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CHAPTER 8

THE SPHINX, HULL, AND THE OTHERS

Even before Welles had left for Europe, many Americans had already begun speculating on the possible connection between his mission and the presidential election of 1940. With the national nominating conventions coming up that summer, some wondered if the trip was an administration ploy to give Democrats an opportunity to wear the peace-party label.

Would Roosevelt break the tradition established by George Washington of retiring after two terms in order to try for a third? Early in 1937 he had emphatically told Prime Minister MacKenzie King of Canada that he would not run, and late the following year he expressed his weariness and fatigue over the midterm elections. He was looking forward to a long rest, and Senator James Byrnes of South Carolina believed that the president would retire and that he longed for a suitable successor to continue the New Deal. But in the summer of 1939 even an experienced politician like James Farley was not privy to Roosevelt's intentions. The president was as communicative as the Sphinx. ¹

Privately, Roosevelt encouraged others to seek the nomination. Harry Hopkins, his friend and confidant, was a possibility, but a divorce,
a stomach operation, and an extravagant life-style soon eliminated him from consideration. Henry Wallace momentarily hoped for a chance, but his flirtation with mysticism and past Republican connections removed him. Even Harold Ickes dreamed of receiving consideration, but ultimately came to the painful realization that any chance he had was extremely remote. Paul McNutt, former governor of Indiana, started to campaign, but his efforts ended in failure. These and other Democratic contenders all went to the Oval Office looking for support; some sparked lukewarm interest, but none ever found the elusive formula that could bring him to the convention as the front-runner. Roosevelt and the New Deal had become synonymous, and no one could take his place.2

Although Roosevelt tried to persuade several prominent New Dealers to run for the presidency, the most popular choices within the party were all Democratic regulars—men such as Vice-President John Nance Garner, Postmaster General Farley, and Secretary Hull—who were close personal friends and political allies. To them and others among the party faithful, it seemed that the New Deal leadership should relinquish power to a "true" Democrat, and Garner, Farley, and Hull each had the qualifications to assume the presidency. Each agreed with that assessment and, to varying degrees, hoped to take the presidential oath of office.

Garner was the oldest. Born in 1868, he had grown up in Texas, studied law, and settled in Uvalde, a small frontier town west of San Antonio. He rose to become its leading citizen, as an attorney, banker, and real estate investor. Elected to the state legislature in 1898, he won his first congressional contest three years later. He served in the House of Representatives until his rise to Democratic minority leader; when his party gained the majority, he was elected speaker of the House, becoming known as one of the most respected and influential members of that chamber. When his state delegation and the Hearst newspaper chain championed a run for the White House in 1932, the speaker emerged as a viable candidate.

Garner had not known Roosevelt well until after the start of his battle with polio. From the time of Roosevelt's reemergence in national politics until the 1932 convention, Garner met periodically with him during his travels to Washington or on his way to Warm Springs. This
cordial relationship and the New York governor's strong showing in the primaries convinced the Texan to release his delegates on the fourth ballot, a step that assured Roosevelt the nomination and guaranteed Garner the second spot on the ticket. Both men had maintained a friendly rapport throughout the first term, but their relationship dramatically soured during the second because the vice-president opposed the court-packing plan, deficit spending, and what he viewed as foolish executive appointments. Their relationship soon deteriorated to such a low point that each often made snide remarks about the other, and eventually they preferred not to be seen together.

At the age of seventy-two, the vice-president had not expected to mount a vigorous campaign for the nomination, but he would not disappoint the loyal followers who had backed him over four decades. In 1939, when Garner thought that Roosevelt might seek a third term, his attitude visibly changed, and he actively sought the nomination to stop any third term momentum. By mid-December, he had publicly declared his candidacy and had persuaded the Texas Democratic convention to endorse him. Yet even the enthusiasm of his most avid supporters could not hide many of Garner's weaknesses. He chewed tobacco, drank heavily, and gambled large sums on high-stakes poker. Some believed that he had more than good luck in these games—that they were a clandestine way to pay bribes to secure the vice-president's political favors. These suspicions, along with his advanced age, such regional biases as opposition to civil rights legislation, and his association with the high-protective-tariff wing of the Democratic party, all hurt Garner's chances for winning the nomination. If these problems were not enough, his own state delegation was deeply divided. Sam Rayburn, majority leader of the House, spoke out for his friend, but a young Lyndon Johnson, elected to the House in 1937 as an avid New Dealer, favored the president.3

Although these troubles hurt Garner's chances, his greatest and most insurmountable hurdle was Roosevelt himself, who refused to pass the party standard on to an adversary intent on dismantling the foundations of the New Deal. Probably echoing the president's thoughts, Secretary Ickes labeled Garner a "traitor." Of course, the antagonism between the two highest elected officials in the country created embarrassing situa-
tions; just before Christmas 1939, for example, Roosevelt sarcastically commented on Garner's announcement for the presidency at a cabinet meeting: "I see that the Vice President has thrown his bottle—I mean his hat—into the ring.""

James Farley embarked on a far different course in his quest for the White House and ultimately grew even more disillusioned than Garner. This large, jovial man had been born some thirty-five miles north of New York City on May 30, 1888. Raised in a poor Irish Catholic setting, he became a staunch Democrat. At the age of twenty-three he was elected town clerk of Grassy Point. From that beginning, he rose to the post of county party chairman and later became a member of the state assembly and chairman of the New York State Boxing Commission. During the 1920s he backed Al Smith's attempts for the presidency, and although these bids failed, Farley gained national prominence and the necessary experience to direct Roosevelt's victorious campaigns as chairman of the Democratic National Committee. His reward was retention as party chairman and appointment as postmaster general.

For eight years he held both positions, and when the president confidentially told him of his plans to retire, Farley decided to try for the nomination. Since he had planned the strategy for two triumphant presidential races, he was confident that he could do the same for his own campaign. He was well known, popular, and in control of the party apparatus. Roosevelt, however, saw Farley as an adequate postmaster general, but did not believe that he had the intellectual capacity to serve in the White House. At first, the president encouraged Farley to run for the New York governorship in 1938 to gain experience in a major elected office. When the postmaster general rejected that advice, the president raised Farley's Catholicism as a political liability, since no member of his religion had ever won the presidency, including fellow New Yorker and friend Al Smith. But Farley minimized the issue's importance, believing that the party machinery at his command coupled with his positive image would bring victory. He also pointed out that, should Roosevelt decide to step down, he could depend on Farley to continue the New Deal.

Yet, after Farley ignored Roosevelt's warnings, the president used other channels to discourage him. After a visit at the White House in the summer of 1939, George Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago spoke with
Farley about the upcoming campaign. At the conclusion of their conversation, the cardinal announced his support for a third term and objected to a Roman Catholic once more raising the religious issue in national politics.³

Neither Farley nor Garner ever heeded Roosevelt's objections. Nor could they mount any serious challenge, because the president minimized the former's intelligence and detested the latter. Since neither man had a chance of winning Roosevelt's endorsement, both eventually became bitter enemies of the president and critical of the New Deal and the chief executive's power. They were not alone, for they represented many regulars inside the party who expected to be heard but were denied that privilege.

Hull alone had the best chance to succeed Roosevelt. In fact, he had had presidential aspirations since the election of 1928. When the draft for his nomination that he had expected after Al Smith faltered never materialized, Hull waited for the appropriate moment to make another try. That chance occurred in the summer of 1937, when his Tennessee backers formed a presidential committee. The secretary discouraged this well-intentioned but premature effort, but he did not extinguish their fervor; he merely wished to pick the appropriate time to announce his candidacy. In the meantime, as secretary of state he could concentrate on diplomatic issues, and this was where many Americans preferred him to stay: he shared many of their values, and they felt safe with the secretary at the helm of the foreign service. Hull himself was content to remain the elder statesman who had come to symbolize the United States' commitment to a peaceful world by speaking out about the possibility of joining the League of Nations (albeit under a more "palatable" name at a later date), worrying about deteriorating global conditions, and labeling the dictators "international gangsters." Throughout the second term, Hull placed special emphasis on reciprocal trade agreements as a panacea to resurrect domestic prosperity and lessen the threat of war. He expected to capitalize on his positive public image and economic philosophy as the cornerstones for his bid to win the Democratic presidential nomination by hiring his close friend George Milton in September 1937. As a special assistant to the secretary of state, Milton was to form the Economic Policy Committee as a front for the secretary's upcoming campaign,
preach the reciprocity faith, and thereby win converts to Hull's presidential crusade.\footnote{6}

By May 1939, Hull had closely connected trade and peace during a speech before the Foreign Affairs Council in Chicago, further warning his listeners that domestic recovery and global war were interrelated. The United States needed to interact commercially abroad if it were to solve its own economic problems, and the only way to keep out of war was to maintain world peace by promoting international commercial intercourse. The secretary urged worldwide financial cooperation and claimed that the United States had started down that path through the reciprocity program, "which has already demonstrated its effectiveness as a powerful instrument of action in that direction; by being ready to extend our policy and action along every practicable line that holds a promise of strengthening the foundations of peace through mutually advantageous economic relationships among nations."\footnote{7}

Throughout 1939 many prominent politicians anticipated Hull's nomination. Farley and other influential leaders had no doubt of Hull's chances for victory, even with such shortcomings as poor public speaking, advanced age, and an evident lack of charisma. Even the Republican candidate in the last election, Alf Landon, considered Hull a formidable opponent. Within the State Department, Berle, Messersmith, and Bowers saw him as the party's best choice, and at the beginning of 1939 Welles surprised Farley by coming out in favor of Hull and opposing Hopkins, Wallace, or Ickes. Welles stuck to that path even when New Deal adviser Thomas Corcoran solicited him to join the third-term movement; Welles believed that the president wished to retire and had already anointed Hull as his heir apparent.\footnote{8}

Even though Moore opposed the secretary's nomination, he still acknowledged Hull's many attributes. Hull, wrote Moore, was "a man of very impressive personal appearance, and of very excellent manners. No one can see him or meet him without being prepared to rate him highly. Beyond that he is a man of strictest integrity, who is deeply concerned about what is occurring in the country and about its future, and he is most industrious in promoting and advocating the policies in which he has faith." Moore recognized that Hull was the spokesman for low-tariff Democrats, and he reasoned that by decreasing trade restric-
tions, economic relations would improve. That improvement would in turn bring forth international cooperation, and the secretary was "passionately in favor of bringing about a more peaceful world."  

Yet in the midst of this growing support for his candidacy, Hull was extremely distraught over press reports about his failing health. Moffat, in late March 1939, had noticed that the secretary was much improved after his rest but remarked that he was "still coughing." Whenever critical issues like Munich and the outbreak of the European war arose, some media spokesmen would note that Hull was absent from his post. The secretary was convinced that columnists were trying to discredit him at the upcoming convention, and he was chagrined that his friends did not refute these accusations.  

Hull faced another liability to his possible nomination: Frances's ethnic background. That summer Ickes thought that his colleague might become the compromise candidate for the Democratic party, but he noted that, among his many shortcomings, Hull was not a New Dealer, and that "Mrs. Hull is Jewish, which is not a political asset, even in free America, at this time." By the end of the year, Hull had heard vicious gossip about his wife's ancestry, and some had already started spreading anti-Semitic rumors. Although he did not believe that they would interfere with Hull's nomination, Farley commented that Hull "would not have his wife humiliated no matter what the stakes; that Mrs. Hull's happiness means more to him than anything else."  

Reporter Mary Johnson of Time went to Frances's birthplace in 1939 to investigate her religious background. In his Who's Who biography, Hull had listed her last name as Whitney, which was not her maiden name. The family doctor in Staunton said that she was a practicing Presbyterian, but her brother admitted that some of their relatives were Austrian Jews. As the nominating convention approached, the reporter requested additional information; aware of the political stakes, both Frances and her brother refused to speak further to the press. Yet their reticence did not prevent the publication of an article asserting that Frances came "from an old Jewish family in Staunton," a statement that the Hulls never challenged.  

Although the secretary worried about his health and his wife's Jewish heritage as barriers to the nomination, he also knew that the shortest
route to the White House was via Roosevelt’s endorsement; in fact, the 
president often appeared sympathetic to Hull’s candidacy. In October 
1938 the president told him that he could expect to receive the nomina-
tion. On a drive to the opening of the professional baseball season in 
April 1939, Roosevelt reiterated this preference for Farley’s benefit. 
Roosevelt also conceded that the secretary had the confidence of the 
American people. When the president nominated Hull for the Nobel 
Peace Prize in late 1939 for his efforts in promoting the good neighbor 
policy and lowering tariff barriers, and, for the first time, announced his 
support for the reciprocity program in early 1940, these gestures of 
support delighted Hull and strengthened the bonds between the two 
leaders.14

Despite Roosevelt’s apparent vote of confidence, Hull also heard of 
complaints from the Oval Office. Roosevelt thought that the secretary 
was too old and had proved to be a poor administrator who had 
difficulty making decisions. His single-minded commitment to the recip-
rocal trade program created doubts that he had the requisite broad 
range of skills to serve in the Oval Office. Since it would not solve the 
international crisis, Roosevelt’s verdict was that Hull had spent too much 
time on this trivial pursuit.15

Nevertheless, the secretary was gaining momentum for his candi-
dacy, and the embittered Garner and Farley recognized that their breach 
with the president was irreversible. Without any chance of winning the 
nomination, Garner publicly opposed a third term for Roosevelt, and 
declared that, if offered the opportunity, he would not again run on the 
ticket. For Garner it was a win-win situation. By entering the primaries 
on his own, he would please his followers; when he lost, he would retire 
to his farm in Texas. Farley, who had also turned against Roosevelt, 
could not understand why the president opposed his candidacy; he was 
determined to fight for the nomination. As long as the White House 
remained silent, Farley thought that he still had a chance, but this hope 
collapsed when Ernest Lindley, who had close ties to the president, 
published an article in the spring, reporting Roosevelt’s assertion that 
Farley could not win because of his Catholicism. Although the president 
belatedly denied making this statement, Farley knew that bringing reli-
gion directly into the campaign had destroyed his presidential ambitions.16
Realizing the impossibility of winning the top spot, Farley shifted his energies to gaining the vice-presidency. At fifty-two years of age, he could run for the White House four years hence, and now, by maneuvering to control sufficient delegates to the convention, he could still assure himself the vice-presidential prize. That plan would work as long as Roosevelt followed through with his retirement, but when the president discouraged Berle from writing speeches for Farley in spring 1940, he finally understood the depth of Roosevelt's opposition. Abandoned by the man whom he had helped elect, Farley became a bitter antagonist. No longer did he seek approval from the "Boss.” Instead, he entered the New Hampshire and Massachusetts primaries and won enough delegates to have his name placed in nomination at the convention. As it neared, he wondered if Roosevelt had reversed his earlier course and had decided to run after all. If he had, Farley would have his name presented to the delegates as a symbolic gesture against the third term, leave the cabinet, and resign from the party chairmanship.  

As Farley's and Garner's aspirations plummeted at the beginning of the new year, Hull's aspirations rose when Drew Pearson published the first article in the United States declaring that Roosevelt had chosen him as the Democratic nominee. Walter Winchell, a well-known columnist, predicted the secretary's nomination in early 1940; a month later the Washington Post declared Hull the White House's preference. In late April the North Carolina state convention believed that Roosevelt favored his secretary of state. The postmaster general now sought to combine forces with the secretary by promoting the idea of a Hull-Farley ticket. Some public opinion polls briefly indicated that Hull was even more popular than the president, and although he publicly denied any presidential ambitions, he did nothing to interrupt the momentum building in his behalf, nor would he oppose a draft.  

Rather than campaign actively, the secretary continued to work for the renewal of the reciprocity program as the foundation of a better world and as his vehicle to the White House. He sermonized about international trade leading to peaceful relations while the Axis forces swallowed Europe. Yet the contradiction between what Hull dreamed and what was actually occurring did not bother his followers, who focused on their candidate's ability to shape foreign policy in a troubled
world. Hull rejected preparations for global warfare, preferring to imagine that the path to peace lay through the acceptance of the reciprocal trade agreements program. When his cherished legislation finally came up for a congressional vote in the spring of 1940, the secretary marshaled all his forces for its passage—for the first time with the president's blessings. Even though the congressional debate was bitter, the bill passed, and that was enough for Hull; the victory vindicated his life's work. Even if the idea of lowering trade barriers during wartime was frankly impractical, the secretary had at least kept its spirit alive, and he intended to use lowering tariff rates as a main theme of his anticipated presidential campaign.19

No one was more effusive in his congratulations than Francis Sayre, who had served under Hull for seven years working on the reciprocity program, and now connected its passage with a bid for the presidential nomination: “He has a native strength, a clarity of judgment, and an utter sincerity which often remind me of Lincoln. He is so free from personal ambitions that I am convinced he will in no way seek the Presidency nor even accept it unless a determined drive is made upon him by his friends.”20

Economic adviser Herbert Feis was far less sympathetic as he watched the secretary cling to this theme and surround himself with advisers who all preached to the same choir. “This group,” Feis asserted, “thought or considered that activities in this field could have far more decisive influence in the increasingly critical international situation that was developing than I did; they very often impressed and bothered me as rather ill-informed enthusiasts.” The same criticism also came from Ickes and Morgenthau, who minimized Hull's capabilities and complained about his ineptitude. Hull, in turn, oftentimes blamed prominent New Dealers for encouraging unsound foreign policy initiatives, constantly griped about their unwanted entries into foreign affairs, and expressed anxiety over the White House's independent initiatives.21

Welles presented another problem by winning headlines from the Panama conference and the European mission. Even though he sometimes acted as a welcome brake on unwise initiatives, the general impression, no matter how unfair and unfounded, was that Hull was losing control of his own department's direction. In fact, the reality was far
more dangerous: the diplomatic corps was gradually splitting into two distinct factions, with Hull relying on his own close associates, and Welles on his.\textsuperscript{22}

The under secretary did not comprehend the consequences of this growing schism. Instead, he was busy returning to his normal duties after his sojourn in Europe. He was preparing for the renewal of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, and he was facing criticism from those within the State Department, like Herbert Feis, who accused him and the president of “rather half-baked and dangerous” initiatives.\textsuperscript{23} Still believing that Roosevelt intended to retire and orchestrate Hull’s nomination, Welles met Berle late in the evening of May 8 at the exclusive Metropolitan Club, a short walk from the White House. After rapidly downing four Scotches, the under secretary predicted that Roosevelt would wait until the last possible instant and then commit to Hull. If he won the general election, Norman Davis, a close diplomatic adviser and personal friend from Tennessee, would become secretary of state, and Welles would be dismissed.\textsuperscript{24} Even in the face of such a bleak prediction, Welles worked energetically throughout the summer, while Berle watched and commented, “Sumner is still working like a beaver.”\textsuperscript{25} He also carried on with his fashionable social engagements, hosting periodic parties at his magnificent estate. On vacation, he no longer traveled to Switzerland, but instead traveled to his thirty-eight-room “summer cottage” in Bar Harbor, Maine.\textsuperscript{26}

Hull was obviously distraught over the relationship between Welles and Roosevelt, but he did not confront either of them. No matter how upset he was, he would not quarrel with the man in the White House whose support he so desperately coveted, and his patience seemed to be having the desired results. During April the president reiterated to Farley that Hull would be his successor; several days later, the president sat next to Frances Hull at a White House banquet and told her to get used to these affairs, for her husband would be the next president. Some voters favored a drive for a popular draft, but Frances, knowing Cordell’s plans, tried to discourage her hometown press by denying that her husband was a candidate.\textsuperscript{27}

At the end of the month, Roosevelt met with Prime Minister King and declared that Hull “commanded the greatest respect of the party.”
His weaknesses were overzealousness on trade matters, his advanced age, and his lack of familiarity with domestic politics. But despite these faults, "he was decidedly the best of all." King reported to Hull that Roosevelt had tapped him as the successor, and that reassurance pleased the secretary. Even with this knowledge, he did not declare his intentions, but the prime minister perceived that Hull was a candidate with powerful support within both political parties. As late as June 20, Roosevelt reassured Hull his backing for the secretary as the Democratic nominee.

While Hull seemed to be inching toward the nomination, others within the party, such as Ickes, opposed him because of his obsession over lowering tariffs and his apparent inability to cope with the worsening global situation. Eleanor Roosevelt, among others, questioned the secretary's commitment to New Deal programs. Most simply wanted to maintain their influence within the administration, and to do so they hoped to maintain the status quo.

The drive for a third term began in earnest at the end of October 1939, when Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace told a Berkeley, California, audience that Roosevelt should run again. This trial balloon was the first partisan speech in the upcoming battle for the nomination, but the president seemed uninterested. At the start of 1940, he appeared ready to end the strain of eight years in office by stepping down to write his memoirs. Farley reported that the president had lost "his usual vigor"; his color was bad; he complained of colds and sinus trouble, and his family wanted him to retire.

Farley's wishful thinking did not take into account certain subtle signs of change at the White House. In mid-February, for the first time, Berle saw indications that Roosevelt might run again because Democratic leaders were pressuring him in that direction. Far more worrisome, the president was growing anxious about European conditions; if the situation worsened, he might seek the nomination in order to protect national security. By the end of April, Roosevelt still was not feeling well and seemed to look forward to the end of his term; however, there had been a noticeable shift in attitude; he would not rule out the possibility of running again. With the Nazi spring offensive and the impending collapse of France, Roosevelt's resolve not to seek a third term seemed to be wavering.
In the midst of this European crisis, Roosevelt made headlines on June 19 by announcing the appointments of Republicans Frank Knox and Henry Stimson to the cabinet as secretaries of the navy and war, respectively. Some Republicans called their acceptance of the posts a betrayal, while staunch Democrats deplored the decision. The president, who had been considering this bipartisan step for some time, thought that bringing these prominent Republicans into the administration would offer a symbol of national unity in the midst of Allied disaster.\textsuperscript{33}

Many Republicans viewed the action as an unwelcome political diversion, intended to draw attention away from their convention, which opened a mere two days later in Philadelphia. When the Republicans finally made their selection, many New Deal antagonists went away disgruntled. Wendell Willkie, a utility executive who had voted for Roosevelt in 1932, won on the sixth ballot.\textsuperscript{34}

Sometime between Willkie's nomination and early July, Roosevelt decided to shatter American political tradition by seeking a third term. The balance had been tipped by his dislike for the Republican standard bearer, the fall of France, Hull's weaknesses, his own ego, or perhaps some combination of all of these factors. In any event the president, having charted his course, now had to inform the Democratic pretenders to his throne.

Hull learned of the about-face at a luncheon meeting on July 3. At the start of their conversation, the president downplayed the idea of another term and then went on to list the secretary's strengths and weaknesses. As he spoke, Hull instinctively noticed a change in the president's tone and intuitively understood that Roosevelt would run for a third term. Under those conditions, the secretary denied any interest in seeking the nomination, assuring the president that the convention would quickly renominate him. Upon leaving the White House that afternoon, Hull had no doubt that Roosevelt had abandoned him. The president might want to live in the White House, but he would never fight for the privilege, and that was the hunch on which Roosevelt had counted.\textsuperscript{35}

The following day, the president met with Farley at Hyde Park and told him of his intention. Appalled by what he considered the president's
devious tactics, the postmaster general was crushed. Shortly after their talk, Farley flew to Chicago in preparation for the Democratic national convention, knowing that his political aspirations were ruined. White House strategists intended to stage a spontaneous demonstration to give Roosevelt the nomination by acclamation, and in the face of such a show of enthusiasm by the party faithful, the president would "reluctantly" agree to run.  

In the midst of this political maneuvering, Farley opened the convention on the morning of July 15 at Chicago Stadium. Speaker of the House William Bankhead of Alabama took the gavel as temporary chairman, a privilege won by his long and faithful service as former chairman of the powerful House Rules Committee and currently as speaker. At the peak of his career but weakened by a series of heart attacks, Bankhead gave a keynote address stressing unity, hoping that the speech would propel him into the vice-presidency. But his efforts had just the opposite effect, for the address was dull and uninspiring, and it effectively ended any serious support for Bankhead in the second spot on the ticket. The following evening Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky took the podium and read a letter from the president stating his intention to retire. The stunned delegates sat in confused silence. Then someone shouted over the loudspeaker, "We want Roosevelt." The gallery, packed with loyal Chicago Democrats by Mayor Ed Kelly, immediately joined in the chorus, and soon the entire floor of the convention had begun demonstrating for the president.

Farley watched the pandemonium and was particularly amazed by the actions of one participant: "As the delegates filed past the platform in a joyous snake dance, my eyes popped in surprise to see the austere, impeccable Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, jogging along... Welles' creased trousers were getting a collection of wrinkles and his collar was wilting. He was going through the motions, but his wan smile was ample evidence that he was not really enjoying himself."  

The next day's result was anticlimactic. Although Farley, Garner, Hull, and several others received token votes, Roosevelt's victory was overwhelming. Farley, as party chair, then faced the unpleasant duty of calling for unity and having the convention unanimously endorse its candidate. The delegates next had to select a running mate. Roosevelt
had already pleaded with Hull to take the vice-presidency, but he vigorously refused: “No, by God!” With the secretary out of contention, the president insisted on naming Henry Wallace, an act that almost caused a party rebellion. The delegates did not especially care for him to begin with, and even more, they resented him being forced upon them. “Dear old Will,” as Roosevelt called Bankhead, refused to step aside in the face of the president’s preference and consequently became a rallying point for dissidents; but when the votes were tallied, Wallace was victorious by a margin of two to one.39

As for Farley and Garner, after eight years of serving in the New Deal, they left unceremoniously and disillusioned. Roosevelt asked Farley to remain as Democratic National Committee chairman, but he, as anticipated, declined the invitation. Ed Flynn immediately replaced him, much to Farley’s surprise. Garner remained in the capital, not even bothering to attend the Chicago convention. After it adjourned, he vacationed in Texas until the Senate reconvened and filled out the balance of his term. Neither man was ever called upon to return to government service.40

Angered by Roosevelt’s decision to run and frustrated that he had lost any hope of residing in the White House, Hull momentarily contemplated resignation, but he decided to remain as a patriotic obligation. As soon as Roosevelt had been renominated, the secretary congratulated him and left for an inter-American conference scheduled to begin on July 18 in Havana. Once the meeting convened, Hull hoped to take the lead in shaping its resolutions. The meeting was notable for the establishment of a hemispheric trusteeship that would consider questions relating to European possessions in the Americas, and for its final declaration, known as the Act of Havana, which provided the machinery for a committee to resolve possible problems over the transfer of European colonies. Although the body never acted, this accord showed the willingness of the American republics to take steps toward hemispheric defense.41

After the meeting, Hull briefly returned to Washington, D.C., on August 1 for a long talk with the president and then left for a vacation. He had been working steadily since the start of the year with only brief periods for rest. His deteriorating health, coupled with the hot summer
weather, necessitated a twenty-day stay in the cooler climate of White Sulphur Springs. Although a direct phone line from his room to the State Department kept him abreast of daily events, in general he followed the accepted treatment for consumption: complete bed rest.\footnote{42}

William Bullitt did not have an opportunity to see the secretary. He boarded Pan American’s Dixie Clipper in Lisbon on July 15, 1940, but the plane was forced down in the Bahamas with engine trouble and did not land at La Guardia Field in New York until five days later. At an impromptu press conference, he spoke to reporters for twenty minutes, proclaiming the continued recognition of Vichy without having first cleared his remarks with the State Department or the White House. The next day the headlines read, “FRANCE OF PETAIN IS NO FASCIST STATE.” A police motorcycle escort with sirens screaming, running red lights at fifty miles per hour, rushed him to Pennsylvania Railroad Station, where he had to wait nearly half an hour before leaving for Philadelphia to spend a weekend with his family. After a pleasant holiday, he proceeded to the White House for dinner with Roosevelt, and then the two men traveled to Hyde Park to continue their discussions of European conditions. There they formulated the theme of the speeches that Bullitt would give during the pending presidential campaign, warning the public of the Nazi menace and suggesting that the only way to prevent this danger from spreading to the Americas was through the rendering of all possible assistance to the British.\footnote{43}

Before making his first speech, Bullitt lunched with Welles (who in Hull’s absence was acting secretary), seeking approval of its contents. On August 18 the ambassador told the American Philosophical Society audience of 4,000 at Independence Square in his home town that the United States faced great peril. Bullitt lectured his listeners that “the United States will not go to war, but it is equally clear that war is coming towards the Americas . . . I am certain that if Great Britain is defeated, the attack will come.”\footnote{44} While Bullitt was speaking out in favor of the Allied cause, he was also lobbying for a cabinet post in order to remain in the United States to take charge of raising his teenage daughter. Roosevelt balked at any thought of giving him that rank, for he believed that Bullitt talked too much. Indeed, Bullitt now had the audacity to recommend himself as the next secretary of the navy, suggesting that the
president remove Secretary Knox and appoint him ambassador to Great Britain.45

In the midst of the presidential campaign, Speaker Bankhead interrupted his legislative duties on September 11 to travel to Baltimore for the opening of the Democratic campaign in Maryland. Minutes before a scheduled radio address, he was discovered unconscious on the floor of his hotel suite. When his daughter Tallulah, a movie and stage star, learned of his collapse, she chartered a plane and rushed to his side, but by the time she arrived he had already been transported to Bethesda Naval Hospital, critically ill. He died there on Sunday, September 15, at the age of sixty-six, of a stomach hemorrhage. The following day his body lay in a gray casket against a backdrop of lilies and palms at the marble podium in the well of the House. Following that chamber’s tradition of naming a successor before conducting the funeral service, the clerk of the House swore in Sam Rayburn of Texas. At the end of the services, Hull, who had counted Bankhead as a friend, went over to the family to express his condolences.46

As a tribute to Bankhead and in added recognition of the South’s pivotal role in the Democratic party, Roosevelt took the unprecedented step of ordering his entire cabinet to attend the funeral in the speaker’s home town of Jasper, Alabama. Late that afternoon, the Southern Railway Company ran two special trains, one bearing a large congressional delegation, the family, and the casket and another carrying the president and his party. Hull was one of the few cabinet members who remained in Washington, but Welles substituted for him at the services. Many newspapermen, broadcast journalists, and photographers accompanied the procession.47

Accustomed to traveling by train, Roosevelt had had the Pullman Company lease a specially designed car to the government for one dollar a year. Armor-plated and bulletproof, it had a reinforced steel frame, bedrooms, bathrooms, and a sitting room. Since the president lived in a ramped environment, secure bars had been mounted on the walls as well as the back platform, and an elevator had been installed at the end of the compartment to accommodate his wheelchair.48

After a day’s journey, the party arrived in Jasper, a town of 5,000 whose population had quickly swelled to over 35,000 as crowds strained
to get a glimpse of its distinguished guests. The temperature was over ninety degrees in a region that had not seen rain in over a month. Several thousand people watched the full-dress affair from outside the First Methodist Church at the peak of the afternoon heat. Mourners were packed inside the old three-story structure, where conditions were made even more unbearable because of the oppressive heat. All the local Protestant ministers took part in the tasteful, short services. After the local clergy had finished, the chaplain of the House, Reverend James Montgomery, spoke extemporaneously for about forty minutes in the oppressive heat, raising the audience's temperature almost off the gauge. At the end of the ceremonies, the president hurried to his train and headed back to the capital.49

On the return trip, Welles had dinner with Wallace and John Carmody of the Maritime Commission; the under secretary drank quite heavily and spoke indiscreetly of his admiration for Mussolini and the Brazilian ruler Getulio Vargas. After this conversation, he retired to his private Pullman compartment.50 Welles returned to his departmental duties the next day; overwhelmed with work, he wrote, "The present situation is such that I fear it is out of the question for any of us to leave Washington for long during the months to come." He also kept abreast of Maryland politics and actively tried to encourage state officials to campaign energetically for the president.51

Hull reluctantly spoke out in favor of Roosevelt's reelection in the face of partisan Republican attacks on foreign policy. At the end of October, the secretary formally endorsed the president by informing a radio audience that he was preventing war, not leading the nation into it. Roosevelt was an experienced leader at a time when the United States could not afford to stand idly by for two and a half months of uncertainty if Willkie triumphed. On the day before the balloting Hull went even further by introducing the president over nationwide radio as an additional testimonial and offering a response to the Republican assaults on American diplomacy.52

Even with Hull's support for the incumbent, the differences between Roosevelt and Willkie on foreign policy issues were inconsequential. Both favored alignment with the British as the best way to keep American shores safe from German infiltration. Each had pledged to keep the
United States out of war, but neither was candid about the possibility of American participation. Both painted themselves into a corner with promises of avoiding confrontation when they knew that such a pledge could not be guaranteed. Although Roosevelt ultimately won by a comfortable margin, those who pressed to keep American troops at home did not trust his assurances. As long as the European war raged, they lobbied vigorously against any foreign entanglement.53

Had Hull resigned at the end of the second term, he could have taken pride in the passage of the reciprocal trade agreements program, the evolution of good neighbor diplomacy, careful supervision of East Asian policy, and the maintenance of an uneasy peace in a world bent on going to war. Hull remained in office in order to guarantee those policies, but at the same time he had to face certain inevitable changes. First, the secretary advocated caution. Such was his nature, and Roosevelt’s antagonists depended on him to do so. The philosophical differences between the two were clearly articulated and acknowledged. But how could Hull continue to practice restraint in the midst of global upheaval and in direct opposition to the White House’s propensity for action?

The answer, of course, was that Roosevelt ignored much of the secretary’s advice and used Welles increasingly to carry out White House initiatives. What Roosevelt failed to realize was that Hull no longer coveted White House support. Thanks to the president, the secretary had lost his last chance to run for the Democratic presidential nomination. During the period before Roosevelt had decided on a third term, Hull had periodically voiced his displeasure over Welles’s close ties to the Oval Office, but in spite of this uneasiness the secretary and the under secretary maintained a working relationship. It did not ensure harmony, but the State Department’s machinery continued to function. Yet despite appearance of a relatively smooth operation, the difference between Welles and Hull were gradually growing more distinct. At least to the secretary, they were moving from a source of annoyance to one of deep-seated aggravation.

This emerging friction did not initially disrupt American policies as the administration continued on its slow course toward an Anglo-American alliance, advocating opposition to Axis aggression, hemispheric solidarity, and maintenance of the status quo in East Asia. The basic lines
of authority were still in force, and as long as they were undisturbed, United States diplomatic initiatives would follow a clearly charted path.

In many ways, Roosevelt, Hull, and Welles had taken on the characteristics of chess pieces, each holding enormous power unique to himself. Roosevelt could move in any direction and had supreme control. Hull had less mobility, but still had considerable strength. These two superior pieces in turn restricted Welles's options, but he had enormous latitude. The rules were sometimes relaxed, but the game of diplomacy could continue infinitely, with no one gaining a decided advantage or conceding any move. One absolute rule, however, applied solely to the under secretary. He could not afford to make a wrong move. Since he and his two superiors had worked together for eight years and knew each other's tendencies, a misstep seemed highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the possibility, no matter how remote, was still part of the game, and Welles knew that if Hull ever found an opening, checkmate would be guaranteed.