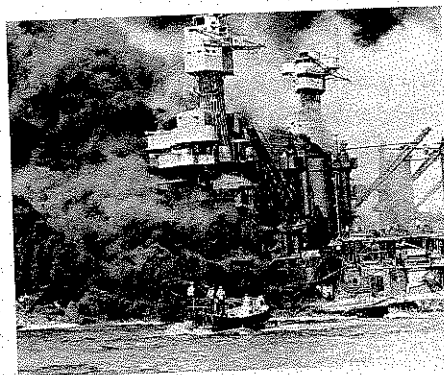


PART NINE



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A World at War (1937–1945)

17 Franklin and Eleanor: The Early Wartime White House

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN

For the first thirty-nine years of his life, success came easily to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Born in 1882 into a wealthy and prominent family in upstate New York (Theodore Roosevelt was a distant cousin), Franklin was a pampered only child who grew into a gregarious, handsome, and athletic young man. Educated at the finest private schools and graduated from Harvard, he chose politics for a career. With wealth and privilege, a famous name, powerful family connections, and a winning personality, he had every reason to believe that he would go far in politics, perhaps all the way to the White House. In 1905 he married his fifth cousin, Eleanor Roosevelt, a remarkably intelligent young woman who would prove to be as politically astute as her affable husband.

But in 1921 Roosevelt's world collapsed. He was stricken with polio, which left both legs paralyzed. He had to wear heavy metal braces on them and could get about only in a wheelchair or on crutches. For a man who had never had to struggle for success, Roosevelt could easily have submitted to his disability, left politics, and lived the rest of his life in the beautiful Roosevelt manor overlooking the Hudson River. Instead, his great inner strength enabled him not only to survive his "trial by fire," but also to continue and succeed brilliantly in politics. What is more, as Eleanor put it, his "great suffering" gave him "a greater sympathy and understanding of the problems of mankind."

In the following selection, prize-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin agrees with Eleanor's assessment. After his ordeal with polio, Franklin now "seemed less arrogant, less smug, less superficial, more focused, more complex, more interesting." Yet, as Goodwin reminds us, Roosevelt had his share of human frailties, which led him into an extramarital affair with his wife's social secretary, Lucy Mercer. If polio was the great test of Franklin's life, the discovery of his infidelity was Eleanor's. Drawing on her own inner strength, Eleanor not only survived her husband's betrayal but also grew

stronger from it and went on to become his indispensable political ally and the most influential first lady in American history.

Goodwin helps us understand the remarkable Roosevelt partnership against the backdrop of the early stages of the Second World War. That war began in Europe when powerful German forces invaded Poland in 1939. The United States, although theoretically neutral, was clearly sympathetic with the Allies, led by Britain and France. Indeed, Roosevelt was more preoccupied with the Nazi threat in Europe than with Japanese aggression in Asia. Time and again, he predicted that Hitler would eventually make war on the United States, and out of that belief flowed much of his European diplomacy: the destroyers-for-bases deal with England, Lend-Lease, and the Atlantic Charter. Still, through 1940 and 1941, as German planes bombed Britain and German armies swept into the Soviet Union, the Roosevelt administration often seemed adrift, as though the president and his advisors were confused, helplessly caught in a vortex of events over which they had no control.

Japanese intentions in the Pacific were especially perplexing. Since 1937, Japan had been laying waste to China, seizing its coastal territory and murdering its civilians—200,000 of them in Nanking alone. Did Japan's aggression against China constitute an immediate threat to United States security? Was a showdown with Japan inevitable, as American military leaders insisted? While the United States watched Japanese movements in Asia, Congress declared economic war against Germany with the controversial Lend-Lease Program, which gave \$7 billion in military aid to embattled Britain. Soon American convoys were carrying supplies across the Atlantic. When German submarines, called U-boats, torpedoed several American vessels, many observers contended that war with Hitler was only a matter of time.

Meanwhile, the Japanese question had become increasingly confusing. In Tokyo, a party led by General Hideki Tojo and the military demanded that the United States be driven from the Pacific so that Japan could establish an Asian empire free of Western influence. But Prime Minister Fumimaro, a moderate, wanted to negotiate with the United States and directed his ambassador in America to present Washington with a set of proposals that might avoid war. At the same time, the war party proceeded with a top-secret plan to attack the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor if negotiations failed. By early December of 1941, United States analysts knew that the Japanese were preparing to strike, but almost no one thought them capable of launching an air attack from aircraft carriers against distant Hawaii. When Japanese planes did exactly that, in a day that would "live in infamy," Americans from Pearl Harbor to the nation's capital were caught completely by surprise. Like the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Pearl Harbor was one of those crises that mark the people who experience them for the rest of their lives. Americans of the war generation would recall exactly what they were doing when they first heard the news on that fateful Sunday. Roosevelt himself, Goodwin states, felt "great bitterness and anger toward Japan for the treachery involved in carrying out this surprise attack while the envoys of the two countries were still talking."

For years, Roosevelt detractors have charged that the president deliberately sent the Pacific fleet to Pearl Harbor so that the Japanese could attack it and give him an excuse to involve the United States in the war. There are those who still make this argument. But Gordon W. Prange's studies *At Dawn We Slept* (1981) and *Pearl Harbor: The Verdict of History* (1985) and the bulk of modern scholarship exonerate Roosevelt of such a monstrous accusation. Goodwin concurs: "It is inconceivable that Roosevelt, who loved the navy with a passion, would have intentionally sacrificed the

heart of the fleet, much less the lives of thirty-five hundred American sailors and soldiers, without lifting a finger to reduce the risk."

On the Monday after Pearl Harbor, December 8, 1941, the United States declared war on the Japanese Empire. Three days later, Germany and Italy—Japan's Axis allies—declared war on the United States. Roosevelt and Congress reciprocated at once, thus placing America on the side of the Allied Powers—Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. Franklin told Eleanor: "I never wanted to fight this war on two fronts." But now there was no choice. Fortunately for Franklin, the political partnership he had formed with Eleanor would serve him well in the terrible years ahead.

GLOSSARY

BULLITT, WILLIAM Bullitt was Roosevelt's pessimistic ambassador to France who sent the president dramatic descriptions of the German invasion. On May 30, 1940, he wrote Roosevelt that he might "get blown up before I see you again."

CHAMBERLAIN, NEVILLE Chamberlain was the British prime minister who resigned in the spring of 1940, shamed by his attempts to "appease" Hitler and by England's lack of military preparedness when the German military rolled through the Low Countries and France.

CHURCHILL, WINSTON In the spring of 1940, when the war in Europe was only seven months old, Churchill replaced the disgraced Neville Chamberlain as the United Kingdom's prime minister. Churchill's courage and implacable stance against Hitler inspired his countrymen when, in the fall and winter of 1940, German bombers sought to destroy London and break the will of the British people to continue the war.

CUDAHY, JOHN Cudahy was Roosevelt's ambassador to Belgium who, in May of 1940, informed the president of Hitler's assault on the Low Countries. Goodwin writes that Cudahy "had almost been knocked down by the force of a bomb which fell three hundred feet from the embassy."

EARLY, STEPHEN Early was Roosevelt's press secretary from the South who helped manage the president's crowded schedule. He frequently disagreed with Eleanor's outspoken advocacy of civil rights and believed the first lady would harm the president among southern white voters, who traditionally voted for the Democratic ticket.

HOPKINS, HARRY The director of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and later secretary of commerce, Hopkins was one of Roosevelt's closest and most trusted advisors. Although weakened by cancer, Hopkins vigorously organized the cabinet to prepare the nation for war.

HOWE, LOUIS In the years that FDR struggled with polio, he was Roosevelt's closest political advisor and confidant. Howe eventually helped Roosevelt make a dramatic reentry into the political arena. He also encouraged Eleanor to become more actively involved in politics. The former newspaperman died in 1936.

KENNEDY, JOSEPH P. Kennedy was a successful and ruthless businessman, ambassador to Great Britain, and father of a future president. Roosevelt eventually lost faith in Kennedy because of the diplomat's pessimism over the ability of England to resist Nazi aggression.

KNOX, FRANK In 1940, Roosevelt appointed him secretary of the navy even though Knox was a Republican and a critic of the New Deal. One of Knox's fondest memories was charging up San Juan Hill with Theodore Roosevelt.

LEHAND, MARGUERITE "MISSY" She was Roosevelt's personal secretary, who grew very close to the president after Eleanor's discovery of her husband's extramarital affair with Lucy Mercer. Missy shared FDR's private moments and became, in Goodwin's words, "his other wife."

MARSHALL, GEORGE He was Roosevelt's army chief of staff and later, under Harry Truman, an influential and important secretary of state in the postwar years. When Hitler began his aggression against Germany's neighbors, this blunt, honest soldier realized how unprepared the United States was to fight another world war.

MCDUFFIE, IRVIN McDuffie was Roosevelt's valet who lived in the White House and helped to dress the president and prepare him for bed. He was friendly and talkative but was plagued with a drinking problem, and Eleanor worried that he would fail the president. The disabled chief executive, however, could not find it in his heart to dismiss him.

MERCER, LUCY PAGE She was Eleanor's social secretary who had a love affair with Franklin. When Eleanor discovered their love letters, she gave her husband an opportunity for a divorce. Faced with disgrace and a lost inheritance, he refused, but their marriage was forever changed.

MORGENTHAU, HENRY He was Roosevelt's secretary of the treasury who acted quickly to freeze the assets of those countries that Hitler's forces had overrun, making certain that those funds would not fall into the hands of the Nazis.

NEUTRALITY LAWS In the isolationist 1930s, Congress passed this legislation designed to avoid the mistakes of the Great War and keep the United States out of future foreign conflicts. These measures prohibited loans and shipments of arms to belligerents and hampered Roosevelt's efforts to help England and France as those nations struggled against Nazi aggression.

PERKINS, FRANCES The first woman to serve in a president's cabinet, Perkins was Roosevelt's secretary of labor from 1933 to 1945. She mediated bitter labor disputes and helped write the Social Security Act of 1935, the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, and other important New Deal legislation.

PHONY WAR Many Americans used this term to describe the first part of World War II, when little fighting was done. From the German attack on Poland in September of 1939 to the march of the German army through western Europe in May of 1940, the United States remained isolationist and

hopeful that Nazi aggression would not threaten American national security.

RIBBENTROP, JOACHIM VON He was Hitler's foreign minister who weakly argued that Nazi aggression against the Low Countries and France was a response to a threatened attack against Germany.

STIMSON, HENRY L. In 1940, Roosevelt appointed this Republican as the secretary of war to give his cabinet a bipartisan direction as America prepared for global combat. This extremely intelligent head of the eastern establishment had served every president since William McKinley.

TULLY, GRACE She was the White House secretary who, when Missy LeHand suffered a stroke, became a valued aide to Roosevelt. Nonetheless, in Goodwin's words, "she never enjoyed the intimacy, playfulness, and absolute trust Missy had."

WATSON, EDWIN "PA" Watson was Roosevelt's secretary and military aide. He came to know the president's temperaments and did his best to channel FDR's busy schedule into productive directions.

WOODRING, HENRY Woodring was Roosevelt's first secretary of war. An isolationist from Kansas, he did not understand the need to strengthen the armed forces in response to increased aggression in Europe and Asia. Tension built when Louis Johnson, an internationalist, became assistant secretary of war.

On nights filled with tension and concern, Franklin Roosevelt performed a ritual that helped him to fall asleep. He would close his eyes and imagine himself at Hyde Park as a boy, standing with his sled in the snow atop the steep hill that stretched from the south porch of his home to the wooded bluffs of the Hudson River far below. As he accelerated down the hill, he maneuvered each familiar curve with perfect skill until he reached the bottom, whereupon, pulling his sled behind him, he started slowly back up until he reached the top,

where he would once more begin his descent. Again and again he replayed this remembered scene in his mind, obliterating his awareness of the shrunken legs inert beneath the sheets, undoing the knowledge that he would never climb a hill or even walk on his own power again. Thus liberating himself from his paralysis through an act of imaginative will, the president of the United States would fall asleep.

The evening of May 9, 1940, was one of these nights. At 11 P.M., as Roosevelt sat in his comfortable study on the second floor of the White House, the long-apprehended phone call had come. Resting against the high back of his favorite red leather chair, a precise reproduction of one Thomas Jefferson had designed for work, the president listened as his ambassador to Belgium, John Cudahy, told him that Hitler's armies were simultaneously attacking Holland,

Luxembourg, Belgium, and France. The period of relative calm—the “phony war” that had settled over Europe since the German attack on Poland in September of 1939—was over.

For days, rumors of a planned Nazi invasion had spread through the capitals of Western Europe. Now, listening to Ambassador Cudahy's frantic report that German planes were in the air over the Low Countries and France, Roosevelt knew that the all-out war he feared had finally begun. In a single night, the tacit agreement that, for eight months, had kept the belligerents from attacking each other's territory had been shattered.

As he summoned his military aide and appointments secretary, General Edwin “Pa” Watson, on this spring evening of the last year of his second term, Franklin Roosevelt looked younger than his fifty-eight years. Though his hair was threaded with gray, the skin on his handsome face was clear, and the blue eyes, beneath his pince-nez glasses, were those of a man at the peak of his vitality. His chest was so broad, his neck so thick, that when seated he appeared larger than he was. Only when he was moved from his chair would the eye be drawn to the withered legs, paralyzed by polio almost two decades earlier.

At 12:40 A.M., the president's press secretary, Stephen Early, arrived to monitor incoming messages. Bombs had begun to fall on Brussels, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, killing hundreds of civilians and destroying thousands of homes. In dozens of old European neighborhoods, fires illuminated the night sky. Stunned Belgians stood in their nightclothes in the streets of Brussels, watching bursts of anti-aircraft fire as military cars and motorcycles dashed through the streets. A thirteen-year-old schoolboy, Guy de Liederkirche, was Brussels' first child to die. His body would later be carried to his school for a memorial service with his classmates. On every radio station throughout Belgium, broadcasts summoned all soldiers to join their units at once.

In Amsterdam the roads leading out of the city were crowded with people and automobiles as residents fled in fear of the bombing. Bombs were also falling at Dunkirk, Calais, and Metz in France, and at Chilham,

near Canterbury, in England. The initial reports were confusing—border clashes had begun, parachute troops were being dropped to seize Dutch and Belgian airports, the government of Luxembourg had already fled to France, and there was some reason to believe the Germans were also landing troops by sea.

After speaking again to Ambassador Cudahy and scanning the incoming news reports, Roosevelt called his secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and ordered him to freeze all assets held by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg before the market opened in the morning, to keep any resources of the invaded countries from falling into German hands.

The official German explanation for the sweeping invasion of the neutral lowlands was given by Germany's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Germany, he claimed, had received “proof” that the Allies were engineering an imminent attack through the Low Countries into the German Ruhr district. In a belligerent tone, von Ribbentrop said the time had come for settling the final account with the French and British leaders. Just before midnight, Adolf Hitler, having boarded a special train to the front, had issued the fateful order to his troops: “The decisive hour has come for the fight today decides the fate of the German nation for the next 1000 years.”

There was little that could be done that night—phone calls to Paris and Brussels could rarely be completed, and the Hague wire was barely working—but, as one State Department official said, “in times of crisis, the key men should be at hand and the public should know it.” Finally, at 2:40 A.M., Roosevelt decided to go to bed. After shifting his body to his armless wheelchair, he rolled through a door near his desk into his bedroom.

As usual when the president's day came to an end, he called for his valet, Irvin McDuffie, to lift him into his bed. McDuffie, a Southern Negro, born the same year as his boss, had been a barber by trade when Roosevelt met him in Warm Springs, Georgia, in 1927. Roosevelt quickly developed a liking for the talkative man and offered him the job of valet. Now he and his wife lived in a room on the third floor of the White House. In recent months, McDuffie's hard

drinking had become a problem: on several occasions Eleanor had found him so drunk that "he couldn't help Franklin to bed." Fearing that her husband might be abandoned at a bad time, Eleanor urged him to fire McDuffie, but the president was unable to bring himself to let his old friend go, even though he shared Eleanor's fear.

McDuffie was at his post in the early hours of May 10 when the president called for help. He lifted the president from his wheelchair onto the narrow bed, reminiscent of the kind used in a boy's boarding school, straightened his legs to their full length, and then undressed him and put on his pajamas. Beside the bed was a white-painted table; on its top, a jumble of pencils, notepaper, a glass of water, a package of cigarettes, a couple of phones, a bottle of nose-drops. On the floor beside the table stood a small basket—the Eleanor basket—in which the first lady regularly left memoranda, communications, and reports for the president to read—a sort of private post office between husband and wife. In the corner sat an old-fashioned rocking chair, and next to it a heavy wardrobe filled with the president's clothes. On the marble mantelpiece above the fireplace was an assortment of family photos and a collection of miniature pigs. "Like every room in any Roosevelt house," historian Arthur Schlesinger has written, "the presidential bedroom was hopelessly Victorian—old-fashioned and indiscriminate in its furnishings, cluttered in its decor, ugly and comfortable."

Outside Roosevelt's door, which he refused to lock at night as previous presidents had done, Secret Service men patrolled the corridor, alerting the guardroom to the slightest hint of movement. The refusal to lock his door was related to the president's dread of fire, which surpassed his fear of assassination or of anything else. The fear seems to have been rooted in his childhood, when, as a small boy, he had seen his young aunt, Laura, race down the stairs, screaming, her body and clothes aflame from an accident with an alcohol lamp. Her life was ended at nineteen. The fear grew when he became a paraplegic, to the point where, for hours at a time, he would practice dropping from his bed or chair to the floor

and then crawling to the door so that he could escape from a fire on his own. "We assured him he would never be alone," his eldest son, Jimmy, recalled, "but he could not be sure, and furthermore found the idea depressing that he could not be left alone, as if he were an infant."

Roosevelt's nightly rituals tell us something about his deepest feelings—the desire for freedom, the quest for movement, and the significance, despite all his attempts to downplay it, of the paralysis in his life. In 1940, Roosevelt had been president of the United States for seven years, but he had been paralyzed from the waist down for nearly three times that long. Before he was stricken at thirty-nine, Roosevelt was a man who flourished on activity. He had served in the New York legislature for two years, been assistant secretary of the navy for seven years, and his party's candidate for vice-president in 1920. He loved to swim and to sail, to play tennis and golf, to run in the woods and ride horseback in the fields. To his daughter, Anna, he was always "very active, physically," "a wonderful playmate who took long walks with you, sailed with you, could out-jump you and do a lot of things," while Jimmy saw him quite simply as "the handsomest, strongest, most glamorous, vigorous physical father in the world."

All that vigor and athleticism ended in August 1921 at Campobello, his family's summer home in New Brunswick, Canada, when he returned home from swimming in the pond with his children and felt too tired even to remove his wet bathing suit. The morning after his swim, his temperature was 102 degrees and he had trouble moving his left leg. By afternoon, the power to move his right leg was also gone, and soon he was paralyzed from the waist down. The paralysis had set in so swiftly that no one understood at first that it was polio. But once the diagnosis was made, the battle was joined. For years he fought to walk on his own power, practicing for hours at a time, drenched with sweat, as he tried unsuccessfully to move one leg in front of the other without the aid of a pair of crutches or a helping hand. That consuming and futile effort had to be abandoned once he became governor of New York

in 1929 and then president in 1933. He was permanently crippled.

Yet the paralysis that crippled his body expanded his mind and his sensibilities. After what Eleanor called his "trial by fire," he seemed less arrogant, less smug, less superficial, more focused, more complex, more interesting. He returned from his ordeal with greater powers of concentration and greater self-knowledge. "There had been a plowing up of his nature," Labor Secretary Frances Perkins observed. "The man emerged completely warmhearted, with new humility of spirit and a firmer understanding of profound philosophical concepts."

He had always taken great pleasure in people. But now they became what one historian has called "his vital links with life." Far more intensely than before, he reached out to know them, to understand them, to pick up their emotions, to put himself into their shoes. No longer belonging to his old world in the same way, he came to empathize with the poor and underprivileged, with people to whom fate had dealt a difficult hand. Once, after a lecture in Akron, Ohio, Eleanor was asked how her husband's illness had affected him. "Anyone who has gone through great suffering," she said, "is bound to have a greater sympathy and understanding of the problems of mankind."

Through his presidency, the mere act of standing up with his heavy metal leg-braces locked into place was an ordeal. The journalist Eliot Janeway remembers being behind Roosevelt once when he was in his chair in the Oval Office. "He was smiling as he talked. His face and hand muscles were totally relaxed. But then, when he had to stand up, his jaws went absolutely rigid. The effort of getting what was left of his body up was so great his face changed dramatically. It was as if he braced his body for a bullet."

Little wonder, then, that, in falling asleep at night, Roosevelt took comfort in the thought of physical freedom.

The morning sun of Washington's belated spring was streaming through the president's windows on May 10, 1940. Despite the tumult of the night before, which had kept him up until nearly 3 A.M., he awoke

at his usual hour of eight o'clock. Pivoting to the edge of the bed, he pressed the button for his valet, who helped him into the bathroom. Then, as he had done every morning for the past seven years, he threw his old blue cape over his pajamas and started his day with breakfast in bed—orange juice, eggs, coffee, and buttered toast—and the morning papers: The *New York Times* and the *Herald Tribune*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Herald*.

Headlines recounted the grim events he had heard at 11 P.M. the evening before. From Paris, Ambassador William Bullitt confirmed that the Germans had launched violent attacks on a half-dozen French military bases. Bombs had also fallen on the main railway connections between Paris and the border in an attempt to stop troop movements.

Before finishing the morning papers, the president held a meeting with Steve Early and "Pa" Watson, to review his crowded schedule. He instructed them to convene an emergency meeting at ten-thirty with the chiefs of the army and the navy, the secretaries of state and Treasury, and the attorney general. In addition, Roosevelt was scheduled to meet the press in the morning and the Cabinet in the afternoon, as he had done every Friday morning and afternoon for seven years. Later that night, he was supposed to deliver a keynote address at the Pan American Scientific Congress. After asking Early to delay the press conference an hour and to have the State Department draft a new speech, Roosevelt called his valet to help him dress.

While Franklin Roosevelt was being dressed in his bedroom, Eleanor was in New York, having spent the past few days in the apartment she kept in Greenwich Village, in a small house owned by her friends Esther Lape and Elizabeth Read. The Village apartment on East 11th Street, five blocks north of Washington Square, provided Eleanor with a welcome escape from the demands of the White House, a secret refuge whenever her crowded calendar brought her to New York. For decades, the Village, with its winding streets, modest brick houses, bookshops,

tearooms, little theaters, and cheap rents, had been home to political, artistic, and literary rebels, giving it a colorful Old World character. . . .

The week before, at the Astor Hotel, Eleanor had been honored by *The Nation* magazine for her work in behalf of civil rights and poverty. More than a thousand people had filled the tables and the balcony of the cavernous ballroom to watch her receive a bronze plaque for "distinguished service in the cause of American social progress." . . .



UPI/Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

Crippled by polio in 1921, Roosevelt had to wear heavy metal braces on his legs and could not walk on his own. But in public, as this photograph shows, the president gave the impression that he was walking. He did this by using a cane with his right hand, clasping the arm of a supporter with his left arm, and then shifting his weight back and forth as he moved. In the White House, away from the public, he got about in a wheelchair. On inauguration day, March 4, 1933, the photograph above shows the jubilant new president flanked by his wife and eldest son James.

For her part, Eleanor was slightly embarrassed by all the fuss. "It never seems quite real to me to sit at a table and have people whom I have always looked upon with respect . . . explain why they are granting me an honor," she wrote in her column describing the evening. "Somehow I always feel they ought to be talking about someone else." Yet, as she stood to speak that night at the Astor ballroom, rising nearly six feet, her wavy brown hair slightly touched by gray, her wide mouth marred by large buck teeth, her brilliant blue eyes offset by an unfortunate chin, she dominated the room as no one before her had done. . . .

It was this tireless commitment to democracy's unfinished agenda that led Americans in a Gallup poll taken that spring to rate Mrs. Roosevelt even higher than her husband, with 67 percent of those interviewed well disposed toward her activities. . . .

The path to this position of independent power and respect had not been easy. Eleanor's distinguished career had been forged from a painful discovery when she was thirty-four. After a period of suspicion, she realized that her husband, who was then assistant secretary of the navy, had fallen in love with another woman, Lucy Page Mercer.

Tall, beautiful, and well bred, with a low throaty voice and an incomparably winning smile, Lucy Mercer was working as Eleanor's social secretary when the love affair began. For months, perhaps even years, Franklin kept his romance a secret from Eleanor. Her shattering discovery took place in September 1918. Franklin had just returned from a visit to the European front. Unpacking his suitcase, she discovered a packet of love letters from Lucy. At this moment, Eleanor later admitted, "the bottom dropped out of my own particular world and I faced myself, my surroundings, my world, honestly for the first time."

Eleanor told her husband that she would grant him a divorce. But this was not what he wanted, or at least not what he was able to put himself through, particularly when his mother, Sara, was said to have threatened him with disinheritance if he left his marriage. If her son insisted on leaving his wife and five

children for another woman, visiting scandal upon the Roosevelt name, she could not stop him. But he should know that she would not give him another dollar and he could no longer expect to inherit the family estate at Hyde Park. Franklin's trusted political adviser, Louis Howe, weighed in as well, warning Franklin that divorce would bring his political career to an abrupt end. There was also the problem of Lucy's Catholicism, which would prevent her from marrying a divorced man.

Franklin promised never to see Lucy again and agreed, so the Roosevelt children suggest, to Eleanor's demand for separate bedrooms, bringing their marital relations to an end. Eleanor would later admit to her daughter, Anna, that sex was "an ordeal to be borne." Something in her childhood had locked her up, she said, making her fear the loss of control that comes with abandoning oneself to one's passions, giving her "an exaggerated idea of the necessity of keeping all one's desires under complete subjugation." Now, supposedly, she was free of her "ordeal."

The marriage resumed. But for Eleanor, a path had opened—a possibility of standing apart from Franklin. No longer did she need to define herself solely in terms of his wants and his needs. Before the crisis, though marriage had never fulfilled her prodigious energies, she had no way of breaking through the habits and expectations of a proper young woman's role. To explore her independent needs, to journey outside her home for happiness, was perceived as dangerous and wrong.

With the discovery of the affair, however, she was free to define a new and different partnership with her husband, free to seek new avenues of fulfillment. It was a gradual process, a gradual casting away, a gradual gaining of confidence—and it was by no means complete—but the fifty-six-year-old woman who was being fêted in New York was a different person from the shy, betrayed wife of 1918.

Above the president's bedroom, in a snug third-floor suite, his personal secretary, Marguerite "Missy" LeHand, was already dressed, though she, too, had stayed up late the night before.

A tall, handsome woman of forty-one with large blue eyes and prematurely gray, once luxuriant black hair fastened by hairpins to the nape of her neck, Missy was in love with her boss and regarded herself as his other wife. Nor was she alone in her imaginings. "There's no doubt," White House aide Raymond Moley said, "that Missy was as close to being a wife as he ever had—or could have." White House maid Lillian Parks agreed. "When Missy gave an order, we responded as if it had come from the First Lady. We knew that FDR would always back up Missy" . . .

When Franklin contracted polio, Missy's duties expanded. Both Franklin and Eleanor understood that it was critical for Franklin to keep active in politics even as he struggled unsuccessfully day after day, month after month, to walk again. To that end, Eleanor adhered to a rigorous daily schedule as the stand-in for her husband, journeying from one political meeting to the next to ensure that the Roosevelt name was not forgotten. With Eleanor busily occupied away from home, Missy did all the chores a housewife might do, writing Franklin's personal checks, paying the monthly bills, giving the children their allowances, supervising the menus, sending the rugs and draperies for cleaning. . . .

By the time Roosevelt was president, she had become totally absorbed in his life—learning his favorite games, sharing his hobbies, reading the same books, even adopting his characteristic accent and patterns of speech. Whereas Eleanor was so opposed to gambling that she refused to play poker with Franklin's friends if even the smallest amount of money changed hands, Missy became an avid player, challenging Roosevelt at every turn, always ready to raise the ante. Whereas Eleanor never evinced any interest in her husband's treasured stamp collection, Missy was an enthusiastic partner, spending hours by his side as he organized and reorganized his stamps into one or another of his thick leather books. "In terms of companionship," Eliot Janeway observed, "Missy was the real wife. She understood his nature perfectly, as they would say in a nineteenth-century novel."

At 10:30 A.M., May 10, 1940, pushed along in his wheelchair by Mr. Crim, the usher on duty, and accompanied by his usual detail of Secret Service men, the president headed for the Oval Office. A bell announced his arrival to the small crowd already assembled in the Cabinet Room—Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, Navy Chief Admiral Harold Stark, Attorney General Robert Jackson, Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and Undersecretary Sumner Welles. But first, as he did every day, the president poked his head into Missy's office, giving her a wave and a smile which, Missy told a friend, was all she needed to replenish the energies lost from too little sleep.

Of all the men assembled in the big white-walled Cabinet Room that morning, General George Catlett Marshall possessed the clearest awareness of how woefully unprepared America was to fight a major war against Nazi Germany. The fifty-nine-year-old Marshall, chief of operations of the First Army in World War I, had been elevated to the position of army chief of staff the previous year. The story is told of a meeting in the president's office not long before the appointment during which the president outlined a pet proposal. Everyone nodded in approval except Marshall. "Don't you think so, George?" the president asked. Marshall replied: "I am sorry, Mr. President, but I don't agree with that at all." The president looked stunned, the conference was stopped, and Marshall's friends predicted that his tour of duty would soon come to an end. A few months later, reaching thirty-four names down the list of senior generals, the president asked the straight-speaking Marshall to be chief of staff of the U.S. Army. . . .

In 1940, the U.S. Army stood only eighteenth in the world, trailing not only Germany, France, Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and China but also Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. With the fall of Holland, the United States would rise to seventeenth! And, in contrast to Germany, where after years of compulsory military training nearly 10 percent of the population (6.8 million) were trained and ready for war, less than .5 percent of the American population (504,000) were on active

duty or in the trained reserves. The offensive Germany had launched the morning of May 10 along the Western front was supported by 136 divisions; the United States could, if necessary, muster merely five fully equipped divisions.

In the spring of 1940, the United States possessed almost no munitions industry at all. So strong had been the recoil from war after 1918 that both the government and the private sector had backed away from making weapons. The result was that, while the United States led the world in the mass production of automobiles, washing machines, and other household appliances, the techniques of producing weapons of war had badly atrophied.

All through the winter and spring, Marshall had been trying to get Secretary of War Henry Woodring to understand the dire nature of this unpreparedness. But the former governor of Kansas was an isolationist who refused to contemplate even the possibility of American involvement in the European war. Woodring had been named assistant secretary of war in 1933 and then promoted to the top job three years later, when the price of corn and the high unemployment rate worried Washington far more than foreign affairs. As the European situation heated up, Roosevelt recognized that Woodring was the wrong man to head the War Department. But, try as he might, he could not bring himself to fire his secretary of war—or anyone else, for that matter. Roosevelt's inability to get rid of anybody, even the hopelessly incompetent, was a chief source of the disorderliness of his administration, of his double-dealing and his tendency to procrastinate. "His real weakness," Eleanor Roosevelt observed, "was that—it came out of the strength really, or out of a quality—he had great sympathy for people and great understanding, and he couldn't bear to be disagreeable to someone he liked . . . and he just couldn't bring himself to really do the unkind thing that had to be done unless he got angry" . . .

The confusion multiplied when Roosevelt selected a staunch interventionist, Louis Johnson, the former national commander of the American Legion, as assistant secretary of war. Outspoken,

bold, and ambitious, Johnson fought openly with Woodring, bringing relations to the sorry point where neither man spoke to the other. Paralyzed and frustrated, General Marshall found it incomprehensible that Roosevelt had allowed such a mess to develop simply because he disliked firing anyone. Years earlier, when Marshall had been told by his aide that a friend whom he had ordered overseas had said he could not leave because his wife was away and his furniture was not packed, Marshall had called the man himself. The friend explained that he was sorry. "I'm sorry, too," Marshall replied, "but you will be retired tomorrow."

Marshall failed to understand that there was a method behind the president's disorderly style. Though divided authority and built-in competition created insecurity and confusion within the administration, it gave Roosevelt the benefit of conflicting opinions. "I think he knew exactly what he was doing all the time," administrative assistant James Rowe observed. "He liked conflict, and he was a believer in resolving problems through conflict." With different administrators telling him different things, he got a better feel for what his problems were.

Their attitude toward subordinates was not the only point of dissimilarity between Roosevelt and Marshall. Roosevelt loved to laugh and play, closing the space between people by familiarity, calling everyone, even Winston Churchill, by his first name. In contrast, Marshall was rarely seen to smile or laugh on the job and was never familiar with anyone. . . .

As the officials sat in the Cabinet Room, at the great mahogany table under the stern, pinch-lipped stare of Woodrow Wilson, whose portrait hung above the fireplace, their primary reason for gathering together was to share the incoming information from Europe and to plan the American response. Ambassador John Cudahy in Brussels wired that he had almost been knocked down by the force of a bomb which fell three hundred feet from the embassy. From London, Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy reported that the British had called off their Whitsun holiday, the long weekend on which Londoners traditionally acquired the tan that had to last until their August

vacation—"tangible evidence," Kennedy concluded, "that the situation is serious."

Plans were set in motion for the army and navy to submit new estimates to the White House of what they would need to accomplish the seemingly insurmountable task of catching up with Germany's modern war machine. For, as Marshall had recently explained to the Congress, Germany was in a unique position. "After the World War practically everything was taken away from Germany in the way of materiel. So when Germany rearmed, it was necessary to produce a complete set of materiel for all the troops. As a result, Germany has an Army equipped throughout with the most modern weapons that could be turned out and that is a situation that has never occurred before in the history of the world." . . .

Seated at his desk with his back to the windows, Roosevelt faced the crowd that was now spilling into the Oval Office for his largest press conference ever. Behind him, set in standards, were the blue presidential flag and the American flag. "Like an opera singer about to go on the stage," Roosevelt invariably appeared nervous before a conference began, fidgeting with his cigarette holder, fingering the trinkets on his desk, exchanging self-conscious jokes with the reporters in the front row. Once the action started, however, with the doorkeeper's shout of "all-in," the president seemed to relax, conducting the flow of questions and conversation with such professional skill that the columnist Heywood Broun once called him "the best newspaperman who has ever been President of the United States."

For seven years, twice a week, the president had sat down with these reporters, explaining legislation, announcing appointments, establishing friendly contact, calling them by their first names, teasing them about their hangovers, exuding warmth and accessibility. Once, when a correspondent narrowly missed getting on Roosevelt's train, the president covered for him by writing his copy until he could catch up. Another time, when the mother of a bachelor correspondent died, Eleanor Roosevelt attended the funeral services, and then she and the president invited him for their Sunday family supper of scrambled eggs.

These acts of friendship—repeated many times over—helped to explain the paradox that, though 80 to 85 percent of the newspaper publishers regularly opposed Roosevelt, the president maintained excellent relations with the working reporters, and his coverage was generally full and fair. “By the brilliant but simple trick of making news and being news,” historian Arthur Schlesinger observed, “Roosevelt outwitted the open hostility of the publishers and converted the press into one of the most effective channels of his public leadership.” . . .

“Good morning,” the president said, and then paused as still more reporters filed in. “I hope you had more sleep than I did,” he joked, drawing them into the shared experience of the crisis. “I guess most of you were pretty busy all night.” . . .

Asked if he would say what he thought the chances were that the United States could stay out of the war, the president replied as he had been replying for months to similar questions. “I think that would be speculative. In other words, don’t, for heaven’s sake, say that means we may get in. That would be again writing yourself off on the limb and sawing it off.” Asked if his speech that night would touch on the international situation, Roosevelt evoked a round of laughter by responding: “I do not know because I have not written it.”

On and on he went, his tone in the course of fifteen minutes shifting from weariness to feistiness to playfulness. Yet, in the end, preserving his options in this delicate moment, he *said* almost nothing, skillfully deflecting every question about America’s future actions. Asked at one point to compare Japanese aggression with German aggression, he said he counted seven ifs in the question, which meant he could not provide an answer. Still, by the time the senior wire-service man brought the conference to an early close, “partly in consideration of the tired newspaper men and partly in consideration of the President,” the reporters went away with the stories they needed for the next day’s news. . . .

[While Franklin was in his press conference, Eleanor was in the country.] Franklin called Eleanor his

“will o’ the wisp” wife. But it was Franklin who had encouraged her to become his “eyes and ears,” to gather the grass-roots knowledge he needed to understand the people he governed. Unable to travel easily on his own because of his paralysis, he had started by teaching Eleanor how to inspect state institutions in 1929, during his first term as governor.

“It was the best education I ever had,” she later said. Traveling across the state to inspect institutions for the insane, the blind, and the aged, visiting state prisons and reform schools, she had learned, slowly and painfully, through Franklin’s tough, detailed questions upon her return, how to become an investigative reporter.

Her first inspection was an insane asylum. “All right,” Franklin told her, “go in and look around and let me know what’s going on there. Tell me how the inmates are being treated.” When Eleanor returned, she brought with her a printed copy of the day’s menu. “Did you look to see whether they were actually getting this food?” Franklin asked. “Did you lift a pot cover on the stove to check whether the contents corresponded with this menu?” Eleanor shook her head. Her untrained mind had taken in a general picture of the place but missed all the human details that would have brought it to life. “But these are what I need,” Franklin said. “I never remembered things until Franklin taught me,” Eleanor told a reporter. “His memory is really prodigious. Once he has checked something he never needs to look at it again.”

“One time,” she recalled, “he asked me to go and look at the state’s tree shelter-belt plantings. I noticed there were five rows of graduated size. . . . When I came back and described it, Franklin said: ‘Tell me exactly what was in the first five rows. What did they plant first?’ And he was so desperately disappointed when I couldn’t tell him, that I put my best efforts after that into missing nothing and remembering everything.”

In time, Eleanor became so thorough in her inspections, observing the attitudes of patients toward the staff, judging facial expressions as well as the words, looking in closets and behind doors, that Franklin set

great value on her reports. "She saw many things the President could never see," Labor Secretary Frances Perkins said. "Much of what she learned and what she understood about the life of the people of this country rubbed off onto FDR. . . ."

During Eleanor's first summer as first lady, Franklin had asked her to investigate the economic situation in Appalachia. The Quakers had reported terrible conditions of poverty there, and the president wanted to check these reports. "Watch the people's faces," he told her. "Look at the conditions of the clothes on the wash lines. You can tell a lot from that." Going even further, Eleanor descended the mine shafts, dressed in a miner's outfit, to absorb for herself the physical conditions in which the miners worked. It was this journey that later provoked the celebrated cartoon showing two miners in a shaft looking up: "Here Comes Mrs. Roosevelt!"

At Scott's Run, near Morgantown, West Virginia, Eleanor had seen children who "did not know what it was to sit down at a table and eat a proper meal." In one shack, she found a boy clutching his pet rabbit, which his sister had just told him was all there was left to eat. So moved was the president by his wife's report that he acted at once to create an Appalachian resettlement project.

The following year, Franklin had sent Eleanor to Puerto Rico to investigate reports that a great portion of the fancy embroidered linens that were coming into the United States from Puerto Rico were being made under terrible conditions. To the fury of the rich American colony in San Juan, Eleanor took reporters and photographers through muddy alleys and swamps to hundreds of foul-smelling hovels with no plumbing and no electricity, where women sat in the midst of filth embroidering cloth for minimal wages. Publicizing these findings, Eleanor called for American women to stop purchasing Puerto Rico's embroidered goods.

Later, Eleanor journeyed to the deep South and the "Dustbowl." Before long, her inspection trips had become as important to her as to her husband. "I realized," she said in a radio interview, "that if I remained in the White House all the time, I would lose

touch with the rest of the world. . . . I might have had a less crowded life, but I would begin to think that my life in Washington was representative of the rest of the country, and that is a dangerous point of view." So much did Eleanor travel, in fact, that the *Washington Star* once printed a humorous headline: "Mrs. Roosevelt Spends Night at White House." . . .

When [Franklin] met with his Cabinet at two that afternoon, his concerns as he looked at the familiar faces around the table were . . . how to get a new and expanded military budget through the Congress, how to provide aid to the Allies as quickly as possible, how to stock up on strategic materials; in other words, how to start the complex process of mobilizing for war. . . .

Labor Secretary Frances Perkins, the only woman in the Cabinet, tended to talk a great deal at these meetings, "as though she had swallowed a press release." But on this occasion she remained silent as the conversation was carried by Harry Hopkins, the secretary of commerce, who was present at his first Cabinet meeting in months.

For the past year and a half, Hopkins had been in and out of hospitals while doctors tried to fix his body's lethal inability to absorb proteins and fats. His health had begun to deteriorate in the summer of 1939, when, at the height of his power as director of the Works Progress Administration, he was told that he had stomach cancer. A ghastly operation followed which removed the cancer along with three-quarters of his stomach, leaving him with a severe form of malnutrition. Told in the fall of 1939 that Hopkins had only four weeks to live, Roosevelt took control of the case himself and flew in a team of experts, whose experiments with plasma transfusions arrested the fatal decline. Then, to give Hopkins breathing space from the turbulence of the WPA, Roosevelt appointed him secretary of commerce. Even that job had proved too much, however: Hopkins had been able to work only one or two days in the past ten months.

Yet, on this critical day, the fifty-year-old Hopkins was sitting in the Cabinet meeting in the midst of

the unfolding crisis. "He was to all intents and purposes," Hopkins' biographer Robert Sherwood wrote, "a finished man who might drag out his life for a few years of relative inactivity or who might collapse and die at any time." His face was sallow and heavy-lined; journalist George Creel once likened his weary, melancholy look to that of "an ill-fed horse at the end of a hard day," while Churchill's former daughter-in-law, Pamela Churchill Harriman, compared him to "a very sad dog." Given his appearance—smoking one cigarette after another, his brown hair thinning, his shoulders sagging, his frayed suit baggy at the knees—"you wouldn't think," a contemporary reporter wrote, "he could possibly be important to a President."

But when he spoke, as he did at length this day on the subject of the raw materials needed for war, his sickly face vanished and a very different face appeared, intelligent, good-humored, animated. His eyes, which seconds before had seemed beady and suspicious, now gleamed with light. Sensing the urgency of the situation, Hopkins spoke so rapidly that he did not finish half of his words, as though, after being long held back, he wanted to make up for lost time. It was as if the crisis had given him a renewed reason for living; it seemed, in reporter Marquis Childs' judgment at the time, "to galvanize him into life." From then on, Childs observed, "while he would still be an ailing man, he was to ignore his health." The curative impact of Hopkins' increasingly crucial role in the war effort was to postpone the sentence of death the doctors had given him for five more years.

Even Hopkins' old nemesis, Harold Ickes, felt compelled to pay attention when Hopkins reported that the United States had "only a five or six months supply of both rubber and tin, both of which are absolutely essential for purposes of defense." The shortage of rubber was particularly worrisome, since rubber was indispensable to modern warfare if armies were to march, ships sail, and planes fly. Hitler's armies were rolling along on rubber-tired trucks and rubber-tracked tanks; they were flying in rubber-lined high-altitude suits in planes equipped with

rubber de-icers, rubber tires, and rubber life-preserver rafts. From stethoscopes and blood-plasma tubing to gas masks and adhesive tape, the demand for rubber was endless. And with Holland under attack and 90 percent of America's supply of rubber coming from the Dutch East Indies, something had to be done.

Becoming more and more spirited as he went on, Hopkins outlined a plan of action, starting with the creation of a new corporation, to be financed by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, whose purpose would be to go into the market and buy at least a year's supply of rubber and tin. This step would be only the first, followed by the building of synthetic-rubber plants and an effort to bring into production new sources of natural rubber in South America. Hopkins' plan of action met with hearty approval.

While Hopkins was speaking, word came from London that Neville Chamberlain had resigned his post as prime minister. This dramatic event had its source in the tumultuous debate in the Parliament over the shameful retreat of the British Expeditionary Force from Norway three weeks earlier. . . .

The seventy-one-year-old prime minister had little choice but to step down. Then, when the king's first choice, Lord Halifax, refused to consider the post on the grounds that his position as a peer would make it difficult to discharge his duties, the door was opened for Winston Churchill, the complex Edwardian man with his fat cigars, his gold-knobbed cane, and his vital understanding of what risks should be taken and what kind of adversary the Allies were up against. For nearly four decades, Churchill had been a major figure in public life. The son of a lord, he had been elected to Parliament in 1900 and had served in an astonishing array of Cabinet posts, including undersecretary for the colonies, privy councillor, home secretary, first lord of the admiralty, minister of munitions, and chancellor of the Exchequer. He had survived financial embarrassment, prolonged fits of depression, and political defeat to become the most eloquent spokesman against Nazi Germany. From the time Hitler first came to power, he had repeatedly warned against British efforts to appease him, but no one had listened. Now, finally, his voice would be

heard. "Looking backward," a British writer observed, "it almost seems as though the transition from peace to war began on that day when Churchill became Prime Minister."

Responding warmly to the news of Churchill's appointment, Roosevelt told his Cabinet he believed "Churchill was the best man that England had." From a distance, the two leaders had come to admire each other: for years, Churchill had applauded Roosevelt's "valiant efforts" to end the depression, while Roosevelt had listened with increasing respect to Churchill's lonely warnings against the menace of Adolf Hitler. In September 1939, soon after the outbreak of the war, when Churchill was brought into the government as head of the admiralty, Roosevelt had initiated the first in what would become an extraordinary series of wartime letters between the two men. Writing in a friendly but respectful tone, Roosevelt had told Churchill: "I shall at all times welcome it if you will keep me in touch personally with everything you want me to know about. You can always send sealed letters through your pouch or my pouch." Though relatively few messages had been exchanged in the first nine months of the war, the seeds had been planted of an exuberant friendship, which would flourish in the years to come.

Once the Cabinet adjourned, Roosevelt had a short meeting with the minister of Belgium, who was left with only \$35 since an order to freeze all credit held by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg had gone into effect, earlier that morning. After arrangements were made to help him out, there began a working session on the speech Roosevelt was to deliver that night to a scientific meeting.

Then Roosevelt, not departing from his regular routine, went into his study for the cocktail hour, the most relaxed time of his day. The second-floor study, crowded with maritime pictures, models of ships, and stacks of paper, was the president's favorite room in the White House. It was here that he read, played poker, sorted his beloved stamps, and conducted most of the important business of his presidency. The tall mahogany bookcases were stuffed with books, and

the leather sofas and chairs had acquired a rich glow. Any room Roosevelt spent time in, Frances Perkins observed, "invariably got that lived-in and overcrowded look which indicated the complexity and variety of his interests and intentions." Missy [LeHand] and Harry Hopkins were there, along with Pa Watson and Eleanor's houseguest, the beautiful actress Helen Gahagan Douglas. The cocktail hour, begun during Roosevelt's years in Albany, had become an institution in Roosevelt's official family, a time for reviewing events in an informal atmosphere, a time for swapping the day's best laughs. The president always mixed the drinks himself, experimenting with strange concoctions of gin and rum, vermouth and fruit juice.

During the cocktail hour, no more was said of politics or war; instead the conversation turned to subjects of lighter weight—to gossip, funny stories, and reminiscences. With Missy generally presiding as hostess, distributing the drinks to the guests, Roosevelt seemed to find complete relaxation in telling his favorite stories over and over again. Some of these stories Missy must have heard more than twenty or thirty times, but, like the "good wife," she never let her face betray boredom, only delight at the knowledge that her boss was having such a good time. And with his instinct for the dramatic and his fine ability to mimic, Roosevelt managed to tell each story a little differently each time, adding new details or insights. . . .

While Franklin was mixing cocktails, Eleanor was on a train back to Washington from New York. For many of her fellow riders, the time on the train was a time to ease up, to gaze through the windows at the passing countryside, to close their eyes and unwind. But for Eleanor, who considered train rides her best working hours, there was little time to relax. The pile of mail, still unanswered, was huge, and there was a column to be written for the following day. Franklin's cousin Margaret "Daisy" Suckley recalls traveling with Eleanor once on the New York-to-Washington train. "She was working away the whole time with Malvina, and I was sitting there like a dumbbell looking out the window, and suddenly Mrs. Roosevelt

said to Malvina, 'Now I'm going to sleep for fifteen minutes,' and she put her head back on the seat. I looked at my watch, and just as it hit fifteen minutes, she woke up and said, 'Now Tommy, let's go on.' It was amazing. I was stunned."

Even if Eleanor had reached the White House that evening in time for the cocktail hour, she would probably not have joined. Try as she might over the years, Eleanor had never felt comfortable at these relaxed gatherings. Part of her discomfort was toward alcohol itself, the legacy of an alcoholic father who continually failed to live up to the expectations and trust of his adoring daughter. One Christmas, Eleanor's daughter, Anna, and her good friend Lorena Hickok had chipped in to buy some cocktail glasses for Eleanor's Greenwich Village apartment in the hopes she would begin inviting friends in for drinks. "In a funny way," Anna wrote "Hick," as Miss Hickok was called, "I think she has always wanted to feel included in such parties, but so many old inhibitions have kept her from it."

But, despite Anna's best hopes, Eleanor's discomfort at the cocktail hour persisted, suggesting that beyond her fear of alcohol lay a deeper fear of letting herself go, of slackening off the work that had become so central to her sense of self. "Work had become for Eleanor almost as addictive as alcohol," her niece Eleanor Wotkins once observed. "Even when she thought she was relaxing she was really working. Small talk horrified her. Even at New Year's, when everyone else relaxed with drinks, she would work until ten minutes of twelve, come in for a round of toasts, and then disappear to her room to work until 2 or 3 A.M. Always at the back of her mind were the letters she had to write, the things she had to do."

"She could be a crashing bore," Anna's son Curtis Dall Roosevelt admitted. "She was very judgmental, even when she tried not to be. The human irregularities, the off-color jokes he loved, she couldn't take. He would tell his stories, many of them made to fit a point, and she would say, 'No, no, Franklin, that's not how it happened.'"

"If only Mother could have learned to ease up," her son Elliott observed, "things would have been so

different with Father, for he needed relaxation more than anything in the world. But since she simply could not bring herself to unwind, he turned instead to Missy, building with her an exuberant, laughing relationship, full of jokes, silliness, and gossip."

"Stay for dinner. I'm lonely," Roosevelt urged Harry Hopkins when the cocktail hour came to an end. There were few others at this stage of his life that the president enjoyed as much as Hopkins. With the death in 1936 of Louis Howe, the shriveled ex-newspaperman who had fastened his star to Roosevelt in the early Albany days, helped him conquer his polio, and guided him through the political storms to the White House, the president had turned to Hopkins for companionship. "There was a temperamental sympathy between Roosevelt and Hopkins," Frances Perkins observed. Though widely different in birth and breeding, they both possessed unconquerable confidence, great courage, and good humor; they both enjoyed the society of the rich, the gay, and the well-born, while sharing an abiding concern for the average man. Hopkins had an almost "feminine sensitivity" to Roosevelt's moods, Sherwood observed. Like Missy, he seemed to know when the president wanted to consider affairs of state and when he wanted to escape from business; he had an uncanny instinct for knowing when to introduce a serious subject and when to tell a joke, when to talk and when to listen. He was, in short, a great dinner companion.

As soon as dinner was finished, Roosevelt had to return to work. In less than an hour, he was due to deliver a speech, and he knew that every word he said would be scrutinized for the light it might shed on the crisis at hand. Taking leave of Hopkins, Roosevelt noticed that his friend looked even more sallow and miserable now than he had looked earlier in the day. "Stay the night," the President insisted. So Hopkins borrowed a pair of pajamas and settled into a bedroom suite on the second floor. There he remained, not simply for one night but for the next three and a half years, as Roosevelt, exhibiting his genius for using people in new and unexpected ways, converted him from the number-one relief worker to the number-one adviser on the war. Later, Missy

liked to tease: "It was Harry Hopkins who gave George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart the idea for that play of theirs, 'The Man Who Came to Dinner.'"

As the president was preparing to leave for Constitution Hall, he remembered something he had meant to ask Helen Gahagan Douglas during the cocktail hour. There was no time to discuss it now, but, stopping by her room, he told her he had an important question for her and asked if she would meet him in his study when he returned. "Certainly," she replied, and he left to address several thousand scientists and scholars at the Pan American Scientific Congress. . . .

Roosevelt was in excellent humor when he returned to his study to find Helen Gahagan Douglas waiting for him. Just as he was settling in, however, word came that Winston Churchill was on the telephone. Earlier that evening, Churchill had driven to Buckingham Palace, where King George VI had asked him to form a government. Even as Churchill agreed to accept the seals of office, British troops were pouring into Belgium, wildly cheered by smiling Belgians, who welcomed them with flowers. The change was made official at 9 P.M., when Chamberlain, his voice breaking with emotion, resigned. It had been a long and fateful day for Britain, but now, though it was nearly 3 A.M. in London, Churchill apparently wanted to touch base with his old letter-writing companion before going to sleep.

Though there is no record of the content of this first conversation between the new prime minister of England and the president of the United States, Churchill did reveal that when he went to bed that night, after the extraordinary events of an extraordinary day, he was conscious of "a profound sense of relief. At last I had the authority to give directions over the whole scene. I felt as if I were walking with Destiny, and that all my past life had been but a preparation for this hour and this trial."

"Therefore," Churchill concluded, "although impatient for morning, I slept soundly and had no need for cheering dreams. Facts are better than dreams." He had achieved the very position he had imagined for himself for so many years. . . .

"OK, Helen," Roosevelt began, his eyes flashing with good humor. "Now, I want you to tell me exactly what happened under the table at Ciro's between Paulette Goddard and Anatole Litvak." The juicy gossip Roosevelt wanted to hear involved the Russian-born director Anatole Litvak and Paulette Goddard, the vivacious brunette actress who was married first to the filmmaker Hal Roach and then to Charlie Chaplin. As Helen Douglas told the story, Goddard and Litvak were having dinner at the elegant nightclub, where the men had to wear tuxedos and the women long dresses, when the urge to make love became so strong that they eased themselves onto the floor under the table. As the moans were heard across the restaurant floor, waiters rushed to the scene with extra tablecloths to cover the sides of the table. Or so the story was told. "I love it, I love it," Roosevelt responded.

Returning to the White House from Union Station just as Helen was finishing her tale, Eleanor heard her husband's laughter and assumed that, as usual, he was with Missy, relaxing at the end of the day. At such times, she later admitted to her son Elliott, she felt terribly left out, wishing that she could let herself go and simply join in the frivolity. But as it was, she knew that if she opened the door she would be driven to talk business, to share the information and insights she had gleaned from her recent trip. Then, if her husband was tired and unresponsive, she would feel hurt and rejected. It had happened this way before. Better to go to her own bedroom and wait until morning to see her husband. "All her life," her niece Eleanor Wotkyns observed, "Eleanor yearned to be more spontaneous, to relax more readily, but in the end how can one force oneself to be spontaneous?"

At ten after eleven that evening, according to the White House usher diary, both Eleanor and Franklin went to bed—Franklin settling into his small bedroom off his study, Eleanor into her own suite of rooms, next to her husband's, in the southwest corner of the mansion. But the separation by night belated the partnership by day—a partnership that would help to change the face of the country in the years ahead.

At 1 P.M. on May 16, 1940, President Roosevelt was scheduled to address a joint session of Congress. It was the president's first appearance in the House Chamber since the war in Western Europe had begun. Despite the blinding rain falling steadily since early morning, a huge audience had gathered to hear him.

Here, on the floor of the House of Representatives, all the contending forces of American life had gathered over the years to argue their causes—abolitionists versus slaveowners, liberals versus conservatives, unions versus management, farmers versus city-dwellers. On a number of occasions, particularly in the nineteenth century, the debates had descended into physical violence as members brandished pistols, smashed one another's heads with tongs, canes, and brass spittoons, and pummeled each other with fists. The very size of the House Chamber, with large numbers of legislators, clerks, and page boys running from place to place, conspired to produce confusion and chaos.

As one o'clock neared, there was a stir among the audience, an air of expectation. Every face, not knowing for sure where the country was going, wore a look of nervousness. In the Congress in 1940, there were 526 men and five women, nearly three hundred lawyers, two dozen schoolteachers, sixty merchants, twenty bankers and insurance agents, nine newspaper publishers, five dentists, a half-dozen preachers, the owner of the largest cattle ranch in the world, an amateur magician, and a half-dozen or more aspirants to the presidency. There was one Negro.

At 12:59 P.M. the assistant doorkeeper announced the members of the Cabinet. The spectators responded with warm applause. But when the audience caught sight of the president himself, his right hand holding a cane, his left hand grasping the forearm of a Secret Service man, they jumped to their feet, applauding and cheering him as he had never been cheered in the Capitol before, a bipartisan ovation that could only be interpreted as a demonstration of national unity in a time of crisis.

It had been a week no one in the Western world would forget. After only five days of fighting, Holland,

with tens of thousands of her citizens said to be dead, had surrendered; the Belgian army was almost totally destroyed, and France, reputed to possess the best army in all of Europe, was being overrun. The Germans seemed to have discovered a radically new style of air-ground warfare that was somehow free from ordinary constraints of time and distance. The speed and destructiveness of Germany's powerful tanks—able to cross rivers and canals as if they were paved boulevards, resisting all fire at normal ranges—were almost incomprehensible. Against these metal mastodons, French Premier Paul Reynaud lamented, the French defenses were like "walls of sand that a child puts up against waves on the seashore." Equally hard to fathom was the effectiveness of Germany's air force, roaring in ahead of advancing columns, bombing communication lines, strafing and terrorizing ground troops to the point of an almost total Allied collapse.

For many in the audience, Roosevelt's dramatic journey to the Hill awakened memories of Woodrow Wilson's appearance before Congress in the spring of 1917, when America entered the Great War. Now, once again, Europe was engaged in an expanding war that threatened to engulf the entire world, and emotions were running high. As the applause continued to swell, the president slowly maneuvered his body up the long ramp from the well of the House to the rostrum.

Standing at the podium, his leg braces firmly locked into place, the president looked at his audience, and an uncharacteristic wave of nervousness came upon him. Absent were both his conspicuous smile and the swaggering way he usually held his head; in their place, a slight slump of the shoulders and a grim expression that matched the gray day. Reporters seated behind the podium detected anxiety in his trembling hands and in the faltering way he tried and failed, not once but twice, to put on his glasses. . . .

The president had cause to feel apprehensive. He knew that both Britain and France were looking to the United States for help. Alone among the democratic nations, the United States possessed the potential resources—the abundance of raw materials, the

oil fields, the bauxite mines, the assembly lines, the production equipment, the idle manpower, the entrepreneurial skills, the engineering know-how—necessary to wage technological war on a scale equal to that of Nazi Germany. “I trust you realize, Mr. President,” Churchill had written earlier that week, “that the voice and force of the United States may count for nothing if they are withheld too long.”

But when all was said and done, there was nothing “the most productive nation in the world” could do to save France. At dawn on the morning of June 14, German troops entered Paris. . . . A week later, Hitler laid down his terms for an armistice, and, in the same railroad car in a clearing in the woods at Compiègne, where the Germans had capitulated to the Allies in 1918, a defeated and humiliated France concluded a truce. After the signing, Hitler ordered that the historic carriage and the monument celebrating the original French victory be conveyed to Berlin. Then, in an attempt to obliterate even the slightest physical memory of Germany’s earlier defeat, he ordered that the pedestal of the carriage and the stones marking the site be destroyed. With the French surrender, Adolf Hitler was now the master of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and France. . . .

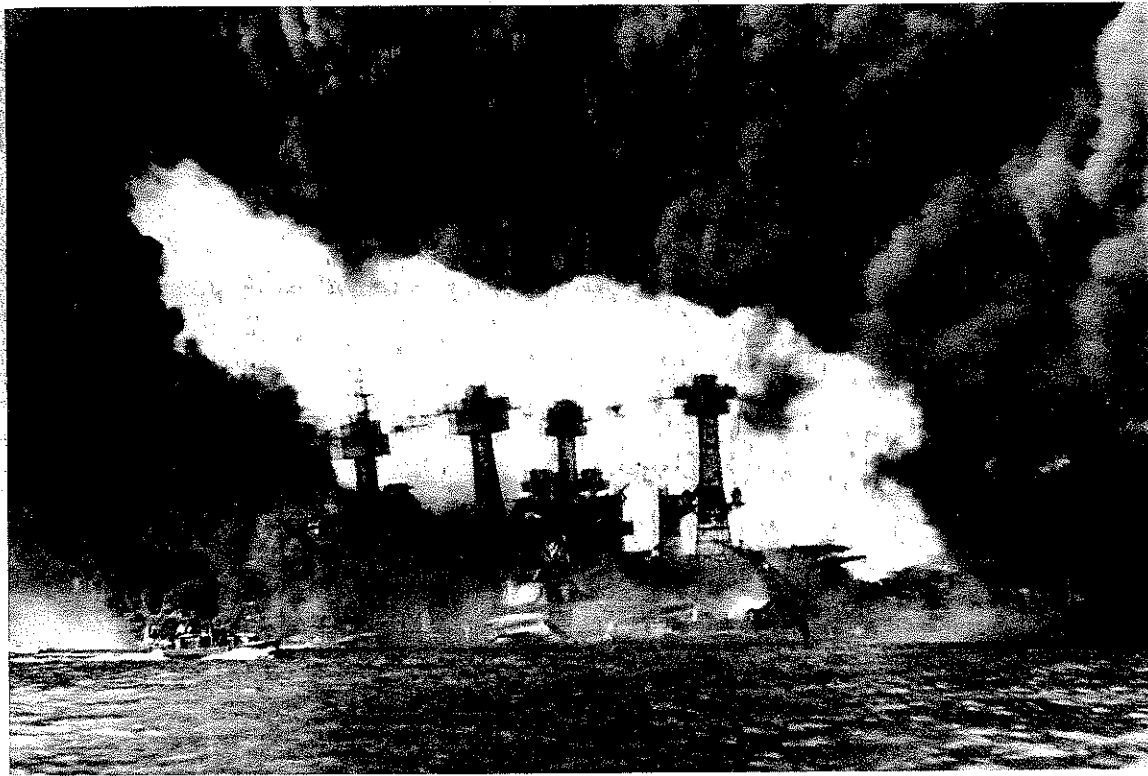
[Through 1940 and 1941 the European war intensified, with Germany fighting a mighty air war over Britain to clear the way for an invasion. But when the British won that war, Hitler turned to the East. In June 1941, he unleashed three million troops on the Soviet Union—the largest land invasion in the history of warfare. Meanwhile, in the Far East, militaristic Japan was waging its own war of aggression against hapless China. While Japanese warplanes bombed China’s cities to rubble, Japanese troops seized coastal territory and murdered Chinese civilians—200,000 in Nanking alone—with unspeakable savagery. When Japanese forces struck southward against French Indochina, President Roosevelt retaliated by declaring an oil embargo against Japan, thus cutting off U.S. shipments of oil desperately needed

by the Japanese war machine. When negotiations between the two countries faltered, the Japanese navy made plans for a surprise attack against the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Final plans called for the attack to take place on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941.]

Shortly after 7:30 A.M., local time, while sailors were sleeping, eating breakfast, and reading the Sunday papers, the first wave of 189 Japanese planes descended upon Pearl Harbor, dropping clusters of torpedo bombs on the unsuspecting fleet. Half the fleet, by fortunate coincidence, was elsewhere, including all three aircraft carriers, but the ships that remained were tied up to the docks so “snugly side by side,” Harold Ickes later observed, “that they presented a target that none could miss. A bomber could be pretty sure that he would hit a ship even if not the one he aimed at.” Within minutes—before any anti-aircraft fire could be activated, and before a single fighter plane could get up into the air—all eight of the American battleships in Pearl Harbor, including the *West Virginia*, the *Arizona*, and the *California*, had been hit, along with three destroyers and three light cruisers.

Bodies were everywhere—trapped in the holds of sinking ships, strewn in the burning waters, scattered on the smoke-covered ground. Before the third wave of Japanese planes completed its final run, thirty-five hundred sailors, soldiers, and civilians had lost their lives. It was the worst naval disaster in American history.

Knox relayed the horrifying news to the president shortly after 1:30 P.M. Roosevelt was sitting in his study with Harry Hopkins when the call came. “Mr. President,” Knox said, “it looks like the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor.” Hopkins said there must be some mistake; the Japanese would never attack Pearl Harbor. But the president reckoned it was probably true—it was just the kind of thing the Japanese would do at the very moment they were discussing peace in the Pacific. All doubt was settled a few minutes later, when Admiral Stark called to confirm the attack. With bloody certainty, the United States had finally discovered the whereabouts of the Japanese fleet. . . .



Naval Historical Center

United States battleships anchored at Pearl Harbor were sitting ducks. A torpedo has just struck the Oklahoma, kicking up a towering geyser. Struck by four additional torpedoes, the great battleship quickly capsized.

The first thing Eleanor noticed when she went into her husband's study was his "deadly calm" composure. While his aides and Cabinet members were running in and out in a state of excitement, panic, and irritation, he was sitting quietly at his desk, absorbing the news from Hawaii as it continued to flow in—"each report more terrible than the last." Though he looked strained and tired, Eleanor observed, "he was completely calm. His reaction to any event was always to be calm. If it was something that was bad, he just became almost like an iceberg, and there was never the slightest emotion that was allowed to show." Sumner Welles agreed with Eleanor's assessment. In all the situations over the years in which he had seen the president, he "had never had such reason to admire him."

Beneath the president's imperturbable demeanor, however, Eleanor detected great bitterness and anger toward Japan for the treachery involved in carrying out the surprise attack while the envoys of the two countries were still talking. "I never wanted to have to fight this war on two fronts," Franklin told Eleanor. "We haven't got the Navy to fight in both the Atlantic and the Pacific . . . so we will have to build up the Navy and the Air Force and that will mean that we will have to take a good many defeats before we can have a victory." . . .

"Within the first hour," Grace Tully recalled, "it was evident that the Navy was dangerously crippled." And there was no way of knowing where the Japanese would stop. The president's butler, Alonzo Fields, recalls overhearing snatches of a remarkable conversation

between Harry Hopkins and the president that afternoon in which they imagined the possibility of the invading Japanese armies' driving inland from the West Coast as far as Chicago. At that point, the president figured, since the United States was a country much like Russia in the vastness of its terrain, we could make the Japanese overextend their communication and supply lines and begin to force them back.

Meanwhile, a little bit at a time, the public at large was learning the news. "No American who lived through that Sunday will ever forget it," reporter Marquis Childs later wrote. "It seared deeply into the national consciousness," creating in all a permanent memory of where they were when they first heard the news.

Churchill was sitting at Chequers with envoy Averell Harriman and Ambassador John Winant when news of the Japanese attack came over the wireless. Unable to contain his excitement, he bounded to his feet and placed a call to the White House. "Mr. President, what's this about Japan?" "It's quite true," Roosevelt replied. "They have attacked us at Pearl Harbor. We are all in the same boat now."

"To have the United States at our side," Churchill later wrote, "was to me the greatest joy." After seventeen months of lonely fighting, he now believed the war would be won. "England would live; Britain would live; the Commonwealth of Nations and the Empire would live." The history of England would not come to an end. "Silly people—and there were many . . ." Churchill mused, "—might discount the force of the United States," believing the Americans were soft, divided, paralyzed, averse to bloodshed. He knew better; he had studied the Civil War, the bloodiest war in history, fought to the last inch. Saturated with emotion, Churchill thought of a remark British politician Sir Edward Grey had made to him more than 30 years before. The U.S. was like "a gigantic boiler. Once the fire is lighted under it there is no limit to the power it can generate."

Shortly before 5 P.M., the president called Grace Tully to his study. "He was alone," Tully recalled, with two or three neat piles of notes stacked on his

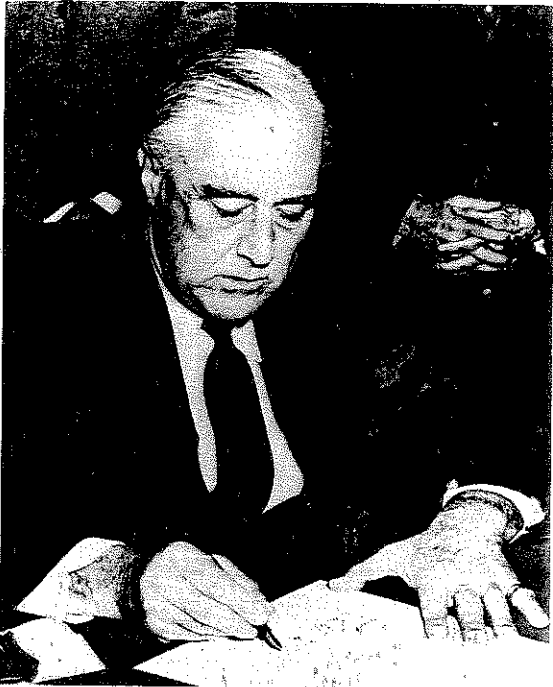
desk containing all the information he had been receiving during the afternoon. "Sit down, Grace. I'm going before Congress tomorrow. I'd like to dictate my message. It will be short."

He began to speak in the same steady tone in which he dictated his mail, but the pace was slower than usual as he spoke each word incisively, specifying every punctuation mark. "Yesterday comma December 7th comma 1941 dash a day which will live in world history. . . ."

At eight-thirty on Sunday night, the Cabinet began to gather in the president's study. A ring of extra chairs had been brought in to accommodate the overflow. The president, Perkins noted later, was sitting silently at his desk; he was preoccupied, seemed not to be seeing or hearing what was going on around him. "It was very interesting," Perkins observed, "because he was always a very friendly and outgoing man on the personal side. He never overlooked people. . . . But I don't think he spoke to anyone who came in that night. He was living off in another area. He wasn't noticing what went on on the other side of the desk. He was very serious. His face and lips were pulled down, looking quite gray. His complexion didn't have that pink and white look that it had when he was himself. It had a queer gray, drawn look."

Finally, he turned around and said, "I'm thankful you all got here." He went on to say this was probably the most serious crisis any Cabinet had confronted since the outbreak of the Civil War. Then he told them what he knew. "I remember," Perkins later said, "the President could hardly bring himself" to describe the devastation. "His pride in the Navy was so terrific that he was having actual physical difficulty in getting out the words that put him on record as knowing that the Navy was caught unawares. . . . I remember that he said twice to Knox, 'Find out, for God's sake, why the ships were tied up in rows.' Knox said, 'That's the way they berth them!' It was obvious to me that Roosevelt was having a dreadful time just accepting the idea that the Navy could be caught off guard."

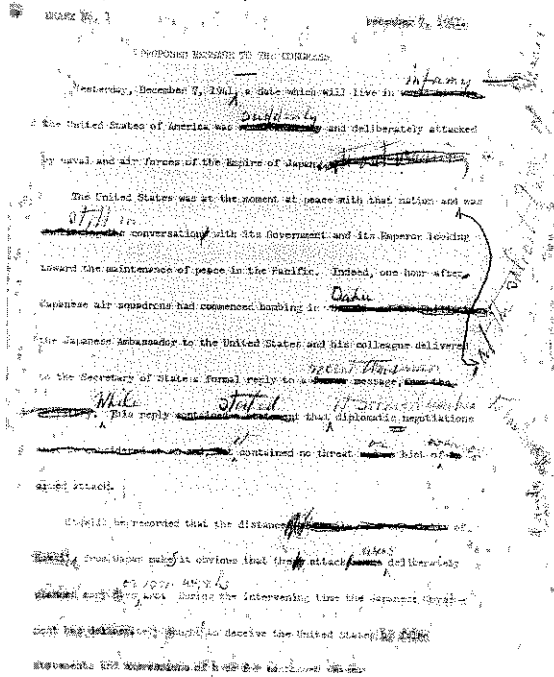
By 10 P.M., congressional leaders had joined the Cabinet in the overcrowded study. The president told



Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

On December 9, 1941, Roosevelt solemnly signed the declaration of war against Japan, which Congress approved with one dissenting vote. Germany and Italy, Japan's Axis allies, responded by declaring war on the United States. These acts plunged America into the greatest war in history.

the gathering that he had prepared a short message to be presented at a joint session of Congress the following day. The message called for a declaration by Congress that a state of war had existed between Japan and the United States from the moment of the attack Sunday morning. He then went on to describe the attack itself, repeating much of what he had told his Cabinet, including new information that Japanese bombs had also hit American airfields in Hawaii, destroying more than half the planes in the Pacific fleet. Apparently, the planes had been an easy mark, since they were grouped together on the ground, wing tip to wing tip, to guard against subversive action by Japanese agents. "On the ground, by God, on the ground," Roosevelt groaned.



Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

White House secretary Grace Tully was with the president just before 5 P.M. on the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt told her, "Sit down, Grace. I'm going before Congress tomorrow. I'd like to dictate my message. It will be short." The president made some handwritten changes to the original draft, and the next day he received a thunderous ovation from a Congress now ready for war.

"The effect on the Congressmen was tremendous," Stimson recorded. "They sat in dead silence and even after the recital was over they had very few words." Finally, Senator Tom Connally of Texas spoke up, voicing the question that was on everyone's mind. "How did it happen that our warships were caught like tame ducks in Pearl Harbor?" he shouted, banging the desk with his fist, his face purple. "How did they catch us with our pants down? Where were our patrols? They knew these negotiations were going on. They were all asleep."

"I don't know, Tom," the president muttered, his head bowed, "I just don't know."

Historians have focused substantial time and attention trying to determine who knew what and when before the 7th of December—on the theory that Roosevelt was aware of the Japanese plans to attack Pearl Harbor but deliberately concealed his knowledge from the commanders in Hawaii in order to bring the United States into hostilities through the back door. Unable to swing Congress and the public toward a declaration of war against Germany, critics contend, the president provoked Japan into firing the first shot and then watched with delight as the attack created a united America.

To be sure, Roosevelt was concerned that, if war came, the Japanese should be the ones to initiate hostilities. Stimson records a conversation on November 25 in which the president raised the possibility that Japan might attack without warning. The question Roosevelt asked “was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves.” But in the discussion, as in all others preceding Pearl Harbor, the reigning assumption was that Japan would attack from the south. Though Pearl Harbor was mentioned once, the previous January, in a report from the U.S. ambassador to Japan, Joseph Grew, to the State Department, it was assumed, again and again, right up to December 7, that the Philippines was the most likely target for Japanese aggression.

Moreover, “without allowing too much danger to ourselves,” is the important phrase in the president’s conversation with Stimson. Common sense suggests that, if the president had known beforehand about Pearl Harbor, he would have done everything he could to reposition the fleet and disperse the airplanes to ensure minimal damage. For the purposes of mobilizing the American people, one American ship torpedoed by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor would have sufficed. It is inconceivable that Roosevelt, who loved the navy with a passion, would have intentionally sacrificed the heart of its fleet, much less the lives of thirty-five hundred American sailors and soldiers, without lifting a finger to reduce the risk. It is an inquiry that obscures the more important question that Senator Connally posed: “How

did it happen that our warships were caught like tame ducks in Pearl Harbor?”

It happened because the U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor were fatally unprepared for war on the morning of December 7. “Neither Army or Navy Commandants in Oahu regarded such an attack as at all likely,” Secretary Knox explained to Roosevelt. “Both [General Walker Short and Admiral Husband Kimmel] felt certain that such an attack would take place nearer Japan’s base of operations, that is, in the Far East.” Lack of readiness characterized every aspect of the base—from the unmanned aircraft batteries to the radar station whose sentries went off duty at 7 A.M. that morning. . . .

Toward midnight, the meeting in the president’s study drew to a close; and while every face wore an expression of regret and reproach, there was also relief. For Stimson, it was in the knowledge “that the indecision was over and that a crisis had come in a way which would unite our people.” No matter how great the damage, at least, the matter was settled. “You know,” Frank Knox whispered to Frances Perkins, “I think the boss must have a great load off his mind. I thought the load on his mind was just going to kill him, going to break him down. This must be a great sense of relief to him. At least we know what to do now.”

“Monday was almost worse than Sunday,” Marquis Childs observed. “A merciful kind of shock prevailed under the first impact and now as that wore off, the truth was inescapable.” In Washington, the rumors of damage “hovered like a low-hanging gas, spreading the panic that seemed to infect the capital.” On the same day as Pearl Harbor, the Japanese had attacked the Philippines, Malaya, Wake Island, Guam, and Hong Kong.

At noon, under heavy security, the president motored from the East Gate of the White House to the Capitol, where, to deafening applause, he delivered a brief but powerful speech. From his first words, commemorating the day that would “live in infamy,” to his call upon Congress to declare that, since “the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7th, a state of war has existed between the

United States and the Japanese Empire," the president's anger and indignation burned through. His head held high, his chin thrust out, Roosevelt roused his audience to a standing ovation when he pledged that "this form of treachery shall never endanger us again. The American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory." The Congress responded unambiguously to the president's call; both chambers approved a declaration of war, with only one dissenting vote—that of white-haired Representative Jeanette Rankin of Montana.

Isolationism collapsed overnight. "American soil has been treacherously attacked by Japan," former President Herbert Hoover stated. "Our decision is clear. It is forced upon us. We must fight with everything we have." . . . After months of vacillation, confusion, and hesitation, the United States was committed at last to a common course of action.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Polio seemed to transform Roosevelt's life in many ways. What was FDR's life like before his crippling illness, and why would Goodwin conclude that Roosevelt's disability "expanded his mind and his sensibilities"?
- 2 Explain how Roosevelt's relationship with reporters provided him with favorable press coverage in spite of the opposition to his administration by most newspaper publishers. Would the current media and

the American people ignore a major political leader's disability as they did then?

- 3 Goodwin's portrait of the Roosevelts is as complimentary to Eleanor as it is to Franklin. Why was this first lady so popular? What obstacles did she have to overcome in her personal life, including her marriage? How did her discovery of Franklin's infidelity free her to play a different role and become her husband's "eyes and ears" as she traveled around the country?

- 4 In the spring of 1940, was the United States militarily prepared to enter a major world war? In contrast, why were Germany's armed forces so modern? How did the Congress view aid to the struggling democracies of England and France?

- 5 Examine the personality of Franklin Roosevelt and how Missy LeHand and Harry Hopkins served his inner needs much better than Eleanor. How did the president relax and temporarily escape the overwhelming problems of the Depression and the foreign policy crisis abroad?

- 6 Describe the damage that the Japanese inflicted on the American fleet at Pearl Harbor. What was Churchill's reaction when he heard of the attack? Why does Goodwin believe that Roosevelt had no advance notice of the invasion, and why does she feel that our warships at Pearl Harbor were "like tame ducks"? Finally, how did Congress and the American people respond to the Japanese attack against Pearl Harbor?