Chief's decision was not what Woodring felt it should be he would often delay in carrying out the President's wishes.¹¹

As time passed and Europe headed closer to war, the disagreements over important policies became more frequent; and Roosevelt, in spite of his high personal regard for Woodring, began to consider replacing him. The President, however, was not willing merely to dismiss his Secretary of War; what he wished to do was ease him out of the War Department by offering him another lucrative position.¹² When their

⁹Senator John Sparkman to Keith McFarland, April 29, 1968.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹See Chapter VIII.

¹²Harold Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.," The Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1948, pp. 81, 90, 91.

disagreements over official matters got to the place where they irritated the President, he began to ignore Woodring and turned to others, both within and outside of the War Department.¹³ Even when F.D.R. ignored his War Secretary he continued to maintain a close personal relationship with him. Although the two men frequently clashed over governmental policies they never let such disputes interfere with their admiration, respect and fondness for one another.

As smooth as Secretary Woodring's association was with his superior, his relationship with his military advisers was even smoother. The close relationship between Woodring and Chief of Staff Craig was well known and on numerous occasions was the topic of editorials and news stories.¹⁵ General Craig had a great respect for the Secretary of War and went so far as to say that during the period he was Chief of Staff, Woodring had not "made a single mistake as Secretary."¹⁶ Woodring's relations with Craig's successor, General George C. Marshall, were also very amiable.¹⁷ The General Staff, the heads of the several

¹³See Chapter V.

¹⁴Woodring to Roosevelt June 20, 1940, January 18, 1942, January 5, 1943, December 27, 1944, March 19, 1945. Roosevelt to Woodring, June 19, 25, 1940, January 29, March 4, 1942, March 24, 1945. PPF 663, Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

¹⁵Army and Navy Journal, January 2, May 29, 1937, April 29, 1939.

¹⁶General Malin Craig to John C. O'Laughlin, September 7, 1939, Box 35, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

¹⁷John C. O'Laughlin to General Malin Craig, September 1 and 6, 1939, Box 35, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

Service Branches and Combat Arms, and their staff members felt that Woodring understood their problems and based his decisions on a sincere desire to do what was best for the Army.¹⁸ Another factor which endeared the Secretary to the military leaders was his policy of not interfering in what he considered to be strictly military matters. According to the Army and Navy Journal, "Woodring's relations with the military portions of his department have been marked with great consideration and sympathetic understanding. Between him and General Craig ... there has existed a most cordial relationship and effective co-operation for the good of the military service."¹⁹ Perhaps the best expression of Woodring's relationship with the military appeared in a Kansas City Star editorial written after the Secretary had been forced from the cabinet: "He had strong support from the military men, who found in the Secretary an able business executive, and an open minded, intelligent and fair department head. Plenty of testimony to this effect has come from high military sources."²⁰ The relationship between Secretary of War Woodring and his top military advisers was definitely one of mutual respect and admiration.

In the late thirties, as the threat of Hitler grew larger and larger, the United States turned more attention to the question of national defense. When this happened Secretary Woodring found his

¹⁸Army and Navy Journal, editorial, January 2, 1937.

¹⁹Army and Navy Journal, May 29, 1937.

²⁰Kansas City Star, editorial, June 21, 1940.

relationship with Congress becoming increasingly important. Woodring spent hundreds of hours before the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee, made numerous appearances before the War Department Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, and wrote scores of letters to Congressional Committees and individual Congressmen informing them of the Army's needs. He often recommended legislation to overcome certain shortcomings, then he would do all he could to convince Congress to provide the authorization and necessary appropriations. In his appearances before the committees the Secretary displayed his oratorical skill and his extensive knowledge of the Army, Air Corps, War Department and national defense.

After war broke out in Europe in the fall of 1939 Woodring adopted a policy of "direct dealing" with congressional leaders who were responsible for Army authorizations and appropriations. This policy, which consisted of monthly conferences between War Department officials and key House and Senate committeemen, was initiated because Woodring wished "to maintain closer contact between the Department and Congress." At these meetings the Secretary of War and his military advisers explained what was needed, what was being done, and what the Congress could and should do to assist the Army.²¹ Woodring's close relationship with key congressmen often paid extra dividends as it did when he gave them a chance to observe the highly secret work in radar which the Army was undertaking at the Signal Corps Laboratories at Fort Monmouth,

²¹Army and Navy Journal, November 4, 1939.

New Jersey--the result was additional funds being granted for research and development.²²

Secretary Woodring was highly regarded and respected by the majority of the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee. In the House Committee, Chairman Andrew J. May, Dow Harter, John Sparkman and Charles I. Faddis thought very highly of Woodring and were among his most loyal supporters.²³ Faddis, one of the committee's most influential members, was later to say of Woodring, "He was of the utmost assistance to us in our efforts to bring our Military Affairs up to date."²⁴

In the Senate Military Affairs Committee numerous individuals, both Democrats and Republicans, voiced their confidence in Secretary Woodring. In the fall of 1939 Senator Robert Reynolds of North Carolina told his fellow committeemen, "I have a good deal of confidence in the Secretary and want the benefit of his advice."²⁵ About the same time Senator Josh Lee of Oklahoma, in a committee hearing at which Woodring was testifying, said "I desire to compliment the present Secretary of War for what he has done in increasing our defense, which I think is

²²Mark S. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 50.

²³Andrew J. May to Roosevelt, November 10, 1938, Box 25, OF 25, FDRL. Dow Harter to Keith McFarland, June 1968. John Sparkman to Keith McFarland, April 29, 1968.

²⁴Charles I. Faddis to Keith McFarland, April 28, 1968.

²⁵Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, "To Provide For a Sound National Defense," 76th Congress 1st Session, p. 7.

due in large part to his efforts."²⁶ Republican Senator Styles Bridges Of New Hampshire, who as a member of the Military Affairs Committee and the War Department Subcommittee on Appropriations had considerable opportunity to see Woodring in action, stated on the Senate floor that he found the Secretary "to be an able, capable, conscientious executive and member of the Cabinet"²⁷ Other important members of the Senate Military Affairs Committee who thought highly of Woodring and considered him a strong Secretary of War were Senators Johnson of Colorado, Hill of Alabama, Clark of Missouri and Nye of North Dakota.

The Army and Navy Journal summed up Secretary Woodring's relationship with the legislative branch by saying, "he has so conducted himself with Congress that he has had little difficulty getting his recommendations adopted."²⁸ Such a statement, while indicating a fine relationship with Congress, should not be interpreted as meaning that Woodring always got what he wanted; in fact, he was never satisfied with the funds which Congress made available to the Army. War Department appropriations had to be approved first by the Bureau of the Budget and the President and then provided by Congress. Those three agencies were greatly influenced by the isolationist and anti-military attitudes which were so strong in the 1930's. The insufficient funds

²⁶Ibid., pp. 12-13.

²⁷Congressional Record, 76th Congress 2nd Session, Vol. 85, Pt. 2, p. 278.

²⁸Army and Navy Journal, May 18, 1940.

given to the Army did not represent a failure on Secretary Woodring's part but a failure on the part of Congress and the public to awaken to the nation's defense needs.²⁹

That Woodring enjoyed a fine relationship with Congress was evident in a number of ways. First, his recommendations as to legislation were usually accepted and acted upon. Second, although the discussions in the committee hearings often became heated on both sides, the Secretary was never treated in a rude or disrespectful manner. Third, while numerous Congressmen praised him publicly and privately for the job he was doing, they rarely criticized him. It is doubtful whether Secretary Woodring could have enjoyed a better working relationship with Congress than he did.

From an examination of Secretary Woodring's personal relationship with President Roosevelt, his association with the military leaders, and his dealings with Congress, one might suppose that he experienced a minimum of political difficulties in running the War Department. Nothing could be farther from the truth because the feuds which Woodring had with his Assistant Secretary, Louis A. Johnson, and a few members of Roosevelt's "inner circle" were of such magnitude and caused so much trouble that they more than offset the gains brought about by his smooth relationship with the President, the military and Congress. A knowledge and understanding of Woodring's feuds are of utmost importance in understanding this period. Robert Sherwood, author of Roosevelt and

²⁹Kansas City Star, June 21, 1940. Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 450.

Hopkins, put it best when he said, "History will achieve no complete understanding of F.D.R.'s Administration without knowledge of the intramural feuds which so frequently beset it. I do not believe that even history will ever be able to understand why he tolerated them to the extent that he did."³⁰

Following the Senate confirmation of Woodring as Secretary of War in May, 1937, there arose the question of who would be appointed to fill the post of Assistant Secretary. The names most frequently mentioned for the position were those of two former National Commanders of the American Legion, Louis A. Johnson and J. Ray Murphy. Both men had hoped to get the Secretary's position and were greatly disappointed when Woodring was named. Johnson was then offered the job of Assistant Secretary but turned it down because he did not wish to be in a position where he was subordinate to Woodring.³¹ Murphy was also offered the position but he likewise turned it down. The President and Secretary of War then began a search for a "strictly businessman" to fill the post.³²

On June 7 Roosevelt asked Woodring what he thought of William I. Westervelt, vice president of Sears, Roebuck and Company, as a possible

³⁰Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 135-136.

³¹New York Times, May 18, 1937.

³²New York Times, June 4, 1937.

Assistant Secretary.³³ Four days later Woodring reported back that the appointment would be favorable to him.³⁴ However, the appointment was never made because Louis Johnson changed his mind and agreed to accept the offer previously made.

While the President and Secretary had been searching for a "businessman" to fill the post, Louis Johnson was being urged by James Farley and a few high ranking American Legion officials to change his mind and accept the number two spot.³⁵ Johnson was hesitant but finally agreed to accept the post. His reason for doing so was based on an alleged promise made to him concerning the Secretaryship. A knowledge of that alleged promise is extremely important in understanding Johnson's actions once he got into office.

According to one version of the story, while Johnson was being pressured to accept the job, James Farley called Johnson's friend, Senator Matthew M. Neely of West Virginia, and asked him to urge Johnson to take the job. According to Neely, Farley said, "You can tell Louis I think within three or four months he will be made Secretary if he will take the post."³⁶ Neely passed this information on to Johnson

³³ Lawrence Houghterling to Roosevelt, June 7, 1937, forwarded to Woodring with request for opinion. PSF Woodring, Box 38, FDRL.

³⁴ Woodring to Roosevelt, June 11, 1937, ibid.

³⁵ Interview with James Farley, August 1, 1968.

³⁶ White House Memorandum for President Roosevelt from Senator M. M. Neely, April 27, 1938, of 25A, War Department, Endorsements for Assistant Secretary, FDRL.

who then made his decision. Whether rightly or wrongly, Johnson interpreted this as a promise from the President that he would soon be promoted to the top spot. Johnson made no effort to keep the promise a secret for "almost in the same breath with which he took office ... he informed intimates that he had been appointed for the express purpose of replacing Woodring in a few months."³⁷ On numerous occasions Johnson stated that he had been promised the Secretaryship. Sometimes he claimed that Roosevelt made the promise but most of the time said that Farley had made it on the President's behalf.³⁸

Roosevelt never recalled such a promise³⁹ and Farley denied making any such statement. Farley termed Johnson's story "absolutely untrue" and told the President that if there was any question about it he should bring Johnson and himself face to face and ask if such a promise had been made. Roosevelt, wishing to avoid an embarrassing situation, never brought about the confrontation.⁴⁰ Whether a promise was actually made is not so important as the fact that Johnson believed or at least claimed he believed that he would soon be named to replace Woodring as Secretary of War.

³⁷Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, December 1, 1938.

³⁸Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

³⁹Eugene Gerhart, America's Advocate: Robert H. Jackson (Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1958), p. 164.

⁴⁰Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

Following a cabinet meeting on Friday, June 11, 1937, Woodring discussed the Assistant Secretary post with the President. At that time it was decided that Johnson would get the post.⁴¹ Just who Woodring supported is unclear because on the day the decision was made he sent two letters to the President concerning the appointment. In one he indicated that he considered William Westervelt "admirably fitted and qualified as to business ability to be Assistant Secretary of War."⁴² In a second letter he stated, "I desire to recommend for your consideration the name of Honorable Louis A. Johnson ... for appointment as Assistant Secretary of War."⁴³

It is likely that the letter on Johnson was a mere formality which was written after the appointment had been decided. One reason for believing it was written after the Roosevelt-Woodring meeting was that it seems unlikely that Roosevelt, who was his own boss when it came to appointing key officials, would so readily accept Woodring's recommendation.⁴⁴ Furthermore, F.D.R. liked to run his own show and therefore found it convenient to "put into the same office or job men who differed from each other in temperament and viewpoint."⁴⁵ When

⁴¹New York Times, June 11, 1937.

⁴²Woodring to Roosevelt, June 11, 1937, OP25A, War Department, Endorsements for Assistant Secretary, FDRL.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Stiles, The Man Behind Roosevelt, p. 321.

⁴⁵James M. Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1956), p. 372.

opposites were placed in the top positions in a department or put in charge of a major project their inability to agree or get along insured that "no single view, no single man could achieve undue significance or influence."⁴⁶ The result was that major problems could and did end up in Roosevelt's lap, and that is exactly where he wanted them.⁴⁷ The cabinet members knew that Roosevelt felt there were benefits in departmental quarrels and for that reason was not always anxious to end them.⁴⁸ The President felt that if the quarrels were ended many important matters might be settled in the department rather than by himself. For that reason Roosevelt gave Ickes and Hopkins control over Public Works, gave Ickes and Wallace control over conservation and power, placed Summer Welles in the State Department to offset Cordell Hull, and placed Johnson in the War Department along with Woodring.⁴⁹

On June 15, 1937, President Roosevelt sent Johnson's name to the Senate for confirmation. Approval was quickly given and on June 29 he took office. Johnson had been born and raised in Roanoke, Virginia, but following his graduation from the University of Virginia Law School

⁴⁶Elting Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 488.

⁴⁷Fenno, The President's Cabinet, pp. 45-46.

⁴⁸Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), pp. 359-360. Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), Vol. 1, pp. 205-206.

⁴⁹Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, p. 372.

in 1912 he went to Clarksburg, West Virginia, to set up practice. By 1917 he was Democratic floor leader of the State House of Delegates and was considering running for Governor. Then came World War I and Johnson entered the Army. After receiving a commission he was sent to Europe where he served as a Captain in the 80th Infantry Division. Following his discharge he returned to his law practice and became an active member of the American Legion, being elected National Commander in 1932. In 1936 the staunch Democrat organized the Veterans Division of the Democratic National Committee and within a year was rewarded with the Assistant Secretary's post.⁵⁰

Johnson, who was very energetic and ambitious, believed that Woodring was not fit to be Secretary of War and set out to supplant him.⁵¹ He immediately "set himself to running the War Department acting very much like a No. 2 man who had been made No. 1 in all but title."⁵² Johnson viewed the procurement and economic mobilization responsibilities conferred upon the Assistant Secretary of War by the National Defense Act of 1920 to be entirely independent of the authority of the Secretary of War. Such an interpretation plus the assumption that he would soon be elevated to the top spot led him to feel that he was entitled to direct access to the President on matters concerning

⁵⁰"Arms Before Men," Time, August 22, 1938, p. 24.

⁵¹Marquis Childs, I Write From Washington (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. 161.

⁵²"Scandalous Spats," Time, October 9, 1939, p. 16.

his own office. He also began to publicly present defense programs and estimates without even consulting his nominal chief, Secretary Woodring.⁵³ Shortly after taking office Johnson started the practice of announcing that on a certain date he was going to be appointed Secretary of War. When the announced day came and nothing happened he would wait a few weeks or months and do the same thing again.⁵⁴ According to Woodring, Assistant Secretary Johnson was soon spending "most of his waking hours in trying to replace me as Secretary of War."⁵⁵

As might be expected Johnson's attitude and conduct soon created difficulties, and with the passage time the animosity grew increasingly bitter. At first the two disagreed only over major matters such as selective service, the importance of heavy bombers, and the striking force of air power.⁵⁶ Before long they began to bicker and quibble over less important things and then progressed to the place where they argued over every thing no matter how insignificant. Eventually the quarrel got to the place where the two men merely ignored each other.⁵⁷

⁵³Elberton R. Smith, The Army and Economic Mobilization (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 102. Troyer S. Anderson, History of the Office of Under-Secretary of War, MSS, Office of the Chief of Military History, Chapter 4, p. 3. "The High Cost of Peace," Fortune, March 1939, p. 45.

⁵⁴John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, December 3, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC. Interview with Helen Coolidge Woodring, July 20, 1968.

⁵⁵Topeka Daily Capital, November 11, 1947.

⁵⁶William Frye, Marshall: Citizen Soldier (Indianapolis: The Bobbs Merrill Company, 1947), p. 252.

⁵⁷"Scandalous Spats," Time, October 9, 1939, p. 16.

Evidence of the Woodring-Johnson feud was evident as early as January, 1938. In that month the State Department requested that the Army send six bombers to Buenos Aires, Argentina, on a good will flight to help that country celebrate the inauguration of their new President. Woodring disapproved of the idea and was prepared to block it. A journalist who wrote for various South American newspapers and knew the situation in the War Department took the idea to the Assistant Secretary. Johnson liked the idea and took it directly to President Roosevelt who approved it and instructed Woodring to send the bombers.⁵⁸ The flight was made and it received favorable world wide publicity with Secretary Woodring receiving most of the credit for ordering the flight to be made - a fact which greatly angered Johnson.

The difficult position in which the Woodring-Johnson feud placed the military leaders can be seen in an incident that took place when the Argentina flight was under consideration. After Johnson received the idea of the flight but before he went to the President he told General Craig what he was going to do and added, "Don't tell the Secretary." Craig immediately replied that the Secretary was his chief and it was his duty to keep him informed of what was taking place. The General then indicated that if he had any quality it was that of loyalty. Finally Craig asked Johnson if he were Secretary what he would

⁵⁸Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, February 24, 1938.

think of an Assistant and a Chief of Staff keeping things from him. Johnson did not reply.⁵⁹ Such was the situation in the War Department.

Both Secretary Woodring and General Craig were bothered and upset by the intrigues of Johnson but neither was willing to do anything about it. In November, 1938, Woodring asked Craig to go to President Roosevelt and explain the condition of the War Department as a result of Johnson's conduct. Craig did not feel it was his place to go because the dispute involved the civilian not the military leadership. Woodring then asked his close friend John C. O'Laughlin, owner and publisher of the Army and Navy Journal, to see the President on the matter. O'Laughlin refused because he felt that Roosevelt would resent an outsider telling him about one of his own Departments. O'Laughlin did, however, discuss the matter with Press Secretary Steve Early. Early said he already knew about the situation in the War Department and that "if Woodring had any guts he would ask the President to relieve him or Johnson."⁶⁰ Woodring was not willing to take such action and Roosevelt, who felt there were benefits from such conflicts,⁶¹ continued to tolerate the unfortunate situation.

Roosevelt's tolerance of Johnson's actions caused Woodring to wonder if such acceptance was an indication that Johnson was indeed to replace him. The first few times that the Assistant Secretary informed

⁵⁹John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, February 12, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁶⁰Ibid., November 19, 1938.

⁶¹Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew, pp. 359-360.

General Craig that he was about to be named Secretary, Craig passed the information on to Woodring who naturally became apprehensive because he never knew if Johnson had made up the story or had actually been informed.⁶² Eventually Woodring learned to ignore such announcements. Another Johnson practice which made a bad situation worse was that of planting information in the newspapers which was favorable to him and detrimental to Woodring.⁶³

By the fall of 1939 the War Department, according to one cabinet member, was "making a holy show of itself with Woodring and Johnson each trying to outsmart the other."⁶⁴ On September 8, Woodring went to see Roosevelt's Military Aide and Secretary, Edwin M. Watson. Woodring complained that "Johnson was running away with the War Department." Watson stated that the matter ought to be straightened out and one man ought to be in control; but he did not offer to make such a suggestion to the President, and so the matter was dropped.⁶⁵

Woodring's failure to take the problem directly to the President stemmed from a number of factors. First, his influence with the President was on the wane and therefore he did not feel he was in a strong

⁶²John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, November 19, 1938 and December 3, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁶³Marquis Childs, I Write From Washington, p. 161. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, p. 717.

⁶⁴Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, pp. 716-717.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 717.

enough position to approach F.D.R. on the matter. As the world situation grew worse in the late thirties the views of Roosevelt and Woodring on how to provide adequate national security became more divergent. The result was that as time passed so did the Secretary of War's influence and with it went the President's strong support.⁶⁶ Second, Roosevelt's growing reliance on Louis Johnson led Woodring to feel that if he asked the President to make a choice between the two, F.D.R. might choose Johnson.⁶⁷ What the Secretary did not know was that when Roosevelt had been told by James Farley that Johnson expected to be named Secretary he replied, "I won't name Louis under any circumstance."⁶⁸ Woodring felt that Roosevelt, knowing the situation in the War Department, could take action to correct the situation if he so desired, but apparently he did not wish to do so.

By the fall of 1939 the Woodring-Johnson feud was public knowledge as newspapers and magazines printed stories describing the bitter quarrel. Typical was an account of the relations between the two officials which appeared in Time magazine: "Only when absolutely necessary do they speak to each other. When official business requires them to communicate, they do so in writing or through harried subordinates. Mr. Johnson despises Mr. Woodring. Mr. Woodring distrusts and despises Mr.

⁶⁶ John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, November 19, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, IC.

⁶⁷ John C. O'Laughlin to General Malin Craig, September 1, 1939, Box 35, O'Laughlin Papers, IC.

⁶⁸ James Farley, Jim Farley's Story, pp. 114-115.

Johnson, who for 27 months has gunned for Mr. Woodring's job."⁶⁹ At about the same time the New York Times reported that a group of "New Dealers" close to the President felt that the rivalry between Woodring and Johnson for domination within the War Department "had reached a point where the President would have to exert his force."⁷⁰ But still the President, who was willing to ignore or sweep embarrassing administrative problems under the rug, did nothing.

The unfortunate aspect of the feud between the Secretary and Assistant Secretary was the disruptive effect it had on the War Department and, consequently, on military preparedness. The continual bickering and fighting at the top became so bad that the military leaders often did not know who was running the Department.⁷¹ One example of how the feuding over a relatively minor problem affected efficiency was an incident that took place in January, 1938. While Johnson was out of town on a trip, Secretary Woodring rewrote the procedures by which certain aircraft parts should be purchased. Johnson upon his return did not approve of Woodring's changes and halted all transactions concerning the parts until the dispute could be settled. In a few weeks the two antagonists agreed to a compromise and purchasing resumed, but in the meantime valuable time had been lost.⁷²

⁶⁹"Scandalous Spats," Time, October 9, 1939, p. 16.

⁷⁰New York Times, September 28, 1939.

⁷¹Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, October 21, 1939.

⁷²Daily Air Corps Record, 1938-1939, January 14, 1938, Box 56, Official File 1932-46, Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

The Woodring-Johnson feud placed the Chief of Staff in an especially difficult position. That position was well described by the wife of General George Marshall, who saw the Chief of Staff in these years as a man "setting on the fence between these two gentlemen. If he followed the Secretary's instructions he would be in bad odor with the Assistant Secretary, who was quite powerful. If he followed the lead of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Woodring would have him called to account. It was an impossible and tragic situation."⁷³ It was because of this situation that General Craig left the Chief of Staff position in June, 1939, instead of September.⁷⁴

General Marshall, Craig's successor, found himself in the same difficult position but, like Craig, he never deserted Secretary Woodring. As Marshall later told Johnson, "Mr. Woodring was Secretary of War and I owed loyalty to him"⁷⁵ In 1951 Marshall said that working under Woodring and Johnson had been "the most miserable experience of my life." As he described it, "I had to be Chief of Staff to a Secretary ... and his first assistant who weren't speaking to each other. They not only didn't make any secret of how they hated and

⁷³Katherine T. Marshall, Together: Annals of an Army Wife (New York: Tupper and Love, Inc., 1946), p. 41.

⁷⁴John C. O'Laughlin to General James G. Harbord, September 22, 1938, Box 35, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁷⁵Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), pp. 21-22.

despised each other, they ran to the President behind each other's back."⁷⁶

The feud did more than cause difficulty for the Chief of Staff; it also caused partiality among the generals at the War Department. Those military leaders working closest with the Secretary of War usually became "Woodring men" while those working closest with the Assistant Secretary became "Johnson men." Because of this division, relations between the military leaders became increasingly strained, and the work of the General Staff became more difficult.⁷⁷ The effects of this division among the military men will be seen in later chapters.

To gain a better understanding of the interworking of the War Department during this period a close examination will be made of the numerous factors which served to influence one major decision. That decision concerned naming a replacement for Chief of Staff Malin Craig. This example is appropriate in that it deals with one of the most important decisions of the period,⁷⁸ and because it gives a better understanding of the distrust and lack of cooperation that often characterized relationships within the War Department and between the Department

⁷⁶Doris Fleeson, "Story Behind Marshall Blast By Woodring," St. Louis Post Dispatch, August 4, 1954.

⁷⁷Nancy H. Hooker (ed.), The Moffat Papers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 327. "M-Day Man: Louis A. Johnson," The New Republic, February 22, 1939, p. 65. William Frye, Marshall: Citizen Soldier, p. 251.

⁷⁸"The selection of a Chief of Staff is the most important act a Secretary of War has to perform in time of peace, for it will determine whether or not his administration of the War Department will be a success." Taken from undated, untitled Memorandum initialed E.M.W. (Edwin M. Watson?). Box 39, PSP, War Department, FDRL.

and the President. In two respects this example is atypical. First, it was one of the few times that Woodring and Johnson agreed on a matter. Second, the decision that was made was an excellent one which ultimately benefited the Army and the nation. As will be seen in later chapters, the strained relationship that existed between the War Department and White House were to result in some decisions that did not serve the best interest of the nation.

Although General Craig was expected to remain Chief of Staff until September, 1939, Woodring began to think about a replacement as early as March, 1937. At that time the Secretary asked former Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, if he would like to return to his old post after Craig's retirement. When MacArthur indicated that he would not consider such an offer under any circumstances Woodring dropped the matter and never mentioned it to him again.⁷⁹ In the months that followed there was a great deal of speculation, especially among military men, as to who would be the next Chief of Staff. The name most frequently mentioned was that of Major General Hugh A. Drum who had expected to receive the post in 1935, but had been disappointed when Roosevelt had named General Craig to the position.⁸⁰ For reasons that are unclear Woodring was not very enthusiastic over the possibility of Drum's appointment, and he began looking for another candidate.⁸¹

⁷⁹John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, March 23, 1937, Box 57, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁸⁰Frye, Marshall: Citizen Soldier, p. 246.

⁸¹Pogue, Marshall: Education of a General, p. 315.

In the spring of 1938 Major General Stanley Embick, Deputy Chief of Staff, told Woodring of a Brigadier General by the name of George Marshall who might be Chief of Staff material. Embick asked that Marshall be brought to Washington so his work could be closely observed. Woodring agreed and Marshall was made head of the War Plans Division of the General Staff.⁸²

General Marshall did an excellent job in his new position and both Woodring and Craig were greatly impressed; however, the Secretary and his Chief hesitated to make him Deputy Chief of Staff because he was only a Brigadier General and a number of senior officers might resent taking orders from him.⁸³ One individual who was not hesitant about advancing Marshall was Assistant Secretary Johnson. Johnson, who had met Marshall before the latter came to Washington, was greatly impressed by the General and he actively worked for his appointment as Chief of Staff.⁸⁴

It was Johnson who was responsible for Marshall being made Deputy Chief of Staff. In October, 1938, Woodring was out of Washington, and Johnson was Acting Secretary on the day in which the War Council was to meet. The Deputy Chief of Staff usually attended the meeting but at that time the position was vacant, General Embick having taken a new command. Before the meeting started Johnson asked General Craig to

⁸²Ibid., pp. 315-315.

⁸³John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, October 25, 1938. Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁸⁴Pogue, Marshall: Education of a General, p. 315.

appoint General Marshall Deputy Chief. When Craig replied that the matter would be worked out, Johnson said, "There is not going to be any War Council until that thing is worked out." Craig left the office for a few minutes and when he returned said, "The orders have been issued."⁸⁵ Although Woodring was unhappy at the manner in which the appointment was made, he did not complain because he was glad to see Marshall in that spot.

In spite of the confidence Secretary Woodring had in General Marshall he was still hesitant to support his appointment as Chief of Staff. Woodring considered the matter of seniority to be quite important and he was concerned about a possible morale problem should the rule of seniority be ignored. For this reason he leaned in the direction of Major General Drum as late as the fall of 1938.⁸⁶ Marshall was thirty fourth in seniority, but a rule that no one could be appointed Chief of Staff who could not serve out a full four year term before the mandatory retirement age of sixty-four made Marshall the fifth-ranking eligible.⁸⁷

In November Roosevelt introduced his new rearmament program - a program about which Woodring and Craig were less than enthusiastic. Such an attitude placed the two men on less than favorable terms with the White House in late 1938 and early 1939. By January 1939 Woodring appeared to have overcome his earlier concerns on the question of

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 319.

⁸⁶ John C. O'Laughlin to General Robert E. Wood, November 1, 1938, Box 71, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁸⁷ Pogue, Marshall: Education of a General, p. 327.

seniority and may have been willing to recommend Marshall as the new Chief of Staff;⁸⁸ however, the strained relationship with the President kept him and Craig from making such a recommendation for fear that their support would prejudice Marshall's chances. Woodring and Craig recalled that in 1935 Secretary Dern had voiced his opinion as to who should be named Chief of Staff and Roosevelt rejected it. Based on that experience they felt that if they recommended Marshall the President would resent the interference and refuse to appoint him. Woodring therefore decided he would not recommend anyone unless the President specifically asked him to do so.⁸⁹ This decision was based not only on what happened in 1935 but also on the fact that the President had made it increasingly clear that he regarded the Chief of Staff as his personal adviser, and therefore "he alone would pick the officer that appealed to him personally."⁹⁰

During this period Assistant Secretary Johnson continued to push Marshall's appointment. This was one of the very few instances in which Woodring and Johnson were in agreement, but at that time they were so at odds and their means of communication so broken down that neither was aware of the other's position. General Marshall knew their views but was not anxious that they be known for fear that one of them might drop his support if he knew the other supported Marshall. As

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 323.

⁸⁹John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, April 1, 1939, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁹⁰Army and Navy Journal, April 29, 1939.

Marshall described it, "Johnson wanted me for Chief of Staff, but I didn't want Woodring to know he was for me. Craig was for me, but I wanted it kept from the President. Woodring was for me, but I didn't want the others to know."⁹¹ The suspicion, distrust, and ill will that prevailed among the personalities involved in the Chief of Staff selection indicate that the personal relationships within the War Department and between the Department and the Commander-in-Chief were anything but smooth. The President, Secretary of War, Assistant Secretary of War and Chief of Staff were anything but a team.

The first week in April, 1939, Roosevelt sent for the records of the outstanding General Officers so that he could choose the next Chief of Staff. It was at that time that Woodring broke his earlier silence and recommended General Marshall.⁹² Whether the Secretary did this on his own or was asked by the President to give his opinion is unknown. The forcefulness of the recommendation is also unknown. According to Woodring, "I threatened to resign unless he took General Marshall my nominee."⁹³ In light of his standing with the President at that time it seems that such a bold move would be highly unlikely.

⁹¹Pogue, Marshall: Education of a General, p. 326.

⁹²John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, April 8, 1939, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁹³Woodring to John C. O'Laughlin, July 30, 1945, Box 71, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

On Sunday, April 23, Roosevelt called Marshall to the White House and informed him that he was to be the new Chief of Staff. Marshall was the first one to know because the President had not yet told anyone, including Woodring of his selection. Just why Roosevelt chose him will never be known for certain, but Marshall felt that favorable words from F.D.R.'s close friend Harry Hopkins was the primary factor.⁹⁴ What weight Woodring's recommendation might have had will never be known, but it would seem that the realization that the Secretary of War and Chief of Staff must work together would have caused Roosevelt to give Woodring's views at least some consideration.

In addition to his constant dealings with the President, military leaders, Congressmen and Assistant Secretary of War, Secretary Woodring was in constant contact with his fellow cabinet members. With some he got along well, with others not at all. Woodring got along very well with Secretary of State Hull, Secretary of Navy Swanson and Postmaster General Farley. With Secretaries Perkins of Labor, Wallace of Agriculture, Roper of Commerce, and Attorney General Cummings his association was satisfactory but nothing more.

Unfortunately the Secretary of War's relationship with a group of "New Dealers" in the cabinet and White House staff was not much better than with Louis Johnson. The leader of that group was Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes. The feeling between Woodring and Ickes was one of mutual hostility. From the day Woodring came into the cabinet until

⁹⁴Pogue, Marshall: Education of a General, p. 326.

the time he was forced out Ickes headed an anti-Woodring group that worked almost continually for his removal. In speaking of the efforts to remove Woodring, Ickes was to say, "I doubt whether any comparable pressure has ever been put on the President in a personal matter."⁹⁵

In his efforts to force Woodring from the cabinet Ickes enlisted the aid of any individual in the Roosevelt "inner circle" who did not care for the Secretary of War and wished to see him go. Included in this group at one time or another were Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Presidential Adviser and later Secretary of Commerce Harry Hopkins, Presidential Adviser and later Attorney General Robert Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State Sumner Wells, Presidential Adviser Thomas Corcoran, Military Aide and Presidential Adviser Edwin M. Watson and Presidential Press Secretary Steve Early.⁹⁶ This "White House clique," as Woodring and his close friends referred to the group, did not work as a unit, but were united only in their common goal, which was to get a new Secretary of War. Louis Johnson was aware of the "clique" and hoped they would succeed but he was not associated with it because most of the group held no higher opinion of him than they did of Woodring.

The antagonism between Woodring and Ickes started in 1933 when the Assistant Secretary of War wrote a letter to the Secretary of Interior criticizing him for the way in which he was handling certain

⁹⁵Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. III, p. 196.

⁹⁶Ibid., Vol. II, p. 127, Vol. III, pp. 12, 117. Walter Winchell, "Winchell on Broadway," Akron Beacon Journal, March 8, 1938. John C. O'Laughlin to General Robert E. Wood, November 1, 1938, Box 71, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

matters pertaining to Public Works.⁹⁷ Ickes wrote a strong reply to Woodring telling him to mind his own business.⁹⁸ A few more disputes in the next few years served to heighten the hostility between the two. When Woodring was being considered to fill the vacancy created by the death of George Dern, Ickes voiced his disapproval because Woodring was "distinctly second or third caliber material."⁹⁹ When the appointment was made Ickes did not hide his disappointment and a few days later had this to say about the new Secretary of War: "He struts about with inflated chest more sure of himself and more disagreeable and dictatorial than any man I have met He is a damned little upstart with no background and no imagination."¹⁰⁰ It was clear what Ickes thought of Woodring. While Woodring was careful of what he said about Ickes, his actions indicated his dislike for him.

The first attempt to force Woodring out came in the late summer of 1937 when Ickes "confidentially" informed a writer for the Washington Evening Star that Woodring was on his way out and would be sent to the Phillipines as High Commissioner.¹⁰¹ It was hoped that such a

⁹⁷ Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. I, p. 101.

⁹⁸ Ickes to Woodring, October 2, 1933, Box 1, OF6 Interior Department, FDRL.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 135-136.

¹⁰¹ Army and Navy Journal, September 4, 1937. Farley, Jim Farley's Story, p. 135.

rumor would make it easier for the President to take such action since everyone concerned would be more or less expecting it. Woodring's denials that he was leaving the War Department did not quell the rumors; not until the President emphatically declared that Woodring would remain, did they die.¹⁰² At this time the Secretary of War and President still saw eye to eye, and things in the War Department were running smoothly; thus, Roosevelt had no thoughts of replacing Woodring.

One year later, in the fall of 1938, Roosevelt's ideas on Woodring's remaining Secretary of War had begun to change, for by that time the two men were disagreeing on certain defense matters.¹⁰³ The prospect of a new Secretary of War became more and more appealing. Although Roosevelt would have liked to see Woodring go he could not bring himself to force him out. F.D.R. was an extremely soft individual when it came to dealing with personal friends; he wanted to be liked and did not wish to do anything that might endanger a long friendship.¹⁰⁴ As one contemporary journalist said, "firing associates is not one of Roosevelt's strong points."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰²Army and Navy Journal, September 4, 1937, January 15, 1938.

¹⁰³John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, November 19, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

¹⁰⁴Interview with James A. Farley, August 1, 1968.

¹⁰⁵Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, May 26, 1939.

Since Roosevelt could not bring himself to fire Woodring or ask for his resignation, he hoped to offer him an attractive post, such as an ambassadorship, so that he would willingly resign as Secretary of War. F.D.R. thought that such offers either would be accepted or would at least cause Woodring to realize that he was not wanted in his present position and thereby bring about his resignation.¹⁰⁶

Roosevelt's strategy did not work on Woodring for a number of reasons. First, Woodring did not want to leave Washington. He and his wife enjoyed a dazzling social life in the nation's capital and had many friends they did not wish to leave. Furthermore, the Secretary had three small children; thus, he was somewhat reluctant to pick up and move to a foreign country.¹⁰⁷ Second, Woodring was a "fighter." If there was anything he did not like, it was a "quitter." To resign when the going got rough at the War Department would be the same as quitting and therefore was unthinkable. Third, Woodring liked his job. He liked action and a real challenge. As time passed and the nation began to rearm, the job at the War Department became increasingly important and difficult; and the challenge made the Secretary more determined than ever to remain at his post. For these reasons Woodring refused to resign.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.," Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1940, p. 90.

¹⁰⁷Childs, I Write From Washington, p. 161. Harlan Miller, "Over the Coffee," The Washington Post, August 30, 1939.

¹⁰⁸Interview with Helen C. Woodring, Cooper C. Woodring and Melissa Woodring Jager, July 20, 1968.

The first time that President Roosevelt actually indicated a desire to ease Woodring out of the cabinet was on December 24, 1938 when he told Louis Johnson that he was going to see if Woodring would be acceptable to Canada as the United States Minister. This action was part of a larger plan to reshuffle the cabinet. In early December Attorney General Cummings resigned, and this caused the President to re-examine the cabinet make up and develop the following scheme. Frank Murphy, Governor of Michigan, would be named Attorney General, Woodring would be sent to Canada, and Johnson would be made Secretary of War.¹⁰⁹ Then after a short period Johnson would be sent to the Phillipines as High Commissioner, Murphy would be transferred to the War Department, and Solicitor General Robert Jackson would be made Attorney General. The reason that Jackson was not made Attorney General outright was that he was a New Yorker, and another New Yorker, Harry Hopkins, had just been named to the Cabinet; with two other members of the Cabinet from the "Empire State" the President feared a public reaction against the cabinet's lack of geographical balance. When Ickes and Roosevelt discussed this plan on December 29, Ickes voiced his wholehearted approval, especially for the moves in the War Department "since both Woodring and Assistant Secretary Johnson had been responsible for an impossible situation by lining up generals as partisans and openly fighting for the place."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹Roosevelt had apparently changed his mind about Johnson because one year before he had stated he would not appoint him Secretary of War "under any circumstances." Farley, Jim Farley's Story, p. 114.

¹¹⁰Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, pp. 535-536.

The first phase of the President's plan went into effect on December 30 when he appointed Murphy Attorney General. Then the scheme ran into difficulty for when Roosevelt offered Woodring the Canadian post he turned it down. Woodring did, however, tell the President that there was one job he would be interested in - Ambassador to England.¹¹¹ At that time such an appointment was out of the question because Roosevelt was pleased with the work of Ambassador Joseph Kennedy. Furthermore it was doubtful whether Woodring could afford the London post. Kennedy was forced to spend \$70,000 a year from his own pocket, and Woodring did not have that kind of money.¹¹²

With Woodring's rejection of the position in Canada F.D.R.'s reshuffling plan came to a halt for the President was not willing to force him from office. When Roosevelt's close associates asked him why he did not remove Woodring he would reply that such a move would be politically unwise because it might result in a loss of the Kansas delegation at the 1940 Democratic convention.¹¹³ Since Roosevelt made such statements even before he was apparently considering a third term, it would seem that he was using the Kansas delegation as an excuse.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.," The Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1948, p. 90.

¹¹²Harlan Miller, "Over the Coffee," The Washington Post, August 30, 1939.

¹¹³Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, p. 692.

¹¹⁴Bernard F. Donahoe, Private Plans and Public Dangers: The Story of F.D.R.'s Third Nomination (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), p. 130.

Throughout the summer of 1939 Woodring was frequently mentioned as being under consideration for a diplomatic post in Ottawa or London. In late August, Harlan Miller of the Washington Post indicated that the Secretary of War might be induced to take the Canadian position, "But a war crisis involving us might keep him at his present post."¹¹⁵ Two days later that crisis came when Germany attacked Poland. Any chance that the Secretary of War would voluntarily resign was now gone for Woodring had always wanted to be at the center of action, and after September 1, 1939, the War Department was such a place.

In September Roosevelt again toyed with the idea of removing Woodring. Attorney General Murphy, who had come into the cabinet with the understanding that he would soon be named Secretary of War, was getting anxious to make the change, and in early September he asked Ickes to discuss the matter with the President. At that time Roosevelt assured the Secretary of Interior that Woodring was on his way out; however, the weeks slipped by and still nothing happened.¹¹⁶

Up to this time Roosevelt's refusal to replace Woodring was due to his reluctance to remove an old friend and possibly to his desire to insure the support of the Kansas delegation at the next Democratic convention, but after war broke out in Europe there arose another consideration which made him reluctant to act. That consideration was expressed by columnist Ernest K. Lindley who said, "By his [Woodring's]

¹¹⁵Harolan Miller, "Over the Coffee," The Washington Post, August 30, 1939.

¹¹⁶Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. III, p. 12.

spunky stand for a cautious foreign policy he has won many new friends. Any attempt to force him out almost certainly would provoke the open charge that it was because of his wholehearted opposition to dangerous entanglements in the current European war."¹¹⁷ The Secretary of War, by making strong pledges of non-involvement, was becoming a well known spokesman for those individuals who advocated non intervention at any cost except aggression on the United States. To remove the Secretary of War would appear to be an attack on the isolationists and Woodring could well become a rallying point for their cause.¹¹⁸ For this reason Roosevelt did nothing.

In November Ickes went to the President and asked that something be done about the situation in the War Department where the feuding was becoming a "public scandal." Ickes then offered his advice on how to get rid of Woodring. As he later explained it, "My plan was to build up in Woodring's mind the idea that Dublin was a very important and critical post now on account of the war, that the President wanted a strong man there and that this job might lead to an even better one." When Roosevelt indicated he did not think such a plan would convince Woodring to leave, Ickes said, "I think you ought to tell him that he has the choice of Dublin or Kansas." When F.D.R. said nothing Ickes added, "You just can't do that sort of thing can you, Mr. President."

¹¹⁷Ernest K. Lindley, "Democratic Candidates," The Washington Post, November 6, 1939.

¹¹⁸Gerald P. Nye to Keith McFarland, July 25, 1968.

"No Harold, I can't," replied Roosevelt.¹¹⁹ As 1939 came to an end the President still desired a new Secretary of War, but "being one who was forever putting off anything distasteful"¹²⁰ he would not replace him.

In early 1940 the President continued his efforts to ease Woodring out. In January when Roosevelt learned that William Phillips, United States Ambassador to Italy, was planning to resign, he offered the job to Woodring, who thanked him for the offer then politely turned it down. After this incident Drew Pearson and Robert Allen concluded that, "Apparently it's going to take more than a sugar coated hint to dislodge the Secretary of War."¹²¹

In February Ickes suggested to Roosevelt that he make Woodring Ambassador to France and appoint the present ambassador, William Bullitt, Secretary of War. The President indicated that Bullitt was so popular with the French officials and people that he could not possibly make such a change.¹²² In March Woodring's name was again mentioned as a possible replacement for Kennedy in London, but the President persuaded Kennedy to remain at his post and Woodring's hope for

¹¹⁹Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.," The Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1948, p. 90.

¹²⁰Farley, Jim Farley's Story, p. 156.

¹²¹Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, January 24, 1940.

¹²²Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. III, p. 136.

that job ended.¹²³ Up to this time all efforts to remove the Secretary of War had failed, and one Washington columnist concluded that Woodring's "defense of his post against all assaults has been a tactical masterpiece which probably will be studied by military men for decades."¹²⁴

After rejection of his plan to send Woodring to Ireland, Ickes continued to ponder the question of how to remove him. In May, 1940, he came up with what he called a "brilliant idea" to accomplish his goal. On May 17, a few hours before a regularly scheduled cabinet meeting, Ickes explained his plan to the President. At that afternoon's meeting he intended to say in effect: "Mr. President when you selected us as members of your Cabinet ... the world was at peace ... [but] conditions have changed so radically that I think it is only fair that all of us should resign and leave you free either to revamp your present Cabinet ... or to constitute an entirely new one." He would then offer his resignation and when the other cabinet members followed suit, the President could accept the resignations of those men he wanted out and refuse those of anyone he wished to remain. Ickes told Roosevelt what he planned to do because he felt that if the President did not know he may in his surprise say something that would make it

¹²³The United States News, March 8, 1940, p. 40.

¹²⁴Harlan Miller, "Over the Coffee," The Washington Post, February 25, 1940.

more difficult to get rid of Woodring. Although the plan was aimed specifically at Woodring, Ickes did not say so to the President.¹²⁵

After Ickes made his plan known Roosevelt said, "Why, I couldn't do that Harold. Some of the members of the Cabinet might think that I don't want them." Feeling that Ickes' plan would place him in an awkward and difficult position the President turned it down and then added, "It isn't necessary anyhow because I am going to ask Woodring's resignation." Ickes who had heard that story before, laughed politely and said, "Mr. President you will never do it." To this Roosevelt replied, "You don't know what I can do when I make up my mind."¹²⁶ More than a month later Roosevelt finally asked Woodring for his resignation. The factors which finally caused the President to act will be examined in Chapter VIII.

There can be no doubt that the activities of Johnson, Ickes and the New Deal clique did much to hamper Woodring's effectiveness as Secretary of War. With an assistant doing everything he could to undermine his superior there soon developed distrust and confusion throughout the War Department. As a result overall efficiency suffered. The continual efforts of Ickes and occasional help of Murphy and Morgenthau to replace Woodring indicate that the teamwork and cooperation of the

¹²⁵Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.," The Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1948, p. 92. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. III, pp. 178-180.

¹²⁶Ibid.

cabinet left something to be desired. Woodring's influence was also undercut by Roosevelt's frequent statements that he was going to remove him. Such comments indicated to those men around the President that he lacked confidence in his Secretary of War. All of these factors caused Woodring's years as Secretary to be one continuous battle to stay in office. Much of the time and energy that he was forced to use just to keep his job could have been effectively utilized in working for the good of the Army. With all the time spend feuding it was amazing that Woodring was able to accomplish as much as he did. One can only speculate as to what he might have accomplished had those feuds been avoided.

CHAPTER V
PROBLEMS OF REARMAMENT¹

It is impossible to determine exactly when United States rearmament got underway. According to President Roosevelt, his January 28, 1938 requests for increased armaments "were but the beginning of a vast program of rearmament."² The January 1938 program, however, was concerned almost solely with Naval rearmament, only \$17,000,000 being requested for the Army. The Naval rearmament program was started before that of the Army because: it was felt the Navy would, in all likelihood, be the first force to meet an enemy; a relatively long period would be needed to materially increase the size of the fleet; and President Roosevelt had a personal interest in the Navy.³

While rearmament was a somewhat gradual process, November 14, 1938 stands out as the most important date in the rearmament of the United States Army or, more specifically, of the Army Air Corps. Upset

¹Attention will be centered on the rearmament of the Army Air Corps since the initial steps in the rearmament of land forces has already been discussed as part of the program for increased readiness. See Chapter III.

²The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938 Volume, p. 71.

³Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, pp. 541-542.

by Hitler's success at the Munich Conference and alarmed by reports from United States' representatives abroad, Roosevelt decided to build up the nation's air strength. On November 14 the President called his top civilian and military advisers, except Secretary Woodring, who was on leave, to the White House, where he revealed his intention to provide a 10,000 plane air force and establish a productive capacity of 10,000 planes per year.⁴ Thus, began the rearmament program of the United States Army.

Before seeing what actually occurred at the November, 1938, conference, what came out of that meeting, and the role Secretary Woodring played in the new program, it will be valuable to examine Woodring's record and views on air power and the Air Corps prior to the fall of 1938.

As Assistant Secretary of War, Harry Woodring had taken a deep and sincere interest in the growth and development of the Air Corps. In 1933 the post of Assistant Secretary of War for Air was abolished and the responsibilities given to the Assistant Secretary of War. Woodring used every opportunity to inform the public of the "urgent necessity for additional aircraft."⁵ In his first year at the War Department Woodring approved and signed the experimental and development

⁴Memorandum for Chief of Staff from General Arnold, November 15, 1938, OF 25-T, Army Chief of Staff, FDRL.

⁵Army and Navy Register, August 22, 1936.

order for the B-17 a four-engine bomber which was soon to be known as the "Flying Fortress." By the time the United States entered World War II the B-17 was one of the major weapons of the Air Corps.⁶ In late 1934, and early 1935 Woodring and Chief of Staff MacArthur played a key role in formation of the General Headquarters Air Force (GHQAF).⁷ In early 1936, the Assistant Secretary went to bat for air power when he asked Congress to provide an Army Air Corps of 4,000 planes because "should an emergency arise, this number would undoubtedly be needed. It is believed therefore, that the interest of national defense, as well as those of national economy, warrant the upper limit in the number of air planes being left somewhat flexible ... however ... the number 4,000 does not seem immoderate."⁸ Congress, feeling such a large force was unwarranted, set the limit at 2,320 planes.

In 1936 and 1937 Woodring as Secretary of War continued to emphasize the air force, but he did so not because he considered it more important than the ground forces but because he felt it was more deficient and therefore should receive more attention. As the Secretary told a nationwide radio audience in the summer of 1937: "I have not stressed the aviation element of our national defense because I regard it of paramount importance. All branches of our defense are important.

⁶Telegram Woodring to Roosevelt, February 25, 1942, PFF 663, Harry H. Woodring, FDRL.

⁷New York Times, July 28, 1934.

⁸Senate Reports, 74th Congress 2nd Session, Vol. 7, Committee on Military Affairs, Report Number 2131, p. 2.

If war unhappily comes ... we must defend ourselves on the sea, on the land and in the air. A failure in any element might prove fatal."⁹

Woodring foresaw a bright future for military aircraft but as an auxiliary to ground forces and not as an independent weapon. For this reason he believed emphasis should be placed on fighter planes and light and medium bombers that could be used in close support of ground troops or for attacking enemy ships that approached the nation's shores. Woodring looked upon the Army as a strictly defensive force and the airplane as a defensive weapon. He also felt that a long range bomber was an "aggressive" rather than a "defensive" weapon and therefore had no real place in the Army Air Corps.¹⁰ Such thinking was in line with that of General Craig, General Marshall and most military leaders.¹¹ There were, however, a small number of military men such as General Frank Andrews, commander of GHQ Air Force and his chief of staff, Colonel Hugh Knerr who felt that heavy bombers such as the B-17 were essential for an adequate defense and should make up a major percentage of the Air Corps' aircraft.¹²

⁹Congressional Record, 76th Congress 1st Session, Vol. 81, Pt. 10, Appendix, p. 2006.

¹⁰Army and Navy Journal, January 7, 1939. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 44-45.

¹¹Chief of Staff Statement on Priorities, October 25, 1938, AG 580 (10-19-38), "Increase of the Air Corps" NA, RG407. Arnold, Global Mission, pp. 163-164.

¹²Thomas H. Greer, The Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm, 1917-1941 (USAF Historical Studies: No. 89, Research Studies Institute, Air University, 1955), p. 82.

In addition to his idea of how airplanes should be used militarily, there was another and perhaps more important reason that Secretary Woodring favored light and medium bombers over the heavy types - that reason was cost. Until 1939 the funds available to the Army for the purchase of planes were quite small, and Woodring felt it was better to purchase two twin engine bombers than one four-engine model. According to Colonel James H. Burns, Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of War, Secretary Woodring "was interested in numbers only and ... any arrangement made towards gain in number of planes would undoubtedly be approved by the Secretary."¹³ General Arnold expressed the same idea when he said, "the superiority of one B-17 to two B-10's, was a mystery which Secretary Woodring ... never understood."¹⁴

Secretary Woodring's reluctance to order heavy bombers can be better understood when their costs are compared to those of two engine bombers. For example, in June 1937, the Army ordered more than one hundred twin engine B-16 bombers at a cost of \$65,000 per plane.¹⁵ One month later the War Department let a contract for thirteen "Flying Fortresses" at a total cost of \$3,700,000 or nearly \$270,000 per plane.¹⁶ This meant that at that time the Army could buy four B-16's

¹³Daily Record of Events, Chief of Air Corps, April 23, 1937, Box 55, Official File, 1932-46, Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

¹⁴Arnold, Global Mission, p. 167.

¹⁵New York Times, July 27, 1937.

¹⁶New York Times, June 11, 1937.

for the same amount it would pay for one B-17. The per plane cost of the new four engine bombers was extremely high because of the excessive cost of "tooling up" and training skilled personnel. Until the planes were ordered in fairly large quantities the cost remained excessively high.¹⁷ With less than \$37,000,000 to spend on aircraft for the entire year it was not surprising that Woodring favored the much cheaper light and medium bombers.

Woodring's desire for a larger number of planes came from the realization that modern aircraft could not be quickly produced.¹⁸ Since construction of planes necessarily took considerable time Woodring believed it was necessary to have a peacetime Air Force that would approximate rather closely the requirements necessary in case of war. According to the Secretary, "In a major war our air arm would probably be engaged almost immediately on the opening of hostilities. Therefore, it is desirable that it be practically on a war footing in time of peace."¹⁹ If the limited appropriations were used on expensive heavy bombers, a 2,320 plane force could not be achieved.

¹⁷Greer, Development of Air Doctrine, pp. 96, 98. New York Times, February 23, 1939.

¹⁸Woodring to Representative Schuyler Bland, May 19, 1938, Box 3A, Air Corps, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

¹⁹Woodring to Charles F. Horner (President, National Aeronautical Association), December 10, 1937, Box 3A, Air Corps, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

In June of 1937 Woodring, for the reasons stated above, opposed the purchase of anything but twin-engine bombers for the upcoming fiscal year. In the face of constant pressure he did retreat and order thirteen Flying Fortresses.²⁰ Woodring's refusal to provide more heavy bombers was bitterly criticized by Assistant Secretary Johnson and a small group of military men who had great faith in the B-17. It was this latter group which looked forward with anxiety to the aircraft procurement program for fiscal year 1939.

It was in early 1938 when the new air program was under consideration that Woodring and Johnson clashed over the make up of the Air Corps. The controversy was evident at a meeting in which Woodring presented the General Staff's plan for 1939. After going over the plan, which provided for only twelve B-17's, Secretary Woodring concluded by saying, "That will be the plan." When Johnson began to raise an objection, Woodring said, "We all know you are opposed to it." "Yes I am opposed to it," replied Johnson. The Assistant Secretary then asked if General Andrews could express his views. The request was granted and Andrews made a plea for a larger number of heavy bombers, but when he finished Woodring pointed to the plan before him and stated, "This is still the program." Determined to have the last word, Johnson replied, "With all due respect to your office, there is a

²⁰Daily Record, Chief of Air Corps, June 9, 1937 and June 16, 1937, Box 55, Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC. New York Times, July 27.

statutory requirement involved. This is not the program until the Commander-in-Chief approves it."²¹

Before Woodring could submit the program to the President, the Assistant Secretary took it to the White House and expressed his disapproval. Johnson urged the Chief Executive to place more emphasis on the Air Corps and stressed the need for heavy bombers. Roosevelt was not prepared to support the expensive program that Johnson was advocating and so he accepted the program recommended by Secretary Woodring. The new accepted program provided for the building of enough planes in the next three years to bring the Air Corps to its authorized strength of 2,320.²²

In the spring of 1938 Congress appropriated \$37,000,000 for the purchase of 450 new planes. Shortly after Congress acted, Secretary Woodring began to feel that the number of planes in the Air Corps should be increased at a more rapid rate than the approved program called for.²³ The Secretary decided that the best way to bring about such an increase was to stop purchasing heavy bombers and use the money to buy a greater number of light and heavy bombers; thus, in June he halted purchase of three heavy bombers and ordered that the money be

²¹Frye, Marshall: Citizen Soldier, pp. 253-254.

²²Greer, Development of Air Doctrine, p. 98.

²³Woodring to Representative Schuyler Bland, May 19, 1938, Box 3-A, Air Corps, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

used toward the purchase of medium bombers.²⁴ On July 29 Woodring, going even farther, sent a memorandum to Major General Oscar Westover, Chief of the Air Corps, informing him "that estimates for bombers in fiscal year 1940 [must] be restricted to light, medium and attack types."²⁵ This order did not bother General Westover, who "was in favor of large bombers in limited numbers ... [and] a large number of smaller bombers for close in support of the Army."²⁶

In September, 1938, there occurred two events which ultimately led to major changes in the program of the Army Air Corps. On September 21 General Westover was killed in a plane crash and the Assistant Chief of the Air Corps, Brigadier General Henry H. Arnold, was named Acting Chief until the President could make a permanent appointment. White House aides Steve Early and Edwin Watson urged Roosevelt to appoint GHQ Commander, General Frank Andrews. Both Woodring and Craig opposed the appointment of Andrews because of the great emphasis he placed on heavy bombers. The Secretary of War and Chief of Staff favored General Arnold because of his more moderate views. Arnold, although a firm believer in the value of the heavy bomber, tended to

²⁴Memorandum Assistant Secretary of War for Chief of the Air Corps, June 9, 1938, Chief of Staff 17840-121, Subject: Procurement of 2-engine Bombardment Planes, NA, RG 165.

²⁵Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 36.

²⁶Daily Record, Chief of the Air Corps, September 3, 1938, Box 56, Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

favor a balanced military force. Andrews' supporters spread rumors that Arnold was irresponsible, unreliable and a drunkard. Woodring and Craig assured the President there was no truth to the rumors and maintained that Arnold deserved the post. Roosevelt followed their recommendation and on September 29 named Arnold.²⁷

The second important event of September 1938 was the Munich Conference at which Hitler received the Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia. Ambassador to France, William Bullitt, immediately returned home and reported to President Roosevelt that Hitler's success was in large part due to French fears of the German Air-Force. The conversation with Bullitt, along with similar information from other officials in Europe, alarmed Roosevelt and caused him to look more closely at the size and make up of the United States Air Corps.²⁸

October, 1938, was a key period in the history of Army aviation. Throughout that month the President and War Department were preoccupied with the question of what role aviation should play in the United States defense system. During this crucial period Secretary Woodring was away from his Washington office making speeches on behalf of Democratic congressional candidates. This political tour, which lasted from early October until election day, was made in response to a request from

²⁷ John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, October 1, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

²⁸ Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 131-132.

President Roosevelt that Woodring serve as an administration spokesman in support of party candidates.²⁹ Woodring looked upon his selection as an honor and was glad to be of value to the President and the Party. The month-long trip took him to nine states where he made scores of speeches in which he praised President Roosevelt and his Administration and then urged the election of more Democrats to Congress.³⁰

Roosevelt's decision to send Woodring on this trip was probably twofold. First, no other cabinet member possessed more oratorical skill than Woodring; thus, the President knew he was sending a man whose speeches would be a credit to the administration and of benefit to the candidates. Second, the President, who undoubtedly was giving thought to Air Corps expansion, knew that Woodring favored a balanced force whereas Assistant Secretary Johnson desired a large, powerful Air Force. Since Johnson's views were in line with his own, Roosevelt apparently decided it would be convenient to have Woodring out of town and Johnson as Acting Secretary when he initiated his air expansion program.

Before departing on his political tour Secretary Woodring took care of a matter which he had been turning over in his mind for a month. On September 2 the President had shown him a confidential letter from

²⁹Representative Andrew J. May to Roosevelt, November 10, 1938, Box 25, OF 25 Misc. 1936-40, FDRL.

³⁰Telegram Woodring to Roosevelt, November 8, 1938, Box 6, OF 25 War Department 1938-39, FDRL.

Hugh Wilson, Ambassador in Berlin, which discussed the potential of German Air power.³¹ Hitler's success at Munich caused Woodring to see the truth in Wilson's claim; therefore, before departing on his tour, Woodring asked General Arnold to prepare a plan for expanding the Air Corps by 4,000 planes, thereby creating a force of 6,320 planes. By October 19 General Arnold had completed the plan and submitted it to the Secretary's office;³² however, Woodring did not see it until he returned to his duties in late November.

In mid-October President Roosevelt began to speak out on the need for a larger Air Force. Then on October 25 he called Acting Secretary Johnson to the White House and informed him of his desire to greatly expand the Air Corps and aircraft production facilities. Roosevelt told Johnson that he was placing him in charge of a three man committee, which would include Assistant Secretary of Navy Charles Edison and Deputy Administrator of the WPA Aubrey Williams, to report on ways to increase military aircraft production.³³ The President did not indicate how much of an expansion he had in mind; therefore, the committee had to use their own judgement as to what was a major expansion.

³¹Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 132.

³²Memorandum from General Arnold for Secretary Woodring, October 19, 1938, AG 580 (10-19-38), "Increase of the Air Corps by Aircraft," NA, RG 407.

³³Johnson to Roosevelt, October 28, 1938 and Memorandum Assistant Secretary of War, Assistant Secretary of Navy, and Deputy Administrator of WPA to President Roosevelt, October 28, 1938, Ibid.

Three days after the committee was appointed, it submitted a preliminary plan which provided for the production of 31,000 planes within two years and a production capacity of 20,000 planes per year. Under this plan the existing aircraft industry would increase its production from 2,600 to 11,000 and the government would build its own plants to provide the other 20,000. The cost of expanding the facilities and actually producing the planes would be \$4.1 billion.³⁴

As the President's interest in expanding the Air Force became apparent in late October, General Arnold drew up a program which represented the views of the Air Corps. On November 10 Arnold submitted his program to Acting Secretary Johnson. Arnold's primary recommendation was, "That at this time, the objective of the Army Air Corps be set at 7,000 planes ... and an annual production capacity of 10,000 planes, all to be achieved in two years."³⁵

On the second weekend in November President Roosevelt notified a number of key civilian and military leaders that a conference would be held at the White House on Monday afternoon, November 14. Present at the conference were Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau, Acting Secretary of War Johnson, WPA Administrator Harry Hopkins, Solicitor General Robert Jackson, General Counsel of the Treasury Herman Oliphant, Chief of Staff Craig, Deputy Chief of Staff Marshall, Chief of Air Corps

³⁴Preliminary Report on Expansion of Air Craft Production, October 28, 1938, Ibid.

³⁵Memorandum Chief of Air Corps to Assistant Secretary of War, November 10, 1938, Ibid.

Arnold, Colonel James Burns the Executive Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of War and the President's Military and Naval Aides, Colonel Watson and Captain Callahan.³⁶

At the conference Roosevelt, to the surprise of nearly everyone in the room, came out in favor of a large Air Force. According to General Arnold, the President said that a new regiment of field artillery, a new barracks, or new machine tools in an ordnance arsenal "would not scare Hitler one blankety-blank bit. What he wanted was airplanes! Airplanes were the war implements that would have an influence on Hitler's activities!"³⁷ The President then told the group that he figured if he would ask Congress for 20,000 planes and a production capacity of 24,000 he would probably get 10,000 planes and a productive capacity of the same amount. He indicated that he expected the program to be filled in two years, with commercial plants and seven new government plants producing the planes. The President, who had done all the talking, closed by asking Assistant Secretary Johnson to draw up detailed plans and recommendations for carrying out the proposals. Johnson indicated he would have the plans ready by the end of the week.³⁸ Thus ended one of the most important conferences in United

³⁶Memorandum for Chief of Staff from General Arnold, November 15, 1938, Box 71, OF 25-T. Army Chief of Staff, FDRL.

³⁷Arnold, Global Mission, p. 177.

³⁸Memorandum for Chief of Staff from General Arnold, November 15, 1938, Box 71, OF 25-T. Army Chief of Staff, FDRL.

States history. It was important because at that conference the Army Air Corps received its "Magna Carta."³⁹

Where was Secretary of War Woodring when this significant rearmament conference took place? He was a few miles away at his Washington residence, completely unaware that such a meeting was being held. The week before Woodring had returned from his month long speech making tour. On the following day (election day) he submitted a report to Roosevelt telling him of his recent activities and giving an estimate of the political situation in the states he had visited.⁴⁰ Having reported to the President, the Secretary of War, exhausted from hard campaigning, took a two-week leave so he could rest and spend some time with his family.⁴¹ During this "vacation" Assistant Secretary Johnson continued to function as Acting Secretary.

There are a number of reasons which might explain why Woodring was not informed of the November 14 conference. First, the President did not want him there because he knew Woodring would probably object to a program which emphasized the Air Corps and ignored land forces. Furthermore, Roosevelt knew the Assistant Secretary's views on air power and felt he would support the type of program which the President had in mind. A second explanation might be that the President did not

³⁹Arnold, Global Mission, p. 177.

⁴⁰Telegram Woodring to Roosevelt, November 8, 1938, Box 6, OF
25 War Department, FDRL.

⁴¹Washington Post, November 12, 13, 1938.

feel it was necessary to bother with Secretary Woodring because expansion of the Air Corps was primarily a matter of aircraft procurement, and therefore the Assistant Secretary's rather than the Secretary's responsibility. Even if this were the case, however, the Secretary should still have been included. If the President had wanted Woodring there he could have had him because the Secretary was but ten minutes from the White House. That Roosevelt did not want Woodring to attend the conference seems evident from the fact that the two men met at an Armistice Day party on Friday, November 11, and the President never mentioned the upcoming meeting.⁴²

Louis Johnson's reasons for not informing the Secretary are quite understandable. Neither Johnson nor anyone else scheduled to attend the conference had any idea of what the President would say and therefore had no idea it would be so important. Johnson had been in frequent contact with the President during Woodring's absence and did not see anything unusual about being called to the White House on November 14. While it is likely that if Johnson had known what the President had in mind, he would not have wanted Woodring there and might not have told him, the fact remains that he did not know what to expect. General Craig was in the same position as Johnson in that he had no idea the meeting would be of such importance and therefore saw no reason to interrupt the Secretary's vacation. In the final analysis it appears that Woodring was not at the conference because the President did not

⁴²Ibid., November 12, 1938.

want him there and his reason for not wanting him there was a fear that the Secretary might oppose his rearmament program.

The November 14 meeting was highly important because for the first time, the President rather than the War Department was advocating immediate rearmament. The fact that the President was behind the movement was significant because he had an influence over Congress that the War Department did not have. President Roosevelt's desire to significantly strengthen the nation's defense system gave Assistant Secretary Johnson and military leaders renewed vigor and enthusiasm for they now had a man who could make their plans become realities.

While the professional military men were pleased with the President's willingness to take a big step toward rearmament, they were bothered by the emphasis he placed on airplanes. The consensus of the military men was that what was needed was a well-balanced force. Although the President had specifically asked for airplanes, Assistant Secretary Johnson and the General Staff, sensing Presidential support for a major strengthening of the Army, began preparation of plans which incorporated the concept of balance.⁴³

The day after the White House conference, Acting Secretary of War Johnson asked Chief of Staff Craig to supply a detailed two year program that would provide a 10,000-plane Air Corps, furnish "sufficient stocks of essential supplies to equip and maintain the Protective Mobilization Plan Army," and help prepare industry for expansion to meet

⁴³Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 139. Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, pp. 542-543.

the needs of full mobilization. Although the President had indicated that he expected the cost of the plane program to be approximately \$500,000,000, the Assistant Secretary failed to mention any such limitation when he requested a detailed plan.⁴⁴

Johnson's memorandum requesting a plan for a balanced force was welcomed by Chief of Staff Craig, who just three weeks before informed the Bureau of the Budget that, "The defense of this country ... ultimately rests with the ground troops, and to ignore this component is to ignore the lessons of history. We need a further increase in air power but the deplorable situation of our ground army ... demands more immediate attention."⁴⁵ Essentially the same view was held by Deputy Chief of Staff Marshall, who, according to General Arnold, "needed plenty of indoctrination about the air facts of life."⁴⁶

General Craig immediately set his subordinates to work in preparing the plan requested by Johnson, but it was not completed until late November. While the plan was being prepared, all coordination and planning within the War Department and between the Department and the White House was carried on through Assistant Secretary Johnson, not Secretary Woodring.

⁴⁴Memorandum from Acting Secretary of War Johnson to the Chief of Staff, November 15, 1938, AG580 (10-19-38), "Increase of the Air Corps by Aircraft," NA, RG 407.

⁴⁵Chief of Staff Craig's Statement on Priorities, to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, October 25, 1938, Ibid.

⁴⁶Arnold, Global Mission, pp. 163-164.

During the month of November Secretary Woodring was virtually ignored. Columnists Drew Pearson and Robert Allen were not far off when on December 1 they wrote: "Secretary Woodring hasn't been consulted on any phase of the defense program. All he knows is what he reads in the paper. Johnson has been Roosevelt's right-hand man in national defense."⁴⁷ The intimacy which developed between Roosevelt and Johnson apparently stemmed from their mutual enthusiasm over a large air force. Since early 1938 the Assistant Secretary had advocated that \$1.4 billion be spent to provide a 10,000-plane Air Corps that would rely to a great extent on heavy bombers.⁴⁸ Therefore, in the fall of 1938 when the President decided to build a large Air Force, it was not surprising that he turned to his energetic, aggressive Assistant Secretary of War. In October and November the two men became quite close and Johnson was a frequent visitor at the White House. This relationship soon gave renewed vigor to the old rumors that Johnson was about to replace Woodring.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Drew Pearson and Robert Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, December 1, 1938.

⁴⁸Frye, Marshall: Citizen Soldier, pp. 254-255, 259-260. Memorandum General Arnold to Louis Johnson, October 24, 1938, Box 22. Aircraft Production - 1938, Henry H. Arnold Papers, IC.

⁴⁹"M-Day Man Louis A. Johnson," The New Republic, February 22, 1939, pp. 63-65. Army and Navy Journal, November 19, 1938.

These were difficult days for Secretary Woodring. His status was uncertain and he had no idea from day to day whether Roosevelt intended to keep him or not.⁵⁰ The Secretary realized that if the President chose to work around him there was nothing he could do about it; thus, he merely waited to see what would happen.

Secretary Woodring was not the only War Department official to be snubbed in this period because Chief of Staff Craig was also receiving the cold shoulder from the Commander-in-Chief. The only information and advice Craig and the General Staff were asked to provide was that of a technical nature. Most military leaders considered a 10,000-plane program to be "fantastic" and were reluctant to rush into a program that placed so much emphasis on the Air Corps.⁵¹ Because of such views, military men were generally not included in the President's discussions of rearmament plans.⁵²

If the Secretary of War, Chief of Staff and General Staff were largely ignored, who then, besides Louis Johnson, was helping Roosevelt formulate rearmament plans? The bulk of the advice was coming from three men who had no military background. "These militarists pro tem were none other than ... Tommy Corcoran, Harry Hopkins and Aubrey

⁵⁰ John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, November 19, 1938, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁵¹ Foreign Policy Bulletin, December 16, 1938, p. 4.

⁵² "Rearmament v. Balderdash," Time, December 19, 1938, p. 11. Newsweek, December 12, 1938, pp. 9-10. Collier's (editorial), January 28, 1939, p. 66.

Williams."⁵³ The growing influence of these "ex officio strategists" was upsetting to professional military men whose advice was not sought. According to one widely-read source, during this period General Craig "has peevish in silence, loathe to admit in public that he knows little ... about the administration's ideas for remaking the Army"⁵⁴ Throughout November Craig remained silent as the President continued to consult men like Hopkins and Johnson first and military men last. By early December Craig could no longer control his frustration and during an interview with a reporter blurted out that "Hopkins and Aubrey Williams are running the defense show."⁵⁵ When accounts of Craig's statement and the story behind it were published, the General denied that there were any difficulties between the Administration and the War Department.⁵⁶ The Chief of Staff's denial only served to center more attention on the controversy, and in the weeks that followed the role of the New Dealers and Louis Johnson received more publicity than ever.⁵⁷

⁵³"Rearmament v. Balderdash," Time, December 19, 1938, p. 11. Foreign Policy Bulletin, December 16, 1938, p. 4.

⁵⁴"Rearmament v. Balderdash," Time, December 19, 1938, p. 11.

⁵⁵Newsweek, December 12, 1938, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁶Army and Navy Journal, December 17, 1938.

⁵⁷Foreign Policy Bulletin, December 16, 1938, p. 4. Time, December 19, 1938, p. 11. Collier's, editorial, January 28, 1939, p. 66.

December 1 marked the beginning of a temporary decline in Johnson's influence with the President and an increasing influence for Woodring. On that day Johnson sent to the President the plan which had been prepared under General Craig and approved by the Assistant Secretary. Included was an air program costing \$1,289,000,000; supplies to equip the Protective Mobilization Force at a cost of \$421,000,000; and \$122,000,000 for industrial preparedness.⁵⁸ Roosevelt immediately called in Johnson and the military advisers and sharply criticized them for reading too much into the November 14 conference. The President reminded the group that he had asked for 10,000 planes at a cost of about \$500,000,000; instead he was presented a \$1.8 billion plan for strengthening air and land forces as well as helping prepare industry for mobilization. Roosevelt stated he did not feel he could ask Congress for more than \$500,000,000 for rearmament and it would be necessary to come up with a program that cost that amount.⁵⁹

From December 1 on, the President moved away from the idea of a large Air Corps and toward the idea of a more balanced force. In doing this he also turned back toward Secretary Woodring and General Craig, who had always urged a proper balance between air and ground forces. By mid-December Woodring was once more in control at the War Department and was working closely with the President in the preparation of a

⁵⁸Memorandum Assistant Secretary of War Johnson to Roosevelt, December 1, 1938, AG 580 (10-19-38), "Increase of the Air Corps by Aircraft," NA, RG 407.

⁵⁹Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 142-143.

rearmament program.⁶⁰ President Roosevelt, heeding the advice for balance, agreed to allot \$200,000,000 for the Protective Mobilization Force. The remaining \$300,000,000 was to go for the Air Corps; but some of that amount was to provide additional personnel and airbase facilities, which left only \$180,000,000 for aircraft.⁶¹

With Johnson temporarily out of favor, Air Corps planning was back in the hands of Secretary Woodring. Under the Secretary's leadership there emerged the so-called "Woodring Plan," which provided for an Air Corps of 5,500 to 6,000 planes.⁶² The basis for the program was the plan which the Secretary of War had asked General Arnold to prepare in October. On January 11, 1939, Secretary Woodring, who had been conferring with the President regularly on the defense program, directed General Arnold to prepare legislation to provide for a 6,000-plane Air Corps.⁶³ That number was subsequently reduced to 5,500 and the President gave that figure his approval. On January 12 Roosevelt asked Congress to appropriate \$300,000,000 for the Air Corps. That amount he said, "should provide a minimum increase of 3,000 planes, but it is

⁶⁰John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, December 17, 1938, O'Laughlin Papers, LC. Ernest K. Lindley, "A Cabinet Shuffle," Washington Post, December 18, 1938. Harlan Miller, "Over the Coffee," Washington Post, December 23, 1938.

⁶¹Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 143.

⁶²Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 546.

⁶³Memorandum Secretary of War Woodring to Chief of the Air Corps, January 11, 1939, AG 580 (12-14-38), "Legislation For Proposed Air Expansion," NA RG 407.

hoped that orders placed on such a large scale will materially reduce the unit cost and actually provide many more planes."⁶⁴

President Roosevelt's decision to abandon his 10,000-plane program was in all likelihood due to the poor manner in which Congress and the nation reacted to the proposals for such a large Air Corps. Following the November 14 conference, Assistant Secretary Johnson, with the President's approval, spoke openly of the need for a large and powerful air arm. A bitter reaction to such statements came from many sources. One of Woodring's best friends, Senator Bennett Clark of Missouri, criticized Johnson's rearmament proposals, saying such a move would be a "cover" for a pump-priming program. Other Senators such as Norris, Nye, Walsh and Borah expressed similar views.⁶⁵ A number of newspapers and magazines also voiced disapproval of establishing such a large air arm. Roosevelt had probably encouraged and approved Johnson's speeches to test the public reaction and when that reaction appeared unfavorable he decided to ease up on his aircraft program.⁶⁶

On January 17 Woodring went before the House Military Affairs Committee and requested 3,032 additional planes, which, with those already authorized, would provide a 5,500-plane force by mid-1941.⁶⁷ Two

⁶⁴The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939 Volume, p. 72.

⁶⁵Army and Navy Journal, December 3, 1938. Newsweek, December 12, 1938, pp. 9-10.

⁶⁶John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, December 17, 1938, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁶⁷House Hearings, 76th Congress 1st Session, Committee on Military Affairs, January 17, 1939. "An Adequate National Defense," p. 2.

weeks later the Secretary, having changed his ideas somewhat, wrote to the Committee Chairman Andrew J. May and called his attention to the fact that procurement of a large number of planes would reduce unit cost, thereby permitting the purchase of more planes than the proposed bill authorized and yet still not exceed the amount of money appropriated. Woodring therefore suggested "that the Committee give consideration to the removal of the limit on airplane strength so that a greater number of planes may be procured than now contemplated by the War Department"⁶⁸ When the House ignored the recommendation and authorized a force of 5,500 planes Woodring wrote a letter to Chairman Morris Sheppard of the Senate Military Affairs Committee and requested that no limit be established.⁶⁹ The Senate Committee decided to compromise between the lower figure set by the House and the absence of a set amount requested by Woodring, and it set the number at 6,000 planes. The House agreed to the revised figure, and on April 26 the President signed the legislation which fixed the authorized limit of the Army Air Corps at 6,000 planes.⁷⁰

The new figure was far short of the amount originally desired by the President, but when it is remembered that until the new legislation was passed the authorized strength of the Air Force was 2,320 planes

⁶⁸ Woodring to Andrew J. May, February 3, 1939, Box 2-A, Air Planes, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-42, NA RG 107.

⁶⁹ New York Times, February 23, 1939.

⁷⁰ Ibid., April 27, 1939.

and the actual strength about 1,700, the figure of 6,000 is quite impressive.

Throughout 1939 Woodring's and Johnson's influence at the White House rose and fell as the President turned from one to the other. From January through April Woodring held the upper hand but following passage of the Army Appropriation Bill in late April the President again turned away from Woodring and toward Johnson.⁷¹

In May and June the warmth which had characterized the Johnson-Roosevelt relationship the previous November reappeared, and Woodring again found himself on the outside. On July 5 the President issued an executive order that placed the Joint Army and Navy Board and the Army and Navy Munitions Board directly under the Commander-in-Chief. This meant that on numerous matters the Assistant Secretary of War and the Military Chiefs of the Army and Navy could now go directly to the Chief Executive.⁷² Whether this action was designed to bring about more efficiency or as a means of working around the Secretary of War is uncertain, but there is no doubt that it made it easier for the President to by-pass Woodring.

On August 3 Secretary Woodring, his wife and his three children left on a three week trip to Panama. Although the Secretary planned to inspect the Canal and its defense system, the trip was primarily a

⁷¹Army and Navy Journal, editorial, April 15, 1939, p. 760.

⁷²Federal Register, July 7, 1939, p. 2786. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 66. Smith, The Army and Economic Mobilization, p. 42.

vacation.⁷³ In Woodring's absence Acting Secretary of War Johnson attended the cabinet meeting on August 4. At that time Johnson requested and received Presidential approval to establish a board of civilians to review the Industrial Mobilization Plan and make recommendations to the Assistant Secretary of War on how to improve it.⁷⁴ The new body, which was called the War Resources Board, had as its chairman, Edward R. Stettinius Jr., Chairman of the Board of the United States Steel Corporation. The majority of the board members were associated with "big business."⁷⁵

That Johnson had more in mind for the newly-created board than reviewing the Industrial Mobilization Plan was soon apparent. On August 9 Johnson, in announcing the creation of the board, said, "In the event of an emergency the War Resources Board would become an executive agency of the Government with broad powers similar to those of the old War Industries Board."⁷⁶ At the first meeting of the board on August 17 Johnson reiterated the same idea.⁷⁷

In late August the War Resources Board submitted to the President a report in which it stated what it felt its function should be in the

⁷³New York Times, August 4, 1939.

⁷⁴Fairchild and Grossman, The Army and Industrial Mobilization, p. 18.

⁷⁵New York Times, August 10, 1939.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Washington Post, August 18, 1939.

event of war. The Board stated its disapproval of the idea of a super-agency and reaffirmed the authority of the President to coordinate its administration and make important decisions; however, the numerous economic functions which the Board assigned to itself indicated its members were still "thinking pretty much in terms of an arrangement such as that which operated under Mr. Bernard Baruch in the First World War."⁷⁸

The President did not like the idea of granting such broad economic authority to anyone except himself. In discussing the proposals of the War Resources Board with administrative advisor Louis Brownlow, Roosevelt said, "If I were to set up a scheme such as recommended by this report, turning over the sole administration of the economy of the country ... to a single war administrator—even though he were appointed by me—I would simply be abdicating the presidency to some other person."⁷⁹ In a September 7 cabinet meeting the President indicated he would not approve the plan of the War Resources Board.⁸⁰

Woodring, who found out about the creation of the Board while on his way to Panama, was quite angry that it had been set up during his absence and upset because Johnson had not mentioned it to him before

⁷⁸Troyer Anderson, History of the Office of Under Secretary of War, Chapter VI, p. 25. MSS OCMH.

⁷⁹Louis Brownlow, A Passion For Anonymity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), Vol. II, p. 425.

⁸⁰Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, p. 720.

his departure. At the September 7 cabinet meeting Woodring expressed his displeasure at the manner in which the Board was established and added that although he had been back at his office for more than two weeks Stettinius still had not been in to see him.⁸¹ It was not until September 21 that the War Resources Board finally met with Secretary Woodring.

Angered by Johnson's move to establish the Board during his absence, Woodring was searching for an opportunity to discredit his Assistant. That opportunity soon presented itself. At a September 26 cabinet meeting Woodring called the President's attention to a forward which Johnson had written for Leo M. Cherne's recently published book entitled, Adjusting Your Business to War.⁸² The fact that the Assistant Secretary of War had written the forward caused many individuals to consider the book to be semi-official. The result was that headlines such as "U.S. to Regiment All People in Case Nation Goes to War" greeted its publication.⁸³ Both Woodring and Secretary of Labor Perkins attacked Johnson's endorsement of the book.⁸⁴

At a press conference that followed the meeting the President fired two shots at Johnson. First, when asked whether Cherne's book

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Washington Post, September 27, 1939.

⁸³Stein (ed.), America Civil-Military Decisions, p. 85.

⁸⁴According to Woodring it was Miss Perkins rather than himself which brought the matter up. See Pearson and Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, October 6, 1939.

had the administration's endorsement the President replied that there was no book on the Army, the Navy or military subjects which had the imprimatur of the administration. Roosevelt then added that 90 per cent of the books written on such matters were written by people who knew less than nothing about the subject. Second, the President followed up his rebuff by announcing that the War Resources Board would be disbanded. Roosevelt said that the Board would submit a report to him in about ten days and then its work would be completed. When the press conference ended, Secretary Woodring, who had been in attendance, completed the spanking of Johnson by telling the reporters that the Board had never been intended as a permanent body. He then said, "The War Department is not setting up any permanent war boards and war machinery and I hope we never will."⁸⁵

The President's statements at the news conference left no doubt that Johnson's influence was once more on the wane. The press immediately speculated that Roosevelt would, as he had in the past, turn back to Secretary Woodring.⁸⁶ The President, however, turned to his Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau.

The President turned to Secretary Morgenthau for a number of reasons. First, Morgenthau, like Roosevelt, had come to feel that Britain and France should be the nation's first line of defense against

⁸⁵ New York Times, September 27, 1939. Washington Post, September 27, 1938.

⁸⁶ Army and Navy Journal, editorial, September 30, 1939.

the Nazi menace. Second, the Secretary of the Treasury got along very well officially and personally with the Chief Executive. Third, in 1939 the question of United States readiness and rearmament became involved in the question of selling airplanes and other supplies to democratic nations; thus, the financial arrangements of such sales were of direct concern to the Treasury.

In early 1939 a bitter controversy developed over whether the United States should sell Britain and France military planes. Woodring and Johnson said no, but the President said yes; and he chose Morgenthau to see that his decision was carried out.⁸⁷ According to the Secretary of the Treasury, the President turned to him because of the situation in the War Department. Morgenthau said: "Louis Johnson ... seemed to loathe his boss. The conflict between the two further paralyzed a Department already enfeebled by Woodring's utter failure to provide leadership. With the War Department demoralized by dissention Roosevelt was forced to turn a good deal to the Treasury to implement his anti-aggressor program."⁸⁸

After war broke out in September, 1939, the Allied nations began requesting airplanes and other military supplies. At first the handling of such requests was muddled and confused. Some requests went to

⁸⁷The controversy over foreign sales and the conflict between Woodring and the President over this matter will be discussed in detail in Chapters VI and VIII.

⁸⁸Morgenthau, "Morgenthau Diaries," Part III, Collier's, October 11, 1947, p. 74.

Morgenthau and others went to the Army and Navy Munitions Board, both of whom decided if the items could be supplied without hurting the United States' defense efforts.⁸⁹

On December 6, the President, upon Morgenthau's recommendation, established a Liaison Committee "to represent the American Government in its contacts with the interested foreign governments in all matters relating to the purchase of war materials in the United States" The Committee, which was to report directly to the President, was composed of three individuals. The Treasury Department's director of Procurement was chairman, and the other members were the Quartermaster General of the Army and the Paymaster General of the Navy.⁹⁰ The President had deliberately kept Woodring and Johnson off the Committee and had made an official of the Treasury Department chairman so that Morgenthau was able to control it.

Woodring immediately objected to the establishment of the President's Liaison Committee.⁹¹ He disapproved of any foreign buying which in any way conflicted or might possibly conflict with Army procurement. Woodring informed the President that he felt the Army and Navy Board, not the Liaison Committee, should decide what items should be sold abroad. Assistant Secretary Johnson expressed the same view to

⁸⁹Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁰Memorandum President Roosevelt to Secretary of War Woodring, December 6, 1939, Box 122, International Traffic, Secretary of War, General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA RG 107.

⁹¹The committee was called the Interdepartmental Committee for Coordination of Foreign and Domestic Purchases, but was always known or referred to as the President's Liaison Committee.

the Commander-in-Chief. The President defended his action on the grounds that the Procurement Division of the Treasury was already experienced in large scale purchases, and the fact that over half of the foreign purchases were of non military, rather than military, items.⁹²

The War Department's continual criticism of the Liaison Committee and its decisions led Morgenthau, in late January, 1940, to request a White House statement endorsing the Committee and clarifying his position. As Morgenthau told Press Secretary Steve Early, who made up the statement, "The whole War Department ... have fought us to a standstill on this thing and the President ... wants to do it this way. Woodring and Johnson argue with him so he has to use me."⁹³ On January 23 the White House announced the establishment of an "interdepartmental committee to deal with foreign purchases of war supplies." In clarifying the Secretary of Treasury's role, it said, "Secretary Morgenthau would act as liaison agent between the three man committee The President had commissioned Morgenthau to take over this work on December 6."⁹⁴ This endorsement made Morgenthau the virtual coordinator of the armament business. This was also the first time that the Secretary of Treasury's relationship with the committee was formally acknowledged. The December 6 memorandum from the President to Woodring, informing him

⁹²Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, pp. 112-113.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴New York Times, January 24, 1940.

of the Committee and its function, had made no mention that Morgenthau was to have a hand in its matters.⁹⁵

During the spring of 1940 Roosevelt consulted more and more frequently with Morgenthau on defense needs and procurement. Then in May the President took away even more of Woodring's responsibilities and gave them to Morgenthau. Early in the month the President consulted with Woodring, Johnson and General Marshall as he attempted to prepare a supplementary budget for military needs for the next fiscal year. The three War Department officials were so at odds as to what should and should not be done that the President had a difficult time deciding what his program should be.⁹⁶ Finally a plan was worked out and on May 16 the President asked Congress to provide \$545,000,000 "for a larger and thoroughly rounded-out Army" and authorization to make \$286,000,000 worth of contract obligations primarily for increased airplane production.⁹⁷

On the very day in which he presented his defense message the President informed Morgenthau that he wanted him to "expedite the entire military program particularly the production of aircraft

⁹⁵Memorandum President Roosevelt to Secretary of War Woodring, December 6, 1939, Box 122, International Traffic, Secretary of War Correspondence 1932-42, NA RG 107.

⁹⁶Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, pp. 138-140.

⁹⁷The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940 Volume, p. 203.

engines."⁹⁸ That the President meant what he said was made crystal clear on May 24 when he sent to Secretary of War Woodring a memorandum which said:

It is of utmost importance that no contracts be entered into from now on either for planes or engines or for the development of new types of planes or engines without coordinating this with the general program as a rule. For the time being, until the final machinery is set up this coordination will be cleared through the Secretary of the Treasury to me as Commander-in-Chief. Please see that this is carried out in toto.⁹⁹

The final machinery which Roosevelt mentioned in his memorandum was revealed on May 28 when he announced he was reestablishing the National Defense Advisory Commission, which had originally been set up during the First World War. The Commission was to be composed of seven "advisers" who were to report directly to the President on such matters as production, raw materials, labor and transportation.¹⁰⁰ The most important adviser, William Knudsen, who was in charge of production, worked closely with the President, the Secretary of Treasury and the War Department on arms production, but like the others on the Commission he was just an adviser. Roosevelt made this clear at the Commission's first meeting when Knudsen asked, "Who is the boss?" Roosevelt replied, "I am."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 144.

⁹⁹Memorandum for Secretary of War Woodring from President Roosevelt, May 24, 1940, Box 2-B, Airplanes, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-42, NA RG 107.

¹⁰⁰Washington Post, May 29, 1938.

¹⁰¹Brownlow, Passion For Anonymity, p. 431.

In June of 1940 it appeared as if the Advisory Commission might serve an important function in the American rearmament program; however, Roosevelt's desire to maintain his personal control over mobilization kept it from becoming an effective body.¹⁰² The success of the Commission was still uncertain, but Woodring was doing everything he could to assist it when in late June he was forced from the War Department.

The importance of Secretary of War Woodring in the rearmament program of the Army Air Corps is difficult to evaluate. Although it was the 6,000 plane "Woodring Program" that was ultimately adopted in 1939, the President turned to Woodring and accepted the program only after Congress and the public indicated it did not wish to support the 10,000-plane program favored by the President and the Assistant Secretary of War. From mid-1939 on, the President virtually ignored Woodring in regard to providing additional aircraft. Roosevelt turned first to Johnson, then Morgenthau, and then the National Defense Advisory Commission in an attempt to find the right person or group to expedite the aircraft program.

As far as air rearmament was concerned the President turned from Woodring for two basic reasons. First, the Secretary of War felt that a rearmament program should provide a balanced military force.

¹⁰²By the end of 1940 it was apparent that the Advisory Committee could not cope with the problems of a defense economy so on January 7, 1941 the President created the Office of Production Management to replace the Committee.

Woodring was therefore lukewarm to any program that provided a vast expansion of the Air Corps while ignoring the ground forces, and that was the type of program which the President initially favored. Second, the President favored selling United States built military planes to Britain and France. Woodring opposed such sales because he felt it would hinder procurement for the Army Air Corps.¹⁰³

During Woodring's tenure as Secretary of War, the Army Air Corps went from an authorized strength of 2,320 aircraft and an actual strength of 1,329 to an authorized strength of 6,000 and an actual strength of 3,102.¹⁰⁴ In relative growth this was quite a significant step forward, but in terms of the air strength of other nations at the time, and the later expansion of the United States Air Force it was quite small. Much of the growth and development that actually did take place appears to have been in spite of Woodring rather than because of him.

¹⁰³This subject will be dealt with in detail in Chapters VI and VIII.

¹⁰⁴New York Times, January 5, 1937. Howard Mingos (ed.), The Aircraft Yearbook For 1946 (New York: Lancer Publishers, 1946), p. 484.

CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS OF NEUTRALITY: 1936-1939

Numerous accounts have been written about the United States and neutrality in the 1930's. Detailed information is presented on isolationism, neutrality legislation, and efforts to keep the United States out of a foreign conflict. Nearly all such accounts are similar in that they tend to look upon the problems of neutrality as the concern of only the President and the State Department. Such heavy emphasis has been placed on the efforts of President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull to handle problems relating to neutrality that there is a tendency to forget that other top administration officials were also vitally concerned with such matters. One such person was Secretary of War Woodring.

Secretary Woodring would have preferred to avoid questions relating to neutrality because he felt that keeping the country out of war was the "primary concern of the State Department and the Chief Executive," and not of the War Department.¹ But as much as Woodring would have liked to avoid such problems, he could not. As Secretary of War he soon discovered that neutrality was not only of great interest to him, but also that he could do much to see that it was maintained.

¹Woodring to Representative Sol Bloom, Acting Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, July 17, 1939, Box 102. International Traffic, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

Woodring's influence on neutrality was both informal and formal. His informal influence stemmed in part from the fact that he was head of the War Department. By virtue of that position his every statement concerning the Army, national defense and foreign policy was looked upon as being representative of administration policy or indicative of what that policy might be in the future. A belligerent or offensive statement by such a key member of the executive branch could have a serious effect on the thinking or action of certain foreign nations and consequently endanger the neutrality of the United States. Another informal influence over neutrality was Secretary Woodring's role as a cabinet member. The fact that the breakdown of neutrality could ultimately result in the nation going to war was a fact that Woodring was well aware of; and if there was anything he wanted to avoid, it was war.² Therefore, in his capacity as presidential adviser, the Secretary of War always cautioned against any action which might endanger American neutrality.

Formally Woodring was able to have an influence on neutrality because the Neutrality Act of 1935 made the Secretary of War a member of the National Munitions Control Board whose purpose was to license and supervise all foreign arms shipments. As a board member, Woodring came to have a major say as to which military items could or could not be shipped to foreign nations. The question of what military items could be sold abroad had always been under the primary jurisdiction of the

²See Chapter II.

Secretary of War but the neutrality legislation of the 1930's made that post more important than it had ever been in regard to maintaining neutrality.

The major problems of neutrality which Secretary Woodring faced centered on the question of selling arms, ammunition and implements of war to foreign governments. This was a problem for Woodring even before he became Secretary because as Assistant Secretary of War he had been asked by Secretary Dern to recommend what policy the War Department should follow in regard to foreign sales.³

Woodring's study of the problem revealed some valuable precedents. A 1920 Act authorized the Secretary of War "to sell to any state or foreign government ... upon such terms as he may deem expedient, any material, supplies, or equipment pertaining to the military establishment ... which are not needed for military purposes"⁴ In April 1923 President Harding established a policy that the government would not sell war equipment to any foreign power. Seven years later that policy was modified by President Hoover to permit the sale of surplus aircraft and aircraft parts provided such sales did not reveal any military secrets and were approved by the State Department.⁵

³Memorandum for the Secretary of War from the Assistant Secretary of War, August 24, 1933, Box 78, Foreign Governments - Sale of Material, Secretary of War, 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

⁴United States Statutes at Large, Vol. XLII, Part 1, p. 949.

⁵Memorandum to Secretary of War from Assistant Secretary of War, August 24, 1933, Box 78, Foreign Governments - Sale of Material, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

Based on the precedents, Assistant Secretary Woodring came up with a foreign sales policy in August of 1933. As put forth by Woodring, it was to be "the policy of this Government to refrain from disposing of arms, ammunitions and implements of war in possession of this Government to foreign powers or to persons who might be presumed to be about to transfer them to foreign powers"⁶

Although the War Department refused to sell arms and ammunition abroad it was not concerned over the sale of such items by United States civilian firms except when military secrets were involved. The Secretary of War not only had no objection to the foreign sale of implements of war by American manufacturers he actually encouraged it. Woodring said he favored the policy because "such action is considered to enhance the interests of National Defense by encouraging the maintenance of facilities for supply in the event of an emergency."⁷

Until the Neutrality Act of 1935 all requests to export arms and ammunition were handled by the State Department, but required approval from the War Department. When an export request was received it was forwarded to the Secretary of War, who then informed the Under Secretary of State if there was any objection, on the grounds of "military secrecy," to the exportation of the articles mentioned. If the Secretary of War objected the State Department denied the request. If he

⁶Ibid.

⁷Assistant Secretary of War Woodring to Elevator Supplies Company, Hoboken, New Jersey, September 13, 1934, Ibid.

had no objection the request was approved.⁸ The identity of the manufacturer making the request or the country destined to receive the item made no difference in the Secretary of War's decisions; the test was strictly one of military secrecy. Thus on October 23, 1933, the Secretary approved a request from the Boeing Airplane Company to export B-9 airplanes to Japan but he turned down a request to send P-26's to Germany.⁹

In August of 1935, Congress passed the Neutrality Act, which provided that in the event of war between two or more nations the President would proclaim such a fact and from that time on it would be unlawful to export arms, ammunitions or implements of war to the belligerent nations. The Act also established the National Munitions Control Board, which was made up of the Secretary of State, who served as chairman, and the Secretaries of War, Navy, Treasury and Commerce. The Board was to supervise and control the manufacture, importation and exportation of arms and ammunition through a registration and licensing system.¹⁰

The licensing system provided by Congress operated almost automatically, there being a minimum of administrative discretion in limiting arms shipments. The Neutrality Act made it unlawful to export any

⁸Under Secretary of State to Secretary of War, November 19, 1934, Ibid.

⁹Secretary Dern to James P. Murray, Vice President Boeing Airplane Company, October 23, 1933, Ibid.

¹⁰United States Statutes at Large, Vol. XLIX, Part 1, pp. 1081-1082.

arm, ammunition, or implement of war without a license; however, a license was issued to nearly anyone who applied for one.¹¹ The only times licenses were refused were in cases where exportation would violate an American law or treaty.¹² The agency responsible for actually carrying out the Munitions Board's responsibilities and handling arms registration and licensing was the Office of Arms and Munitions Control, which was a part of the State Department.

With the possible exception of Secretary Hull, Secretary Woodring came to have the most important role on the Munitions Control Board. That importance stemmed from the fact that the Board's regulations provided that arms export licenses could not be issued when doing so would violate the Espionage Act of 1917.¹³ That law provided that anyone who turned over to a foreign government or an individual in a foreign country or any person not entitled to receive it any " ... blueprint, plan, map, model, instrument, appliance or note relating to the national defense ... shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment for not more than twenty years"¹⁴ This meant that the maintenance of military secrets was the only limitation to granting a license for the exportation of implements of war, and it was the Secretary of War who made the final determination of whether or not an

¹¹Murray S. Stedman, Exporting Arms: The Federal Arms Exports Administration, 1935-1945 (New York: Kings Crown Press, 1947), p. 17.

¹²United States Statutes at Large, Vol. XLIX, Part 1, p. 1082.

¹³Stedman, Exporting Arms, p. 59.

¹⁴United States Statutes at Large, Vol. XL, Part 1, p. 218.

item constituted a military secret.¹⁵ In this position Woodring could determine if a foreign government was to receive a certain type of aircraft, arm, or ordnance item.¹⁶ While the Secretary always consulted the General Staff's G-2 and the Technical Services in deciding whether or not an item should be classified as a military secret, he was in no way bound to follow their recommendations. Under the guise of military secrecy Woodring could, if he chose, veto the foreign sale of any item that fell in the category of arms, ammunition or implement of war. As will be seen, however, Woodring used his Munitions Board powers in an impartial and neutral manner and only when he refused to follow such a policy did he run into difficulty with his superior.

The experience which Woodring gained as Assistant Secretary on matters relating to foreign sales was put to use almost as soon as he assumed the Secretaryship. In October, 1936, the British Air Attache in Washington called on Secretary Woodring and inquired whether it might be possible for the British Government to purchase military planes from American manufacturers.¹⁷ Woodring, feeling that British orders would help the sagging United States aircraft industry, favored such sales provided the models to be turned over were more than a year

¹⁵Woodring to Secretary of State Hull, April 6, 1939, Box 102, International Traffic in Arms, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Memorandum for files from Colonel James Burns, November 14, 1936, Box 2, Airplanes, Secretary of War General Correspondence, 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

old.¹⁸ For several years the War Department had followed the policy that no American firm selling planes to the Army could sell similar planes to a foreign government until one year after delivery of the second production plane. It was felt that since experimental and testing work was completed and production well under way by the time the second production plane was received, the United States Air Corps would have aircraft a full two years ahead of other countries. Some Air Corps leaders wanted to shorten the release period from one year to six months after delivery of the second plane, but Woodring refused to go along with such a change.¹⁹ The Navy's policy on release of aircraft for export was based on what it called "National Defense Interests." Since such a phrase could be interpreted in many ways, it meant that the Navy had no set time limit. Some planes were released in six months while others were held for years.²⁰

When the British expressed an interest in buying American built military planes in October of 1936, the War Department asked that the President decide on a uniform release policy. On November 11 the President met with Secretary Woodring, Secretary of the Navy Swanson, Acting Secretary of State R. Walton Moore and Solicitor General Stanley Reed. After Woodring and Swanson explained their department's aircraft release policy and discussed their merits the President decided that

¹⁸Memorandum of Conference held October 22, 1936, Ibid.

¹⁹Army and Navy Journal, November 14, 1936.

²⁰Ibid.

the War Department policy should be used by both military services. Although Roosevelt agreed that all Air Corps planes should be considered a military secret for one year, and therefore not eligible for release, he did request that a study be made to see if the time limit might be reduced in the future.²¹ In late November Britain temporarily abandoned the idea of purchasing American-built planes, and so for the time being the release policy seemed unimportant.

Secretary Woodring was determined to insure that military secrets relating to aircraft remained the sole property of the United States Government. Woodring felt that since Congress did not authorize an Air Corps of quantity, it was essential that it be one of quality; thus, he always attempted to provide the Corps with the latest and most efficient planes available.²² The Secretary of War's determination to protect aircraft secrets was occasionally a source of difficulty. Such was the case in October of 1936 when the Director of Air Commerce criticized Woodring for refusing to permit representatives from a Latin American air transport company to visit factories at which Army planes were being produced.²³ On this visitation policy and his refusal to cut the

²¹Memorandum for files from Secretary Woodring, November 11, 1936, Box 2, Airplanes, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

²²Congressional Record, 76th Congress 1st Session, Vol. 81, Part 10, Appendix, p. 2006 and interview with Helen C. Woodring, July 20, 1968.

²³Army and Navy Journal, October 17, 1936.

aircraft release period to six months Woodring was guided by the desire to safeguard American aircraft secrets.

In mid-1936 civil war broke out in Spain, and a few weeks later a number of American airplane manufacturers asked the State Department if they could export planes to Spain since the Neutrality Act did not impose an embargo in case of civil war. Acting Secretary of State William Phillips informed the manufacturers that sales to Spain "would not follow the spirit of United States policy." This "moral embargo" was accepted without question until December.²⁴ In that month Robert Cuse, a New Jersey scrap dealer, applied for a license to sell \$2,777,000 worth of airplanes, airplane engines and airplane parts to the Spanish Government. Since there was no legal prohibition against such sales the State Department was forced to issue the export license. The government was widely criticized for issuing the license but the President explained that nothing else could be done; for, although Cuse's action was unpatriotic, it was legal. Criticism next shifted to the Army because it was revealed that most of the engines to be exported had been sold to Cuse by the War Department in January of 1936. Woodring defended the Army by pointing out that the engines had been sold as surplus because they had already been overhauled three times and it would have been unsafe to place them in a plane again. The Secretary

²⁴Robert A. Divine, The Illusion of Neutrality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 168-169.

also pointed out that the sale had been completed months before the Spanish Civil War broke out.²⁵

In early January Congress passed a resolution to expand the arms embargo provision of the Neutrality Act to civil wars; but before the legislation went into effect on January 8, Cuse was able to export six planes and one engine.²⁶ Although the furor over the Cuse matter quickly subsided, Woodring was determined that such a thing should not occur again. Therefore, on March 8, 1937, the Secretary directed that steps be taken to insure that in the future surplus arms, ammunition, and implements of war were to be sold only to citizens of the United States and "then only under a contract specifying that such articles will not be resold, transferred or mortgaged to any foreign government or power and provided further that such material or equipment will not be shipped outside the United States." In the event of resale the same provisions had to be adhered to by the new owner.²⁷ These principles were incorporated in Army regulations in the spring of 1937. Three years later those regulations were to become a source of major disagreement between Secretary Woodring and President Roosevelt.

²⁵New York Times, December 29, 30, 31, 1936.

²⁶Ibid., January 7, 1937.

²⁷The Adjutant General to the Assistant Secretary of War, March 17, 1937, Box 181, Surplus Property, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

On May 1, 1937, the President signed the 1937 Neutrality Act which provided the nation with permanent neutrality legislation, the 1935 and 1936 acts being only temporary. On the same day that the new legislation went into effect the President expanded the list of arms, ammunitions and implements of war to be included in an embargo. Most of the items added were gases and explosives. The recommendation for expanding the list had come from the Munitions Control Board.²⁸ Secretary Woodring, however, had voiced opposition to expanding the list on the grounds that a number of the articles and materials to be added were not designed or intended for military purposes. The Secretary of War believed that restrictions should not be placed on the exportation of items that were not definitely for military use. He feared that if the line were not drawn somewhere the United States might eventually come to define contraband as widely as Britain had during the World War. In spite of his opposition to the new list Woodring, seeing that he was outnumbered on the board 4 to 1, reluctantly endorsed its adoption.²⁹

That Secretary Woodring did not wish to stand in the way of exports unless they had a definite military advantage to the country receiving them can be seen from his position in the helium controversy of 1937-1938. On May 6, 1937, the German dirigible Hindenburg, which was

²⁸ Stedman, Exporting Arms, p. 58.

²⁹ Statement made for the Secretary of War at the meeting of the National Munitions Control Board, April 30, 1937. AG 470 (4-16-37), NA, RG 165.

using highly inflammable hydrogen, exploded and crashed as it was landing at Lakehurst, New Jersey, after a trans-Atlantic flight. A few days later the German Zeppelin Company, desiring to utilize a safer noninflammable gas, contacted Secretary of Interior Ickes and inquired whether it could purchase helium from the United States for a second dirigible then under construction. Ickes was consulted because the production and sale of helium was under the control of the Bureau of Mines which was within the Interior Department.³⁰

At a cabinet meeting on May 14 Ickes informed those present of the German request. The cabinet members had mixed emotions on such a sale. With the Hindenburg tragedy still fresh in their minds they tended to look with favor on such a sale for humanitarian reasons. At the same time they did not wish to sell helium to a foreign government which might use it for military purposes. To examine the matter more closely and then make a policy recommendation the President appointed an ad hoc committee composed of the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, Interior and Commerce.³¹ A week later the committee reported in favor of exporting helium, provided there were safeguards to insure that the gas was not used for military purposes.³²

³⁰Michael D. Reagan, "The Helium Controversy," American Civil-Military Decisions, ed., Harold Stein (Birmingham, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1963), p. 45.

³¹Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, p. 143.

³²Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 75th Congress 1st Session, "Conservation of Helium Gas," pp. 123-124.

In April, a few weeks before the Hindenburg crash, the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee had started hearings regarding legislation on the foreign sale of helium. Secretary Woodring, who was one of the first persons whose views were requested, informed the committees that the War Department had no objection to foreign sales.³³ Secretary of the Navy Swanson expressed a similar view. On May 25 the President, in hope of speeding up the helium legislation submitted to the congressional committees the ad hoc committee's report which favored the sale.³⁴ A few months later Congress passed the Helium Act and on September 1 it went into effect. Under the Act the Secretary of Interior retained responsibility for production and sale of helium while export control was given to both the National Munitions Control Board and the Secretary of Interior.³⁵

In October the Zeppelin Company requested 17.5 million cubic feet of helium for one year's operations. The Munitions Control Board quickly gave its approval and on January 31, 1938, the State Department issued an export license. The only thing that now remained was for Secretary Ickes to sell the helium. Ickes however refused to sell the gas. The Secretary of Interior was fearful of Hitler's intentions and did not want to do anything which might aid the German military machine.

³³Ibid., pp. 12-13.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 123-124.

³⁵United States Statutes at Large, Vol. L, Part 1, pp. 885-887.

When the Germans invaded Austria on March 12 he was more determined than ever to refrain from selling the gas.³⁶

Throughout the spring of 1938 a controversy raged over whether or not to sell helium to Germany. President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull pressed for the sale because the German Government was becoming increasingly irritated over the delay and the Chief Executive and Secretary of State wanted to maintain peaceful relations with the Reich.³⁷ Ickes however refused to back down. Secretary Woodring sided with Hull. Woodring saw no reason to discriminate against a nation merely because one disagreed with their policies. He felt that Congress had provided for sale of the gas and therefore any nation requesting it should receive it as long as such action did not endanger the security of the United States.

On April 4 and again on April 27 the Secretary of War wrote to Ickes and urged him to make the sale. Woodring maintained that the United States should make the helium available to Germany because of humanitarian reasons, and he assured Ickes that the amount to be sent was "not sufficiently great to represent jeopardy to the National defense."³⁸ After the second letter Woodring saw that he was getting nowhere with Ickes and, realizing that under the law there was no way

³⁶ Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, p. 344.

³⁷ Reagan, "The Helium Controversy," American Civil-Military Relations, ed. Stein, p. 51.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 49-50.

of getting around the Secretary of Interior, he stopped pursuing the matter. During the spring and summer Ickes continued to resist all pressure to make the sale, and with Hitler's success at Munich in September all such pressure ended. In the years that followed Ickes told proudly how he had prevented Nazi Germany from getting American helium and therefore helped curtail German military might.³⁹ In reality Ickes did no such thing because the quantity requested was so small that even if it had been sent it could not possibly have been of military value.⁴⁰

In January of 1938, there began a series of events which marked the beginning of the breakdown of United States neutrality and brought about one of the most controversial issues of the Roosevelt Administration. On January 16 French Senator Amaury de la Grange, a long time friend of Roosevelt, met with the Chief Executive and asked if France could purchase 1,000 planes such as were being used by the United States Air Corps. The President pointed out that restrictions of the Neutrality Act would "hinder" French procurement in the event of war, but he indicated a willingness to assist the French all that he could. Upon leaving the White House de la Grange wrote: "The President will thus be completely in favor of all measures that the French Government

³⁹Ickes, "My Twelve Years With F.D.R.," The Saturday Evening Post, June 5, 1948, pp. 82, 84.

⁴⁰Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 75th Congress 1st Session, "Conservation of Helium Gas," pp. 76, 99.

might believe necessary to reinforce its air formations in time of peace and time of war."⁴¹

The French Defense Minister, Edouard Daladier, doubted whether Roosevelt would be as helpful as de la Grange indicated; therefore, he asked American Ambassador William Bullitt to sound out the President on the matter. In February Bullitt and Daladier's representative, industrialist Jean Monnet, traveled to Washington in an effort to find out just how much support Roosevelt was willing to give the French. When Bullitt and Monnet met with the President, he told them of his efforts to repeal the arms embargo and said if war came before repeal he would push through such legislation immediately. The President then stated that in the event he could not bring about repeal of the embargo he would get around the legislation by sending planes from the United States to Canada from whence they could go to France.⁴² This meeting and the earlier one with de la Grange were both confidential; thus, neither Secretary Hull, Secretary Woodring, nor any other administrative official knew what the President had pledged.

A close examination of the American aircraft industry by French officials revealed it was not much better off than that of France and that the only American-built plane which could meet French needs was the Curtiss-Wright P-36. When Curtiss-Wright officials were approached by French representatives they indicated that even if the War

⁴¹John M. Haight Jr., "Roosevelt as Friend of France," Foreign Affairs Quarterly, April 1966, pp. 518-519.

⁴²Ibid., p. 520.

Department released the plane for export their limited production facilities would allow no more than 100 planes to be sent abroad prior to March, 1939. Although the number of planes was quite small Monnet favored making the purchase. A number of technicians in the French Air Ministry were hesitant about buying the planes because they doubted that the P-36 could stand up against the newest German aircraft. The French Minister for Air felt that the only way to settle the dispute was to have his leading test pilot, Michael Detroyat, fly the plane and then recommend whether or not to place the order.⁴³

The French requested permission for Detroyat to make the flight but the War Department, following the one year release policy approved by the President two years before, denied the request. The Department also pointed out that since the second production plane had not yet been received it would be at least a year before such a flight could be made. Chief of Air Corps Arnold, Chief of Staff Craig and Secretary Woodring all agreed that the request should be denied.⁴⁴ On March 10, 1938 the President, acting as Commander-in-Chief, directed the Chief of Staff to permit Detroyat to fly the P-36. The flight, he said, should be limited to twenty minutes and "should be conducted from some outlying field, with utmost secrecy." The President also directed that anything of a confidential or secret nature should be removed before the

⁴³Ibid., p. 521.

⁴⁴Ibid.

flight.⁴⁵ The flight subsequently took place and when Detroyat reported favorably upon its performance the French Air Ministry placed an order for one hundred export models of the P-36. The export models were essentially the same as those received by the Air Corps except secret instruments and equipment such as the retractable landing gear were not included and its name was changed to the Hawk 75-A.⁴⁶

France was not the only nation interested in purchasing American built planes at this time for in March Britain sent an Air Mission to explore the possibilities of making such purchases. When the British Mission expressed an interest in the B-18 and the War Department refused to permit a test flight because it was still classified as a military secret, the President again overruled his Army advisers and ordered that the British representatives be permitted to make the flight.⁴⁷ The British were not impressed with the B-18 and did not order any. However, in June they did place an order for 400 American-built military aircraft. The planes to be supplied were no longer classified as military secrets; therefore, there were no problems involved in their sale.⁴⁸ Three months after this transaction the Munich

⁴⁵Daily Air Corps Record, 1938-39, March 10, 1938, Box 56, Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

⁴⁶United States Air Service, February, 1939, p. 28. "Armaments Arguments," Aviation, March, 1939, pp. 69-70.

⁴⁷Haight, "Roosevelt as Friend of France," Foreign Affairs Quarterly, April, 1966, p. 521.

⁴⁸Edward R. Stettinius Jr., Lend-Lease: Weapon for Victory (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), pp. 13-15.

Conference took place, and from that time on the British preferred to develop their own aircraft industry rather than rely on America. The British restricted their American purchases because they feared that if they became involved in a war with Germany the Neutrality Act would come into effect and cut off all the planes ordered. Britain was not willing to take such a risk, but France was.⁴⁹

On October 25, 1938, while President Roosevelt was in the midst of making plans to greatly expand the United States Air Corps, he met with Ambassador Bullitt, Secretary Morgenthau and Jean Monnet to discuss the Nazi menace. During this meeting there arose a discussion of what the United States could do to build up French air strength. Roosevelt told the group that the American aircraft industry could supply France with 1,000 pursuit planes and 1,000 bombers. Since the French were especially short of bombers, Monnet returned to France and urged Daladier, who was now Premier, to place a large order. On December 5 Daladier told his Defense Council that there was "a possibility of receiving 1,000 planes of the latest model in use by the American Army. The American Government has formally promised delivery but it must be kept an absolute secret."⁵⁰ After a few days of budget juggling it was decided that Monnet should head a mission to the United States with the funds and authority to purchase 1,000 planes.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Haight, "Roosevelt as Friend of France," Foreign Affairs Quarterly, April, 1966, p. 522.

When the French Air Mission arrived in Washington in mid-December President Roosevelt, remembering the earlier opposition of Woodring, Craig and Arnold to French efforts to test the P-36, directed Monnet to work through the Secretary of the Treasury. According to Secretary Morgenthau, the President so acted because "he knew the Treasury would take a less parochial view of national policy in the sale of aircraft than either War or Navy."⁵¹ The nominal reason given by the President was that the Procurement Division of the Treasury was experienced in large scale purchases.⁵²

Secretary Woodring was completely unaware of the French Mission until December 21 when Deputy Chief of Staff Marshall informed him that General Arnold had been requested to grant permission for the Mission to inspect the latest Army planes under construction. At a cabinet meeting that afternoon Morgenthau referred to the presence of the Mission but it was not discussed. After the meeting Woodring, Morgenthau and Acting Secretary of State Sumner Wells held a long discussion.⁵³ Morgenthau said that the French wanted to purchase a thousand of the latest planes, and therefore he proposed that the French aviation experts be permitted to inspect and test three late models, the P-40, the Martin 166 Bomber, and the B-12 Douglas Bomber. Woodring told the others that it was not advisable to show the Mission planes under construction

⁵¹Morgenthau, "The Morgenthau Diaries," Part IV, Collier's, October 18, 1947, p. 17.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Memorandum of conversation between John C. O'Laughlin and Secretary Woodring, February 19, 1939, Box 71, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

or ready to test. Furthermore, he added, the War Department policy which the President himself had approved, prohibited the foreign sale of planes until a year after the second production plane was received. The President said that France was the nation's first line of defense; therefore, every effort should be made to supply them with the planes. After Woodring expressed fear that French purchases would interfere with future Army orders, the President wrote on a memorandum of Morgenthau's that for "reasons of State" the French should be permitted to inspect and purchase the planes, provided their procurement did not interfere with United States orders. Woodring reluctantly replied that if that was what the President wanted then he would see that it was done.⁵⁴

The following morning, after discussing the President's directive with his military advisers, Woodring was even less enthusiastic about carrying it out. That afternoon Woodring, General Marshall and General Arnold went to see Secretary Morgenthau. The Army officials reluctantly agreed to release the P-40 because it was already in service and would be eligible for foreign sale in a few months anyway. They did not, however, want to reveal, let alone release, the newly produced Martin bomber or the Douglas bomber which was still under development. Woodring and Arnold then argued that the French order could not be filled in less than eighteen months, which meant it could not help but hinder Army procurement. Morgenthau said he intended to carry out the

⁵⁴Ibid. See also John Blum (ed.), From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Urgency (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), pp. 65-66.

President's order whether the War Department "liked it or not." Woodring replied that he too would carry out the President's wishes, but he wanted Roosevelt "to know all the facts and not be mixed in his reasoning" by the information Morgenthau was giving him.⁵⁵ The meeting ended with Morgenthau agreeing that for the time being there would be no inspection of the secret bombers.⁵⁶

On December 29 Woodring wrote to Morgenthau that no secrets would be revealed until Morgenthau assured him two things. First, that the French had the money to put on the "barrel head" for the planes. Second, that the orders would not interfere with future Army orders. Morgenthau saw these demands as an attempt on the part of Woodring to place obstacles in front of the French Mission. Therefore he wrote to the President and said, "I am unable to proceed further in this matter so long as Secretary Woodring maintains his present attitude."⁵⁷

The following day Morgenthau telephoned Woodring and expressed his displeasure with the demands placed upon him by the December 29 letter. Morgenthau charged the Secretary of War with attempting to put him "on the spot by writing a letter placing such limitations ... on the program of assistance to the French." Woodring replied that he was under pressure from his military advisers not to release the bombers and he was also afraid that Congress would "raise hell" over their

⁵⁵Memorandum of conversation between John C. O'Laughlin and Woodring, February 19, 1939, Box 71, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁵⁶Blum (ed.), Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 67.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 69.

release. He then said, "all I wanted to do, Henry, was simply to protect you in the matter." To this Morgenthau replied, "I don't want to be protected."⁵⁸ After an extended discussion Woodring finally agreed to let the French see the Martin but not the Douglas bomber.

On December 31 Morgenthau informed Monnet that the Mission could inspect the Martin 166. He then said to the Frenchman, "The whole United States Army is opposed to what I am doing and I am doing it secretly and I just cannot continue ... forcing the United States Army to show planes which they say they want for themselves."⁵⁹

During the first two weeks of January, 1939, Morgenthau was on vacation. In that period the French made a tentative decision to purchase one hundred additional export models of the P-36 and sixty Martin 166 bombers, but the Douglas bomber remained under wraps.⁶⁰ When Morgenthau returned to Washington and found that the War Department was still dragging its feet on the Douglas matter, he proposed to the President that all purchasing of planes for the United States Government be turned over to the Treasury Department. Morgenthau urged such action because it would enable him to release any plane he desired.⁶¹ The

⁵⁸Morgenthau, "Morgenthau Diaries," Part IV, Collier's, October 18, 1947, p. 17.

⁵⁹Blum (ed.), Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 69.

⁶⁰Memorandum for Assistant Secretary of War from Chief of Air Corps, January 9, 1939, Box 86, France, Secretary of War, 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

⁶¹Blum (ed.), Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 70.

President was unwilling to take such a drastic step, but Morgenthau's proposal had made it necessary for him to take some action.

On January 16, 1939, the President summoned Secretary Woodring, Assistant Secretary Johnson, Secretary Morgenthau and Ambassador Bullitt to the White House. Bullitt opened the meeting by stating that time was running out for France and the United States should give her all the assistance she could. It was especially important, he continued, that the Douglas bomber be made available. Woodring voiced opposition to inspection or release of the bomber because it had secret elements and had been built partially with government funds. Its release, the Secretary of War said, "might put the President in an embarrassing position." In the discussion that followed Roosevelt indicated, but did not actually say, that he favored the plane's release. Finally Assistant Secretary Johnson said to the President, "Do you mean, sir, that you wish the Douglas light bomber released to the French government?" Roosevelt replied, "I mean exactly that."⁶²

The President had made his position clear and Woodring could hold back no longer. The Secretary told Johnson to insure that the War Department cooperated 100 per cent with the French Air Mission. Johnson then informed General Arnold that the members of the French Mission should be given access to the Douglas bomber. On January 19 Arnold telegraphed the military authorities at Los Angeles and informed them that French representatives would arrive the following day. Arnold's

⁶²Morgenthau, "From the Morgenthau Diaries," Part IV, Collier's, October 18, 1947, p. 17.

telegram concluded: "Authority granted for them to inspect Douglas attack bomber less secret accessories, fly in same and open negotiations with Douglas Co. relative to purchase."⁶³ On January 20 three members of the French Mission, including test pilot Paul Chemidlin, arrived at the Douglas plant at Los Angeles and on the following day began inspecting the new bomber.

"On January 23 all hell broke loose," wrote General Arnold.⁶⁴ On that day the Douglas bomber, with Chemidlin aboard, crashed in a Los Angeles parking lot killing the pilot and destroying a dozen cars. Miraculously Chemidlin survived the crash and was taken to a nearby hospital. At first the Douglas Company attempted to keep the Frenchman's presence on the plane a secret by announcing that the survivor was a company mechanic named Smithins. Reporters quickly learned the survivor's true identity, and when confronted with the information the Douglas officials admitted that the French test pilot had been aboard the plane.⁶⁵ As the Chemidlin story appeared in newspapers across the country everyone began asking the same question. What was a member of a French Air Mission doing on the experimental bomber?

The January 23 crash was just what congressional isolationists needed to attack the administration because it was now public knowledge

⁶³Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "To Provide for an Adequate Defense," p. 186.

⁶⁴Arnold, Global Mission, p. 186.

⁶⁵New York Times, January 27, 1939.

that the Executive Branch was not being neutral but was assisting the French by granting them special privileges. Isolationist Senator Bennett Clark had been informed of the presence and activities of the French Mission by Secretary Woodring prior to the crash, but he could not mention it publicly without revealing his source of information.⁶⁶ The secrecy that surrounded the French Mission prior to January 23 was so tight that not only were newspapermen unaware of it but even Secretary of State Hull had no knowledge of its activities.⁶⁷

At a secret hearing before the Senate Military Affairs Committee on January 26 General Arnold, who had been testifying in regard to Air Corps needs for the following year, was placed on the hot seat by Senator Clark, who was quite upset that Roosevelt had ignored the advice of the War Department and permitted the French to test the Douglas bomber. Clark turned from the subject under discussion and asked why a French aviation expert was on the secret bomber that crashed. Arnold replied: "He was out there under the direction of the Treasury Department, with a view of looking into possible purchase of airplanes by the French Mission."⁶⁸ He then explained that while the visit was under the direction of the Treasury Department the actual authorization had

⁶⁶Gerald P. Nye to Keith McFarland, July 25, 1968. Pearson and Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, February 17, 1939.

⁶⁷Memorandum of Conversation, Secretary of State Hull and French Ambassador De Saint-Quentin, Box 58, "France 1933-1940," Cordell Hull Papers, LC.

⁶⁸Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "To Provide for an Adequate Defense," p. 64.

come from the War Department.⁶⁹ After asking Arnold such questions as, "Does the Secretary of the Treasury run the Air Corps?" and "Does he give orders about Air Corps procurement?"⁷⁰ Senator Clark asked that the committee call Secretary Morgenthau to appear before it so that he might explain "what the Treasury Department had to do with authorizing the disclosure ... of American military secrets"⁷¹

The following day Morgenthau and Secretary Woodring testified before the committee. Morgenthau said that the President had desired that the French be given access to the Douglas bomber, and when informed of this decision Woodring directed General Arnold to send the authorization for inspection. When Woodring was asked whether the War Department had declined or discouraged the efforts to make the secret plane available to the French, he tried to sidestep the issue by saying all considerations had been discussed. However, in the grueling questioning that followed Woodring revealed that he and his military advisers had opposed the plan.⁷²

The testimony of Morgenthau and Woodring, which revealed that President Roosevelt had been quite willing to make the secret bomber available to the French, caused alarm among a number of Senate Military

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 65.

⁷⁰Arnold, Global Mission, p. 185.

⁷¹Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "To Provide for an Adequate Defense," p. 65.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 112-115.

Affairs Committeemen. The worried Senators asked their chairman, Morris Sheppard, to approach the President and get his side of the story. After visiting the Chief Executive Sheppard reported back that "there was absolutely nothing to worry about." One pessimistic committeeman stated that if the President was that convincing then perhaps the entire committee should go and talk to him. To this proposal Senator Sheppard replied, "That's just what you ought to do."⁷³

On January 31 the entire Senate Military Affairs Committee met with President Roosevelt at the White House. At that time the President surprised and alarmed a number of Senators when, after discussing the menace that Hitler presented to Europe and the world, he said, "Our first line of defense is in France."⁷⁴ He said that France must not be permitted to fall because if it did England would be next and if it fell Germany could then turn its attention to the world sphere. "Therefore," he continued, "it is to our interest to do what we can to help the French and British maintain their independence." The President then vowed to send the two nations anything and everything they could pay for. When asked if such a policy was unneutral Roosevelt replied, "Yes it might be called that," but it was necessary "because self-protection is part of the American policy."⁷⁵

⁷³Gerald P. Nye to Keith McFarland, July 25, 1968.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Transcript of Conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, January 31, 1939, PPF 1-P, Box 262, FDRL.

When asked who actually authorized the French Mission to see the Douglas bomber the President answered:

You need not worry about who authorized that order I am frankly hoping that the French will be able to get the fastest pursuit planes ... and the best bombers they can buy in this country. It is not a question of secrecy. We have just one secret and that is the question of a bomb sight and that has not been disclosed to the French and won't. And I hope to God they get the planes and get them fast and get them over there in France. It may mean the saving of our civilization.⁷⁶

To the isolationist senators present at the White House conference the President's remarks were cause for real alarm. Instead of being convinced that they should curtail their current investigation and support the sale of planes to France, they felt that the President was pursuing a policy that was unwise and dangerous. Unwise because it would take airplanes and other valuable military supplies, which might ultimately be needed by the United States Army, out of the country. Dangerous because such sales might draw the country into a European conflict, much as it had during the World War.⁷⁷

Although the Senators attending the January 31 meeting had pledged themselves to secrecy, that pledge was immediately broken by a few isolationists who were convinced that the President's policy would lead the nation into war. On February 1 the New York Times reported that President Roosevelt had told the conferees "to regard France as

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 133.

the actual frontier of America in a ... showdown between democracies and dictatorships."⁷⁸ Immediately there developed widespread criticism of what was called an extension of the American frontier to the Rhineland. The reaction to the President's alleged statement became so bitter that on February 3 Roosevelt called a news conference at which time he branded as a "deliberate lie" the claims that he had said the Rhine was the United States frontier or anything to that effect.⁷⁹

The isolationist senators had forced the President to back down on his Rhine statement but they were not through. Seeing an opportunity to embarrass the Chief Executive, they continued their investigation of the Douglas bomber matter for another two weeks. During that period the Military Affairs Committee, meeting in secret sessions, again called on Woodring, Morgenthau, Johnson and a number of military leaders to rehash the entire story of the French Air Mission.⁸⁰ On February 16 the committee concluded its investigation and on the following day began releasing portions of the testimony. The following day the New York Times reported that the released transcripts revealed that "President Roosevelt authorized the demonstration of the Douglas bomber ... against the judgement and over the protest of the War Department"⁸¹

⁷⁸New York Times, February 1, 1939.

⁷⁹The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939 volume, pp. 112-113.

⁸⁰Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "To Provide for an Adequate Defense," pp. 197-227.

⁸¹New York Times, February 17, 1939.

In mid-March the French Mission placed an order for 300 military planes including one hundred Douglas and one hundred Martin bombers. The limited production capacity of the American aircraft industry had kept the order from approaching the 1,000 planes originally expected.⁸² On March 23 the Mission returned to France and the controversy surrounding it ended as quickly as it had begun.

As far as Secretary Woodring was concerned, the events surrounding the French Air Mission were significant in that they showed his determination to assure United States defense superiority and a desire to be neutral in deed. The Secretary of War had opposed release of the Douglas bomber for two basic reasons. First, he wanted to make certain that his country and it alone had the best military planes; therefore, he did not want to "give away" to any foreign nation America's latest aircraft. Second, he wished to live up to the spirit of the Neutrality Act. Although Woodring frequently expressed moral support and sympathy for the democratic nations and antagonism toward the fascist countries,⁸³ he did not feel that when it came to the inspection, sale or release of arms, ammunition, or implements of war the War Department was "empowered, per se, to discriminate between friendly foreign

⁸²Haight, "Roosevelt as Friend of France," Foreign Affairs Quarterly, April, 1966, p. 525.

⁸³New York Times, May 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, 19, 21, 1938. Foreign Policy Bulletin, June 10, 1938, p. 4. Army and Navy Journal, May 14, 1938. Army and Navy Register, May 7, 1938.

governments,"⁸⁴ a friendly foreign government being any nation not at war with the United States. Officially, Woodring drew no line between the aggressor and the victims of aggression. He told the Senate Military Affairs Committee that he interpreted the Neutrality Act to mean that "any Government has the right to come here and negotiate and purchase on a cash and carry basis ... and no matter what the Government is, we will under that Act ... and as a policy, in the spirit of the law ... handle any country and every country on the same basis"⁸⁵

Secretary Woodring was more than willing to sell military aircraft to France, but he felt that that nation must be governed by the same rules and regulations that applied to all other nations. Therefore, he did not wish to show members of the French Mission planes which were still classified as military secrets. These views ran counter to those of President Roosevelt and so Woodring was overruled. Although the President was upset by Woodring's opposition to the release of the Douglas bomber to France, the publicity which surrounded the affair after the January 23 crash made it impossible for him to dismiss his Secretary of War without bringing the wrath of the isolationists upon him.

⁸⁴ Assistant Secretary of War to Secretary of Navy, December 9, 1935, Box 78, Foreign Governments - Sale of Material, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-42, NA, RG 107.

⁸⁵ Senate Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 1st Session, "Purchase of Implements of War by Foreign Governments," p. 10.

Prior to the summer of 1939, Secretary Woodring encouraged foreign nations to purchase American-produced planes, arms, and military equipment. Although Woodring did not want the War Department to become a "purchasing adviser for foreign governments," he did want to see American war industries expanded and he felt the best way to bring that about was by increased foreign orders. For that reason the Secretary of War directed his Department to do all it could to put foreign purchasers in touch with American producers.⁸⁶ Representatives from nations throughout the world from Australia to Argentina and Belgium to Bolivia were authorized to visit American aircraft factories, and Secretary Woodring approved the sale of any model plane to any country requesting it as long as it was no longer classified as a military secret.⁸⁷ However, when a "secret" was involved or when a request was made to release a certain aircraft or other weapon before the set release date, Woodring refused to back down.⁸⁸ Only when the President overruled him did the Secretary of War make exceptions. Although Woodring was not neutral in thought he did all he could to be neutral in deed.

⁸⁶Woodring to Secretary of the Navy, January 6, 1939, Box 2-A, Airplanes, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

⁸⁷See numerous letters in folders entitled "Foreign Government Official Visits," Box 78 and "International Traffic in Arms," Box 102, Secretary of War 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

⁸⁸Woodring to Secretary of State Hull, April 22, 1939. Johnson to Secretary Hull, April 1, 1939, Box 102, International Traffic in Arms, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

By the summer of 1939 the threat of war in Europe resulted in the United States Government receiving numerous requests, especially from Britain and France, for airplanes and other war supplies. On July 5 the President gave to the Army and Navy Munitions Board the task of coordinating all foreign purchases. The Board established a Clearance Committee whose responsibility was to gather information on all foreign orders and then after determining which orders could be filled decided where to place the orders so they could best promote American arms and aircraft industries. The establishment of the Clearance Committee did two things. First, it enabled foreign orders to be secured more quickly than ever before since the foreign governments no longer wasted time establishing contacts and negotiating with American producers. Second, orders were distributed to producers in a manner best calculated to build up and strengthen war industries.⁸⁹ For example, if one aircraft company had been receiving more orders than it could possibly handle and another such company had been idle because of insufficient orders, the Clearance Committee could send any new aircraft orders to the second plant, thereby insuring that it would have modern equipment and trained personnel should an emergency arise and rapid expansion be necessary.

In the early morning hours of September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland and within a few days all Europe was at war. Roosevelt responded by applying an embargo to all the belligerents. He then called

⁸⁹Leighton and Coakley, Global Logistics ... 1940-1943, p. 30.

Congress into special session and on September 21 asked for immediate repeal of the arms embargo provision of the Neutrality Act. On November 3 after six weeks of bitter debate the request was granted with the requirement that all sales of arms, ammunition and implements of war had to be on a cash and carry basis.

Secretary Woodring was pleased with the embargo repeal. As early as July 17 he had written to the House Foreign Affairs Committee that "the arms embargo provision does not actually advance the cause of neutrality and may under some conditions, serve to involve us in war rather than to accomplish its purpose of keeping us out." Therefore, he asked for repeal.⁹⁰

When repeal actually came it meant something different to Secretary Woodring than it did to President Roosevelt. To the Secretary of War it meant that the American arms and aircraft industries could grow and expand as a result of increased foreign orders and, therefore, be better equipped to produce for the United States Army should war come.⁹¹ The President, however, saw repeal as an opportunity to help Britain and France arm so that they could successfully meet the Nazi onslaught.

With the repeal of the arms embargo there came a new flood of orders from Britain and France for military aircraft and other

⁹⁰ Woodring to Representative Sol Bloom, Acting Chairman House Foreign Affairs Committee, July 17, 1939, Box 102, International Traffic, Secretary of War General Correspondence 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

⁹¹ Ibid.

implements of war. On November 7 Britain established a Purchasing Commission to facilitate the procurement of American goods. About the same time France set up a similar body but after a few weeks the two groups agreed to merge and form the Anglo-French Purchasing Commission. With a single purchasing mission Britain and France no longer found themselves bidding against each other for American war goods.⁹²

By the end of November it was evident that the Clearance Committee of the Army and Navy Munitions Board could not keep up with the work imposed by the increased foreign requests. Therefore, on December 6 Roosevelt created the President's Liaison Committee to handle all foreign orders. Remembering the reluctance with which Woodring and Johnson had accepted the French Air Mission the year before, the President organized the committee so that the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of War had no control over foreign sales. The President chose Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau to serve as liaison between foreign purchasers and American producers. In this position Morgenthau had a tremendous responsibility because he not only had to see that Britain and French received the implements of war that they so drastically needed, but he also had to see that the United States rearmament program did not suffer as a result of the foreign orders. The Treasury Secretary carried out this dual responsibility until May of 1940 when the President replaced the Liaison Committee with the National Defense Advisory Commission.⁹³

⁹²Stettinius, Lend-Lease, pp. 20-21.

⁹³Ibid.

Secretary of War Woodring was vitally interested in the United States maintaining strict neutrality because he believed that was the only way for the country to avoid war. He was afraid that if the country followed an unneutral policy and aided the Allies the ultimate result would be entrance into a war on their side. Therefore, Woodring did everything he could to see that the United States government and especially the War Department followed a neutral policy when dealing with all foreign governments. An examination of Woodring's actions in dealing with the Helium Controversy, Spanish Civil War, the March, 1938, French and British Air Missions and the December, 1938, French Air Mission reveal his efforts to see that all nations were treated in a fair and equal manner. He tried to make neutrality a reality.

Beginning in 1938 Woodring's desire to be entirely neutral came into conflict with the views of President Roosevelt, who made no secret of his desire to assist Britain and France. The President had come to feel that the best way to avoid war was to help the European democracies defeat Germany so that the United States would not have to become involved. Throughout 1938 and 1939 the President and his Secretary of War were in frequent conflict over the issue of neutrality but the worst was yet to come. The first six months of 1940 brought the controversy to a head and played a large part in Woodring's removal from the Secretaryship in June of 1940. Those critical six months will be examined in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VII

WAR IN EUROPE CREATES THE NEED FOR AN "ARMY IN BEING"

By mid-summer of 1939 Secretary Woodring and his War Department advisers were generally satisfied with developments at home and abroad. Congress had just approved a substantial increase in Army strength, appropriated considerable funds for additional "critical and essential war supplies," and approved the largest operating budget ever made available to the Army during peacetime. Along with these developments there appeared to be a declining possibility of war in Europe. The growing optimism in government circles over events in Europe was expressed in June by President Roosevelt when he said, "Last winter I thought the chances of war were about three to two, but now they seem to be even."¹ With the relaxing of world tensions and with no pressing problems facing him, Woodring decided to get away from Washington. Therefore, on August 3 he set out with his family on a two week trip to Panama.²

When Woodring departed the United States, the international scene appeared relatively calm, but that condition soon changed. In

¹Louis B. Wehle, Hidden Threads of History: Wilson Through Roosevelt (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), pp. 219-220.

²New York Times, August 4, 1939.

mid-August Hitler succeeded in engineering a non-aggression pact with Russia. With that agreement Germany could attack Poland without fear of becoming involved in a two front war. Although the official announcement of the pact did not come until August 21, President Roosevelt and the State Department learned of its existence on August 16.³

On August 17 Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles called Acting Secretary of War Johnson, Acting Secretary of Navy Edison and a few other officials from the State, War and Navy Departments together to inform them of the German-Russian pact. At that time Welles told the group, "The European situation is so bad that I think we ought to be ready for the worst."⁴ Johnson immediately passed the information on to General Marshall, who ordered the General Staff to prepare a detailed plan of action to be taken when war came.⁵ On August 19 Woodring returned to Washington and assisted in the preparation of the War Department's recommendations. A few days later the Secretary presented to the President a number of measures which the Army felt should be taken if and when war broke out in Europe.⁶

³Alsop and Kintner, American White Paper, p. 54.

⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁵Secretary General Staff for Assistant Chief's of Staff, August 18, 1939, Chief of Staff, 21060-8, NA, RG 165.

⁶Memorandum for the President from Secretary Woodring, August, 1939, Box 39, PSF, War Department, 1933-1945, FDRL.

The proposed measures were divided into two categories. First, "Immediate Action Measures," which the President could initiate without Congressional action; and second, "Measures Requiring Congressional Authorization or Appropriations." More specifically the measures asked that the authorized strength of the Regular Army be increased from 210,000 to 280,000 and the strength of the National Guard be raised from 190,000 to 280,000. It was also proposed that all necessary equipment and a year's supply of munitions be provided for the Initial Protective Force and that certain "critical items" be procured to further implement the Protective Mobilization Plan. Additional aircraft and increased training for National Guard units were also requested. In presenting these proposals to the President, Secretary Woodring indicated they were not mobilization steps but were measures necessary "to place the Regular Army and the National Guard in a condition of preparedness suitable to the present disturbed world situation."⁷ Since the measures urged were to be taken only in case of war and could only be implemented by the President, it was uncertain whether they would be carried out.

Having made the Army's desires known to the President, the Secretary of War turned his attention to the Panama Canal. Woodring's deep interest in the canal extended back to 1936, when he became convinced that it was "the vital link in our chain of national defense."⁸ He

⁷Ibid.

⁸New York Times, August 20, 1939.

believed that the canal was of such great importance because the defense of the continental United States rested on the ability of the fleet to move quickly between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. If the canal were to be closed it would seriously jeopardize the nation's ability to defend itself. Therefore, the Secretary considered the canal's protection to be "of utmost importance to our national security."⁹

It was the matter of canal security which led Woodring to embrace the concept of hemisphere defense. The Secretary admitted that he did not visualize hemisphere defense as a Pan-American protective alliance, but as a United States defense measure. According to Woodring, "Any hostile air base established anywhere within effective striking distance of the Panama Canal would prove a vital threat to that waterway - and therefore a threat to the very security of the United States."¹⁰ Therefore, steps would have to be taken to insure that no such air bases were established.

From the time he became Secretary of War, Woodring stressed the importance of the canal and urged that proper measures be taken to provide for its defense. In 1939 he was the person primarily responsible for getting Congress to appropriate \$30,000,000 for air bases, harbor

⁹Woodring to Roosevelt, December 1938, Box 38, PSF, Woodring, FDRL.

¹⁰Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1939, p. 2.

defenses and anti-aircraft guns for the Canal Zone.¹¹ That same year Woodring achieved a hollow victory when Congress, heavily influenced by his testimony, authorized the construction of a third set of canal locks, but failed to appropriate the funds necessary for their construction.¹²

As war approached Europe in late August, 1939, Woodring became quite concerned over the safety of the canal. What he feared was not an air attack but sabotage.¹³ The Secretary worried that a German, Japanese or Italian crew might destroy a ship inside a lock and thereby block the canal. In order to reduce the possibility of any such attempt at sabotage, Secretary Woodring began on August 28 to advise canal authorities of the nationality makeup of the crews of ships about to go through the canal.¹⁴ This led to close observation of those ships which had crewmen from the Axis nations. On August 29 the Secretary directed that an Army guard be placed on every ship going through the canal.¹⁵ It was hoped that the presence of the military guards would discourage any attempts at sabotaging the ships while in the canal.

¹¹Pearson and Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, December 20, 1939.

¹²Army and Navy Journal, August 5, 12, 1939.

¹³Army and Navy Register, March 18, 1939.

¹⁴Memorandum for the Adjutant General from Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, August 28, 1939 and copies of Radiograms sent to Panama Canal Department, WPD 4191, NA, RG 165.

¹⁵New York Times, August 30, 1939.

At a few minutes after three o'clock on the morning of September 1, 1939, Secretary Woodring received a phone call from President Roosevelt, who informed him that Germany had just attacked Poland. Within thirty minutes Woodring and Chief of Staff Marshall were at the Secretary's office discussing what action had to be taken immediately. The first thing done was to notify the Military Commander of the Canal Zone to take extra precautions to assure the safety of the canal.¹⁶ Next the Commanding Generals of the nine Corps areas and the Hawaiian, Philippine and Puerto Rican Departments were advised of the German attack and ordered to take any necessary precautions.¹⁷

The days immediately following the German attack were especially hectic for Secretary Woodring. Frequent trips to the White House to confer with the President and numerous conferences with State, War and Navy officials consumed most of his time. A problem to which the Secretary devoted considerable attention was reinforcement of the canal's defenses. By the tenth of the month Woodring had ordered several thousand troops to supplement the 15,000 already there and plans were made to raise the total strength to 22,000. In addition, more than thirty aircraft, all that could be spared at the time, were sent, and

¹⁶Harlan Miller, "Over the Coffee," Washington Post, April 8, 1940. Memorandum for Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff, September 1, 1939, AG 380.3 (9-1-39) NA, RG 407.

¹⁷Memorandum for Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff, September 1, 1939, AG 380.3 (9-1-39) NA, RG 407.

arrangements were made to increase the air strength from 150 to 300 planes as soon as possible.¹⁸

Increasing the air and ground strength in the Canal Zone were matters on which Woodring could take direct action. Two other things which he desired could only be done by the President. The first thing the Secretary wanted was to have the control of the canal transferred from the Civil Governor to the Military Commander so that the latter could better coordinate local defense matters. On September 5 the President, acting upon Woodring's recommendation, issued an Executive Order placing the military in charge of all activities in the Canal Zone.¹⁹ Over this matter there was no controversy, but on the Secretary's second request there developed a bitter controversy.

On September 1 Secretary Woodring asked the President for authority to let the Army inspect every ship desiring to pass through the canal. The purpose of the inspection was to see that no ship was carrying explosives or other devices that could be used to destroy it when it was passing through the locks. Woodring's proposal was bitterly opposed by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles who argued that such action might be interpreted by some nations as unjustified harassment and consequently develop into a point of bitter controversy between the United States and the offended nation. Woodring answered Welles' argument by claiming that no nation would have a right to complain since

¹⁸New York Times, September 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 1939.

¹⁹Army and Navy Register, September 9, 1939.

all ships, regardless of the country from which they came, would be inspected. Furthermore, the Secretary added, any protests which might be received were a small price to pay for the security which the inspections afforded the canal.²⁰ The Secretary of War's arguments carried the day, and on September 5 the President issued an order granting the Army the authority to make the inspections.²¹

Defense of the Panama Canal was just one of many problems facing Secretary Woodring in September of 1939. The Secretary had hoped that once war started in Europe the President would take action to implement the measures which the General Staff had drawn up in August. To Woodring's disappointment that hope did not come true.

The question of a troop increase was of primary concern in early September. Woodring and General Marshall considered it essential that the authorized strength of the Regular Army be increased by 70,000 so as to bring the total figure to 280,000. As far as the National Guard was concerned, they believed an increase from 190,000 to 280,000 was necessary.²² When such increases were discussed with the President he made clear that he would not accept them. Woodring pointed out that

²⁰Interviews with Helen C. Woodring, July 20, December 29, 1968. New York Times, September 6, 1939.

²¹Executive Order 8234, September 6, 1939 in Federal Register, September 7, 1939, p. 3823.

²²Memorandum for the President from Secretary Woodring, August, 1939, Box 39, PSF, War Department, 1933-1945, FDRL.

even if the desired figures were approved it would still only bring the Regular Army up to the peacetime strength provided for in the National Defense Act of 1920.²³ The President, however, stood by his initial decision, and on September 8 he proclaimed a "limited national emergency" and issued an Executive Order which authorized a Regular Army strength of 227,000, an increase of only 17,000. The same order provided for the National Guard to add 45,000 men instead of the 90,000 which Woodring asked for.²⁴ When in private Woodring expressed his disappointment over the small increases that the President had granted, Roosevelt told him that under the present conditions such an increase was "all the public would be ready to accept without undue excitement." The President did, however, assure Woodring and Marshall that more troops would soon be authorized.²⁵

Other steps taken by the President to meet the "limited national emergency" were just as feeble as the troop increases. A very modest \$12,000,000 was made available for additional motor vehicles but virtually no additional funds were made available for "critical and

²³Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 157.

²⁴Army and Navy Journal, September 9, 1939.

²⁵Memorandum Chief of Staff to Deputy Chief of Staff, September 8, 1939, AG 320.2 (9-8-39) NA, RG 407.

essential" items or for additional training. The only other action taken by the President which approached the recommendations submitted in August was the provision for additional training for the National Guard.²⁶

In spite of the President's refusal to provide or even ask Congress for anywhere near that which the Army had requested, Woodring and Marshall did not give up hope because by mid-September they sensed a growing sentiment in Congress for adequate defense. Evidence of this feeling can be seen in a September 20 letter from Major James McIntyre, the War Department's liaison officer with Congress, to General Marshall. McIntyre stated that after sounding out a number of Congressmen he believed "that now is the time to ask for everything the War Department needs."²⁷ With such encouragement the General Staff prepared an \$850,000,000 armament program which embodied most of the things asked for in the list of "Immediate Action Measures" which had been presented to the President in August.²⁸

In early October Secretary Woodring presented the new plan to the President and asked that it be implemented immediately. Roosevelt claimed that such vast expenditures were completely out of the question.

²⁶Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 157.

²⁷Ibid., p. 161.

²⁸Ibid.

To this Woodring replied that the nation's defense needs would have to be placed first, even if it meant violating the law by creating a financial deficit. Then the Secretary said, "Mr. President, I would rather be impeached for providing the country with means of defense, than impeached in time of emergency for failure to make such provision."²⁹ In spite of such pleas the President refused to go along with the program recommended by his Secretary of War and Chief of Staff. In late October Roosevelt decided to ask Congress for a \$120,000,000 supplemental appropriation for the Army.³⁰ This represented less than 15 per cent of the amount sought by the War Department.

Secretary Woodring was quite upset that the President had not seen fit to ask Congress for the men and material that the Army considered necessary to carry out its mission. The President felt that the Army was asking for too much but Woodring considered the requests both reasonable and necessary. The Secretary of War was not one to seek that which was not needed and he impressed that idea on his subordinates. He continually told the General Staff, "We must not take the position of grabbing all we can just because the grabbing is good, but rather ask for what we need to make the military establishment what it should be."³¹ The War Department had presented a program for increased

²⁹Army and Navy Journal, October 14, 1939.

³⁰New York Times, November 1, 1939. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 162.

³¹Army and Navy Register, November 18, 1939.

military readiness which it considered essential and which Secretary Woodring did not consider excessive, but the President was not yet ready to accept such a program.

With no hope of getting more than \$120,000,000 in supplemental funds for the current fiscal year, Woodring, in late October, turned his attention to the Army program for fiscal year 1941. As the General Staff prepared that program the Secretary of War adopted and began to put into effect a plan to bring about its acceptance. Whereas the contents of the \$850,000,000 program proposed in October had been known only to War Department Officials and the President, the Secretary's new strategy was to give the new program as much publicity as possible. Woodring felt that by letting Congress and the public know what the Army needed and how much it would cost he would be able to stimulate interest and support for the new program.³²

The first thing the Secretary felt he had to do in order to sell the new program was to convince people that he was a peace loving man that advocated strengthening the Army for defensive purposes only. Woodring went a long way to achieving that goal when he made a speech before the National Guard Association on October 27. In that speech Woodring started off by saying, "In all sincerity and in all honesty let me tell you there is no man in public life today who is more determined than your Secretary of War that your sons and my sons shall

³²Although Woodring did not actually state his new strategy, his actions of November and December reveal his intention to give the new program the widest possible publicity.

not march forth to war!" He then went on to claim that while the security of the United States did not demand a military force larger than the peacetime strength provided by the National Defense Act, it did "demand the maintenance of an Army in being at all times. This force must be fully, perfectly equipped and adequately trained at all times"³³

Woodring had hoped that his statement concerning an "Army in being" would be that part of the speech which was remembered, however it was his phrase that American "sons shall not march forth to war" that was singled out and widely publicized. The speech caused columnist Ernest Lindley to write: "For those who believe that this war in Europe is not our war and that we should keep out of it, no matter which side wins or loses, October 27 must be underlined." Lindley then proceeded to discuss the speech, after which he reported that Woodring had vowed to his friends that, "No American boys will be sent to fight on European soil so long as I am Secretary of War."³⁴

Nationwide news coverage along with Lindley's column on the October 27 speech convinced many Americans of Woodring's desire to arm strictly for defensive purposes. The publicity also did much to endear him to those individuals in Washington and throughout the country who tended toward an isolationist policy. Although the isolationists never

³³Army and Navy Journal, October 28, 1939.

³⁴Ernest Lindley, "Pax Americana," Washington Post, October 28, 1939.

counted Woodring among their number and while he never considered himself one of them, there is no doubt that they shared identical views when it came to the war in Europe. In fact one of Woodring's statements, "Every man and every dollar necessary for the defense of America, but not one man, not one dollar to fight the wars of other nations,"³⁵ could well have served as the isolationist creed.

Having convinced many Americans that any readiness program he might advocate would be solely for defense, Woodring was ready to set forth the new program. By early November the Secretary of War, Chief of Staff and General Staff had decided on the broad outlines of the program but the detailed plans still had to be worked out. In early November Woodring held conferences with key members of the House Military Affairs Committee and Appropriations sub-committee to explain the Army's needs.³⁶ The Secretary of War recommended that the Regular Army be increased to 280,000 men, but he said that even more important than the number of troops was the need to provide them proper training and equipment. Woodring warned the Congressmen against authorizing a large force and then failing to provide funds to supply and train it. He then went on to explain the two objectives which the Army hoped to achieve: "(1) An Initial Protective Force complete in organization, training and equipment and (2) such organization, training and equipment

³⁵Army and Navy Journal, October 28, 1939.

³⁶Army and Navy Journal, November 4, 1939.

to contemplate Hemispherical Defense in order that American defense may be assured."³⁷

When several Congressmen expressed concern about the high cost of fulfilling the objectives, Woodring replied, "It is time that national defense shall be determined on the basis of our needs and not on a dollar and cents basis."³⁸ Those House members with whom the Secretary talked seemed to be impressed with his views and reasoning and they indicated a willingness to support his upcoming requests.³⁹ To further enhance Congressional understanding of the Army's needs, the War Department arranged for a total of eighteen members of the Senate and House Military Affairs and Appropriations Committees to make a month long inspection tour of military installations throughout the United States and the Canal Zone.⁴⁰ Most but not all of the Congressmen returned from the trip convinced of the need to materially strengthen the Army.

The Secretary of War made the Army's objectives known not only to Congressmen but to the public as well. Throughout November and December Woodring utilized public speeches and interviews with reporters to expound on what the Army needed and hoped to get from the next Congress.⁴¹

³⁷Army and Navy Journal, November 11, 1939.

³⁸Army and Navy Journal, November 4, 1939.

³⁹Army and Navy Journal, November 11, 1939.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Army and Navy Journal, November 11, 1939. Army and Navy Register, December 9, 1939, January 6, 1940.

He made clear to the press his determination to have "1,000 per cent perfection in training, 1,000 per cent perfection in equipment, motorized and mechanized, [and] 1,000 per cent in air provision," even if it was costly.⁴²

By mid-November the General Staff completed a detailed armament program, which Woodring approved and forwarded to the Bureau of the Budget and the President so that it could be utilized in preparing the annual budget message. In addition to normal operating expenses, the program provided supplemental estimates for "critical and essential items" and arsenal and depot facilities. The cost of the entire program was 1.5 billion dollars.⁴³ In late December the President decided that the War Department plan was too costly and, after consulting not with the Secretary of War but the Bureau of the Budget, came to the conclusion that a \$853,000,000 Army budget would be adequate for fiscal year 1941.⁴⁴ Woodring's request for additional supplies and training had once again been rejected by the President.

In spite of this setback Woodring still had hope of rallying support for his Department's program. He intended to do that by utilizing one of the strongest propaganda devices - the Secretary of War's Annual Report. The report, which was released on December 27, was short and concise. After quickly reviewing the progress made by the Army in the

⁴²Army and Navy Journal, November 11, 1939, p. 225.

⁴³Kreidberg and Henry, History of Military Mobilization, p. 565.

⁴⁴House Hearings, Committee on Appropriations, 76th Congress 3rd Session, "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill For 1941," p. 14. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 163-164.

past several years, Secretary Woodring told of three needs. First, the need to further strengthen the defenses of the Panama Canal. Second, the need for a strong Air Corps. Then he came to the third point, the one which he emphasized most. He said that he was making no recommendation as to military strength since that was a decision for Congress to make. However, he did say that every American fighting man:

must be afforded complete equipment, clothing, supplies, subsistence, transportation, training, and instruction to prepare them for any eventuality presupposed by any military exigency. Whatever ... the size of our Army ... I must urgently insist that that force ... be complete as to personnel, as to material, and that it be 100 per cent efficient as to training. Our Military Establishment must be an "Army in being!"⁴⁵

From this time on Secretary Woodring always cited an "Army in being" as his goal.

Woodring hoped that a favorable public reaction to his report might convince the President to change his mind and restore some of the requests made by the Army. Such a reaction never occurred. The newspapers carried accounts of the report on the back pages and failed to comment on it in their editorials.⁴⁶ As a last hope the Secretary turned to radio where on December 31 he gave a speech in which he said virtually the same things mentioned in his annual report.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁵ Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1939, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁶ New York Times, December 28, 1939. Washington Post, December 27, 1939.

⁴⁷ Army and Navy Register, January 6, 1940.

broadcast received even less comment than the report. All of Woodring's efforts to create public support for the program had failed and he still could not convince President Roosevelt of the need for more Army funds. Therefore, when the President presented Congress with the proposed Army budget for fiscal year 1941 it was only for \$853,000,000 or about 55 per cent of what Woodring had fought for.⁴⁸

Roosevelt's refusal to accept the War Department's program was in all likelihood influenced by a strong nationwide sentiment that the United States should avoid involvement in the European war at all cost. The President probably feared a public reaction against large military expenditures.⁴⁹ Furthermore, there was considerable pressure from Republican Congressmen to hold down all government expenditures.⁵⁰ Still another factor was the conduct of the European war. As the war assumed a "phony" character in the late fall of 1939, alarm over the Nazi menace began to decline.

Regardless of the reason for the President's decision, the fact remained that he had asked Congress for only about half as much money as the Army had requested. Almost immediately Woodring indicated that he considered the proposed budget inadequate, but he did so in such a

⁴⁸House Hearings, Committee on Appropriations, 76th Congress 3rd Session, "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill For 1941," p.14.

⁴⁹Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 157.

⁵⁰House Hearings, Committee Appropriations, 76th Congress 3rd Session, "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill For 1941," pp. 28, 37-38.

way as to not sound insubordinate. On January 16 he appeared before the House Military Affairs Committee where he discussed the strength and weaknesses of the Army. He maintained that the Army budget proposed by the President was "a wise step toward the fulfillment of our objectives;" however, he added, "It does not provide for the deficiency of some \$300,000,000 worth of critical ordnance and engineer items and a smaller amount of other less critical munitions for the 3/4 million men in the Protective Mobilization Plan."⁵¹

In late February the House opened its hearings on Army appropriations. General Marshall served as the primary War Department spokesman and did a fine job of explaining the Army's needs.⁵² Unfortunately for the Army, the "phony war" had cooled the enthusiasm of a number of Congressmen who a few months before had been so willing to strengthen the Army. Thus, on April 4 the House responded by cutting the President's request from \$853,000,000 to \$785,000,000.⁵³ The measure was then sent to the Senate for action, but before it could be considered, events in Europe were to cause a radical change in American thinking.

On April 9, 1940, the phony war came to an end as German troops attacked Norway and Denmark. Suddenly many Americans who had not previously shown an interest in national defense wanted to know what could

⁵¹Army and Navy Journal, January 20, 1940.

⁵²House Hearings, Committee on Appropriations, 75th Congress 3rd Session, "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill For 1941," pp. 2-48.

⁵³New York Times, April 5, 1939.

be done to provide for the nation's security. A large number of Congressmen began asking not how much a sound Army, Air Corps and Navy would cost but how soon they could be provided.⁵⁴ On April 30 the Senate, with a new sense of urgency, opened its hearings on the Army Appropriations Bill.

Ten days after the Senate hearings opened Germany attacked the Low Countries of Belgium and Holland and then moved into France. With that attack President Roosevelt, who just the day before had received a memorandum from Woodring asking for additional war materials,⁵⁵ decided that the time had indeed come to materially strengthen the Army.⁵⁶ After five days of hectic conferences a plan was worked out, and on May 16 the President asked Congress to grant the Army \$546,000,000 more than he had previously requested. The new funds, Roosevelt, said would be used "to procure the essential equipment of all kinds for a larger and thoroughly rounded-out Army."⁵⁷ Specifically, he asked for an increase in Regular Army strength from 227,000 to 255,000 and for the equipment and munitions required for a Protective Mobilization Force of

⁵⁴House Hearings, Committee on Appropriations, 76th Congress 3rd Session, "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill For 1941," pp. 28-32, 55-58.

⁵⁵Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 167.

⁵⁶Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 138.

⁵⁷The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940 volume, p. 202.

750,000.⁵⁸ At last the President had asked Congress for some of the important things Woodring had been advocating for the past eight months.⁵⁹

By mid-May alarm over the German advance through the Low Countries made the Senate willing to go even further than the President had suggested. On May 22 it passed a \$1.5 billion Army Appropriations Bill. The House responded to the new state of affairs by scrapping its April 4 Bill and adopting the Senate version. On June 13 the President signed the Bill and the \$1.5 billion appropriation became a reality.⁶⁰

As large as the June appropriation was, it was quickly followed by additional grants. President Roosevelt had no sooner made his May 16 defense speech than he realized the need for even further military spending. Therefore, during the last week of May the President and General Marshall discussed the Army's additional needs and their cost. Secretary Woodring, for reasons to be discussed in the following chapter, was now out of favor at the White House and thus played virtually no role in these discussions. On May 31 Roosevelt asked Congress for still another \$700,000,000 for the Army. Again they responded with more than requested, this time approving a \$821,000,000 appropriation.⁶¹

⁵⁸Senate Hearings, Committee on Appropriations, 76th Congress 3rd Session, "Military Establishment Appropriations Bill For 1941," pp. 405-406.

⁵⁹Army and Navy Journal, May 18, 1940.

⁶⁰New York Times, May 23, June 13, 15, 1940.

⁶¹The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940 volume, p. 253.

This measure, which became law on June 25, along with the June 13 measure provided \$2.3 billion for the Army for fiscal year 1941. At last the War Department had enough money to create an "Army in being."

Woodring never got the opportunity, however, to make his dream become a reality because on June 19 the President asked for and received his resignation.

Although Secretary Woodring spent a considerable amount of time from September 1939 to June 1940 seeking more money for the Army, there were other ways in which he sought to provide increased military readiness.

One matter which Woodring devoted attention to was that of the reorganization of combat units. For many years there had been talk in military circles of changing the organization of the infantry division. After the outbreak of war in Europe Woodring decided that the long overdue change should take place immediately. In mid-September the Secretary, acting upon the Chief of Staff's recommendation, announced that the 22,000 man "square" infantry division would be replaced by a 9,000 man "triangular" division.⁶² It was felt that new weapons and mechanization would permit such a manpower reduction without a reduction in firepower. Under the new organization, three new divisions were to be formed immediately and two more in the near future. This change in the infantry division was just the beginning of a vast reorganization

⁶²New York Times, September 17, 1939. Army and Navy Journal, September 23, 1939.

program. According to the October 21, 1939 Army and Navy Journal, "The Army has plunged into probably the greatest peacetime reorganization in its history ... sweeping changes are being made in nearly every arm and service."

The new organizations looked good on paper but the Secretary of War was anxious to see how they would really work. Therefore, in October Woodring and General Marshall drafted a field training program that called for extensive exercises at the division and corps level.⁶³ In February and March, 1940, the new infantry and cavalry divisions underwent considerable training and in April the first corps maneuvers since 1918 were held. The following month 70,000 men participated in the first corps versus corps exercises.⁶⁴ These maneuvers were valuable because they showed the "triangular" division to be tactically sound, but they also revealed a serious need for more anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns as well as tanks at the corps level.⁶⁵ The new organization had many shortcomings and it was to take years to overcome some of them, but at least Secretary Woodring had started this badly needed reorganization.

Another problem to which Woodring devoted considerable time was that of eliminating over-age and physically unfit officers. The Secretary knew of many officers who were too old to carry out the physical

⁶³Army and Navy Journal, October 14, 1939.

⁶⁴Army and Navy Journal, April 27, 1940. Millis (ed.), The War Reports, p. 18.

requirements which their grade would place on them should they ever find themselves in a combat situation.⁶⁶ This problem stemmed from promotion stagnation which became acute in the thirties when a large number of officers which had entered the Army during the World War found they could not be promoted because the number of officers waiting to be promoted was large while the number of openings was small. Since promotion was strictly on seniority it meant that a man could not move to the next rank until all others with more time in grade had been promoted.⁶⁷ It was not unusual to find a 40 or 45 year old Captain, not because the man was incapable or inefficient but because there just was no need for Majors. By the late thirties the prospect of remaining in the same grade indefinitely was affecting the morale of many young officers.

To overcome the problem of over-age and unfit officers, Secretary Woodring in April, 1939, initiated a "vitalization" program. The first part of the program centered on the "Woodring Age-in-Grade Plan." This plan, which was originated and developed by the Secretary, called for automatic promotion of an officer after a specific number of years in grade.⁶⁸ The plan was rejected by Congress because it was set up in

⁶⁵Army and Navy Journal, June 1, 1940.

⁶⁶Army and Navy Journal, April 26, 1939.

⁶⁷Army and Navy Register, April 13, 1940.

⁶⁸Ibid., April 26 and May 20, 1939.

such a way that many able bodied officers under 60 would be forced to retire.⁶⁹

When war broke out in the fall of 1939 Woodring urged that his plan be reconsidered and acted upon because it was more important than ever that younger officers find their way into the upper ranks.⁷⁰ He resubmitted the bill; but when opposition was again raised, he agreed to a new plan that provided promotion based on total length of service and grade and did not force the retirement of so many officers. This measure was passed on June 13, 1940.⁷¹

The second part of the "vitalization" program was aimed at those officers who were physically unfit. This was done by giving rigorous physical exams to all those in the grade of Captain and above. Those who failed the exams were then forced to resign or retire.⁷² The "vitalization" program actually had a small effect on the Army because the rapid expansion which began in mid-1940 eliminated the problem of promotion stagnation and the physically unfit were placed in positions where they could still function. The beneficial thing to come from the program was that the passage of the June 13 bill paved the way for the next step in promotion reform - selective advancement. The War Department began working on a promotion system based on merit while Woodring

⁶⁹House Hearings, Committee on Military Affairs, 76th Congress 3rd Session, "Promotion of Promotion List Officers of the Army," pp. 3-4.

⁷⁰Army and Navy Journal, January 13, 1940.

⁷¹Army and Navy Journal, June 15, 1940.

⁷²Army and Navy Journal, May 20, 1939.

was still Secretary but it was not introduced and passed until he had departed.⁷³

In June of 1940 Harry Woodring was forced to resign as Secretary of War. Thus ended seven years of continual effort to provide increased military readiness. Much progress had been made under his leadership, first as Assistant Secretary and then Secretary, and the Army's future looked brighter than ever. Although the strength of the Regular Army was only 257,000, recent authorization and appropriations had just been received to raise that figure to 400,000. Funds had also been provided for "critical and essential" items for a 750,000-man Protective Mobilization Force, and provision had been made to secure 3,000 planes above and beyond the 5,500 already on hand or on order. The combat unit reorganization and a more effective training program were also reasons for optimism.⁷⁴ It seemed as if Woodring's "Army in being" could and soon would become a reality.

The future looked bright, but what was the present status of the Army? How adequate, how prepared, how ready was the United States Army to defend the country when Woodring left office in June of 1940? Perhaps that answer could best be answered by Chief of Staff Marshall, who, in describing the state of the armed forces, wrote: "As an army we were ineffective. Our equipment, modern at the conclusion of the World War, was now, in a large measure obsolescent. In fact the Army

⁷³Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 249.

⁷⁴Army and Navy Journal, June 15, 29, 1940.

[was] virtually ... that of a third rate power."⁷⁵ Other observers shared the same view. In late May, J.G. Norris, the military editor of the Washington Post reported that recent testimony of ranking War Department officials revealed the well known fact that the Army "needed many war planes and pilots ... [and] arms and equipment were sadly lacking in many categories."⁷⁶ In June one Washington reporter wrote: "A gloomy view is taken here of our readiness for war. Our Army is so small, so badly equipped that one military leader asserts, 'I would even go to Munich to get a year or more to prepare.'"⁷⁷ There seems to be no doubt that in June, 1940, the United States Army was far from being an effective military force.

Secretary of War Woodring had labored long and hard to receive the funds necessary to make his "Army in being" a reality, but no sooner had the money been secured than he was forced to leave his post. The large appropriations needed to materially strengthen the Army had been sought by Woodring for several years and he had intensified those

⁷⁵ Although Marshall's statement referred to conditions in the fall of 1939 he proceeded to say that conditions were not much better by June, 1940. Walter Millis (ed.), The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall, General of the Army H.H. Arnold and Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott Company, 1947), pp. 20-21.

⁷⁶ Washington Post, May 26, 1940.

⁷⁷ "Washington View 'Our Vital Interest'," Independent Woman, June, 1940, p. 188.

efforts after war broke out in Europe. However, his pleas to the President, Congress and the public went unheeded. Finally, the German attacks on Norway, Denmark, the Low Countries and France did what Woodring had been unable to do: convince the President and Congress that there should be no further delay in strengthening the Army. While it is true that the Army was quite weak in mid-1940 it was not because Woodring had not made every effort to improve it. If the President had followed the advice of his Secretary of War in the fall of 1939, the country could have been well on its way in June of 1940 to having an "Army in being."

CHAPTER VIII

DELAY AND OBSTRUCTION BRING DISMISSAL

When Britain and France declared war on Germany following the latter's attack on Poland in September, 1939, President Roosevelt issued a proclamation of neutrality and then, as required by the Neutrality Act of 1937, imposed a mandatory arms embargo on all belligerents. A few days later the President, who made no secret of his sympathy for the democratic nations and his desire to aid them, called Congress into special session and asked that legislation be passed which would permit the United States to sell implements of war "abroad." Although the Chief Executive said "abroad" it was clear that he meant Britain and France. On November 3, after six weeks of bitter debate, Congress scrapped the mandatory embargo provision of the Neutrality Act and replaced it with a "cash and carry" policy.

With the way now cleared for the purchase of American produced implements of war, both Britain and France set up purchasing commissions in the United States. When it soon became apparent that the two nations were bidding against each other for the limited supply of war materials, they decided to merge their operations. Thus, in early December a Joint Anglo-French Purchasing Commission was established. About the same time President Roosevelt established a special Liaison Committee whose function was to coordinate the placing of foreign and American

orders with American firms in such a way that the foreign orders did not interfere with the United States rearmament program. Because of his pro-ally sympathies, Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau was selected to serve as liaison between the President and the Committee.¹ The creation of the Liaison Committee and the appointment of Morgenthau as its coordinator were deeply resented by Woodring who felt that matters relating to the sale of military materials and equipment should be under the control of the War Department and not the Treasury.²

The Allies' most critical needs in the winter of 1939-1940 were military aircraft and aircraft engines. In late December Arthur Purvis, head of the Anglo-French Purchasing Commission, informed Morgenthau that a large order would be placed in several months but in the time being the Allies wanted to secure as many military aircraft as they could.³ War and Treasury officials realized that it would be extremely difficult to fulfill a large order because production facilities were so limited and it would take a minimum of nine months to complete the necessary plant expansions. Since the Allies wanted the planes as soon as possible and American manufacturers could not meet the demands of the Army Air Corps and still fill the foreign orders, some sort of priority system would have to be worked out. It was over that priority system that President Roosevelt and Secretary Woodring came into bitter disagreement.

¹See Chapter V.

²John C. O'Laughlin to General Hugh Drum, March 18, 1940, Box 36 O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

³Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, pp. 115, 117.

As early as January, 1939, the President made it quite clear that he wanted to sell the Allies anything they requested as long as it did not violate the Neutrality legislation.⁴ By late December, 1939, he had gone even further, for he was then so determined to fulfill the Allied requests that he was willing to do so at the expense of the United States Army.⁵ The President considered Britain and France to be the nation's first line of defense; therefore, to aid the Allies had first priority and to strengthen United States forces, second.

Secretary Woodring, on the other hand, was opposed to "frittering away" vital war materials by sending them to foreign governments. He felt that the American military machine should be strengthened first, and then aid could be extended to Britain and France.⁶

The difference in the priorities of the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of War stemmed from their particular views on the best way to provide for the nation's security. Roosevelt felt the best policy was to help provide Britain and France with the supplies they needed to defeat Germany. Woodring believed that the country should make its own defenses so strong that no nation would dare attack. The Secretary of War was worried about the disastrous consequences if the United

⁴Transcript of Conference with the Senate Military Affairs Committee, January 31, 1939, PPF 1-P, Box 262, FDRL.

⁵Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 115. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 138.

⁶Army and Navy Journal, July 13, 1940.

States were to impair its military strength by sending war supplies to Britain and France and then those nations were to fall to Germany.⁷ Therefore, he continually advocated that the President reverse his priorities and place United States defense needs first.

It must be kept in mind that in 1940 there was no right or wrong policy when it came to foreign versus domestic priority. Roosevelt bet on his "Ally First " policy and time was to prove that he made the proper decision. Thus, Roosevelt became a hero. Woodring, however, advocated a "United States First" policy and time was to indicate that such a policy might have been fatal to the democratic cause throughout the world. While it is not the place of the historian to speculate as to what might have happened, it is indeed interesting to consider what the present American attitude toward Roosevelt and Woodring might be had Britain been unable to hold out against Germany in 1940.

The story of Woodring's activities in the first six months of 1940 revolves around his disagreements with the President over the questions of supplying American aircraft to the Allies and turning military surplus over to them. The disagreements between the two men became so great that Woodring not only failed to cooperate with the Chief Executive, but even began obstructing his policies. The situation deteriorated to the point that Roosevelt was finally forced to ask his Secretary of War to resign. The Roosevelt-Woodring disagreements

⁷Kansas City Star, June 20, 1940.

reached their peak in June of 1940, but they had been quite evident during the previous six months.

In early January of 1940 Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau, who had recently been made responsible for the coordination of foreign sales of military equipment, approached the President on the problems of aircraft production. Since American aircraft factories could not immediately provide Britain and France with the number of planes they desired, Morgenthau believed that they should be given every other one of the Army and Navy planes currently under production.⁸ The President was unwilling to accept such a proposal but he did agree to give the French twenty-five of the first eighty-one P-40's which the Army was scheduled to receive prior to July. Roosevelt also expressed a desire to have an aircraft industry which could quickly expand its production to 30,000 planes per year, and he and Morgenthau both agreed that Allied purchases could and should be utilized to bring about such expansion.⁹

On January 17 President Roosevelt called Woodring, Morgenthau and Generals Marshall and Arnold to the White House where he "emphasized the necessity for expediting delivery [of aircraft] to the Allies."¹⁰ The President's instructions were not in line with the ideas of War Department officials who had been giving serious consideration to the

⁸ Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 115.

⁹ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁰ Ibid.

difficulties the American aircraft industry would have in fulfilling domestic and foreign orders. As early as January 12 General Arnold had written to Secretary Woodring concerning British and French proposals "to set aside work now being done on Army airplanes to expedite foreign deliveries." Arnold vigorously opposed such a proposal for three reasons: (1) It would delay the completion of the Air Corps Expansion Program; (2) Foreign nations would receive airplanes superior to those of the United States Air Corps; (3) Such action would antagonize and cause difficulty with Congress.¹¹ Secretary Woodring was impressed with Arnold's arguments, especially the first two, and he was to use them time and again as reasons for opposing a policy whereby planes produced for the Air Corps would be made available to the Allies.

The President's instructions of January 17 had little impact in late January and February because the Allied plane requests were relatively small. Then in early March the Anglo-French Purchasing Commission presented the Liaison Committee with the large aircraft order it had previously promised. It called for 10,000 planes and 20,000 engines to be supplied by July, 1941.¹² The Allies naturally wanted the very latest planes that could be produced and Secretary Morgenthau supported them on that matter. Therefore, Morgenthau and Purvis requested that

¹¹Memorandum for the Secretary of War from Chief of Air Corps, January 12, 1940, Box 223, "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

¹²William Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), Vol. I, p. 290.

the War Department release the very latest in aircraft, aircraft engines and super-chargers. Secretary Woodring, upon the advice of his military aides, especially General Arnold, refused to release the items because they were still classified as "secret" and were therefore not eligible for release. Some of the items requested were not yet in production and some were in production but had not yet been turned over to the Army.¹³

Woodring had no intention of releasing the items or of changing the release policy so that they could be turned over. Twice in 1939 the Secretary of War had consented to changes in the aircraft release policy. In the spring he had agreed to lower the time limit for release from one year to six months after delivery of the second production plane. Then in the fall he had approved a new policy which provided that: "Military aircraft will not be released for export until they have become identified as production articles." The 1939 changes made it easier for the Allies to receive more modern planes but they still insured that foreign delivery of one type of aircraft or aircraft engine would not be permitted until a later type was actually being manufactured for the Air Corps.¹⁴ Now in March of 1940 Secretary Woodring was being asked to release to foreign nations airplanes which were more modern than those possessed by his own Army--and that he was unwilling to do.

¹³Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 117.

¹⁴Army and Navy Journal, March 23, 1940.

On March 11 word of the release to France of twenty-five of the new P-40's and of War Department opposition to their release appeared in Washington newspapers, and Representative Dow Harter, head of the Aviation Subcommittee of the Military Affairs Committee, called for an inquiry into the administration's policy on releasing planes for export. Harter said that the purpose of the hearing would be to determine whether Allied purchases were hampering procurement of Army aircraft.¹⁵ Chairman Andrew May of the Military Affairs Committee decided that the hearing would be conducted before the entire group, not just the Aviation Sub-committee. Woodring was summoned to testify on the fourteenth, but he requested and was granted a delay until the twentieth. While the House was preparing for its inquiry, Senator Robert LaFollette Jr., was calling for the Senate to do the same.¹⁶

On March 13 the President, angered by public disclosure of conflict between himself and the War Department over release of military aircraft called Secretary Woodring, Assistant Secretary Johnson, Secretary Morgenthau, Secretary of Navy Charles Edison and General Arnold to the White House. The President informed those present of the need for "cooperation and coordination concerning foreign sales of aircraft and accessories." Roosevelt made it quite clear that he expected no more resistance from the War Department.¹⁷ He also advised that care be

¹⁵Washington Post, March 11, 12, 1940.

¹⁶New York Times, March 14, 1940.

¹⁷Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 117.

used in answering questions before Congressional committees, adding that he had not been pleased with the way in which War Department witnesses had testified in the past. The President then turned to Arnold and said that there were places where officers who do not "play ball" might be sent--like Guam. Following the meeting General Arnold wrote, "It was a party at which apparently the Secretary of War and the Chief of Air Corps were to be spanked and were spanked."¹⁸ The meeting was pleasing to Secretary Morgenthau who was tiring of Army opposition to aiding the Allies.¹⁹

The President had made it clear that he wanted to make it easier for Britain and France to get American built planes. Therefore, it was necessary that the War Department come up with a new aircraft release policy. Following the March 13 White House meeting Woodring asked Generals Marshall and Arnold to develop a plan which would satisfy the President but not endanger the nation's security.

On March 18 Marshall and Arnold presented their recommendations to the Secretary of War. Submitted was a list of all planes currently being produced for the Army. Beside each plane there was an indication of whether it should be retained or released. The planes approved for release for foreign sale were selected in such a way as to insure that

¹⁸Memorandum of Record by General Arnold, March 13, 1940, Box 223, "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

¹⁹Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 117.

the United States Air Corps always retained a better model.²⁰ Woodring approved the plan in principle and asked that it be placed in a form suitable for presentation to the President. This had to be done immediately because the Secretary of War had to get the Chief Executive's approval prior to his appearance before the House Committee on the twentieth. That afternoon Woodring explained the proposed release policy to several members of the House Military Affairs Committee and they indicated that such a plan would be quite acceptable to them.²¹

On the morning of March 19 Secretary Woodring, General Marshall and General Arnold met in the Chief of Staff's office to discuss the new policy. During the course of the conversation there emerged a new idea which was incorporated into the proposed policy. General Marshall indicated that he felt the Army Air Corps had more to gain than to lose if it released its reserve planes to the Allies and received in lieu of the reserve planes later models with improved performance.²² Woodring agreed to such a delay of reserve aircraft but not of the operational requirements or of a small maintenance reserve. At the close of the meeting the Secretary of War summarized the decisions agreed upon:

1. No military secret or secret development should be divulged or released to any foreign purchaser of military aircraft.

²⁰Memorandum of Record by General Arnold, March 16, 18, 1940, Box 223, "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

²¹Ibid., March 19, 1940.

²²Ibid.

2. No American military plane would be released for foreign sale unless or until a superior plane was actually in the process of manufacture for the War Department.
3. The War Department would negotiate change orders on current contracts so it could obtain refined models.
4. No delivery delays would be tolerated in operating requirement needs or in a 15% maintenance reserve, but delivery delays would be accepted on aircraft scheduled for delivery over and above operational requirements plus a 15% maintenance reserve.²³

Since the last two provisions had just come out of the present meeting, Secretary Woodring asked that the conferees plus Assistant Secretary Johnson meet at his office at 7 o'clock that evening to make a final review of the proposed policy before the Secretary took it to the President for approval.

That evening while Woodring and the others were on their way to the meeting they heard radio newscasts which reported that at an afternoon news conference President Roosevelt had said that every American-built military plane would be released for foreign sale. The President's alleged statement caused considerable concern to the conferees because it indicated a policy which was quite different from that which they were about to recommend.²⁴ In order to determine exactly what the President had said a complete transcript of the news conference as well as a ticker tape press account were secured. The detailed accounts

²³Report of meeting held in Chief of Staff's Office, 10:30 A.M., March 19, 1940. Chief of Staff Binder, March, 1940, NA, RG 165.

²⁴Memo of Record (General Arnold) March 19, 1940, Box 223 "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

revealed that the radio reports had been somewhat misleading. The matter of foreign sales had come up at the news conference when a reporter asked the President to clarify the administration's policy on releasing airplanes and armaments for foreign sale. Roosevelt started off by indicating that each case would have to be decided individually. He went on, however, to indicate the vital need for expanding the nation's aircraft productive capacity and added that it could only be achieved with the help of foreign orders. The President also stated that as far as he was concerned an airplane was no longer a military secret once it was under production. The implication of such a statement was that he would therefore have no objection to releasing any "secret" aircraft.²⁵ Roosevelt's statements plus the fact that he made no mention of delayed orders seemed to indicate that he intended to release the latest military planes with no strings attached.²⁶

While those present at the March 19 meeting were discussing what the President had really meant by his statements, Secretary Woodring received a phone call from Roosevelt. The Chief Executive, who had been informed of the move to get the stenographic notes of the press conference, told Woodring that his afternoon statements outlined quite

²⁵The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940
Volume, pp. 104-108.

²⁶Memorandum of Record by General Arnold, March 19, 1940, Box 223, "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

clearly the policy which he intended to follow. Next he stated that if there was anyone who did not go along with his program he would take "drastic" action. Then he issued a warning that he would consider any individual appearing before the House Military Affairs Committee, on the question of release policy, to be on trial as far as any statements he might make. Before Woodring could question his superior or explain the new policy that had been prepared, the President hung up.²⁷ The Secretary of War then informed the group of the President's decision and voiced his dissatisfaction with it. General Arnold, although also disappointed, stated that since the Commander-in-Chief had made his decision, there was nothing to do but implement that decision. For the next three hours those present argued, debated and discussed a new release policy. By 1:00 a.m. they had come to agree on a plan which provided for the release of the latest planes but assured the Air Corps of receiving improved models at a later date.²⁸ Before the meeting adjourned Woodring called Chairman May and asked if his appearance before the House Military Affairs Committee, scheduled for later that morning, could be postponed until March 27. May consented to the Secretary's request.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid. and Army and Navy Journal, April 20, 1940.

²⁸ Memorandum of Record by General Arnold, March 20, 1940, Box 223, "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

²⁹ Army and Navy Register, March 23, 1940.

The following day General Marshall presented the new plan to the President. Roosevelt gave it his tentative approval and told the Chief of Staff to place it in final form. On March 25 Woodring, Johnson and Marshall took a prepared statement on export policy to the White House and got the President's final acceptance.³⁰ Woodring and his military advisers were not too pleased with the new policy, but it was the President's desire and there was nothing they could do about it. One contemporary report described the Army's action on the release matter quite well when it said, "Highest War Department officials swung around to the President's view on selling latest model airplanes to the Allies when they discovered that on that issue Mr. Roosevelt's mind was set and determined."³¹

In late March the Secretary of War set forth and defended the new release policy before the House and Senate Military Affairs Committees. In appearing before the House group on March 27 Woodring explained that the new policy would let the War Department defer the delivery of planes already contracted for so that manufacturers could fill their foreign orders. In return the manufacturers would have to agree to "change orders" in the deferred deliveries so that refinements could be made in the later models. Such a system would thereby assure the Army Air Corps of receiving planes which incorporated the latest developments.

³⁰Government Policy on Aircraft Foreign Sales, March 25, 1940, Box 233, "Aircraft Production 1939-1941," Henry H. Arnold Papers, LC.

³¹United States News, April 5, 1940, p. 40.

Another policy provision was that foreign nations receiving the planes were bound to furnish the Army complete information on the combat performance of the American built planes so that shortcomings could be corrected. In the questioning that followed Woodring assured the committee that the new scheme would not interfere with the procurement of planes needed for Air Corps operational requirements. He also claimed that no secret devices had or would be released.³²

In response to further questions concerning his acceptance of the new policy Secretary Woodring denied published reports that he had been opposed to it. He claimed the entire matter had been worked out with his advisers and without coercion. At that point Representative Arthur Anderson asked, "Is it true that Secretary Morgenthau was responsible for this program?" Before the Secretary of War could reply, Chairman May intervened by rapping his gavel and saying that he did not consider the question appropriate. At May's request Anderson withdrew the question.³³ Thus Woodring was saved from what could have been a very embarrassing situation. Following the Secretary of War's appearance, Assistant Secretary Johnson and Chief of Staff Marshall gave similar testimony. When the hearing ended Chairman May issued a public statement in which he said that the testimony clarified all questions

³²Woodring's Statement Before the House Military Affairs Committee, March 27, 1940, Box 102, "International Traffic," Secretary of War 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

³³New York Times, March 28, 1940. Army and Navy Register, March 30, 1940.

concerning the new aircraft release policy, and the Military Affairs Committee considered it to be quite satisfactory.³⁴

The following day Woodring appeared before the Senate Military Affairs Committee where he said essentially the same things that he had the day before. One new matter arose when the Secretary was asked whether the new planes would be released only to Britain and France or to any nation. To this Woodring replied, "Any Government has the right to come here and negotiate and purchase on a cash and carry basis.

[The War Department] ... will handle any country and every country on the same basis."³⁵ In answering the question affirmatively Woodring was saying the same thing which the President had said several days before;³⁶ however, while Woodring's answer was probably made in good faith, Roosevelt's sincerity would be open to question. When Woodring had finished testifying Johnson and Marshall also spoke in favor of the new policy. At the close of the session the committee, by the narrow margin of 5 to 4, rejected a proposal to conduct a formal investigation into the sale of military aircraft to Britain and France.³⁷

³⁴New York Times, March 28, 1940.

³⁵Senate Military Affairs Committee, 76th Congress 3rd Session, Hearings, "Purchase of Implements of War by Foreign Governments," p. 10.

³⁶The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1940 Volume, p. 108.

³⁷New York Times, March 29, 1940.

In spite of Secretary Woodring's attempts to give the impression that the new release policy had not been a source of conflict the press was well aware of what had been going on. Typical of accounts appearing in news magazines was that of the United States News which said, "The breach between President Roosevelt and his War Secretary is widening near to the breaking point. Argument over the question of supplying latest model military planes to the Allies is really more bitter inside than has appeared on the surface."³⁸ Newspaper columnists Drew Pearson and Robert Allen wrote: "Over the vital question of selling latest types of Army airplanes to the Allies, Secretary of War Woodring was in such disagreement with his Chief that there was a near break in the Cabinet."³⁹ Publisher John C. O'Laughlin who was in frequent contact with the Secretary of War during this period, reported to General Pershing that a break had been avoided only because Woodring "surrendered, and he did so in order to hold on to his job."⁴⁰

On March 25 Secretary Woodring had agreed to accept the new release policy and even had defended it before the House and Senate Military Affairs Committees. However, he soon made it apparent that he did not intend to carry it out. On March 22 Woodring had refused to

³⁸United States News, March 29, 1940, p. 40.

³⁹Pearson and Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, April 17, 1940.

⁴⁰John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, March 23, 1940, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

release for export a General Electric Supercharger currently produced for the Army.⁴¹ Even after the new policy had been declared in effect he continued to deny its release. He also refused to sign the orders to release the latest American aircraft for export to the Allies. Assistant Secretary Johnson urged Woodring to sign the releases but the Secretary refused.⁴²

On April 9 Secretary Morgenthau called Johnson and informed him that the Anglo-French Purchasing Commission was anxious to complete aircraft contracts with the American manufacturers, but they could not do so until the War Department signed the necessary aircraft releases. Johnson reported that there was nothing he could do. "I'm having all kinds of trouble with Woodring," he said. He then informed Morgenthau that the Secretary not only refused to sign the releases but was also threatening to tell the House Military Affairs Committee that he opposed the new release policy. To this Morgenthau replied, "When the President gives me a job, if anybody puts obstacles in my way, I tell the President about it." The Treasury Secretary then stated that he was going to see Roosevelt on the matter and suggested that Johnson do the same. Later that day both men informed the President of Woodring's refusal to cooperate. The Chief Executive immediately called his Secretary of War and informed him that he expected the planes to be released at once.

⁴¹Record of Conference held in Chief of Staff's office, March 22, 1940, Chief of Staff Binder, March, 1940, NA, RG 165.

⁴²Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 119.

Woodring yielded to the pressure and released the planes. The next day arrangements were made to sell the Allies 2400 of the latest fighters and 2200 new bombers. Several weeks later American manufacturers began turning over to Britain and French planes that had been built for the United States Air Corps.⁴³

Secretary of War Woodring's efforts to keep the latest military planes in the hands of the Air Corps, rather than turn them over to the Allies, were paralleled by attempts to keep from selling or turning over surplus military equipment to belligerent nations. On both matters Woodring was motivated by a desire to retain for the United States Army all military items which he considered necessary for the nation's defense.

One of many statutory requirements placed upon the Secretary of War was that of disposing of "surplus military property." Prior to 1940 the problem was minimal because the limited Army budgets created problems of scarcity of supplies, not problems of surplus. Occasionally, however, an Army inventory would reveal that certain supplies and equipment, including arms and ammunition, were in excess of Army needs and were therefore "surplus." When such a situation occurred it was not unusual for the "surplus" to be sold to a foreign government. The

⁴³Ibid., pp. 119-129. "From the Morgenthau Diaries," Collier's, October 18, 1947, p. 71.

⁴⁴Memorandum for Chief of Staff from Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, March 9, 1940, Chief of Staff 15270-896, NA, RG 165.

sales were usually made to Latin American nations and were done so with the encouragement and expressed approval of President Roosevelt, who saw the sales as a way of further implementing his policy of Hemisphere Defense.⁴⁴

Woodring approved such disposition of "surplus," but he did so reluctantly. The Secretary of War felt that the nation was so short of military equipment and supplies that nothing could or should be disposed of. He believed that if war ever came to the United States, every rifle, every mortar and every artillery piece, regardless of age, would be needed.⁴⁵

During the war with the Soviet Union, in the winter of 1939-1940, Finland requested permission to purchase arms, ammunition and other implements of war from American producers on a credit basis. On February 8 President Roosevelt decided against extending such assistance. Roosevelt had originally favored aid to the Finns but he yielded to the pressure of Secretary of State Hull and Secretary Woodring who opposed such a move. Hull opposed sending aid because he feared such a step would endanger United States neutrality. Woodring's opposition was based on the belief that no military supplies could be diverted abroad without further weakening the nation's defenses.⁴⁶

Following the President's decision to deny Finland the funds to purchase war supplies from American producers, consideration was given

⁴⁵Congressional Record, 76th Congress 3rd Session, Vol. 86, Pt. 16, Appendix, pp. 4429-4431.

⁴⁶Langer and Gleason, Challenge to Isolation, p. 340.

to selling or otherwise providing that nation with "surplus" war materials. On February 9 Roosevelt conferred with Secretaries Hull, Woodring and Edison on the feasibility of disposing of war "surplus" to neutral nations so they could in turn sell the items to Finland. Woodring opposed the plan on two counts. First, he claimed the Army had no "surplus" to dispose of. Second, since the plan's purpose was to supply war goods to Finland, it would be an unneutral act which could ultimately lead to involvement in a foreign conflict. In spite of Woodring's pleas the President decided that the War Department would sell "surplus" artillery to Sweden, who would in turn sell it to Finland.⁴⁷ The President also directed the Secretary of War to determine what other military "surplus" items could be made available. Within a few days negotiations for the artillery sale were undertaken but Finland fell to the Russians before the transaction could be completed.⁴⁸

As a result of the February 9 meeting Secretary Woodring asked General Marshall to have G-4, the Supply Division of the General Staff, make a survey to determine what and how much Ordnance equipment could be declared "surplus" so that it could be turned over to foreign governments. On March 9 the survey was completed and several days later Woodring was asked to approve the sale price of a list of "surplus" Ordnance material which would be eligible for sale to foreign governments. Included on the list were 100,000 Enfield Rifles, 11,000

⁴⁷This could be done because neither Finland nor Russia had declared war, thus technically a state of war did not exist.

⁴⁸Langer and Gleason, Challenge to Isolation, pp. 339-340.

machine guns, 237 three inch mortars, 300 75mm guns and a handful of other weapons in lesser quantities. All of the items listed had been Army property since the World War.⁴⁹ As a result of the President's previous instructions Woodring approved the disposition to foreign nations. However, he did so very reluctantly, in part because he felt the material could not be spared and in part because he felt that the items might not go to neutral nations. On the request for approval Woodring expressed the following views on the disposition of surplus:

I approve the above paper as a method of carrying out the policy determined by higher authority for the sale of surplus property. But--I continue, as for several years, to absolutely disapprove of the sale of surplus United States Army property. I insist, regardless of any higher authority direction, that if Army surplus property is to be sold, it only be sold by this government to another neutral government⁵⁰

Woodring's concern that the Army "surplus" might go to belligerent rather than neutral nations led him to issue a March 15 Departmental order which provided that "no surplus arms or ammunition will be disposed of to any state or foreign government engaged in hostilities." Before taking this action Woodring had consulted with Secretary of State Hull who approved of the Secretary of War's action.⁵¹ Sooner or later the order was certain to cause some difficulty, because its provisions

⁴⁹Memorandum for the Chief of Staff from Assistant Chief of Staff G-4 March 9, 1940, Chief of Staff 15270-896, NA, RG 165.

⁵⁰Note appended by Secretary Woodring to memorandum cited in previous footnote.

⁵¹Memorandum approved by Secretary of War and Secretary of State, March 12, 1940, Box 102, "International Traffic," Secretary of War 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

were in direct conflict with President Roosevelt's policy of extending aid to Britain and France. During the first two months the order was in effect, the question of disposing of surplus was quiescent because Finland met defeat at the hands of the Russians and Germany took control of Norway and Denmark so quickly that the Roosevelt administration did not have time to consider making supplies available. Thus in early May the "surplus" which Woodring had released for foreign sale on March 11 was still in Army warehouses.

On May 10 Germany attacked the Low Countries, and in the next few days the rapid advance of Hitler's Army seemed to endanger all of Europe. On the fifteenth of the month Britain's new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, sent a message to Roosevelt telling him of the British determination to meet the Nazi challenge and asking the President to "help us with everything short of actually engaging armed forces." Specifically, Churchill asked for forty or fifty "older destroyers," several hundred of the latest type aircraft, anti-aircraft guns, ammunition and steel.⁵²

Upon receiving Churchill's message Roosevelt went over the items requested with Secretary Morgenthau. The Chief Executive then directed his Treasury Secretary to see what he could get the Army to release. Morgenthau first asked the Chief of Staff and Chief of Air Corps if there would be any objection to the immediate release of one hundred pursuit planes for Britain. Vigorously opposing such a move, General

⁵²Winston S. Churchill, Their Finest Hour (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), p. 24.

Arnold claimed it would set back the development of United States pursuit squadrons six months.⁵³ Marshall concurred with Arnold and on May 17 wrote to Morgenthau: "I do not think we can afford to submit ourselves to the delay and consequences involved in accommodating the British Government in this particular manner."⁵⁴ In spite of this indication that the Army desired to hold on to everything it could, Roosevelt, on May 18, sent an optimistic message to Churchill. After informing the British leader that turning over the destroyers was temporarily out of the question, because it would require Congressional approval, the President pledged to "facilitate to the utmost the Allied Governments' obtaining the latest type of United States aircraft, anti-aircraft guns, ammunition and steel."⁵⁵ The President's willingness to assist the Allies soon led to additional requests for small arms and ammunition as well as iron and aluminum.

In his efforts to carry out the President's request to see what the War Department could turn over to the Allies, Morgenthau dealt almost exclusively with General Marshall, rather than Woodring. This was not only because of the personal dislike which the Secretary of War and

⁵³Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, p. 150.

⁵⁴Memorandum Chief of Staff for Secretary of the Treasury, May 18, 1940 "Release of P-36 type airplanes ... to the British Government," Chief of Staff, Emergency File, May 11 - August 16, 1940, NA, RG 165.

⁵⁵Churchill, Their Finest Hour, p. 25.

Secretary of Treasury held for each other but also because of Woodring's firm conviction that the United States could not dispose of military surplus to belligerent nations.⁵⁶

In response to a May 17 request by Morgenthau, General Marshall ordered G-4 to conduct a new survey to determine what Ordnance materials might be released as "surplus" without endangering the national defense. The previous study for the same purpose had been completed less than three months before. On May 22 the new survey was complete and a list of "surplus" World War items was turned over to the Chief of Staff. The new list contained many items not included on the March 9 surplus list, and the quantities on the latter were much larger.⁵⁷ For example:

<u>Item</u>	<u>March 9, 1940 List</u>	<u>May 22, 1940 List</u>
Enfield Rifles	100,000	500,000
.30 caliber ammunition	0	100,000,000 rounds
Machine guns and automatic rifles	11,000	35,000
75mm guns	300	500
3 inch mortars	237	500

The new list revealed an attempt on the part of the Army to meet the President's demands of assisting the Allies by all means short of war.

⁵⁶John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, March 23, 1940, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

⁵⁷Memorandum Chief of Ordnance to Chief of Staff, May 22, 1940 "Availability of Ordnance Material For Release" Chief of Staff Emergency Binder 2, NA, RG 165. Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, p. 309.

On the afternoon of May 22 General Marshall took the new list of surplus items to the President. Marshall explained that the items were available for transfer to the Allies but the decision on whether or not to make the transfer was up to the President. After expressing approval at the type and quantity of items on the list the President directed Marshall to consult with Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and see if a way could be found legally to turn the material over to the Allies.⁵⁸

While efforts were being made to supply critical war items to Britain and France, Woodring continued to maintain that "surplus" could not be turned over to the Allies because they were at war; thus, to aid them in the proposed manner was a violation of War Department policy. Woodring believed it was one thing to permit American manufacturers to build and sell goods to the Allies but quite another to provide them with war materials owned or previously owned by the United States Government.⁵⁹

On May 23 Marshall discussed the transfer of the surplus with Welles. The Assistant Secretary of State, much to his dismay, was forced to agree with Secretary Woodring's view that under existing

⁵⁸Memorandum for the Record by the Chief of Staff, May 25, 1940, "Regarding Release of Ordnance Material to the Allied Purchasing Agent," Chief of Staff, Emergency File May 11 - August 16, 1940, NA, RG 165.

⁵⁹Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 153.

legislation the transfer would be impossible.⁶⁰ Welles did, however, refer the problem to State Department legal officers, and Marshall asked G-4 to also seek a solution to the dilemma.

Following the World War, Congress had passed legislation governing the sale and disposition of surplus military property and deteriorated ammunition. Those laws contained the key to turning over the surplus in a legal manner. On May 27, 1940, General Richard C. Moore, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, gave the opinion that the surplus could be disposed of "in any way that the Secretary of War may deem expedient."⁶¹ The next day the State Department's legal opinion was set forth by counsel Green Heckworth. He maintained that Army surplus exchanged as part payment for new equipment could be resold by the manufacturers to a belligerent without involving the neutrality of the United States.⁶² On May 29 Attorney General Robert Jackson informally expressed agreement with Heckworth's conclusion.⁶³ These legal opinions seemed to

⁶⁰Memorandum for the Record by the Chief of Staff, May 25, 1940, "Regarding Release of Ordnance Material," Chief of Staff, Emergency File May 11 - August 16, 1940, NA, RG 165.

⁶¹Memorandum for Chief of Staff from Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, May 27, 1940, Chief of Staff, Emergency File May 11 - August 16, 1940, NA, RG 165.

⁶²Report from Green Heckworth, Department of State Legal Adviser, May 28, 1940, OF 25 War Department 1940, Box 7, FDRL.

⁶³Handwritten note on Memorandum for Secretary of State from Green Heckworth, May 28, 1940, Box 2B, Secretary of War 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

open the way for the War Department to turn in or sell surplus war material to a private manufacturer who could in turn sell it to the Allies. When Welles informed the President of the legal opinions which would permit disposition of the surplus to Britain and France, Roosevelt told him to see that the War Department proceeded with the transfer immediately.⁶⁴ There remained one obstacle to the transaction--Secretary of War Woodring.

When Welles informed the Secretary of War of the President's request to turn in the surplus to the manufacturer, Woodring was unwilling to go along. In previously disposing of surplus material Secretary Woodring had always adhered to a ruling by the Comptroller General which provided that before surplus items could be sold or turned in as part payment on new purchases they had to first be publicly advertised and if the value bid was greater than the exchange value the items had to be sold for cash.⁶⁵ Roosevelt, Morgenthau and Welles opposed such a procedure in the present case because it was a lengthy process, usually taking several months, and the Allies needed the goods immediately.

At a May 31 meeting Woodring discussed the proposed transfer with Roosevelt. The Secretary informed the President that he had arranged to have inserted into legislation currently under consideration an

⁶⁴Memorandum from Secretary of War to the President, May 31, 1940, Box 2B, Secretary of War 1932-1942, NA, RG 107.

⁶⁵Ibid.

amendment enabling him to exchange surplus without prior bids; but until such legislation was enacted or until the Attorney General issued a formal ruling which made it advisable for him to do otherwise, he would proceed as he had in the past. The President, who already knew the Attorney General's view on the matter, agreed to go along with the long-standing policy until a formal opinion could be given by the Justice Department.⁶⁶

On June 3 that opinion was set forth by Acting Attorney General Francis Biddle. Its conclusion was: "The provision that such supplies may be sold upon 'such terms as may be deemed best' undoubtedly gives the Secretary of War power to sell without advertisement."⁶⁷ After reading the opinion Woodring agreed to the transfer,⁶⁸ the details of which were left to General Marshall. The following day the Chief of Staff met with Arthur Purvis to determine just what and how much of the surplus the Allies desired. After examining Marshall's list, which included every Ordnance item that G-4 had declared surplus, Purvis announced that he wanted "the whole damned lot."⁶⁹ The Chief of Staff having anticipated such a request had already sent orders to arsenals

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷John T. Fowler (ed.), Official Opinions of the Attorney General of the United States (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), Vol. 39, pp. 445-446.

⁶⁸Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, pp. 153-154.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 153.

and depots throughout the country instructing them to pack the equipment and send it to New Jersey for overseas shipment.⁷⁰

On June 4 General Charles Wesson, Chief of Ordnance, went to see Edward R. Stettinius, Chairman of the Board of the United States Steel Corporation. Wesson asked Stettinius, who a few days before had been appointed by the President to serve on the National Defense Advisory Commission, if his corporation would serve as a middleman in the transfer of goods from the War Department to the Allies. Stettinius replied that his resignation from U.S. Steel was to take effect that very afternoon but he was almost certain that his successor Irving Olds would go along with the idea. After receiving Board approval Olds agreed, and negotiations were undertaken between the War Department and the United States Steel Export Company, a subsidiary of the Corporation. Negotiations were soon completed, and on June 11 officials of the Export Company met with Secretary Woodring and signed the contracts which sold all the surplus on the May 22 list for \$37,619,556. Five minutes later the officials from the Export Company met with representatives of the Joint Purchasing Commission and sold them the material for the same amount they had just paid for it.⁷¹ The surplus then belonged to Britain and France and within a few days was on its way to those countries. Before the goods left the country Woodring prepared a

⁷⁰Stettinius, Lend Lease, p. 26.

⁷¹Ibid.

memorandum for the President in which he requested retention of the 500 75mm guns which had been turned over, but for some unknown reason the memo was never sent.⁷²

The Secretary of War's reluctance to make American aircraft and Army surplus available to the Allies antagonized many top administrative officials who were striving to carry out the President's professed policy of aiding Britain and France.⁷³ Woodring's actions were more popular with most military leaders, who were opposed to having the nation's small supply of war materials further depleted but were hesitant to speak out against the policy advocated by the President. Word of Roosevelt's warning to General Arnold about what might happen to officers who did not "play ball" had spread among the military men and they were not about to jeopardize their careers. General Marshall and his top advisers found themselves in a situation in which the Secretary of War was advocating a policy which they personally favored, but they were bound to carry out the Commander-in-Chief's policy—a policy over which they were less than enthusiastic.⁷⁴ General Marshall probably revealed the attitude of most military leaders when, during a June 4

⁷²Memorandum for the President from the Secretary of War, June 17, 1940 (Not Used) Chief of Staff, "Foreign Sales" Binder 4, NA, RG 165.

⁷³Morgenthau, Hopkins, Watson and Early were especially upset with Woodring's attitude toward the Allies.

⁷⁴Kansas City Star, June 21, 1940.

meeting at which Secretary Morgenthau complained about all the difficulty Woodring was causing him and the President, the Chief of Staff said, "Now everybody in town is shooting at Woodring and trying to put him down and I don't want to see him get on the spot. Everybody is trying to get him out of here and I am not going to be a party to it."⁷⁵

Until early June, Woodring was the only War Department official to speak out against aid to the Allies. His primary reason for opposing the aid was that he felt the Allies were being strengthened at the expense of the United States Army. The military's complacent attitude began to change quickly following a June 11 announcement by the President that he was ordering a "re-survey" to determine what additional military material could be turned back to the manufacturers for ultimate sale to the Allies. Feeling that to release anything more would endanger the nation's security, the War Plans Division voiced opposition to the President's proposal. General Marshall had also come to feel that it was time to call a halt to the disposition of Army material to foreign nations. Therefore, on June 22 he sent the following message to his Commander-in-Chief: "To release to Great Britain additional war material now in the hands of the armed forces will seriously weaken our present state of defense." He then recommended that the United States "make no further commitments of this sort."⁷⁶ Woodring never knew of

⁷⁵ Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, pp. 153-154.

⁷⁶ Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 109-111.

this recommendation because two days before he had been forced to resign as Secretary of War.

The President's decision to ask Woodring for his resignation was a surprise to everyone, including the Secretary of War. The only thing more surprising than the resignation was that Roosevelt retained his Secretary as long as he did. On many occasions throughout 1939 and early 1940 the President told close associates that he was about to remove Woodring; however, he never did and by the late spring of 1940 the general feeling was that he never would. There were several factors which made Roosevelt reluctant to act: an extreme dislike of firing anyone and especially an old friend like Woodring; a desire not to antagonize Congressional isolationists; and a yearning to insure control of the Kansas delegation at the 1940 Democratic Convention.⁷⁷

In early May the President began to give serious consideration to the appointment of a new Secretary of War. The earlier reasons he had for retaining Woodring were now being overridden by other factors. Roosevelt's primary reason for seeking a replacement was the increased difficulty he was having in getting Secretary Woodring to carry out his policies. From March on, Woodring made no secret that he opposed the President's policy of aid to the Allies. In March and early April the War Secretary fought against release of modern military aircraft to

⁷⁷See Chapter IV.

Britain and France; then in May he did the same thing in regard to surplus ordnance items. As Woodring's obstructionism increased, the President's fear of antagonizing the isolationists declined because the German successes in Europe did much to weaken their cause.⁷⁸ Another reason for considering removal was Roosevelt's desire to unite the country behind him in this period of crisis. The President had come to believe that the best way to provide the national solidarity which he desired was to appoint several prominent Republicans to the cabinet, thereby creating a coalition cabinet.⁷⁹

To make the coalition a reality Roosevelt first had to find qualified Republicans who would be willing to join his administration. One man that the President wanted to join his team was the 1936 Republican Vice Presidential candidate Frank Knox. In December of 1939 Roosevelt asked Knox to enter the cabinet as Secretary of the Navy, but the Chicago Publisher refused to accept unless another Republican was also appointed to the cabinet at the same time. Roosevelt was not willing to take such a step at that particular time.⁸⁰

In early May Washington was filled with rumors that the President was about to form a coalition cabinet. The names most frequently

⁷⁸Watson, Prewar Plans and Preparations, pp. 166-167.

⁷⁹Brownlow, A Passion for Anonymity, p. 435.

⁸⁰McCoy, Landon of Kansas, p. 431.

mentioned as possible appointees were Knox and Alfred Landon, the 1936 Republican Presidential nominee. Landon was invited to the White House, perhaps to be offered a cabinet position, but before he went he issued a statement saying he was opposed to a coalition. On May 22 Landon visited Roosevelt. At that time the President said he was looking for replacements for Secretaries Woodring, Edison and Perkins, and he had a number of men under consideration; however, he never mentioned the possibility of a post for Landon. Apparently the anti-coalition statement had eliminated the former Republican standard bearer from further consideration.⁸¹

In May Roosevelt again approached Knox about joining the administration. Although Knox did not accept the President's offer, he made it apparent that he would be willing to accept the offer if another top Republican was also appointed to the cabinet. Therefore, Roosevelt left the invitation to Knox open, and continued his search for another capable appointee.

The President considered a number of qualified men for that second cabinet position. Knox personally favored William Donavon, a distinguished soldier of the World War, a former Republican candidate for Governor of New York, and a former law classmate of Roosevelt. The President, however, for reasons known only to him, rejected Donovan.⁸²

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 432-436.

⁸²Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, p. 242.

Another possibility, William Bullitt, Ambassador to France was championed by Secretary of Ickes, but the President felt Bullitt was more valuable in his diplomatic position.⁸³

In late May the President gave serious consideration to the selection of New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia as a replacement for Woodring. When word of La Guardia's possible appointment spread to the newspapers, the relatively conservative House Military Affairs Committee became alarmed because of the "extreme liberalism" of the New Yorker. Therefore, Chairman May and Representative Charles I. Faddis went to see the President. They emphatically informed the Chief Executive that if La Guardia was made Secretary of War the House Committee would refuse to work with him. Roosevelt was angered by such a dictate but he nevertheless assured his two visitors that the appointment would not be made.⁸⁴

As the President continued to search for the "right man," the pressure to remove Woodring grew to considerable proportions. In addition to the age-old pressure from such members of the anti-Woodring "inner circle" as Ickes, Morgenthau, Steve Early and Edwin Watson, there now appeared "outside pressure." One source of this new pressure was

⁸³Ickes, Secret Diary of Harold Ickes, Vol. II, pp. 132-133, 136. Bullitt claims that on June 9 the President offered him the position of Secretary of Navy and he accepted, but when Knox decided to take the position the President dropped the matter of his appointment. New York Times, February 19, 1948.

⁸⁴Charles I. Faddis to Keith McFarland, April 28, 1968.

from newspaper columnists. Drew Pearson and Robert Allen continued their long time criticism of Woodring and called again for his dismissal.⁸⁵ Frank Kent reported the likelihood of Woodring's removal and added that he had no idea why the President had retained him for so long.⁸⁶ Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner talked of the lack of leadership in the War Department and called on the President to appoint a new Secretary of War.⁸⁷

In June the calls for Woodring's replacement reached the editorials. In its June 14 edition, the New York Times contained an editorial criticizing the leadership of the Navy and War Departments. In discussing the War Department it said, "It seems incredible, but it is unfortunately true that the offices of Secretary of War and Assistant Secretary of War should be occupied by two men who do not see eye to eye, do not pull together and ... do not even speak." Mention was then made of the many important defense measures that had to be taken, but "None is more urgently important than the immediate appointment to the top posts in the Navy and War Department of thoroughly competent ... and thoroughly cooperative executives."⁸⁸ An editorial in the June 17

⁸⁵Pearson and Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, June 19, 1940.

⁸⁶Frank R. Kent, "The Great Game of Politics," Baltimore Sun, June 5, 1940.

⁸⁷Alsop and Kintner, "The Capital Parade," Washington Evening Star, June 20, 1940.

⁸⁸New York Times, June 14, 1940.

issue of Life magazine called for Woodring's replacement saying that the need for such action was "obvious."⁸⁹

The foreign press also got into the act. On June 5 the London Daily Telegraph reported that United States aid to the Allies was being delayed by Secretary of War Woodring, who was the leader of American "obstructionists." The article then suggested that perhaps President Roosevelt should "take the risk ... of kicking out this disloyal member of the Cabinet who has made a hollow mockery of the profession of his chief that the administration's policy was to aid the Allies by every means short of war."⁹⁰

By early June Woodring's retention was on the way to becoming a possible political liability to Roosevelt. In a June 8 speech New York Governor Thomas A. Dewey, who was seeking the Republican presidential nomination, called upon the President to dismiss Secretaries Woodring, Perkins and Hopkins who were "symbols of incompetence, disunity and class hatred." Although Perkins and Hopkins were criticized the speech was especially critical of Secretary Woodring.⁹¹ Such things as Dewey's speech along with newspaper and magazine articles and

⁸⁹Life (editorial), "Will the U.S. Mobilize Its Industrial Might In Time," June 17, 1940.

⁹⁰London Daily Telegraph and Morning Post, June 5, 1940.

⁹¹New York Times, June 9, 1940.

editorials calling for Woodring's dismissal soon led to a steady stream of letters to the President asking that he replace his Secretary of War.⁹²

One obstacle to the creation of a coalition cabinet was cleared in late May when Secretary of Navy Edison was nominated as the Democratic candidate for governor of New Jersey. The nomination had been arranged by James Farley at the request of President Roosevelt. In this way Edison would leave the cabinet without being forced to. The Secretary of Navy realized what was happening but he nevertheless stepped aside with no complaint. On May 21 he submitted his resignation, to be effective June 15.⁹³ A position was now open for Frank Knox, but Roosevelt still had not found another competent Republican to join the administration. Then at a June 3 luncheon Roosevelt's good friend, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter suggested Henry L. Stimson. According to Frankfurter, Stimson would be a perfect choice. He was a well-known Republican, he was well qualified, having served as Secretary of War under Taft and Secretary of State under Hoover, and his views on foreign policy and aid to the Allies were quite similar to those of the President. In the days that followed, Frankfurter continually urged Stimson's appointment.⁹⁴

⁹²OF 25 Mis., War Department 1940, Box 25, FDRL.

⁹³Farley, Jim Farley's Story, pp. 212-213. Ickes, Secret Diaries of Harold Ickes, Vol. III, p. 186

⁹⁴Max Freedman, Roosevelt and Frankfurter: Their Correspondence 1928-1945 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), pp. 524-527.

The way for the coalition cabinet was further opened on June 11 when Knox informed Roosevelt that he was willing to accept the position of Secretary of Navy provided another Republican was named to the President's official family.⁹⁵ But before another new cabinet member could be appointed room would have to be made for him. The President had previously decided that Woodring would have to go, but now he had to do something he had previously been unable to do--dismiss him. It was apparent by this time that the Secretary of War would not leave on his own. On numerous occasions the President had offered him fine positions but in each instance the offer had been turned down. As Drew Pearson, writing in mid-June, put it, "If there is anything Roosevelt ought to know by now it is that only a blast of TNT will oust his Secretary of War."⁹⁶

On June 17 there started a series of events which quickly led to Woodring's removal. On that morning Secretary Morgenthau informed the President that the British urgently needed some four engine bombers (B-17's). When Roosevelt asked if the Army could spare eight or nine, Morgenthau said that he felt they could spare ten. "That's fine," replied the Chief Executive, "You have been doing grand work and continue to give the English the same help."⁹⁷ Later that day in talking with

⁹⁵McCoy, Landon of Kansas, p. 437.

⁹⁶Pearson and Allen, "The Merry-Go-Round," Akron Beacon Journal, June 19, 1940.

⁹⁷Blum, Morgenthau Diaries, Vol. II, p. 162.

the President's Military Aide General Watson, Morgenthau said he intended to transfer twelve B-17's and there was no need to consult the Army on the transaction. When Watson asked whether the transfer could be made without first asking the War Department, Morgenthau assured him that "We have the authority." At Watson's insistence it was finally agreed to sound out the Army on the proposed transfer of twelve aircraft.⁹⁸ That afternoon Watson informed the War Department that the transfer was under consideration and asked for their reaction.

On the following morning, June 18, Woodring and Marshall discussed the consequences of such a transfer. Marshall explained that the Army had only 52 B-17's, and if twelve were given away it would take six months to replace them. Both men agreed that the planes should not be released. The Chief of Staff then wrote a recommendation to that effect and forwarded it to the Secretary of War. Woodring gave it his approval on the morning of June 19 and immediately sent it to the White House.⁹⁹

Upon the receipt of this memorandum the President decided that the time had come to remove his Secretary of War. Whether his decision was made because he was "fed up" with Woodring's obstructionist tactics and the B-17 matter was simply the "last straw" or whether he had

⁹⁸Telephone conversation between Watson and Morgenthau, June 18, 1940. Morgenthau Diaries, Book 273, pp. 280-281, FDRL.

⁹⁹John C. O'Laughlin to General John Pershing, June 22, 1940, Box 58, O'Laughlin Papers, LC.

previously decided on dismissal and merely seized upon this incident as an excuse will never be known.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the President immediately wrote the following letter to his Secretary of War:

Dear Harry,

Because of a succession of recent events both here and abroad, and not within our personal choice and control, I find it necessary now to make certain readjustments. I have to include in this a change in the War Department - and that is why I am asking that you let me have your resignation.

At the same time it would be very helpful to me if you would accept the post of Governor of Puerto Rico.***¹⁰¹

The next morning the Secretary of War sat down and wrote in longhand a letter which, in spite of the fact that its exact contents were not to be known until years afterward, was to become a source of great speculation and controversy:

June 20, 1940

Dear Mr. President,

Your request of yesterday afternoon for my resignation as Secretary of War is acknowledged and you may consider this note compliance therewith.

I assure you that my refusal of yesterday morning to agree to your request for the release of the flying fortress bombers to foreign nations was based upon my own belief, supported by the General Staff, that it was not in the best interests of the defense of our country.

¹⁰⁰James Farley, who was close to Woodring and Roosevelt, believed the latter to be the case. Farley wrote, "I am satisfied that Edison and Woodring would have been eased out on one pretext or another to bring men into the Cabinet who were convinced that the United States should enter the war" Jim Farley's Story, p. 243.

¹⁰¹Roosevelt to Woodring, June 19, 1940, PSF Harry H. Woodring 1937-1940, Box 38, FDRL.

Fearful of a succession of events to which I could not subscribe I prefer not to accept your proffer of continued service in another post.***

I feel Mr. President that I cannot retire with my knowledge of the inadequacy of our preparedness for war without most respectfully urging you to maintain your pronounced non-intervention. I trust you will advise those who would provoke belligerency ... that they do so with the knowledge that we are not prepared for a major conflict. Billions appropriated today cannot be converted into preparedness tomorrow.***¹⁰²

Accompanying the letter was a note in which Woodring said he would not make any statement or release any part of the correspondence surrounding the resignation. He asked that any announcements concerning the matter be made by the White House.¹⁰³

A few hours after receiving Woodring's resignation, the President sent the names of Frank Knox and Henry Stimson to the Senate for confirmation as Secretary of Navy and Secretary of War. Roosevelt was able to act so quickly because he had offered the War post to Stimson the previous afternoon and the latter had accepted it.¹⁰⁴ At the same time that the names of the new appointees were sent to the Senate, Press Secretary Steve Early issued more detailed announcements on the new appointments and on Woodring's resignation. There was one very unusual facet of the news release concerning Woodring--that the usual

¹⁰²Woodring to Roosevelt, June 20, 1940, Ibid.

¹⁰³Memorandum Woodring to Roosevelt, June 20, 1940, Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 323-324.

practice of releasing the letter of resignation of an outgoing cabinet member was not followed in his case because his letter to the President was "too personal."¹⁰⁵

Woodring's removal and Stimson's appointment came as a surprise to everyone, including Woodring. Just a few days before he had told Representatives May and Faddis that there was nothing to the rumors that he was about to be replaced; in fact, he told the two Congressmen that the President was quite satisfied with the job he was doing.¹⁰⁶ Assistant Secretary Johnson was surprised and disappointed. Surprised that the President finally had gotten the courage to dismiss Woodring. Disappointed that he had not been made Secretary. After hearing of Stimson's appointment, the Assistant Secretary went to the White House and expressed his dissatisfaction, "But Mr. President you promised me not once but many times ...," said the angry Johnson.¹⁰⁷ Most Senators were on the Senate floor when the announcement of the impending appointments was made. The shocked surprise of that body was typified by Senator Bennett Clark who cried out, "Is this true?"¹⁰⁸

That evening the Topeka Capital carried a story which reported that three weeks before, on June 1, Woodring had told friends in Topeka

¹⁰⁵ Washington Post, June 21, 1940.

¹⁰⁶ Charles I. Faddis to Keith McFarland, April 28, 1968.

¹⁰⁷ Bernard Baruch, Baruch: The Public Years (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1960), Vol. II, p. 277.

¹⁰⁸ New York Times, June 21, 1940.

that a "small clique of international financiers" were trying to force him from the cabinet because he was opposed to "stripping our defenses" to aid the Allies.¹⁰⁹ The next morning newspapers throughout the country carried the story from Topeka. The controversy over Woodring's dismissal was underway.

Congressmen and journalists looked at the Topeka story and the President's refusal to make public Woodring's letter of resignation and concluded that there must be some connection between the two. Congressional reaction was immediate. On the floors of the House and Senate a score of Congressmen praised Woodring for the job he had done and deplored the President's decision to remove him. Resolutions calling for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the Secretary of War's resignation; demanding that the President release Woodring's letter of resignation; and summoning Woodring to appear before the Military Affairs Committees and explain his reason for resigning were introduced in both houses.¹¹⁰ Although none of the resolutions were passed the Senate Military Affairs Committee authorized its Chairman, Morris Sheppard, to invite Woodring to testify if he cared to. Sheppard made the offer but the ex-Secretary of War, in response to a personal

¹⁰⁹Topeka Capital, June 20, 1940.

¹¹⁰Congressional Record, 76th Congress 3rd Session, Vol. 86, Pt. 8, pp. 8791, 8822, 8855, 8908, 9038, 9039, Vol. 86, Pt. 16, pp. 4280-4281. New York Times, June 21-24, 1940.

request from President Roosevelt that he not let his resignation become a political issue, refused to testify.¹¹¹

The only public statement Woodring made concerning his resignation was made to reporters on June 21 when he said, "No one sympathizes with the European democracies any more than I do, but I feel it is America's duty to put our own defenses in order before going to their aid. I simply could not go along beyond the point where I felt we would be jeopardizing our own defenses."¹¹² With Woodring refusing to tell what happened and the President failing to release the Secretary of War's letter of resignation, the entire controversy slowly dropped into the background and Congress and the nation turned their attention to more pressing matters.

On June 27 Woodring, his wife and three children went to the White House to pay a farewell visit to the President. Roosevelt again urged his friend to accept the Governorship of Puerto Rico, but again Woodring refused. A few days later the Woodrings left for Kansas. In spite of the circumstances under which Woodring left the cabinet, he and Roosevelt remained the best of friends. Both found time to

¹¹¹Roosevelt to Woodring, June 25, 1940, PSF Harry Woodring 1937-1940, Box 38, FDRL. New York Times, July 3-4, 1940.

¹¹²Kansas City Times, June 22, 1940.

correspond and every Christmas "Harry" would receive a gift from "F.D.R." Their close relationship lasted until Roosevelt's death in April of 1945.¹¹³

Many reasons can be given as to why the President finally decided to replace Secretary Woodring. There were political considerations: Roosevelt wanted to bring about national solidarity by forming a coalition cabinet. Internal and external pressures were also factors. Disagreements were also important but in themselves were not responsible because the President encouraged different viewpoints and saw certain benefits in having in the same department men with vastly different views on a variety of subjects. All of the above factors undoubtedly influenced the President's decision, but each of them had been and probably could have been tolerated by the Chief Executive.

There was one factor, however, which, by June of 1940, could no longer be ignored—Woodring's obstruction and delay in carrying out the President's policies. In late 1939 Roosevelt made it clear that he wished to aid Britain and France by all means short of war, even if it meant a temporary weakening of United States military strength. Woodring, while not necessarily opposed to Allied sales, believed that United States defenses should receive first priority. His views were therefore completely different from those held by the President. To

¹¹³ Correspondence in PPF 663 Harry H. Woodring, FDRL. Interview with Helen Coolidge Woodring, July 20, 1968.

disagree with the Commander-in-Chief when a policy decision was being made was quite acceptable. However, once the President had made clear the policy which he intended to follow, Woodring should have carried it out without delay. Instead he did what he could to keep that policy from going into effect. In January, 1940, the President made it quite clear that he wanted to provide the Allies with the latest American-built military aircraft, but because of Woodring's obstructionism and delaying tactics this was not done until April. The turning over of "surplus" ordnance material to the Allies was also delayed for several weeks because of Woodring's reluctance to go along with a policy with which he disagreed. In mid-June, 1940, when the question of transferring a dozen B-17's arose and the Secretary of War again gave evidence that he was not going to "play ball," President Roosevelt made the decision to replace him with a man whose views were similar to his own.

In attempting to delay the flow of American built aircraft and Army "surplus" to the Allies, Secretary Woodring was doing what he sincerely considered to be in the best interests of the United States. His conscience and his military advisers told him to hang on to those items, but his superior told him to turn them over to the Allies. Woodring was inclined to follow the former rather than the latter.

In pursuing the course of action which he did, the Secretary of War was attempting to override decisions of the Commander-in-Chief. If there is to be order in a military establishment or in government itself a proper superior-subordinate relationship must be understood

and carried out at all echelons. Secretary Woodring did not maintain that relationship. The Secretary of War undoubtedly realized what the unfortunate consequences would be if every American soldier obstructed or delayed in carrying out the orders of his superior; however, he failed to realize that equally disastrous consequences could result if he balked and delayed in carrying out the orders of his superior.

CONCLUSION

When Secretary of War George Dern died in the summer of 1936, Harry H. Woodring, the Assistant Secretary, became the "Acting" head of the War Department. A month later the President announced that Woodring would be the Secretary of War until he could find a new person for the job. Woodring's unique status of "Temporary Secretary of War" lasted for seven months, at which time Roosevelt decided to make the appointment permanent. The unusual manner in which the Assistant Secretary became Secretary was a hinderance to him in his new job because many officials in the Roosevelt administration felt that he received the post not because the President wanted him, but because it was easier to let him remain in office than to find a replacement. The President's failure to act decisively on the Woodring appointment was interpreted by many officials to indicate a lack of confidence in Woodring; thus, it is not surprising that they also had their doubts about his ability to handle the War post.

In spite of the way in which Woodring became Secretary it appears that he was probably as well qualified for the position as anyone else in the country, at that time. For more than three years he had served as Assistant Secretary of War and during that time he was Acting Secretary during George Dern's frequent absences. As the number two man

in the War Department, Woodring became quite familiar with its operations and problems. He had also gained a good understanding of the American military establishment by his wartime experience as an enlisted man and an officer, his American Legion activities and his interest in and work with the National Guard when he was Governor of Kansas.

In attempting to carry out his responsibilities as Secretary of War, Woodring encountered several obstacles that served to make his job even more difficult than it otherwise would have been. Those obstacles were the result of the following factors: undue Presidential interference; an inability to get along with the Assistant Secretary of War; and a strong, nationwide, isolationist sentiment.

One well-known characteristic of President Roosevelt was his desire to "run his own show." On several occasions he stated that he considered it necessary to be his own Secretary of State, War and Navy. Instead of giving Woodring a relatively free hand to run the War Department, Roosevelt insisted on being consulted and advised on nearly every matter, including relatively minor problems. The President's practice of keeping such close tabs on the War Department made it extremely difficult for the Secretary of War to show any real initiative.

Few things served to limit Woodring's effectiveness as did his serious feud with Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson. Departmental disagreements and feuding are not necessarily detrimental. Much can be gained by having divergent points of view presented, considered and intelligently discussed. However, the Woodring-Johnson feud got

completely out of hand. The two War Department officials reached the point where they seemed to disagree just for the sake of disagreeing. Before long the military leaders found themselves caught between a Secretary who was telling them one thing and an Assistant Secretary who was telling them something else. As a result, distrust and demoralization entered the War Department and overall Army efficiency suffered. At a time when Woodring and Johnson should have been working together in the interest of national defense they were fighting among themselves over rather trivial matters.

Still another factor which kept the Secretary of War from being as successful as he might have been was the strong isolationist sentiment that prevailed in Congress and throughout the nation. In Congress that sentiment was reflected in at least two ways: the passage of neutrality legislation and the failure to appropriate the funds necessary to provide, equip and train an adequate military force. Many Americans believed that increased preparedness would ultimately lead to involvement in a foreign conflict. Thus, they pressured Congress to keep the Army so small that the nation could not risk committing it to hostilities outside of the country. Neither the President nor Congress could ignore the isolationist sentiment; thus, prior to 1940 they found it easier to provide the Army with what was politically expedient rather than what was needed and requested.

Working under a man like Franklin D. Roosevelt, having a subordinate like Louis Johnson and depending on a "peace loving" Congress for

departmental appropriations made Woodring's task extremely difficult. Yet, in spite of such circumstances, he proved to be a rather influential and effective Secretary of War.

The primary factors responsible for Woodring's accomplishments were his ability to get along well with the Chief of Staff and his other military aides, and the good relationship which he enjoyed with Congress. To get along with those two groups was no small accomplishment and the Secretary of War used that asset to the fullest extent. Throughout his years in the War Department, Woodring's relationship with the military leaders was one of mutual trust, understanding, cooperation and respect. By working closely with the Chief of Staff and the General Staff, the Secretary of War was able to accomplish considerably more than he would have otherwise. Another of Woodring's assets was the high esteem in which he was held by many Congressmen, especially the members of the House and Senate Military Affairs Committee. His good standing on the "Hill" was responsible for the passage of much of the legislation that benefited the Army.

Woodring came to head the War Department at a very critical time because the breakdown of peace in Europe and the Far East gave a new importance to matters of defense. Although the War Department was responsible for many non-military as well as military functions, the bulk of the Secretary's time was devoted to military matters, especially problems concerning readiness, rearmament and neutrality.

Secretary Woodring's primary concern was to see that the nation had an Army that was militarily ready to meet any contingency. He realized that the nation's military effectiveness had suffered considerably as a result of the reduced Army budgets which were characteristic of the early thirties. To increase the Army's state of readiness, Woodring attempted to provide better organization, equipment and training.

Woodring's greatest contributions to Army readiness were made in the area of mobilization planning and Army organization. Under his leadership and guidance there emerged a practical, realistic mobilization plan. The Protective Mobilization Plan with its provision for an Initial Protective Force, to be used immediately, and a Protective Mobilization Force, to supply necessary reserves, was the basis for the large scale mobilization of World War II. Two other important innovations that came primarily through Woodring's efforts were the establishment of an Enlisted Reserve Program and the adoption of the "triangular" Infantry Division.

In his efforts to provide the Army with better equipment, Woodring was moderately successful. He continually fought for the funds needed to completely motorize and mechanize the Artillery and Cavalry and to supply the Infantry with the new semi-automatic Garand rifle. Through 1938, appropriations for re-equipping the Army were quite limited. By the time the President, Bureau of the Budget and Congress got through with the Army budget, there was never as much money left for new equipment as Woodring had hoped for. However, in 1939 Congress did provide considerable funds for "critical" items.

The Secretary's attempts to provide more extensive training achieved some success. He continually stressed the need for large scale exercises. In June, 1939, he finally succeeded in getting Congress to appropriate a sizable amount for training. Thus, in August, 1939, the Army was able to conduct the largest field exercise ever held in peacetime, and in the following spring even larger maneuvers were held. During the period Woodring served as Secretary, Army readiness was also aided by an increase in Regular Army strength from 159,000 to 257,000, and provisions had just been made to raise that figure to 400,000.

In spite of the advances made in the realm of military readiness under Secretary Woodring, the fact was that when he left office the Army was still woefully unprepared. The Protective Mobilization Plan was quite sound, but Congress had not provided the men and supplies to implement it; thus, it was still just a plan. The Regular Army was, in comparison to the standing armies of other world powers, relatively small, poorly equipped and ill trained. There was no doubt that the American military machine was far from being an effective fighting force.

Another major problem area for Woodring was that of rearmament. As conceived and discussed by the President and his associates, rearmament generally referred to a material strengthening of the Air Corps. Woodring had great confidence in military aircraft, but only as a weapon in support of ground forces, not as an independent fighting force. Therefore, he felt that a moderate size Air Force, made up of

short and medium range airplanes, would meet the nation's needs. Following the Munich Conference, President Roosevelt wished to increase the number of planes in the Air Corps from 2,400 to 10,000. This was his "rearmament program." Woodring opposed the President's plan because he felt that any increase in military strength should be balanced between ground troops and the air arm. After considerable litigation the President accepted Woodring's plan for a 6,000 plane Air Force, but no additional provisions were made for strengthening the land forces. During Woodring's service as Secretary the number of Army aircraft increased from 1,300 to 3,100. Although that increase was considerable it would probably have been greater had Woodring been as enthusiastic as the President over the development of the Air Corps.

Although the maintenance of neutrality was primarily the concern of the President and Secretary of State, Secretary Woodring was also quite interested and involved with that matter. His concern resulted from his fear of war and a strong desire to do what he could to keep the country from getting involved in one. He felt that United States entrance into the World War had been a serious mistake, and he did not want to see the country make that same mistake again. The Secretary of War's involvement in questions of neutrality stemmed from his authority to determine which American produced implements of war were still military "secrets" and, therefore, could not be sold abroad and his authority to dispose of "surplus" war material to foreign nations.

Over questions of neutrality the Secretary came into conflict with the President. Woodring was determined that the War Department should follow the spirit and the letter of the neutrality legislation which Congress had enacted to keep the United States out of any foreign conflict. As Hitler's strength grew, Roosevelt came to feel that it was in the nation's best interest to assist Britain and France so that they might defeat Germany. When the President attempted to carry out such a policy, Woodring objected and did what he could to keep it from being implemented. The Secretary's objections were based on the grounds that such aid might be the first step toward involvement in the war on the side of the Allies and because he felt it was unwise to give war supplies to foreign nations when the United States Army was critically short of many of those same items. Woodring did all that he could to insure that the government treated all nations in a fair and neutral manner, but his efforts were unsuccessful for the President did all he could to assist the Allies.

Secretary of War Woodring has often been criticized for failing to provide the United States with a more powerful military machine. Those critics point out that when he left the War Department in mid-1940 the United States Army was quite weak when compared to the military establishments of the other world powers and extremely small and ineffective in relation to the size of force that was ultimately developed during World War II. What Woodring's critics fail to mention is that in spite of its numerous shortcomings and acknowledged inferiority the

Army was, in 1940, larger, better equipped and more adequately trained than at any previous peacetime period in the nation's history.

The Secretary of War's unusually smooth relationship with his military advisers and Congress contributed substantially to the advances made by the military establishment in the late thirties. That the Army had as many aircraft and other supplies as it did was also due primarily to Woodring because he served as a brake on the President's policy of supplying Britain and France with American produced implements of war and military "surplus." If Woodring had willingly gone along with Roosevelt's desire to send military aid to the Allies the United States Army would have suffered even more. In spite of the many obstacles facing him, Secretary Woodring was quite successful in strengthening the Army and laying the groundwork for future military expansion.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Archival Material

War Department, Secretary of War, General Correspondence, 1932-1942.
National Archives, Washington, D.C., Record Group 107.

War Department, Records of the War Department General Staff, Chief of Staff, 1936-1940. National Archives, Record Group 165.

War Department, Records of the War Department General Staff, Supply Division, 1936-1940. National Archives, Record Group 165.

War Department, Records of the War Department General Staff, War Plans Division, 1936-1940. National Archives, Record Group 165.

War Department, Records of the Adjutant General, 1936-1940. National Archives, Record Group 407.

Manuscripts

Henry H. Arnold Papers. Library of Congress. Washington, D.C.

George H. Dern Papers. Library of Congress.

Cordell Hull Papers. Library of Congress.

Henry Morgenthau Jr. Diaries. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

John C. O'Laughlin Papers. Library of Congress.

General John J. Pershing Papers. Library of Congress.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers. Official File, President's Personal File and President's Secretary Fil. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

Interviews and/or Correspondence

Leslie C. Arends, May, 1968.
 Hugo L. Black, June, 1968.
 Stetson Conn, March, 1968.
 Charles I. Faddis, April, 1968.
 James A. Farley, August, 1968.
 Dow W. Harter, May, 1968.
 Lister Hill, August, 1968.
 Mellisa Woodring Jager, July, 1968.
 Edwin C. Johnson, April, 1968.
 Paul J. Kilday, May, 1968.
 Gerald P. Nye, July, 1968.
 Forrest C. Pogue, July, 1968.
 John Sparkman, April, 1968.
 Cooper C. Woodring, June, July, December, 1968.
 Helen Coolidge Woodring, July, December, 1968.

Printed Public Documents

Fowler, John T. (ed.). Official Opinions of the Attorneys General of the United States Advising the President and Heads of Departments in Relation to Their Official Duties. Vol. 39. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941.

U.S. Congressional Record. Vols. LXXX-LXXXVI.

U.S. Federal Register. Vols. IV, V.

U.S. Government Manual, 1933-1940. Washington: Office of Government Reports, 1933-1940.

- U.S. House of Representatives. Documents. "Second Annual Report of the National Munitions Control Board." House Document No. 465. 75th Congress, 3d Session, 1938.
- U.S. House of Representatives. Documents. "Third Annual Report of the National Munitions Control Board." House Document No. 92. 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "An Adequate National Defense As Outlined By the Message of the President of the United States." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "Promotion of Promotion List Officers of the Army." 76th Congress, 3d Session, 1940.
- U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "Vitalization of the Active List of the Army." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- U.S. House of Representatives. Reports. "Reestablishing the Regular Army Reserve." House Report No. 1828. 75th Congress, 3d Session, 1938.
- U.S. House of Representatives. Reports. "Secretaries of War and Navy to Assist American Republics to Increase Their Military and Naval Establishments." House Report No. 1231. 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Hearings. "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill for 1940." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- Lewis, Elmer A. (comp.). Laws Relating to National Defense Enacted During Seventy Sixth Congress. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941.
- U.S. Senate. Documents. "Army of the United States." Senate Document No. 91. 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1940.
- U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "General Staff Corps Eligible List." 75th Congress, 1st Session, 1938.
- U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "National Defense." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "Procurement of Aircraft." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.

- U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "Promotion of Promotion List Officers of the Army." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1940.
- U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "Purchase of Implements of War by Foreign Governments." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1940.
- U.S. Senate, Committee on Military Affairs. Hearings. "Regular Army Reserve." 75th Congress, 3d Session, 1938.
- U.S. Senate. Reports. "Reestablishing the Regular Army Reserve." Senate Report No. 1414. 75th Congress, 3d Session, 1938.
- U.S. Senate, Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, United States. Hearings. "Investigation of the National Defense Program." 80th Congress, 1st Session, 1948.
- U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Hearings. "Military Establishment Appropriation Bill For 1940." 76th Congress, 1st Session, 1939.
- U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Hearings. "Military Establishment Appropriations Bill For 1941." 76th Congress, 3d Session, 1940.
- U.S. Statutes at Large. Vols. XII, L-LIV.
- War Department, Office of the Secretary of War. Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1933-1940. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933-1940.

Published Memoirs, Correspondence and
Other Personal Accounts

- Alsop, Joseph, and Kintner, Robert. American White Paper: The Story of American Diplomacy and the Second World War. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940.
- Arnold, Henry H. Global Mission. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949.
- Baruch, Bernard M. Baruch: The Public Years. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.
- Blum, John M. (ed.). From the Morgenthau Diaries. Vol. I, Years of Crisis, 1928-1938. Vol. II, Years of Urgency, 1939-1941. Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1959, 1965.

- Brownlow, Louis. A Passion For Anonymity: The Autobiography of Louis Brownlow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Callahan, James D. (ed.). Jayhawk Editor: A Biography of A.Q. Miller Sr. (From the Recollections, Writings and Papers of A.Q. Miller Sr.). Los Angeles: Sterling Press, 1955.
- Childs, Marquis W. I Write From Washington. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942.
- Churchill, Winston S. Their Finest Hour. Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1949.
- Clugston, W. G. Rascals in Democracy. New York: Richard R. Smith, 1941.
- Elibank, Viscount (Formerly Arthur C. Murray), "Franklin Roosevelt: Friend of Britain," Contemporary Review, CLXXXVII (June, 1955), 362-368.
- Farley, James A. Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years. New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1948.
- Freedman, Max (Annotated by). Roosevelt and Frankfurter: Their Correspondence, 1928-1945. Boston: Atlantic Monthly, 1967.
- Hooker, Nancy H. (ed.). The Moffat Papers: Selections From the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.
- Hull, Cordell. The Memoirs of Cordell Hull. 2 Vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948.
- Ickes, Harold L. The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes. Vol. I, The First Thousand Days: 1933-1936. Vol. II, The Inside Struggle: 1936-1939. Vol. III, The Lowering Clouds: 1939-1941. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953-1954.
- Ickes, Harold L. "My Twelve Years With F.D.R." The Saturday Evening Post, CCXX (8 Parts, June 5-July 24, 1948).
- Jones, Jesse H. with Angly, Edward. Fifty Billion Dollars: My Thirteen Years With the RFC (1932-1945). New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951.
- Marshall, Katherine T. Together: Annals of an Army Wife. New York: Tupper and Love, Inc., 1946.
- Millis, Walter (ed.). The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall, General of the Army H. H. Arnold and Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1947.

- Morgenthau, Henry Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries: How F.D.R. Fought the Axis," Collier's, CXX (October 11, 1947), 20-21, 72-79.
- Morgenthau, Henry Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries: The Story Behind Lend-Lease," Collier's, CXX (October 18, 1947), 16-17, 71-75.
- Perkins, Frances. The Roosevelt I Knew. New York: The Viking Press, 1946.
- Roosevelt, Elliott (ed.). F.D.R. His Personal Letters. 1928-1945. 2 vols. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950.
- Roper, Daniel C. Fifty Years of Public Service. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1941.
- Rosenman, Samuel I. (ed.). The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941.
- Sherwood, Robert E. Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948.
- Stettinius, Edward R. Jr. Lend-Lease: Weapon for Victory. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944.
- Stimson, Henry and Bundy, McGeorge. On Active Service in Peace and War. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947.
- Tugwell, Rexford. The Democratic Roosevelt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1957.
- Tully, Grace. F.D.R. My Boss. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.
- Wehle, Louis B. Hidden Threads of History: Wilson Through Roosevelt. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953.
- Welles, Sumner. The Time For Decision. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944.

Newspapers

- Akron Beacon Journal, 1937-1940.
- Army and Navy Journal, 1933-1940.
- Army and Navy Register, 1933-1940.

Baltimore Sun, 1936-1940.

The Evening Star (Washington), 1933-1940.

Kansas City Star, 1928-1933, 1937-1940.

New York Herald Tribune, 1936-1940.

New York Times, 1930-1940.

The Times (London), 1936-1940.

Washington Post, 1933-1940.

Magazines

American Legion, 1936-1940.

Army Ordnance, 1933-1940.

Aviation, 1933-1940.

Christian Century, 1933-1940.

Congressional Digest, 1936-1940.

Events, 1936-1940.

Field Artillery Journal, 1936-1940.

Foreign Policy Bulletin, 1935-1940.

Foreign Policy Report, 1935-1940.

Fortune, 1936-1940.

Infantry Journal, 1936-1940.

Life, 1937-1940.

National Republic, 1933-1938.

Newsweek, 1933-1940.

The Nation, 1933-1940.

The New Republic, 1933-1940.

Time, 1933-1940.

United States Air Service, 1936-1940.

United States News, 1940.

Miscellaneous Unpublished Material

"History of the Under Secretary of War's Office." (Typed Manuscript located at the Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington, D.C.).

Killigrew, John W. "The Impact of the Great Depression On the Army. 1929-1936." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Indiana University, 1960.

Woodring, Harry H. "Certification of Military Service" (2 certificates: one for service as an enlisted man, the other for service as an officer). In possession of Keith McFarland, Columbus, Ohio.

Secondary Sources

Books

Beard, Charles A. and Mary R. America In Midpassage. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939.

Burns, James M. Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1956.

Cherne, Leo M. Adjusting Your Business to War. New York: Tax Research Institute of America, Inc., 1939.

Coles, Harry L. (ed.). Total War and Cold War: Problems in Civilian Control of the Military. Ohio State University Press, 1962.

Conn, Stetson and Fairchild, Byron. The Framework of Hemisphere Defense. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960.

Craven, Frank W. and Cate, James L. (eds.). The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vol. 6, Men and Planes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Divins, Robert. The Illusion of Neutrality. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

- Ekirch, Arthur A. Jr. The Civilian and the Military. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Eliot, George F. The Ramparts We Watch: A Study of the Problems of American National Defense. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1938.
- Fairchild, Byron and Grossman, Jonathan. The Army and Industrial Manpower. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959.
- Fenno, Richard F. Jr. The President's Cabinet: An Analysis in the Period From Wilson to Eisenhower. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Freidel, Frank. Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956.
- Frye, William. Marshall: Citizen Soldier. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947.
- Gerhart, Eugene C. America's Advocate: Robert H. Jackson. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1958.
- Greer, Thomas H. The Development of Air Doctrine in the Army Air Arm, 1917-1941. U.S. Air Force Historical Studies No. 89: Air University, 1955.
- Hagood, Major General Johnson. We Can Defend America. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1937.
- Huntington, Samuel P. The Soldier and the State. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957.
- Janeway, Eliot. The Struggle For Survival: A Chronicle of Economic Mobilization in World War II. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951.
- Kreidberg, Marvin A. and Henry, Merton G. History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955.
- Langer, William L. and Gleason, S. Everett. The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952.
- Leighton, Richard M. and Coakley, Robert W. Global Logistics and Strategy, 1940-1943. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955.
- Lunt, Richard D. The High Ministry of Government: The Political Career of Frank Murphy. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965.

- Manfred, Jonas. Isolationism in America, 1935-1941. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966.
- Martin, James J. American Liberalism and World Politics, 1931-1941. 3 Vols. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1964.
- May, Ernest A. (ed.). The Ultimate Decision: The President As Commander in Chief. New York: George Braziller, 1960.
- McCoy, Donald R. Landon of Kansas. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.
- Mingos, Howard (ed.). The Aircraft Yearbook 1936-1940, 1946. New York: Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce and Lancer Publishers, 1936-1940, 1946.
- Pogue, Forrest C. George Marshall, Vol. I, Education of a General 1880-1939. Vol. II, Ordeal and Hope, 1939-1942. New York: The Viking Press, 1963, 1966.
- Rauch, Basil. Roosevelt From Munich To Pearl Harbor. New York: Creative Age Press, 1950.
- Reinhardt, George C. and Kintner, William R. The Haphazard Years: How America Has Gone to War. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr. The Coming of the New Deal. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958.
- Smith, A. Elberton. The Army and Economic Mobilization. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959.
- Stedman, Murray S. Exporting Arms: The Federal Arms Exports Administration, 1935-1945. Morningside Heights, New York: Kings Crown Press, 1947.
- Stein, Harold (ed.). American Civil-Military Decisions. Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1963.
- Stiles, Lela. The Man Behind Roosevelt: The Story of Louis McHenry Howe. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1954.
- Timmons, Bascom N. Jesse H. Jones: The Man and the Statesman. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956.
- Washburn, Charles G. The Life of John W. Weeks. Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928.

Watson, Mark S. Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950.

Wheeler-Nicholson, Malcolm. Battle Shield of the Republic. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940.

Zornow, William F. Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957.

Articles

"America is Arming," The Nation, CXLII (April 8, 1936), 436.

"Armaments Arguments," Aviation, XXXVII (March, 1939), 69-70.

"Arms Before Men," Time, XXXII (August 22, 1938), 23-25.

"Army in Being," Time, XXXIV (January 1, 1940), 12.

Baldwin, Hanson W. "Our New Long Shadow," Foreign Affairs Quarterly, XVII (April, 1939), 265-276.

"Behind the Arms Program," The Christian Century, LVI (January 25, 1939), 110-112.

Chenery, William L. "Ask the Men Who Know" (editorial), Collier's, CII (January 28, 1939), 66.

"Coalition Bomb," Newsweek, XVI (July 1, 1940), 28-29.

Cole, Wayne S. "American Entry Into World War II: A Historical Appraisal," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIII (March, 1957), 595-617.

Emerson, William. "Franklin Roosevelt as Commander-in-Chief in World War II," Military Affairs, XXII (Winter, 1958-1959), 181-207.

Fleeson, Doris. "Washington Views 'Our Vital Interest,'" Independent Women, XII (June, 1940), 162, 188.

Flynn, John. "Other People's Money," The New Republic, LXXIVII (October 28, 1936), 350.

Flynn, John. "The President's Foreign Policy," The New Republic, XCVI (September 28, 1938), 213.

Flynn, John. "Will the Armaments Industry Save Us," The New Republic, XCV (December 6, 1939), 193.

"From Private to Secretary of War," Recruiting News, XVIII (November, 1936), 9.

Haight, John M. Jr. "Roosevelt As Friend of France," Foreign Affairs Quarterly, XLIV (April, 1966), 518-526.

Hornaday, Mary. "Washington Speed-Up," Independent Women, XIX (July, 1940), 199, 221.

"L'affaire Chemidlin," The New Republic, XCVIII (February 15, 1939), 44-45.

"Millions For Defense," The Christian Century, LIV (February, 1937), 175-177.

Mitchell, Jonathan. "How We Can Help Britain," The New Republic, CIII (July 1, 1940), 10-12.

Mitchell, Jonathan. "M-Day Man: Louis A. Johnson," The New Republic, XCVIII (February 22, 1939), 63-65.

"New War Secretary Pacifist Enemy," The Christian Century, LIII (October 14, 1936), 1373.

"Our Gallery of Illustrious: Harry Hines Woodring," The Reserve Officer, X (May, 1933), 3.

"Our Much Discussed Export Policy," United States Air Service, XXIII (June, 1938), 26.

Popper, David H. "American Defense Policies," Foreign Policy Reports, XV (May 1, 1939), 34-48.

Popper, David H. "The United States Army in Transition," Foreign Policy Reports, XVI (December 1, 1940), 214-228.

"Profiles: Chief of Staff: General Marshall," The New Yorker, XVI (October 26, 1940), 26-35.

"Scandalous Spats," Time, XXXIV (October 9, 1939), 16-17.

"Skeleton For Expanding U.S. Army," The Literary Digest, CXXII (August 8, 1936), 24-25.

"The High Cost of Peace," Fortune, XIX (February, 1939), 40-47.

"The Policy and Status of the U.S. Army," Congressional Digest, XVII (March, 1938), 71-73.

- "The War Department," Fortune, XXIII (January, 1941), 38-42.
- Tucker, Ray. "Washington Letter," The Living Age, CCCLVII (December, 1939), 380-383.
- "War Board's End," Newsweek, XIV (October 9, 1939), 31-32.
- Ward, Paul W. "The Inexcusable Woodring," The Nation, CXLII (April 29, 1936), 529.
- Washburn, G. "The Pro and Con of the Regular Army Reserve," Our Army, XI (March, 1939), 4-5.
- "Who Controls Our Armed Forces," Events, III (April, 1938), 282-286.
- "Will U.S. Mobilize Its Industrial Might in Time," Life, VIII (June 17, 1940), 84.
- "Woodring: A Militant Kansan Wins Temporary Job in Cabinet," Newsweek, VIII (October 3, 1936), 2.
- Woodring, Harry. "The Perfect Army," The American Legion Magazine, XXVIII (April, 1940), 20-21, 46-47.
- Woodring, Harry H. "Our Power for Defense," National Republic, XXII (December, 1934), 1-2.
- Woodring, Harry H. "Supply Preparedness," Army Ordnance, XVII (Army Ordnance).
- Woodring, Harry H. "The American Army Stands Ready," Liberty (January 6, 1934).
- Yoshpe, Harry B. "Bernard M. Baruch: Civilian Godfather of the Military M-Day Plan," Military Affairs, XXIX (Spring, 1965), 1-15.