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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:**

**“TELL ME, *BILLY YANK*’, WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU FIGHTING FOR?”  
THE NORTH’S STRUGGLE TO BRING THE ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER –  
DIPLOMATIC, INFORMATIONAL, MILITARY, AND ECONOMIC – INTO  
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT TO WIN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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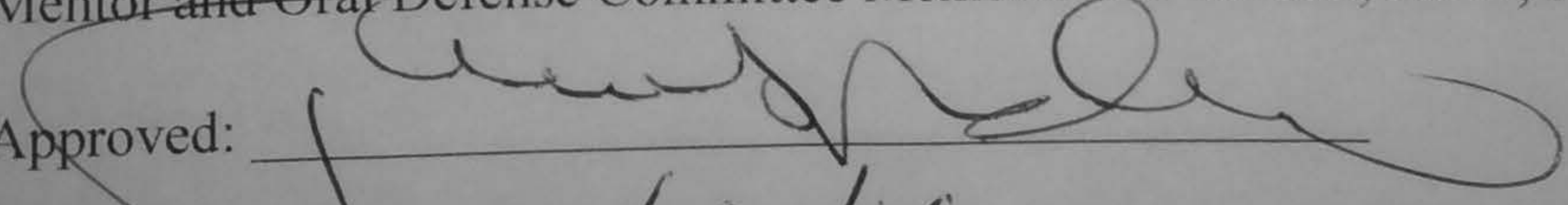
**AUTHOR:** Major Jason W. Lopez, USA

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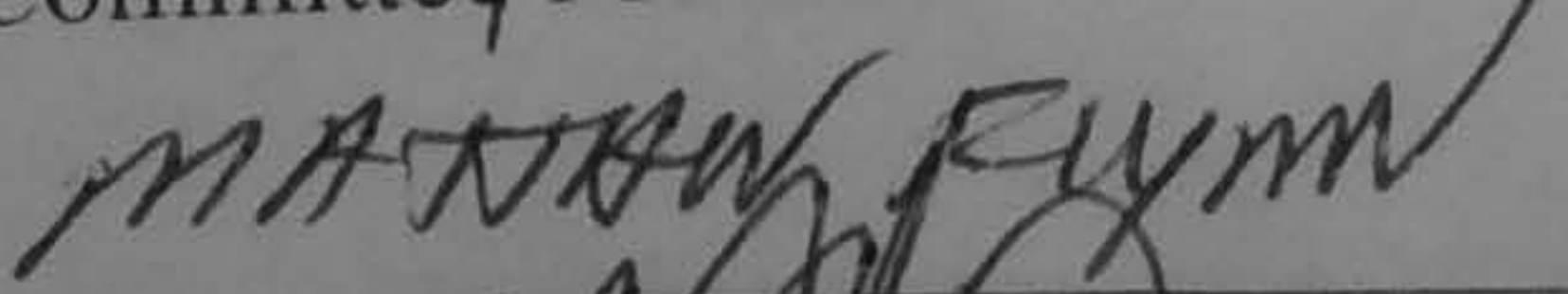
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Command and Staff College  
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Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** “Tell me, *Billy Yank*, what exactly are you fighting for?” The North’s struggle to bring the elements of National Power – Diplomatic, Informational, Military, And Economic – into strategic alignment to win the American Civil War.

**Author:** Major Jason W. Lopez, United States Army

**Thesis:** Despite its conspicuous advantage in personnel, weapons, and equipment, Union victory in the American Civil War stalled because of a lack of unified effort in bringing to bear the elements of national power, usually considered to be diplomacy, information, military, and economic.

### Discussion:

The Civil War arguably remains the most intriguing conflict in American history despite its conclusion over 150 years ago on the far side of a tumultuous 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of factors contribute to America’s on-going infatuation with a war fought at the convergence of Napoleonic tactics and the industrial revolution. These include everything from sectionalism to whether the Constitution represents an eternal contract with the people or a dissoluble bond with the states to the question of “the peculiar institution of slavery” as it was known at the time, and the unalienable rights of man. Numerous studies – including many revisionist in nature – have examined the conflict from almost every imaginable perspective. In the face of a sesquicentennial of postmortem study it may seem that the proverbial bones have been picked clean of any new study. That is, however, not the case. In a fundamental example of not seeing the forest for the trees, the evaluation of why the Union failed to sustain any significant strategic success for the first half of a war that drug on for five bloody years in spite of significant advantages in all the ways of war has not been widely studied. With that as a starting point, this essay will advance the argument that the American Civil War lasted so long due to a lack of unity in the Union’s strategic vision for success in reference to the elements of national power. A thorough examination of missteps in the elements of nation power includes:

- Diplomacy between the United States and the powers of Europe add some clarity to why there was significant cause for concern that England and France would enter the war on the side of the Confederacy.
- Ambiguity reference many inspects of information dissemination contributed to a lack of unity in prosecuting the war against the rebel states.
- The growing pains of building an effective army in the face of a dedicated Southern force headed by the audacious and innovative Robert E. Lee.
- Substantial advantages in economic might were tempered by the question emancipation and a labor force at war.

**Conclusion:** A unified effort in the elements of national power would have insured Union victory in the American Civil War at a much earlier date thus saving the nation a significant amount of the blood and treasure lost from 1860-1865.

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## *Preface*

This thesis is the next chapter in an unceasing infatuation with the America Civil War that has marked the past 25 years of my life. In the two and a half decades since an impressionable 11-year-old boy sat, wide-eyed, in front of a grainy television set, mesmerized by Ken Burns' documentary masterpiece, *The Civil War*, I have continually found myself drawn to the nuances of the war that transitioned our great nation from "the United States are" to the "United States is." That said, my fascination with the Civil War is not unique. Thousands of books and journal, magazine, and newspaper articles have been written on seemingly every aspect of the war. Still, finding new topics to write on, while challenging, is not impossible as some areas have not been studied in great detail. One such example of these parts is the discussion of why the war lasted so long. Finding an answer to that question is the purpose of this paper.

Using the elements of national power introduced by British historian and diplomat Edward Hallett Carr, this paper will focus on North's diplomatic, informational, military, and economic actions in the Civil War. My hope is this dialog will contribute to the discussion of understanding the challenges faced by modern nations when cooler heads don't prevail.

I am indebted to my Masters of Military Science Mentor Dr. Bill Gordon for his guidance in the completion of this paper (in addition to his willingness to invite the multiple disruptions of his schedule entertaining my tangent questions and discussion on the way of war in 19<sup>th</sup> century America). Additionally, I would like to thank my family, in particular my wife, children, and grandparents for their unwavering support during the development of this thesis.

## Introduction

The Civil War arguably remains the most compelling conflict in American history despite its conclusion over a century and a half ago and on the far side of a tumultuous 20<sup>th</sup> century with its two very violent world wars. A number of factors contribute to America's on-going fascination with a war fought at the convergence of Napoleonic tactics from Europe and the new weapons, railroads, and telegraphs of the industrial revolution. These include everything from sectionalism, to whether the Constitution was an eternal contract with the people or a dissoluble bond with the states, to the question of "the peculiar institution of slavery" as it was known at the time, and the words from the Declaration of Independence proclaiming the "unalienable rights of man."

Numerous scholarly works – including many revisionist in nature – have examined the conflict from almost every imaginable perspective. In the face of a sesquicentennial of postmortem study it may seem that the proverbial bones have been picked clean of any new study. That is, however, not the case. In a fundamental example of not seeing the forest for the trees, the evaluation of why the Union failed to sustain any significant strategic success for the first half of a war that dragged on for five bloody years in spite of significant advantages in all the resources of war, yet requires further effort to explain. With that as a starting point, this essay will advance the argument that despite its conspicuous advantage in personnel, weapons, and equipment, Union victory in the American Civil War stalled because of a lack of unified effort in bringing to bear the elements of national power, laid out by Edward Hallett Carr's model of diplomacy, information, military, and economic.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, back to the question posed in the title, “tell me, *Billy Yank*, exactly what are you fighting for?” “Billy Yank” at different points in the war, would have said to bring the South back into the Union, or, later, perhaps to end slavery. But, whichever purpose is given, required the effective application of the national powers in the form of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements. This did not happen very quickly, and took four years for all these elements to be brought into effective application. Before entering the discussion of a lack of unity in implementation of the instruments of national power, it is crucial to first dispel three commonly held components of mythology that continue to plague evaluations of the longevity of the war. The first is the fallacy of superior leadership on the Confederate side providing such a drastic advantage that the Union was unable to overcome such a gap until the second half of the war. No explanation is made for this sudden shift in operational brilliance on the part of Union leadership beyond the attrition of Confederate generals (particularly Lieutenant General Thomas Jonathan Jackson’s death following Chancellorsville in May 1863) and the messiah-like arrival of Lieutenant General (Hiram) Ulysses Simpson Grant, General of all Union armies, to the eastern theater of war. While there is no doubting the almost unprecedented Southern success from 1860-1863 in the eastern theater of war, the opposite is true for actions in the west. Confederate generals – headlined by Braxton Bragg – fared equally as poorly during the same period of time against Union efforts in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. As such, any reference to supremacy of Confederate generalship is, at best, a theater-specific issue and not by itself one affecting a universal contribution to the length of the American Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

The second element of mythology is the misconception that the Southern Soldier, who, “largely drawn from a yeoman class of farmers, had spent their lives shooting game and inuring themselves to hardship in a healthy outdoor environment” and as such, were better fighters than

their contemporaries from the North.<sup>4</sup> This argument, however, is not supported by the social and cultural make-up of mid-19<sup>th</sup> America. According to historian Williamson Murray, quoting a letter from a Southern officer to a Northern friend immediately following the war, “our officers were good, but considering that our rank and file were just white trash and they had to fight regiments of New England Yankee volunteers, with all their best blood in the ranks, and Western sharpshooters together, it is only wonderful that we weren’t whipped sooner.”<sup>5</sup> Whether this quote was a rosy excuse fresh on the heels of brutal defeat, the fact remains that almost 80 percent of the Northern population still lived in rural areas at the outset of the war provides at least plausible support to the argument that the quality of Northern and Southern Soldiers was marginal at best.<sup>6</sup>

The third, and most derisive, is the idea that the war was one fought from the outset as a moral quest to grant equality to all men in the face of a fanatical south bent on protecting the peculiar institution of slavery. Many historians point to the 1861 oration of Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, known more commonly as the Cornerstone Speech, that proclaimed slavery as a primary plank in the Southern quest for independence in addition to codifying the inferiority of persons of color to whites, as the overall moral basis for Union prosecution of the war. While Stephens’ claims were rebutted by Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who reasserted the basis for the war as independence and not slavery, the opinion that blacks were inferior to whites was not a belief uniquely held in the South during this period of time.<sup>7</sup> There is no doubt the Emancipation Proclamation and eventual passage of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution – outlawing slavery, granting citizenship to former slaves, and universal male suffrage, respectively – were by-products of the war, the quest for universal equality of all men, regardless of color, was not on the list of Northern war aims at the

start of the conflict. Contrary to this increasingly popular narrative, with the exception of a vocal abolitionist minority who were often at loggerheads with the moderate Lincoln administration, the goal for the North was preservation of the Union at all costs.<sup>8</sup> As proof of its lack of stature, in an address on colonization to the Committee of Colored Men, in August 1862 President Lincoln stated:

...You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffers very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason at least why we should be separated...even when you cease to be slaves; you are yet far removed from being placed on equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoys. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent, not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you...<sup>9</sup>

The Lincoln administration believed slavery would eventually fade away, not through force, but because it was an archaic, callous, and ineffective system. The plan – repeatedly parroted by Secretary of State William Henry Seward – was that slavery would remain contained to the South at the end of the war. From that point, following a design similar to that England’s Abolition Act of 1833, slaves would be freed through compensatory payments to their respective owners and then resettled in Latin America, the Caribbean, or Africa. Though slavery, as it will be discussed in the Diplomacy section to follow, was viewed as a hindrance to future expansion of the United States by the Lincoln administration, it was not a primary war objective. Only the strategic brilliance of President Lincoln, who saw the dual advantages of adding the additional objective of liberation to the war strategy as a (1) guarantee of European neutrality since no country could enter the war on the side of the South with the eradication of slavery in play and (2) the ability to save a substantial amount of post-war debt incurred as a result of the inevitable

compensated emancipation that was to follow the ceasing of hostilities.<sup>10</sup> In the end, far more as a brilliant strategic move of necessity than for the moral accomplishment of freeing the slaves, Lincoln's emancipation effort met the overall goal. In the words of acclaimed historian Shelby Foote:

Abroad, as at home, a bedrock impact had been felt... In London, Earl Russell himself might point out to his colleagues that that it was 'of a very strange nature,' and contained 'no declaration of a principle averse to slavery.' Yet behind these organs of opinion, below these men of influence, stood the people. In their minds, now that Lincoln had spoken out - regardless of what he actually said or left unsaid - support for the South was support for slavery, and they would not have it so. From this point on, editors might favor and the heads of state might ponder ways and means of extending recognition to the Confederacy, but to do this would have to run counter to the feelings and demands of their subscribers and electors. Not even the nearly half-million textile workers already idle as a result of the first pinch of the cotton famine were willing to have the blockade broken on such terms. And the same was true in France. With this one blow - though few could see it yet: least of all the leader most concerned - Lincoln had shattered the main pillar of what had been the southern President's chief hope from the start. Europe would not be coming into this war.<sup>11</sup>

Even still, in Lincoln's December 1, 1862 Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, the President's words were far from stalwart in its support of universal suffrage for slaves in the South. In fact, objective analysis would deduce that the speech, written by Lincoln but read by the Secretary of the Senate John W. Forney, seemed to supersede the Emancipation Proclamation of only a few months prior. In the address, Lincoln proposed three constitutional amendments. The first gave legal status "to the current state of affairs" by forever freeing those persons seized according to the Confiscation Acts or those who escaped through their own efforts to the North. Even still, included in this amendment was compensation for those "masters who lost slaves but had not themselves been disloyal" to the Union.<sup>12</sup> The next two amendments proposed compensation emancipation through federal bonds to those states that re-entered the Union under the promise of gradual emancipation through the year 1900 and the allocation of

federal money for re-colonizing “free colored persons” someplace outside the United States.<sup>13</sup> As such, the belief that the war went on so long because of a dogged struggle between the steadfast Northern good of freedom and equality for all men and the Southern dedication to evils of enslavement and manumission is misleading and largely a product of inflated post war efforts to quantify the loss of life beyond the quest for preservation of Union.<sup>14</sup>

With these popular rumors dispelled, this discussion of Union missteps in the implementation of the elements of national power has to begin with basic definitions. An “element” is a “fundamental, essential, or irreducible constituent of a composite entity.”<sup>15</sup> Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, refers to the elements of national power as “all of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national objectives...expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational, and military.”<sup>16</sup> This definition builds on E.H. Carr’s 1939 assertion that “political power in the international sphere may be divided, for purpose of discussion, into three categories: (a) military power, (b) economic power, (c) power over opinion. ... But power is an indivisible whole; one instrument cannot exist for long in the absence of the other.”<sup>17</sup> Intrinsically, it is crucial to examine the elements of national power from a holistic approach, understanding that the lines between each component are blurred and overlap exists. Combined, these factors provide a clear understanding on why it took the North so long to win the war.

When examining diplomacy between the North and South and the powers of Europe it is crucial to add clarity to why there was significant cause for concern that England and France would enter the war on the side of the Confederacy. In this analysis, the relationships between the United States and both the Confederate States and European nations are important to the understanding of how the Union struggled to capitalize on a profound strength in the war. Any

gaffes on the side of the United States carried the possibility of dragging Europe into the war on the side of the South, exponentially complicating the process of re-establishing the Union.

Ambiguity in reference to many aspects of information dissemination contributed to a lack of unity in Union prosecution of the war against the rebel states. No area is this more prominent than in the explanation of what exactly the war was about. Nearly unanimous support at the outset of the war was geared to preservation of the Union. As the exceedingly bloody and destructive conflict progressed, an added strategic cause (also moral, though only as a secondary benefit) of the emancipation of slaves in all territories in rebellion was added to the war.<sup>18</sup> Revisionist historians often paint this as the primary reason for the war but, with lack of empirical evidence and majority support in the North, debunk this claim and require a deeper investigation of information blunders in the prosecution of the Union war effort.

Military prosecution of the war effort for the North is often (and rightly) blamed for the longevity of the brutal conflict. Several factors share culpability beginning with a crisis in both the civil-military relationship of leaders and in the Northern command selection for officers in the early years of the war. Another primary cause was failure to embrace the strategy set forth in the Anaconda Plan. Finally, the early assessment of the quality and dedication to the cause of volunteers in the Union were lacking in comparison to those in the Confederacy. Each of these elements served to contribute to the repeated Union defeats through the first years of the war.

Substantial advantages in economic might were tempered by the question emancipation and a labor force at war. President Lincoln, while having the advantage of a large influx of immigrants at his disposal, was still faced with the impact of establishing a standing military force without draining the United States' vast industrial capabilities. Adding to this was the idea that, once emancipation occurred, the Soldiers he was sending to war were fighting to free a

people who would, in turn, compete for the same jobs at its conclusion. Concerted execution of the elements of national power was an issue of concern for the Union in the American Civil War. Despite vast advantages in the elements of national power, a failure to coordinate execution due to a number of factors contributed to four long, bloody, and destructive years of the war.

## **Diplomacy**

Oxford dictionary defines the word diplomacy as “the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad.”<sup>19</sup> The diplomatic element of national power is the principle means by which the United States engages other nations and foreign groups in order to advance its national interests and objectives. Defined in JP 1, diplomacy is “the principal instrument for engaging with other states and foreign groups to advance US values, interests, and objectives, and to solicit foreign support for US military operations... a principal means of organizing coalitions and alliances, which may include states and non-state entities, as partners, allies, surrogates, and/or proxies.”<sup>20</sup> These straightforward explanations provide a base for understanding the appropriately named instrument of national power. Unlike the information and economic components that this essay will address, there is not much ambiguity to the overall understanding of diplomacy. Where the complexity arrives is in the ways and means of engaging in statecraft.

When examining diplomacy in the Southern War of Independence, it is crucial to understand the direct correlation between European involvement in the conflict and the prospects of success for secession. While both sides understood the necessity of relations with Europe,

each differed in its view of how to pursue foreign policy goals. The Union, under Secretary Seward, conducted a campaign of “vigorous foreign policy composed of bluff, bluster, and ultimately cautious moderation” to keep the powers of Europe from providing the Confederacy with the “diplomatic recognition, military supplies, and any kind of encouragement” necessary to successfully prosecute the war.<sup>21</sup>

Contrarily, the Confederacy focused on a passive approach to foreign policy, hinging its hopes on the idea that Europe’s industrialized nations overriding need for cotton to maintain economic well-being would drive Britain and France to enter the war on the side of the South or, even better, broker for peace. As the war progressed, Union military and diplomatic missteps, unimagined bloodshed on numerous battlefields, and the dwindling of cotton stockpiles as the war advanced over several years led the nations of Europe to progress from resolute neutrality to prospective intervention in an effort to finally restore order. In the end, a universal abhorrence to the peculiar institution of slavery, substantial wartime trade with the Union, and the supply of Southern cotton warehoused in Britain from the pre-war years’ bumper crops led to uniform neutrality across Europe, ultimately dooming the quest for Southern independence.<sup>22</sup>

In this essay, United States diplomacy issues in regard to the execution of the instruments of national power and the prosecution of the war effort will focus on two areas. The first being the tenuous balance between the United States, Europe, and the Confederacy in which all sides harbored competing end states for the future of the Western Hemisphere. The second will focus on the issue the slavery question provided for the Lincoln administration on the both the domestic and international stages. Failures in these two areas would have potentially been catastrophic were it not for the calculated risks taken by President Lincoln and Secretary Seward and the aid provided by the Confederate States laissez faire attitude toward foreign affairs rooted

in its drastic overestimation of King Cotton as a means for drawing Europe into the war. Still, while success was the ultimate result, the aforementioned errors led to an expansively bloody and destructive war.

United States diplomatic relations with Europe was shaky at the outset of the war due to British, Spanish, and French interests in expanding intervention in the Western Hemisphere during the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As the advent of colonization took hold in the continent of Africa, the main actors of Europe displayed a renewed want to engage in actions in the new world. As such, Spain sought to recolonize the Dominican Republic and, with Britain and France, was resolved to intervene in Mexico at the request of that country's government. Further, Russia diplomats were conducting open discussions with the Confederate government and France was contemplating a move at re-colonizing Haiti (though the French in Haiti effort was later proved false). In the face of these potential incursions, Seward, speaking for President-elect Lincoln before its inauguration, made it clear that (1) the secession effort lacked popular support throughout the south and would soon fail and (2) that no European incursion would be tolerated in American or western hemispheric affairs.

The Confederacy quickly sought to dispel the first assertion by dispatching representatives to Washington City and the capitols of Europe to explain why the South had seceded, convince European leaders that the Confederacy had an effective government, and that the Confederacy was willing and capable of preserving its independence. In response, Seward refused Confederate diplomats' access to President Lincoln or himself. Through third party communication, Seward insured the Confederate representatives that an amicable reunion of the North and South was still the goal. In the end, the representatives rejected Seward's assurances and instead left Washington with the belief that President Lincoln was resolved to go to war to

force the secessionists back into the Union. The efforts to regain a foothold in the new world by the old powers of Europe and the Confederacy's dedication to independence, added broad layers of complexity to the struggle for maintaining Union.<sup>23</sup>

Further clouding diplomacy was the Trent Affair in 1861. The incident, involving a question of maritime freedoms, brought the United States to the precipice of war with Britain and France. Confederate President Jefferson Davis sent diplomats James Mason of Virginia and John Slidell of Louisiana, destined for Britain and France respectively, on a covert mission to Europe. Shortly after the two diplomats boarded the British mail ship *Trent* in Havana, the *USS San Jacinto* intercepted the boat, firing several warning shots across its bow, detaining the Confederate representatives, before allowing the *Trent* to continue its voyage. The controversial decision to seize the diplomats was met with polar opposite responses in the North and Britain. Opinion in the Union was largely positive – the first “good” news in a thus far dismal war – with the exploit receiving praise in Northern newspapers and the House of Representatives passing a resolution honoring the Captain of the ship. The British, however, claimed that the *San Jacinto* had violated international law by removing persons from a ship without taking the ship to a prize court for adjudication. “Lord Palmerston, Britain's cantankerous Prime Minister, commenced an emergency cabinet meeting by throwing his hat on the table and declaring, ‘I don't know whether you are going to stand this, but I'll be damned if I do.’”<sup>24</sup>

The British government sent a letter demanding an apology and the return of the two diplomats to Lord Lyons, the British minister in Washington. “Meanwhile, the Government of France declared its willingness to support Britain in a conflict against the United States. After heated meetings with his cabinet, Lincoln decided upon a policy of ‘one war at a time.’ (Still) The question remained how to accept British demands while maintaining U.S. popular support.”

The Trent Affair, in a masterful effort by President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, was salvaged by “forcefully asserting that Britain had finally adopted the American conception of neutral rights over which the two nations had fought a war in 1812.” Ultimately a success, the Trent Affair highlights the fragile nature of Northern diplomacy in the American Civil War.<sup>25</sup>

The complicated prospect of European powers salivating at the possibility of a modern era land grab brought on by a faltering United States ran counter to the expansionist plans Secretary of State William Seward who saw the United States on the verge of creating an American Empire.<sup>26</sup> The primary constraint to Seward’s “higher destiny” of the United States was the immoral, inefficient, and archaic institution of slavery. Even so, “Seward’s objection to slavery and desire for its abolition did not lead him to demand its immediate destruction.”<sup>27</sup> Instead, his overall plan for the eradication of slavery was a process of gradualism. Under this design, the nation would slowly abolish slavery through an incremental process thus mitigating “sectional hostilities” and allowing the south time to transition to a free labor society. The first step in this plan was to restrict slavery to the states it already existed and not allowing its expansion into the western territories. A unified United States could then move to peacefully acquire territory, “including but not restricted to Canada and Mexico.”<sup>28</sup>

The final result of each of these factors was an indecisive Northern effort regards to diplomacy. Until the North made the war about slavery, there was a sincere danger of European involvement in the war on the side of the South. European involvement in the war in support of the Confederate war effort, whether an interest in renewed colonialism in the Western Hemisphere or the economic need for cotton, would have been catastrophic for the Northern cause. In the end, the brilliance of the Lincoln administration, though delayed, ultimately led to the securing of a Union diplomatic victory though the cost was a prolonged war.

## **Information**

Oxford Dictionary defines the word information as “facts provided or learned about something or someone.”<sup>29</sup> This definition does not fit, however, for the informational instrument of national power which is understood to mean the United States Government communicating its intent and views. This is also often referred to as Strategic Communication.<sup>30</sup> Joint Publication 1 states that information is “an important instrument of national power and a strategic resource critical to national security” requiring concerted efforts to “synchronize, align, and coordinate communication activities to facilitate an understanding of how the planning and execution” of “strategies, plans, operations, and activities will be received or understood by key audiences.”<sup>31</sup> Under these explanations, information is seen across each of the other elements of national power. As such, any lack of clarity on this element of national power can lead to catastrophic results.

Contrary to the increasingly popular belief that the American Civil War was rooted in the cause of universal emancipation, the historical facts simply don't fit the narrative. All evidence points to the overwhelming stance from President Lincoln that the war was unequivocally rooted in the fundamental issue of preserving the Union at all cost. While this doesn't fit the revisionist storyline, it is important in understanding Union challenges in defining a clear and concise information plan. Several factors both highlighted and contributed to the problem the Lincoln administration faced in clearly defining the 'why' of the war. Included in this were the factions on the Union political front that contributed to the lack of hegemony in prosecuting the war. From Democratic Copperheads on one side who wanted to end the war at any cost to the Radical

Republicans who want to pursue the war and punish the South. Further adding to the fray were the issues of where slavery fit into the fight. With support for universal suffrage in the north at a lukewarm level, the Lincoln administration were trapped in an impasse where the choice idea of projecting a “free the slaves and save the Union” information goal carried a litany of potential issues. In the end, the lack of a clear informational plan contributed to the length of the war.

Political difference is by no means a unique trait of the American Civil War. Still, it is important to analyze the multiple factions with widely different views on the war. On one side of the aisle were the Peace Democrats, more commonly known as the “Copperheads.” Drawing its name from the copper pennies worn on member’s lapels, the group vehemently opposed the war, particularly one that sought to expand the powers of the Federal government while infringing on the rights of states. “A majority of Peace Democrats supported war to save the Union, but a strong and active minority asserted that the Republicans had provoked the South into secession; that the Republicans were waging the war in order to establish their own domination, suppress civil and states’ rights, and impose “racial equality”; and that military means had failed and would never restore the Union.”<sup>32</sup> The Copperheads, based primarily in the rural southern regions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, also had substantial support in urban, predominantly Catholic, immigrant areas that viewed the glut of former slaves flooding north in search of jobs as a threat to its livelihood. While still a minority of comparable size to the abolitionist movement, the group had substantial support with influential newspapers throughout the Union. This contributed to the group’s ability to spread its own informational campaign, proclaiming a return to Jacksonian Democracy and peace with the South at any cost. The Copperheads active effort to attain peace, ironically, came to a head in the July 1863 when the New York Civil War Draft Riots erupted.

The enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 was followed by the federal draft law in March of that year calling for all male citizens between the age of twenty and thirty-five (and single thirty-five to forty-five year olds) to register for military service. Following two years of fearful anticipation of an impending flood of freed slaves seeking labor jobs brought about by emancipation, the fact that individuals with means could purchase a \$300 exemption from the draft, and, arguably most incendiary, blacks, who were not considered citizens, were exempt from the draft, the immigrant population in northern cities was on the edge of revolt. White workers, stoked by Democratic Party leadership and pro-slavery press in New York with tactics similar to those used to incite the 1834 anti-abolition riots, compared their value unfavorably to that of southern slaves, stating that “[we] are sold for \$300 whilst they pay \$1000 for negroes.”<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the tensions erupted in the Civil War Draft riots on 13-16 July 1863 during which 120 people and 3-5 million dollars in property were destroyed. The event required the Lincoln administration to redirect soldiers headed south to quell the uprising.

On the opposite end of the political spectrum, the Lincoln administration faced the Radical Republicans within its own party. In the words of a leader of the faction, “the word Radical as applied to political parties and politicians....means one who is in favor of going to the root of things; who is thoroughly in earnest; who desires that slavery should be *abolished*, that every disability connected therewith should be *obliterated*.”<sup>34</sup> Radical Republican elements sought universal emancipation without compensation, harsh punishment for any state that sought independence, and civil rights for the slaves (including immediate suffrage).<sup>35</sup> These “radical” efforts ran counter to Lincoln’s restrained efforts to bring an end to the war. Still, even with these stark contrasts in political counterparts, Lincoln managed to maintain the Union. “The president’s relations with the Congress and his own party waxed and waned in accordance with

progress in the war. The failure of eastern campaigns in 1862, perhaps compounded by an initial backlash to the Emancipation Proclamation, resulted in Republican losses at the polls that year”<sup>36</sup>

The Lincoln administration chose a moderate stance in the execution of the informational element of national power by consistently proclaiming the war as a means of preserving the Union. Lincoln understood that any drastic deviation from this posture, including any pursuit of emancipation, threatened to push the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland out of the Union along with upsetting the conservative populace of the North. Lincoln’s efforts to this end were largely successful and maintained this tenuous balance for the duration of the war. Unfortunately, this balance came at the price of prolonging the war.

### **Military**

The military element of national power, as defined by JP 1, has the “ultimate purpose...to fight and win the Nation’s wars. Fundamentally, the military instrument is coercive in nature, to include the integral aspect of military capability that opposes external coercion. Coercion generates effects through the application of force (to include the threat of force) to compel an adversary or prevent our being compelled.”<sup>37</sup> As such, the military element of national power does not have an immediate impact on any war. It takes time to recruit, equip, train, mobilize, and deploy an army. Along with these base factors, the Union efforts were met by several unique factors that contributed to the longevity of the war. Included in this lot was the basic Union strategy for winning the war – the Anaconda Plan. Also, the vast size of the Confederacy, exacerbated by its lack of lines of communication, unorthodox efforts of Robert E. Lee, and the strong will of the southern populace, all contributed to the length of the war.

The Anaconda Plan, devised by General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, was the initial Union plan for defeating the Confederacy. General Scott, following a month of in-depth conversations and counsel with President Lincoln, by May 1861 had developed the plan for Union war aims. “About 3 May Scott told his protégé, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, that he believed an effective ‘Blockade’ of Southern ports, a strong thrust down the Mississippi Valley with a large force, and the establishment of a line of strong Federal positions there would isolate the disorganized Confederate nation ‘and bring it to terms.’”<sup>38</sup> This brilliant strategic plan ultimately succeeded in claiming military victory for the North. Unfortunately, several factors impacted the increased time it took for the plan to achieve these results. The primary reason was that the North simply did not have the resources in terms of men and material to accomplish the plan. The Union Army in January 1861 consisted of 16,000 Soldiers.<sup>39</sup> The Anaconda Plan would require ten times that amount for successful execution of its three pronged approach. In addition to the time required to build assets, the plan itself called for “Federal troops...stop, waiting for Southern Union sympathizers to turn on their Confederate governors and compel them to surrender. It was his belief that sympathy for secession was not as strong as it appeared and that isolation and pressure would make the "fire-eaters" back down and allow calmer heads to take control.”<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, the sheer size of the Confederacy added to the issue with prosecuting the war for the North. With a borders than contained more than a 700 thousand square miles, boxed by the multiple tributaries feeding the Mississippi River in the West, innumerable inlets along the Atlantic coast in the East, broad, undulating terrain of Kentucky and Tennessee in the North, and the large ports along the Gulf of Mexico in the South, the Confederacy presented a daunting challenge for the Union war effort. These diverse conditions required the creation of both blue

and brown water navies capable of conducting combat, siege, and transport operations because of the lack of an expansive and advanced road network and no uniformity in railroad gage.

Particularly in the western theater, where as previously discussed, the North enjoyed sustained success; the war was prolonged due to these challenges in lines of communication.

In the eastern theater, Confederate General Robert Edward Lee's unorthodox efforts extended the war. Dividing the Army of Northern Virginia into two Corps – placing one under the command of the audacious LTG “Stonewall” Jackson, the other under the steadfast LTG James Longstreet, General Lee continually applied a “hammer and anvil” approach to warfare. Using the constricted terrain of Virginia to limit the manpower advantages of the North, General Lee turned Virginia into a canvas for repeated strokes of tactical military brilliance. General Lee repeatedly violated Jominian principles of massed formations and decisive battle by dividing his Army into smaller elements in the face of opposing armies vastly larger in size.

After taking command during the Battles of the Seven Days, General Lee used deception and maneuver to prevent Major General McClellan's massive Army from achieving its goal of capturing Richmond during the Peninsula Campaign. General Lee followed this success by dispatching his LTG Jackson to capture Harpers Ferry, thus forcing the withdrawal of the Army of the Potomac to protect Washington City. The resulting Battle of Second Manassas, another resounding Confederate victory, led to General Lee undertaking an invasion of the North with the strategic goals of freeing the fields of Virginia for harvest and enticing Britain and France to enter the war on the side of the South. This proved to be a brilliant effort, as Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, wrote in the days leading up to the Battle of Antietam, “it is evident that a great conflict is taking place to the northwest of Washington, and its issue may have a great effect on the state of affairs. If the Federals sustain a grave defeat, they may be at once ready for

mediation, and iron should be struck while it is hot. If, on the other hand, they should have the best of it, we may wait a while and see what may follow.”<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, due to infamous discovery of Order 191 by Union forces, Lee was forced to abandon his planned invasion and fought a bloody defense at Sharpsburg, not only ending in a tactical draw but also any chance of European involvement in the war on the side of the South with the subsequent issuance of the previously discussed Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>42</sup>

Not deterred, General Lee continued his deft efforts at prolonging the conflict with more stunning Confederate victories at the Battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville in December 1862 and May 1863, respectively. Unfortunately for Lee, the victory at Chancellorsville, arguably his most impressive military effort, was also the most costly, as it resulted in the mortal wounding of LTG Jackson. No other leader provided Lee with the daring tactical brilliance of Jackson and this became evident a few months later during the Army of Northern Virginia’s fateful trek into Pennsylvania in July 1863. Even still, with dwindling supplies and manpower, Lee continued to press the initiative and, through a string of fighting withdrawals against the unrelenting General Grant, the war drug on until April 1865.

The final military facet of the prolonged nature of the war was the impact of the strong will of the southern people. At the outset of the war, as outlined in the statements of the Lincoln administration, the original concept of the Anaconda Plan, and the common understanding amongst most military leadership, was that the war was to be a quick affair due to the fact that the majority of Southern populace was not interested in war. Secretary Seward believed, “secession lacked majority support in the South and that Southern Unionist would rise and end the secession movement in the spring of 1861.”<sup>43</sup> In the end, this was simply not the case. General Grant summed the overall concept in his memoire stating that “Up to the battle of Shiloh

I...believed that the rebellion against the Government would collapse suddenly and soon, if a decisive victory could be gained over any of its armies... But when Confederate armies... assumed the offensive... I gave up all idea of saving the Union except by complete conquest.”<sup>44</sup> Southern citizens believed the incursion of Northern armies on Confederate soil, was an affront. Many Southerners opposed secession but still fought without hesitation in support of the Confederacy. In the words of historian Shelby Foote, who’s “great-grandfather had opposed secession but fought without hesitation for the South,” the dedication to the South was one of honor. “I’m a man, my society needs me, and here I am. The difference between the North and the South in the war is that there was no stigma attached to the Northern man who paid two hundred dollars to not go to war, or who hired a German replacement. In the South you could have done that, but no one would. You’d have been scorned... all Southerners subscribe to this code to some degree...It’s what kept them going through Appomattox, that attitude of ‘I won’t give up, I won’t be insulted.’”<sup>45</sup>

In the end, the Union Strategy for winning the war, requirements to recruit, build, and train an army, the challenges of the massive size and restricted mobility presented by fighting an offensive war in the South, the brilliant efforts of Robert E. Lee, and the strong will of the southern people, all added to the length of the American Civil War

## **Economic**

A common definition for “economy” is “the wealth and resources of a country or region, especially in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services.”<sup>46</sup> JP 1 defines it as, “a strong US economy with free access to global markets and resources is a fundamental

engine of the general welfare and the enabler of a strong national defense. In the international arena, the Department of the Treasury works with other USG agencies, the governments of other nations, and the international financial institutions to encourage economic growth, raise standards of living, and predict and prevent, to the extent possible, economic and financial crises.”<sup>47</sup> During the American Civil War, of all the advantages available to the North during the conflict, a developed economy capable of massive industrial production was arguably the most pronounced. At the start of the war, the North had substantial advantages in the number of factories (101,000 to 21,000 for the South), factory workers (1.1 million to just over 100,000 for the South), and miles of railroad (20,000 to 9,000 in the South). Additionally, a considerable financial capital edge – \$234 million in the North, \$74 million in the South – gave the Union the potential to expand as needed to support the war effort. Even with these ample advantages in the means of waging war, the North struggled to bring a swift end to the war. There were several reasons why, including the challenges of mobilization and the aforementioned training requirements of building a Union Army and the restricted terrain of the South.

Mobilization of the war effort took time. The requirements for building an army capable of waging war on the scale required to defeat a South dedicated to the defense of their newly minted independence was daunting. The recruiting, training, and deployment of Soldiers was not something to be done overnight. Expanding from a regular army of 16,000 men January 1861 to nearly 200,000 by July of the same year was a daunting task. The best of equipment and weapons does not guarantee military success. This was made even clearer following the embarrassing defeat at the First Battle of Manassas Junction in July 1861.

Major General McClellan, newly in command at the recommendation of the ailing General Scott, understood this and set forth training the Army of the Potomac shortly after the

debacle on the Bull Run. The process continued for nearly nine months before an impatient civilian populace forced the initialization of the Peninsula Campaign in spring 1862. Even with a large, well-trained and equipped Army, the terrain of the South was not conducive to easy maneuver over this large force. The military efforts of April and May 1862 were consistently slowed by torrential rain, undeveloped road networks made even more challenging by a lack of decent maps and the swampy terrain of the plains south and east of Richmond.

Even still, the industrial production might set in motion for the North produced an enormous amount of weapons and equipment. As discussed above, the issue then became one of how to move it. To call the railroad system of the South inadequate is an understatement. As touched on in the military instrument of war, the lack in numbers of roads and of continuity in gauging of the railroads exacerbated the problem with the large size of the Confederacy, contributed to the issues in supporting the war effort. The lack of an established army and the challenges presented by conducted offensive operations in the South were limiting factors for the economic might of the North.

## **Conclusion**

Northern victory in the American Civil War stalled because of a lack of unified effort in the elements of national power, commonly understood as diplomacy, information, military, and economic. The North's struggles with diplomacy and information were rooted in the balancing of multiple interests in the prosecution of the war. While trying to preserve the Union and prevent European intervention in the conflict, the North could not make the war about a conquest for the

eradication of slavery for fear of losing the Border States and increased labor uprisings throughout urban centers. Military efforts were slowed by the requirements for building an army capable of executing Northern strategic war aims. Additionally, the genius of Confederate General Lee and the will of the Southern people prevented the short duration war that many in the North were expecting at the outset. Finally, economic advantages were limited by the size and scope of conducting offensive operations in the South. Together, these factors served as a case study on the application of the elements of national power under the unique and difficult conditions of war.

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<sup>2</sup> Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty-Years' Crisis 1919-1939: Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: HarperCollins, 1964), 1-21.

<sup>3</sup> Williamson Murray, "What Took the North so Long?" *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1989): 24-33.

<sup>4</sup> Murray, "What Took the North so Long?," 25.

<sup>5</sup> Murray, "What Took the North so Long?," 25.

<sup>6</sup> United States, National Park Service, "Civil War Facts." National Parks Service, 2016, Accessed January 21, 2016. <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/facts.htm>.

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<sup>8</sup> Todd Brewster, *Lincoln's Gamble*, (New York: Scribner, 2014), 1-10.

<sup>9</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "THE PRESIDENT AND COLONIZATION: Interesting Interview with a Committee of Colored Men, Speech of the President in Favor of Colonization, The Experiment to Be Tried in Central America," Speech, Address to a Committee of Colored Men, White House, Washington City, August 15, 1862. Accessed January 28, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/1862/08/15/news/president-colonization-interesting-interview-with-committee-colored-men-speech-355635612.html?pagewanted=1>

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<sup>13</sup> Brewster, *Lincoln's Gamble*, 212.

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- <sup>18</sup> Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863 (Historical Studies of Urban America)* (Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press, 2004), 279-288.
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