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Diplomacy and the American Civil War: The impact on Anglo-American relations

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Diplomacy and the American Civil War:
The Impact on Anglo-American Relations

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Abstract:

Modern historical memory of the American Civil War is dominated by the domestic elements of the four-year conflict between the Union and Confederacy. The military figures, battles, and major political changes of 1861-1864 are central elements to public interpretation of the Civil War. But there is an additional dimension to the events of this period in American history, one that, outside of secondary scholarly research in the past century, remains distant from public knowledge. This research explores the nature of international reaction to the American Civil War, focusing on interaction between the combatants and the United Kingdom. The heart of Empire and the foremost world power in the mid-19th century, the British response to events across the Atlantic places domestic events of the war in greater context. The impact of the conflict was not limited to waves of domestic change. Though no foreign power officially entered the war on either side, its influence appeared in the social, political and economic issues of the 1860s. Generating periods of controversy and upheaval in Anglo-American relations, the Civil War, interpreted in this way, finds a place in the international affairs of the period. Exploring the development of this relationship, the research was conducted with a further purpose – for use in the creation of public web-based resource addressing the issues of this sphere of Civil War history. The product’s aim is to convey international contexts to the conflict, interpreting matters of diplomacy, public opinion, and lasting effects upon the U.S. and U.K.

Keywords: American Civil War, Foreign Policy, Diplomacy, Union, Confederacy, United Kingdom
Introduction

The American Civil War, fought from 1861 to 1865, is remembered today as a conflict between Americans that threatened to split the country permanently. Escalating out of longstanding divisions over the political and economic influence of the North and South, the war altered the course of the country’s development. Formed from the inception of the nation, the war occupies a unique place in American historical memory. Battlefields and museums preserve the stories of the war – its landscapes and battles, its politics and personal experiences. Common narratives of the Civil War evoke the perception of an American society turned inward, focused on an internal conflict with no external influence. As the name suggests no outside powers were directly involved in the conflict, which remained entirely between the Union and Confederacy. Yet the conflict remained of interest to the outside world. Though it wasn’t the foremost interest of European powers such as Britain, France and Russia - themselves embroiled in the ever shifting rivalries and alliance systems of the continent – the Civil War reached them as well.

Furthermore, the importance of international perceptions and responses to the war was not lost on the leadership of the American belligerents. For the North, the Lincoln administration recognized the threat posed by a South bolstered by foreign trade and diplomatic recognition or support. The South was largely dependent on its external connections to attain necessary goods, even before entering a state of war with the North. Its agriculturally-based society, with limited manufacturing, necessitated trade with external partners, a lifeline largely cut off by the Union’s blockade. The Confederacy’s hope was rooted in the intervention or mediation in the conflict by outside powers, the
potential for their recognition as an independent entity also being the doorway to renewed ties of trade. To attain their goals, and to undermine the other, both sides moved towards diplomatic action to move events in their favor.

Thus the full story of the American Civil War encompassed more than the battlefield landscapes and the streets of cities like Washington D.C. and Richmond. The international story of the conflict, one largely behind the scenes from the campaigns, is rooted in diplomacy and outreach; propaganda and persuasion. Though no other power involved itself in the war, it is necessary to understand why this was the case. What factors inhibited foreign participation? What economic, political or social interests drove the U.S. contemporaries to remain on the sidelines? This research aimed to analyze these aspects of Civil War foreign policy, focusing on the most prominent case within the subject. As the leading power in the world, the diplomatic relations and interactions between the American belligerents and the British Empire provided the most significant example for interpretation.

In the mid-19th century, the British Empire would soon be reaching the height of its power in the Victorian Age, ruler of the oceans and spanning across four continents by the Age of Imperialism. Its economic growth led Europe, and later the United States, into the Industrial Revolutions of the early century, and had maintained a dominant position in global manufacturing and trade since. This status, along with their shared history, made the British central to diplomatic efforts of the North and South. The outbreak of secession and Civil War in America presented a challenge for British interests. Competing economic incentives for and against different forms of intervention, with general disinterest in involving the nation, shaped internal and diplomatic discussion. Ultimately,
the desire for neutrality remained dominant in public and government feeling. Reinforced by the increasing inevitability of a Northern victory, the prospect of British intervention, or any significant action on behalf of the South, rapidly diminished over the latter half of the war.

Concerning the Anglo-American relationship in the period of the Civil War, a more developed understanding of foreign policy and interests stems from thorough analysis. The British perspective of the conflict is not defined solely by official diplomatic engagement between themselves and American envoys. Public attitudes factored into the engagement of American agents, both official and unofficial. Attempts to sway the British public, through propaganda and other avenues of influence, reveal perceptions of national opinion. British publications at the time, including widely-read papers such as the _Times_ of London, similarly convey some of the ideology held by supporters and readers. Furthermore, the involvement of the Empire did not end with the resolution of the war in 1865. Outstanding issues from the conflict, as well as new disputes in its aftermath, continued to affect interests at home and in British territories abroad. Ramifications of the Civil War’s outcome are seen in the consolidation of the Canadian territories and in the movement towards social and political reform in the United Kingdom.

To summarize the structure of the text, the first chapter analyzes diplomatic ties between Britain and the American belligerents, exploring the course of and responses to specific incidents and issues between these governments during the war. The second explores the public response, including perception and attitudes towards the conflict, as well as efforts to influence it by American and sympathetic British propaganda. The third
focuses on the lasting impacts of Civil War on the British Empire and Anglo-American discourse in the conflict’s aftermath.

The goals laid forth for this research were twofold. First, it lays out the importance of diplomatic development throughout the Civil War to its outcome. The Anglo-American relationship in this period presented both problems and opportunity. Britain’s role in European affairs heightened its importance to wartime foreign policy, its influence with contemporaries such as France bringing it to the forefront of this area of Civil War history. Through analysis of the war’s impact upon foreign policy during and after the conflict, how these events fit into the context of Civil War history and international affairs is made clear. The resulting interpretation forms an historical narrative, to be applied for the second goal.

Second, the project includes the interpretation of information, analyses and conclusions for public use, in the form of designed websites. In terms of easily-accessible resources that address this sub-area of Civil War history, there are few that contain a significant level of detail. Online information and relevant materials are widely dispersed across different collections and digital libraries. A condensed, detailed resource, one with an aim to generate interest in the subject, is therefore of use. The narratives conveyed through the constructed web locations tell the story of the Civil War from a different perspective, highlighting the major issues, events and figures involved in American and British foreign policy. In effect, the design of these locations act as online exhibits,

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1 The two distinct, yet connected websites created to convey this research are, for the purposes of accessibility in this project, johnathanseitz.com, for a general collections-style site, and johnathanseitz.com/blog/, focused on narrative analysis and conclusions.
utilizing imagery and document based material to supplement and convey necessary information.

Altogether, this work builds upon the research of the past century. Since the late 19th century, the matter of Britain and the Civil War has been analyzed from different perspectives. Among Civil War historians, a general consensus reached on the nature of the British view – that idea of ambivalence or apathy towards the entire event. Concerning modern narratives of the Civil War, multiple authors have noted the lack of detail previously afforded these subjects. Writing on the role of President Lincoln, Howard Jones notes that in the “rich historiography” of the period, “most accounts dwell on battles and personalities,” rather than the “pivotal role of foreign affairs.” In historical memory, the important role of diplomacy in the Civil War is overshadowed by that of events closer to home, for both the United States and United Kingdom. Thomas Sebrell, writing on the use of propaganda, believed coverage of “the European factor” in this conflict of the 1860s, particularly the impact of foreign aid and intervention, falls short of what is received in “accounts of the War of Independence.” Before the development of closer relations between the two in the 20th century, Anglo-American relations in the mid-19th century contain a narrative important to the development of both powers. By giving this subject a greater public presence, it broadens understandings of how events commonly perceived as isolated in actuality had far-reaching effects.

Since the late 20th century, studies of the subject have gradually been coming to light, building upon the work of earlier authors. Analysis of the foreign policy decisions

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made by American leadership or the characteristics of foreign opinion are among the common approaches taken by authors today. In doing so, they expand on prior coverage and understanding. For example, author Dean Mahin’s 1999 work, *One War at a Time*, explores the role of President Lincoln in defining the U.S. approach to diplomacy, detailing a level of participation in foreign policymaking greater than previously suggested. As such activity was not at the forefront of the 16th president’s image during his time in office, occurring out of the public eye or carried out by Secretary Seward, Lincoln’s presence in those affairs shrank in historical memory.

At the same time, interpretation of the British perspective has evolved from the early 20th century as well. Where before the early 20th century consensus anchored upon the idea that views of the war aligned strictly along lines of social and cultural difference, differing models have developed in modern historiography. Authors like Duncan Campbell have argued for broadening examinations of Anglo-American relations in the 1850s and 60s, analyzing “each country’s national experience.” As such, new approaches to understanding the British perception of the Civil War balance generalization with greater analysis of exceptions to the norm.

The American Civil War represents a defining period for the United States, in more ways than one. A test of the nation’s founding democratic principles, the impact of the conflict rippled across the Atlantic World. It was not restricted to the continental United States, to the military campaigning of the North and South. Even as the Union and Confederacy fought, foreign powers observed, weighing the impact of the crisis upon

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their own interests. For Britain, in the midst of its own continued rise as a world power in the 19th century, the instability in the United States carried multiple meanings. It was both distraction and inconvenience, security interests in North America drawing resources away from matters in Europe and economic growth disrupted by trade impediments. For some in Britain, the conflict served as an opportunity and inspiration, the course of the war factoring into the work of reformist causes. The ties of trade and diplomacy established between the two nations over the course of the 19th century, regardless of periods of animosity or distrust, left the Empire with vested interests in the Civil War. As such, analysis of the diplomatic processes occurring behind the scenes rise to greater importance, for their outcome carried the potential to alter the course of the war.
CHAPTER 1

The battles of the Civil War were not confined to politics and campaigns of the Union and Confederate armies in the North and South. Nor were they limited to the military engagements of Northern and Southern navies in the Atlantic and abroad. At several points during its course, the Civil War threatened to escalate into a greater conflict, one that the North could not afford and that the Confederacy hoped could assure victory. While the chief nature of the conflict was domestic, the American Civil War nevertheless contains an important, if smaller, international element. The conflict serves as a backdrop to key moments of American diplomacy in the later 19th century, despite occurring almost entirely on American soil. Where weapons could not achieve definitive victories or advantages, words were utilized instead. Diplomacy, whether to achieve support in the war or to undermine the work of their opponent, was heavily employed. Agents of the American combatants, both official and unofficial in their roles, operated in government halls throughout Europe, with the central focus placed upon the British Empire.

Foreign involvement, whatever form it took, held the potential to sway the course of the war, for better or for worse, for both the Union and Confederacy. Aid could be delivered to the ill-supplied Confederacy, foreign powers could offer recognition of its independent status as legitimate. More immediately, such an achievement could result in the placement of external economic, diplomatic, or even military pressures upon the North to end its blockade of the South. While the blockade remained intact, European nations refusing to undermine it, the economic lifelines of the South likewise remained cut off. The Lincoln administration recognized the dangers that foreign entry into the war
would pose to the Union, from limiting its ability to effectively wage multiple wars to the potential for economic hardship further damaging public support for continuing the fight. Britain thus received the greatest attention, being the premier global power through its growing Empire and long-dominant navy. Moreover, the island kingdom had maintained vested interests in the United States - political, historical, and economic in nature – that shaped their government’s responses to the American situation.

This section focuses on the interactions between American officials and diplomats, and their British counterparts, addressing the key themes and issues of Civil War diplomacy at the governmental level. The central aims of Union and Confederate agents abroad, particularly within Great Britain are key to understanding their actions and arguments, and are thus first examined. Following that, the British government’s perspectives on the conflict at the start of the war, and its varied interests regarding the United States and the outcome of the conflict are analyzed. For each entity here, important figures in their diplomatic outreach - not only State Department or Foreign Ministry leaders, but executives like Lincoln and Palmerston - are included.

The effects of three central issues in shaping the Anglo-American relationship during the war are then presented, outlining their impact upon official British responses and the positions taken by the North and South. The first is the fallout of the Trent Affair, which developed from mid-November of 1861 through into January of 1862, and brought the Union and Britain closest to another war. The second concerns the case of the CSS Alabama and other Confederate vessels, examining reaction to their construction in British shipyards and to attacks on Union ships. Last, the issue of American slavery was a constant influence upon diplomatic discussion, and the eventual move towards
emancipation by Lincoln and the Union had its own consequences in shaping official views of the Civil War. Each of these issues is central to any narrative interpreting this field, and work together to place the events and themes of the conflict in an international context.

At the onset of the Civil War, the United States had the apparent advantage in most comparisons with the Confederacy. Just in terms of population and industrial capacity alone, it outmatched the latter significantly. To many onlookers, the effort to restore the Union was the North’s war to lose. Concerning foreign connections, it had the benefit of established diplomatic ties with other nations, despite its historic apathy towards the affairs of the European powers. The United States was not yet a major power in the world, and its greatest value to the international community derived from its economic qualities, as an expanding industrialized producer and as an ever-growing consumer of foreign goods. However, this status did not remove obstacles from the path of the U.S.’s wartime diplomacy.

On the international stage, President Lincoln’s diplomatic stature was not established, facing domestic pressures and foreign doubts of his capability as he entered into office. Past analyses of Lincoln’s role in the Union’s diplomacy have pointed out his influence upon the messages conveyed by those in the State Department, and his own image in presenting the Union to foreign observers. Mahin identifies the president’s personal interests in British law and politics, useful towards understanding, and defending against, British positions in consecutive diplomatic standoffs during the war. Lincoln did not entirely take the backseat to the diplomatic affairs of the nation, as

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6 Mahin, One War at a Time, 5.
responsibilities of the office required direction and input, though concern over the course of the war and the restoration of the Union undoubtedly drew the bulk of his attention. The president remained the face of the Union to the general public abroad, with numerous caricatures and cartoons criticizing or satirizing not only his role in the American conflict, but his appearance and supposed inexperience. In truth, Lincoln was involved in significant decision making on matters of foreign policy, working to form responses he believed appropriate to issues such as the Trent Affair of 1861.

Leading the North’s diplomatic effort was Secretary of State William Seward, former political opponent of Lincoln and a man with a mixed reputation regarding his combativeness in the position. Seward thus bore the brunt of foreign officials’ immediate attentions regarding Union actions and diplomatic positions, with the president’s own direct involvement in the field lessened as a result. The secretary understood the imminent dangers of Southern recognition and worked tirelessly to put the interests of the Union first, unafraid to ‘privately’ make the threat of war to pressure Britain and others, though knowing when to avoid it. Of course, Seward, like the president, was not without critics of his performance at home, particularly concerning his handling of controversies with Britain. In an 1863 letter to Lincoln, Ohio politician Thomas Ewing expressed dissatisfaction with Seward over the Trent Affair of late 1861. Believing that while the decision to release captured Confederate diplomats had been the correct course, it had taken too long to reach, in part due to Seward’s aggressive nature and attitude towards Britain.\(^7\) Seward’s stubbornness concerning his positions on the actions of neutral

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powers, in Ewing’s view, threatened destabilization of a peaceful resolution. Whether
Northern diplomacy would have proven more effective without Seward at the helm is a
matter of debate, but the Secretary was committed to achieving the aims of the State
Department concerning potential interference and Southern recognition.

In acknowledging the potential threat that British aid or worse, intervention,
would pose to the war effort, Seward and rest of the State Department ardently worked to
prevent such a possibility from occurring. Following the outbreak of war in April, 1861,
the official American diplomatic presence in London was headed by Charles Francis
Adams, Sr., son of John Quincy Adams. The overall aim of his mission in Great Britain,
and the fears if he should fail, are laid out in correspondences from Seward included with
Lincoln’s message to Congress that year. The Secretary’s missive reads:

The agitators in this bad enterprise, justly estimating the influence of the
European powers upon even American affairs, do not mistake in supposing that it
would derive signal advantage from a recognition by any of those powers, and
especially Great Britain. Your task, therefore, apparently so simple and easy,
involves the responsibility of preventing the commission of an act by the
government of that country which would be fraught with disaster, perhaps ruin, to
our own.8

While in England, Adams would be a regular participant in the dialogues between the
North and the British – an individual key towards the easing of any tensions that arose,
with or without direct guidance from Seward in Washington. In this active role, Adams
conveyed to Seward and Lincoln his insight into the affairs of the Palmerston
government, especially the attitudes of key British officials, such as the Foreign Minister

8 United States Department of State. Message of the President of the United States to the Two
Houses of Congress, at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress, Vol. 1 of
Earl Russell. But even with Adams’s presence, the Union effort was not without challenges.

It must be noted that, with the splintering of the Union and the ensuing military conflict, the Lincoln Administration was weakened in its ability to address events in other parts of the New World. The disruption caused by the Secession Crisis, and the potential permanency of this secession at the start of the war was a great danger to the cause of the Union abroad, seen as a failure of the American republican system. As Jones notes, the divisions that arose were “exposing the myriad weaknesses of a popular government now collapsing in anarchy” to the governments of Europe. The inability of the Union to restore itself, to quickly quash the Southern rebellion, was further evidence towards this. The drawing out of the war, and the military stalemates of the first two years, were a significant detractor to the Union cause abroad. The view of former Confederate agent Edwin De Leon, written after the war, provides a summary of this point, and though his personal biases should be considered, he does make reference to European reactions to accounts of the Union’s embarrassing defeat at First Bull Run. Judging the impact of the words of *Times* journalist William Howard Russell and others, the agent holds the view that such reports reinforced a view that the two sides were more of a match for each other, at least at the start of the war. However, the Confederacy’s ability to turn back early Union advances would not endure. By 1863, strings of Northern military successes placed further pressure on the South, undermining arguments of military equivalency.

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The lapse in U.S. attention to the rest of the hemisphere opened the way for the nations of Europe to act on opportunities in Latin America, the situation preventing enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine issued decades prior. The primary case for such a ‘violation’ would be the European actions against Mexico, concurrent to the events of the Civil War. Mahin notes that, for France and the other powers involved in the invasion of Mexico, the transformation into a puppet state was justified “as a means of thwarting the ultimate domination or absorption” of that nation by the U.S.  

Some prominent British officials, for their part, saw the breaking of the Union and the potential diminishment of American power through their own disunity in a similar light. The words of one war observer, Field Marshal Viscount Garnet Wolseley, expressed the view that a broken Union was necessary to continued British power. On the conflict, the Marshal writes:

> Every person that reflects on the matter must be aware that it is in the interest of all nations, but especially of England, to have more than one great republic upon the American continent, as they were fast becoming such a nuisance in the republic of nations that if by any accident they should succeed in their war of subjugation, their insolence and arrogance would be more intolerable than ever.  

In arguments of this nature, notable British figures like Wolseley gave credence to Northern fears that sympathies for the South permeated Britain’s upper classes. That such ideologies influenced the decisions of Parliament or worse, were expressed within the Palmerston government itself, would be a regular public concern in early diplomatic confrontations.

As a newly formed entity, the Confederate States of America lacked preexistent official diplomatic relations with other countries. Its international ties were

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11 Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 220.
predominantly economic, like those of the North, though rooted to its agrarian status as the leading region of the world in cotton production. To better match the organization of the Union in diplomatic capability, the Davis administration rapidly worked to build a State Department that could compete with its Northern counterpart. Despite changes in leadership over the course of the war, the overall aims of Confederate diplomacy abroad, once determined, remained the same. Most central was the goal of recognition of its independent status by the powers of Europe. Through that, the introduction of either aid or outside arbitration in its conflict with the remaining United States would give the South several avenues towards greater influence and autonomy, either in a reunited U.S. or through two American nations. However, the results of their efforts fell significantly short of the goals they had hoped for.

A challenge to the organization of the Confederate State department during the war concerns its leadership. Whereas the Union was served by Secretary Seward in this capacity through to the end of the conflict, and after, the Southern office lacked any such permanence in its leadership. Peterson notes the challenges faced by the first secretary, Robert Toombs, who entered office in early 1861 “with no official foreign policy” in place, something only addressed through a “disorganized and ugly” process.\(^{13}\) Lacking the resources to support extensive diplomatic operations and at odds with others in the Confederate government – both within the Congress and President Jefferson Davis – Toombs resigned his position only months later. Replacing Toombs was Robert Hunter, who similarly only served roughly half a year in the position, between July, 1861, and the following February. It was Hunter who oversaw Confederate actions leading into the

\(^{13}\) Dennis Peterson, *Confederate Cabinet Departments and Secretaries*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016), 211.
Trent Affair, including the assignment of new waves of diplomatic agents, such as James Mason and John Slidell, to England and France.

In the same vein as early American diplomatic outreach - envoys sent to foreign courts and governments perceived as friendly – results were mixed. Neutrality concerns limited interaction with high-level figures, particularly in England, frustrating the direct outreach efforts of Southern agents. Hunter, like Toombs, similarly expressed dissatisfaction with diplomatic work, as well as in the performance of Jefferson Davis and other Confederate leaders.\footnote{Peterson, Confederate Cabinet, 240.} These transitions - and the slowness with which the South’s foreign policy pieced itself together - served to dull the diplomatic impact of their early military victories. Despite repeated attempts to pressure foreign powers, the absence of effective messaging beyond the first year of war, after which it increasingly turned against the Confederacy, helped seal its fate.

The last Secretary of State to serve the Confederacy oversaw the office the longest. From mid-1862 through to the end of the war, former Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin held the reins of Confederate diplomacy. Unlike his predecessors, there was more trust between him and Davis, and the secretary was able to expand Confederate diplomatic operations to other nations of Europe.\footnote{Ibid., 242-243.} However, Benjamin also operated in the time frame that saw the accelerating decline of Southern hopes, both in military victory and in foreign intervention. The secretary was responsible for proposing to President Davis a radical last ditch effort to win foreign support in 1864, convincing him to support the move. In exchange for recognition and aid, the South would move towards
the emancipation of its slaves and slash the cost of its cotton product. This plan too, would fail, as it came too late in the conflict to convince Europe to delay what was inevitable. The South’s failings in other aspects of the war had cut off any chance of overt support.

A persistent theme associated with early Southern diplomatic outreach, and one that is most often associated with this field of the Civil War as a whole, revolved around the concepts of ‘King Cotton Diplomacy.’ The idea - that ‘Cotton is King’ - preceded the war, stemming from the plant’s cash crop nature and prominent influence in Atlantic trade. Nothing could compete with the dominance of cotton, and any war made upon the South - endangering the supply of cotton, would fail due to the dependency of Europe upon the region’s productivity. Argued in 1858 by South Carolina Senator James Hammond, the view held that South would remain economically sound under threat, while “England would topple headlong and carry the whole civilized world with her.” A strategy heavily promoted at the start of the war, particularly by Secretaries Toombs and Hunter, it did not achieve the desired result, and repeated failure to achieve results served to further limit the South’s economic sway in the Atlantic world. Diplomatic leverage of Southern cotton failed to make as much of an impact largely due to stockpiles of the product kept across Europe. Built up in the UK as a result of exports from previous years, not only was Southern cotton drawn upon, but product from colonial sources in Egypt.

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18 Peterson, Confederate Cabinet, 240.
and India were utilized as well.¹⁹ Thus, although economic pressures gradually grew in Europe amid later shortages, the immediate impact was dulled. The Confederacy, however, were victims of their own earlier prosperity, and repeated attempts to further this strategy in early diplomacy only impeded the delivery of other, potentially more successful arguments from Southern officials.

In response to early declarations of neutrality by Davis and leading Confederates, the Southern public pushed to cut off its cotton exports – effectively an embargo to pressure outside intervention. Southerners, some acting on their own accord, blocked shipments, denying foreign textile factories material essential to production. This move, however, had consequences beyond what the Confederacy had first anticipated. The implementation of the Union blockade from late 1861 onwards worsened their own economic situation, as there was no way to sell cotton sitting in Southern ports had they wanted. Furthermore, by 1862, it was increasingly clear that depriving Britain of Southern cotton was not having the desired effect upon diplomatic efforts. Charles Adams wrote to Seward of the Confederates’ folly and their turn to other attempts, noting a large stockpile of cotton that continued to supply British factories.²⁰ Southerners in the public and the government continued to support the idea, even after its immediate impacts had been dulled significantly, but it remained a faint hope – unable to change the minds of European leaders.

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Like the North, the Southern government faced challenges in working to achieve its goals, including the issues regarding cotton above and questions regarding the continued practice of slavery, to be discussed later. Unlike the North, the South faced factors that impeded success in diplomatic outreach. The issue of military performance factored into foreign views of the South just as it factored into views of its opponent. Early victories that carried the war past 1861 gave agents abroad evidence to argue the South could hold its own, that it merited foreign support. However, persistent issues undermined and degraded this position. The most direct evidence is the shift in the course of the war between 1862 and 1863.

While the South inflicted heavy blows to Northern forces in Virginia amid the campaigns against Richmond and other targets, winning victories at Fredericksburg in December, and at Chancellorsville in the spring of 1863, the Union gradually gained a clear upper-hand. The continued impediment of the blockade upon the South, which, despite repeated efforts, remained unbroken through the war, was a significant factor in the reluctance of Britain to involve itself. Concerning this issue, Southern diplomat De Leon recounts a conversation with Prime Minister Palmerston in 1862. The agent encountered questions over the inability of the South to overcome the blockade, thereby proving its ability to the outside world in the process.\(^{21}\) The failure of the Confederacy to relieve themselves of the blockade by the time the war turned against them only heightened the need for foreign aid. The South, while at first successful in deflecting the Northern advance, did not have the resources nor the trade access necessary to compete with its opponent indefinitely.

Turning to the British stance itself, while largely focused upon the affairs of Europe and its Empire over the course of the early 19th century, events in America maintained the attentions of the public and Parliament. In the 1850s, the leadership of the British Empire was not unaware of the devolving situation between the factions of the United States. Henry John Temple, the Viscount Palmerston, served as Prime Minister in Liberal-controlled government, though on most matters relating to diplomacy, the Foreign Minister, John Russell, had some autonomy. Effectively, their situation regarding foreign policy was alike to that of Lincoln and Seward. Both men leaned towards neutrality, as did the British minister to the U.S., Lord Lyons. However, it should be noted that word of Palmerston’s satisfaction concerning the fracturing – stemming from prior standoffs - played to Northern suspicions that he favored the South early on. Regardless of their personal views on the United States, the Secession Crisis, and the implications it had for the future of American power in North America, had presented a tense situation for Britain to navigate. Foreman notes that, despite the divisions between his own councils, “the imperative to stay out of America’s troubles was one of the few issues that united Palmerston’s fractious cabinet,” particularly at this early stage. Reactions to the election of 1860 were concerning, though not unforeseen, given Southern grumblings for years. However, when an imminent war on the other side of the Atlantic was visible on the horizon, maintaining Britain’s neutrality became more difficult to achieve.

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22 Jones, *Blue & Gray Diplomacy*, 34-35.
23 Ibid., 36.
The official position of the British government was announced by Queen Victoria in May, 1861, to be further defined by Earl Russell in his work as Foreign Minister later on. The initial proclamation laid out the rights of Britain as a neutral entity in the conflict, at the same time recognizing the belligerent statuses of both Union and Confederacy, and finally prohibiting, or warning against, British citizens aiding or participating in the conflict. Amongst other actions, the discussion of belligerency meant opening the door to Southern trade, though it would later also lead to the acceptance of the Union’s right of blockade. Russell’s additions to British neutrality broadened its scope going into 1862, with one set of rules affecting territorial waters around England and the territories. Directed at privateers and ships-of-war – aligning with either of the belligerents – these stipulations barred port access in English waters, and limited the supplies such vessels could replenish to non-military items and provisions. The provisions of equal treatment as belligerents angered the Union and gave hope to the Confederacy that further progress could be made to stronger ties with Britain. More importantly, however, were the regulations concerning maritime law and the rights, expectations, and limitations of neutral and belligerent powers. For the British Empire, these positions which would be challenged during the war - legal debate arising out of the Trent controversy of late 1861, as well as the careers of multiple British built Confederate commerce raiders, including the Alabama.

Of course, there were economic factors at play as well for the British government, not merely its political interests in the conflict erupting on the other side of the Atlantic.

Having heavily industrialized over the course of the late 18th and early 19th century, England served as the manufacturing hub of Europe and one of the dominant industrial producers in the global economy. This status left it with strong ties to both sides of the Civil War, with the potential for economic consequences developing depending on the conflict’s outcome and Britain’s role towards it. Chief among its various growing industries was textile goods manufacturing - spread throughout the nation, but concentrated in centers such as Manchester in Lancashire. This production had driven industrial growth, and growing demand necessitated bulk supplies, forming this link between Britain and the South.

But the reasons for the failure of the South’s cotton diplomacy with the Empire are several fold. First, the South was a victim of its own making, cotton overproduction driving surpluses of the crop. As noted earlier, Britain had a built up stockpile of cotton from before the war, primarily from imports from just before the war.27 While there were occasional ‘famines’ of cotton, the reserve materials provided a buffer for the textile industry, thereby undercutting the impact of cotton diplomacy in the first years of war. As to why such outreach failed to convince Britain to intervene after this, the latter nation began drawing on textile resources from other sources. Despite their access to the South’s higher quality cotton being cut off, by the blockade and the actions of the South itself in its informal embargo, Britain had looked towards possible substitutions. As earlier noted, these they found to the East, in the Empire’s territories in the Egypt and India. An 1861 *Punch* cartoon, titled “Over the Way” reflects the shift in British cotton interests towards open markets, as the American one grew mired in unpredictability, displaying John Bull

turning elsewhere.\textsuperscript{28} The importance of cotton to diplomacy between Britain and the South diminished over the course of the war, outweighed by other factors in the nation’s interest.

The British economic interest in the Union was more varied, posing a greater problem for the British to overcome were their relationship to deteriorate. Prior to the war, the U.S. had begun work to pass a protectionist tariff on manufactured goods, which, when finally passed in February, 1861 – hit imports from Great Britain hard.\textsuperscript{29} Known as the Morrill Tariff, though it preceded the Lincoln administration the damage it did to the U.S.’s British relations started their diplomatic outreach on a sour note. However, the Union retained its own advantage concerning the agricultural consumption of England. While the North did not produce cotton, what its agricultural regions did grow was just as important as the cotton supply both prior to and during the war. Because of its size, the Union had the space to grow significant quantities of grains – wheat in particular, as well as a variety of other foodstuffs. While the South was itself large in terms of territory, its farmlands were increasingly devoted to cotton and other cash crops. Cited by Mahin, Jordan and Pratt noted that British importation of such products from the U.S. had grown exponentially, a supply that Russell and others recognized could be cut off.\textsuperscript{30} The loss of Union resources vital to feeding the public – in the case of Southern Recognition or a separate deterioration of relations – consistently would play into the talks between the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{Foreman, A World on Fire}, 68.
\end{itemize}
two nations. Thus, while the importance of Southern quality cotton faded – cut off and replaced by other regions – the North’s food exports remained a key contributor to supporting the needs of the British population.

Diplomatic ties between Americans and the British were shaped by the events of the war, influencing relations between the two for years after the conflict’s end. As the Union and Confederacy organized their respective diplomatic messaging and officials, the first key moments of the Civil War’s international side began to play out. The events of 1861 through 1863, the opening years of the war, are crucial to understanding both American and international perspectives of diplomatic relations at this time. Furthermore, they play a role in the shaping of later Anglo-American ties. For the Confederates, their hope for foreign recognition, or even just economic aid in the form of open trade, lay in outreach towards England and France. It was to these nations that the first of its agents and diplomats would travel. The Union, seeking to prevent the South from making headway on foreign recognition or support, worked to counter or block these actions.

With the military standoffs and stalemates throughout the campaigns at home, both sides of the conflict recognized the importance of outside influences in the hopes of the other, a mutual understanding that brought about the most contentious periods in the war. Not between North and South, but between the former and England.

On November 7th, 1861, half a year after the attack on Fort Sumter, an English mail carrier, the RMS Trent left Havana on a standard delivery voyage returning to the United Kingdom. Aboard the vessel, alongside its other passengers and crew, were a team of Confederate diplomats – James M. Mason and John Slidell, accompanied by aides and family. Their presence outside the Confederacy was not hidden from the Union,
as they had previously run the Union blockade, avoiding capture then. Their government’s state department, then under Robert M.T. Hunter, had assigned them their mission as official envoys to Europe. There, they were to make appeals on behalf of the Southern cause - Mason operating largely in England and Slidell in France. As their arrival was publicized around the Caribbean, their movement and destinations were not kept secret, being known in Havana. The fact that the captain of the Trent had them aboard, despite the prevalence of this information, would become a focal point of arguments over the legality of actions taken, a defense put forth by Seward and others.\(^{31}\)

On the 8\(^{th}\), the Trent was intercepted by a Union warship, the USS San Jacinto, its captain - Charles Wilkes – operating with the view that capturing Mason and Slidell was legal, as they were transported as ‘contraband’ of war. Despite being a neutral vessel, Wilkes had the vessel boarded. After a search, Trent’s diplomatic passengers were removed and placed under arrest, only after which the mail carrier was permitted to continue its journey.

The capture of the Confederate diplomats ignited a firestorm of debate on both sides of the Atlantic, fueling both anger and concern. The Lincoln administration was now in a difficult situation, though at first most – the president and Seward included – applauded Wilkes’s actions.\(^{32}\) The North had greeted the arrests as a much-needed victory, though new waves of anti-British sentiment emerged. Moreover, a defense was still needed as questions and demands concerning the seizure would inevitably arrive.


\(^{32}\) Foreman, A World on Fire, 178-179.
Secretary Seward, writes of the arrests on the 30th of November in an update to Charles Francis Adams, establishing the defense that Captain Wilkes had acted without direct orders to do so. In writing that the U.S. would be “therefore free from the embarrassment which might have resulted if the act had been specially directed by us,” Seward hoped to deflect attacks and dampen the British response ahead of escalation. Despite this disconnect between the actions of the San Jacinto and the government, the actions of Wilkes were quickly seen by British officials as disregarding the rights of neutral powers, an act of great disrespect to their nation.

Days after news reached England, Foreign Minister John Russell expressed these sentiments in a letter to Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador to the United States. Characterizing the incident as “an act of violence which was an affront to the British flag and a violation of international law,” Russell expressed concern over the course of the Affair, directing the ambassador to take Britain’s grievances to Secretary Seward. Amends could only be made through a thorough explanation and the release of the captured envoys. Though he recognized the likelihood of Wilkes acting on his own volition, the letter nonetheless conveys Russell’s desire for clarity on the U.S. position and steps taken by his counterpart towards an apology.

These letters reflect the themes of the back-and-forth that followed the Affair between late November and into January the following year, past its official resolution.

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They convey the tensions of the dialogue between British and American officials on either side of the Atlantic, as the speed of discourse was slow and neither side was willing to back down against perceived transgressions by the other. On the sidelines of all this, despite the arrest of its main envoys, Confederate leadership saw the course of events as an unforeseen benefit, sowing ill feeling between Britain and their adversary. Their hope, naturally, was that the situation would escalate into another war, or at least an avenue towards securing greater British sympathy and aid for the South, a gamble perceived as a last, desperate fling of the dice to some in the Union.\textsuperscript{35} Tensions rose, but war remained off the table for the moment.

Calls for a reprisal, escalating to declarations of war, appeared throughout sympathetic media and public circles in the North and in Britain, pressuring officials in both governments to act. Thurlow Weed, an American politician - and agent for Seward - in London, conveyed his concerns over this feeling and its effect, writing on December 7th:

Nothing but “War, and rumors of War,” are heard here. All expect, and all accept it, and generally with less reluctance than I anticipated. It is unfortunately, assumed that we are unfriendly to England, and are seeking a quarrel. The causes of our own War are wholly misunderstood. While we were attending to our own business, Confederate emissaries were in Europe perverting the judgements and poisoning the minds of Governments and People.\textsuperscript{36}

The agent goes on to elaborate on the potential actions and preemptive measures undertaken by England, suggesting that were there a lack of ice in the St. Lawrence, “British War Steamers would soon be in the Great Lakes.”\textsuperscript{37} Weed’s dire predictions were


\textsuperscript{37} Weed, “Letters from Europe,” 19.
not far off the mark. Among the British responses to the perceived slight by the Union was the formation of a war council, made up of leading figures including Lord Palmerston and Earl Russell. Jones notes the steps taken for preparation against a possible American invasion, as had been attempted decades earlier, including additional troops and naval support.\(^{38}\) The Empire’s concerns over the safety of its Canadian territories, a reasonable course as they had become a target of the Northern public’s frustrations after Trent, escalated an already tense situation. Neither side was yet willing to back down from its position on the Affair.

Despite the precautions taken by Britain, a secondary war with the Empire was the last thing that President Lincoln wanted. However, public opinion still favored keeping the diplomats in captivity, and Lincoln himself was reluctant to set them free.\(^{39}\) Views on the matter clashed within the administration, and the White House received letters arguing for different approaches – to refuse, to acquiesce, or to delay. Former President Fillmore wrote to Lincoln that “the last hope of restoring the Union will vanish,” a “dishonorable peace” would be forced in the face of another war, suggesting outside European arbitration to ease the situation.\(^{40}\) This sentiment was echoed by Wisconsin Senator James Doolittle, who suggested coming together to determine “with greater certainty the rights of belligerents against neutrals upon the High Seas and in which constitutes contraband of war.”\(^{41}\) Later in life, Charles Francis Adams Jr., son of

\(^{38}\) Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, 98-99.


the ambassador, drew upon his father’s thoughts on the Affair and put to words one of the arguments that had defended Wilkes’s actions. He notes that in carrying the Confederate diplomats - individuals recognized as belligerents under Victoria’s decree – the *Trent* “was in plain violation both of recognized British principles and precedents regulating the obligations of neutrals,” as well as “the Queen’s proclamation.”42 These differing arguments concerning the U.S.’s response to Russell’s demands drew out the crisis, and left the British questioning the American position.

Public debate on war continued to frame talks between American and British emissaries into December. Agents such as Weed held the view that British leadership, while wanting to avoid conflict, were aware “that a war over the Trent issue, gives them the support of the whole Nation.”43 At the same time however, figures such as Russell had their own doubts about the extent of such support in their country, even questioning the strength of the British legal case against the Union, should the issue move into outside arbitration. Prior British actions, going back to the War of 1812, were examined for any applicable precedents concerning doctrines of naval law.44 This search for precedent, a course mirrored across the Atlantic in Union justifications for the legality of *Trent*, set the stage for further discussion of neutral rights and maritime law in the post-Civil War era.

In the end, despite public and governmental pressure toward keeping Mason, Slidell and the other diplomats in Union custody, the Lincoln administration gave way to the British position. Following an ultimatum from Russell in mid-December, Lincoln was

44 Warren, *Fountain of Discontent*, 153-154
convinced that drawing out the issue further proved a greater risk than it was worth. As Jones notes, “War with England over debatable legal principles was too high a price to pay for refusing to release the captives.” The men were allowed to go free and be transported to Europe in late December, as Russell had first demanded, though the U.S. did not extend a formal apology for the actions of Captain Wilkes. Minister Adams would write to his son the following February, describing the Affair as having “proved thus far somewhat in the nature of a sharp thunderstorm which has burst without doing any harm.” Adams considered the situation resolved in such manner that allowed both Great Britain and the United States to save face and move on. The perceived violation of British neutrality had been amended, and while anger persisted, the threat of war had been neutralized

Ultimately the only entity that came out of Trent in a diplomatic loss was the South. The Affair had not escalated into a greater standoff between the two powers as Confederates had hoped. England had not entered the war and remained reluctant to do so on their behalf. Nor did it make any further moves towards their recognition as an independent power, which would have opened the door for other nations, such as France, to do so as well. While its captured diplomats could finally travel to Europe and begin operating in their assigned posts, the Confederacy, in the end, had gained little of what it desired. An image published in 1862, titled ‘The Great Surrender’ captures some of the feelings of both sides concerning the result. It portrays the release of Mason and Slidell as a surrender on the part of Seward despite John Russell’s disregard for the right of search,

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45 Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, 109.
yet it also notes Confederate President Jefferson Davis’s displeasure at being deprived of an open conflict between Britain and the North.\(^{47}\) The Confederacy would look for other means of undermining these diplomatic ties, though the situation would not deteriorate to this point again.

A further development out of *Trent* was the redoubling of Union efforts to ease tensions with the British Empire, contributing to the latter’s continued official impartiality in the conflict. The Lincoln administration, through Secretary Seward, utilized the *Trent* resolution as a stepping stone to foster further cooperation on issues outside the affairs of the war. Prominent among these was the crackdown upon the slave trade in the Atlantic Ocean, a lingering issue where earlier negotiations had made limited progress. The product of these efforts followed not long after the immediate issues surrounding *Trent* had been resolved, in an agreement reached in the spring of 1862. The Lyons-Seward Treaty, aimed at the suppression of the slave trade, allowed both nations the power of search regarding each other’s merchant vessels on suspicion of participating in the practice.\(^{48}\) While not addressing the conflict ongoing in America, Seward’s work in crafting the treaty with Lord Lyons was a step towards mending the divide between their nations. However, three years of war remained, bringing with them new challenges and questions for Anglo-American relations.

Despite progress, while some of the tension caused by the events of the *Trent* Affair had been mended by late 1862, other issues, coincidentally also maritime in nature,


soon emerged that again raised questions on the parameters of British neutrality. While not implemented in full, a key part of an initial proposal for Union strategy, the Anaconda Plan, called for a blockade of Confederate ports, strangling their flow of commerce. Lacking a navy that could rival the North’s, the few ships of war the South had, as well as its trade vessels, were constrained to coastal ventures and their home ports. Their available resources left transit and trade through the blockade limited to small blockade runners and whatever could be smuggled out of the South. Constant economic pressures and the demands of the war effort necessitated a way to break up or circumvent the blockade. Limited resources and time meant that it could not solely rely upon the production of its own shipyards – the Confederacy had to turn elsewhere.

To try and close the gap between their own naval power and that of the Union, to strengthen their attempts to break the blockades in the Atlantic and Gulf, the Southern government looked past the Union ships. While European nations remained neutral, there were methods through which it could acquire the necessary ships to attempt challenges to the blockade or to run it. This task was given to agents abroad, both in the service of the Confederate State Department and the Navy. Minister James Mason aided in the placing of international orders, but it was agent James D. Bulloch who served most successfully in this charge within the United Kingdom. Bulloch would work towards the South’s interests both on his own and in carrying out orders from Naval Secretary Stephen Mallory, securing funds from interested parties for the construction of ships.49 This would tie the origins of a segment of the Navy to the shipyards of England and France.

Prominent among them were those at Liverpool and neighboring Birkenhead, as the area served as a hub of activity for Bulloch and other agents of the Confederate Navy abroad.

However, the entire operation needed an extra level of caution and concealment to hide the purpose intended for ships awaiting completion. The terms of British neutrality stood against their construction, ordered by Bulloch or other intermediaries, as such an act would suggest that Britain was permitting military support to the South. Early cases, such as that of the Oreto (later the Florida), escaped confiscation through the argument that they were not fitted as ships of war – at least not in British waters.\textsuperscript{50} Despite Union protests, such vessels were permitted to leave, usually sailing disguised under a British flag and crew. They would travel elsewhere – often to the Caribbean or the Azores – to be refitted depending on their military function. Some would then run the blockade to join the Confederate fleet directly, while others operated outside the Union line, hunting weaker targets at sea. These ships, operating as raiders, avoided direct military engagement with the U.S. Navy, instead targeting U.S. trade vessels around the world.

In late 1862, the Union received reports of attacks on its shipping off New England, leading to cries of piracy against the Southern perpetrators. The crew in question sailed the CSS Alabama, a sloop of war and later among the most infamous of the Confederate ships to sail out of Liverpool. Her two year cruise raised fresh concern over violations of British neutrality, and the awareness and attitude of the Palmerston government concerning still ongoing construction. Leaving the shipyard of John Laird & Sons in late July, 1862, she was concealed under number 290, later the name Enrica, though her purpose was guessed by the Union. The vessel’s structure clearly signified a

\textsuperscript{50} Symonds, The Civil War at Sea, 83-84.
military purpose, yet it was not fitted with any armaments, meaning its construction appeared to be under compliance with British laws on neutrality in shipbuilding. This loophole in British neutrality became a point of criticism from Americans, later pressuring for legal review by Lord Russell and the British Admiralty in the face of further shipbuilding.

The *Enrica* did not escape England without facing the threat of capture, despite maintaining the appearance of a neutral vessel. Through its own agents, the Union moved the USS *Tuscarora* to intercept the vessel when British officials made no move to intercede.\(^{51}\) Escaping the net to the safety of the Azores, the ship’s officers, including Captain Raphael Semmes, arrived to oversee her fitting and arming for service. Taking place off of Terceira Island, the *Alabama* was commissioned on August 24\(^{th}\), 1862, her crew was comprised of diverse nationalities, including those that had sailed her as the *Enrica*. From there, the ship began a cruise eastward, targeting Union whaling and merchants vessels. Reports of crews and passengers taken prisoner, and ships plundered and burned soon raised Northern anger, yet the raider eluded open combat.

Once news of the *Alabama*’s activities in the Azores and off New England, and her origins were firmly traced to the shipyards of Liverpool, a fresh wave of anti-British sentiment swept the North. As a raider, the vessel preyed not upon Union warships, but on its commerce, stalking and harassing Northern shipping, inflicting financial damage and spreading fears over the safety of trade. Frustration at British inaction, specifically the roles of Russell and the Crown’s legal offices, in preventing her departure developed

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alongside this concern. Mersi notes that, on the question of its legality under the Foreign Enlistment Act, the advice given to the foreign minister by law officials suggested that “if American allegations were correct, and if their charges could be confirmed,” a temporary prevention of departure would be warranted.\(^{52}\) Concerning the Alabama, Britain could not do anything further once the ship left port. Two years later, off Cherbourg, France, the raider would be sunk in a battle with its pursuer, USS Kearsarge, after a career that saw millions of dollars in damages done to Union merchants.

The actions of the Alabama and her crew in the Atlantic and elsewhere are only the most prominent example of British-built vessels, but its construction was not an isolated incident. Confederate orders for other vessels were conveyed through Bulloch and Mason, leading to further controversy between the North and Britain between 1862 and 1863. While the Alabama’s infamy was growing abroad, the Laird yards began work on a pair of new ironclad ships, their order employing the same process as before to mask construction, identified in Confederate correspondence only as 294 and 295 early on.\(^{53}\) These ‘Laird Rams,’ as they came to be called, were ordered by Bulloch and intended to be superior to other Confederate ironclads as well as those of the Union.

The controversy over these new ironclads sparked division on both sides of the Atlantic, raising tensions once more. Within the Lincoln Administration, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox wrote the President condemning perceived inaction on Adams and Seward’s part for not aggressively pushing Britain to end the


construction. In Britain, facing growing frustration from Minister Adams – who had, despite Fox’s thoughts, been working to block the rams – Earl Russell was increasingly facing a legal situation equitable to that of Seward around Trent. With threats of war from Adams on one side, and a lengthy search for an answer to the legality of potential seizure on the other, Great Britain was poised for embarrassment, something Foreman notes both Adams and Seward were aware of in the aftermath of a move by Russell to finally detain the ships in October, 1863. While the ironclads were eventually purchased and incorporated into the Royal Navy, thereby ending the debate over the Laird Rams, the construction of additional vessels, walking a thin line of legality, continued.

Further examples accompany the case of Laird’s ironclad rams, showcasing attempts to evade British neutrality and further action by Britain’s foreign office to crack down on such activity. Operating out of Glasgow, Confederate agent James H. North ordered two 150-pound Armstrong guns for the large, ironclad vessel he was overseeing, though his frustrations in the potential for interference of Minister Adams and Earl Russell show the risk posed to these projects. Writing to Secretary Mallory, the agent suggests transferring the ship to a French flag to delay action against it. This tactic was one method of a larger approach to the issue, in which Confederate agents, as private citizens, placed orders and later transferred ownership of the ships to other entities, including governments as in the case of the rams. In another case – that of the Alexandra


55 Foreman, A World on Fire, 522-523.

built in Liverpool - the vessel was a gift to Bulloch for use in the war and underwent a year of litigation to determine her fate. Agents regularly commented on the continuing case of the *Alexandra* and the potential fallout concerning their own projects should the vessel be held indefinitely.\(^\text{57}\) Though the *Alexandra* was eventually allowed to sail - to later be detained elsewhere under different owners - the resolution to the case did not sway the course of British action against the work of the agents and associated shipyards. For the rest of the war, further confiscations or forced sales to prevent seizure severely limited the ability of the Confederacy to maintain its Navy.

Like the *Trent Affair*, the impact of the *Alabama*’s actions and the controversy over the construction of further vessels by Laird and others together form a key issue within Anglo-American relations during the period of the War. Furthermore, its effects persisted for years after the conflict’s end as a catalyst for debate between representatives of the two nations. These discussions, beginning after the first attacks by the *Alabama*, focused upon the claims of the American government on behalf of merchants hit by the effects of it and other raiders during the war. An 1871 agreement between the U.S. and Britain – the Treaty of Washington – called for an outside body of neutral powers to examine the case for compensation.\(^\text{58}\) Common arguments going into the Grant administration took into account not only the latter’s earlier lack of action in allowing these ships to begin their careers of piracy, but their role in blockade running and other activities argued to have prolonged the war.\(^\text{59}\) Eventually, a settlement - arbitrated by an


\(^{58}\) Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 292-293.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 294-296.
international tribunal in Geneva - was reached in 1872 awarding over $15 million to the United States as recompense for all losses incurred.\textsuperscript{60} Despite frustrations within Parliament, including from the current Prime Minister William Gladstone and Lord Russell, the British government went through with the payment. In this way the last outstanding issues of the diplomatic side of the Civil War were resolved, allowing both nations to move on from those years of tension.

Finally, on the matter of slavery, its role as a central issue behind the war - though not placed at the forefront until 1863 – consistently influenced the outreach of the American belligerents. Despite persistent efforts to make inroads within the British government, Confederate diplomats failed to make any headway that amounted to more than sympathy. Partly because of the war’s military campaigns turning against the South beginning in late 1862, European nations, Britain at the forefront, were increasingly reluctant to become involved in a conflict that appeared headed towards an inevitable conclusion. But the issues surrounding slavery were a weight that Southern appeals could not effectively shake. While perhaps not explicitly pro-slavery, economic interests or other sympathies for the South matched or else, outweighed the convictions of some in Parliament. For others, their stance remained solid in their view of the South’s actions. This divide is most prominent when the course of the war was still undetermined, when the South had a feasible path to victory. However, this does not mean that the incorporation of abolition as pillar of the Union cause resulted in an absolutely positive reaction in the Empire. Within Parliament and the offices of the Prime Minister, differing

\textsuperscript{60} Hugh Dubrulle, \textit{Ambivalent Nation: How Britain Imagined the American Civil War}, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 82.
British sentiments on slavery clashed, leading to questions for both Confederacy and Union in their turn.

For British leadership, slavery was not the issue at the forefront of diplomatic talks with Confederate emissaries such as James Mason. At most, it underlay different topics of discussion, but the issue is more integrated with the public and propagandized responses of Britain to the conflict in America. While public opinion on slavery and how it related to the war shifted over its course, influencing official responses towards the South’s overtures later on, early concerns related to the aforementioned military and economic woes of the Confederacy. A last attempt by the Confederacy to win over support in early 1865, outlined earlier as promising emancipation and cotton for support, failed for this reason. Hubbard notes that in the case of the Kenner mission’s terms, slavery had no bearing on recognition, rather “it was the absence of any threat to the vital interests of the Continental powers” that did so.61 Slavery interests amongst European leadership had not risen to a point that reflected the growing Confederate view that the practice had impeded their attempts at recognition.

Nevertheless, the issue does have a small role to play in the shaping of government sympathies going into the midpoint of the war, into 1863. In the months following Lincoln’s actions towards emancipation, with the issue moving to the forefront of the Union cause in the process, British sentiment remained mixed. On the issue, Dubrulle cites comments made by Earl Russell in a letter to William Gladstone in 1862, that “a “war of emancipation” would mean “a war of greater destruction.”62 In his view,

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the Civil War in America would be pushed into greater violence with less chance for peace between North and South. In September the following year, Russell gave a speech that included discussion of affairs concerning the Confederacy, from the issue of belligerent rights to British shipbuilding.\(^{63}\) The issue of slavery and his own thoughts – both personal and as a diplomat – on the institution’s practice in the South are conveyed. Russell states that while it remains “one of the most horrible crimes that yet disgraces humanity,” it would be no benefit to Britain or to the world to “have no relations with a people who permit slavery to exist among them.”\(^{64}\) Ultimately, through this section of his speech, the foreign minister maintains the necessity of British neutrality in the conflict, expressing an ambivalent view in pointing out faults in the causes of both combatants and how the war has been justified.

Britain’s economic ties to the South places its stance on the issue of slavery in an intriguing light, as this, in part, shapes their views of the institution’s relation to the Civil War. Supplied by its cotton prior to the war, impediments to British manufacturing were perceived by Northerners as a driving force behind visible reluctance to confront the South on slavery. The blockade by the Union was one, while the informal cotton embargo by the South was another. The third was the Morrill Tariff. As covered earlier, the Tariff raised manufacturing imports, hitting profits in textiles and other industries across the Atlantic. Angered British responses would inspire a pair of cartoons, published by Harper’s Weekly that April, satirizing the apparent change. The first, set before its passage, shows the British lion as a protector of the enslaved from the “bloodthirsty


\(^{64}\) Cowardin and Hammersly, “The Daily Dispatch: October 22, 1863.”
persecutions” of slaveholders. The second, set after, has the roles reversed, with the lion now protecting slave holder and berating the slave for slacking in their work. These images raised questioned how quickly Britain would abandon its principles on slavery – those outlined by Russell for example – in the name of economic prosperity. A third Northern print titled “John Bull Makes a Discovery,” released between 1862 and 1863, conveys that this issue has not yet disappeared. Displaying John Bull inspecting imported cotton, the case of the enslaved is still being ignored, their welfare or less import than the benefits of cotton. Imagery such as these, while clearly adding a dash of hyperbole to the reality of Britain’s situation, carry a bit of truth with them concerning the positions of leadership on the issue. An economic downturn, such as what was caused by cotton shortages as, will shape the views of those who guide policy, including tolerance of slavery as an institution.

When the Secession Crisis broke out in 1860, followed by the eruption of Civil War the following spring, the leadership of Great Britain faced challenges in maintaining its neutrality. Shaping the course of 19th century Anglo-American relations, the interactions between the Palmerston government and administrations of Lincoln and Davis on a diplomatic level were shaped by the competing interests of each nation involved. British and American arguments over the course of events such as the Trent Affair and the debates over the Alabama serve as a precursor to post-war review of neutrality and the rights of neutral and belligerent powers at sea. Such discussion includes

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the right of blockade or raises questions of accountability in questions concerning the impact of commerce raiding. At the level of the British government, the issue of slavery was not as influential as it would be within public circles. Reactions there to the role of the practice in the onset of the Civil War, and the changes brought about partway through regarding emancipation, reflect a general ambivalence about the American conflict. The persistence of such feeling creates an impression that, despite the best efforts of Confederate diplomatic outreach, British neutrality on aiding the South remained resolute. Any British participation was more likely to develop through a deterioration of relations between them and the North, a point that Seward, Adams, Lyons and Russell would have been aware of.

Yet despite the fact that Britain remained neutral throughout the war, such an outcome does not undermine the importance of the diplomatic factor of the conflict. Other possible outcomes to controversy, particularly in the case of Trent or the Laird Rams, would have altered the possibility of that secondary Anglo-American war mentioned above. The military and economic threats that European leaders like Palmerston were more concerned over, the latter of which the South was losing ground on, were reflected in the remaining United States. As the conflict dragged on, the solidifying ground upon which the Union cause stood pushed Britain and other European powers further and further away from the idea of what would have been increasingly considered interference in the North. In interpreting the story and issues of Anglo-American diplomatic ties during this period, the significance of the work performed by the State Departments and the Foreign Ministry to the development of the Atlantic World is better understood.
CHAPTER 2

In reviewing the stance of the Palmerston government on the United Kingdom’s role in the events of the American Civil War, an overarching ambivalence to the ‘American affair’ can be seen. While sympathies for either the North or the South were present throughout Parliament, interests in maintaining neutrality, rather than in intervention, remained dominant. However, the use of direct diplomatic dialogue was not the only approach taken by the belligerents and their sympathizers to generate foreign support. Underlying the discourse between officials such as Seward, Adams, and Russell, a secondary conflict was raging to win over the British public. The public’s opinion of events across the Atlantic held the potential to place additional pressures upon leadership to take action or not. As such, competing Union and Confederate influences upon the British population’s attitudes on the war and its combatants developed in the first years of the Civil War. While similar to government figures in being primarily ambivalent towards the conflict, information and themes of the war nevertheless created divisions within the public, shaped by influences foreign and domestic.

British opinion and the battles to sway it through outreach and propaganda were influenced by several key factors. First, initial reactions at the war’s outbreak were influenced by lingering memory of past interactions between England and the United States, including confrontations and territorial disputes going back to the War of 1812. Additionally, British understanding of American culture and identity, going into the era of sectionalism and division, factor into these the pre-Civil War attitudes. Second, Britain’s own interests in the 1850s and 60s further impacted public opinion, namely concerns over events past and present in Continental Europe. The impact of the Crimean
War, the shifting balance between the great powers, and its own economic health all carried weight in discussions of how to respond to the American Civil War. The availability of information, and its presentation in different printed media, further shaped public understanding and knowledge of the war, an obstacle that led into the influence of outside factors.

Both Union and Confederate entities participating in the war of words to garner support had to address or overcome these factors in the British attitudes, an effort that took shape in multiple formats designed to reach broader audiences. Sympathetic writers and propaganda networks utilized Britain’s growing audience of readers, finding publications willing to print stories favorable to their cause. Public organizations, old and new, capitalized on the events in America to draw attention to their significant themes, even connecting them to reform causes in their own nation. This connects to the last point of discussion, concerning the role of sentiments on slavery and emancipation. It has already been noted that attitudes within the British government did not rule out support for the Confederacy based on its continued use of slave labor alone. For the British public, there is a similar question, not concerning who opposed slavery in the South, but rather who remained sympathetic despite the institution.

While today the United States is part of multiple alliances and enjoys a close relationship with the United Kingdom, the relationship between them in the mid-19th century was one of repeated confrontation. Despite being key partners in trade, numerous political and military disputes had arisen between England and its former colony since the era of the Revolution. Avoiding military confrontation following the War of 1812, American views of Britain had gradually soured over the years. With the rise of
American nationalistic feeling developing out of the postwar Era of Good Feelings, subsequent periods of growth saw new disagreement with its former parent. Disputes over trade and the division of lands along the border with the Canadian provinces, particularly concerning the Oregon territory in the 1840s, had incensed settlers and the broader public. In a wartime issue concerning the Trent Affair, writers for Harper’s Weekly described the recurrence of these pre-war disputes. Noting that at “half a dozen times since 1814 occasions of war have arisen between this country and England, and have always been adjusted by diplomacy,” they point out the role of negotiation in easing the conflict, yet despite repeated resolutions bitter sentiments persisted.68 The early development of the principles comprising Manifest Destiny – that vision of an ordained American nation from sea to sea – combined with the interests of the Monroe Doctrine, further tested American diplomacy with foreign powers.

While diplomacy found solutions to the immediate issues dividing the nations, it could not address the grievances of those that felt the nation was insulted or impeded, particularly among believers in the ideals of Manifest Destiny. This, combined with the original factors contributing to the nation’s independence from Britain, only served to incense the public. The 19th century French diplomat, Alexis de Tocqueville, notes this resentment in his Democracy in America, as “nothing can be more virulent than the hatred which exists between the Americans of the United States and the English.”69 American attitudes during the major controversies with the British Empire throughout the

war – the Trent Affair, the Alabama and Laird Rams, and Southern belligerent recognition – reflect what Tocqueville describes, that lingering animosity affecting discourse both formal and informal between the two powers.

For the British, their view of the Anglo-American relationship displays similar, if mirroring characteristics. Though anger over its move for independence had dissipated, much like for the American public, memories of later interaction with the United States remained more persistent. Prominent cases of this are the disagreements over impressment and trade that had catalyzed the War of 1812 as well as the aforementioned land disputes in the decades since. The 1837 outbreak of small, but armed, rebellions in Canada was even supported by Americans sympathetic to the cause, foreshadowing Northern fears during their own conflict 25 years later.\(^70\) American interest in, as well as actual attempts at, seizing Canada alarmed Britain, and the standoff over the Oregon territory exacerbated concerns over American expansionism on the North American continent. It did not help that popular American publications raised such ideas in their wartime coverage, including Harper’s Weekly’s suggestion that the North “might, if it were deemed worthwhile, overrun Canada and add that wild and worthless region to our dominion.”\(^71\) The United States was the unruly upstart on the world stage, and giving ground to it in controversy was seen as blow to national pride. In their journeys throughout the country, travelers from Britain and elsewhere, such as de Tocqueville, judged the nation’s progress, based upon what they witnessed – from public decorum to democratic principles. Dubrulle suggests that such practices were intended to determine

\(^70\) Foreman, A World on Fire, 21.
\(^71\) [N.A.], “The Trent Question,” Harper's Weekly.
“whether or not America had “succeeded’” in the experiment its founders had begun."72

For Americans, the identification of their faults by the British, whose society had its own issues – social and political inequality for example – that needed reform, bred further resentment. Though diplomacy repeatedly eased tension between the two nations following the War of 1812, it could not reshape either nations’ view of the other.

Naturally, there were pre-war cases that serve as exceptions to these tendencies. The 1860 tour of the North by Prince Edward, the Prince of Wales, which was received with great public acclaim, is one such case. Fascination with the visiting royal surpassed traditional American distaste for monarchs, leading to parades along crowded streets throughout the country.73 The overall enthusiasm and welcome from both the government and the public left the Prince and his entourage encouraged, hopeful for the future of the Anglo-American relationship. Warren cites the words of Lord Lyons in describing such feeling, writing “Politicians, he hoped, must now realize that they could no longer seek popularity by attacking the mother country, and perhaps Englishmen would now abandon “unfounded prejudices concerning the feelings, manners and habits of Americans.””74

Though tensions could certainly flare, cooler heads ultimately prevailed in disputes between the U.S. and Britain, with resolutions regularly reached through means of diplomacy rather than war.

But while examples of more amiable interaction occurred, the back and forth rivalry between the U.S. and U.K. remained a significant theme of their relationship. By the outbreak of the Civil War, the most prominent medium for it was in newsprint and

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72 Dubrulle, Ambivalent Nation, 21.
74 Warren, Fountain of Discontent, 49.
accompanying illustration. Though it cannot be representative of the entire British population, such work reflected themes found within the British perspective, from criticism of American expansionism to satirical takes on its political failings. As such feelings developed throughout the first half of the 19th century, American depictions coalesced into a political character, a personification equivalent to that of John Bull, the contemporary depiction of England. This Yankee caricature, a precursor for the later Uncle Sam in its design, was termed by newspapers and magazines such as the London Charivari, otherwise known as Punch, as Brother Jonathan. The character of Jonathan served as means to exaggerate on the flaws outsiders saw in American culture and government.

Such depictions continued into the period of the Civil War, in which Jonathan or similar characters, meant to reflect the South, were used to mock their division as a childlike squabble, something beneath the cares of the British. An example from the political cartoons of Punch, an 1863 illustration by Sir John Tenniel titled ‘John Bull’s Neutrality,’ conveys this theme (Figure 1). The artist captures public and press frustrations with the war’s combatants, both of which inconvenienced Britain with their continued fighting. For many, the North and the South were equally at blame for the disruption caused by the conflict. This aids in explaining why interests in intervention in the Civil War, to force mediation on neither side’s direct behalf, developed early on.

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Given these examples of British views of the pre-war relationship with the United States, it is understandable that apathy or disinterest in intervening emerged when American sectionalism rose to its highest in the 1850s. Like leadership in the Palmerston government, including the Prime Minister himself, there were those in the public that thought the fracturing of the Union was something deserved, if not an inevitability. British doubts over the potential of the American experiment manifested throughout the era. An 1861 letter of support to President Lincoln, written by an English rector, reveals these misgivings concerning democratic principles. Henry Bart, congratulating Lincoln and lamenting the impact of the war, goes even further in his writing: “Surely, sir, you must have discovered that democratic institutions are not equal to meet such a crisis as
the present. Nothing short of a monarchy will suffice.” 76 Such a proposal speaks to yet another British view of events surrounding the war, specifically concerning the powers of the presidency. Understanding of the executive power Lincoln wielded during the war, particularly in regards to his methods in dealing with the remaining border states of the Union, is important. While certainly not rising to the level of a monarch, his actions would play into Southern accusations that he wielded the power of his office as a tyrant.

Interpretations of who believed what, and which group supported which side, that lean into generalizations do not fully account for the different factors and interests at play not only within the government, but society as well. For some citizens, the conflict in America was a test of democracy that carried the potential to reshape the balance of the Atlantic world, worthy of attention. Others simply saw the conflict as far out of the range Britain’s immediate interests, with more pressing matters closer to home, particularly concerning the balance of power among the European nations. What was it to the British if the Americans fought among themselves, particularly as it navigated European alliances and the buildup towards imperialistic rivalry? Why become involved in the domestic issues of a nation separated by thousands of miles of ocean, when the likes of France, Russia, and Prussia competed for power and influence?

Despite sharing interests among the other powers concerning the economic effects of the Civil War, at several points in the first years of war, the prospect of coordinated action faltered. On the consideration of a joint mediation, political concerns, alongside varying levels of public support, impeded cooperation. 77 Russia was among the

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77 Foreman, A World on Fire, 283.
contemporaries on the continent that the British government and public watched in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Its move during the Civil War to shelter its warships in New York City’s harbor, without any intention of actual military support to the North, overshadowed concurrent, but genuine, British naval efforts to reinforce peace. City residents flocked to the Russian vessels, while largely ignoring the presence of British Admiral Milne. Lingering distrust regularly impeded strong cooperation between the fractious powers of Europe on addressing events between North and South.

These factors carried with them the potential for more immediate consequences to Britain’s own power and the security of its Empire abroad. Therefore, the focus of its foreign engagement was upon monitoring the stability of Europe. A foreign conflict was anathema to these interests, both as a distraction and an unnecessary expenditure of resources. Furthermore, for much of the British populace, the consequences of war had left a powerful memory in the decade prior to the Civil War. The Crimean War from 1853 to 1856, between the Russian Empire and an Ottoman Empire backed by alliance of European nations, including Britain and France, left a scar on the nation and its attitudes towards war. Casualties and illness wore down British troops, and the prolonged conflict made the war increasingly unpopular as it drew on. Myers writes of how these issues factored into a brief pre-Civil War incident between Britain and the U.S from 1855-56. In a scheme to recruit Americans for the war effort, addressing rising losses, then minister to the U.S., John Crampton, established a network that violated American law under the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1818. Under suspicion by the administration of Franklin Pierce of violating American neutrality, Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon recalled Crampton.

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once his work was uncovered. At that time, the prolonged nature of the war in Europe and its growing unpopularity in Britain necessitated the prevention of any escalation with the United States.

It should also be noted that the U.S., while officially neutral, had nevertheless made a small contribution to the Russian war effort that briefly spurred British resentment. U.S.-Russian relations fluctuated regularly during the 18th and 19th century, in the era of Crimea and the Civil war being more favorable, though their interaction remained limited. With Americans volunteering their aid and U.S. ships transporting provisions of supplies and weapons to Russia, such support drew Britain’s ire until later American support for it during the “Indian Mutiny of 1857-58.” The fluctuating contention of the 1850s serves as the precursor for Anglo-American relations during the Civil War, shaped by domestic and international developments following Crimea.

The effects of the Crimean War would be carried into later conflicts of the century, including the American Civil War five years later, having set new precedents on warfare and attitudes concerning it. The conflict served as a testing ground for developing weaponry and equipment, factors contributing to its casualty rate. But beyond advances in soldiers’ armaments, technologies such as the railroad and telegraph were increasingly being utilized to facilitate transport and communication. This incorporation in turn facilitated greater coverage of the Crimean conflict by the nation’s war correspondents, which in turn expedited the growth of the British press. For the first time, the public back

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80 Foreman, A World on Fire, 38.
81 Dubrulle, Ambivalent Nation, 54.
home was better able to follow events in distant parts of Europe, with reporters such as William Howard Russell of *The Times* going on to cover the American conflict in 1861. Joel Weiner ties public interest in the Crimean War to the “rise of a penny press,” facilitating cheaper access to papers, leading into an “insatiable desire for war news.” Such interests would promptly factor into consumption of news relating to the deteriorating situation in the States from 1860 onward.

Despite the importance of concerns closer to home, news of the Civil War in America, when it could published, still had an audience in the British public. Though far away, the performance of the Union and Confederacy on the battlefield drew the public eye, playing its own role in the growth of the early modern British press. Dubrulle suggests that, in covering the war, the British press helped the issue gain greater significance to the British population, which in turn elevated the publications involved. However, there are two factors to note in the transmission of information across the Atlantic that shaped public understanding. First was the ever-present delay in communication back and forth, which affected correspondents’ dispatches just as it did diplomacy. As no trans-Atlantic telegraph cable had yet been established, the first line being laid down in 1866, British readers only learned of events in America weeks after they happened, carried by ship. In the time it took to transmit news, British and American readers abroad were left in suspense over military, political and diplomatic developments. This delay further factors into the second influence upon public

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83 Dubrulle, *Ambivalent Nation*, 55.
interpretation of the American Civil War, being found in the interests of the publications that covered it. This was not a factor limited to the instruments of Union and Confederate propaganda that emerged from 1861 onward. To compensate for slow or limited news, non-affiliated British papers published editorials and opinion pieces remarking on the conflict, giving glimpses of different perspectives and opinion. Even leading publications, such as *The London Times*, were shaped by the sentiments of their editors and reading audience.

In examining the prominent publications that covered the war, the role of *The Times* presents an intriguing case study of press influence and bias. One of the foremost papers in England, the *Times* had been among those that had benefitted from the growth of the nation’s news consumption in the mid-century, gaining in influence in politics and society. Its foremost war reporter, William Howard Russell, with experience from the Crimean conflict, placed himself so as to cover both events on the battlefield and in the U.S. and Confederate capitals. His coverage of the disastrous Union performance in, and subsequent retreat from, the opening shots at First Bull Run, was printed on both sides of the Atlantic. Earning “him the contempt of Northerners as “Bull-Run Russell,” the account fed early sympathies for a South that appeared able to defeat its enemy.85 From Bull Run onward, the fluidity of the *Times*’s approach to coverage made it a frequent target of criticism from Northerners. Their criticism was likely deserved, as Blackett notes the *Times*’s view that Union sympathies were scarce among those of good standing, a self-reference to the editors and prominent supporters.86 Its reporting clearly conveyed

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biases against the North, later highlighted by author Sir Leslie Stephen in a critique of the editors’ positions. Stephen argued that the Times too often resorted to presenting its own prophetic guesses on the course of the war, particularly in its early years. Predicting Union losses that were avoided, the Border States seceding when in fact they remained throughout the war, and from the beginning, espousing ideas on the war’s inevitable victor, the publication had a poor track record of accuracy in such statements.\(^{87}\) The Times’s foreboding speculations for the North, circulating to its readers both in the general public and in the British government, shaped understanding of and reaction to the events unfolding across the Atlantic.

But beyond certain biases and its penchant for prediction, the Times’s style of reporting presented another flaw, particularly in its descriptions of slavery. In a study of the paper’s role, Fulton notes that the publication more often than not took a conservative stance on popular issues ranging from labor reforms to political actions, supporting the status quos of British society.\(^{88}\) While the Times was not explicitly pro-slavery in its commentary on the issue, and its significance in American society, it also did not take a direct stance one way or the other. Fulton says of the Times, that “the paper preferred questions that could be reduced to black and white terms,” and the debate over slavery had turned the question into a significant grey area for international onlookers.\(^{89}\) Altogether, it is understandable why the Confederacy saw coverage of the North and

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\(^{89}\) Fulton, “Now Only the Times is on our Side,” 50.
slavery in papers like the *Times* as beneficial, even if it was not always in direct alignment with their own interests.

Despite the well-read status, *The Times*’s approach to coverage does not account for other native British publications. Among the non-affiliated press, there are clear examples of that sense of ambivalence and overall frustration with the effects of the ongoing war. *The Illustrated London News*, for example, largely operated from a neutral standpoint, split in their condemnation of both North and South. In interpreting their stance on opinion and their own approach, Campbell cites the policy its editors laid out:

“We have no sympathy with those who are seeking to crush a nation that desires to be isolated; we have no sympathy with a nation that upholds the atrocious system of slavery. But we admire the valour on both sides, and we lament the cruel and useless sacrifice of life. That is the English standpoint, and we are neither to be menaced, cajoled nor taunted into abandoning it.”

The performance of the soldiers, their gallantry on both sides of the conflict, providing its readership with intriguing accounts of the Union and Confederacy alike. These stories would in turn, be supplemented by the paper’s illustrations, presenting military scenes as well as images of domestic life in the North and South. Looking again at the example of slavery, such illustrations provide insight into the views of the institution in a society at war. An 1863 image, titled ‘Domestic Life in South Carolina,’ depicts white and black families living together in a Southern scene of racial harmony (Figure 2). The amiable themes of this first image clash with another from 1863, titled ‘The War in America’ (Figure 3). This second image shows a line of black laborers working on the fortifications

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of Savannah, Georgia, likely as slave labor given the location. With the inclusion of these images, the Illustrated News presents differing instances of the institution, avoiding leaning too far into the Southern view of slavery as a ‘positive good.’ Such an approach, not providing either side the appearance of an explicit preference, gives credence to the paper’s asserted policy of neutrality.

Figure 2. Domestic Life in South Carolina – From a Sketch by Our Special Artist. From the Illustrated London News; May 23, 1863.

Figure 3. The War in America: Negroes at Work on the Fortifications at Savannah – From a Sketch by Our Special Artist. From The Illustrated London News, April 18, 1863.

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However, there are still cases of more visible sympathies, to one side or the other, among native British publications of the period. Of particular note is the *Morning Star*, a daily publication based in London. The *Star* was one of the few, if only, prominent British publications to outright support the Union in its war effort. Operated by Samuel Lucas, its pages espoused arguments that were chiefly anti-slavery and anti-Confederacy, though it was not a direct line of Northern propaganda. In analysis of the Star’s role in reporting the war and its politics, Borchard and Bulla make note of the British press’s response to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. They assert that, in comparison with its peers and rivals, such as the *Times*, which expressed doubts over its effects, the *Morning Star* adopted a position that welcomed and celebrated the decision.  

Lucas’s ardent anti-slavery interests are most certainly the defining factor behind his support of Lincoln and the Union cause, even prior to official action on emancipation. Concerning his view of the president, Mahin argues that the *Star* was again one of only several papers that credited Lincoln for his work in foreign policy. In particular, it recognized his “efforts throughout the war to maintain peaceful relations with Britain,” a role in which today Lincoln is usually overshadowed. The *Star* thus proved to be a reliable ally to the Northern cause among the British press, offering support where most other publications were either neutral or opposed Unionist sentiment.

The deteriorating situation between the North and South, and the themes of the ensuing war, covered issues ranging from secession to slavery. It gave journalists and illustrators extensive material to draw upon in continued critiques of American society.

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94 Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 256.
and government, both serious and satirical. Political cartoons were, and still are, effective ways of presenting information, Christopher Kent noting that they were “vaguer, more emotive and participatory,” their nature as imagery making them more “accessible to all.” Interpreting issues through clever captions and imagery was easier to digest for a larger amount of people, even with the growth of literacy. Looking back at the character of Brother Jonathan and similar depictions of American politics, the Civil War brought about an updated interpretation. Imagery with Jonathan, now alongside a twin representing the South, captures the rivalry as frustrated Brits saw it, more often capturing American stereotypes of discourtesy, uncouthness and general stubbornness. The wartime transformation of the character placed it as the more obstinate of the two, evidenced by a July, 1861 cartoon from *Punch* titled ‘Naughty Jonathan (Figure 4). It depicts the titular character in the midst of a tantrum concerning prospects of foreign intervention in his fight, thrown in front of the motherly figure of Britain. The image reflects early views that the U.S. was overplaying its hand, and that the foreign policy of Lincoln and Seward was driven by Northern anger at the South and Britain.

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Moving to the impact of economic change in the Atlantic World, which the markets and factories of England dominated, disruptions in the wake of secession and the American Civil War affected large portions of the nation’s industry. Both the North and South were prominent cornerstones of trade between the Old World and the New, both as exporters and importers. With the beginning of war, the previous system of the antebellum period deteriorated. Jones writes that “the North American economy was a vital cog in the ocean trade, and the longer the fighting continued, the more other nations suffered from the commercial disruption of what had become an integrated Atlantic network.” Britain’s concerns, following a Southern embargo and the Union blockade, lay in their access to a sufficient supply of cotton for textile manufacturing, as well as the supply of foodstuffs from the North. While temporarily supplementing cotton stockpiles

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through colonial production in the east, this was not enough to prevent shortages throughout the country.

In Lancashire, the mills of Manchester faced economic depression, with factory closures and growing unemployment resulting from the cotton famines. Instances of economic downturns throughout the war generated unrest at the war’s continuance, reflected in the words of Henry Adams, the son of the U.S. envoy, to his brother in an 1862 letter. Adams, who served as a secretary for his father, writes of growing interest in mediation among the nations affected by cotton shortages, noting that “the suffering among the people in Lancashire and in France is already very great and is increasing enormously every day.”

Public pressures, straining pre-existing relief programs, generated further anger in the populace. Blackett notes that responses to poor relief among unemployed workers ranged from organized meetings and “vigorous but peaceful protest,” to several instances of more violent protest, occasionally set among pro-Union or pro-Confederate gatherings. However, as reflected in the critique from Punch, the overall feeling could also be directed at both combatants for contributing to the lingering economic hardship. What did arise from the coordination of mill workers around the country as a result of the famines was the growth of their role in political activism. This would subsequently lead into the calls for political and social reform in Britain that rose once more in the aftermath of the American Civil War.

The United States faced a series of challenges in its efforts to maintain the goodwill of the British public throughout the war, presented by its opponent, by Britain,

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100 Blackett, Divided Hearts, 204-205.
and by its own early efforts. In presenting the Union’s justifications for war amid the
Civil War’s beginnings, both the Lincoln Administration and sympathizers abroad
actively avoided representing the U.S.’s focus as being upon the ending of slavery.
Though the issue had intensely divided the nation throughout the decades preceding the
conflict, it was not a central aim of Union efforts until 1863. To identify the struggle with
the South as one of emancipation presented problems close to home, due to the lingering
unpopularity of such a measure. However, that does not mean that Union operations
discounted slavery as a factor entirely. Jones argues that the administration saw slavery as
“the root cause of the Union-Confederate struggle,” believing “the British astute enough
to recognize the obvious.”

This, however, meant that the most visible argument put
forward was Lincoln’s one of reunification – that the South had illegally seceded from
the Union and that it had every right to go to war to gain it back. However, in making
such an argument, the North left itself exposed to criticism from Britain and the South.
Had the United States not formed as a result of a separation from its parent nation, as the
British were well aware? What was different in the South’s case that justified the North’s
actions that, to some, were hypocritical and reflected the Confederacy’s claims of
overbearing tyranny?

Printed works, as with most efforts in advertising a cause to the public, were a
prominent method of the North and its sympathizers to attempt to sway the British public.
Influencers such as Thurlow Weed and others used their connections to different
publications, established through prior business, to submit letters to be published, or
conveyed stories for their editors to include. In a late 1863 letter to President Lincoln

101 Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, 29.
from London, New Jersey politician James Scovel makes mention of his interactions with the British public, among them the editor of the *Morning Star*, Samuel Lucas. As earlier discussed, the paper was one of the few British publications to openly support the North. Scovel notes the work of Lucas through the paper, including an anticipated article on Lincoln’s role in turning the war around over the course of 1863. But American efforts did not rest upon the work of the British press alone. Though the Lincoln Administration did not organize official ventures into propaganda themselves, Americans abroad worked independently to support the Union cause.

An American paper active in supporting the North was the *London American*, founded by John Adams Knight in 1860. Not initially meant for propaganda, intended instead as a means for Americans abroad to stay informed, the paper changed in response to the war. Following news of the attack on Fort Sumter, Knight shifted his work from a neutral stance to that of a Unionist. Soon, his publication found itself part of the competition with Southern rivals in the press, including Hotze’s *Index*. Throughout his efforts, Knight appealed to the Union government for greater action in order for a coordinated response to Confederate activity. This included asking for financial support, as many of its British subscribers had canceled with the paper’s sharp turn in tone. However, the Lincoln administration expressed no interests in pursuing such a venture. While Lincoln became a subscriber, Knight did not receive government funding to support further operations. Instead, he had to draw solely upon his subscriber base in Britain, which again, was for the most part Americans abroad, with the contributions of

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102 James Scovel, “Letter from James M. Scovel to Abraham Lincoln, Friday, December 18, 1863,” Online at https://www.loc.gov/item/mal2876000/
103 Sebrell, *Persuading John Bull*, 23
104 Ibid., 109.
likeminded writers, public speakers and interest groups.\textsuperscript{105} However, the \textit{London American} encountered increasing difficulties in continuing operations, finally shutting down in March, 1863.\textsuperscript{106} For the rest of the war, those active in Unionist outreach utilized additional methods to convince the public of the cause.

Accompanying the work of publications like Knight’s \textit{The London American}, operatives and organizers drew on oration as a method of public outreach. To utilize this effectively, agents and sympathetic circles arranged events featuring public speakers whose presentation of arguments, their own or otherwise, could better resonate with an audience. The North’s official diplomats were not particularly involved in such action, preferring instead written communication in their professional duties. Mahin notes that Minister Adams in particular “was a poor public speaker,” unwilling to give public addresses of such a nature.\textsuperscript{107} However, some of the orators that participated in this activity were either well-known in British circles, or were Americans that became so over time. For example, James Scovel also makes note of his work in public speaking activities in late 1863. Speaking throughout the country, he specifically mentions in his letter to Lincoln the good reception that his use of the president’s name evoked from the audience.\textsuperscript{108} As Lincoln’s popularity with the British public grew in the latter half of the war, it is understandable that his presence would factor into the arguments made on his and the Union’s behalf.

\textsuperscript{105} Sebrell, \textit{Persuading John Bull}, 110-111.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{107} Mahin, \textit{One War at a Time}, 39.
Another figure in public speaking, an American businessmen residing in England during the war named George Francis Train, was also an active Unionist orator, giving several public speeches throughout England in 1862. Later circulated through the *London American*, they presented an intriguing defense of the Union cause, as well as criticism of British stances concerning said cause. Contrary to other appeals, Train’s speech addressed the issue of slavery in American society. However, his argument presents a racially-biased view of the institution as a civilizing benefit to the enslaved before emancipation, effectively a ‘positive good.’ He does call out British consumption of slave-made products, from cotton and food to clothing, as a response to critics of the institution, though his primary target remains a treasonous Confederacy. In a separate speech on the matter of the impact of southern independence, Train provides his audience both critiques of society in the South and a defense of the Union position in the war, using humor and American and British historical precedents to make his points. He rebukes concerns that America wanted the Canadian territories, believing them wholly different from one another, going on to argue in support of clemency for secessionists, the intention being that living free in a restored U.S. was its own punishment. Eccentric and hostile in the delivery of his speeches, as well as other contributions to the *London American*, Train’s efforts did not endear him to those in public circles outside of groups already sympathetic to the Union.

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110 George Francis Train, *Train’s Speeches on Slavery, Emancipation and Pardoning of Traitors*, (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers, 1862), 29-30, Online at [https://www.loc.gov/item/15003557/](https://www.loc.gov/item/15003557/).
111 Train, *Train’s Speeches*, 31-32.
“You will be diligent and earnest in your efforts to impress upon the public mind abroad the ability of the Confederate States to maintain their independence.”¹¹² In a dispatch from Confederate Secretary of State, R.M.T. Hunter, instructions for how to proceed with his mission were provided to Henry Hotze. Hotze was a Swiss-American agent of the C.S.A. government, travelling to London with the commission of swaying the British public to the Southern side. To achieve the goals laid out by Hunter, Hotze developed a network of connections throughout British media, circles of influence, and literary professionals. He developed his own weekly publication, The Index, to provide detailed accounts of events in the South, utilizing reports smuggled through the blockade along with his own additions and interpretations of popular issues, including race and slavery.

In examining the Confederate appeal, several key themes emerge throughout various efforts, designed to be complementary of the work performed by the official diplomatic envoys. Calls for southern recognition and the persistent issue of the cotton trade were two prominent elements in the resulting arguments. The appeal for Southern recognition, when diplomatic approaches saw no desired resolutions, expanded to include the public sphere. Popular pamphlets, read by the public and leading politicians alike, espoused the benefits of greater cooperation with an independent Confederacy, such as Liverpool businessman James Spence’s The American Union. Spence, an agent of the South, laid out a defense of the secessionists, arguing that a defense of slavery had not been the deciding factor, and of the economic benefit of renewed trade.¹¹³ The matter of

¹¹³ Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, 202.
economic relief for Britain’s woes concerning the cotton supply and other markets was not lost on the Confederacy. However, though it had the leverage of having the desired materials in high demand, the South did not have the ability to profit off of it. Despite the promise of stronger economic benefit to Britain, the Union blockade remained a key impediment to British interests. Moving to break the blockade risked escalating to war, thus resulting into the limited amounts of smuggled cotton being available for Britain’s consumption.

Like the Union’s methods, the Confederacy and its sympathizers did not limit themselves to appeals in printed form. Beyond the papers, broadsheets and pamphlets that circulated, interest groups organized various events, from public rallies to speeches by orators – primarily sympathetic intellectuals and persons of influence within the circles of Hotze and others. Men such as James Spence addressed crowds of the British working-class, or their own peers, in an effort to persuade them to support the Southern cause. In an 1862 speech by Spence, also concerning the matter of Southern recognition, the businessman makes reference to the relations of the North and South with Britain. In the South’s defense, he argues “Here is a continent of which one half is full of ineradicable hostility, sometimes latent but ever there; the other half anxious to be friendly.”

Together, Hotze and Spence also took further action on the matter of the cotton supply, with the latter reaching out to leaders in mill labor around Britain. In one case, Spence coordinated “mass demonstrations” by groups of the working-class, rallied by “veteran strike leaders, William Aitken and Mortimer Grimshaw,” who were angered by the

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perceived economic exploitation of cotton workers by the North. In using these methods, Confederate operatives sought to build upon the growing frustration of Britain concerning the conflict, at the time having no end in sight.

The actual impact of the Confederacy’s work to sway public opinion in Britain was less than what had been desired by those who had commissioned Hotze and others. In Hotze’s case, his paper, The Index, only ever had a small circulation of sympathetic readers. Confederate Senator Clement Clay was one of those in the South dissatisfied that the Confederate government had spent limited resources on ventures of little return.

Writing, “I apprehend The Index has but few readers besides its patrons and our open and active friends,” Clay argues that the paper’s editors failed to “reach the minds of the great body of the English public.” Among the other reasons for its failure are a lack of cooperation between it and other prominent agents of the Confederacy, Edwin de Leon in particular. De Leon, describing the Hotze-Index mission, argues that its inherent biases and interests were more readily apparent to the British public, believing “that the Confederate label placed openly upon it would mar its utility and confine its circulation.” Both Clay and de Leon’s critiques were accurate, as the paper only reached around 2,250 subscribers in its lifetime. Like the Union’s louder parts of its propaganda effort, Confederate success was limited to those already aligned, failing to attract more of the general population to its side.

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118 Sebrell, Persuading John Bull, 130.
Events during the latter half of the war made it increasingly difficult for Confederate propaganda to present arguments in their favor. The major contributing problem, the increasing number of Union victories appearing in the British press, overshadowed the stories of Southern military capability. Lincoln’s actions on emancipation in the same period breathed new life into the underlying issue for all Southern agents and sympathizers. Could the South present itself as a just society and maintain its institution of slavery? The persistent problems surrounding that institution became an even greater obstacle to their efforts to convince the public, more so than it was for their official envoys in negotiation. Despite continuous efforts to downplay or ignore the issue until late in the war, slavery grew to be an irremovable weight upon the Confederate appeal in Europe.

By the Civil War, British abolitionist sentiment had waned from its earlier prominence. While still an issue that united most of the nation against it, ardent opposition to slavery was at a level similar to its presence in the United States. Interest in the topic had in no means dissipated, evidenced in the widespread popularity of published slave experiences. Among the most widely consumed works was Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a fictional account with a description of affairs in the South that nevertheless captured British attention.¹¹⁹ That Southerners raised fury over Stowe’s descriptions of slavery in America furthered British curiosity over the realities of the institution. Moreover, interest in the cause of abolition remained, with invested societies focused upon public awareness and international reform following Britain’s passage of abolition in the 1830s. English travelers in the U.S. before and during the Civil War

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provided further accounts of slavery, shedding light on the extent of these lingering stances. As Arthur Fremantle, a British officer who toured the South in 1863, said of experiences with the institution and the war, at first his “sympathies were rather in favor of the North, on account of the dislike which an Englishman feels at the idea of slavery.” However, his writing goes on to cover a shift in attitude, juxtaposing the warm reception of Southern society with accounts of the racial tensions and violence in the North. Fremantle bore witness to the New York City Draft Riots in July, which quickly escalated into indiscriminate attacks on black individuals and communities throughout the city. Such events, coupled with the North’s overall lack of action to address the issue, understandably suggested to the British public that there was not enough support in the North to pursue the issue.

However, even among lingering elements of organized anti-slavery action there was doubt and hesitation on the matter of a war over slavery. Division among religious denominations provide examples of this, particularly in the case of historically abolitionist groups like the Quakers. On both sides of the Atlantic, Quakers had served prominent roles in early anti-slavery causes going back to the 18th century. Yet another tenant of the faith was pacifism, and the idea of a war over slavery presented a clash of principle between Quaker groups in Britain and America. In an 1863 message to North American Quakers, the London Society of Friends appealed to their duty to following the Gospel, hopeful that they would “plead effectually for peace with those on whom the

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121 Fremantle, *Three Months*, 151-152.
awful responsibility of continuing the war more immediately devolves.” Arguing that American Quakers, believed to be caught up in the emotions of the war, should be espousing the cause of peace, English Quakers sought their aid in ending the conflict and cultivating relations between their nations. In a response to the resolution of the London Society later in the year, William Wood and the New York Society argued against the stance taken by their British counterparts. Wood asserts that the British government, “instead of cultivating relations of peace and friendship, tends to enmity and future strife,” arguing that the blame for continued war lies “with our misguided fellow citizens in the Southern states, and those who aid and encourage them in this and other lands.” Peace could not prevail this way, so long as sympathies for the Southern cause, or other interests in undermining the U.S., were present among those who called for a resolution. Moreover, for American Quakers, reaching such an end to the war would weaken their nation, as well as risk the continued perpetuation of slavery on the American continent.

This reluctance on the part of anti-slavery groups impacted success of early Union appeals, but was even further compounded by faults in the North’s initial messaging concerning what its purpose going to war was. As has been noted, the Union’s arguments in its public outreach was hampered by several factors concerning its reasons for war, an issue capitalized upon by rival Confederate appeals - to their initial benefit. Justification was based upon the aim of reunification after unlawful secession, for “many northerners strongly opposed the abolitionists and staunchly rejected a war against slavery.” The

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124 Jones, Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom, 38.
maintenance of U.S. control over the slave-holding states along the dividing line made
avoiding such a conflict imperative. Any move towards addressing slavery further,
particularly in the conflict first two years with no clear upper hand, played into Southern
arguments against an aggressive North. Thurlow Weed, monitoring foreign opinion,
writes of early concerns regarding issues surrounding an abolition-based appeal. He notes
the spread of the idea in the European public that “the Election of an “Abolition
President” was to be followed by violent emancipation,” the very fears of pacifist groups
like the London Society of Friends.  
125 However, as time would show, such concerns proved to be unnecessary.

Yet, despite the delay in the Union on addressing the matter of slavery, the
Confederacy had its own problems in how to present its justification for war. Responding
to questions on slavery and ideas of emancipation in 1863, Hotze used The Index to
promote popular arguments defending the institution. Such a change, this “emancipation
scheme of the North,” stood against “the interests of mankind and civilization.”
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American society in the South had benefitted from slavery’s presence, and not just
economically. The argument of slavery as a positive good stipulated that it benefitted
both the slaver and the enslaved, and without it, social order and stability would diminish.
Naturally, such an argument was meant to suppress the significance of the South’s
continued reliance on slavery as a source of labor well into the 19th century. That the
institution would likely continue to survive for the foreseeable future if the independent

125 Thurlow Weed, Thurlow Weed’s Letters from Europe, 1861-1862: For Private Circulation,
126 Henry Hotze, “A Word for the Negro, The Index, 12 February 1863,” In Henry Hotze,
Confederate Propagandist: Selected Writings on Revolution, Recognition, and Race, ed. Lonnie Burnett
(Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), 192.
South endured, and by extension Britain’s use of the produced cotton to fuel manufacturing was not lost upon the public. In a March, 1862, broadside printed by the London Daily News, the argument rests upon the belief that “The new government is not only ostentatiously founded on slavery, but it seeks to become established for the avowed purpose of perpetuating and extending this abomination.” Shared sentiments among the British concerning slavery, while not the deciding factor preventing support for the Confederates at the war’s beginning, had risen to a greater prominence in its latter half.

The decision by President Lincoln in 1862 to pursue complete emancipation made waves in the diplomatic atmosphere of the Civil War. For the British public, the move garnered wide-ranging reactions, though many expressed ardent support for the President’s decision, if not the Union itself as well. Though some carried doubts over the ability of the U.S. to follow through with such actions, sentiment shared by publications like the Times and supported by Hotze and other Confederates, such feeling was overshadowed by growing public enthusiasm. Certain groups publicly rallied behind the shift in the North’s war aims, such as the London-based Emancipation Society, which “eulogised the American government as the emancipator of the negro and the champion of equal justice without distinction of race.” The new focus on the final destruction of slavery within the United States with a Northern victory served as an inspiration for others, helping to catalyze public interest in pursuing social and political change in Britain. Jones asserts that, for those involved in early labor movements, supporting the

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North aligned with their goals at for improving the lot of the working class at home.\textsuperscript{129} Outside intervention in the American conflict, likely serving to undermine or prevent a Union victory, would only hinder British reform efforts.

A prominent example of such sentiment appears among the mill workers of Manchester, for whom the President’s actions instilled new resolve in regards to reform causes. Though such gatherings risked a response from mill owners and anti-Unionists, many felt that the cause of the Union on ideals of free labor increasingly aligned with interests in their own status as part of the British working class. Their gathering on New Year’s Eve, 1862 included arguments on the nature of Southern sympathies in Britain, supporters that worked “to disguise the fact that the South rebelled to conserve, perpetuate, and extend slavery.”\textsuperscript{130} For the working-men gathered in Manchester’s Free Trade Hall that evening, shared enthusiasm made it clear which side merited their support. Though the effects of the cotton famines persisted, the participants noted that “there had been no meetings in the South to assist the unemployed operatives in Lancashire,” while in the North there were public gatherings in New York aimed at economic relief.\textsuperscript{131} In a famed correspondence with Lincoln, this meeting of citizens and laborers issued a resolution of support for the President and his actions. Their message is one of hope, stating: “Heartily do we congratulate you and your country on this humane and righteous course. We assume that you cannot now stop short of the complete

\textsuperscript{129} Jones, \textit{Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom}, 94.


\textsuperscript{131} [N.A.], “Address from the Working Men,” 9.
uprooting of slavery.\textsuperscript{132} The President would go on to respond to their message, offering thanks and asserting that “through the action of disloyal citizens, the working men of Europe have been subjected to a severe trial for the purpose of forcing their sanction,” to strong-arm European support.\textsuperscript{133} With Lincoln’s actions, support for an independent South became increasingly equated with opposing the North’s ideals for freedom in a just society.

Naturally, the announcement of emancipation, though encouraging to many, left lingering doubts in others that such a process would be honored. Beyond British leadership, speculative talk in the press - propaganda or otherwise - and in public circles wondered at Lincoln’s ability to actually follow-through with the action. This view was not without precedent. O’Connor notes that, during Britain’s own abolition progress in the 1830s, attention was paid to poor treatment of freed blacks in the Northern states if the U.S., as well as to the limited support for abolitionist policies.\textsuperscript{134} At the time of its official release, the Emancipation Proclamation still held no legal power to enforce the freedom of slaves in the rebel states, though it inspired new waves of escapees as news spread. Early British reaction to emancipation included those of \textit{Punch}’s political cartoons by John Tenniel. Following the preliminary announcement by Lincoln in the fall of 1862, the publication printed an illustration titled “Abe Lincoln’s Last Card” (Figure 5). The president, seated opposite of a Confederate soldier, throws down a card

\textsuperscript{132} [N.A.], “Address from the Working Men,” 8.
\textsuperscript{134} Peter O’Connor, \textit{American Sectionalism in the British Mind, 1832-1863}, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 16.
emblazoned with a black spade, signifying what opponents suggested was a last attempt to achieve a Union victory.¹³⁵ Lincoln’s move was certainly a gamble concerning its potential impact upon foreign support. However Punch’s satire, as well as the contrasting work of those that sought to disparage the move, including Southern operations, painted it as an act of desperation.

![Cartoon Image]

Figure 5. *Abe Lincoln’s Last Card; Or, Rouge-et-Noir.* By Sir John Tenniel. *Punch,* October 18, 1862.

Others made similar arguments as the Quakers concerning wars of emancipation, though for separate reasons. Expressing concerns of new waves of violence in America, beyond military engagement of the North and South, more conservative circles argued that in the mass emancipation of the enslaved, Lincoln opened the door to racial revolt. In an 1863 letter published in *The Times,* the anonymous contributor echoes the arguments of Hotze and other defenders of the institution as necessary to order in Southern society.

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Such directions were “advocating a measure which is not freedom to the blacks, but is, as far as possible, massacre to the women and children of the whites,” suggesting a rebellion of vengeance in the aftermath of emancipation.\(^{136}\) Again, these fears and warnings proved to be unfounded, based upon racial bigotries or early cultural and anthropological, ‘science-based’ studies of race – themselves biased.

President Lincoln’s association with the cause of emancipation helped to endear him to international audiences, becoming known as the ‘Great Emancipator’. His role as commander-in-chief, overseeing the Union’s significant turnaround in military performance, erased earlier doubts over his ability to manage military and domestic affairs in a fractured nation. Despite his direct role in Anglo-American relations ending with his assassination in April, 1865, public memory of Lincoln garnered the late President countless eulogies and honors from across the Atlantic. Such tributes came even from among those who had frequently mocked the President – for his looks, his frontier upbringing, or his performance in the office – during the war. *Punch*, which had frequently utilized the image of the president for its satirical cartoons of issues in the U.S., printed both an image, showing the symbolic figure of Britannia mourning Lincoln alongside Columbia, as well as an accompanying poem.\(^{137}\) The latter’s verses reflect upon prior depictions of the man, including allusions to the work that led to the improvement of his reputation at home and abroad.\(^{138}\) Crucial to solidifying arguments


for the Union abroad, Lincoln’s role in establishing the destruction of American slavery ultimately generated the responses that the president had hoped, in the process gaining international esteem with foreign onlookers.

British public sentiment, on a broad scale, carried the same attitudes of overall ambivalence towards the American Civil War as the British government. While there are trends in viewpoints that correlate with factors such as class, there remains diversity of opinion within these different groups. The working class was not united behind the North, and the aristocracy with not purely sympathetic to the South. Furthermore, in analyzing reaction to emancipation, it should not be interpreted that later British responses to the move alone signified greater support of the Union. Certainly as the war drew into its last months, public sympathy to the North and its cause of emancipation through reunification grew, surpassing earlier doubts. A more precise understanding would be that Britain was ever-increasingly less likely to intervene on the Confederacy’s behalf. It was a combination of attitudes concerning the themes and issues raised by the Civil War that solidified the British position. The interests of labor and political reform causes, alongside with the government’s own unwillingness to involve itself, kept Britain entirely out of the conflict through to its resolution.

In examining the variety of formats utilized and arguments presented by propaganda and sympathetic media, the methods of the North and South are comparably similar, yet garnered varying levels of success. The victor in the propaganda struggle was undoubtedly the North, as the efforts of its agents and sympathetic connections had contributed to Britain’s maintenance of neutrality. Despite its shortcomings at the war’s beginning, the military and political turnaround the Union experienced in turn helped to
salvage its image. Where in 1861, the U.S had been both unable to strike a decisive blow against the Confederacy and unwilling to expand the aims of the war beyond reunification, from 1863 onward its public stature improved. Pivotal Union victories of the war – Antietam, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, Atlanta and more – gradually neutralized the Confederacy’s capability to wage war, in spite of the early doubts and dubious predications from British publications like The Times. The inclusion of emancipation was an essential step to securing the foreign policy aims laid out by Lincoln and Seward concerning the prevention of outside intervention. In issuing his Proclamation in 1863, Lincoln presented the war as one between freedom and bondage. Popular reaction to this new approach did the rest of the work, as British public reluctance to interfere in such a struggle effectively kept its leaderships’ hands tied, whether there was an interest in doing so or not.

However, it must also be noted that there are successes in the Confederate’s efforts to sway the public, despite failing in its primary goal to place further pressure on the government to aid the South. Early appeals portraying it as under assault by a tyrannical North, won it some sympathy among the British public as the underdog. The Union’s justifications for war were presented as overbearing and hypocritical to the nation’s founding principles. The Confederacy was also indirectly aided by unaffiliated elements of the British press. This included the aforementioned Times, which derided the unorganized response and poor military performance of the Union in the opening months of the war. Arguments concerning the economic demands for Southern cotton, though they met the same overall failure as the official approach to ‘cotton diplomacy,’ also
presented limited success, evidenced by British investment in smuggling the product, as well as the organized mill-worker harassment of pro-Union meetings.

Furthermore, even while he was unable to fulfill the aims of his venture, Henry Hotze had effectively established a network of connections across Britain and the continent, allowing his and others’ work the potential to reach a larger audience. As earlier noted, Hotze and his contemporaries operated on limited funds from the Confederate government, a result of poor immediate returns and the numerous war-related economic pressures upon the South. That such coordination could be achieved in such circumstances is impressive, despite the ideology that its creators attempted to spread. Even so, such efforts could not continue to fight the increasingly uphill battle for the Confederate cause abroad. On the failures of his paper and other ventures, Hotze lays part of the blame with both Europe and the counter-effort of the U.S. In the last weeks of *The Index*, the agent wrote of its performance, noting: “In Europe we were looked down upon as a mere organ of the Confederate Government,” a characteristic “described in the United States as “the rebel organ.””¹³⁹ Such a designation, particularly as the issue of slavery rose to the forefront, could not be overcome. The bulk of public interest had shifted away from actions that would directly aid the South.

In addressing foreign public opinion on the American Civil War, it must be understood that it was not static. Did Union and Confederate propaganda have a visible impact upon the course of British neutrality? Neither group’s appeals achieved immediate results, both encountering challenges to overcome, as well as failure, early on. Certainly

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¹³⁹ Henry Hotze, “This is the last number of *The Index*, 1865,” Quoted by Trahan in, “Henry Hotze”, in *Knights of the Quill: Confederate Correspondents and their Civil War Reporting*, 236, ed. Mcneely, Patricia, Debra Reddin van Tuyl and Henry Schulte, 216-237, (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2010).
the efforts of American agents and sympathizers enhanced public knowledge of the conflict and its effect upon the North and South. Despite limited circulation and the biases in their presentation, publications like *The Index* and *The London American* were still conduits of information, covering the details of the war as they could be obtained. As spectators of the war, the sentiments of the British public mirrored its development, but were primarily shaped by their own shifting interests and influences. These changes in attitude, resulting from the tide of the war, a downturn in the British economy, or by being otherwise linked to political events in Europe, reflect the potential for greater fluidity. Therefore, a general definition beyond the popular interpretation of British ambivalence is difficult to assign, as the interests of the British public, like its government, shifted throughout the war. While Britain’s public remained indifferent to the conflict on the whole, tensions and pressures both internal and external threatened to serve as the catalysts to calls for action.
CHAPTER 3

Throughout the Civil War, President Lincoln held concerns over the threat that a secondary conflict with a foreign power, particularly Britain, posed to a nation divided. However, the prospect of his concerns becoming reality increasingly diminished before war’s end. Moreover, beyond conflict with the Native American tribes of the west, the nation wouldn’t enter into a major conflict with a foreign entity until the turn of century – in the era of American imperialism. But while the spring of 1865 saw the end of the Civil War, the impact of the conflict upon the global affairs and the foreign relations of the United States did not fade. While the nation attempted to rebuild and reunify itself after four years of war, other nations, including the United Kingdom, also dealt with its consequences. Contrary to the early expectations of European governments witnessing the outbreak of secession and the early stages of the war, the American experiment had not collapsed. The principles of democracy, liberty and union had overcome those of slavery and secession. Though a costly experience in terms of resources and lives, the United States would gradually emerge from its division a stronger presence in the Western hemisphere, rededicated to enforcing the principles of the Monroe Doctrine.

For the Anglo-American relationship at this time, the end of the war marked the beginnings of a shift in dialogue. While not yet reaching the level of cooperation seen in the conflicts of the early 20th century, the impact of a Union victory in the Civil War had a ripple effect lasting years after its end. Controversial moments of the war remained engrained in public memory, brought up in later debate as justifications or precedent. The British Empire would experience notable changes brought about by the conflict, including prominent, ongoing issues concerning social and political reform at home, as
well as the structure of their Canadian possessions. Finally, a particularly divisive point of contention – one that persisted into the following decade – developed in the form of the Alabama Claims. This debate necessitated outside arbitration, evoking review of maritime law and a neutral Britain’s responsibility. This period of post-war transition continued earlier, war-time dialogues, and worked to address the lingering issues and concerns of both nations. As such, it represents a key part of the growing trans-Atlantic dialogue between the United States and United Kingdom in the latter half of the 19th Century.

While the conflict itself had ended, and its wounds had begun to heal, the Civil War’s presence in public memory and opinion did not fade as easily in its aftermath. In the United States, the nation began its recovery from the loss of President Lincoln, with Congress and the Johnson administration beginning the implementation of Southern Reconstruction. Foreman notes that, in order to further the aims of the restoring the Union and the pursuance of peace, the nation entered a period of demobilization of its military forces. By 1870, the army and navy had shrunk to a fraction of their wartime size.\textsuperscript{140} For the defeated forces of the Confederacy, “a general amnesty” was offered by President Johnson, intended to be a step towards the reentry of the South into the Union.\textsuperscript{141} A strong standing army was still not feasible, nor desired by the American populace, particularly among the occupied states of the South. However, even with the surrender of General Lee’s forces in the April of 1865, and the subsequent collapse of the Confederate government, some remained at war. Elements of the Confederacy persisted, unaware of, or unwilling, to follow Lee’s actions and surrender themselves to the North.

\textsuperscript{140} Foreman, \textit{A World on Fire}, 785.  
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 783.
Throughout the war, and particularly during its last weeks, Confederates had sought refuge in neutral territories. Some eluded capture by fleeing south into the Caribbean or Mexico, while others sought to cross the northern border into British Canada. Those seeking escape from U.S. authority ranged from the common soldier to the leadership of the Confederate government. As noted in earlier discussion of the CSS Alabama’s crew, many of those who survived its final battle - including its captain, Raphael Semmes - were rescued from the water by the sympathetic crew of a British yacht. A bystander to the 1864 engagement, the Deerhound, which bore them to Southampton, England, had identified itself as a neutral vessel.\textsuperscript{142} However, the victors of the battle off Cherbourg, France - the crew of the USS Kearsarge under Captain Winslow - had not intended for their quarry to escape their later attempts to retrieve them. On the battle, A.K. Browne notes that, although Winslow had permitted the Deerhound to aid in the recovery of the sailors, his presumptions and “confidence in the integrity of a neutral” was “misplaced.”\textsuperscript{143} That prize was soon lost, as Semmes and his men, including some of British origin, would subsequently disperse upon arrival in Southampton. These actions were particularly dishonorable in Winslow’s view as, prior to Deerhound’s aid, the Alabama’s crew had surrendered themselves.\textsuperscript{144} Thus, the impact of the Alabama’s destruction was blunted, her experienced officers free to join other efforts in this late stage of the war.

For the few high-ranking Confederate officials who escaped, nations like Britain and France presented opportunity for their new lives in exile. The last Secretary of State

\textsuperscript{143} Browne, \textit{Kearsarge and Alabama}, 16.
\textsuperscript{144} Symonds, \textit{Civil War at Sea}, 101.
for the Davis Administration, Judah P. Benjamin, managed to evade the fate of his
president, his disguised travel through the South enabling him to reach safe passage from
the Gulf.\textsuperscript{145} From there, he traveled to Europe, where he would draw upon the
connections of Southern diplomats like Mason and Slidell for aid in avoiding further
personal upheaval. Entering a career in the English legal system, Benjamin kept
correspondence with other exiles in London, later learning of his criminal indictment - in
absentia - alongside other Southern leaders for their role in bringing about the war.\textsuperscript{146} For
Confederates abroad, their evasion of capture served as a frustration for those that wished
to pursue justice, as they either remained in exile or else returned years later. Their
fortunes run parallel with those of the many former Confederate figures that still resided
in the US, who returned to positions of power as the plans for the Reconstruction of the
South weakened and collapsed.

Of special note among these cases is the last documented surrender of
Confederate forces, occurring that November. Placed under the command of Captain
James Waddell, the CSS \textit{Shenandoah} was another of those ships built in British shipyards
and secretly purchased and fitted for use by the Confederacy. After its acquisition in
1864, the ship had made its way into the east, narrowly avoiding confiscation by
Australian authorities due to its origins and partially British crew – a violation of the
Empire’s Foreign Enlistment Act.\textsuperscript{147} The CSS \textit{Shenandoah} then traveled into the northern
Pacific, and had continued to target American whaling and shipping well into the summer
following the Southern defeat. Only through news acquired from their later prizes, as

\textsuperscript{145} Robert D. Meade, \textit{Judah P. Benjamin: Confederate Statesmen}, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State
\textsuperscript{146} Meade, \textit{Judah P. Benjamin}, 342-43.
\textsuperscript{147} Symonds, \textit{Civil War at Sea}, 203-204.
well as neutral vessels, did the crew learn of the fate of their erstwhile nation in the war. Believing in the potential risk of the accusation of piracy had they surrendered to United States authority, Waddell avoided travelling to closer American ports along the West Coast.\textsuperscript{148} Their attacks would be seen as having been performed outside of the war, with their best chance at evading capture being with a neutral power. Therefore, the \textit{Shenandoah}'s crew made for Europe, travelling to the port of Liverpool, where the Confederacy’s naval agents in England had earlier operated.

Upon arrival in England, the ship was handed over to British Admiralty’s authority. The resulting legal intrigue over the fate of the vessel and its crew drew in Waddell, the U.S. Minister to Britain, Charles Adams, and the British Admiralty. Ship officer William Whittle notes the view of Mr. Adams, that both should have been turned over to his nation’s jurisdiction. The actions of the \textit{Shenandoah} in the Pacific continued even after their first knowledge of Lee’s defeat, and thus were more easily argued to be acts of piracy rather than wartime belligerency.\textsuperscript{149} But the review of British law presented an alternative. The US would be given the ship, its fittings and other property, but on the continued holding of its crew and the prospect of their arrest, there were doubts. In a letter presenting their opinion, included by Whittle in his recollections of the cruise, the argument favored their release:

“With respect to any of the persons on the \textit{Shenandoah} who cannot be immediately proceeded against and detained under legal warrant upon any criminal charge, we are not aware of any ground upon which they can properly be prevented from going on shore and disposing of themselves as they think fit, and

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\textsuperscript{148} Symonds, \textit{Civil War at Sea}, 206.
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we cannot advise her Majesty’s government to assume or exercise the power of keeping them under any kind of restraint.”

Captain Waddle’s evidence and documentation for his crew’s travels were deemed legally acceptable. Thus, while the _Shenandoah_ would later be placed under the custody of the United States - later to be sold in England - its remaining officers and crew went ashore.

The _Shenandoah_ Confederates were all released, even those British sailors whose service aboard the ship were by law violations of Britain’s neutrality. Facing questions from British officers attempting to ascertain their nationality, these men simply lied about their home country, to the point that their questioners put the matter aside. The decisions made by the British further frustrated post-war discourse between the U.S. and U.K. Dispersing after their release, some men remained in England, joining other former Confederate naval figures - such as Admiral James Bulloch and his brother Irvine - in their shared, self-imposed exile. Chaffin suggests that many “were forced to look beyond England to rebuild their lives,” with officers relocating to other parts of the Empire, or to Latin America, either never or clandestinely returning to the US. As to the limited wealth taken by the ship from its last prizes, this also went unrecovered by the U.S. What meagre funds were left, depleted during its long voyage, had instead been split between the crew before their dispersal. Understandably, this course of events factored into the anger of those in the North who had been affected by the _Shenandoah_’s predation upon

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152 Chaffin, _Sea of Gray_, 362
153 Ibid., 346.
U.S. merchants. These grievances would subsequently be incorporated as part of the ongoing American argument for the payment of raider-inflicted damages by Britain.

Naturally, Britain’s part in the escape of fugitive Confederates, coupled with lingering resentment over different wartime controversies and other past slights left some in the U.S. embittered. Anger understandably persisted over the idea that leading figures in Britain, with an apparent reluctance to stop avenues of support and illicit trade with the Confederacy, had maintained sympathy for the South. The idea that the South’s repeated exploitation of British neutrality, and the perception of a British willingness to abet such behavior, popularized the idea that it’s action, or inaction, had served to prolong the war. This view persisted long after 1865, as evidenced in an 1889 article by the British-American financier, Henry Clews, who wrote that such sympathies were rampant in the upper levels of the Palmerston government. On the idea of intervention, Clews writes:

“Looking at the question in the light of these facts and others elicited in the debate on intervention, I think it is safe to state that probably the majority of the Cabinet, and certainly the large majority in Parliament, were morally responsible for imparting aid and comfort to the South, and thus prolonging the struggle and the effusion of blood which they seemed so anxious to stop, although, through the able and praiseworthy tactics of its leaders, the Cabinet narrowly escaped technical and official responsibility.”

Clews’s argument reflects much of the lasting resentment directed at Great Britain that arose in the North and among its foreign supporters. Specific targets of this frustration during the war had included John Roebuck and William Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer under Palmerston. The role of the latter was actually defended by Clews, who argued against published misunderstandings that Gladstone was for the breakup of the Union, though Clews does criticize the man’s early belief in an inevitable southern

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victory. His rise to Prime Minister, three separate times in the twenty years after the war, would place him into the spotlight, his past speeches and positions a target of American press that shared the remainder of Clews’s view. While the accuracy of such interpretations of the British position is debatable, certainly the visible presence of Unionist support in Parliament was outweighed by proponents of either continued neutrality or the South.

President Lincoln’s pro-emancipation move in 1863 changed the dynamics of the war and what each side stood for, particularly among foreign audiences. Where before confusion had arisen regarding what justification the Union had for fighting the South, the incorporation of anti-slavery ideals shifted sympathies for the remainder of the conflict. For the U.K.’s reform-minded populace, even those for whom the fires of abolition had waned after their own successes against slavery, would consider Lincoln the ‘Great Emancipator.’ But the principles laid out by Lincoln and others concerning liberty and rights for the enslaved in America sparked another reaction, developing alongside British opinion. Long brewing political reform interests rose to greater prominence during the war, with British positions on the American conflict often correlating to support or opposition for generating change at home. But such movements had arisen before, early attempts failing to generate radical change in the fabric of British politics. It was not until 1867, two years after the war’s end, that notable progress on addressing the causes of the reformers developed.

In the intervening years leading up to the Civil War, Britain had experienced its own political and social division. Drawn along lines of class and labor, reform

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155 Clews, “Great Britain and the Confederacy,” 221.
movements among the working class rose and fell repeatedly during the 19th century, focusing on issues including the expansion of suffrage. Periods of unrest in early Industrial Era-Britain, which saw both peaceful campaigns and violent riots, pressured Parliament to take steps to curb the social and political strife. Limited action in the 1830s occurred in the form of the Reform Act of 1832, which primarily benefitted the middle classes of manufacturing centers, extending and standardizing the political franchise.\textsuperscript{156} But for the remainder of the lower classes, their issues with the system of representation remained unaddressed. Beginning in the late 1830s and going into 1840s, the Chartism movement, which called for the political suffrage of British workingmen and a stronger political presence for the working class in their representation, initially formed as separate movements across the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{157} But the cause generated little political action, Parliamentary leadership preferring to evade the prospect of achieving significant reform of democracy.

Writing on the fluctuations experienced by Chartists, the Scottish writer, Thomas Carlyle, argued that the actions of the British government to satisfy past reform movements had not addressed the root of the issues from which they sprung. In his discussion of the ‘Condition-of-England Question,’ Carlyle expressed concern over the plight of the worker, and the mistakes made by the upper-class and Parliament in their consideration of reform. Summarizing the issues, Carlyle writes:

“These are inquiries on which, had there been a proper ‘Condition-of-England question,’ some light would have been thrown, before ‘torch-meetings’ arose to illustrate them. Far as they lie out of the course of Parliamentary routine, they should have been gone into, should have been glanced at, in one or the other


\textsuperscript{157} Charlton, \textit{The Chartists}, 14-15
fashion. A legislature making laws for the working classes, in total uncertainty as to these things, is legislating in the dark; not wisely, nor to good issues.”

Carlyle’s stance on the issue reflects the problems faced by the British government in attempting to address reform interests such as those of the Chartists. But the views espoused by Chartism were not entirely buried with the deterioration of the platform, resurfacing in both the 1850s and 60s, feeding into successor movements.

The outbreak of the Civil War presented a challenge for political reformers, particularly those that drew upon American examples in their calls for change. Radical figures in British politics supported reforms that benefitted the working-class, including the Liberal statesman John Bright. Bright argued against the hesitation of the government to adapt and expand the institutions of democracy, often invoking the American system in his Parliamentary speeches. But political turmoil, secession, and the bloody war in the United States undermined Bright’s idealized political vision for Britain. The instability and conflict gave ammunition to foreign detractors of greater democracy, whose influence factored into early British attitudes on Union prospects in the war. Dubrulle notes Bright’s continued attacks on traditional political stubbornness and fear over the prospect of ‘Americanizing’ their systems of government. But the opponents of Bright and other radicals criticized such rhetoric, pointing to faults in the structure of the American experiment that had widened with time.

Opposition could derive from varied backgrounds, but prominent voices against the idealized reformation of British politics could be found in the nation’s Conservative

159 Dubrulle, Ambivalent Nation, 126.
160 Ibid., 129.
161 Ibid., 126.
Party. One such perspective, voiced by figures such as Richard Spence, was that the breakup of the U.S. had occurred as an inevitable result of the nation’s growth, a trend its democratic systems could not match.162 Wartime propaganda, such as Henry Hotze’s *The Index*, painted Bright’s position as “anti-aristocratic,” a hatred for the themes of social order shared by South gentility and the British upper class.163 Pro-Union and pro-reform sentiments aligned more often than not, becoming entangled in the view of those opposed to either group’s interests. But opinions change, and public sympathy, if not full support, for both issues grew increasingly vocal. As the Civil War coalesced around issues with which a greater number could more easily connect - emancipation and liberty rather than an attempt to prevent secession – British reformers had a new source of inspiration to draw upon.

While earlier attempts at achieving change had poor to mixed results, the latter half of the 19th century provided fresh resolve and inspiration. For the different labor movements and working class organizations throughout the United Kingdom, events across the Atlantic served as a needed catalyst for their work to secure a stronger political voice. Considering the role of the emancipation, Jones suggests that the Proclamation “signified Lincoln’s commitment to a new and improved Union that was revolutionary in spirit.”164 For the British worker, that commitment suggested an evaluation of their own social situation and presence in their nation’s politics. The aftermath of the war, with promises for the further expansion of rights and the political franchise to African Americans in the U.S. through the Reconstruction amendments, provided for further

162 Blackett, *Divided Hearts*, 17.
comparison going into the 1870s. If these steps towards political equality could succeed in the United States, why had such advancement been slow to occur in Britain? Subsequent public reaction to the lasting influence of Lincoln’s role in these issues indicates an inspirational nature around the president’s work.

Connections between such feeling and the interests of the period’s rising workers’ advocates, including Karl Marx, reflect the changing social interests of the era, forming the origins for the labor movements of the later 19th century. Jones notes that, although he himself was disappointed with the limitations of Lincoln’s actions in 1863, Marx - working with Friedrich Engels in England - had earlier commended the framing of the conflict as one that promoted “equal opportunity for all mankind.” Prominent figures, such as Marx and Engels, were not alone in their belief. The response of groups such as the Manchester mill-workers, largely united in ardent support of Lincoln and his intentions for emancipation in their 1862 letter, reflects the attention paid to the conflict. It was not solely an economic interest, going beyond the cotton shortages and unemployment in Britain’s textile industry, but social and ideological ones as well. Against the predictions, and in some cases hope, of European governments, the principles of democracy espoused by the concepts of the American approach endured. The survival of the American experiment and its success in advancing the demise of the U.S.’s own slavery institution furthered reform sentiment. With self-reflection on the nature of democracy the United Kingdom came escalating calls for similar expansion of said principles across the Atlantic.

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165 Jones, Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom, 94.
166 [N.A.], “Address From the Working Men to President Lincoln,” 5.
In detailing the groups that emerged amid the late-Civil War feeling concerning class status and political inequality, differences within their shared interests split supporters. The Reform League and National Reform Union were among the most notable branches within the resurgent movement for change - the former created in 1865, the latter forming a year before.\textsuperscript{167} A left-wing group, the League advocated consistently for the spread of political rights, but expanded their platform of issues to encompass other matters of social and political equality in Britain. Finn describes their appeal as presenting the principle of expanded suffrage “as a mechanism of social emancipation,” drawing on themes “of class fear and of class reconciliation.”\textsuperscript{168} In the same way that the institution of American slavery faced destruction through emancipation, the reformers of Britain sought to weaken the chains holding back the lower classes. Comparatively, the Reform Union represented a more moderate stance among Britain’s liberal groups, less radical in their approach to achieving change. This perspective is clearly reflected in their arguments for reform; Finn noting that the leadership - many from Manchester - was “hostile to organized labor,” and “urged workers to abandon combination in restraint of trade for political cooperation with the middle class.”\textsuperscript{169} Despite the differences in the scope of their divergent platforms, the two organizations would collaborate to push for greater support of favorable liberal policies as they were debated in Parliament.

The first major product of these reform efforts in the immediate post-Civil War period, only a single step on the path towards political change in Britain, arrived in 1867.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{168} Margot C. Finn, \textit{After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics 1848-1874}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 243.
  \item \textsuperscript{169} Finn, \textit{After Chartism}, 235.
\end{itemize}
An earlier attempt, brought up in 1866, had been in response to a wave of resurgent activism and demonstrations concerning representation and participation in Britain’s House of Commons. The performance of that bill - which followed Prime Minister Palmerston’s death, and was proposed by his successor Lord Russell – paralleled the decline of his government. Saunders describes Russell’s introduction of the bill as “making a decisive break with the domestic conservatism of his predecessor,” its failure contributing to the breakup of the Liberal coalition, and the transition into a Conservative one.\textsuperscript{170} Under the new government, led by Lord Derby once again, Parliament returned to debate over an act to expand enfranchisement among men of the working class. The issue couldn’t be ignored, as the publicity of continuing protests supported a perception of widespread appeal and clamor for reform.\textsuperscript{171} Conservatives such as Benjamin Disraeli believed that they could structure a bill that could promise reform, but intended their actions to further undermine the position of the Liberals.

Fierce debate between Conservatives and Liberals like Gladstone - over measures determining suffrage - occurred amid increased outside pressure to act. This led to the adoption of amendments that increased enfranchisement, including a radical one from Gladstone that eliminated the practice of compounding – allowing for the direct payment of the rates required from renting tenants in order to vote.\textsuperscript{172} The result of Disraeli’s gamble became known as the Reform Act of 1867, a more radical outcome than had initially been envisioned. It was the second such Reform Act in 19\textsuperscript{th} century Britain, and its passage soon proved a significant miscalculation on the part of Conservatives. While

\begin{footnotes}
\item[170] Saunders, Democracy and the Vote, 191.
\item[171] Ibid., 229.
\item[172] Ibid., 253-254.
\end{footnotes}
the political franchise had become more open, significantly increasing the voting population, it did not translate into Conservative support. Saunders notes that the move by Liberals to “assert their ownership of the bill,” ahead of the Parliamentary elections in 1868, working to undermining Conservative claims and, subsequently, returning to power.

The reforms of 1867 would serve as a basis for further adjustments and for later Acts concerning political representation, going into the early 20th century. While the U.K. had still not adopted democratic principles at the level of the idealized view of America held by radicals such as Bright, it was an effort to address the growing interest in achieving such reform.

The war to the south regularly threatened to draw in the colonial provinces that made up British North America, today the nation of Canada. Throughout the conflict, multiple incidents along the border and in Canadian waters raised questions of the British territory’s neutrality, and by extension that of its parent nation. The eastern regions, including Provincial Canada and the islands of Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, had long been deemed at risk to the interests of American expansionism. Throughout the first half of the 19th century, the U.S. had more than tripled in size - a rapid course of growth which had brought it into conflict with Mexico, to the loss of a significant portion of that nation’s territory. Growing American public and political enthusiasm over the themes of Manifest Destiny raised British concern. Would the spread of similar ideas within the U.S., instead directed at their northern neighbor, prevail and escalate a dispute over land into a full war? The lengthy borderline with the United States

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173 Saunders, Democracy and the Vote, 13.
presented repeated challenges, with the very real possibility of an invasion of British holdings in the event of war between the two nations.

Americans and Canadians were no stranger to war and discord between one another, as far back as the colonial era. Past confrontations ranged from an attempted American invasion in the War of 1812 to intermittent skirmishes, clashes and flare-ups over territorial claims on the border. An example of one such case lies with the Aroostook War of 1838-39. Rising over land claims between New Brunswick and Americans in Maine, the war did not include direct fighting, rather a period of escalation between militia groups on either side of the disputed lands. The standoff was ended through a diplomatic resolution in the form of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty signed in 1842.

The compromise reached by then Secretary of State Daniel Webster and Baron Ashburton of Britain included multiple compromises addressing issues later brought up again during Civil War-era negotiations. In addition to settling the matter of the disputed lands, the agreement also included an outline for naval cooperation against the African slave trade, a precursor to the terms of the Lyons-Seward treaty in 1862.174 This later agreement built upon the work of 1842 in a shift brought about by Seward as part of his effort to ease wartime tension. Moreover, it laid out the terms for extradition for those “charged with the crime of murder, or assault with intent to commit murder, or Piracy, or arson, or robbery, or forgery, or the utterance of forged paper.”175 The clarification of this

175 Webster and Baring, “The Webster-Ashburton Treaty,” Article X.
policy in 1842 connects into a central point of contention between Canada and the U.S. twenty years later, namely the former’s role in Confederate activities against the North. Beyond the matter of the Aroostook dispute, the repeated occurrence of such disputes, though they were mediated through diplomacy, displayed Canada’s vulnerability to American pressures. In the event of an actual war, the Empire’s ability to reinforce the region would face a test of speed, competing with the U.S.’s ability to mobilize a successful invasion. But even while this external threat remained, the Canadian provinces faced problems entirely their own as well, rooted in the region’s politics.

Issues in the governance of their North American territories had plagued British interests in this portion of the Empire. Stagnating levels of government accountability in the face of fluctuating economic conditions and provincial growth suggested increasing political turmoil. In an 1836 essay concerning the trouble with the Canadas – separated into Lower and Upper Canada before the first union in 1841 - John Roebuck expressed the view that the former was mired in political turmoil and government irresponsibility, the latter on course for the same downwards spiral.¹⁷⁶ Lower Canada formed from a combination of the Quebec region’s earlier French inhabitants and subsequent waves of British settlement, while the latter was predominantly English, though lower in population.¹⁷⁷ In introducing a structure for greater self-governance to Lower Canada, Roebuck argued that such change had gradually tainted the colony’s political system since its inception. Five particular evils were outlined around the problems plaguing political representation and the Canadian legislature, the House of Assembly. Drawing on

the varied complaints raised by their inhabitants, Roebuck identified them as relating to: finance, revenues and the expenditure of government resources; the administration of justice and the politicization of judges; funding for the spread of education; Parliament’s own activity in trying to influence “laws regulating the internal affairs of the colony;” and perception of favoritism in the structure of political offices and councils. Attempts to resolve these matters brought about proposals for the significant restructuring of government in the Canadas, unification being one such solution to better address the interests and grievances of the colonies’ population.

The conflict of 1861-65 would place further pressure on Canadian and British leadership to reevaluate the governance of the territory. Canada’s geographic location presented opportunity for both North and South alike during the Civil War, largely due to the extensive border it shared with the Union. Operatives of the Confederacy exploited the fluidity of the border, staging plots and attacks on border communities from Canada. This included the raid on St. Alban’s, Vermont, in which a group of Confederate agents robbed several banks and killed one person in their escape. Northern anger over the raid intensified when - after several of the raiders were arrested - those held for an extradition trial were set free, disappearing before the Canadian governor, Lord Monck, could order their arrest once more. The ability of the agents to walk free, regardless of Canadian attempts to recapture them, did little assuage frustration across the border. In their eyes, the 1842 agreement made between Webster and Ashburton, which had included terms concerning extradition, was being undermined by inaction.

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178 Roebuck, Existing Difficulties, 10-12.
179 Foreman, A World on Fire, 698-699.
180 Ibid., 721.
However, the St. Alban’s raid ultimately proved more of a threat than a benefit to Confederate efforts abroad. The venture had been orchestrated without the knowledge of Jacob Thompson, the Confederacy’s Special Service official in Canada, who feared that it would undermine his work in the provinces. Thompson, whose task was the spreading of “anti-Northern feeling in Canada,” did not want such actions to inspire the opposite reaction.\textsuperscript{181} He would go on to organize other schemes to sow disarray in the North, one involving an failed attempt at the burning of New York City in November, 1864, to spread fear behind Union lines.\textsuperscript{182} Northern anger over the ability of these operatives to freely move back and forth across the border, either evading or facing lax action on the part of Canadian authorities, would force Canadian officials - as well the British Foreign Ministry – to take some action to curtail such behavior. But arrests and diplomatic warnings in the last years of the war did not change what had already been allowed to occur, and the U.S. took a step towards retaliation.

The potential for an aggressive Northern response to any prospective intervention or recognition of Southern independence pressured the Empire to devote resources to counter such threats. As noted in the first chapter, while Lincoln’s focus remained on the avoidance of an unnecessary second conflict, the military vulnerability of Canada and other holdings was considered by Secretary Seward in his interaction with British officials. But wartime tension between the North and Canada was not solely expressed through military threats or the reinforcement of the latter by a concerned Parliament. British North America benefitted from important trade and military compromises with

\textsuperscript{181} Foreman, A World on Fire, 596.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 718-719.
the United States, agreements that fell under review as public and congressional animosity over Canada’s inaction grew.

Two such deals in particular, both made between Britain and the U.S., fell under the growing spotlight. One was the 1855 Reciprocity Treaty, promoting free trade across the border, though some manufactured goods from the US could be tariffed when entering Canada. Mahin argues that the “the treaty’s benefits to the United States had been debatable before the war and had eroded during the war due to increased domestic demand,” and as it permitted the cancellation of the agreement by either party after ten years, popular support in Congress pushed its repeal in early 1865.\(^{183}\) The long-standing military agreement concerning the militarization of the Great Lakes, the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817, also faced criticism and scrutiny at this late point in the war. Congressmen such as the radical Charles Sumner voiced increasingly anti-British rhetoric, suggesting that it could also face repeal.\(^ {184}\) Such a move would set a new course for border relations between the two powers, a prospect few British officials wished to realize. But Seward took further action on the issue, suggesting after the St. Albans Raid that U.S. would consider the armament of forces in the Great Lakes, Mahin noting the explicit link made connecting “naval armaments to British enforcement of its neutrality policy.”\(^{185}\) Occurring near to the end of the conflict, the winding down of the war helped to avoid a new one to the North. Outside the minds of figures like Sumner, the idea of a direct military reprisal for wartime grievances caused by Britain would gradually fall away from the wider public interest.

\(^{183}\) Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 248-249.  
\(^{185}\) Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 247.
The end to the Civil War did not put an end to the dangers posed to British Canada, and the years that followed presented significant change in the political structure of the territory. Though none of the feared attacks from the North during the war had ever developed, other issues emerged along the border, again threatening Canadian security - events in which the United States played a role yet again. The point of contention here concerned the Fenian raids of 1866, a reversal of the wartime situation regarding the Confederate presence north of the boundaries. These attacks on Canadian soil, launched from the American side of the border, were largely carried out by militia groups of Irish Republicans. Multiple incursions against the provinces, from Northeastern United States and from around the Great Lakes, resulted in casualties on both sides. The Fenians were primarily comprised of fighters utilizing guerilla-like tactics, with many being veterans of the Civil War - Irish immigrants recruited for the war effort amid waves of immigration from the island.\textsuperscript{186} From the Canadian and British perspective, such raids could not have been organized without the knowledge of Americans across the border. The lingering animosity towards the British within the U.S. government, from Sumner and other Radical Republicans suggested to those in Canada that the attacks of the Fenians, unsuccessful as they were, served as their retribution - a continuation of interest in weakening the British presence in North America.

The effect of treaty alterations and the Fenian attacks, coupled with the British government’s exhaustion regarding the longstanding concerns over American interest in the northern regions, applied pressure for a significant change in the British approach to Canada. The key factors in the resulting transformation were based in the unification of

\textsuperscript{186} Foreman, \textit{A World on Fire}, 796.
the provinces, the goal being to strengthen the new government’s organization and centralization. In 1867, the first iteration of a modern Canada was established via the British North America Act, merging the province of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick together, still under the British crown. In terms of self-governance, the Confederation as a whole was led by a single Parliamentary body. The characteristics woven into the new structure took into account the events that had preceded the American Civil War, the lower legislatures of the individual provinces tied to the centralized federal body, an effort to avoid the divisions seen in American secession arguments. However, concerning its impact upon American relations, old habits tended to endure. Even with the formation of the new Canadian Confederation, those Americans who still maintained a bitterness towards their northern neighbors oddly kept the view that Canadians would want to be annexed by the U.S.

The divisive factors that had fractured the United States, catalyzing the decline into the Secession Crisis and war, only began to be addressed in the aftermath of the war. Domestic issues, including the rebuilding of the South and the condition of freed slaves, remained matters that would take years to address, even then remaining problems well into the 20th century. Similarly, in foreign policy, certain matters remained unsettled between the reunited U.S. and the war’s neutral bystanders, France and Britain among them. An immediate example of the restoration of American attentions to their foreign policy and North American interests lay to the South. The Second French Empire’s occupation of Mexico since 1861, had consistently been a subject of American diplomatic warnings to Napoleon III’s rule. Operating a proxy state in Mexico under its

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installed ruler Emperor Maximilian I, the French presence violated the ideas set forth in the Monroe Doctrine. By 1867, the movement of U.S. troops to the border with Mexico, short of an actual invasion, had pressured the French to withdraw, allowing Mexican republicans to overthrow Maximilian. In the case of Anglo-American ties, Britain had long since withdrawn from the French effort in Mexico, its initial participation in the venture based upon attaining repayment of loans given to the nation’s previous government. Beyond the animosity Americans still felt over British ‘neutrality’ and perceptions of Southern sympathy, negotiations over diplomatic issues stemming from the maritime controversies of the war continued.

At the heart of these lingering arguments were the financial damages incurred by American shipping as a result of the predation of Confederate commerce raiders during the war, many of which were built in British shipyards. The CSS Alabama, being the most infamous and one of the most successful of these vessels, would lend her name to the resultant debate over British responsibility for her actions at sea. Negotiation over the Alabama Claims, as they came to be known, were a regular topic in Anglo-American diplomacy between 1863 and 1872. Legal analyses raised questions of the loopholes and exploitations of maritime law that had not only allowed the Alabama to be constructed, but had aided in her escape. Knowledge of the cruiser’s purpose had spread, with Minister Adams and Lord Russell both aware of Confederate interests in the vessel. The arguments of the former, suggesting it was a violation of the integrity of British neutrality, were met by inaction from Russell’s Foreign Offices, which seemed unsure what action it could legally take to halt the ship’s construction. Mersi describes a general

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188 Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, 319-320.
189 Mersi, The Alabama, British Neutrality, and the American Civil War, 42.
confusion in understanding of British law, particularly in regards to earlier 19th century precedents regulating foreign enlistment, leading to divergent interpretations of what the law actually was.\textsuperscript{190} With the beginning of direct negotiation on the matter in 1869, the legal questions of responsibility in the affairs of neutral and belligerent powers would see evaluation and change.

American trade interests, especially those that had directly suffered from the actions of the commerce raiders, clamored for recompense. Anglophobic congressmen like Sumner called for increasingly high payments as recompense, even laying “the entire cost of the war after Gettysburg in 1863 at Britain’s feet,” over two billion dollars in total at the time.\textsuperscript{191} Varying perspectives of Britain’s role in the war mingled together, the idea that its actions had prolonged the war gaining traction. Yet the demands of Sumner and others did little to bring Britain to the negotiating table. While responsibility for the actions of the \textit{Alabama} was one matter, pinning further financial damages on top of that only served to anger a British government still unwilling to accept blame in the first place. Between 1868 and 1869 – years which saw the return of a Liberal government, under Gladstone, and the election of the Grant Administration - an opportunity for negotiation on the issue presented itself. First reviewing an earlier agreement between American Minister Reverdy Johnson and British Foreign Minister Clarendon to establish commission on claims, both Grant and Congress would reject this approach. For many, particularly the more Radical wings controlling Congress, the agreement did not address the full scope of Britain’s culpability in the Confederacy’s actions.\textsuperscript{192} Britain remained

\textsuperscript{190} Mersi, \textit{The Alabama, British Neutrality, and the American Civil War}, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{191} Foreman, \textit{A World on Fire}, 801.
\textsuperscript{192} Mahin, \textit{One War at a Time}, 288-289.
disinterested in negotiating over the broader matters of the war, but the persistence of American officials served to distract from issues more immediate to the concerns of the Empire. Mahin connects the outbreak and course of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to a shift in the British perspective, the monitoring of the balance of power on the European continent demanding more of their attention. Thus, talks between the two nations proceeded more swiftly going into 1871, with a tempered rather than radical approach to the negotiations.

The talks over the settlement of the claims consisted of legal debate and argument over how such a payment could be fairly determined. Arguments remained over the interpretation of British neutrality and precedent in maritime law. However, a consensus on how to move forward was eventually reached. Signed in the spring of 1871, the Treaty of Washington laid out a plan to resolve the claims once and for all by the following year. The terms called for an international arbitration of the claims, through a meeting of representatives from the U.S., U.K, Brazil, Italy, and Switzerland, to be carried out in Geneva. Earlier plans for settlement only through a British-American commission proved too contentious, requiring the input of third parties. Furthermore, the Treaty set forth new rules concerning the expectations for neutral powers going forward, points similar to Britain’s own policies regarding port access and ship construction during the war, now set in stone for legal precedent. Attending representatives would review the case, examine legal precedent and justification, and determine what would be done concerning the prospect of compensation for American losses. The agreement reached in

193 Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 291.
194 Ibid., 293.
195 Ibid., 293.
1872 favored the American position on direct damages inflicted by the *Alabama*—indirect costs of Britain’s role having been dropped from the U.S. representatives’ arguments. Their resolution directed Britain to pay $15 million to the U.S., thereby ending the matter.\(^{196}\) Although the act of doing so caused some consternation and embarrassment in Britain, the agreement of the Claims kept the two nations on the path of peace with one another.

With the resolutions emerging from the Treaty of Washington, and the arbitration of the dispute at Geneva, both nations were at last able to move past the divisions of the 1860s. Britain, though still slighted by the cost of the agreed-upon damages, was more desirous to put the affairs of 1861-65 behind them. Events in Europe, including rivalry and imperialist conflict between Russia, Prussia, and France, increasingly necessitated British attentions. As a result, the last significant point of contention between the United States and United Kingdom stemming from the Civil War had been addressed. Still rivals rather than allies, and still limited in their direct cooperation on issues beyond trade matters or the crackdown upon the slave trade, the late and post-Civil War periods marked the beginnings of a shift in Anglo-American relations.

While the American Civil War ended in the spring of 1865, its impact would resonate for years after, shaping policy and development in the postwar United States. But this effect was not limited to the U.S. alone, for through the nation’s foreign relations, other powers felt the conflict’s effects. Public resentment in the United States over the role the United Kingdom, and its political leadership, had during the war dampened relations in the immediate aftermath of war. The perception of Confederate

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\(^{196}\) Mahin, *One War at a Time*, 297.
sympathies being shared by eminent British statesmen – their stances on intervention and recognition persisted in particular - endured long after the war, damaging public images among Americans. The example of Gladstone, particularly during his own periods of leadership as Prime Minister, shows that memory of his role in British affairs during the war was not forgotten in the U.S. For the British Empire as a whole, the ramifications of the Civil War carried notable change. The Empire’s approach to the maintenance and protection of its North American territories shifted in response to the events of the war, intended to address concerns over external threats and internal inefficiencies. The resulting formation of a more cohesive Canadian province set the stage for the modern structure of the nation, and the gradual path towards its own sovereignty in the 20th century. Finally, the settlement of the long-standing disputes over the British role in the actions of the *Alabama* and other raiders allowed at one fence to be mended.
Conclusions and Interpretations

In reviewing the effects of the Civil War upon Anglo-American relations, the conflict finds stronger connections to global events in the mid-19th century. While its military dimensions remained limited to actions of the North and South against one another, outside this sphere, the war carried significant consequences. Diplomatic activity influenced, or was influenced by, not only military success, but by economic, political and social developments as well. Northern and Southern outreach alike sought to capitalize on the foreign impacts of the war, among them widespread economic disruption. Moreover, the effects of the war persisted past its final moments, issues in foreign policy lingering well beyond 1865.

Three areas of prominence are central to understanding of Anglo-American foreign policy between 1861 and 1865, shaping the course of the war and post-war relations. The Trent Affair of November through December, 1861, represents the closest point to war between the United States and British Empire. The Affair raised questions of U.S. and British conduct, the rights and protections of neutral powers, and the legality of the Union blockade. Furthermore, as one of the earliest direct disputes, it carried the potential to undermine the Union war effort going forward, even if such a secondary conflict was not in direct support of the Confederacy. For the Confederacy, while their agents primarily acted from the sidelines of the crisis, it was nonetheless recognized as a key opportunity to turn the war in their favor early on. The failure of the South to fully capitalize on their early military victories against the North, and their inability to influence the outcome of Trent Affair, inhibited their diplomatic impact. The settlement reached between Seward and Russell not only moved both nations away from the brink,
but directed Northern policy to the prevention of similar escalations for the duration of the war.

The actions of the *Alabama* and other British-built raiders present a second area of persistent controversy. The supplementation of the Confederate Navy with vessels contracted or acquired from British shipyards throughout the war brought forth fresh waves of scrutiny over the neutrality of the Empire. The careers of these commerce raiders, the *Alabama* alone inflicting millions in damages to Union shipping, sparked anger in the North. The slowness with which Britain acquiesced to Union pressure to investigate, halt or seize such vessels furthered this emotion. The overall impact of the raiders was not enough to sway the course of the war, particularly as the Confederate Navy still unable to break the Union blockade. However, that these raiders were acquired and allowed to inflict damages remained a point of contention into the 1870s. The lengthy debate over the *Alabama* Claims necessitated review of legal precedent in maritime and neutral law, and stressed diplomatic talks in the war’s aftermath, taking seven years to resolve.

The issues surrounding the cause of emancipation shaped attitudes on the war, even before slavery began its move to the forefront of the Union war effort in 1863. The lack of clarity from the U.S. suggested that there was no greater interest in ending the practice and that its leadership could not enforce such a change while at war. At the same time, the economic reliance of the South upon slavery and, by extension, the British need for Southern cotton, further dulled the extent of abolitionist and reform sentiments. The shifting tide of the war and the message set forth by President Lincoln through emancipation began a change within British attitudes. The events of 1863-64 altered
perceptions of the war and helped to catalyze reform causes abroad. The resulting movements of the later 1860s, sparked by attempts earlier in the century, carry similar themes for social improvement and drawing upon the example of Lincoln in their work.

The impact of the American Civil War upon the British Empire is evidence of the conflict’s reach, affecting nations on both sides of the Atlantic World. The direct diplomatic interaction of American and British officials regularly concerned issues related to the war, as trade and security remained under threat. The attempts of Northern and Southern sympathizers to generate or deter support in the Empire, through propaganda or political action furthers this conclusion. Though a general ambivalence remained the guiding theme of the British position regarding the conflict, their official impartiality did not prevent their being reached by its consequences. Despite their official neutrality, the war left a mark on the Empire. Not the same impact left upon the North and South, nor as lasting, but one that instilled changes in the aftermath all the same.

Interpreting and Conveying the Narrative

In developing an online interpretation of these issues and events, three themes guided the creation of the websites – level of detail, accessibility, and navigability. The site itself, built with the intention to serve as a resource for the interested and as a springboard of ideas for further research, is in actuality two separate locations. The first, utilizing WordPress, operates as a general discussion of developments and issues in Anglo-American diplomacy during the Civil War – titled ‘The American Civil War on the world stage.’197 The second, built utilizing Omeka exhibit programs, serves as a collection of selected primary materials that reflect said issues, with accompanying

197 For access and reference, the site’s web address is johnathanseitz.com/blog/
analysis and interpretation, titled ‘A Study of England in the American Civil War.’ Together, they complement one another, the first presenting a narrative of the subject, and the latter detailed and structured in such a way as to make finding the materials relevant to specific parts of this narrative easier.

The extent of the websites’ coverage of the topic remains focused upon the issues analyzed within the research that contributed to its content. They work to present the war in an international context, focusing on events and key figures to convey a narrative. The WordPress location covers each of these areas, providing discussion of developments throughout the war as well as the roles of key U.S., Confederate, and British individuals involved in diplomacy and outreach. Prominent issues covered throughout the site include the Trent Affair, the Alabama’s cruise, and the nature of British public opinion. The site houses several pages specifically focused upon these issues, utilizing different formats. For example, multiple timelines place events in America in specific contexts, including among global developments displaying political or economic interests of Americans and Europeans. Not only was the war in America distant from many in Europe, more pressing matters amid the persistent rivalries and competing political interests – reflected in said timeline – occupied foreign attentions.

As the sites’ aims include fostering greater interest in the subject, including for research purposes, several aspects of its design work to promote these goals. Alongside the narrative it presents, the WordPress site includes discussion of materials and additional, external resources and locations that would provide further information. This includes specific materials and documents, as well as prominent Civil War-related

198 For access and reference, the site’s web address is johnathanseitz.com/
collections containing documents pertaining to this area of the field. This effort is furthered through collection on the Omeka-based site. It draws examples of document and image-based materials and displays them in specific collections. Through exhibits, further narratives are constructed specifically drawing upon related materials on the site. Each item in the collection has attached descriptions, including context. The origins and locations of the materials are also included, again allowing visitors to explore the subject further.

Altogether, the aims of this research - to determine the importance and lasting consequences of Civil War foreign policy – form the backbone for the websites’ design. In the same vein as a museum site or an online exhibit, raising interest in the subject and enhancing understanding of the war are primary goals. They seek to provide visitors with an informative, accessible narrative of the history surrounding the Anglo-American relationship in the mid-19th century. By contextualizing the events and issues of the American Civil War in a more global view, the diplomatic connections of the United States, and their role in shaping the development of nations, are more clearly understood.
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