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Chief of Staff

"George's appointment has met with universal approval. . . . He is in a position where he will make a great name for himself and prove a great credit to the American Army and the American people."

—Pershing to Mrs. Marshall, August 26, 1939.

FROM Vancouver the Marshalls came east together by train, the General stopping a few hours in Chicago to see old friends and then coming on to Washington, while Mrs. Marshall and Molly went on to Fire Island for the summer.[1] While looking for a house the General shared an apartment with his former executive, Colonel Walker, who was also a member of the War Plans Division staff. Marshall wanted to live in Virginia in the country but for one reason or another found nothing to suit him. He ended by renting a house on Wyoming Avenue near Rock Creek Park that belonged to General Embick.[2] Toward the end of September, Mrs. Marshall and Molly joined him, almost literally blown into town, as Mrs. Marshall wrote, by the great hurricane that struck New England in 1938.[3]

The General was just back from a short trip south when he picked up his newspaper one morning in Washington to read reports that the storm had virtually wiped out the houses on Fire Island. As telephone communication was knocked out, he got a plane and flew up.

"From the air, I saw the cottage [belonging to Mrs. Marshall] had not been destroyed though most of the houses in the vicinity had collapsed or been demolished. Many on the bay side of the island—which is about six hundred yards wide—had floated out in the water. On the ocean side the dunes had been broken through by heavy seas and most of the cottages in that vicinity were destroyed. I flew over to Mitchel Field and procured a small training plane and succeeded in landing on the beach. I found Mrs. Marshall and Molly all right, but they had had a terrific night and escaped from the cottage in water up to their waists, and in a fifty-to-ninety-mile-an-hour gale. My orderly[4] was with them and did his part nobly [by going out at the height of the storm to seek help]. The next morning they took stock and found that the cottage had not been harmed, though the destruction elsewhere had been terrific, and quite a few lives were lost. The adjacent community of Saltaire was completely destroyed, except for six cottages." [5]

As prelude to Marshall's Washington days, that hurricane seemed a fitting symbol. On his arrival at the War Department he had plunged at once into what amounted to a concentrated course of grooming first for Deputy Chief and then for Chief of Staff. His rise to the top was now rapid and in retrospect seems to have been inexorable. Yet it did not seem so at the time to Marshall or indeed to his superiors. The intention to promote him to General Embick's post had been made clear enough. But it remained an intention; assignments in the Army, as Marshall well knew, were never certain until they had actually been ordered. The political situation, moreover, was delicate. Secretary of War Woodring and Assistant Secretary Johnson were in almost constant chafing opposition, personally incompatible and politically at odds on basic principles. Woodring, former governor of Kansas, was cautious to the point of isolationism about risking involvement with Europe; Johnson of West Virginia, powerful in American Legion circles, was vigorous, ambitious, eager to push the development of United States defenses. Between them General Craig was caught in political crossfires that withered his own influence. Bitterly Mrs. Craig told Mrs. Marshall on her first visit, "They have crucified my husband." [6]

Marshall knew that to some degree he enjoyed the favor of all three. But that did not mean that they agreed. It meant rather that each separately had reason to support Marshall's claims to the top job despite—and in some degree in supposed opposition to—the others. Thus when Marshall returned from Fire Island late in September and heard the War Department buzzing with conjectures that he was to be Embick's successor and the next Chief of Staff, he was alarmed. "Rumor's destroying me," he wrote Pershing. "I am announced by Tom, Dick and Harry as Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff to be. The Assistant Secretary makes similar announcements. Probably antagonizing Woodring and Craig." [7]

Whether or not Craig was antagonized, he hesitated to name the War Plans chief as Deputy Chief of Staff for a reason which Marshall recognized as counting heavily against him—the fact that his appointment to this post as a brigadier general would be resented by a number of senior officers who would have to take orders from him. General Embick was shifted to the corps area command at Atlanta at the end of September. Early in October the word was that Craig would not name a deputy until the first of the year. Then one day Johnson, as Acting Secretary of War in Woodring's absence, decided to force the issue. He asked that Marshall be appointed. Craig replied that the matter would be worked out. Johnson said it would be worked out at once and that day's meeting of the War Council, on which the Deputy Chief of Staff normally sat, would not be held until it was worked out. Craig left the office, returning in a few minutes to say that the orders to appoint Marshall had been issued.

Marshall, who assumed duties as Deputy Chief of Staff on October 15,[8] had been Chief of the War Plans Division for only three months. Of that time he was out of Washington for about four weeks; one was a week of leave at Fire Island, his last real rest until after the war; the other three were spent in tours of inspection and speech-making. It was undoubtedly part of Louis Johnson's campaign to build him up for Deputy Chief of Staff that he was asked early in September by the Assistant Secretary to address a state convention of the American Legion in Clarksburg, West Virginia—the grass roots of Johnson's political power. Two weeks later Marshall substituted for General Craig

in presiding at the opening session of the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell Field.

He was embarking at this time on a concentrated education in air corps matters. An early and useful part of that was his trip with Major General Frank M. Andrews in the summer of 1938 to visit United States air bases and aircraft plants. General Andrews, son-in-law of General Allen who had been Marshall's chief at VIII Corps in 1919, was then commander of the General Headquarters, Air Force, the over-all air command directly under the Chief of Staff.[9]

There was no real break in Marshall's duties with the shift from the War Plans Division to the Deputy Chief of Staff's office. Nor would there be a break when he took the next and final step up. He was continuously concerned at an accelerating tempo with the review of war plans, with the build-up of Army and Army Air Corps as the situation in Europe deteriorated, and with War Department and Army reorganization leading ultimately to full mobilization. From his arrival in Washington to the outbreak of war in September 1939, he was learning, accepting increasing responsibilities, broadening and deepening his contacts with the War Department, the White House, and Congress, appearing more in public as a military leader to be reckoned with.

Marshall's appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff came a little more than two weeks after the Munich Agreement. Since the spring of 1935 Hitler had been openly and rapidly expanding Germany's military forces. In 1936 he began to use them. On March 7 of that year German troops reoccupied the Rhineland. Two years later his troops occupied and annexed Austria after a campaign of intimidation from without and Nazi propaganda from within had undermined the Austrian government. Almost at once Hitler agitated the next step—the take-over of Czechoslovakia, now caught in a vise between Germany and Austria. From the spring of 1938 he had fulminated against alleged mistreatment by the Czech government of the Sudeten German minority in Czechoslovakia. By September he was promising the Sudeten Germans that he would get justice for them if Czechoslovakia did not give it. France, bound by treaty to defend Czechoslovakia

against aggression, and Britain, committed to back France against German attack, were unprepared militarily and psychologically to act decisively. France, badly divided internally and severely shaken by Germany's show of strength, left to the British the initiative in negotiations with Hitler. On his flying trips, first to Berchtesgaden and then to Bad Godesberg, Prime Minister Chamberlain appeared more obviously in the role of conciliator than as negotiator and early revealed his willingness to put pressure on Czechoslovakia to make concessions. The Führer promptly raised his demands and threatened direct action if he did not get them. Having thus exposed the weakness of his adversary and established the pressures of crisis, Hitler invited Chamberlain and Premier Daladier to join him and Mussolini at Munich. There the British and French leaders listened to Hitler's peremptory demands for the surrender of the Sudetenland and, having no alternative but war, accepted them. They undertook as well to help persuade the Czechoslovakian government not to resist. In return they received Hitler's assurance that now that German-speaking people on Germany's borders had been integrated with the Third Reich he had no further ambitions. Despite Chamberlain's hyperbole that the settlement meant "peace in our time," both the fact of surrender and its tragic revelation of democratic weakness were clear enough. The only possible justification for the retreat at Munich was that, in making it, Britain and France had bought a little time. How little time was bought Hitler revealed in the spring, when he absorbed all of Czechoslovakia and shortly thereafter began pressing his demands on Poland.

Munich came as a moral shock to the American people. Public opinion polls in the fall showed that 43 per cent now believed the country could not stay out of a European war. Senator King of Utah early in October said that Munich might make it necessary for the United States "to spend hundreds of millions of dollars more for military purposes." [10]

President Roosevelt had no doubt that this was the meaning for America and that a beginning had to be made without delay. For him the galvanizing moment was the night of October 13 when Ambassador William C. Bullitt returned from his post in

Paris to report on the state of Europe. Bullitt stayed late at the White House, describing the German military build-up, particularly in airpower, which had permitted Hitler to dictate the terms at Munich, and the French conviction that they must move rapidly to match Hitler's air fleet both defensively and offensively. The French, Bullitt reported, recognized that their only hope for such rapid expansion lay in the possibility of calling on American aircraft factories to produce planes which they and the British could buy. The President, having received similar reports of British desires, apparently made up his mind on the spot to push for greatly increased United States plane production. The next day he announced to his press conference that new world conditions made it necessary to re-examine United States defenses.

Almost certainly Roosevelt at this time was thinking in terms of helping Britain and France to build air strength that might be sufficient to hold Hitler in check or, if war came, to defeat him without United States participation. Though it was a plan essentially to keep America out of war, he could not urge it. Not only was it impossible to use government funds to build factories for the supply of foreign nations, but the sale of American-made munitions abroad was already under heavy attack by isolationists as weakening our own defenses and likely to involve us in foreign adventures. In the circumstances the President's only recourse was to recommend the rapid build-up of United States airpower. He did so, but the confusion of aims which that tactic inevitably entailed was for some time to harass War Department planning, in which Marshall was deeply involved from the beginning. It also set Marshall in flat opposition to the President at one of the earliest of their official meetings. This was the crucial White House conference of November 14 at which the President outlined his program to build ten thousand planes.[11]

There were twelve at the meeting: besides the President, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, WPA Administrator Harry Hopkins, Assistant Secretary of War Johnson, Solicitor General Robert H. Jackson, Solicitor of the Treasury Herman Oliphant, Generals Craig, Marshall, and Arnold, Johnson's executive officer, Colonel James H. Burns, and the White House Mil-

itary Aides, Colonel Edwin M. Watson and Captain Daniel J. Callahan. Marshall's recollection was that "there was a great difference of opinion as to what the military [appropriations] should be and the President was all for the increase in the air but he wasn't much for getting the men to man the airships nor for the munitions and things that they required. He was principally thinking at that time of getting airships for England and for France." Yet Roosevelt talked rather of the need for a deterrent force strong enough to discourage any enemy from attempting a landing in North or South America. He believed that a heavy striking force of aircraft would form such a deterrent, a large ground Army would not. Actually he wanted twenty thousand planes with an annual United States productive capacity of twenty-four thousand, but as Congress was likely to cut that in half he wished the War Department to plan on ten thousand of which a quarter would be training planes and the rest half combat and half reserve. Of that total he suggested orders be given to commercial factories for eight thousand. He proposed that the WPA Administrator build seven new plants on War Department reservations, two of these plants to produce the remaining two thousand aircraft immediately needed, the other five to stand by for later use.

From a lounge off to the side Marshall listened with the others to the President, who "did the major portion of the talking." [12] As Roosevelt talked "most of them agreed with him entirely [and] had very little to say and were very soothing. . . . He finally came around to me. . . . I remember he called me 'George.' (I don't think he ever did it again. . . . I wasn't very enthusiastic over such a misrepresentation of our intimacy.) So he turned to me at the end of this general outlining . . . and said, 'Don't you think so, George?' I replied, 'I am sorry, Mr. President, but I don't agree with that at all.' I remember that ended the conference. The President gave me a . . . startled look and when I went out they all bade me good-by and said that my tour in Washington was over. But I want to say in compliment to the President that that didn't antagonize him at all. Maybe he thought I would tell him the truth so far as I personally was concerned, which I certainly tried to do in all our conversations."

The White House conference was the beginning of a long and ever-shifting struggle within the War Department to adjust air corps and ground force planning and to reconcile United States defense needs with demands of aid to Britain and France. It was the beginning, too, of a slow and (on Marshall's part) cautiously maturing relationship between President Roosevelt and the man who was to become his most important strategic adviser during the war. In all his mature life few people ever called Marshall "George," and he on his side called most of his associates and subordinates by their last names only. Roosevelt, squire by background and politician by instinct and training, knew few people whom he did not address by their first name. That difference in style sprang from a significant difference in approach to human relationships that helped set both men initially on their guard. Marshall believed that Roosevelt did not develop complete confidence in him until well after he became Chief of Staff. Marshall for his part felt that he had to hold the President at a calculated distance in order to keep his own freedom of action. For instance, he always refused to go to see Roosevelt at Warm Springs or Hyde Park for private conversations. "I found informal conversation with the President would get you into trouble," he said later. "He would talk over something informally at the dinner table and you had trouble disagreeing without creating embarrassment. So I never went. I was in Hyde Park for the first time at his funeral."

Marshall could be blunt in upholding a point of view he believed in, but he understood the need for dealing diplomatically and for knowing his man. How well he understood the important art of catching the President's attention was revealed in a letter he wrote to the commandant of the Infantry School preparing him for Roosevelt's visit in the winter of 1939. After suggesting that the school put on a demonstration of "some interesting field stuff" to "awaken his interest in the practical training of the Army," Marshall wrote: "I make this suggestion—that whatever arrangement is made, no one press him to see this or that or understand this or that; that whatever is furnished him in the way of data be on one sheet of paper, with all high-sounding language eliminated, and with very pertinent paragraphed underlined headings; that a little sketch of ordinary page size is

probably the most effective method, as he is quickly bored by papers, by lengthy discussions, and by anything short of a few pungent sentences of description. You have to intrigue his interest, and then it knows no limit." [13]

That Marshall got on with the President and impressed him favorably there is no doubt. But it is not clear that these contacts decided Roosevelt to appoint Marshall as Chief of Staff. Marshall's case was pushed by others, eventually by many others, but crucial among them was Harry Hopkins. It was in the closing days of 1938 that Marshall first came into close working contact with Hopkins, who on December 24 had been named Secretary of Commerce. Both were then deeply involved in the President's aircraft procurement program. Hopkins in the fall had traveled to the West Coast to check into the capacity of existing plane factories. The War Department General Staff liaison officer with WPA, Colonel Arthur R. Wilson, also made the trip and on his return reported officially to the War Department and wrote Marshall personally that Hopkins believed that the services could get large appropriations in the next relief bill provided they could sell the scheme to the President. Mr. Roosevelt, favorable to the idea of increasing the national defense, was understandably wary about diverting funds from works projects to plants and machine tools for the making of armaments. The way to Mr. Roosevelt, Wilson added, lay through Hopkins, and he urged that the Chief of Staff or his deputy get an appointment with the new Secretary in a matter of days.

In the end it was Hopkins who took the initiative. After Christmas he sent word that he would like to call on the Deputy Chief of Staff. Marshall, following a practice which he would use increasingly with cabinet officers and congressmen, instead went to see him. They spent an hour or more in discussion which centered on building more airplanes but ranged far over the problems of defense. Marshall, who had been living with the multiple deficiencies of both ground and air forces for many months, outlined a condition of unpreparedness which so shocked Hopkins that he recommended that the Deputy Chief of Staff seek out the President at once at Warm Springs or Hyde Park and discuss the matter. Marshall refused, but he had gained the most important point—the sympathy and support of Hopkins, which

from that time on never faltered. Hopkins, he believed, not only helped dispose the President to listen to the Army's needs but built up Marshall personally. He thought the favorable words spoken by Hopkins at the White House weighed more than any other single influence in tipping his selection as Chief of Staff.[14]

The more interesting fact seems to be that while up to the moment his appointment was announced he seemed no better than an outside possibility, nobody opposed him and nearly everyone whose wishes counted independently pushed his cause. As Marshall put 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. Someone mentioned me to Senator Guffey and asked about 'your fellow Pennsylvanian.' He didn't know me. Then he found he was a friend of my sister's. (He lived near her.) He came down and called me up on Lincoln's Birthday or Washington's Birthday. Said he wanted to come over; I said, 'I prefer to come to you.' I went up there. He was all excited. I had the damnedest time to keep him from seeing the President. I said you will destroy me. Let things take their course and perhaps I will get it."

Besides the backing of his associates, Marshall had the continuing support of General Pershing. That was important, though probably less decisive than was commonly assumed at the time. Had Pershing been opposed, he could, without much question, have swung the appointment to someone else. In giving his strong approval he joined an array of advocates already impressive and difficult for the President to resist.[15]

For Marshall one worry was his own health. Under great and continuous pressure he had found less time to relax than he had been accustomed to. He feared the irregularity in his pulse might recur and start up again reports that he was unfit. He himself kept careful check and made plans to rest the morning before he was due for his annual medical examination. But as it happened, after three especially grueling weeks during which he "had to work like lightning, compromise endless disagreements, sit in on most difficult scenes, and a tumultuous morning with much emphatic argument," General Craig suddenly sug-

gested he go over for the examination.[16] He wrote his friend Stayer the results. The doctor "found a slight irregularity in my pulse before exercise, and none after exercise. . . . He agreed with me that it was due to too much desk and too little exercise of the type to which I had been accustomed. Said I would have to fight a 'desk belly,' tho I was pretty well off at the time, being six pounds lighter than when you first saw me and in better shape, both as to hardness and figure." [17]

General Craig was scheduled to retire in September 1939. At the time his successor was being considered—competition for the post and speculation about it were warming up in February—Marshall stood about thirty-fourth in seniority on the list of eligibles; twenty-one major generals and eleven brigadier generals outranked him.[18] The rule, however, that no one could be appointed Chief of Staff who could not serve out the full four-year term before reaching the age of sixty-four eliminated all but four of the thirty-three and left Marshall the fifth-ranking eligible.[19]

Although he was not so far down the eligibility list as he appeared to some surprised observers at the time who merely counted names, Marshall's comparatively junior position had made political difficulties within the Army to which he was particularly sensitive as the time of decision approached. To an Atlanta newspaperman and close friend of Woodring's who wanted to campaign publicly in his behalf he wrote: "Reference any publicity regarding me, or 'build-up' as it is called, I am now, in my particular position with low rank, on the spot in Army circles. The fact of my appointment as deputy while a brigadier general, junior to other generals of the General Staff, makes me conspicuous in the Army. Too conspicuous, as a matter of fact." Then he went on shrewdly to appraise the compensating advantages he enjoyed. "My strength with the Army has rested on the well-known fact that I attended strictly to business and enlisted no influence of any sort at any time. That in Army circles has been my greatest strength in the matter of future appointment, especially as it is in contrast with other most energetic activities in organizing a campaign and in securing voluminous publicity.

"Therefore, it seems to me that at this time the complete ab-

sence of any publicity about me would be my greatest asset, particularly with the President, and the Army would resent it, even some of them now ardently for me. In other words, it would tar me with the same brush to which they now object.

"The National Guard knows me now. The Reserve Corps knows me well. The ROTC people, including many college presidents, know me. And the regular Army knows me. It is not time for the public to be brought to a view of the picture." [20]

The publicity campaign that Marshall had chiefly in mind was the one actively under way in behalf of General Drum, Marshall's old friend who had been Pershing's First Army chief of staff in France and who at that moment was commanding First Army in New York. Drum led the list of eligibles for Chief of Staff by such a wide margin that in the Army it was generally thought he had an almost pre-emptive right to the job. Not only was he senior, but his record was impeccable in a series of assignments that had admirably prepared him for Army leadership, from his service under Pershing through division and corps area commands and command of the Hawaiian Department. Against him was the fever of his own ambition and his unwillingness to let his preeminence speak for itself.

Repeatedly in the 1920s and 1930s, Drum had asked Pershing to seek political backing to get for him a one-star and later a two-star appointment, which were slow coming to him under the Army's promotion system. His name was presented along with MacArthur's to President Hoover when the Chief of Staff was to be selected in 1930; he was an active candidate to succeed MacArthur in 1934 when the Chief of Staff's appointment was extended for a year and in 1935 when Craig was appointed. When he first hoped to succeed MacArthur he complained of MacArthur's efforts to continue himself in office. In 1935 he actively sought General Pershing's aid to counteract objections that he was not a West Pointer and had not held a field command in World War I.[21]

Whether his being passed over then tainted his eligibility or, on the contrary, made his claim in 1939 stronger, it clearly did have the effect of stimulating Drum himself to extraordinary efforts this time to leave no strings unpulled. As early as 1937 visitors returning from the Hawaiian Department, where he

was in command until June of that year, wrote Roosevelt in Drum's behalf. George Patton, who had served under Drum in Hawaii, was prompted by his superior in December 1937 to sound out Pershing on the matter.[22] Drum had powerful political friends in New York, including Postmaster General James A. Farley, national Democratic party leader, whose support, it was supposed, would alone be enough to assure his appointment.[23] Service journals and some national magazines began early to tout him as the obvious and best choice. Drum himself was indefatigable in buttonholing those he thought might help him. But in the end, as Marshall and many others believed, this special pressure backfired, creating resentments and doubts among those who had the decision to make.[24]

If Drum were eliminated, Marshall had clearly the strongest remaining claim of the top five eligibles. Of the other three generals senior to him, only General DeWitt was seriously mentioned; and DeWitt, although currently commandant of the Army War College, was apparently handicapped because much of his experience was in the supply services. Major General Frank W. Rowell had no significant backing. Kreuger, a fine staff officer during the war and later an infantry commander, had held less prominent posts than Marshall in France and was hampered by his German birth.

As for Marshall, his chances of selection seemed to ebb and flow. Woodring, who in the fall of 1938 had indicated privately that he intended to recommend Drum, may have swung back to Marshall by mid-January 1939, but he told O'Laughlin at that time that he doubted if the President would name him. O'Laughlin, and some others in Washington at that time, believed that Marshall's independence, particularly his opposition to the President's airplane program, had hurt his chances and that Roosevelt might now prefer Drum.[25] It appears that both Woodring and Craig, who had also opposed the President's program, refrained for a time from recommending Marshall for fear that their support would prejudice his chances.[26] By mid-March the military editor of the *Washington Post* had picked up the rumors and hedged—though he did not withdraw—his earlier prediction that Marshall would be the next Chief of Staff.[27]

When, about the first of April, President Roosevelt asked the

Secretary of War for the records of general officers eligible for Chief of Staff so that he might look at them during his coming trip to Warm Springs, Craig made a preliminary selection, eliminating Rowell and DeWitt from the first five eligibles, adding one officer (Beck) who did not have four years to serve before retirement, and including four generals junior to Marshall (Grunert, Benedict, Ridley, and Chaffee). Although his selection seems in practical terms to have narrowed the choice to Marshall or Drum, Craig continued uncertain. Well along in April he felt that the President might reach down for a younger man and perhaps pick General Sultan, who he thought had the backing of the President's aide, General "Pa" Watson.[28]

It is likely that, when Craig was voicing his doubts, the President had already made up his mind. One Sunday he called Marshall to the White House. He seems to have let no one else know in advance, not even Secretary of War Woodring. "I saw the President in his study when he told me," Marshall recalled. "It was an interesting interview. I told him I wanted the right to say what I think and it would often be unpleasing. 'Is that all right?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'You said *yes* pleasantly, but it may be unpleasant.' "

Characteristically Marshall asked that the announcement be put off until he could leave Washington. He was flying that week to the West Coast. In leaving he intended himself to keep the secret even from Mrs. Marshall. But she was in such misery from a bad case of poison ivy and reaction to the serum she had been taking that he relented and told her. The official announcement was released on April 27.

Enthusiastic response was hardly to be expected from the press, which for the most part knew Marshall only slightly by reputation, if at all. Some editorials noted that in naming Marshall, Roosevelt was again seeking younger men for high command, as he had in picking Rear Admiral Harold Stark as Chief of Naval Operations. The one voice raised strongly against the appointment was Boake Carter's in the *Chicago American*. Carter, a constant and vigorous administration critic, found slightly sinister implications in the rejection of Drum in favor of someone less self-assertive. "It would be unkind," Carter wrote, "to

say that he [Marshall] is expected to be simply a willing 'order-taker.' Rather what is expected of him by the White House is that he will not 'talk out of turn.' " The comment must have amused the President if he saw it.[29]

From the Army came general acclaim, including enthusiastic words from some who later would allege that they never really cared much for Marshall. Pershing, wholly delighted, wrote to Mrs. Marshall: "George's appointment has met with universal approval. Of course all this pleases me very much and I do not have to tell you how I feel toward him. He is in a position where he will make a great name for himself and prove a great credit to the American Army and the American people." [30]

The organization of the War Department when Marshall was named Chief of Staff remained substantially as it had been shaped under Pershing in 1921. Under Army Regulations of 1921 the Chief of Staff was declared to be the "immediate adviser of the Secretary of War on all matters relating to the Military Establishment" and was "charged by the Secretary of War with the planning, development, and execution of the military program." These specifications clearly implied command authority over the Army as a whole, but to make that authority unambiguous a paragraph was added to the regulations in 1936 making the Chief of Staff the "Commanding General of the Field Forces" in peace and during war until "the President shall have specifically designated a commanding general thereof." There had been no major changes in the structure of the General Staff since Pershing's time, nor had the number of officers on duty with the General Staff increased materially. From a low of eighty-two in 1933 the total had risen only to a hundred and twenty-two in September 1939.[31]

The principal formal machinery to co-ordinate planning of the War and Navy Departments was still the Joint Board set up in 1903 by agreement of the Secretaries of War and Navy. Members of the board were, for the Army, the Chief of Staff, G-3 (later replaced by the Deputy Chief of Staff), and the Chief of War Plans Division; for the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, Assistant Chief, and the Director of Navy War Plans Division. They met once a month when there was business to be

decided and in the interim were served by a Joint Planning Committee. There was also an Army and Navy Munitions Board, under civilian chairmanship to deal with matters of joint procurement. Early in 1938 a Standing Liaison Committee was established consisting of the Army Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Under Secretary of State. Meeting irregularly but roughly once a month, the committee was designed broadly to assure that military and diplomatic policies were shaped in harmony. In practice, with Sumner Welles as the State Department member, it devoted most of its time to Latin-American problems.

This in outline was the structure of the top military directorate into which Marshall came in 1939. Under the supervision of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of War, it was all subordinate and directly advisory to the President as Commander-in-Chief. In July of 1939 Roosevelt made that direct relationship explicit by directing that the Chief of Staff and Chief of Naval Operations, on questions of "strategy, tactics, and operations," and the Joint Board for certain matters, should report directly to him rather than through the service secretaries. None of the machinery would prove adequate to the demands of a two-front war, and all would be replaced by 1942.

To redesign the War Department would become in time one of Marshall's most exacting and vital tasks. But in 1939 he was preoccupied with still more basic matters. The Army, it will be recalled, had reached a low point in both numbers and readiness for combat in the middle 1930s under the impact of congressional thrift and anti-war sentiment. Thereafter it expanded slightly as some funds from New Deal spending came its way and trouble abroad raised doubts as to America's perpetual immunity to war. In 1932 the regular Army had a little less than 120,000 enlisted men in active service, including Philippine Scouts. Among national armies of the world at that time, it was estimated to stand seventeenth. By mid-1939 the enlisted strength was close to 175,000. Both figures, however, contrasted notably to the strength of 280,000 authorized by the National Defense Act of 1920. Under the Rearmament and Re-equipment Program launched by MacArthur there had been during the

1930s "moderate but steady increases in appropriations and corresponding progress in re-equipment of the Army." Yet the money available to the Army was always grossly inadequate even to halt the normal deterioration of attrition and obsolescence, much less to develop and buy modern weapons to match those being acquired by America's potential enemies.[32] For the Army ground forces the situation was worse than the gross figures of manpower and appropriations suggest, because during the 1930s, in particular, the Army was required out of its meager totals to build an air force, which though absurdly small and ill equipped on the eve of war nevertheless absorbed one-eighth of the Army's enlisted strength. The Army Air Service had become the Army Air Corps in 1926 and in 1935 was disentangled from Army organization and formed in four national air districts under the over-all command of the General Headquarters, Air Force. Technical control was exercised by the Chief of Air Corps, who in 1939 was General Arnold.

Years of neglect had vitiated the 1920 concept of a small regular Army capable of rapid and orderly expansion in case of need. The concept had been buried so deep, in fact, that neither MacArthur nor Craig had found it advisable to attempt a resurrection. They were conditioned rather, by the cold air on Capitol Hill, to fight only for the minimum needs that they saw some hope of getting recognized in the annual appropriations. The result of this policy was, as noted, some small improvements but no basic progress toward real preparedness.

Marshall continued at first the politics of the possible. His most pressing task was to begin to remedy deficiencies so numerous and various that the weightiest decisions, even when the congressional pursestrings began to loosen, were to establish priorities among requirements nearly all of which in the light of world conditions in 1938-39 were desperate. The announcement from the White House in mid-October 1938 that defense appropriations were to be reviewed for the first time encouraged the War Department to try to define the real military needs. Within a week Marshall had met with the Chief of Ordnance in what turned into a discussion of a program for balanced rearmament. As a result the estimate of what was immediately needed for

weapons was increased almost threefold. At the same time Air Corps planners greatly expanded their estimates, which the Chief of Staff pushed still higher.

Encouraged suddenly to plan not for what a reluctant Congress might possibly concede but for what might actually be needed for defense, the War Department came hard up against the problem of what kind of defense to design and what to order first. That problem was posed most sharply by the President's ten thousand aircraft program. Marshall felt strongly that the program was unsound, that the enlistment and training of air crews and money for bases and other facilities ought to be provided to keep pace with the procurement of aircraft, and that the whole air build-up should be kept in balance with a simultaneous strengthening of the ground forces. He was not opposed to enlarging American airpower or to putting strong emphasis on its rapid development.[33] It is notable that so great an air force enthusiast as General Arnold has acknowledged not only that Marshall understood air force needs but that he was "one of the most potent forces behind the development of a real American airpower." "The two of us," Arnold wrote of the period when Marshall was Deputy Chief of Staff, "worked out the details of an entire air plan for the War Department." [34] But Marshall in 1938-39 had too lively an awareness of the total military weakness of the United States in relation to its potential enemies to accept the President's simple thesis that combat planes alone could create an effective deterrent force.

"Military victories," he told cadets at the Air Corps Tactical School, "are not gained by a single arm—though the failures of an arm of service might well be disastrous—but are achieved through the efforts of all arms and services welded into an Army team." Moreover, in the circumstances in which the United States then found itself in the fall of 1938, it was not at all clear when, where, or how the nation might be called on to exert military force or for what national objectives. Starting almost from scratch to re-create a military establishment, the nation faced a long period of preparation and vulnerability. He believed therefore that the sensible policy at first was "to maintain a conservatively balanced force for the protection of our territory against

any probable threat during the period the vast but latent resources of the United States, in men and material, are being mobilized." [35] On the matter of balance he made a prolonged and vigorous fight, carrying it with Craig to the White House in several meetings with the President in the winter of 1938 and later to committees of Congress.[36]

In late November 1938 he appealed to Pershing for support. "There is no one else in the country," he wrote, "that can speak as you do. Mr. Harry Hopkins the other day expressed to me his regret that you were not here to discuss some of the aspects of the present situation with the President. Possibly you will consider doing it in the manner suggested." Pershing readily complied with a letter to the President on November 25 along the lines Marshall had drafted, but a few days later wrote Marshall that he doubted it would have much effect. "In any event," he added, "I hope you and the Chief of Staff will go along, as that, in my opinion, is the only way in which you will get anything near what you want." [37]

Pershing's warnings against heading again into the sort of unpreparedness which he recalled so vividly from 1917—especially the lack of artillery and ammunition—may have carried some weight. (Marshall, after hearing the President's January 16, 1939, message to Congress, thought they did.) More immediate and convincing pressure for a balanced force was exerted by the War Department itself. The President wanted combat planes immediately to overawe Germany; the War Department wanted to begin building an effective fighting force. The War Department (Craig, Marshall, and Air Corps Chief General Arnold seem to have been in essential agreement throughout) complained that planes were worthless without men to fly them and troops to hold the ground for them. Roosevelt complained that he asked for war planes and his planners offered him almost everything else instead. The upshot was, however, that the program was reduced to six thousand planes and Congress was urged to provide more money for other things, notably to train pilots and to strengthen the seacoast defenses of Panama, Hawaii, and the continental United States.[38]

To follow up the President's request, Marshall directed the General Staff in the preparation of data for congressional com-

mittee hearings and himself accompanied General Craig to testify before the House Military Affairs Committee on January 17. In his own testimony Marshall emphasized once more his long-held contention that a proper defense must be one capable of functioning at once when war breaks out. "We assume," he said, "that almost any war of the future will at least start in the air, and that means that we must have available an adequate amount of materiel and personnel, trained personnel, ready to function the first day of the war; and also the materiel which would permit us to start immediately on the training of additional personnel required." [39]

But what specifically did the Army ground forces need? In December, Assistant Secretary Johnson had asked General Craig to be prepared to defend increases "made necessary by the unsettled and critical conditions of world affairs, [which] will in all likelihood cover a period of several years." Marshall, in late January, working along these lines with the War Plans Division, developed a two-year augmentation program which would flesh out five divisions to combat strength by the addition of eighteen hundred officers and twenty-three thousand men. War Plans noted that at a time when Germany had ninety field divisions, Italy forty-five, and Japan fifty on the Chinese mainland, the United States had nine on paper and not one ready to fight at authorized wartime strength.[40] Modest as the planned augmentation was, the President would not recommend the required manpower increases; he had in fact not asked Congress for any increase at all in mobile ground forces. The plan was shelved, but the War Department continued to regard it as a statement of something that should eventually be done.

Marshall justified the five-division plan generally in the light of aggressive threats of "dictator governments" against South and Central America and the establishment by Japan of "a new order" in China. A General Staff report further underlined the danger to the Western Hemisphere, saying that "violation of the Monroe Doctrine by European powers is not beyond the realm of possibility." [41]

That danger unquestionably was taken seriously. The political advantages of emphasizing it in 1939 were also obvious. At a

time when most Americans still believed we could stay out of foreign wars and nearly all hoped we could, the need for larger ground forces could hardly be argued on a premise of intervention abroad. Foreign invasion of the continental United States could not be put forward as a plausible contingency. But the public evidence of Axis activity in South and Central America was already sufficient to make the danger of subversion there, if not invasion, seem real and possibly imminent. If Hitler, moreover, were victorious in Europe, might he not then be tempted to move in force against our southern neighbors? A concern for the security of the hemisphere could seem, even to some isolationists, a small and logical extension of self-defense in our own home base. The tradition of the Monroe Doctrine, moreover, gave to that defense such anti-European color as not to stir the isolationists' fear of foreign entanglements.

As early as January 1938 President Roosevelt backed a request for additional money for the Army and Navy with a warning, that could seem all but axiomatic, that the United States "must keep any potential enemy many hundreds of miles away from our continental limits." At the end of the year Secretary of State Cordell Hull pushed, at the Inter-American Conference at Lima, for a declaration of "hemispheric foreign policy." The result was the Declaration of Lima (December 1938) in which the American republics "affirmed their intention" of helping each other in the event of foreign attack on any of them, "either direct or indirect." [42]

The Joint Planning Committee had already under study what the United States might do in case of an Axis grab in Latin America, assuming a simultaneous aggression by Japan against the Philippines. In February 1939 Marshall asked the Army War College to examine in secret just what force would be needed to make Brazil and Venezuela safe against assumed Nazi designs to take them over, primarily by subversion and sabotage. The committee in March recommended a specially equipped hemisphere defense force of a hundred and twelve thousand with shipping enough to transport it as a unit.[43] From its own broader premises the Joint Planning Committee a little later came up with an estimate of roughly the same magnitude. Be-

sides recommending stronger fixed defenses in the Canal Zone, Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico, and the development of Pacific naval bases, the Joint Planners asked for a larger Navy, an increase of the Fleet Marine Force to fifteen thousand officers and men, and the organization of the three-division Army expeditionary force.[44]

The planners, like everyone else who looked to the defense of Central and South America, fixed their eyes on the eastward bulge of Brazil at Natal. Here, it seemed, within easy flying range of Africa, was the most likely spot for the European dictators to try to bridge the Atlantic. From a foothold in Brazil they could spread to positions from which it would be possible to attack the Panama Canal. The Axis, it was assumed, would gain the initial objectives not by direct attack but by infiltrating commercially, politically, and militarily. Already several Latin-American countries were accepting German and Italian help in training and equipping their armies. At the end of 1938 the German Army had extended an invitation to the Brazilian Chief of Staff to visit Berlin. In an effort to block this, Brazilian Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha proposed in January that the United States Chief of Staff come to Brazil and invite the Brazilian Army Chief to return the courtesy with a trip to Washington. The idea appealed to the President, particularly since the Senate at this time was considering the sale of surplus munitions to Latin-American nations as a way of weaning them from military dependence on the Axis.

It was arranged for General Craig to go with a small mission by warship. But as soon as Marshall's nomination for Chief of Staff was announced, Craig decided that Marshall should go in his place.[45] Marshall received the word on the West Coast and wired the War Department to ask where and how he was to go. Only Rio de Janeiro had definitely been decided on, the War Department replied, and the only member of his party definitely picked was an officer who knew Brazil and spoke Portuguese, Colonel Lehman W. Miller. Whom else would he like? Marshall suggested Major Ridgway, who had been with General McCoy on the Bolivian-Paraguayan Conciliation Commission in 1929, and Captain Thomas North, listed as a "geographic and map ex-

pert and a good linguist." Later the group was completed by Colonel James E. Chaney, an Air Corps officer recommended by General Arnold, and Major Louis J. Compton. Transportation was to be the cruiser *Nashville*.[46]

The *Nashville* sailed on May 10 from New York, and with stopovers at Puerto Rico and Trinidad reached Rio on the twenty-fifth. The next twelve days for Marshall and his party were a crowded mixture of festivities and conferences, as the object of the trip mixed good will and military business.[47] Among their first social engagements in Rio was a reception for Countess Edda Ciano, Mussolini's daughter, whom *Life* called Italy's attractive answer to America's "humdrum" Marshall.[48] But Marshall was to prove not entirely humdrum. He had one notable inspiration, which was as natural as it was appealing.

At Curitiba, reviewing a parade of six thousand school children, he noticed a group of boys from four to twelve years old dressed alike in overalls with pink piping and carrying hoes, rakes, and the like. He asked who they were. Told they came from a state orphanage, he accepted an invitation to visit it. He came away impressed, and that evening asked Captain North, who managed housekeeping matters for the tour, whether there was anything in the regulations to prevent him from spending money on candy. North thought not, and Marshall told him to buy enough candy to give all two hundred-odd boys in the orphanage a pound apiece. It was a lot of candy to find in a short time but North managed to get it distributed before the plane took the mission on to their next stop.[49] The next stop was Pôrto Alegre, and by the time they got there the news of the Americans' spontaneous gesture of kindness had preceded them. The result was a reception more enthusiastic than any they had received before.

Marshall reported to Craig: "Arrived in Pôrto Alegre—Governor of State, Military Commanders, Archbishop, Cabinet, civil officials, etc., at field. Guard of Honor Cavalry escort surrounding my car, motorcycle police. Main street bordered by thousands of schoolchildren in uniform, 50 or 75,000 people in rear of children, confetti and paper like Broadway, for a half mile of blocks, four or five bands.

"Another guard of honor at palace of governor, all civil officials present, champagne, etc. The same at headquarters of General. Tour of city with Mayor and General. Dinner by Governor—one hundred guests, usual variety of wines, elaborate printed menus in form of memento. Then a ball or dance. Civil guards in plumes, jack boots, etc., at entrance, all guests grouped to receive me, governor as escort, national anthems, a dais at which to sit. It sounds like a joke or stage business, but it was all in deadly earnest in their desire to do the gracious thing.

"Inspection of a frontier regiment at its barracks. Regiment paraded along road in advance of barracks, wide road looking four hundred yards to barracks; carpeted with flowers, sign across archway in letters two feet high 'Welcome General Marshall,' complete inspection, including layout of all programs and schedules of instructions, welcome by officers in their club, formal speech—written—by Colonel, champagne; another inspection of an airfield, same arrangements, menu, speeches, music, as dinner night before; visit female academy (this, I think, was probably arranged for you), indoor amphitheater filled with girls, front row ones with flowers and they sing welcome in English, do their flag stunt, sing some Brazilian chants and present me with fifty bunches of flowers—all sent later to my hotel. The whole thing was beautifully arranged and executed. Then a parade of 6000 school children, in school uniform, two Army bands, followed by 2000 men of various sport clubs. All this last was a hurried arrangement due to publicity regarding my contact with schoolchildren at Curitiba. . . . The sport clubs insisted on being let in, which involved all the German rowing clubs—to the intensive satisfaction and amusement of Brazilians." [50]

The meticulous catalogue of details Marshall wrote not in innocent exuberance, but because he was to bring the Brazilian Chief of Staff of the Army, General Pedro Aurelio de Góes Monteiro, back with him to Washington and he was concerned that the reception accorded Góes Monteiro not fall short in any way of Brazil's hospitality. So he was careful to note a gift to him of three aquamarine stones and a large gold nugget and asked Craig to "tell Wesson [the Chief of Ordnance] that they serve champagne and cakes in the middle of a shell manufacturing shop." [51]

Besides Curitiba and Pôrto Alegre, the mission visited São Paulo, Santos and Belo Horizonte. In Rio from the first of June, the round of receptions and inspections continued, along with discussion with Brazilian military leaders on the ways and means of assuring closer co-operation between Brazil and the United States. On the way down Marshall had told his staff that he wanted "to get from the trip definite ideas as to its [Brazil's] military capabilities, its military establishments, the military problems which concern its important ports, its physiography in relation to strategy, its air bases, and the problems with which military aviation is concerned." That large order appears to have been largely filled. Not only were German designs frustrated—General Góes Monteiro never made the trip to Berlin—but Marshall's mission was able to arrange for American use of airfields in the Natal bulge, which proved of considerable value in the North African campaign of 1942-43. Moreover, when the United States was drawn into war, Brazil, by prior agreement, "put their German and Japanese nationals under the strictest surveillance for the duration." [52]

The evening of June 5 Marshall gave a farewell dinner on board the *Nashville* for his Brazilian hosts, including the Minister of War, Foreign Minister, and Chief of Staff. Next morning General Góes Monteiro and his party came aboard for the trip back to Washington. On reaching the Virginia Capes on June 20 the *Nashville* was met by an air escort of six Flying Fortresses and thirty-five pursuit planes, which accompanied them to anchor at Annapolis. There General Góes Monteiro began a round of festivities honoring him as Marshall had been honored in Brazil. Marshall said good-by in Washington but detailed Captain North to take charge of the Brazilian party's tour of the United States. North recalls Marshall's instructions to him, typical and revealing of the General. "I am sending you on this expedition," Marshall said, "because I have confidence in you. You have my complete authority to do in connection with this expedition what your judgment tells you is right. You have authority to issue orders in my name in connection with this. If you see anything that is going wrong, use my authority, if necessary, to correct it. But don't you ever come back to Washington and expect

me to correct something that you have allowed to happen." [53]

The Brazilian trip was a clear-cut success, but it was for Marshall one of the very few activities of these days to which any conclusion could be set. Concern with hemispheric defense helped to get Americans in and out of Congress thinking in terms of active rather than passive measures for the security of the United States—in terms of raising fighting forces rather than filling sandbags. In retrospect that can be seen as an important transition to the global involvement just ahead. Yet the Army did not immediately benefit, as hoped. It did not begin decisively to move from a peacetime to a wartime footing until after 1939, and the story of that transformation as Marshall directed it belongs to the story of the war years. So, with the other great task of planning against the manifold contingencies of attack on this nation, Marshall was continuously involved, but this story, too, can be properly told only from the vantage point of the later discussions of strategy when America's role had been shaped by events.

The Chief of Staff-to-be took over his duties on the first of July. General Craig, with two months of terminal leave, continued until September 1 to hold his old title. But the whole responsibility devolved at once on Marshall. Craig in his farewell statement urged that the United States strengthen its defenses, organize the five seasoned divisions the War Department had recommended to protect the Western Hemisphere, prepare a war reserve with equipment for one million men, and establish an outpost line, Alaska-Hawaii-Panama-Puerto Rico, ready for immediate action. It was high time.

In June, Hitler began his violent denunciations of the Versailles Treaty provisions that separated Danzig from Germany. Great Britain, sore from the retreat at Munich, announced it would stand by promises to defend Poland against attack. The German Führer only redoubled his demands and threats. On August 8 he conferred with Nazi leaders from Danzig. Shortly thereafter he absorbed the armed forces of the Protectorate of Slovakia into the Wehrmacht. None could doubt that he was preparing for imminent war. Meanwhile General Franco had proclaimed a Falangist dictatorship in Spain, which was interpreted

as putting him solidly in the Axis camp. The pace stepped up. On August 20, after British and French officials talked with the Russians about the possibility of a military understanding to check Nazi ambitions, Stalin bluntly announced that the Soviet Union had just signed a two-year trade agreement with Germany. Britain reiterated her commitment to fight for Poland. France called up troops. Hitler retorted with orders for the mobilization of additional reserves.

Then on August 23 came announcement of the non-aggression pact between Berlin and Moscow. Although arrangements in that treaty for the partition of Poland, the assignment to Russia of spheres of influence in the Baltic, recognition of special Soviet interest in Bessarabia, and the stipulation of German "political disinterestedness" in Southeastern Europe remained secret, it was clear enough that the understanding removed one considerable obstacle to German action against Poland. It seemed clear, too, that German insistence on her latest "final demand" in Europe was now matched by stubborn determination of France and Britain to yield no more.

For the United States parallel difficulties were rising in the East. As Japan extended control over China and talked of her destiny to dominate Asia, relations with the United States deteriorated. Near the end of July, Washington indicated that it would not renew the 1911 Japanese trade treaty, which was to lapse in January 1940. That action presaged the attempt shortly to apply brakes to Japan's war machine by embargoing the shipment of war materials.

As the showdown developed in Europe, Washington could do little more than stay alert. On August 9 the President created a War Resources Board under Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., to review the Industrial Mobilization Program.[54] On the seventeenth Sumner Welles, as Acting Secretary of State, presided over a meeting of officials of the State, War, Navy, Treasury, and Justice Departments to discuss measures for proclaiming and assuring United States neutrality in case of war. The Congress in the summer of 1939 had failed to heed the President's plea to amend existing neutrality legislation so that the arms embargo should not work to the disadvantage of the European democracies. Senator Borah

at a July White House conference, certain that his information was more reliable than that of the State Department, doubted if war would come, inasmuch as Germany was not ready for it.

Americans generally appear to have been both more pessimistic and more realistic as the fateful autumn approached. A Gallup poll taken on August 20 before announcement of the German-Soviet pact found that more than three-quarters of both parties believed that if France and Britain went to war with Germany the United States would be drawn in.

As for George Marshall, he needed no gift of prophecy to see that he entered on responsibilities that would be long, critical, and exacting. Whatever happened, America's perilous weakness in a world of armed bullies stood out as the all-absorbing fact that he as Chief of Staff had to face; his energies for some time would be devoted in full to rebuilding the nation's defenses.