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Abraham Lincoln and Civil War Reconstruction

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Abstract

The United States was at a crucial period in our countries history after the American Civil War ended. President Lincoln had the task of uniting the northern and southern states while the country faced economic and social challenges. He planned to institute the Ten Percent Plan, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution to unify the divided nation. The reconstruction challenges the nation faced in the post civil war era are similar to those we have encountered in Iraq. The current Iraqi government faces challenges such as uniting the war torn country, establishing a single government body, and dealing with the segregation of the Iraqi Shia and Sunni population.

## Abraham Lincoln And Civil War Reconstruction

President Abraham Lincoln had the major challenge of developing plans to start the reconstruction of the post Civil War in the Union. The Ten Percent Plan, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution were all plans started by President Lincoln (Wikipedia 2007). President Lincoln planned to use these programs to bring the defeated Confederate States online with the rest of the Union States. These were primarily designed to deal with the freed slaves and help reconstruct the southern states that were left in chaos because of their defeat by the Union Army. Unfortunately, President Lincoln was assassinated on April 15, 1865, and was unable to see the impact both programs had on the integration of the Confederate States back into the United States.

Reconstruction started toward the end of 1863. President Lincoln wanted to quickly resolve the slave issue and unify the country. The first action he took to begin his reconstruction efforts was the Ten-Percent Plan. This reconstruction plan was started in December of 1863 with little support from President Lincoln's fellow Republicans. The Ten Percent Plan allowed the States in rebellion to reenter the Union by a ten percent vote for the voters in the state to pledge allegiance to the United States. As part of the vote, the voters also had to support President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The Ten Percent Plan's goal was to decrease the fighting of the war and influence peace with the South. The plan gave him more leverage on former Confederate states to support his policy of freeing all slaves because the states had to support his Emancipation Proclamation to be reinstated into the Union and it bought him time until he could get congress to pass the Thirteenth Amendment.

Congress did not pass the Emancipation Proclamation as a law; the proclamation was given as a presidential order. On September 22, 1862 President Lincoln issued the

Emancipation Proclamation that freed all African-Americans in the Confederate States of America. The second part of the proclamation designated the different territories that the Emancipation Proclamation would affect.

One of the biggest problems with the Emancipation Proclamation was with the actual states that were designated as free. The proclamation did not free all slaves, it only freed the slaves in the states that the Union Army did not have control over in the former Confederate States of America. The states the Union Army already controlled Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri did not have to free any slaves. The States of Kentucky and Delaware were the last two states in the country to actually have slaves until the Thirteenth Amendment was passed.

President Lincoln used the Emancipation Proclamation as a tool until the Thirteenth Amendment could be passed. The proclamation successfully helped to deal with the slave issues faced in the post-war reconstruction and was solidified when the Thirteenth Amendment was passed on December 6, 1865 (Our Documents). The Thirteenth Amendment formally abolished slavery in the United States. The amendment divided the government because it passed the Senate but was not passed by the House. President Lincoln, knowing the importance of the amendment for the reconstruction of the country, became actively involved and used the amendment as part of his reelection campaign. Once he was reelected as President of the United States, President Lincoln was successful in getting the bill passed by the House.

The Iraqi government faces the same challenges that the Lincoln administration faced at the end of the American Civil War and the reconstruction of our nation. Iraqi reconstruction involves security of the nation, establishing a governing body, stabilizing the economy, and providing the public services for the citizens to maintain their daily life. The

refugee crisis that was created during the Iraqi war was similar to the crisis created by the former slaves of the Confederate States. The defeated Iraqi Army has to be dealt with just as the defeated Confederate Army had to be dealt with by the Union government. The constitution of Iraq needs to be written to support the reconstruction similar to the amendments added to the U.S. Constitution to support reconstruction of the southern states.

The unification of the Iraqi Shia and Sunni population post war is similar to the divided population left over from the Union and Confederate States. The Shia majority ruling over the Sunni minority is the cause of most of the internal strife in Iraq. Shia-Sunni relations can further divide the war-torn country unless action is taken within the Iraqi government to deal with this reconstruction issue. President Lincoln had foreseen the same unification problem with the north and south prior to the end of the Civil War and acted quickly to reunite the nation.

References

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