

The Fortunes of War:
Confederate Expansionist Ambitions During the American Civil War

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Abstract

Southern and then Confederate politicians and business leaders possessed and implemented expansionist ambitions during the Civil War Era from State Secession in late 1860 until the final collapse of the Confederacy in the first half of 1865. The Confederacy exhibited both formal ambition in the desire to annex additional territory and informal expansion through either a pursuit of commercial exploitation or fostering the fragmentation of neighboring states. Although the pursuit of expansion was integral to the formation of mid-nineteenth century nation states, for southerners, the experience of both secession and of fighting a war acted as a stimulant for such ambitions.

I chart these ambitions held for the Confederacy in terms of slavery expansion, the nature of its future international relations, commercial growth and territorial extent. I have identified numerous leading individuals—planters, farmers, lawyers, merchants, politicians and soldiers—who both held these opinions and sought to persuade others. I track the opinions and actions of these persons throughout the war, and demonstrate that these aspirations changed over time, as did the resulting measures taken at the time by Government and businesses to achieve their ultimate fulfillment.

The objective of my research is to build up an understanding of the postwar expectations, held during the war, of Confederates located across the Confederacy itself, the Border States and stationed abroad. Therefore I consulted a range of printed and manuscript sources at archives across the U.S. The breadth of my research enables me to prove that expansionist ambitions varied across the Confederacy together with demonstrating that policy enacted in Richmond was often the result of intense lobbying from the provinces. The result is to show the Civil War in its true wider context, that the

participants at the time consistently saw its outcome as a Confederate nation with international and even global implications. At the same time, the nature of the planned country changed, according to the progress of the Civil War. The pursuit of expansion was certainly both a rhetorical and nostalgic exercise, but it was also a practical part of nation building and preeminently important for a new country dependent on slavery.

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**Introduction to “The Fortunes of War”: Confederate Expansionist
Ambitions in the American Civil War**

“All we ask is to be let alone”, declared President Jefferson Davis in his Message to Congress on April 29, 1861. To that end, Confederates fought a war for independence that they not only lost, but it also killed slavery. Confederates struggled to maintain a contest that stretched across four years and achieved, albeit in part due to slavery, mobilization rates and sustained casualty levels that remain unheard of in a democracy.

“The Fortunes of War” focuses on what Confederates intended to do once they had been let alone, which was to grow their nation both commercially and territorially.

Confederates possessed expansionist ambitions in part because such aspirations were inherent in the mid-nineteenth century Atlantic World. Expansion came naturally to notions of the competitive system of international relations, political economy, nation building, and the cult of progress and pursuit of perfection. Keen believers in these ideas and reinforced by their faith, secessionists and Confederates regarded expansion as even more of a prerequisite for their latecomer nation, which had been both endowed with the responsibility of slavery and buoyed by the production of vast quantities of staple crops. This work is above all a study of how secessionists and Confederates continued to pursue these expansionist ambitions in wartime, sustained by their commitment to a revolution and constantly adjusting to changing circumstances of the American Civil War.¹

Expansion in “The Fortunes of War” meant both territorial and commercial growth of the Confederate nation and its economy. Confederates wished to expand in the traditional sense of annexing neighboring lands. Conscious of a need to build alliances in order to compete against the United States, they also when necessary sought to play down this potentially aggressive behavior in favor of more covert forms of expansion –

¹ Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress” April 29, 1861, *JDC*, 5:84.

fostering the fragmentation of neighboring states or weak indigenous regimes.

Confederates also pursued expansion commercially. They wished to prevent competitors growing staple crops, wanted to develop markets for their own products and identify reliable suppliers of manufactured goods. Finally, Confederates sought prestige for their nation and the enhancing of its status in the eyes of other nations and peoples.

This dissertation is about those who carried out policies and plans of expansion. It is therefore about those leading secessionists and Confederates who were in a position to enact legislation, make business decisions and influence others. Therefore the majority of the individuals studied were politicians, merchants, lawyers, bankers, senior soldiers, clergymen, planters and farmers. Most, but not all, were slaveholders. They were both ex-Whigs and ex-Democrats and became both opponents and supporters of the Davis administration. They were from across the Confederacy, and its supporters from the Border States, California and those Confederates stationed abroad. Sometimes these leading Confederates took their stances individually, recorded their views and sought to persuade others in diaries, broadsides, correspondence, speeches, pamphlets and newspaper articles. At other times, they debated and worked their way to conclusions whether in Jefferson Davis's cabinet, the Confederate State Department, federal and state legislatures and their committees, commercial and professional conventions and the like.

The central claim of this dissertation is that Confederates had ambitious about intentions for the post-war era. In part, they believed they had to be ambitious, as they were struggling to build a new nation in a world governed, Confederates thought, by competitive and consolidating nation states. From the outset, they knew that their nation

did not exist in a vacuum; then fighting a war made Confederates even more conscious of their place in the world. Confederates believed they understood international relations and it was imperative that their new nation had to quickly win a significant position in it. This world vision comprised a global economy governed by movements of people and commodities. According to Confederates, the new steamboat technology had made rapid mass transportation of people suddenly possible. As a result, Britain, France and the United States intended to transport what Confederates deemed as surplus populations from overpopulated regions, mainly Europe and East Asia, to the comparatively empty spaces of Latin America. These great powers planned to revive moribund Caribbean planter economies with this labor and extend the practice on to the mainland and consequently compete with the Confederacy in staple crop production, undermining that hated and, to Confederates, envied and superior form of forced labor – slavery - in the process.

Confederates wished therefore to pre-empt such moves by expanding slavery and staple crop production southward. They understood that the growth of other countries governed their own expansionist ambitions, as the competitive system of nations and people dictated social and economic life. This dissertation highlights the meaning of this mutual expansion to Confederates. They enthusiastically grasped the core concept of international political economy – the enlightened interest in the prosperity of nations with which they trade together with the enormous value of peace. The Confederacy envisioned itself as an expansionist nation in so far as all advanced nations were so understood at the time. Moreover, Confederate territorial expansion would benefit other nations because it would lead to greater crop yields, which in turn generated increased trade and hence

commerce with other nations. Commercial relations created an interest, erecting in the minds of those the Confederates traded with, affection towards the Confederacy. With the international reputation of slavery in mind, Confederates hoped that because recipients perceived commerce as a communication of good understanding between nations as part of civilization, it would mean the displacement of the prejudice of ignorance by tolerance. This interchange of commerce and ideas lay at the heart of progress. Out of this general theory came a specific result: Confederates expected that expansion would vindicate slavery as system of labor best suited to the exploitation of the newly accessible regions of the tropics.²

“The Fortunes of War” is also a story of a constant attempt at nation building. When Confederates planned their expansionist ambitions, they did not only sit back and dream of what they knew to be delusional and romantic “castles in the air.” They set to work planning for a practical outcome. This dissertation is about a top-down process of constructing institutions and businesses that would support a future expansionist realm. Given that nations were defined as a collection of individuals acting in self-interest, Confederates recognized ambition as the building block integral to the foundation and expansion of the nation state in order to fulfil the objective of national progress. Individually, people progressed in life by the pursuit of enlarged systems of action in which to operate. As a result, according to historians Peter and Nicholas Onuf, such

² On the workings of political economy, see Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957); Samuel Smiles, *Self Help With Illustrations of Character and Conduct* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860); Harriett Martineau, *Illustrations of Political Economy: Selected Tales*, ed. Deborah Anna Logan (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 2004); John Stuart Mill, *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, (London: John W. Parker, 1844), *Principles of Political Economy with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy*, ed. W.J. Ashley, (1849; London: Longman, 1915).

doctrine invested nations with a vitality that they had never before possessed. Hence when Jefferson Davis demanded the Confederate people be let alone, he would have agreed with Doctor Brown of Tyneside, England, who applauded the Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone's Newcastle Speech when he declared that Davis had made a nation. The doctor observed that: "True liberty consists for nations, we would say, as for individuals, in the right of each, whether man or nation, to do what is best for self, without infringing in the title or rights of others." Reaching back to language that would have been familiar from the Declaration of Independence, the goal of nation building for the individual was that "which gives him the power to do that which he deems best for his own happiness."³

Ambition overruled complacency because the goal of life was perfection and the nation state was the agent of this general perfection. According to the Victorian point of view, back in the eighteenth century, an American or a Briton had been satisfied with what he was. In the mid-nineteenth century, that state of mind was no longer sufficient. Victorians based their faith in progress by demanding to become more of what they were already. This optimism meant the problems of national and individual life would be

³ Nicholas and Peter Onuf, *Nations, Markets and War: Modern History and the American Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 343-52. Dr. Brown quoted in W.L. Burn, *The Age of Equipoise: A Study of the mid-Victorian Generation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964), 51-52. Confederates knew about the perils of "air-castling." In writing to her soldier fiancé stationed in Charleston from what she viewed as her own drudgery as a teacher in upstate South Carolina, Eliza J. Trescot associated them with either longing for a lost past, "all my remembrances are connected with you...building our castles with you," or a fatal inaction, "I spent my thoughts on air-castles...I am biding my time and waiting for something to turn up." Finally, Trescot knew air castles presented a chance for escapism, "I like to talk of the past and divert your mind from the disagreeable present – build bright airy castles or the realization of those dreams." (Eliza Josephine Trescot to Eldred J. Simkins, December 12, 1863, June 29, August 4, 1864, SIM 265, 278, 285, box 1, box 2, Papers of Eldred J. Simkins, HL). Charles Dickens had earlier popularized the term to represent the delusion that William Dorritt would ever escape his past in the Marshalsea debtors' prison by going to Venice. (Charles Dickens, *Little Dorritt*, [1857; reprint, Oxford University Press, 1999], 387-89, 527-45.)

solved as easily as a problem of simple arithmetic. The necessary condition for this achievement was hard work; individuals would only succeed by self-development and self-expansion, they had to behave as superior beings striving for great ends.⁴

Such was the general context in which Confederates attempted to construct their nation state. “The Fortunes of War” shows how these expansionist ambitions found expression especially strongly first in the South and then in the Confederacy. Its people mixed confidence in achievement with anxiety about what more needed to be done. Secessionists knew that their nation was the newcomer and were conscious, as historian Michael T. Bernath phrased it, of the “past inadequacies” of their intellectual life. Acutely conscious of the need to catch up with northerners and Europeans, secessionists and then Confederates manifested, in extreme measure, a tendency to which Victorians were prone - to go to extremes and dogmatism. Owing to this intense pressure of competitive life, secessionists and then Confederates welcomed axioms; they exhibited a propensity to adopt extreme and unqualified positions and demonstrated an intense and energetic absorption in one particular point. They willingly imposed upon themselves a choice of opposites, of “weal or woe.” Confederates believed the only alternative to disaster was to realize their ambitions for an expansive and powerful nation-state.⁵

⁴ On the cult of progress see Burn, *The Age of Equipoise*, Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Hutchison, 2002), G. M. Young, *The Portrait of an Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936); Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society from Coleridge to Orwell*, (1958; reprint, London: Hogarth Press, 1990).

⁵ Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds: the Struggle for Intellectual Independence in the Civil War South*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 7. For other studies of the particular circumstances of the South see Stephen W. Berry, *All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Steven A. Channing, *Crisis of*

Confederates regarded the existence of slavery and the production of staple crops for export as entitlement to a significant share of this mid-nineteenth century world of expansionist ambition. In political economy, cotton in particular was the symbol of the civilizing virtue of commerce. Through the textile industry, cotton clothed millions across the world and provided work for the poor in New England and Western Europe. Additionally, slavery reinforced southern membership of the global economy through its competitive and capitalist aspects: the possession of slaves, critical to upward mobility of southerners and the price of slaves, the indicator of their wealth. Slavery also gave slaveholders a sense of self-conscious responsibility, which enabled Confederates to constantly think that their independence involved the fate the broader canvass of civilization and humanity as a whole. The right to dominate African Americans and care for what Confederates deemed an inferior race lay at the heart of Confederate expansion.

This dissertation therefore aims to challenge our understanding of ‘modernity’ in a mid-nineteenth context. Historians of the South and the Confederacy have proved that the region and nation possessed an improvement-minded cosmopolitan middle class, a diversifying economy, and capitalist business practices. This analysis only goes part of the way to explaining Confederate ambitions. While Confederates eagerly embraced

Fear: Secession in South Carolina (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970); Augusta Jane Evans, *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice* (1864) ed. Drew Gilpin Faust (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (1982; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1998). Alfred Tennyson, more than any other poet exposed himself to the mood of the age, and he captured the essence of this duality in his *In Memoriam* of 1850,

Dear friend far off, my lost desire
So far, so near, in woe and weal;
O, loved the most when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher!

(Quoted from and with her own punctuation, George Eliot, *Felix Holt: The Radical* [1866], ed. William Baker and Kenneth Womack (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 2000), 434.)

some classic components of modernity—increases in international trade, investment, and the development of new communications technology—it was only in support of what Confederates wished to concentrate on. Confederates wished remain focused on managing slaves to produce cash crops, in order that their economy and nation would become a key partner for industrializing powers in an interdependent world.⁶

Confederates regarded the Christianizing aspect of slavery as central to their ambition to uplift inferior races. “The Fortunes of War” is not a study of religion during the Civil War era, but the revival that spread in 1858 across the South demonstrated how faith reinforced the later expansionist ambitions of Confederates. It divinely sanctioned the existing social arrangement of slavery. Sanctified Christians had a duty to work for the perfection of society. Victorians already had a secular idea of perfection as a legitimate aspiration, now perfectionalism became a doctrine that meant regenerate men and women should aspire to a second and higher stage of Christian experience. Revivalism sanctified the pursuit of the perfect society with the state as its agent. Southerners increasingly saw this goal as grander, more progressive and contrasted it with what they saw as the individually focused or inner-directed revivalism in the North. The subordination of the human will to the divine gave Confederates intense confidence in their nation state. It did not mean a meditative inward preparation for death; instead

⁶ On the rise of the capitalist, cosmopolitan, southern middle class, see Jonathan Daniel Wells, Jennifer R. Green, *The Southern Middle Class in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011); L. Diane Barnes, Brian D. Schoen, Frank Towers, *The Old South's Modern Worlds: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Brian D. Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics, and the Global Origins of the Civil War* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). On the Confederacy looking to a protectionist and industrial future, see John Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of the Confederate Nation* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

one needed to live this life as the best training for the next, which will be its glorious crown and completion.⁷

Faith, political economy, and slavery also reinforced the Confederate sense of their revolution. This dissertation seeks to show how this revolution provided impetus for the expansionist ambitions of the Confederacy. In his demand for Confederates to be let alone, Davis pointed to their determination for self-government. In a similar fashion to northerners, southerners and then Confederates regarded self-government to be in peril around the world. At a time when aristocracy and oligarchy appeared triumphant in Europe, now the Republican Party threatened the same loss of liberty for the citizens of the United States. By 1860, the slave-based society in the South had become the last place on Earth where every white man was at liberty to think and act for himself. The freedom of the individual was the mainstay of national power and the nation is only the aggregate of individual conditions and government, the reflection of the individuals comprising it. According to southerners, in the North, men were losing their independence from the institutions of government due to consolidation. It was only in the South that man possessed the perfect freedom of thought, speech and action essential for the demonstration of national power.

⁷ On the importance of evangelicalism in the Victorian era, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What God Hath Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Richard Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic revivalism: Popular Evangelism in Britain and America 1790-1865* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978); Daniel Walker Howe, *Victorian America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976). Specifically on religion and the Civil War, there is a growing body of literature. George Rable shows how citizens steeped in providential history sought to discern divine will amid the contingency of war, see Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Thomas L. Wesley focuses on political preaching and suggests that Confederate clergy were more united in their defense of the southern nation than their counterparts in the north for the Union. He even suggests they were more effective than the government in this task and that their prominent position in society remained intact during Reconstruction; Wesley, *The Politics of Faith during the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013).

Until 1860, for the bulk of southerners the Union had provided sufficient scope for the fulfillment of expansionist ambitions. As chapter one demonstrates, secessionists had to work hard to develop a more compelling proposition that would compete successfully with the alternatives posited by either cooperationists who argued the Slave States had to act collectively and the Unionists who contended only the Union would still deliver future promise. In that context, secessionists did not wish for any continuity with the filibustering exploits of the 1850s, those products of the partisan gridlock in Congress. To an extent therefore, in looking forward to a southern confederacy they also sought to recreate the conditions of an earlier period of expansion, that of the early republic - when, guided by the wisdom of the Founding Fathers and especially by Thomas Jefferson, the nation seemed to multiply in size unhindered by internal constraints. Confederates claimed that they were the true inheritors of the 1776 promise of realizing the American expansionist impulse and northerners were the deviators. As the *Southern Illustrated News* declared in November 1862, “we see the ambition of liberty breaking the fetters of nation.”⁸

⁸ “Ambition,” *The Southern Illustrated News*, November 1, 1862 (UVA). For the expansionist impulse of 1776, see Peter Onuf, *Jefferson’s Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 2001). For an investigation of how southern adherence to the ideology of republicanism meant southerners feared dependence and therefore drove territorial and commercial expansion, see Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). Kenneth Greenberg suggests that slavery provided the mirror image of liberty and forcefully demonstrated to southerners the dangers of dependence, oppression and loss of freedom; avoiding dependence meant more than saving republican self-government—it meant expansion, see Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Masters and Statesmen: The Political Culture of American Slavery* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988). Hietala and Morrison likewise posit republicanism as central to westward expansion as it unfolded in the 1840s, Hietala through a southern determination to preserve an agrarian society and Morrison on the need to maintain sectional equality and self-government. Thomas R. Hietala *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Michael A. Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: the Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

While Confederates looked back to the promise of the American Revolution, the Confederacy was intended to be a decisive break with the antebellum Old South. In this argument, “The Fortunes of War” contrasts with recent studies of Confederate nationalism; these historians have argued that southern nationalism was an essential precondition for the later Confederate variant and hence there was substantial continuity between the two. Instead, from the moment secessionists tried to appeal to the Conditional Unionists of the Upper South and especially once the Confederacy came into being, the Confederate nation ceased to be a regional identity as part of and defined in opposition to the United States. Confederates retained their multiple identities and loyalties, but even before the war changed everything, the nation took the prior claim. In this context, the pursuit of expansion was an attempt by leading Confederates to transcend the differences of a diverse and divided Confederacy.⁹

Whatever the nostalgic aspects of the resumption of the right of expansion, Confederates regarded it also as integral to the survival and prosperity in the future of their nation state. The chapters that follow show how during the war, Confederates continually sought to continue their nation-building quest to expand; “The Fortunes of War” demonstrates there was no linear path of diminishing expectations from the heady days in February 1861, with the formation of the Confederacy, to the denouement at Appomattox over four years later. Rather, Confederates understood that the nature of

⁹ For historians who concur with Ernest Gellner’s argument that nationalism engendered nations and not the other way round and hence the importance to Confederate nationalism of continuity with that of the South see Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds, Nationalism and the American South, 1848-65*, (Oxford University Press, 2012), 4-5; Coleman Hutchison, *Apples and Ashes, Literature, Nationalism and the Confederacy*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 4. On the idea of multiple loyalties see David M. Potter, “The Historian’s Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa,” *The American Historical Review* 67 4 (1962):924-50; Gary W. Gallagher, *Becoming Confederates: Paths to a New National Loyalty* (Athens: the University of Georgia Press, 2013), 1-4.

their expansionist ambitions altered over time due to an ever-changing combination of three factors: first, the shifting consciousness of the sources their nation's power. For example, in 1862 and again in 1864, Confederates stressed the importance of industrialization and the development of its internal resources. At other times, Confederates concluded the Confederacy's sources of strength lay chiefly in the nation's ability to convert its supply of cotton into wealth in an interdependent world.

Second, Confederates amended their expansionist ambitions in accordance with the perceived opportunities and threats that arose from the events of the Civil War itself. Factors including changes in the internal politics of Mexico, French and Spanish intrigues, the intentions of British Conservatives, the political electoral calendar of the Union and, above all, the progress of the War, opened and closed routes to expansion for Confederates. Expansionist ambitions possessed by Confederates were governed by their own attitudes to the absorption of parts of Mexico and Cuba, hopes the Union may break up and their sense of the relative power of the Confederacy on the North American continent.

Third, Confederates regarded their expansionist ambitions as synonymous with peacetime pursuits and preparing for the future. Sometimes, Confederates thought more about the future. It mattered a great deal at the time of the formation of the Confederacy and again later at times during wartime, when the time peace seemed imminent – which it did on occasion in every year of the conflict. At other times, especially in early 1865, when the war seemed endless, seeing into the future became either too dark to contemplate or was crowded out by a struggle for present survival, which required the sacrifice of everything. Even then, Confederates did not cease to think about the future,

but in such circumstances it devolved to an individual context, which became virtually universal after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865.

"The Fortunes of War" intends to help explain why Confederates fought so hard for so long, until the point of surrender had been reached. Confederate soldiers' letters home showed that an expansive and great future in an abstract sense mattered to them. As citizen soldiers, these Confederates never viewed expansion as a direct war aim to be achieved by the defeat of the Union. Instead, once peace had been secured, they would be left free to pursue this legitimate individual and national objective. This dissertation examines how these soldiers' leaders both responded to and sought to encourage and shape this human need. The prominent people are the secessionists and Confederates to whom I refer.¹⁰

Historians have ably explained how secession and the formation of the Confederacy were acts in response to a variety of fears. Confederates certainly believed the Republican Party threatened their slavery-based economy and social structure and way of life. Consequently, they needed to secede and fight for its protection. Within the Deep South, secessionists expressed concern that slavery's grip on the Border States and Upper South had weakened and with it those states' loyalty to the cause of the South. They then fought a defensive war for the protection of hearth and home, local community and comrades. However, "The Fortunes of War" endeavors to show this narrative omits

¹⁰ For soldiers, see James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For: 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994); Robert E. Bonner, *The Soldier's Pen: Firsthand Impressions of the Civil War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006); Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

the vital inclusion of hope as a motivator. The Atlantic World of the mid-nineteenth century was full of optimism about expectations for the future, especially in the United States and above all in the South. Secessionists and Confederates presented their nation state as the true embodiment of this hope, the fulfillment of which would be in the Confederacy's expansionist ambitions.¹¹

In proving what Confederate independence would mean, "The Fortunes of War," aims to indirectly vindicate the purpose of the Civil War. Scholars, perhaps influenced by the forthcoming centenary of the First World War and more recent events in Afghanistan and Iraq, are increasingly focusing on the Civil War's violent, seemingly futile, aspects and even to suggest that the conflict itself was an avoidable outcome of failures by politicians to achieve compromise. These are important topics to study, but should be only a part of Civil War scholarship. By presenting the ambitions of Confederates, my dissertation demonstrates that the Union was also engaged in a struggle with a hemispheric rival with ambitions for expansion and slavery that were far beyond the reach of any achievable settlement between Washington politicians.¹²

¹¹ On fear see Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001). On southerners in the Deep South worried about Border State loyalty see William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹² On the 'new revisionist' studies on the Civil War see Yael A. Sternhell, "Revisionism Reinvented? The anti-war turn in Civil War scholarship," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 2 (June 2013):239-52. On the resurrection of the blundering generation theme, see David Goldfield, *America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011); William J. Cooper, *We Have the War Upon Us: The Onset of the Civil War, November 1860 – April 1861* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012); Russell McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision to War: The Northern Response to Secession* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). For an emphasis on violence and destruction beyond the hard war debates, see Stephen Berry, ed., *Weirding the War, Stories from the Civil War's Ragged Edges* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

“The Fortunes of War” is a study of the Confederates’ view of the world and their place in it. Unlike globalization studies that examine the mid-nineteenth century, Confederates would not have agreed that a free labor, protectionist, industrializing, and centralizing nation state necessarily represented the future of the world. Instead they saw their nation, by dint of their race, economic size and military power, as a member of a privileged global club of leading nations, which had the tropical and subtropical parts of the world at its disposal. Confederates confidently assumed that they would be in a position to influence people and nations abroad than the other way round; but they did not see themselves in any way complacent—the great powers were competitive and motivated by self-interest. In particular, Confederates believed they needed to react to over-populated and, or industrialized nations having to import raw materials, and export goods and people.¹³

In examining the Confederate pursuit of expansion in such a context, this dissertation will also add to the scholarship on imperialism. Confederates needed to expand from a position of weakness and in reaction to threats both at home and abroad. Expansion was necessary to deal with the feared overpopulation of slaves, a need for security from Union aggression and concerns that both the Union and European powers would expand at the Confederacy’s expense in what it claimed as its own sphere of influence, Latin America and the Caribbean. There was an absence of asymmetry

¹³ Chris A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004). On transnational history as an evolving discipline, see Matthew Pratt Guterl, “The Futures of Transnational History,” *American Historical Review* 118 1 (February 2013):130-39. See also Matthew Pratt Guterl, *American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008); Edward Bartlett Rugemar, *The Problem of Emancipation: the Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2008).

between the center and periphery in the Confederacy, as especially later in the war, individuals in the borderlands took the initiative on expansion. Ironically these activities echoed the earlier initiatives of the filibusterers, from whom the Confederates had been so keen to distance their nation from. At the same time, however, these plans revealed surprising directions in Confederate expansion, such as the importance of the Pacific Ocean and above all explained why its proponents believed that the Confederacy needed to expand more than other nations.¹⁴

Finally, “The Fortunes of War” is an exercise in recovery of a national state of mind scarcely conceivable given the hindsight granted to historians by the catastrophic defeat of the Confederacy in April 1865. Much the expansionist ambitions voiced by later 1863 and especially into 1864 and 1865 must seem totally untethered to reality. But to the end, Confederates remained committed to their nation as something to both hope for and plan for. The dissertation’s title is ironic in that Confederates expected to make money and become great after, rather than during, the war. As a result, they could constantly rationalize setbacks as sacrifices, which would be justified by the success of the postwar

¹⁴ Empire by the mid nineteenth century had largely ceased to be the subject of anxiety that had earlier exercised some republicans. It now denoted a large and impressive domain, but the Confederacy is a useful example of an empire best approached as a complex circuit of agency in which bottom-up and mid-range claims matter, as well as top down command. The Confederate empire also capitalized on older connections, such as trade networks and the mid-nineteenth century international slave trade connecting Africa, Brazil and Cuba with the South. See Paul A. Kramer, “Power and Connection: Imperial Histories of the United States in the World,” *American Historical Review* 116 5 (December 2011):1348-91 and Greg Grandin, Anthony Pagden, “Liberal Empire and International Law,” *American Historical Review* 117 1 (February 2012):67-147. On the international slave trade on the eve of the Civil War, see Ted Maris-Wolf “‘Of Blood and Treasure’: Recaptive Africans and the Politics of Slave Trade Suppression,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 1 (March 2014):54-76. But I do not believe the Confederates regarded their imperial ambitions as an exercise in nostalgia, which David Cannadine argues was a strong influence on the British later in the century, see Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). On filibusters, see Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny’s Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Confederacy and only accepted its loss when it had been already destroyed by the armies of Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman.¹⁵

¹⁵ On the difficulty of recovering these ambitions, see William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2003). The debates on whether there was a Confederate nation continue to exercise historians. Emory M. Thomas initially asked whether the shock of war provided the catalyst to achieve unity. Thomas then concluded, as symbolized by the contradictory offensive-defensive war strategy, that the Confederacy was unable to simultaneously define itself and fight a war; Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979). Also see William W. Freehling, *The South Versus the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Paul Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1978); Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the secession crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989). Drew Gilpin Faust discussed the paradox at the heart of the Confederacy; a project which sought to preserve continuity with the past yet imposed tremendous change; Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge, 1988) For a view suggesting that there were Confederates who saw in their nation the chance to create something new in this very search for the promise of the Founders, see Michael T. Bernath, "the Confederacy as a Moment of Possibility," *The Journal of Southern History* 79 2 (May 2013):299-337. Also see Anne Sarah Rubin, *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill, 2005) and George C. Rable, *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1994). For the centrality of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to the Confederate nation and hence its survival until Appomattox, see Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Chapter One

‘The Destiny of Empire’: How leading Immediate Secessionists in late 1860 and early 1861 tried to counter the appeal of the Union.

Support secession in order to join an expansive southern confederacy; this was the message with which secessionists sought to persuade an uncommitted majority and reconcile southerners to the need for secession. That a slavery-based, independent nation would expand was a foregone conclusion. Expansion fulfilled individual and national needs; it separated the living, independent, and great nation from the dying, dependent, and small nation. In this argument, the existence of slavery rendered expansion a prerequisite.

Tactically, the need for expansion was also an important argument for secessionists to deploy. A southern confederacy would expand because the hated Republican Party appeared to devote its entire platform to its prevention. Secessionists also needed to outbid the almost equally expansive arguments of southern cooperationist secessionists and unionists. Secessionists also needed to take account of the expansion record of the United States, especially during the 1850s. While they could easily demonstrate that successive administrations had appeared to choke territorial expansion, the U.S. record on commercial expansion was extremely impressive. Fortuitously, however, the election of Abraham Lincoln appeared to coincide with a financial panic which could have presaged a recurrence of hard times. Moreover, despite the positive overall commercial performance of the Union, secessionists could point to sectional grievances: such as the threat of protective tariffs; southerners compelled to purchase northern goods; export via New York; and witness southern industries undercut by subsidized northern competitors.

Secessionists kept vaguely aspirational the vision of where and how a southern confederacy would expand. Within the continental U.S., they hoped for peaceful coexistence with the northern states, so mostly eschewed ambition there beyond their share of the territories. However, secessionists paid especial attention to the future of the Mississippi Valley and Border States to counter the prospect of a middle confederacy and present a southern confederacy as capable of controlling and perhaps ruling the entire Mississippi Basin. Secessionists presented their nation as an opportunity for merchants to establish direct trade links with Europe and deliver a surge in trans-Atlantic trade. The flag would follow trade as secessionists looked south to where they expected a movement of people and goods to be getting underway. The opportunity to establish a slaveholding confederacy across the tropical regions of the western hemisphere existed, but it would not last in a competitive world. Secession was only the first step towards the realization of that dream.

Why Expand?

Between the election of Abraham Lincoln on November 4, 1860, and the assembling of delegates for the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America on February 4, 1861, leading secessionists persuaded each other, the electors and members of the various state conventions about the merits of immediate secession and the swift formation of a southern confederacy. They achieved this feat through speeches, editorials, pamphlets, broadsides and letters. In order to accomplish this, they had to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a course of action compared with remaining in the Union and attempting, as cooperationists argued, for the southern states to collectively negotiate a settlement with the North. This process of evaluation forced

the secessionists to contemplate the consequences of commercial growth arising from adopting a free trade platform, relationships with European powers, and where a southern confederacy needed to expand. The outcome of this deliberation was an articulation of a vision of future expansion, ultimately imperial in scope as it extended outside the United States, which would be unleashed by an act of secession.

The cause, conduct, and course of the secessionist campaign were well known at the time. On September 6, the Constitutional Union Party presidential candidate, Senator John Bell of Tennessee informed his principal North Carolinian supporter, the leading Whig, William A. Graham, that “I have ever learnt the opinion that the Union cannot long survive the election of a sectional president.” He foresaw “how a talented and active minority may precipitate a majority of the people into measures which would not be approved by the majority if allowed to express their opinion directly at the poll.”¹

Expansion played a crucial, but indirect role in this exercise in persuasion. As the Presbyterian clergyman and president of the South Carolina College in Columbia, James H. Thornwell, wrote in a pamphlet that southerners would “not secede due to avarice.” Instead secessionists had to “cast about for considerations to reconcile [the South] to her destiny.” It was in this process that “for the first time, it was maintained that instead of being the loser, [the South] might be the gainer by the measure which the course of the United States government was forcing on her.” Secessionists neither invented expansionist ambitions to justify secession nor allowed such arguments to dictate why

¹ John Bell to William A. Graham, September 6, 1860, box 11, folder 191, William A. Graham Papers, #285, SHC.

they supported secession. Thornwell was right that instead expansionist ambitions were essential to secession as “motives to reconcile the mind to its necessity.”²

This expansion would be different in magnitude from earlier attempts by the United States because northern opposition would no longer restrain it. The Republican Party’s emphatic rejection of southern expansion within the Union meant expansion could only be undertaken after independence. Southerners had also witnessed a curbing by the United States government of the Manifest Destiny impulse during the 1850s. This policy meant that the Union ceased to be identified with the possibilities of the territorial growth of slavery and the development of slave states. Secessionists argued that a southern confederacy would enable them to resume their destiny of expansion.³

However, at the same time, it was also the success of the Union in generating prosperity and power that presented a challenge to secessionists. In order to persuade uncommitted southerners of their case, secessionists had to surpass the promise of the Union in their vision for a southern confederacy and this further drove their expansionist ambition. By 1860, the patriotic statesmen and business leaders of the United States

² James Henley Thornwell, *The State of the Country: an Article Republished from The Southern Presbyterian Review* (Columbia, S.C., 1860), 7-8. The article won wide acclaim as a cogent defense of the Southern point of view. The fact the Boston Athenaeum alone has three copies of the imprint attests to its wide circulation.

³ Thomas R. Hietala argued expansion was discarded by 1850 when the political costs, in terms of its entanglement with the slavery question, outweighed its benefits (Thomas R. Hietala *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985]). Edward P. Crapol asserted that expansionism was not cynical in the 1840s and vindicated President Tyler, who was “primed to produce an expansionist agenda and promote the gospel of extensive republic.” (Edward P. Crapol, *John Tyler, The Accidental President* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006]). Robert E. May shows how this earlier broad based national vision of the 1840s was subsequently changed into a bid for balance between the sections; how southward expansion became imperative in the 1850s, as westward appeared to be reserved for the North. This motivation for expansion led to the dominant view amongst historians that secession rendered redundant any need to pursue further territorial growth. May focuses on the provocative antics of filibusters and highlights how they actually retarded expansion through the discredit they attracted to America’s territorial expansion. (Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire 1854-1861* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973] and *Manifest Destiny’s Underworld*).

could look back with satisfaction upon the achievements of the Union. The success of the Union was symbolized for many by the twin events of the opening up of Japan from 1853 and the welcoming of the Prince of Wales on his visit in 1859. To excited onlookers, the United States was thus in the process of both asserting its own primacy over the ‘less developed’ parts of the world and its equality with the foremost power on Earth, which at that time was Britain. The bid for secession was a product of this context; not only were southern States apparently being deprived of the present fruits of this Union, but also the prospect of confederate expansion demonstrated a better future to be had than remaining in the Union.⁴

Secessionists presented future expansion, promised by the creation of a southern confederacy, as a vital object that justified immediate secession. They needed to outbid the benefits of Union in a positive fashion. Florence, Ala., state legislator, Judge Sidney Cherry Posey, saw no division between the success of the state and the individual when he observed in the Alabama Secession Convention, “the same rules which apply to the prosperity of individuals, are applicable to the welfare of nations.” Unionist, Lawrence County, Alabama, lawyer and state legislator, James S. Clark, had earlier said in the same debate that “these statistical facts, taken from...the census of 1850, augmented by a

⁴ An example of a southern eulogies of the Union was “The representatives of Eastern Potentates, who for ages have declined all intercourse with the rest of the world...bowed the head in token of respectful salutation to the chief magistrate of the Republic...the youthful Heir Apparent of the proudest monarchy on Earth..., stood UNCOVERED, side by side, with the same chief magistrate, at the tomb of Washington, in silent homage.” (Evans and Cogswell, *Epitaph on the United States of America*, January 1861 (Charleston, S.C.: Broadside, 1861, [UVA].) See also T.C. Faulkner, *History of the Revolution in the Southern States: including the special messages of President Buchanan, the ordinances of secession of the six withdrawing states* (New York: J.W. Trow, 1861). Even the skeptical British consul in Charleston conceded that the Union “has made some figure in the world during its brief existence, and furnished Englishmen with a ground of reasonable pride in the achievement of their kindred.” (Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 20, 1860, FO 5/745, p.253, PRO.) The density of speeches and writings praising the Union brought on a retort in the Senate by Senator Clingman “We have had eulogies upon the Union until they have been productive of mischief...” (Thomas L. Clingman, “Speech on the State of the Union,” December 4, 1860, CG, 5.)

decade's increase, demonstrate that the South, under the present Government, has attained a distinction almost unrivalled in material progress....” The consequence was “[these facts] admonish us to exercise great patience before we destroy the Confederation [the Union] which has supplied us with so much nourishment, growth and wealth.” Secession sought to maintain this propelling upward relationship between the national “career” and the individual “career.”⁵

Secessionists seized upon expansion as vital to deliver that promise of individual and collective advance. On January 25, 1861, Pickens County, Alabama, lawyer and state senator Lewis Maxwell Stone, in the Alabama secession convention, summarized the general case, “expansion seems to be the law and destiny of our institutions. To remain healthful and prosperous within, and to make sure our development and power, it seems essential that we grow without.” Similarly, before Lincoln’s election, but looking forward to the event as certain, a New Orleans newspaper editorial saw the “profitable expansion of [the South’s] territory as the natural order of things...” Secession would have to continue to deliver these wants.⁶

Secessionists argued that expansion was essential if nations were to survive in a competitive world. It also meant that the promise of the status quo to the South and the end of national expansion offered by the Republican Party was fraught with danger to the United States in general and the South in particular. “Bland” of Richmond, Virginia, declared “that civilization that has ceased to expand is doomed to perish” because

⁵ William R. Smith, *The History and Debates of the Convention of the People of Alabama* (1861; reprint, Spartanburg, South Carolina, 1975), 209, 87[source hereafter cited as Smith, *History and Debates*]. For the benefits of the Union, See Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011). For Alabamians spreading a very different message of fear, see Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion*, 51-58.

⁶ “Debate on the African Slave Trade Resumed,” January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 236-7.

“stagnation is the precursor of disease and death.” George W.L. Bickley, president of the Knights of the Golden Circle, agreed that there seemed to be no question of simply trying to stand still, he considered that “the idea of equilibrium is absurd, society must either advance or retrograde and we shall do well not to try and stop.”⁷

Secessionists celebrated the potential opportunity that would be presented by the formation of a new nation. In December, James E. Carnes of Texas declared that the “judicious separation of men into independent nationalities is the necessary law of human progress – a separate government is the test of the moral condition of the people.” Southerners had to be ready to make the most of the opening presented by secession and launch of the southern confederacy. Secessionists argued that history proved new and small nations could be stunningly successful, but only if they subsequently expanded. A popular reference for editorials and speeches at this time was the rise of the Dutch Republic in the sixteenth century. U.S. diplomat John L. Motley’s *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* had been published in 1856 and the first volume of his *History of the United Netherlands* in 1860. The themes of the overthrow of, and then triumph over, a universal tyranny had tremendous resonance for secessionist ambitions—the struggle to win international recognition; the bid for self-government and the subsequent distinguished international career of the Dutch, both as a global commercial center and cornerstone of the balance of power. While secessionists liked the outcomes of the Dutch struggle for

⁷ Bland, *A Southern Document: to the people of Virginia. The Great Issue! Our Relations to It* (Wytheville, Va.: D. A. St. Clair, 1861), 8; George W. L. Bickley, *Address to the People of the Southern States* (Richmond, Va.: n.p., 1860), 29. On the Knights of the Golden Circle using extra-political pressure to propel Texas and Virginia toward secession, but at the same time dispensing with their demand for a grand slaveholding empire in the southern hemisphere in favor of the protection of southern rights see David C. Keehn, *Knights of the Golden Circle: Secret Empire, Southern Secession, Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013).

independence, they wished to avoid the intermediate stages of reliance on, and supplication to, other powers.⁸

Secessionists presented an expansionist southern confederacy as a necessary outcome of secession in order to allay fears amongst southerners that the new nation would become dependent on another power. A confederacy consisting of solely the Deep South states could only constitute a small nation from the perspective of secessionists. Small nations did exist, and even prosper, but these were formerly great powers now on the downside of the wheel of fortune of the rise and fall of countries in history. They survived on sufferance as buffer zones between great powers. Secessionists deemed that future as being unacceptable because it would not fulfill the need to protect slavery. Advocates for immediate secession had to confront the cooperationist argument that the resulting independent state would have no alternative but either to “become a dependency of Great Britain, or of France, or [even] return...to the [United States].” “A weak state can only maintain a nominal independence,” and representative James S. Clark of Lawrence County, Alabama, continued in the convention, “far from enabling us the more effectually to secure the interests of slavery, would only invite the descent...of Northern

⁸ James E. Carnes, *Address, on the duty of the slave states in the present crisis / delivered in Galveston, Dec. 12th, 1860, by special invitation of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence, and many of the oldest citizens* (Galveston, Tex.: "News" Book and Job Office, 1860), 7. On references to the Dutch war of independence see “Fundamental Principles Involved,” *The Daily Picayune*, January 15, 1861; “The Moderation of Tyranny,” *The Daily Delta*, January 23, 1861 (Drummond, *Editorials*, 399-400, 411-12); John Lothrop Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic, a History in Three Volumes*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1856). The example of the Dutch encouraged secessionists as Motley wrote that “to the Dutch Republic...is the world indebted for practical instruction in that great science of political equilibrium which must always become more and more important as the various states of the civilized world are pressed more closely together, and as the struggle for preeminence becomes more feverish and fatal...A great naval and commercial commonwealth, occupying a small portion of Europe but conquering a wide empire by private enterprise of trading companies, girdling the world with its innumerable dependences...[The United States] must look with affectionate interest upon the trials of the elder commonwealth...the establishment of its external system of dependencies and its interior combinations for self-government and European counterpoise. The lessons of history and the fate of free states can never be sufficiently pondered by those upon whom so large and heavy a responsibility for the maintenance of rational human freedom rests.” (Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, vol 1, iii-vi.)

marauders.” Protection of slavery required the southern States to remain part of a ‘great power’ after secession.⁹

The context of Americans welcoming Italian Unification during 1860 meant secessionists were vulnerable to the charge that they were consigning southerners to the fate from which the Italian people had just escaped. The unionist New Orleans newspaper, the *Daily Crescent* warned that the chaos and tyranny of the disunited former Italian principalities was evidence “the history of the world proves the failure of governments embracing very small communities...” Therefore “the present reunion of the Italian people under one government is hailed by the civilized world as the regeneration of that country.” Yet at the same time across the Atlantic, “state action and immediate secession are working to produce the same fate for the South which for centuries has degraded and ruined the Italians.” Secessionists had to demonstrate that their strategy involving immediate disunion would be rapidly followed by a confederacy committed to expansion.¹⁰

Expansion and Slavery

To oppose the Republican Party means supporting expansion, and this never more true than in relation to slavery. Indeed, the Republicans’ slave power argument was

⁹ Clark, “Minority Report on the Ordinance of Secession,” January 10, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 82.

¹⁰ “On President Buchanan’s Message to Congress,” *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, December 8, 1860, in Dwight Lowell Drummond, ed., *Southern Editorials on Secession* (New York: The Century Co., 1931), 312 [hereafter cited as Drummond, *Editorials*]. The newspaper had earlier noted that “Italy, broken into minute divisions, has for centuries been the prey of the strong and the victim of the bold.” Again, as with Motley and the Dutch, the intensity of this international struggle between nations seemed to be gathering strength and hence the necessity of those contending secession that the end product would be strong enough to both survive and then prosper in this competitive world. See also Paula Gemme, *Domesticating Foreign Struggles: The Italian Risorgimento and Antebellum American Identity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005) and Don H. Doyle, ed., *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America’s Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

responsible for the prominence of territorial expansion in 1850s political debate and Southerners blamed Republican intransigence for the failure to achieve an acceptable compromise. On January 9, 1861, the Mississippi convention concluded that Republican Party policy “refuses the admission of new slave states into the Union and seeks to extinguish [slavery] by confining it within its present limits, denying the power of expansion.” In the United States Senate, the month before, Senator Alfred Iverson of Georgia understood that opposing expansion of slavery was “the great shibboleth of the Republican Party.” By making the opposition to expansion of slavery so integral to party unity, Republicans had contributed to its advocacy by southerners and their determination that expansion be pursued outside the United States. Territorial expansion and expansion of slavery were to Republicans wholly different objectives, but secessionists conflated the two and asserted that Republicans effectively blocked both.¹¹

The means by which the Republicans intended to combat slavery expansion contributed specifically to the southern case for secession. Not only was proscription the Republican policy; but also secessionists thought they understood the Republican determination on future enforcement, whatever the obstacles. Secessionists asserted that Lincoln “has openly avowed that he will disregard the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States declaring it the right of the South to carry slave property into the territories.” Such belief in Republican intransigence made a mockery of efforts by

¹¹ “A Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union,” *Journal of the State Convention and Ordinances and Resolutions Adopted in January 1861*. Jackson, Miss., Printed by E. Barksdale, Jackson, Mississippi, 1861 (UVA). Alfred Iverson, “Speech on the State of the Union,” December 11, 1860, *CG*, 48. Two days later on December 13, Iverson went on to say of the Republicans that “it is the great principle which stands at the very basis of their political organization, that slavery shall never advance one inch beyond its present boundaries, and shall never plant a footprint in any Territory of the United States.” (*CG*, 48.) On the Republican slave power argument, see Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

Senator John D. Crittenden of Kentucky directed toward a compromise. If expansion was so important for Republicans to prevent by whatever means, it likewise became crucial for secessionists to show that radical steps, outside the Union, could only achieve expansion for southerners.¹²

Secessionists did not demand the expansion of slavery only because the Republicans forbade it. The necessity of expansion of nations in general, so as to be on the right side of the dividing line between living and dying powers, was intensified by the specific attributes of slavery. Bland declared “slavery must have both security and perfect assurance of its natural expansion and development, if it wants either it must ultimately perish.” Bland understood that slavery has inbuilt “within it the law of expansion and growth.” Therefore he agreed with Thornwell that if the Republicans “can circumscribe the area of slavery, surround it with a circle of non-slaveholding states and prevent it from expanding, nothing more is required to secure its ultimate abolition and it will wither and decay under hostile influences.”¹³

Secession was an opportunity for slavery to realize its potential. On November 5, John B. Thrasher of Mississippi asserted in a speech that it was simply “duty to God and ourselves and to posterity to perpetuate African slavery and to extend it as a missionary duty.” John H. Parkhill of Maryland explained in his preface to a book on Haiti that “white and black races cannot exist together as equals in community.” Dr. William H. Holcombe of Tensas Parish, Louisiana, agreed and declared that “slavery is the only way an inferior race can coexist with contact with a superior one.” The South, he continued,

¹² *Constitution of the Southern Rights Association of the State of Louisiana*, November 23, 1860, included as an attachment in Thomas Mure to Lord John Russell, December 13, 1860, FO 743, pp. 68, 74, PRO.

¹³ Bland, *A Southern Document*, 6; Thornwell, *The State of the Country*, 24.

was “now fully convinced of the benefits and blessings it is conferring on the negro race” and with secession, “beginning to catch a glimpse the true nature and extent of slavery’s mission.” He anticipated “no terminus to the institution.” Holcombe proceeded to explain why slavery “is no retrograde movement.” “It is the means,” he revealed “thereby man is to subdue the tropics all round the globe to order and beauty and to the wants and interests of an ever expanding civilization.” Within this global purpose of slavery, Holcombe argued a southern confederacy’s mission was “to succeed in establishing a vast, happy, and glorious slaveholding republic throughout all tropical America.”¹⁴

It was an accepted axiom of slaveholders that slavery required constant territorial expansion in order to survive. The leading Alabama secessionist William Lowndes Yancey was unusual in arguing that expansion was only driven by the need to maintain sectional balance and hence the impetus to expand would cease after disunion. Secessionists, as they thought the black population was growing more quickly than the white, believed expansion was essential to prevent any concentration of slaves and risk of insurrection. Census data appeared to corroborate these arguments. Bland believed the slave population was doubling every twenty five years, others put the period of increase at twenty. As Senator Robert Augustus Toombs of Georgia rhetorically asked about the slaves, “[W]hat shall be done with them? We must expand or perish. Those who tell you that the territorial question is an abstraction, that you can never colonize another territory without the African Slave Trade, are both deaf and dumb to the history of the past sixty years.” When Toombs denied that the issue of territory was an abstraction, he rejected the

¹⁴ John B. Thrasher, *Slavery, a Divine Institution: A speech made before the Breckinridge and Lane Club on November 5, 1860* (Port Gibson, Miss.: Southern Reveille Book and Job Office, 1861), 21; John H. Parkhill, *Alaux Gustave de Soulouque and his Empire from the French of Gustave D’Aluax* (Richmond, Va.: J.W. Randolph, 1861), xiii. William H. Holcombe, M.D, *The Alternative: a Separate Nationality, or the Africanization of the South* (New Orleans, La.: Delta Mammoth Job Office, 1860), 6-7.

argument that expansion was only driven by the need to maintain sectional parity in the Senate with the North. Expansion was also necessitated by the requirement of slavery to extend its footprint in order to meet the needs of an expanding slave population and the desire of slaveholders to grow more crops for export.¹⁵

Secessionists deemed natural slave population growth to be a sufficient imperative for expansion; consequently, it was possible to be in favor of expansion and against the immediate reintroduction of the African slave trade. As Posey stated, “the rapid increase of our slaves, points to the necessity of acquiring more territory before we import more slaves from Africa.” Secessionists did not believe the South had undeveloped lands to satisfy the natural growth of the slave population, let alone the resumption of imports. [Stone] added: “[I]f our limits are to be circumscribed, and we are to have no territorial expansion or outlet, then to increase the numbers of our slave population by importations from Africa would be disastrous.” Most secessionists agreed the need was greater for more land for expansion than it was for more slaves for expansion. A southern confederacy would both need to expand and not require more slaves from Africa because it had a large and naturally growing surplus slave population in the Upper South.¹⁶

¹⁵ William L. Yancey, “No Balance of Power to Strive for and Sustain,” January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 251. Robert Toombs, “Secession Speech,” November 11, 1860, in William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, eds., *Secession Debated: Georgia's Showdown in 1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) [hereafter Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*], 40.

¹⁶ Smith, *History and Debates*, 209, 236; Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 5, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 233. PRO. Secessionists tended to agree the South had enough slaves, and there was resistance to any policy that would reduce the market price. Supporters of reopening the trade tended to concentrate on the inherent, moral, disapproval of slavery as an institution that the ban on the trade allegedly conveyed. Rhett told Consul Bunch “that to prohibit the slave trade was, virtually, to admit that the institution of slavery was an evil and a wrong” as opposed to appeasing border State sensitivities about high prices of slaves.

A significant minority of secessionists did indeed advocate the reintroduction of the African slave trade to enable faster and preemptive expansion. But South Carolina secessionist Robert Barnwell Rhett conscious of the sensitivities of the British consul, assured him that “he personally, and nearly all the politicians of the older States were opposed to the introduction of fresh slaves from Africa...” But, Rhett continued: “He felt assured that the newer States of the present Union, such as Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana...required fresh labourers, in view of the increasing demand for cotton, and that such labour could only be obtained from Africa.” The British need for cotton, driving massive economic growth in the South, justified an aggressive expansion sustained by the reopening of the slave trade.¹⁷

Outbidding the Cooperationist & Unionist Case with the Border States

Some secessionists saw expansion as a necessary compensation for the loss of the Border States to a southern confederacy. For Stone, a supporter both of immediate secession, the question of border state secession had a direct relationship to expansion: “[S]hould the border states refuse to unite their destiny with ours, then we may be compelled to look for territorial strength and political power to those rich and beautiful lands that lie on our south west frontier.” The expected actions of the border slave states had an influence on plans for expansion.¹⁸

More precisely, secessionists had to trump southern Unionists who argued that leaving the Union would forfeit forever any share of the federal territories in the West.

¹⁷ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 5, 1860, FO 5/745, p.234, PRO. James F. Dowdell’s motion to reintroduce the African Slave Trade was defeated in the Alabama convention by a vote of 40-19 (Smith, *History and Debates*, 264.)

¹⁸ Smith, *History and Debates*, 237.

Additionally, immediate secessionists had to defeat the more compelling cooperationist case, which was for secession by all the slave states together and only after negotiations with the Union had failed. Therefore, cooperationists proposed a delay in the secession of the cotton states, in order that they could act in concert with the remaining slave states. To plan these actions, cooperationists intended to hold a southern convention, which they felt was the appropriate forum for the composition of a list of grievances for the North's attention and action. For cooperationists, the priority in such a convention would be to petition for Congressional protection of slave property in the territories. For all the Chicago platform's certainty of president-elect Abraham Lincoln's veto on the expansion of slavery into the territories, ratified by his silence thereafter, cooperationists made persuasive arguments about the limitations of his power and hence the feasibility of yet another compromise.

Secessionists had to meet the challenge of cooperationists who argued that separate state action, without the border slave states, jeopardized slavery expansion. Whereas, cooperationists continued, eventual secession by the entire South in concert was the essential precondition for expansion. After all, as the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* declared, it was "for equal rights in the Territories the South determined to make a stand; not to abandon them." According to cooperationist and Georgian state senator Benjamin H. Hill on November 15, geographical proximity and destiny meant these territories "will be at the control of the united South, and we can scarcely fail to secure its occupation even if no division can be amicably effected." Instead of a future when "the southern states alone, with the territory naturally falling into our hands, would form the greatest government then on earth...", separate secession would mean any

cotton State “voluntarily relinquishing whatever interest she has in the golden fruitage of the territories.” This abdication would involve a narrowing of personal and state ambition; on January 10, Clark asked “has the cotton bloom no interest in the Indian Territory worth Alabama’s attention?” Cooperationists countered that immediate secession meant, at best, a future of provincial obscurity and, at worst, slavery in decline because of its dependence on expansion. Moreover, geographical location of the border slave states was vital to the cooperationist reasoning that only secession of all the southern states would mean that “their northern border will be above all that territory, which, from its climate, its soil and productions, is adapted to the extension of slavery. “The Inclusion of Missouri and Arkansas in any confederacy was essential to ensure that “Our western frontier will then outlie upon the north and east of a large proportion of this territory.”¹⁹

Both cooperationists and Unionists argued that the best way to secure slavery and a prosperous future for southerners was by remaining within the United States. As Sam Houston told a meeting in Texas on January 24, 1861, the Union was the “haven of safety” for border states in particular, and in this group he included Texas beset by Native American and Mexican raids. Winfield Scott asked both Graham and Letcher: “Would your slaves be less secure and their labor be less profitable under the new order of things than the old?” Graham summed up the case to which secessionists had to answer, in a memorandum written in December 1860, he concluded “secession is not an appropriate or effectual remedy for the injuries under which the southern states are laboring.”

¹⁹ “What Cooperation Is,” *The Daily Picayune*, December 20, 1860, in Drummond, *Editorials*, 353; Benjamin H. Hill, “Unionist Speech,” November 15, 1860, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 104; Clark, “Minority Report on the Ordinance of Secession,” January 10, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 82, 85.

Graham thought it nonsensical “to depart from the Union leaving behind in the hands of her supposed enemies all her interests in the national accumulations of eighty years – public arms, ships, munitions of war, armies, public domain and other public property in which she had proportional rights...”²⁰

Secessionists sought to prove that this necessary “united South,” which would result in being in a position to obtain a share of the spoils would only become a reality as a result of immediate individual state secession. They explained that states were moving toward secession at different speeds because of differences that precluded joint action. A greater interest in the application of the Fugitive Slave Law existed among border states, and, at a more basic level, “these border States can get along without slavery...but the cotton States cannot.” However, having accepted these differences, secessionists argued over a period extending from “immediately” to “in the rapid process of time” to “eventually” for the border states to join them.²¹

Secessionists claimed that the act of secession and a southern confederacy’s re-adoption of the federal Constitution with improvements meant it was they who were the true inheritors of the promise of the Union. Prominent among these proponents was Yancey, who saw the existence of “a southern Confederacy, with the federal Constitution, slightly altered to suit an entire slaveholding community, [as] an invitation to southern States...” In his January 28, broadside to the electors of Rockbridge County, Virginia., convention candidate, Cornelius Clark Baldwin, looked forward to “a southern Confederacy...in due time permanently organized on the basis of the federal Constitution

²⁰ Sam Houston, *Message of Gov. Houston, of Texas, on Secession* (San Antonio, Tex.: Herald Steam Press, 1861), 8; Winfield Scott, “Views &c”, October 29, 1860, folder 192, William A. Graham, “Memorandum”, undated December 1860, folder 193, William A. Graham Papers, #285, SHC.

²¹ Alfred Iverson, “Speech on the State of the Union,” December 11, 1860, CG, 49.

with such additional provisions as will secure to the South and to every section of our country the most ample self-protection of its peculiar interests.” The South alone adhered to the precepts of the Constitution and looked to a future, in Baldwin’s words, of “my native South against the whole North and the whole world.” In these circumstances, an expansionist South was integral to the restoration of Jefferson’s “empire of liberty,” which was argued by secessionists to have been thwarted by the northern politicians of the 1850s Union.²²

In conjunction with the constitutional framework for growth, secessionists argued, lay the common interests and common destiny of the border and cotton slave states as motives for expansion. Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi assured Rhett that “the planting States have a common interest of such magnitude that their union, sooner or later for the protection of that interest is certain.” Judge George Booker of Virginia wrote about the eventual border state secession to Senator R. M. T. Hunter of Virginia that “how sad that that demonstration was necessary. Instinct - interest, honor, safety also point in the proper direction.” Georgia Convention member Henry Lewis Benning stated “this mere feeling of fraternity would be enough, but it will have the aid of interest.” The word “interest” was central. It was meant in a dynamic sense - a shared stake in the existence of slavery was necessary, but not sufficient, it was also an expectation of shared benefits of greater prosperity and power inherent in its growth. At one time, the states of the Union had possessed a common interest, but now, owing to the growth of anti-slavery

²² William L. Yancey, “Speech on the Motion to elect a second convention to elect representatives to the Provisional Congress,” January 17, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 144; C.C. Baldwin to the Citizens of Rockbridge, January 28, 1861 Broadside B 28 (UVA).

belief and the development of a distinct economy in the North, that bond had been broken.²³

The main shared interest of seceding states was in the perpetuation and expansion of slavery. Hunter detailed how “in the southern Confederacy, [Virginia and the other border slave states] would find an outlet for their surplus population of slaves, not only in these co-States but in whatever territory might be acquired by that Union.” Demand for slaves from newly acquired territories would keep slave prices high and possibly enable the Border States to become, in time, free of slaves if they so wished. Upper South secessionists, such as Hunter, laid particular stress on a southern confederacy that also included free states or parts of states; the problem for him and others was a confederation between slave and anti-slavery states. The assertion by secessionists of a joint interest between the border and cotton states in the expansion of slavery also extended into more general economic terms.²⁴

Promising Greater Wealth: Free Trade and Commercial Arguments for Secession

Secessionists had a potential problem in demonstrating to southerners the potential for expansion of commercial agriculture that would ensue after disunion. The year 1860 was the culmination of an unrivalled, to date, economic boom and hence the

²³ Davis to Rhett, November 10, 1860 *JDC* 4: 542; George Booker to Hunter December 8, 1860, box 7, Hunter Correspondence folder “A – Bo,” Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS; Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 130.

²⁴ Senator Hunter of Virginia, “The Border States - Their Position After Disunion”, *DBR* 5, 1 (January 1861):114. *The Review* of Charlottesville, Virginia on, January 4, 1861, editorialized “the number of slaves would not be (materially increased) by allowing it to go into the Territories. Slavery would be diffused, but not increased. Or rather it would shift its location. Missouri, Kentucky &c., would in process of time become free, and their slaves would go to the cotton states and the new slave Territories - each new slave Territory would drain a border State, the areas of slavery would not really be enlarged. On the other hand, if the South had no outlet for its slaves, in the process of time, it would become Africanized. The tide of emigration from the border states might even be arrested, and Slavery fastened, whereas under the principle of expansion, it would otherwise cease.” (Drummond, *Editorials*, 390.)

risk, or rather attraction, that the potential individual and collective achievement within the Union seemed limitless. As the Georgia Unionist Alexander Hamilton Stephens asked: “[H]ave we not in the South, as well as at the North, grown great, prosperous and happy under [the Union’s] operation?” This economic situation was unlike that of territorial expansion, which the secessionists could legitimately show to have been thwarted in the 1850s, first with the stifling of Manifest Destiny and now threatened with its total proscription in the future by Lincoln. The challenge to secessionists was to build a convincing case for greater prosperity within a future confederacy. Even more than with territorial expansion, a people used to experience increased prosperity would not accept a future without accelerating improvement and progress.²⁵

Secessionists argued that the long period of commercial expansion under the aegis of the Union was coming to an end. They portrayed disunion as a chance to recover what they argued was, in reality, an increasingly jeopardized economic expansion. Some believed that the economic growth occurred despite, and not because of, the federal government. In particular there were also doubts about the government’s creditworthiness. In the Senate, Thomas Lanier Clingman of North Carolina could declare that “it was admitted that the government was in straightened circumstances” and Hunter gloomily reported, “I think things have got to that pass that we should consider all these means of saving the public credit.” This loss of confidence meant Secessionists

²⁵ Stephens, “Unionist Speech,” November 14, 1860, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 63. Davis in the Senate was even more forceful and declared that it was “under [the Union] the people have been prosperous, beyond comparison with any other [system of government]; whose career is recorded in the history of man.” December 10, 1860, *CG*, 29. The great planters of the lower Mississippi Valley seemed especially cool to secession as the British Consul in New Orleans, Thomas Mure, wrote “[New Orleans] is the great ‘entrepot’ of the agricultural product of the valley of the Missi, and of the great western states, the value of last year reached the enormous sum of 185 millions of dollars. It did not seem probable, therefore, that such vast interests would be imperiled...” (Thomas Mure to Lord John Russell, December 13, 1860, FO 5/743, p. 64, PRO.)

revised downward expectations of a continuation of the historic increase of staple crop production. Looking to prospects in 1861, sugar planter and Louisiana governor Thomas O. Moore predicted that “the great decrease in the production of cotton is now generally admitted, the deficiency compared with last year is estimated at 700,000 to 800,000 bales for the whole crop of the United States.” Even before considering the economic grievances felt by the South, there seemed grounds for considering that Secession might enable the South to resume its economic growth.²⁶

More precisely, secessionists saw immediate secession as a swift way to solve what they saw as a sudden and unprecedented economic panic leading to a period of hard times caused by the election of Lincoln. A combination of apparently insoluble economic and political problems enabled secessionists to exaggerate the peril they faced. Lazarus Whitehead Powell of Kentucky told the Senate that “for the first time in the history of our country, we are in the midst of a fearful commercial and financial revulsion, now rapidly approaching a most alarming and disastrous crisis...which have been produced alone by political causes...” Consul Bunch agreed “the effect of the present condition of publick [sic] affairs upon the money market and commerce generally of this city, is extreme.” James Spurlock Williamson of Lowndes County summed up the economic crisis by telling the Alabama Convention to “look...to the deplorable condition of our financial and commercial affairs...confidence lost, gloom and despair depicted in every

²⁶ Clingman, Hunter, Senate debate on Treasury Note Bill, Committee on Finance, December 11, 1860, *CG*, 70; *Special Message from Thomas O. Moore, December 1860* (Baton Rouge, La.: J.M. Taylor, 1860) enclosed in Thomas Mure to Lord John Russell, December 13, 1860, FO 5/743, p. 80, PRO. Since the summer, southerners had become concerned about economic prospects for 1861. Mure had earlier written that “the commercial year opened with a very flattering prospect for the cotton trade, and to some extent these expectations have been realized...[But] the prospect for the coming crop appears much less flattering than at the same period last year.” (Thomas Mure to Lord John Russell, June 14, 1860, FO 5/743, p. 45, PRO.)

countenance.” By linking a poorer crop to uncertainty created by Lincoln’s election, secessionists felt they could convincingly argue that they had a swift political solution to get the economy back to expansion.²⁷

To secessionists, the anticipated addition of the border states was integral to an economically expansive southern confederacy. The border states’ agricultural and commercial activities would enable the southern confederacy to present to the world a truly national economy within an international system, as well as demonstrate its capability for the mass export of raw materials. Hunter saw the commercial expansion, at least in part of the South, inherent in the development of a thriving ‘balanced’ southern economy to supplant that of the Union - “in the southern Confederacy, the border States would soon derive all the advantages which the non-slaveholding, and particularly the New England States now derive from the market of the cotton States.” Benning agreed that “in a separate government with us, the border states would have for their manufactures that monopoly of our rich markets that the North now has.” Economic diversification would benefit all border states, “with Virginia, this would especially be the case...an unexampled development of her vast capacity for mining, manufacturing and commercial production.” The spoils of the thriving economy of the Union would,

²⁷ Powell, Senate Debate “State of the Union,” December 10, 1860, *CG*, 24; Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, November 29, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 227. PRO; Williamson, “Speech,” January 17, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 138. In a later debate on the admission of Kansas (itself a provocative topic) Senator Nicolson of Tennessee told the senate of a “widespread disastrous, pecuniary, and commercial revulsion that has taken place, this destruction of private and public credit which within the last 60 days [he was speaking on December 21, 1860] has diminished the actual value of estates of this country from 25 to 50%...” *CG*, 182. Bunch added in his letter to Russell, while “noting the political aspect making this[crisis] intractable and serious, that though ‘financial crises’ are by no means rare in the United States, and are, in their ordinary form, as the natural result of over-trading, bad enough. They are, however, far less dangerous than the present one, which proceeds from political causes, the end of which is not easy to foresee...” (Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, November 29, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 227, PRO.)

after secession, be concentrated on the smaller footprint of a future southern confederacy, with a greater concentration of economic benefits.²⁸

George W. Randolph believed that many Virginians regarded the alleged reasons for cotton state secession, chiefly fears over Lincoln's future dispensation of patronage and the appointment of "judges, collectors &c.," as "frivolous and even ridiculous." But as early as November 10, he made a case for secession that rested on economic factors. According to Randolph, if Virginia remained "in the northern republic, her position will be dishonorable, dangerous and ruinous. [Virginia] will feel her degradation and be made to feel it, the anti-slavery agitation will go on until emancipation is forced upon her, she has no industrial pursuits except the cultivation of tobacco, which will not be prostrated by northern competition and the loss of her southern markets."²⁹

The bleakness of the future for Virginia if the state remained in the Union would be offset if it joined a southern confederacy. In such a nation, Randolph anticipated that the economically distracting "anti-slavery movement would at once cease, [Virginia] would have an opportunity to devote her whole attention to the development of her wealth and prosperity." Virginia would benefit politically and economically, from being a more significant voice in a smaller union and being a member of a more advantageous economic arrangement, Virginia's "population would give her great influence and importance and her capacities for manufacturing, and her favorable situation for

²⁸ Hunter, "The Border States - Their Position After Disunion," *DBR* 5, 1 (January 1861):114; Benning "Disunionist Speech," Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 130. An expansionist economic plan is endorsed by historian John Majewski, see Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of the Confederate Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

²⁹ George Wythe Randolph to Cordelia Randolph, November 3, 1860, folder 208, Nicholas Philip Trist Papers, #02104, SHC; George Wythe Randolph to Mary Randolph, November 10, 1860, box 10, Edgehill-Randolph Papers, #1397, UVA.

European commerce, would make her the great manufacturing and commercial state of the confederacy....” Randolph expected a confederate government’s economic policy to be further geared to benefit Virginia because “being relieved by a tariff from northern competition and put into connection with an immense southern market which could exchange the raw material for her manufactures, she would advance in wealth and population with immense rapidity.”³⁰

Commercial expansion would therefore be facilitated by the adhesion of the border states to an evolving southern confederacy. Moreover, Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia stressed the inherent nature of southern commercial expansion, for “us of the South...have within ourselves, all the elements of wealth, power, and national greatness, to an extent probably possessed by no other people on the face of the earth...if we were but true to ourselves, our power would be invincible and our prosperity unbounded.” Secessionists attempted to convince southerners how they could be ‘true to themselves’ within a confederacy, as opposed to within the Union, and ‘unlock those elements within themselves.’ For secessionists, these phrases meant the emancipation of the South from its tributary status to the northern economy - secession would unleash explosive growth, both economic and territorial.³¹

Expansion would deliver this potential by ensuring the social cohesion of the white population and enable all whites to achieve economic independence by removing African American competition where necessary. The resulting mobility would enable the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Joseph E. Brown, *Special Message of Governor Joseph E. Brown to the Legislature of Georgia, November 7, 1860* (Milledgeville, Ga., Broughton, Nisbit and Barnes, 1860) enclosure in James Molyneaux, British Consul to Savannah, to Lord John Russell, November 16, 1860, FO 5/743, p. 243, PRO.

slave population to act as a “safety valve to protect the white laborer against a...ruinous decline in wages.” “With an outlet for emigration,” Hunter stated, “the slave is first to move under a decline in the rate of wages. The law of profit moves him to a theatre where he will earn more for his master, and yet more for himself...” The mobility of slavery enabled by expansion would mean “the labor market which [the slave] leaves is thus gradually relieved from the pressure, and the white man remains in the land of his birth, to enjoy the profits of renumerating operations.” Governor Brown stated that the status of the non-slaveholding white population was dependent on the expansion of slavery. The South had to have “new Constitutional guarantees, which will secure our equal rights in the territories” as “the poor honest laborers of Georgia can never consent to see slavery abolished and submit to all the taxation, vassalage, low wages and downright degradation...”³²

Only a southern confederacy promised commercial freedom from financial burdens levied by the Union. Secessionists argued that numerous discriminatory ‘duties’ were imposed on the South by the northern majority section. Benning spoke of “a number of drains...through which the money of the South is incessantly flowing to the North...[secession] would cut off these drains and turn them back to the South to enrich its manufactures, commerce and agriculture....” Secession had its economic counterpart in southerners being free to adopt the platform of free trade.³³

³² Senator Hunter of Virginia, “the border-states - their position after disunion,” *DBR* 5, 1 (January 1861):114. Governor Brown added “the poor would all become tenants, as they are in England, the New England States, and all old countries where slavery does not exist.” (Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 152, 155.)

³³ Benning, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 134. In a year Benning reckoned these to cost US\$85m of which US\$50m was the tariff, \$3.2m coasting trade; \$350k indirect trade; \$150,000 fishing bounties; \$1.1 million Fugitive Slaves; \$4 million South’s overseas imports coming via the North; \$11.2

Secessionist adherence to free trade was integral to their visions of commercial expansion, cheap government at home, and moral leadership abroad. As Rhett told Bunch, “free trade would form an integral portion of their scheme of government.” Domestically, it would enrich the population, as Benning observed, southern “consumers would gain eighty million dollars per annum in clear money in the subsequent lower prices at which they could purchase their goods.” As well as boosting the living standards and demand at home, free trade promoted commerce. In the words of Alabama convention delegate Henry Cox Jones of Lauderdale County, “commerce never fails to elevate the mental horizon, and expand the range of vision.”³⁴

In advocating free trade, secessionists sought to place the future of a southern confederacy in the vanguard of human progress and improved international relations. For, as Major W. H. Chase wrote in the January edition of *De Bow's Review*: “[I]t is now undisputed by political economists that just as trade becomes free, and the intercommunications of nations and states are relieved of restrictions of all kinds - so its movement is extended and accelerated - the true equation of the world's interests rests.” Having asserted this axiom, Chase added that “there is but one commercial nation in the world which...could adopt the policy of free trade, and resort to direct taxation for the support of cheap government...due exclusively to the possession of the cotton zone of the world.” Secession would create a nation which, owing to its cotton production, could

million, excess of federal public expenditure allocated to the North; \$15 million, southern travel in the North. He also backdated some of these costs back to 1789 and with a hefty charge of interest reckoned the South should be \$4 billion richer than it was in 1860 (Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 140-1.)

³⁴ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 5, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 231, PRO; Benning Speech, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 142; Jones of Lauderdale, “Confiscation of Property debate,” January 23, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 178.

most closely approximate “perfect free trade” in policy and so become a force for world peace and commercial integration.³⁵

Secessionists did not profess, unlike those who adhered to the laissez-faire economic policies espoused by the Manchester School in Britain, to be doctrinaire free traders. They supported the creed only because free trade specifically helped the power and slavery system of the southern States. For all of Rhett’s earlier assurances, Bunch noticed the absence of free trade from the ordinance regulating the commercial relations of newly independent South Carolina. This omission was in spite of free trade being “set forth by advocates of the southern Confederacy as one of the cardinal points of her policy.” The complete shift to a free trade regime had to be tempered in South Carolina on account of its “being unjust to those merchants who have on hand...large stocks of goods.” Furthermore, the establishment of Charleston as a free port, it was feared, would “produce an unfavorable effect upon the other southern States.” Secessionists were not pure free traders; instead they had an instrumental use for it as policy to expand the commercial power of a future southern Confederacy.³⁶

Secessionists predicted the adoption of free trade principles would lead to a surge in exports from the seceded states. The British consul in New Orleans, Thomas Mure, reported to Lord John Russell that cotton exports had in 1860 reached “the enormous sum” of one hundred and eighty five million dollars. Clingman predicted the level of

³⁵ W. H. Chase, “The Secession of the Cotton States: its Status, its Advantages, and its Power,” *DBR* 5 1 (January, 1861):93. See also Benning’s Speech, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 142.

³⁶ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 28, 1860, FO 5/ 745, p. 267, PRO. Often these direct relationships such as subsidized steamship lines, warehouses and so on were stressed more than the tariff for, as the then Unionist, Alexander Stephens pointed out, the United States tariff had been on a declining trajectory since 1846. So it could plausibly be argued the Union was not yet synonymous with protection, until that is the Morrill Tariff passed in March 1861 (Stephens, “Unionist Speech,” November 14, 1860, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 61.)

exports would be three hundred million in 1861. Senator Louis Trezevant Wigfall of Texas forecast lower exports going forward at “never again less than” two hundred and fifty million dollars. In the world of free trade, these exports would lead to southern consumers purchasing an equal and opposite amount of imports at the lowest possible price, mainly from the Union and Europe.³⁷

Such a surge in cheaper imports would boost both the relative wealth of the seceded states and the international leverage of any government levying a duty. Clingman told the Senate that “everybody can see how [such a volume] would enliven business in our seaboard towns.” According to the rules of free trade, customs duties were allowed to be maintained for fiscal purposes. Secessionists interpreted this clause widely. If fiscal purposes were construed as meaning the financing of a future government’s ability to wage war, then high duties were, in theory, permitted. Wigfall stated “we understand [the consequences] well enough to make the experiment [of secession]...forty percent upon [the imports] puts into our treasury one hundred million...numbers constitute the strength of governments in this day. I tell you it is not blood; it is the military chest; it is the almighty dollar...” Wigfall connected free trade and the growth of a southern confederacy’s power through taxing the predicted surge in imports. Clingman was more of a straightforward protectionist, observing that “the result of only ten percent duties in

³⁷Thomas Mure to Lord John Russell, December 13, 1860, FO 5/743, p. 64, PRO; Clingman, “State of the Union,” December 4, 1860, *CG*, 4; Wigfall, “State of the Union,” December 11, 1860, *CG*, 73. Douglass C. North verified Mure’s numbers in table A-VIII of his *Cotton Exports from the United States 1815-1860*, [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961], 233.)

excluding products from abroad would give life and impetus to mechanical and manufacturing industry throughout the South.”³⁸

Secessionists hoped to leverage the power they believed a future southern confederacy would possess both as a potential market and as an exporter. Governor Francis W. Pickens addressed the South Carolina legislature on December 17, telling the delegates that “our interests will lead [South Carolina] to open her ports free to the tonnage and trade of all nations, reserving to herself the right to discriminate only against those who may be our public enemies.” Discrimination, to Governor Brown, meant retaliation in order to deal with specific grievances such as the return of fugitive slaves. He argued that the North could not both “endure [the discriminatory duties] and prosper.” The North would then enter “into a treaty with us to bring back our fugitive slaves, and deliver them to us at the line, if we were to agree to a favorable commercial treaty with them...” Brown then looked abroad and foresaw “a similar treaty...could be made with the English Government, by which Canada would be no longer the harbor of fugitive slaves.”³⁹

Secessionists believed that commercial self-interest was paramount in international policymaking and this meant they envisioned a future when they were able

³⁸ Ibid. In his Broadside, Baldwin regarded “a revenue duty of twenty percent on the two hundred million dollars of southern imports will yield forty million dollars per annum, an abundance of money for the orderly purposes of a plain and frugal government.” That again was pure Free Trade. Hunter’s national economy, although he did not state it, may fall into the protectionist camp especially as it promoted economic diversification (*C.C. Baldwin to the Citizens of Rockbridge*, January 28, 1861 Broadside B 28 [UVA].)

³⁹ “Address delivered by Governor Pickens before the legislature of the State on the 17th instant, the day of his inauguration”, *Charleston Mercury*, December 19, 1860, clipping pasted in Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 19, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 249, PRO; Brown, *Special Message to the Legislature of Georgia on our federal relations, retaliatory state legislation, the right of secession etc.* November 7, 1860 (Milledgeville, Ga.: Broughton, Nisbet and Barnes, 1860) enclosure in Molyneux to Lord John Russell, November 16, 1860, FO 5/743, p. 242, PRO.

to dictate the actions of foreign powers. A former Governor of South Carolina and planter, John Lawrence Manning, declared in Columbia “cotton is king...the millions in France and England engaged in its manufacture are an effectual guarantee of the friendship of these nations.” Rhetoric aside, secessionists believed that they would become so powerful. Rhett told Bunch that the future trade policy of the state or a southern confederacy “is to commence by levying a duty of fifteen percent on all importations of foreign goods, which duty may be diminished to five percent or withdrawn altogether, on manufacturers of such states as will fall into our views and make treaties with us on our own terms.” Rhett added that “a requirement on the part of Great Britain that the slave trade should be prohibited would render any understanding impossible - in this case...we should go to France...France and Germany would gladly avoid the question of the revival of the slave trade for this consideration...” In a world of competitive nations governed by the need for commercial gain, secessionists were able to present a future when a southern confederacy would wield great power.⁴⁰

Commerce means Conquest up the Mississippi Valley

Commercial power led inevitably to territorial expansion because it was generally held, not just by secessionists, that “the march of empire ever follows the course of trade.” A particular focus of expansion was the Upper Mississippi valley and the Northwest. The state of Louisiana added to its ordinance of secession: “[W]e the people...recognize the right of free navigation of the Mississippi and tributaries...by all friendly States bordering thereon.” Even though their state was geographically distant,

⁴⁰ Manning quoted in Andrew Johnson, “State of the Union,” December 21, 1860, CG, 139; Rhett quoted in Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 5, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 233, PRO.

Alabamans felt they should also discuss the need for free navigation of the Mississippi in their secession Convention. Yancey argued, “Free Trade should be our motto [and] that it would be wise for the South to combat the fanaticism of the North West with the more enlarged, and friendly commercial policy indicated in my resolution.”⁴¹

Actions of commercial pressure gave opportunity for expansion. Other secessionists were more ambitious as to the results of the proposed riverine free trade, James F. Dowdell predicted that it would be “probable that some of the western and northwestern States will oppose coercion...[as] the great Mississippi river insures friendly feelings” and thus they will join the South. In the U.S. Senate, Joseph Lane of Oregon, unsuccessful candidate for vice president on the Democratic ticket in 1860, predicted that “if a dissolution of this Union takes place, I look to the day when everyone of those great North West States shall become a portion of that southern confederacy...” The New Orleans based journalist and statistician, James Dunwoody Brownson De Bow concluded that “here in the great Mississippi valley, is the possible future of a proud and august empire [from the] Ohio to the Mexican Gulf - Rockies to the Atlantic...”⁴²

Secessionists had to demonstrate that the formation of a southern confederacy would not block the Mississippi to trade. On December 17, John Pendleton Kennedy of Maryland argued that the “prosperity of New Orleans” was “united with the fortunes of

⁴¹“Cuba: the March of Empire and the Course of Trade,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):30; Thomas C. Faulkner, *History of the Revolution in the Southern States: including the special messages of President Buchanan, the ordinances of secession of the six withdrawing states* (New York: J.W. Trow, 1861), 26; Yancey, “Debate on the Navigation of the Mississippi River,” January 24, 1860, Smith, *History and Debates*, 185.

⁴²Smith, *History and Debates*, 190, 191; Lane, “State of the Union,” December 17, 1860, *CG*, 144; “Quo Tendimus?” [where we tend] *DBR* 4 4 (October 1860):441. Historian Robert E. Bonner sees continental, as opposed to commercial or slavery expansion, at the heart of the antebellum Southern Slaveholder’s vision of America, and that this ambition did linger into the war. (Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009].)

the West.” He claimed that southerners “cannot slight consideration that the adverse possession of a great seat of trade at the mouth of the Mississippi may furnish in the future as well as the past a fruitful source of quarrel with the power that holds it.” Above all, the “commonwealths upstream which now claim its free and uninterrupted use at all times and in all contingencies” would be brought into conflict with a southern confederacy and “no form of treaty can afford complete and invariable protection to this enjoyment.” According to the *New Orleans Picayune*, in the Northwest there was by January 21 “excitement regarding interference with navigation by Louisiana and Mississippi.” Senator Thomas Bragg of North Carolina agreed. A week earlier on January 14, he recorded in his diary: “Difficulties are springing up, about the navigation of the Mississippi River, upon which the authorities of Mississippi have placed a guard to examine all boats from above. The question will be the one most likely to breed difficulties and give trouble.”⁴³

A southern confederacy had to counter the prospect of a middle confederacy, which was more than a mere abstraction to some southerners. On October 29, Winfield Scott believed “as many as seven slaveholding states would be placed in a new confederacy with Ohio, Illinois and Indiana.” Such a union would be based on “laws of trade, contiguity of territory and comparative indifference to free soil doctrine.” Internal Improvements seemed to enhance the ties between Upper South, Border States and the Northwest. In his January 7 Message to the Virginia legislature, Governor John Letcher observed that “the state’s railroads already point to the great North West and must soon

⁴³ John Pendleton Kennedy, *The border states: their power and duty in the present disordered condition of the country*, December 17, 1860 (Baltimore, Md.: J. B. Lippincott & Co. of Philadelphia, 1861), 26; *Extracts from the Editorial Columns of the New Orleans picayune: Read and Circulate* (January 1861); Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” January 14, 1861, p. 23, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC.

be part of a network of roads reaching to Kansas and fast progressing to the Pacific and when that system is complete, Virginia will be part of a central belt from the Atlantic to the Pacific.” Consequently, Kennedy argued the Border States, “if compelled to construct a confederacy of their own may be able to associate with the whole body of middle and western states.” He concluded that the Border States represented “almost every interest and pursuit in the Union” and therefore “possess all elements necessary to organize a polity of first class power.”⁴⁴

Secessionists believed that a common southern and slaveholding identity would trump such considerations for Border States. Even the Unionist Lemuel C. Porter of Bowling Green, Kentucky reported on January 1, that “although there is a large and respectable portion of the middle states in favor of a central confederacy the Border South will ultimately decide to go with the Deep South.” Kenneth Rayner asked Hunter “if the cotton states go off will the grain states follow?” He answered his own question, “I agree with you, we must make common cause and share the common destiny of our sister slaveholding states.” Agriculture and slavery were important, but secessionists had to argue a convincing case.⁴⁵

Secessionists sought to demonstrate that the free navigation of the Mississippi was just the beginning of many commercial opportunities to be had in a southern confederacy. Both Senators John Slidell of Louisiana and Jefferson Davis of Mississippi allayed any upstream fears with their call for free navigation of the Mississippi. The *New*

⁴⁴ Winfield Scott, “Views &c,” to William A. Graham, John Letcher et al., October 29, 1860, folder 192, William A. Graham Papers, #285, SHC; John Letcher, *Governor’s Message and documents, January 7, 1861* (Richmond Va.: William F. Ritchie, 1861), folder 389, John Letcher Papers, #L5684 a FA2 VHS; Kennedy, *The border states*, 22, 24.

⁴⁵ Porter, “Diary,” January 1, 1861 in the *Bowling Green Lyceum Minute Book*, 92, BI\B763, FHS; Kenneth Rayner to Hunter, December 10, 1860, box 11, folder Q-R, Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS.

Orleans Picayune argued that any interference from those states was “not probable, as they were as interested in unobstructed navigation as any Northwest state.” Robert Ruffin Barrow, owner of 700 slaves and hence one of the richest planters, wrote from his plantation “Residence” near Houma in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana that the whole Louisiana Purchase territory needed to be encompassed within a southern confederacy. For “all the produce of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys must be brought to this city [of New Orleans] and the vast extent of southern territory yet unoccupied must in time increase our wealth, influence and importance among the nations of the earth beyond the most extravagant calculations of the present generation.”⁴⁶

Expansion and International Commercial Rivalries

Trade and informal and formal commercial exploitation extended beyond the continental United States. According to Secessionists, disunion provided a boost for an outward looking commercial policy and a welcome escape from the inward looking contest with the North. In particular, the secession movement provided a chance for advocates of the commercial convention movement to reassert their earlier message of the “gospel of prosperity.” In the midst of secession mania in South Carolina, a leading light of the movement, oceanographer Matthew Fontaine Maury informed the Charleston Chamber of Commerce about south Atlantic trade routes. Consul Bunch, not with admiration, noted the commercial plans of South Carolina had “long formed a staple grievance at the meetings of the various ‘Southern Commercial Conventions.’” William Henry Gist, the departing governor of South Carolina, found time in his address to the

⁴⁶ John Slidell, “State of the Union Debate,” December 18, 1860, *CG*, 137; Jefferson Davis to John Pettus, January 4, 1861, *JDC* 4:564; Robert Ruffin Barrow, *A miscellaneous essay on the political parties of the country, the rise of abolitionism and the impolicy of secession*, December 22, 1860, (New Orleans, La.: L. Marchand, 1861), 14.

South Carolinian legislature to discuss approvingly the fact that “some enterprising citizens of Charleston propose to establish a line of steam propellers between Charleston and Liverpool.”⁴⁷

Depending on their audience, southerners saw the growth of international trade as at the very least as offsetting the risk of secession or as an upside resulting from the event. Letcher claimed his purpose as governor of Virginia was to “ascertain what ways the interest of Virginia can be preserved and especially material prosperity, regardless of what happens to the Union.” With that calculation in mind, in Norfolk, Virginia had “the best port in the country and if direct trade were established between Norfolk and Europe, it would preserve to us commercial independence that would prove of immense value in any contingency.” Addressing the Deep South, Bickley declared “we all look forward to the opening of new commercial relations and avenues to the acquisition of wealth.” In the pursuit of that end, “we contemplate a vast trade with China, Japan and the Pacific Isles...and that an enormous trade must be established between the Gulf States and what

⁴⁷ “The Southern Route Across the Atlantic,” *DBR* 4 6 (December 1860):779; Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, November 27, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 203, 210, PRO. DeBow reported that Maury informed the President of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce on October 20, 1860 “Permit me to call the attention of your chamber of commerce and your shipping merchants, owners and masters to the advantages in winter of the southern route from Europe or the Mediterranean to ports in the United States south of Delaware inclusive.” British observers were skeptical, Bunch caustically commented that “the proposal of the Governor’s that the State shall guarantee an interest on monies invested in the establishment of the steamers...is, I think, scarcely likely to be met with favor just now, or rather, it is very improbable that the money can be found in the present embarrassed condition of both publick [sic] and private finances.” On southern commercial conventions, see also Vicki Vaughan Johnson, *The Men and the Vision of the Southern Commercial Conventions, 1845-1871* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992). According to Johnson, as a keen advocate of direct trade with South America, Maury had attacked recent commercial conventions for losing their economic focus due to worries about anti-slavery in the North. He told an audience at a state agricultural bureau meeting in October 1859, “look to your commercial conventions, and take warning. Keep men from the political commons out of your meetings.” Maury, while engaged in his oceanographic pursuits, was also deeply interested in the development of Southern commerce. He cherished as a favorite project the opening of the Amazon Valley to free trade, hoping that one effect of such a measure would be to draw the slaves from the United States to Brazil.

is now the Mexican Republic, the western or Pacific States of America and south of Asia and Polynesia...”⁴⁸

Secessionists anticipated that the principal commercial thrust would be southward rather than toward Britain and France. More generally, Stone declared that the future southern confederacy would possess “the trade of all tropical America.” De Bow predicted that the trade of the southern states “after disunion will easily and naturally supersede and exclude the Yankees and English in the Cuban and other West Indian, Mexican and South American trade.” The rationale went beyond geographical proximity, De Bow observed that “the Cubans would prefer to trade and associate with Southerners; because, as slaveholders, they have the same...interests.” The motivation was a shared interest in the preservation of slavery, as an international system of labor combined with a belief that this sympathy would induce preferential terms of trade. De Bow called for “treaties of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Spain and Brazil, and [to] form, also, commercial treaties with them. They are the neighbors and natural friends and customers of the South, let us guarantee Cuba to Spain, as long as she preserves negro slavery intact...” Secessionist promotion of trade there would protect slavery.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ John Letcher, *Governor's Message and documents, January 7, 1861* (Richmond Va.: William F. Ritchie, 1861), xxv, folder 389, John Letcher Papers, #L5684 a FA2 VHS; George W.L. Bickley, *Address to the People of the Southern States* (Richmond, Va., n.p., 1860), 9.

⁴⁹ Stone, “Debate on the African Slave Trade Resumed,” January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates* 237; “Cuba: The March of Empire and the Course of Trade,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):30. Thomas Schoonover argues for a continued Confederate southward commercial interest. Schoonover, *Dollars over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978). Matthew Pratt Guterl takes a Caribbean focus and placed the slaveholder at the apex of a prewar slavery based economic system known as the “White Republic of the Tropics” centered on the Gulf of Mexico; Guterl, *American Mediterranean*. Edward Bartlett Rugemer also insists that slavery was seen by its proponents as part of an international system, with links to Brazil as well as the Caribbean. Territorial protection and expansion of slavery’s “footprint” remained a priority during the war. (Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation*.)

Secessionists argued that expansion would be driven by movements not only of goods, but also people. They saw pending mass trans-Atlantic immigration to the North as a threat for which the southern states must prepare. It added a crucial degree of urgency to the act of secession. Secessionists expected continued mass immigration would enable the North to settle and therefore convert territories into states at great speed. Benning stated that “as far as the public lands are concerned, they will be worth nothing to us, we shall never get a foot of them. [The Republicans] will on account of the preponderance of northern emigration take possession of the whole of the public lands.”⁵⁰

The threat of immigration was not a problem restricted to the continental United States. According to secessionists, other powers were planning to compete with slavery by designing their own forced labor systems by using what secessionists called “coolies.” For example, secessionists worried that the anticipated movement of millions of Chinese would revive Great Britain’s moribund Caribbean economy in order to compete with the South. Dowdell, in the Alabama convention, spoke of the need to preempt the British and French intention to “plant their African apprentices in proximity to our borders, with a purpose to limit our expansion...under the plausible pretext of producing their own cotton rice and tobacco.” Secessionists may have been confident about the future, but they also felt that without urgent action their prosperity and power would not last.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Henry L. Benning, “Secessionist Speech,” November 19, 1860, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 133.

⁵¹ Dowdell, “Speech on the African Slave Trade,” January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 257. Leading Southerners were being made aware that other schemes of colonization of Latin America were also being mooted, for example, the resident minister of Prussia wrote to the Mexican minister of the interior on January 2, 1861 “history proves the fact among all the people of the new world that civilization and progress have been introduced by the mixture, contact, and commerce of people of different races and origin. Without colonization, Mexico will expire, no hope remains that she can repeople [sic] herself again. Germany can alone resupply Mexico with the agricultural laborers she stands so much in need of.” (Mr. Callaghan to R.M.T. Hunter, April 12, 1861, Box 7, folder title “CA”, Hunter Correspondence, VHS.)

Advocates of importing additional slaves and aggressive expansion also cited the need to counter European expansion in the Americas. Secessionists believed that the United States had been insufficiently robust in deterring British interference in Central America during the 1850s, and a southern confederacy would be more effective. At the Alabama convention, according to Chambers County delegate and U.S. representative, James Ferguson Dowdell, British intrigue provided a similar impetus to expansion. A future southern confederacy would need to respond because Britain “will endeavor to make her Mosquito protectorate the basis of a policy which will take in the country from the Rio Grande to the Isthmus.” Reopening the slave trade with “a surplus of African slaves, and the advantage of our proximity to that country” would allow southerners to “secure safety to ourselves and security to our humane system of African slavery; by a timely and judicious policy, we could settle the neighboring states and territories...”⁵²

Secessionists argued that a southern confederacy need not be a passive bystander to such schemes of rival nations moving surplus populations. The historian John H. Parkhill of Maryland speculated that Haiti would be “open to the immigration of our free blacks,” although they would have to be removed on a compulsory basis. He explained that “the two classes of blacks cannot remain in the same community without producing pauperism and crime in one and discontent and insubordination in the other.” Therefore such a scheme would remove an “element of pauperism, vice and insubordination at home.” But it would also serve the interest of southerners abroad, as such a movement of people “will redeem the island – free blacks should be made the medium through which

⁵² Dowdell, “Speech on the African Slave Trade,” January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 257.

the reforming power of our civilization can be brought to bear on the social condition of Haiti.” Parkhill concluded that “trade is the pioneer of Christianity.”⁵³

Because they expected other powers to be expansionist and also to use similar labor systems to achieve their aims, secessionists promoted speedy territorial expansion whilst the opportunity lasted and to combine this with alliance diplomacy. The delegates at Alabama’s secession convention debated sending envoys to Santa Fe in order to try to secure the application of the territory of New Mexico (which also included Arizona) to the Confederacy as a new state. In addition, secessionists planned the expansion of the cotton economy into the Indian Territory. Formal policy on the territories would necessarily await the formation of a future confederacy; but in the meantime it was clear the act of secession would not mean the renouncing of territorial ambitions. Instead secessionists presented secession as an opportunity for the southern states to secure the share of the territories they believed was rightfully theirs and had been withheld by the Union.⁵⁴

Secessionists predicted that a future southern confederacy would have a foreign policy dedicated to the protection of slavery and pursuit of opportunities for expansion.

⁵³ John H. Parkhill, *Alaux Gustave de Soulouque and his Empire from the French of Gustave D’Aluax* (Richmond, Va.: J.W. Randolph, 1861), v- xiii.

⁵⁴ “Resolution offered by Mr. Henderson of Macon,” January 12, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 124. It was decided to delay consideration of this matter until the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy gathered the following month. De Bow wrote “The southern States, rounded off with the Indian Territory, will constitute a splendid Empire.” (“Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade,” *DBR* 5 1 [January 1861]:30.) Robert E. May shows how this earlier broad based national vision of the 1840s was subsequently changed into a bid for balance between the sections; how southward expansion became imperative in the 1850s, as westward appeared to be reserved for the North. This motivation for expansion led to the dominant view amongst historians that secession rendered redundant any need to pursue further territorial growth. May focuses on the provocative antics of filibusters and highlights how they actually retarded expansion through the discredit they attracted to America’s territorial expansion. (Robert E. May, *The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire 1854-1861* [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973] and *Manifest Destiny’s Underworld*.)

Even before the formation of the Confederacy, secessionists made initial diplomatic moves. Georgia appointed an envoy to seek alliances in Europe, and Rhett paid a call on the British consul in Charleston. Secessionists looked forward to a “southern alliance” to sustain the international system of slavery against an anticipated anti-slavery league of Britain and the United States. Secessionists hoped that the emperor of the French, Napoleon III, then at the height of his powers, would be prepared to join such an alliance. In considering the implications for the balance of power, which the secession of the southern states called into being, a future confederacy should be in a position, as part of this structure of proslavery international relations, to guarantee both the independence of Brazil and Spain’s possession of Cuba. Mexico, without an existing slavery system to be protected, seemed ripe for a more formal annexation.⁵⁵

Secessionists disagreed about whether expansion into Mexico should be informal and commercial or whether it should extend to territorial annexation. The latter course would mean the inclusion in a southern confederacy of substantial numbers of Native American and mestizo people. Yancey had both racial and religious qualms about Mexican confederates, for “it is, at least doubtful, whether we would wish an expansion in that direction, that it would bring with it the recognition of such a mass of ignorant,

⁵⁵ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, December 5, 1860, FO 5/745, p. 229, PRO. Bunch observed that Rhett “enjoys the triumph of seeing the entire State convert to his doctrines, and his influence is, at this moment, very great. I am inclined to think that he desires the appointment of Commissioner to England from the new State or Confederacy that is to be....” De Bow considered that as “the cotton States must build up the wealth of those with whom they trade. [so] better build up the wealth of the border States and of France, who are their friends, than of England and the North, their direst enemies.” (“Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade,” *DBR* 5 1 [January 1861]:30.) Historians have argued that a proslavery foreign policy developed during the antebellum era and even according to Kagan, two distinct competing sectional foreign policies, see Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government’s Relations to Slavery* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2001); Tim Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy: Haitian-American Relations during the Early Republic* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003); Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America’s Place in the World from its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 2006) and, forthcoming, Matthew Karp, *The Foreign Policy of Slavery, 1833-1865* (under contract with Harvard University Press).

superstitious and demoralized population, as Mexican states, if annexed, would necessarily bring.” Smith earlier in the debate argued, “Even the Slave would degenerate in Mexico...return to Africanism.” As for any colonizing white Alabamians, their “American gravity would sink into Mexican frivolity...Ambition would be satisfied with the weight of a spur.”⁵⁶

Other secessionists were more positive about the ease of expansion into Mexico and beyond. Far from “Indians, Creoles, Spaniards [being] in the way...the case of Florida, Louisiana, New Mexico, California, and Missouri [show that] the dominant race will supplant all others, and slavery will expand South to Brazil and from her till stopped by snow.” The *Daily Constitutionalist* (Augusta Ga.) declared that these inferior races would simply make way for the superior white southerner. Stone was only slightly less expansive as “Arizona and Mexico, Central America and Cuba, all may yet be embraced within the limits of our southern republic.”⁵⁷

Secessionists struggled with the choice between mastery over what they claimed to be inferior races and their antipathy to being amongst them, so tended to prefer expansion without the creation of new states. Bickley argued that it was important that “we do not go as filibusters to rob, burn and devastate – but as colonists...” He suggested southerners follow the earlier example of Texans instead and “go into Mexico in the character of a defensive colony to draw in citizens there who want to arrest this state of anarchy and misrule.” The process to be followed would be gradual, “plant a

⁵⁶ William L. Yancey, William R. Smith of Tuscaloosa, “Speech on Reopening the African Slave Trade,” January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 203-4, 251.

⁵⁷ “Disunion,” *The Daily Constitutionalist*, Augusta, Georgia, December 30, 1860 in Drummond, *Editorials*, 384; Stone, “Speech on Reopening the African Slave Trade”, January 25, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 237. The newspaper editor likened slavery to cholera, “no power can check it but frost.”

southern colony with southern habits and southern institutions” and “not at once ask that states of Mexico be admitted, but Americanize, plant institutions and build up separate nationality as had been done in Texas.”⁵⁸

Secessionists agreed on the need to annex territory for commercial reasons. For example, they desired secure control of an outlet to the Pacific. Therefore some secessionists saw expansion into Mexico solely in the light of an alternative route for a Pacific Ocean outlet. Bickley argued that Mexico would become “the natural channel” for the vast global trade between the East and the southern States. Even a more limited annexation of northwestern Mexico might not be necessary, given that in the wake of Lincoln’s election there was a great deal of speculation about a Pacific confederacy being formed. This new nation, comprising California, Oregon and Washington Territory, would be allied with the Confederacy and act as a conduit for its planned exports to Asia. Secessionists shared the general mid-nineteenth century antipathy toward formal imperialism without clear financial benefits. They had earlier observed the expensive travails of the British in India as they struggled to suppress the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857-58.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, annexation of territory could be justified on the grounds of self-preservation. Secessionists took their cue from the debates over the 1854 Ostend

⁵⁸ George W. L. Bickley, *Address to the People of the Southern States* (Richmond, Va., n.p., 1860), 9, 29.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 9. On December 10, 1860, Californian Senator Latham declared in the Senate “I rise to correct a false impression upon the public mind as I have seen it published in several leading journals of the country as to the attitude of California in the present crisis. it has been said, and by many believed, that in the event of secession...California will avail herself of the opportunity to declare her own independence and in conjunction with the other territory of the United States on the Pacific, will form a Pacific Republic...there is not one word of truth in the idea”. Latham then undercut this pious declaration by adding “there is but one thing that can alienate the affections of the Pacific from the Union...a failure to give them a Pacific Railroad” (CG, 27). It was small wonder that secessionists believed in trade determining action when a State could plausibly wish to secede on such a motive.

Manifesto. This was a dispatch from U.S. diplomats in Europe, which had urged U.S. seizure of Cuba if Spain refused the sale. Congress has responded by imposing tight restrictions on seizures of territory without the consent of the owner. In December 1860, Senator Andrew Johnson of Tennessee told his colleagues, “[O]ur past history forbids that we should acquire the island of Cuba without the consent of Spain, unless justified by the great law of self-preservation.” For the United States as a whole, such a condition would have been impossible to fulfill. By 1860, with the threat to slavery under question, the self-preservation clause would be much easier to invoke on the part of a southern confederacy. If Cuba either threatened to become another Santo Domingo or subject to abolition intrigue from either Britain or the United States, the self-preservation clause could be easily used to justify annexation.⁶⁰

Southern Expansion and the Union

Secessionists presented a southern confederacy as offering more opportunities than lay within the Union. Secessionists held out a future as one of an imperial destiny, based both upon a belief in slavery’s applicability to the exploitation of the newly accessible southern hemisphere and the related potency of a commercial and agricultural economy no longer burdened with northern tariffs. The commerce of a southern confederacy would expand even more than slavery. Secessionists coupled these lofty ambitions with an urgent necessity: the future confederacy has to expand because

⁶⁰ Andrew Johnson, “State of the Union,” December 18, 1860, *CG*, 138.

independence within current boundaries would not protect slavery from hostile neighbors.⁶¹

Secessionists argued that they proposed a peaceful separation from the Union that, if accepted, would lead to improved relations with the northern states. The result would be reduced cross-border agitation and increased trade, leading to greater rate of economic growth in the South than if the states had remained in the Union. Some secessionists believed the states had a right to disunion on the basis of resumption of delegated powers, in effect a constitutional process. If this was the case, northern acceptance was probable - with at least a chance of peaceful relations with a rump post secession Union. Peaceful coexistence and, especially, an end to anti-slavery agitation would, secessionists believed, boost the southern economy. The fact “the negroes will be working quietly and contentedly” would alone boost cotton production. For northerners “would leave us our slaves to help make the cotton they would want, as England does...” Furthermore by ending the “fear” of fugitive slave departures, coexistence would support the institution of slavery in the Border States and hence “would put an end to the alarming process by which the slave population was draining off to the cotton States.” Senator Iverson had

⁶¹ Other motives for expansion included the right to dominate all southern latitudes combined with a sense of mission. De Bow defined the south as “The Mediterranean latitudes in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the country south of the Mason and Dixon’s line, is the true and only seat of high civilization...France, Italy, Greece, Spain, Cuba, Brazil and our own [yet to be] Southern Confederacy, are in the ascendant.” [Unbounded commerce’s] power will subdue and overrun the Chinese empire, and will ultimately civilize and Christianize benighted Africa, as well as every other inhabited portion of the globe...” (Southern Patronage to Southern Imports and Domestic Industry”, *De Bow* 4 4[October 1860]:494.) But historians often assume such expansive ambitions were backward; Thomas Bender argues that Lincoln’s ‘modern’ territorial definition of nation, which he evolved during the Civil War contrasted with the South’s looser more archaic, as well as expansive mentality. (Bender, Thomas, *A Nation Among Nations: America’s Place in World History* [New York: Hill and Wang, 2006], 150-63.)

“no doubt but that both of us - certainly the southern states - would live better, more happily, more prosperously...than we have now in this Union.”⁶²

Secessionists insisted that separation did not threaten, but was the only way to preserve current prosperity and harmony among Americans. Holcombe wrote that “each section has a separate mission to fulfill, and a glorious destiny to accomplish. In our present relations we incommode each other.” The *New Orleans Picayune* agreed: “The sooner the divided confederacies begin their separate careers of progress the easier they will get on.” Thornwell hoped that republicanism may be the beneficiary from secession and “two governments may be able to work out the problem of human liberty better than one.” He further hoped that the two nations would form the “closest alliance against foreign foe” in order to ensure that “no European power would ever set foot on American soil” and no form of government would exist there other than republican. Thornwell argued that “separation changes nothing but external relations and frees us for the fullest and freest development of our noble institutions.”⁶³

In these circumstances of future harmony with the Union, secessionists did not discard expansionist ambitions but defined them with northern sensibilities in mind. Secessionists expressed their plans in terms of a right to a share of the public property of the Union. In this future, the territories, as with the federal arsenals, existing armed forces, and even the government debt would be equitably divided pro rata. The act of

⁶² Wigfall, “State of the Union,” 11 December, 1860, *CG*, 71; Iverson, “State of the Union,” 6 December, 1860, *CG*, 11.

⁶³ William H. Holcombe, M.D., *The Alternative: a Separate Nationality, or the Africanization of the South* (New Orleans, La.: Delta Mammoth Job Office, 1860), 11. *Extracts from the Editorial Columns of the New Orleans Picayune: Read and Circulate, January, 1861*, 23; James Henley Thornwell, *The State of the Country: an Article Republished from The Southern Presbyterian Review* (Columbia, S.C.: n.p., 1860), 28-29.

secession was the only device that could bring about such an equitable and secure distribution of the lands. Iverson declared, “[W]e are entitled to the protection of our property, and we intend to have it in the Union if we can get it, and out of the Union if we cannot.” If necessary, commercial pressure would be applied by the seceding states collectively to achieve an acceptable outcome. Iverson expected an agreement modelled on the territorial elements of the Crittenden Compromise, but between two nations rather than two sections in the Union and which would make the ‘imaginary line’ of 36 30 into a national frontier.⁶⁴

With amicable relations as the objective, secessionist expansion was not directed against the loyal States of the Union. Secessionists argued that the objective of their action would be to instead ‘reset’ relations with the Union. They looked to existing international relationships by means of justification. Both Britain’s links with the South and those of the United States with Brazil and Cuba provided evidence that slave and free societies could get on much better if they had commercial but not political connections.

⁶⁴ Alfred Iverson, “State of the Union,” 11 December, 1860, *CG*, 48. Iverson added that concessions made from the Union to the South would have no value on account of the anti-slavery sentiment and “There is but one way [to achieve territorial compromise] and that is to let the southern states go out of the Union...and a sound state of [Northern] opinion may possibly arise Looking to a future settlement and division of spoils, Governor Moore of Alabama assured President Buchanan, after the seizure of Forts Morgan and Gaines and the United States Arsenal at Mount Vernon, that “an inventory of the [federal] property...has been ordered, and the strictest care will be taken to prevent injury and destruction of it.” (Moore to Buchanan, January 4, 1861, Presented to convention January 8, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 42).” Hence as Smith of Tuscaloosa told the Alabama convention on January 24, separation would lower the temperature and “whatever else we must claim must remain to be settled hereafter by some of the modes of adjusting international disputes.” (Ibid., 203.) Of the Treasury Note Bill in the House, Representative Crawford of Georgia moved an amendment because he does “not think it just to the people of the southern States...that the public lands should be given away for the purpose of internal improvement, or to the people of the free States for homesteads, while they are assets of a common Government...when it is to be expected...the public debt would be a subject matter between the retiring States and the others....” (Martin Jenkins Crawford, December 10, 1860, *CG*, 42.) Therefore the British vice-consul in Charleston concluded, “there is a general idea entertained that an adjustment must be had of the public property of the United States, and of which South Carolina claims to be entitled to a share and that an equitable adjustment of her claims is to be enforced by some system of non intercourse....” (Henry Pinckney Walker to Lord John Russell, November 17, 1860, FO 5/745, p.193, PRO.)

Benning declared that the axiom of “interest would take the place of prejudice.” In a world governed by countries acting in their own best interests, secessionists hoped that the North would seek commercial benefits by entering into a mutually advantageous trade pact with a future confederacy. As Iverson promised in the Senate, the southern confederacy “shall be very willing to look upon [the Union] as a favored nation and give them all the advantages of commercial and amicable treaties.” However, secessionists recognized that this mutually beneficial situation would have to surmount formidable obstacles. They understood that, unlike the rest of the world, the North might have reasons not to act in its own commercial best interests.⁶⁵

Seizing the Moment

If the North did not accept the southerners’ right to secede, secessionists insisted on their right to revolutionary self-government. A forceful departure would result in a more expansionist southern confederacy than one created by an amicable exit from the Union. At its heart, the right to revolution was a dynamic exercise of power. Its relationship to expansion, the casting aside of inherited constraints and barriers hitherto tolerated as part of being voluntary members of the Union, was clear to secessionists. Revolution both facilitated and validated this renunciation of restraint, as both secessionists and cooperationists are “each and all driven forward upon the irresistible

⁶⁵ Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 127-28; Iverson, “State of the Union,” December 6, 1860, *CG*, 11. Benning explained to his audience “If you were to separate from the North, the *power* to abolish slavery would be taken away. That is clear. The *will* to do so would also cease. Slavery exists in Cuba, exists in Brazil, and the North has commerce with both...No party in Canada, or England, or France, does or can make any political capital out of slavery of the South. And so it would be in the North, if the South were a separate people...” Robert Woodward Barnwell assured R. M. T. Hunter that “I have no doubt that practically we should be found very close to each other in reference to our intimate commercial relations with our late confederates.” (Barnwell to Hunter, January 7, 1861, box 7, Hunter Correspondence, folder “A – Bo,” Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS.)

tide..."There was a belief that a vast accretion of power had been vested in the seceding State Convention because "the people are here in the persons of their deputies." In these circumstances, ambitions for expansion became both possible and also a necessary demonstration of a complete break with a discredited past.⁶⁶

The secessionists believed the North was likewise undergoing a political revolution and that immediate secession and the formation of a southern confederacy were vital countermeasures against this threat. The old world of the primacy of states and reserved powers was being swept away by what Senator James M. Mason of Virginia termed a "social war" waged against the South. There was a sectional movement, a transformation of "public sentiment" that put Northern hostility beyond the reach of Constitutional amendment and the capacity of the Union to adapt. Expansion was predicated on a belief in an increase of power, and the sense of that power in turn was the result of the need to confront the equal and opposite force of northern anti-slavery sentiment. Those southern leaders opposed immediate secession sought to portray either the northern anti-slavery "agitation" as a product of British intrigue or declining in virulence. But immediate secessionists saw Lincoln's election as the culmination and greatest assertion of northern power that had to be confronted and quickly.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ William L. Yancey, "Committee of Thirteen Report the Ordinance of Secession," January 10, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 114. Yancey added "Some have been disposed to think that this is a movement of politicians and not of the people. This is a great error...This is a great popular movement...flowing from the popular heart for years. You gentlemen of the minority have not been able to repress it. We of the majority have not been able to add a particle to its momentum." A Richmond correspondent of Hunter's wrote in the same vein: "No palliatives will do now. We are in the midst of a revolution and thank God beyond the control of man or set of men." (Lewis Edwin Harvie to Hunter, December 18, 1860, box 8, Hunter Correspondence, Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS.)

⁶⁷ Mason, "State of the Union," December 10, 1860, *CG*, 35; Iverson, "State of the Union," December 12, 1860, *CG*, 48-51; "Quo Tendimus?" *DBR* 4 4 (October 1860):441.

Immediate secessionists argued that the South had only a temporary opportunity to secede and successfully establish an expansive nation; hence the need for quick withdrawal rather than run the risk of waiting for yet more ominous developments in the North. The right time to secede was as soon as possible and definitely before March 1861 because southern public opinion, commercial strength, Lincoln's inauguration, and military preparedness presented a narrow period of opportunity. In classic language of the time, Representative Jabez Lamar Munro Curry of Alabama wrote to Hunter that "the present temper of the South will enable us to construct a government that would endure for ages. The time is propitious and should not be permitted to pass away unimproved." Commercial imperatives demanded action as "millions have already been lost and will continue to be lost to the South by [cotton's] depreciation, if we do not demonstrate to the world that we are in earnest..." Although the certainty of Lincoln as president seemed in December 1860 a galvanizing threat, that threat might not last if he turned out to be a weak president, merely the product of "a dominant majority; an accidental power, which in a single turn of the wheel of political fortune, might be hurled from its position. The triumph of party is transient. There is no stability in parties. There is no tenure so uncertain as political power." The prospect of Lincoln was then a temporary opportunity as well as a temporary threat.⁶⁸

Most of all, secession was an act of seizing the initiative and exploiting a chance for prosperity and expansion, which gave momentum to southern power to offset northern predominance. Georgia convention delegate Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb

⁶⁸ Curry to Hunter, January 25, 1861, box 7, "Folder CL-Cu," Hunter Correspondence, Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS; Williamson, "Report on Formation of Provisional and Permanent Government by the Seceding States," January 17, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 138; William R. Smith of Tuscaloosa, "Confiscation of Property," January 23, 1861, *Ibid.*, 180.

worried that “delay invites aggression and destroys all confidence in our courage...delay is dangerous, for ere long you will be imprisoned by walls of Free States all around you.” Governor Brown agreed, “[I]f we fail to resist now we will never again have the strength to resist.” Yancey asserted to the Alabama convention, “hostilities already exist between the seceding States and the Federal Union. Coercion is the policy at Washington.”⁶⁹

The military imperative to act quickly, even at the risk of war, explained Benning, stemmed from the fact that southerners “have now the largest proportion of arms and ammunition in your arsenals. The President has the power to order these to be sent away from you.” Preemptive seizure was vital because there existed “in the non-slaveholding states an organization vast in numbers, ready at a word to assume a military form.” Benning asked should such arms be seized or left “in the hands of the Wide Awakes?” Secessionists argued the only way to avoid war was to anticipate the moves of the North. Northerners would be more likely to accept a *fait accompli* than consent to a negotiated settlement, and they would then leave the southern states to form a confederacy and pursue their destiny of commercial and territorial expansion.⁷⁰

Yet these expansionist ambitions, pushed forward by secessionists, were combined, often by the very same people, with gloomy, even apocalyptic, forecasts of race wars and destruction of the southern civilization. The mid-nineteenth-century mind accommodated extreme and contradictory outcomes, particularly when war became likely. Even those who hoped for the ‘Constitutional’ outcome of peaceful coexistence and division of property were always uneasily aware of both the great resources and the

⁶⁹ T. R. R. Cobb, “Speech,” November 12, 1860, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 27, 29; Brown, “Speech,” December 7, 1860, *Ibid.*, 148; Yancey, “Report on Formation of Provisional and Permanent Government by the Seceding States,” January 17, 1861, Smith, *History and Debates*, 140.

⁷⁰ Benning, “Speech,” November 19, 1860, Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 125.

intense hostility of ‘public sentiment’ in the North to slavery. To secessionists, proof of northern enmity lay in the humiliations the South had incurred in the 1850s, culminating with the election of Lincoln in 1860. The same leading supporters of secession saw the great expansive opportunities associated with war; but, at the same time, perceived the great risk of this enterprise. As the Confederate Provisional Congress assembled, its president, Howell Cobb of Georgia, looked into the future and saw that it was one of “Weal or Woe,” as Georgia seceded: there was no alternative.⁷¹

By early February 1861, as delegates began gathering in Montgomery, Alabama, secessionists had done much to set high expectations as to what a future confederacy could achieve and how much better it would be than life within the old Union. They did not present a coherent narrative. The plans were too speculative for that. Secessionists disagreed about reopening the African slave trade, how to accommodate other races, the desirability of formal over informal expansion as an ideal, and whether to pursue a national economy as opposed to an open free trade version. But the overall picture was one of the reaffirmation of slavery’s need to expand combined with aggressive commercial ambitions. At the same time, however, was a more anxious undertone arising from living in a hostile world, which meant expansion was also an essential act of self-preservation. Secession provided a simple goal of preserving slavery and asserting nationhood by means of expansion. It would be up to the embryonic Confederacy to put these ideas into action.

⁷¹ Howell Cobb to R.M.T. Hunter, February 24, 1861, box 7, Folder CL-Cu, Hunter Correspondence, Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS.

Chapter 2

“Demanding the Powers of Expansion” February to April 1861

Before war broke out in the middle of April, Confederates regarded the formation of their nation during peacetime in early 1861 as just the beginning of the rise of their country to become a world power. Already, they believed the Deep South possessed the essential ingredients for national greatness and were confident that the process of polarization of opinion among the American people would mean that the neutral positions of the Upper South and Border States became untenable. Perhaps even the pro-Union position of the Northwest would not be long maintained. Furthermore, secession and the formation of the Confederacy had removed the constraint of the United States government on southern expansion. Finally, in Jefferson Davis, Confederates had nominated a man for president who was well known for his expansionist ambition.

Confederate expansion would not be simply rendering official the activities of 1850s filibusters. Immediately upon independence, expansion had become a political issue in the Confederacy between Confederates, their supporters in the Upper South and Border States and the cooperationist and unionist opinions present in these slaveholding states outside the Confederacy. Furthermore, expansion had become tainted for some Confederates by its association with the reopening of the African slave trade. The Confederate bid for diplomatic recognition by European powers would also not be assisted if it were to become known that the government intended to seize Cuba and other territories to its south.

Confederates facing these issues did not renounce expansion. It remained essential to the national vision sufficient to attract the opinion of leaders in slaveholding states outside the Confederacy and generate separatism in the Northwest and perhaps far West against the United States government. Confederates presented themselves as

selfless servants of the destiny of slavery to expand and change would come in an orderly fashion. To that end, Confederates adopted a constitutional and institutional approach to expansion; moreover, free as well as slave states were to be admitted to the Confederacy. Commercial and professional conventions sought to influence government action with proposals for internal and external improvements geared to commercial and territorial expansion. Likewise, while commercial growth through maximum staple crops export remained the principal goal, it was amended. Instead of a pure free trade policy, Confederates presented a vision of lower tariffs with some protection of domestic industries. They expected to offer reciprocal commercial treaties with favored nations and, in particular, a commitment to the free navigation of the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

The New Confederacy, Expansion and Slavery

As the leaders of what they believed to be a new power in a competitive and hostile world, Confederates believed they both had a right and a necessity to expand. Confederates based their expansion on first, the power resulting from possession of the raw material wealth of the South and, secondly, on the notion that slavery was ideally suited to exploit the newly accessible tropical regions in both hemispheres. The South Carolinian poet and commentator, William John Grayson phrased the new nation's ambitions both vaguely and expansively in early 1861, "in the present Southern movement, the voice of the people is unmistakable. They think...that secession will make the South a great people; that it will add vastly to their trade, wealth, population, and advancement in all material and moral good. They rely with confidence on the advantages of cotton and free trade. They count, without a doubt, on growing power and

unsurpassed prosperity.” It was amorphous because what constituted the Confederacy was in constant change, and this dynamism was further driven by the questions both of whether there would be war and if other states would join the fledgling nation.¹

The first task, the formation of the Confederacy, had been accomplished. But this triumph was just the beginning, as opposed to the realization, of the ambitions of leading Confederates. Confederates needed a vision of an expansive Confederacy in order to appeal to a number of audiences. Most importantly, such an outcome was vital for impatient and excited supporters across the Deep South whom otherwise might begin to lose enthusiasm for the new nation and become fearful for the future. Leading Confederates also believed that territorial and commercial growth would be a requirement to meet the aspirations of the as yet uncommitted citizens of the Upper and Border South States. Moreover, Confederates needed to consider opinion in the free states: commercial opportunities presented by a confederacy with access to increasing markets might make the inhabitants of the states of the Northwest apply pressure on Lincoln to concede both recognition of Confederate independence and an equal share of the Territories and other federal assets. Finally, similar arguments could also be counted on to influence European, especially British and French opinion. For all these audiences, Confederates understood that their nation had to offer the prospect of a better future, not just for slaveholders fearing the loss of their slaves, but to all those affected by Confederate independence.

¹ William John Grayson, *A Reply to Professor Hodge On the State of the Country* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans and Cogswell, 1861), 10. Dynamism was evidenced by the varying dates of secession of other states following South Carolina: Mississippi, January 9, 1861; Florida January, 10, 1861; Alabama, January 11, 1861; Georgia, January 19, 1861; Texas, February 1, 1861. See William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-1861*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2:490-8.

It was not the case that, by the time of the formation of the Confederacy in early 1861, expansionism for southerners had become, as William W. Freehling argues, tainted because it was associated with support of the continuation of the Union. Freehling contends that expansion had become divisive within the southern section. Expansion was even a matter of dispute within the Deep South, opposed by conservative Charleston and supported by 'buccaneering' New Orleans. But the more important split on expansion, at the heart of his argument, was that between the citizens of Border States and those of the Deep South. Deep South opinion turned cold on expansion, as it would entail the draining away of slaves, and with it any support for the Confederacy, from the Border States. Meanwhile, Confederates perceived that expansion itself was only permitted as part of a Union-preservation project, the extension of the 36 30 line to California, associated with the negotiations over the Crittenden Compromise. According to Freehling, to support secession became tantamount to opposing expansion, and Confederates instead favored the more intensive cultivation of areas within the existing slave states in order to better strengthen Border South loyalty both to southern rights and the institution of slavery.²

Expansion was not driven by sectional competition, which Confederates discarded at the moment of disunion. It was the end of the Union that meant expansionism became a necessary objective for the Confederacy. Mississippi's secession ordinance declared

² Freehling's argument is that Deep South unease at the perceived weakening commitment of the Border South toward slavery drove the movement toward secession. At the same time, northerners and even the Doughface Presidents, increasingly opposed expansion on the grounds that it might involve the spread of slavery; Freehling flags the debacle of the Ostend Manifesto and the limiting of the Gadsden Purchase in 1854 and the Presidents' invoking of neutrality legislation to thwart the activities of filibustering. Freehling, *The Road of Disunion*, 2:145-168. The Crittenden Compromise, so named after the U.S. Senator of Kentucky, John J. Crittenden; he was a member of Senate 'Committee of Thirteen' tasked with sifting the compromise proposals along with Jefferson Davis and Robert Toombs. Crittenden proposed a series of amendments, which would have guaranteed slavery in the states against future interference by the national government; prohibited slavery north of 36° 30' and protected it south of that line in all territories, "now held, or *hereafter acquired*" (italics added). See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 252-4.

that the United States government “refuses the admission of new slave states into the Union and seeks to extinguish [slavery] by confining it within its present limits, denying the power of expansion.” Mississippi joined the Confederacy for the same slave power arguments that had been propounded by the Republican Party between 1854 and 1860. These claims had been so effective because the threat of slavery expansion to the territories and tropics was real, dictated by ambitious southerners and so expansion became an essential objective for Confederates. Southerners believed in a record of broken promises within the Union, which meant that expansionism, and therefore slavery and the South’s future, could only be secured through the means of independence.³

Expansionist ambitions had been made possible by the removal of the Union as a constraint. Before the outbreak of war in April, Confederate president Jefferson Davis’s hoped peace with the Union implied no denial of Confederate expansion. On March 1, Davis wrote to a northern correspondent that “the North has wanted Canada and the South wants Cuba, the expansion of both may have been restrained by the narrow views of each, let them be left freely to grow...” He did not simply reserve these thoughts for private consumption.⁴

The delegates to the convention of the Confederate states in Montgomery had nominated a man as president who was known at large to be an expansionist. As the British consul in Charleston noted, Davis “is a firm believer in the ‘Manifest Destiny’ of

³ *Journal of the State Convention and Ordinances and Resolutions; Adopted January 1861 with an Appendix, Published by Order of the Convention* (Jackson, Miss., E. Barksdale, 1861). Eric Foner and Michael F. Holt still dominate the Slave Power debate whether economic expansion of free labor or republicanism was held to be most threatened by the expansion of slavery. But both agree that the threat of slavery’s territorial expansion was vital for the Republican Party message to gain traction in the North; in particular, as Holt notes, against competition from the nativist Know Nothing Party. See Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: 1970) and Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: Norton, 1983).

⁴ Jefferson Davis to Anna Ella Carroll, March 1, 1861, *JDP*, 7:64; Jefferson Davis, “Speech to the U.S. Senate,” January 10, 1861, *JDP*, 5:29.

the South to overrun and convert into slave-holding states of a Confederacy, Mexico, Central America and Cuba. He was a warm advocate of the expeditions of Lopez, Walker and other Filibusters..." Virginian lawyer Robert G. H. Kean spoke for many in regarding the new Confederate president as endowed with the enlarged vision necessary to lead a great power and in contrast to the provincial reputation of Lincoln, it was a case of "statesman versus stump speaker, Hyperion to a Satyr." Davis did not seek to change his reputation as an expansionist; in early February, on his way to Montgomery for his Inauguration, he assured an audience in Atlanta that expansionism was only possible with independence. Under a Confederate regime, he "had no fears about expansion; there are the West India Isles, which under the old Union were forbidden fruit to us, and there are the northern parts of Mexico." The president saw a twofold opportunity; first, possibly a bargain with the Union to achieve a mutually beneficial scenario of separate expansion to the north and south and, secondly, liberty for Confederates to look for areas in which to expand, which had been denied to southerners when part of the Union.⁵

To both press and politicians, the existence of the Confederacy spelled an end to the ambiguous compromises that thwarted expansion in the Union. On February 21, the editor of the *Charleston Mercury* wrote that Davis's remarks amounted to a vision of what the Confederacy would become. He wrote approvingly that Davis "spoke of the future of the Confederate States and that posterity would see a great nation...stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with the northern portions of Mexico forming portions of its broad domain." In contrast, the latest Union mediation attempt, the National Peace

⁵ Jefferson Davis, "Speech at Atlanta," February 16, 1861, *JDP*, 7:43; Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, February 28, 1861, FO 5/780, p. 127, PRO; Kean to John B. Minor, February 19 1861, Box 9, Minor and Wilson Family Papers, #3750, UVA. In Davis's January 1861, farewell address to the United States Senate, there was also an oblique reference to this wish, when he hoped for "peaceful relations," which would be "mutually beneficial." (Jefferson Davis, "Message on the State of the Union," January 10, 1861, *CG*, 310.)

Conference at Washington, had simply wasted “a great deal of breath” about “the acquisition of future territory.” George Wythe Randolph, Richmond lawyer and delegate to the Virginia Convention, agreed; he called the compromise put forward “a most unreliable safeguard” because “this [Peace Conference] proposition, which requires the majorities of the Senators of each section to concur in the acquisition of territory, exposes us again to all the annoyances of controversy; and much worse than that, to the dangers of intrigue and infidelity...” So a Virginian politician, Randolph, agreed with the *Charleston Mercury*, controlled by fire-eater Robert Barnwell Rhett, that “not an inch of soil will ever be added to this Union south of the Rio Grande. All expansion will be made by and for the southern Confederacy.” Unlike Randolph, for the editor of the *Charleston Mercury*, the merits of expansion received additional impetus from his demands for the reopening of the international slave trade.⁶

The *Mercury* believed that reopening the international slave trade and Confederate expansionist ambition were mutually reinforcing. By advocating expansion as well, proponents of the resumption of the slave trade believed they would be able to broaden support for the latter. The slave trade was “a topic that might hereafter involve the development and expansion of our Confederate Empire”- especially as the Confederacy had “within our reach a large scope of fertile territory uncultivated in Texas,

⁶ “The President at Atlanta, from our own correspondent,” *The Charleston Mercury*, 21 February, 1861, accessed through the internet via the *Accessible Archive, The Civil War, Part I: A Newspaper Perspective* <http://www.accessible.com>; George Wythe Randolph, “Secessionist Speech,” Virginia Convention, March 16, 1861, William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia: the 1861 Convention and the Fate of the Union* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 50 [hereafter cited as Freehling & Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia*]; “Our Washington Correspondent,” *Charleston Mercury*, February 25, 1861, accessed through the internet via the *Accessible Archive, The Civil War, Part I: A Newspaper Perspective* <http://www.accessible.com>. The January 1861, Virginia Legislature had summoned what became the Peace Conference to Washington, D.C., on February 4. All states, except the seceded Lower South and the far-off Pacific Ocean states sent delegates. Ex-President John Tyler was elected presiding officer. It then spent 3 weeks in search of a reunion bargain and finally settled on a version of Crittenden’s “tired compromise.” (Freehling, *Road to Disunion* 2:513.) See also William C. Davis, *Rhett, the Turbulent Life and Times of a Fire-Eater* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 354-374.

and may have ere long the silver mines of Arizona, and the teeming states of Mexico to populate and reduce to agricultural productiveness...” Consequently, reopening the slave trade “may become essential to our appropriate growth and expansion and to our successful competition with the hypocritical [regarding slavery] nations of Europe.” Even though the South Carolinian representatives were unsuccessful at the Provisional Congress then meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, in removing the ban proposed in the draft Confederate Constitution, the broader support for expansion remained.⁷

Expansionism had a broader constituency than the minority who supported the reintroduction of the international slave trade. Advocacy for the slave trade did not necessarily correlate with extensive support for expansion. On February 13, South Carolinian lawyer and convention member Lewis W. Spratt criticized those who argued that reopening the slave trade would “overstock the country and induce some kind of social suffocation...it is assumed that hemmed in as we are but a slight addition to our slaves will induce disastrous consequences.” But Spratt dismissed “any danger from an overcrowded population. Slaves may be held to greater density than freemen, order will be greater and the economy of resources will be greater.” Spratt, an associate of Rhett’s, wanted to increase slave ownership amongst poor whites with an influx from Africa lowering the rapidly rising prices of slaves to more affordable levels.⁸

⁷ “The Constitution of the Confederate States,” March 15, 1861, printed in the *Charleston Mercury*; “The Provisional Constitution of the Confederate States of America,” printed in the *Charleston Mercury*, February 12, 1861; Rhett, “Amendment of the CS Constitution,” February 8, 1861, *CJ*, 1:35. The First Session of the Confederate Congress met from February 4, 1861 to March 16, 1861 in Montgomery.

⁸ Lewis W. Spratt, *The Philosophy of Secession: a southern View, presented in a letter addressed to the Hon. Mr. Perkins of Louisiana, in criticism of the provisional constitution adopted by the Southern congress at Montgomery, Alabama, February 13, 1861* (n.p., 1861), 6. Representative Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina likewise considered that “we have a reasonable time in which to repent of our sins before we die of suffocation” (Zebulon Baird Vance, *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* [Washington, D.C., H. Polkinhorn, 1861], 5.) Governor Pickens of South Carolina described Spratt as “a distinguished member of our convention and one of our prominent lawyers

Those who believed in Confederate expansion could also oppose the international slave trade because they doubted, unlike Spratt and Rhett, the ability of the new nation to sustain a rapidly growing slave population within its existing borders. In Virginia, the secessionist James Holcombe argued at the Convention that Deep South states “want further acquisition of territory” simply in order “that the normal relation of races may be preserved for all time”; otherwise, existing “Southern territory...will not be adequate to the peaceful accommodation of the black race.” Doubts about the solidity of the social structure in the event of a continued rapid natural growth of the slave population, doubling in size every fifteen or twenty years, provided a basis for expansion.⁹

The Appeal of Confederate Expansion to the Upper South

In appealing to the undecided citizens of the Upper South, supporters of the Confederacy had a difficult task. They feared that remaining in the Union or joining a middle confederacy constituted viable alternative futures for these states. Critics of the Confederacy also argued that by renouncing concerted Slave State action, the South had surrendered any right it may have had to the territories. In order to surmount these problems, Confederates presented their nation as expansionist.

Expansion provided a means for Confederates to diffuse slavery southward and westward in order to disperse dangerous concentrations of slave population. The U.S. Senator of Virginia, R. M. T. Hunter, stressed the advantages to Virginia, and other Upper South and Border States, of joining an expansive Confederacy. In a letter

who has taken very great interest in the important events now transpiring.” (Pickens to Letcher, April 30, 1861, folder 385, Letcher Papers, #1 L5684 a FA2 VHS.) See also Davis, *Rhett* 354-374.

⁹ Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 2:155; James P. Holcombe, “Secessionist Speech,” Virginia Convention, March 20, 1861, Freehling & Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia*, 69.

published in both the *Richmond Enquirer* (December 1860) and *De Bow's Review* (January 1861), Hunter averred that membership in the Confederacy would provide those states with “an outlet for their surplus population of slaves,” which would go not only to “these co-states,” but also “in whatever territory might be acquired by that Union.” However, if Virginia chose to remain in the United States, “her slave population would indeed be ‘penned in’ and ‘localized’ within her borders.” The incentive to expand was not only a matter of race control; Hunter argued that slave mobility, from having “an outlet for emigration,” was essential to keep wages for the white laborer high. As with Spratt and Rhett, Hunter was concerned for the welfare of poor whites; for the former, their loyalty would be cemented by becoming slaveholders themselves. But for Hunter and Randolph, the need was to disperse competing slave labor and so remove downward pressure on wages. For both groups, expansion offered a reconciling vision that would achieve the desired outcome of poor white support for the Confederacy. For Hunter, the result of higher wages and increased markets would be prosperity, and for Virginia, specifically, on “the shores of the Chesapeake, a great and commanding center of credit and commerce.” State and national ambition would work in harmony in the Confederacy.¹⁰

It suited those Upper South critics, who wished to condemn Deep South secession as a precipitate act, to argue that their states had more of an interest in expansion than the Deep South. On March 11, western Virginia delegate George W. Summers asked his fellow members of the Virginia convention “what interest compared with ours do the

¹⁰ Hunter, “The border states—their position after disunion,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):114; Hunter to James R. Micou, Thomas Croxton, and others, December 10, 1860, in Charles Henry Ambler, ed., *Correspondence of Robert M.T. Hunter, 1826-1876* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 345-47. Freehling defines the Middle South states as Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina. (Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 2:4.)

cotton states have in the territorial question? Do they furnish any population for the settlement of the territories?” Summers scoffed “who would leave the fertile lands of the South with his negroes to New Mexico and Arizona?” He added “what possible inducement can exist for the removal of slave labor from the cotton and sugar plantations of the southern states where it is so profitable, to any of the territories now owned by the United States?” It will be from the Border States that there will be “the slave migration to the territories.” Summers concluded, “In all these questions we have the larger interest.”¹¹

Moreover, advocates of the Confederacy had to compete with Unionists; for the latter it was the Union that promised a future of expansion. Membership of the Confederacy ruled out a share of the territories. On February 13, U.S. representative Zebulon Vance of North Carolina asked an audience in Washington, Beaufort County, North Carolina, “What is to become of our vast public property – the immense territories of the west?” He added that “scarcely a nation on earth has so magnificent a public domain”; yet the Confederacy could not simply rely on receiving a pro rata portion for “they are common property and if we are to divide, how are we to dispose of them?” To expect an amicable settlement whilst leaving the Union was absurd because “if we can divide them fairly and peacefully, why can this not be done without leaving the Union?” Vance agreed that the territories “constitute the great bone of contention between the North and South”; but he added, if “the North refuses even so much as to allow us to take an even chance with them for their settlement by prohibiting us to go there with our slave

¹¹ George W Summers, *Speech of Hon. George W. Simmers on federal Relations in the Virginia Convention, delivered March 11, 1861*(Richmond, Va.: Whig Book and Job Office, 1861), 14.

property, can we expect them to peacefully give up one half to us absolutely?" Vance answered his rhetorical question, northerners "certainly never will."¹²

Hence in the debates between secessionists and unionists in the Upper South, expansion became a political issue. Senator Thomas Bragg of North Carolina noted in his diary on February 18, of Vance's pamphlet stating that secession meant an end to expansion, "it is out and out against secession, and is very well calculated to produce some effect among his constituents. Surely it is a very different paper from what he would have issued a few weeks since, judging from his conversation." After the excitement of the secession of the Deep South States in January, the period during February and until news spread about Lincoln's First Inaugural on March 4, witnessed a lull in secessionist feeling in the Upper South states. In this context, advocates of secession in order to join an expansionist Confederacy had to hedge their positions to take account of an electorate which still considered that a future was possible within the Union. As a candidate for the Virginia State Convention, Randolph had to qualify his private enthusiasm for Virginia joining and leading a southern confederacy when campaigning against a popular Whig and Unionist opponent. The state Governor, John Letcher, noted with some satisfaction on February 4, "Randolph made a speech and declared his willingness to take the Crittenden platform, as a fair ground of adjustment. This saved his bacon, and defeated [John Minor] Botts by a small majority."¹³

¹² Zebulon Baird Vance, *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 3-4.

¹³ Thomas Bragg, "Diary," February 18, 1861, p. 55, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; John Letcher to John D. Davidson, February 4, 1861, folder 384, Letcher Papers, #L5684 a FA2, VHS. The result was an ambiguous election in which the apparent setback to secessionist feeling was not tantamount to a triumph of Unionism. As Kean noted to Minor on February 19, "I was to some extent behind the scenes with the convention, though they have not seen enough of each other to know one another's position accurately. The Constitutional Secessionists, of whom our delegates are types, are the holders of the balance of power – they are about fifty; the straight out Union men about sixty, and the supporters of

It also suited politicians from the Upper South to portray themselves as ‘honest brokers’ between recalcitrant extremists in both the Deep South and the Union, and this extended to the positions they adopted on expansion. On February 17, the North Carolina delegation attending the Washington Peace Conference considered whether to “to embrace or leave out the proposal of adjustment ‘future acquired territory’” and asked their State’s legislators for their opinion. Bragg together with a colleague in the House, Lawrence O’ Bryan Branch, “both agreed that we did not want more territory.” But, as the North Carolinians believed that it was the Deep South that demanded expansion, compromise might be necessary as “we rather thought however that the states that had gone out of the Union would insist upon it and that it might be expedient so far as bringing them back was concerned.” Bragg virtuously insisted that but for this deep south intransigence, “we were willing to see strong positions inserted against the future acquisition of territory by treaty or otherwise.” On the same day, Kentuckian diplomat William Preston explained the rationale for border state moderation on matters of expansion, “for my own part I wish Kentucky to stand by the South because if she and the other Border States gave strong proofs of friendship and sympathy, it will give more moderate tone to the southern opinion and southern demands, and I will trust also deter the North from the idea of coercion and lay the basis of future adjustment.” In addressing the questions of supporting secession and attempting to extract concessions from the

prompt action in the event of a failure of the peace congress to provide something...about forty two.” (Kean to Minor, February 19, 1861 box 9 Letters to Professor John B. Minor, folder title “January to April 1861 correspondence,” Minor and Wilson Family Papers, #3750, UVA.) On March 4, Randolph concurred, telling his elder brother, “the convention is still in a fog. As nearly as one can judge about one third are secessionists, as many are submissionists, and a third are halting between...” (Randolph to Thomas Jefferson Randolph, March 4, 1861 box 11 Edgehill-Randolph Papers, #1397, UVA.)

North, politicians and commentators adopted stances that disguised their own attitudes to expansion.¹⁴

While Confederates and other southerners debated the merits of Union or Confederacy, alternatives such as either a looser Union or the formation of a ‘middle confederacy’ composed of Border States from both North and South faded. On January 4, senator Alfred Osborn Pope Nicolson of Tennessee presented a paper drawn up by Vice President John C. Breckinridge and signed by Crittenden addressed to the people and governors of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Missouri, “for the purpose of avoiding civil war and secure united counsels by conventions or legislatures to send commissioners to Baltimore on February 13 to confer together for that purpose.” As Bragg noted, both Virginian senators Hunter and Mason had refused to sign and although Bragg had “no objection,” his colleague Thomas Lanier Clingman was “indisposed to sign as it would supersede the State Convention he was proposing be called.” Separate state action triumphed over attempts to institutionalize collective border state action.¹⁵

To some Upper South politicians, a middle confederacy remained one that had a viable economic future. Governor John Letcher called on the citizens of Virginia to “cast about and ascertain in what way the interests of Virginia can be preserved and advanced...regardless of what happens to the Union.” With railroads and canals

¹⁴ Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” 53-55, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; William Preston to [his father] February 17, 1861, Preston Family Papers - Davie Collection, 1658-1896., #A\P937d, FHS. Judge Thomas Ruffin of the North Carolina delegation to the peace conference told his wife from Washington D.C. on February 9, that his duty was “that of endeavoring in committee and private consultations to reconcile the strife between our fellow citizens and ourselves by wholesome amendments to the Constitution...If I was certain that I could carry home with me such proposals as would satisfy the demands of our people, & bring back our retired sisters I would gladly undertake the duty...” (Thomas Ruffin to his wife, February 9, 1861, box 29, folder 440, Thomas Ruffin Papers, #641 SHC.)

¹⁵ Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” 2, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC.

extending westward, Virginia will be “part of a central belt from Atlantic and Pacific.” On February 8, William Massie, a planter from Nelson County, Virginia, agreed on the viability of a middle confederacy. He asked a delegate to the Washington Peace Conference from Virginia, William C. Rives, whether “if a disruption is obliged to take place, can’t Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Arkansas act with New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Iowa, and be brought together as a middle Confederacy? I dashed off and drafted from my atlas...a map containing those states and it looked very well...” But such proposals did not get beyond a speculative stage.¹⁶

The reason for the failure of the middle confederacy was a combination of sectional and economic issues, especially concerns about solidarity over slavery. On February 6, J. Warren Grigsby of Danville Kentucky, told Letcher he “very cordially” approved of his message whilst “dissenting decidedly from that portion looking to the formation of a border state confederacy,” which was “wholly impracticable even if desirable politically.” He asked Letcher of the Border Free States, “what reasonable hope is there that they would consent to sever their relations with their own section to unite their fortunes with those of the border and lower states?” Grigsby answered his own question, such a hope “does not exist” and “our only hope of safety will be found in a united South.” On March 16, Randolph told the Virginia convention, that a border state confederacy was a “commercial absurdity and politically objectionable. The Border States have the same products, are competitors, present no market for each other’s

¹⁶ John Letcher, *Governor’s Message and documents, January 7, 1861* (Richmond Va., William F. Ritchie, 1861), xxv, folder 389, John Letcher Papers, #L5684 a FA2, VHS. Massie to Rives, February 8, 1861, box 2E493, folder “correspondence, January-March 1861,” William Massie Papers, UT. About the Washington Peace Conference, please see note 6.

productions and would have no inter-state trade.” The result would be “no union except a political one.” Echoing Grigsby’s earlier conclusion, Randolph argued that “a majority of those states have a small and a decreasing interest in slavery and are not such protectors as we would select in preference to other states having a greater stake in slavery.” A future state needed the bonds of economic self-interest, commitment to slavery expansion and shared sectional sentiment.¹⁷

In this context of increasing commitment to a Confederate future among southerners as a whole, attempts by northern politicians to chart an alternative course of a looser Union foundered. Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois made constant efforts, but as Bragg observed when “Douglas concluded his speech; I hoped the southern leaders would thank him, but they kept aloof.” On February 19, Bragg noted in another speech Douglas gave, “he seemed to think we might and ought to have a league and commercial arrangement among the nations of this continent, similar to that of the Zollverein in Germany and that it might be also arranged to have treaties offensive and defensive...” Intrigued, Bragg went to see Douglas who told him that “the speech was made to shadow out the policy this government would have to pursue towards these States.” Bragg believed that “perhaps it was intended as a feeler” but added “I don’t see that the speech has attracted any attention yet” even though he considered that “it is the only thing that can now be done to prevent entire alienation between the sections.” Bragg hoped that the speech’s importance and potential would register among Confederates. But when Davis dispatched commissioners north to Washington D.C. on February 27, all he suggested was that the mission was “animated to bind together our respective countries by friendly

¹⁷ Grigsby to Letcher, February 6, 1861, folder 384, John Letcher Papers, #L5684 a FA2 VHS; George Wythe Randolph, “Secessionist Speech,” March 16, 1861, Freehling and Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia*, 49-61.

ties.” Davis wanted cooperation over expansion and a commercial treaty, but he did not want any arrangement that qualified Confederate independence.¹⁸

The Confederate Proposition: Expansion of Slavery

Instead of speculative visions of a *zollverein* encompassing North America, southerners and Confederates preferred to debate about the feasibility of expansion of slavery into neighboring lands. Bragg’s caution over insisting on expansion as a condition of the peace conference was influenced by his doubts as to whether it was possible, “especially as the Mexican territory next to ours was not adapted to slave labor, for the reason that it would not produce sugar or cotton, save in a few localities, and that it was as apt to be settled by free labor as by slave labor, perhaps more so.” Vance was more scathing about the Territories, “it is agreed on all sides, that if a negro was ‘expanded’ into any portion of our unsettled domain he would be more likely to starve with his silly master than to flourish.” Of the lands, “none is inviting to slavery as long as there is a single acre to spare in the regions of cotton, sugar and rice.” Vance accepted that “though New Mexico might become a slave state and so strengthen the political status of the South, it certainly never will become profitable to slave labor if soil, climate and productions furnish any expectations.” There were undeniable limits to the expansion of slavery, but this acceptance did not rule out Confederate expansion as a whole.¹⁹

Opponents and supporters of the Confederacy and its expansion agreed about this basic calculus underpinning the growth of slavery. The pastor of the First Presbyterian

¹⁸ Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” 3, 55-56, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; Davis to James Buchanan, “announcing mission of Martin G. Crawford, John Forsyth and A.B. Roman,” February 27, 1861, *OR*, 94-95.

¹⁹ Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” 53, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; Zebulon Baird Vance, *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 5.

Church of New Orleans, Benjamin M. Palmer, considered “if African slavery exists at all, its limits must be determined by climate and soil – that precisely where it ceases to be profitable there it will inevitably cease to exist.” On March 30, Joseph E. Segar agreed, telling the Virginia House of Delegates, “[S]lavery will go wherever it is profitable, just as sure as water finds its level. No human legislation can prevent it, because the instincts of the human constitution and the laws of soil and climate are stronger than any law-giving of finite man.” Confederates believed slavery had to remorselessly grow because of its potential as a labor force that was ideally suited to the cultivation of staple crops in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. For as Spratt insisted that “the system of domestic slavery, guided always by the best intelligence, directed always by the strictest economy...can underwork the world.” These individuals portrayed slavery as an unstoppable force beyond the control of humanity, for, as Spatt declared, “there is no other human labor that can stand against it.” In this context, the role of the Confederacy was to simply allow slavery to expand of its own accord; as Palmer added, “it is the duty of the South in the discharge of a great historic trust, to conserve and transmit the same...” This duty meant allowing slavery to achieve its natural limits.²⁰

The representation of Confederates as mere guardians of an institution larger than themselves enabled them to refute accusations of aggression from their detractors while at the same time retaining their right to expand. Palmer had written in the April edition of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* in response to a Kentuckian cleric who had in January

²⁰ Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *A Vindication of Secession and the South from the Strictures of Reverend R.J. Breckinridge DD LLD in the Danville Quarterly Review* (Columbia, S.C.: Southern Guardian Press, 1861), 24, 25; Joseph Eggleston Segar, *Speech of Joseph Segar, Esq., of the York District, delivered in the House of Delegates of Virginia, March the 30th, 1861, on the resolutions of the Senate, directing the Governor of Virginia to seize, by military force, the U.S. guns at Bellona Arsenal, and on the secession of Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: n.p., 1861), 18. Lewis W. Spratt, *The Philosophy of Secession: a southern View, presented in a letter addressed to the Hon. Mr. Perkins of Louisiana, in criticism of the provisional constitution adopted by the Southern congress at Montgomery, Alabama, February 13, 1861* (n.p., 1861), 3.

accused Confederates of “ulterior motives” in seceding including wanting “a war which shall end when you shall have taken possession of the whole southern part of this continent down to the Isthmus of Darien [Panama].” Palmer retorted, “Who knows but there may be in the midst of us military adventurers, as there are in all lands, who are ambitious of making history a little prematurely?” But, as far as Confederates in general were concerned, Palmer continued “We know not how to quiet these nervous forebodings, but by suggesting that the South has notoriously been content to walk in historic paths...we have not the prescience of the prophet to forecast the distant future. We are content to deal with present realities, and leave the future to posterity, when it shall become their present.” He insisted of Confederates, “If we desire territory, we shall not with school-boy greed pluck the apple tree when it is green, but will wait upon history till the time of ripeness, when it will fall into the lap...” With the inexorable advance of slavery and the workings of political economy, Confederates felt themselves to be at the mercy of forces larger than themselves and divinely providential.²¹

Confederates recognized constraints on the growth of slavery, not only in terms of the economic viability of certain lands, but also regarding the problem of what to do about the native populations that came under their control as a result of expansion. Although a vigorous expansionist, James D. B. De Bow cautioned that Confederates should not prematurely “conquer and annex territory that would destroy the homogeneity of their population.” More bluntly, Vance reminded his audience in Washington North Carolina, that if the Confederacy was to “take in the mongrel, cut-throat population of Mexico and Central America,” its leaders should recall that “the wisest and greatest of

²¹ Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *A Vindication of Secession and the South from the Strictures of Reverend R.J. Breckinridge DD LLD in the Danville Quarterly Review* (Columbia, S.C.: Southern Guardian Press, 1861), 24.

southern statesmen from Calhoun down have disapproved and argued against such a thing.” But the criticism was only against excessive expansion, a national expansion that exceeded the collective ability of Confederates and involved the acquisition of densely populated lands. Even the critics envisaged a realm larger than all the slave states taken together; Vance foresaw there would be “cotton lands enough to employ one hundred million slaves” and De Bow believed that all “the southern states, rounded off with the Indian Territory, will constitute a splendid empire. Let us bend all our energies to improve this territory and endeavor to keep peace with the outside world.” The new Confederate legislature, which spent much time deliberating on the territorial scope of the Confederacy, agreed with this view.²²

The first session of the Confederate Provisional Congress established the mechanism for possible expansion. In the words of South Carolinian William Porcher Miles, member of Committee of the Flag and Seal, the representatives were “determined to build up a new power among the nations of the world.” Congress rapidly established separate committees on Indian Affairs and Territories. Congress also envisioned both New Mexico and Indian Territory within the Confederacy, at a time when Arkansas, sandwiched between Mississippi and Indian Territory, had not yet seceded. Confederate Secretary of State Robert Toombs sought Congressional authorization to send an agent to the Indian Territory at the same time as sending a commissioner to the Arkansas convention. By the time Congress concluded its session on March 16, approval had been given, and appropriations granted, for the establishment of a bureau for Indian Affairs. Congress stated its intention to expand the Confederacy by its extension of dominion

²² “Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade – A Southern Confederacy,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):30; Zebulon Baird Vance, *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 5.

over Native Americans. More importantly, the Provisional Congress established, spending much time in debate, the process of admitting new states and new territories into the Confederacy.²³

Commercial Expansion

Confederates knew that territorial expansion, although a prerequisite for slavery was controversial for two reasons: first, it may involve the eventual inclusion of populations likely to complicate the racial balance of the Confederacy; and, second, an undue emphasis on territorial expansion might reawaken memories of filibustering. As a result, the Confederate government, especially as it commenced diplomatic approaches to overseas governments, preferred an emphasis on a more universally appealing commercial expansion.

The efforts of Congress paralleled the economic and international policy of the government, which was peaceful commercial expansion. The policy promoted increased waterborne commerce and Free Trade. On February 12, a South Carolinian delegate Christopher G. Memminger proposed to Congress that the Committee on Commercial Affairs “inquire and report upon the expediency of repealing the navigation laws of the United States.” In his instructions to the commissioners heading to Europe, the Secretary of State, Robert Toombs, extolled the “liberal navigation system” of the Confederate States. He emphasized the anticipated growth in coastal trade as a result of this legislation and added “it must be borne in mind that nearly one-half of all the Atlantic coast and the

²³ Miles, “Report,” March 4, 1861, *CJ*, 1:105; Jefferson Davis, “Message,” March 16, *CJ*, 1:151; Robert Toombs, “Resolution,” March 4, 1861, *CJ*, 1:105. The committees on territories and Indian affairs were established on February 11, 1861, (*CJ*, 1:44-45.) New Mexico included all the land between California and Texas (although its boundaries were up for dispute and later Arizona would be carved out) Indian Territory equates to modern day Oklahoma. On 18 February 1861, Louis T. Wigfall, in a letter to Jefferson Davis, referenced Arkansas U.S. Senator Richard W. Johnson who had warned him the United States was competing for the loyalty of the Indian Tribes, (*JDP*, 7:51-2.)

whole of the Mexican Gulf, lately within the United States, are at present within the boundaries of the Confederate States.” Hence the envoys could inform their European audiences as to the Confederacy’s “valuable attraction to countries largely engaged in that enterprising pursuit of free trade.”²⁴

In March, as it went into recess, the Confederate Congress published the results of its secret sessions, including this modification of the navigation laws and the repeal of all discriminatory duties on ships and vessels. On receipt of the news, Consul Bunch explained to Russell “the practical effect of this enactment is to open the coasting trade of the new Confederacy to the world.” Earlier rumors of such measures did not go without criticism, Vance exclaimed that to repeal the navigation laws was too much of a concession to overseas merchants and would cripple native shipbuilding, “we have no ships and with an entire repeal of the navigation laws throwing our carrying trade open to the world, we never would have any for our goods will be carried on foreign bottoms.” Possession of one’s own merchant navy was the essential precondition of constructing ships of war, as Vance added “without ships there can be no national greatness.” But not all Confederates agreed with Vance; Texan Senator Louis T. Wigfall, looking to a future of peaceful commercial expansion in an interdependent world, believed Confederates could safely rely on foreign nations to protect their own trade with the Confederacy. This

²⁴ Memminger, “Resolution,” February 12, 1861, *CJ*, 1:48; Robert Toombs to William L. Yancey, Ambrose D. Mann, Pierre A. Rost, March 16, 1861, in James D. Richardson, ed., *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy including Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865*, 2 vols. (1906; reprint, New York: Chelsea House, 1966), 2:5 [hereafter cited as Richardson, *Messages and Papers*]. Memminger’s proposal was just 8 days after Congress had assembled on February 4. On the instructions to the commissioners see Jones, *Blue and Grey*, 19-20. A bill to propose the free navigation of the Mississippi was introduced to the Provisional Congress on February 22 (*CJ*, 1:75.)

trust was not a sign of weakness, but of strength and meant Confederates concentrated on what they were best at: growing cotton.²⁵

Helped immensely by the passage of the protective Morrill Tariff by the U.S. Congress on March 2, Confederates presented their nation as a force for reciprocal commercial growth throughout the world and the Union as its enemy. Confederates saw their quest for independence as for both political and economic self-government. On March 30, after the Provisional Congress went into recess, Representative Robert H. Smith of Alabama addressed his electors gathered in Mobile's Temperance Hall and looked back at the legislation passed and declared "We have sent our diplomats to Europe with the Constitution in one hand and a low tariff in the other...the intelligence of these material facts will follow fast upon the tidings of the Morrill Tariff that has become the law of the United States." The Confederate House Committee on Foreign Affairs declared that the Morrill Tariff "is a war on the foreign commerce of the country, in which the southern people are chiefly interested." As well as encouraging overseas merchantmen to trade in their ports, Confederates projected their new nation as the promoter of free trade sustained by an economy geared toward the maximum production of staple crops for export.²⁶

²⁵ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, March 7, 1861, FO 5/780, p.134, PRO; Vance, Zebulon Baird. *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 6. Wigfall frankly declared to the British, "We have no commercial marine – no navy – we don't want them. We are better off without them. Your ships carry our produce, and you can protect your own vessels...As long as we have our rice, our sugar, our tobacco and our cotton, we can command wealth to purchase all we want." Quoted in Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 11.

²⁶ Robert Hardy Smith, *An address to the citizens of Alabama on the constitution and Laws of the Confederate States of America, by the Hon Robert H. Smith, at Temperance Hall, on the 30th of March, 1861* (Mobile, Ala., Mobile Daily Register, 1861), 22; *The Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the President's Message relating to the affairs between the Confederate and the United States* (Montgomery, Ala., n.p., 1861), 3.

Confederates argued their export-led slavery-based economy would benefit world trade and wealth. The revenue earned by the exportation of commodities would enable Confederates to increase their consumption of overseas manufactured goods, resulting in a virtuous cycle of nations thriving on comparative advantage. On April 12, a correspondent of Hunter wrote, “the primary fact to all communities is that the creation of a surplus of agricultural crops by capitalists farming large tracts of land with disciplined laborers, produces the largest benefits to all members of society.” The members of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the provisional congress agreed with this theory of comparative advantage; under a free trading Confederate Government, the report they produced asked “shall we not have the right to deal directly with those who in return can supply us with their cheaper manufactured commodities?” With protective barriers removed, the committee enquired as a result “if foreign nations can sell us freely their manufactured commodities in consequence of their greater cheapness than those of the United States, they will be the richer by the trade and can they not afford to give us more for our cotton? And if we pay less for their manufactured commodities, are we not so much richer by the trade?” Confederates believed that the interdependent system of political economy between nations would work in their favor.²⁷

As a result, Confederate production of cotton would soar. Consul Arthur Lynn in Galveston explained what this theory would amount to in practice for the Confederacy and its British customers. “The profits of the plantations, instead of being absorbed as hitherto by the northern manufacturer, working under a protective tariff, will result more

²⁷ Callaghan to R.M.T. Hunter, April 12, 1861, box 7, Folder title “CA,” Hunter Correspondence, Hunter Family Papers, H9196aFAZ, VHS; *The Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the President’s Message relating to the affairs between the Confederate and the United States* (Montgomery, Ala., n.p., 1861), 3.

to the benefit of the planters....” Lynn believed the flow of money to the planters would “enable them to bring into cultivation lands now idle. In [Texas] alone it is estimated there are lands capable of producing two million bales.”²⁸

Monoculture left the Confederacy vulnerable to crop failure and also its simplicity seemed inappropriate for government policy outside the Deep South. Consul Bunch had “the firm conviction that the new republic will never rise to eminence as a great power of the earth as it is...founded upon the possession of...a monopoly of one single product, cotton...” Bunch informed Russell that the present set of circumstances which encouraged cotton production could not be expected to last and “so soon as this staple is subject to competition and cultivation is impeded or destroyed by causes either political or physical, so soon as some cheaper or more available fibre shall be substituted for it...from that moment does the importance of the Confederacy diminish and their claim to consideration disappear.” Nor was this vulnerability restricted to cotton. On February 20, the New Orleans based agricultural statistician, P. A. Champonier, wrote “it is impossible to foresee, or even to speculate upon the future...a crop of sugar in Louisiana is subject to so many casualties that the best judgment may be at fault when it attempts to predict uncertainties. [Whilst] the planters may benefit from the past, and avoid mistakes which were the consequences of want of prudence, foresight or skill; the result remains with Him who controls the seasons.” Such a seasonal dependency could jeopardize the realization of the ambitions Confederates set themselves; but at the same time,

²⁸ Arthur Lynn to Lord John Russell, March 14, 1861, FO 5/788, pp. 292-93, PRO.

Confederates viewed reliance on God and concentration on a single crop as not necessarily a sign of weakness.²⁹

Some southerners did believe in the need for a mixed economy. There were those in the Upper South who had reservations about the implications of free trade and reliance on cotton in particular. As Ellen [Randolph] Coolidge wrote to her relatives in Virginia, “I think Virginia and the other Border States will be miserably out of place in a coalition of which cotton is to be the supreme lord and where they will have less to hope for than in their present position.” Vance concurred, and he also wondered where the government would get its revenue from in the absence of a protective tariff and expected that whatever expedient was adopted it would hit his state disproportionately, “we could get rid of high tariffs it is true, but instead of them we would have an export duty on everything that we sold to foreign nations, which is the same or direct taxation, which is worse.” Massie agreed “I trust that we shall not be cast in with the cotton states, especially South Carolina, that would grind us to death, with her free trade and direct taxation.” In this narrative, inappropriate commercial policies and costly government reliant on revenues from the Border States rendered the Confederacy an unattractive proposition.³⁰

To Vance and Massie, a Confederacy reliant on staple crops and wedded to a policy of free trade would be weak. Vance warned “as to the bright dreams of greatness and prosperity of a southern confederacy, I do not believe them to be anything more than

²⁹ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, February 28, 1861, FO 5/780, pp. 129-30, PRO; P. A. Champomier, *Statement of the Sugar Crop of Louisiana, of 1860-61 with appendix* (New Orleans, La.: Cook, Young & Co., 1861), viii.

³⁰ Ellen Coolidge to Benjamin Randolph, February 6, 1861, Box 6, Group 19, Papers of Jefferson, Randolph, Taylor, Smith & Nicholas Families, #8937, UVA; Zebulon Baird Vance, *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 6; Massie to Rives, February 8, 1861, box 2E493, folder “correspondence, January-March 1861,” William Massie Papers, UT.

dreams. No nation on earth ever got rich that did not manufacture and manufactures cannot flourish without the protection of government.” Whereas, Vance continued “the proposed policy of the cotton states [of entire free trade] would destroy those [manufacturers] which we currently have and prevent the springing up of others.” Vance in effect argued that membership of the Confederacy would be an act of deindustrialization and a solely agricultural economy was no basis for a powerful nation dedicated to commercial and territorial expansion.³¹

Supporters of the Confederacy argued their nation would be better at accommodating manufacturing industries based in the Border States than the Union. Moreover membership of the United States had retarded the development of southern industry. On March 16, Randolph asked the Virginia convention “will the material interests of Virginia be promoted by adhering to the North or by joining the Southern Confederacy?” Randolph seized on the Morrill Tariff as proof that northerners behaved just as the British had done before the Revolution and the harmony of the Union had been destroyed by northern commercial aggression. “So soon as a branch of manufactures is attempted here, it immediately draws upon itself the powerful and concerted competition from the North.” For northerners “fully appreciate the value of the southern market...they will never permit manufacturing industry to raise its head at the South so long as they have the power to suppress it...hence what we require is moderate protection against the North.” Randolph agreed with Vance on the need for manufacturing in a successful and expansive nation state; but he also argued the enemy was the Union and not Deep South

³¹ Ibid.

free traders. In these circumstances, Confederate policy would have to deviate from absolute free trade orthodoxy.³²

In the event in order to not only stimulate international trade, but at the same time attempt to foster the development of home manufacturers and also raise revenue, the Confederate congress did adopt a new, albeit lower, tariff rather than declare free trade. The British were somewhat disappointed, Consul Bunch considered that “it is not all that we have been led to expect, but it is certainly an improvement on the US tariff of 1857 and still more so upon the new [Morrill] tariff of this year.” His counterpart in New Orleans, Thomas Mure estimated the tariffs on average between ten and fifteen percent lower than those of the Union. The Confederates were more enthusiastic. While the result was only of comparative advantage, Davis boasted the tariff amounted to “the freest trade our necessities will permit,” and Toombs excused the tariff the Confederacy had to levy as “import duties for mere revenue purposes, so moderate as to closely approximate free trade.” Implications of this policy of free trade, synonymous with expansion, would extend beyond the boundaries of the Confederacy.³³

³² George W. Randolph, “Secessionist Speech,” March 16, 1861, Freehling and Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia*, 50.

³³ Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, March 14, 1861, FO 5/780, p. 142, PRO; Thomas Mure to Lord John Russell, March 18, 1861, FO 5/788, pp. 66-67, PRO; Jefferson Davis, “Inaugural Speech,” February 18, 1861, *JDP* 7:47; Robert Toombs to William L. Yancey, Ambrose D. Mann, Pierre A. Rost, March 16, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:7. Confederate banded about ‘free trade’ and ‘direct trade’, direct trade meaning avoiding shipping first to the North before on to European ports. Confederate exporters could in effect charge retail, as opposed to wholesale, prices. The Press termed this process the repatriation of southern profits. (“Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade – A Southern Confederacy”; “The Secession of the Cotton States: its Status, its advantages, and its power” *DBR* 5 1 [January 1861]:30, 93.) Much time in the Confederate Congress was taken with discussing requisite ‘ports of entry’ for this direct trade. Free Trade meant the demand for abolition of import duties, given much impetus by the United States Congress passage of the higher so-called ‘Morrill Tariff’ in early March. Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 2: 503. For the tension between the desire for free trade and the need for repatriation of resources, see Nicholas Onuf and Peter Onuf, *Nations, Markets, and War: Modern History and the American Civil War*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2006).

The Mississippi, Internal and External Improvements, Continental Primacy

Confederates began to develop a strategy to dominate the North American continent based on their control of the Mississippi, perhaps as a means to entice Northwestern states into the Confederacy via commercial incentives. At the same time, the debates in the Provisional Congress reveal fears that the inclusion of non-slaveholding states might recreate the sectional tensions that beset the United States in the 1850s. Commercial organizations and individual States appeared to possess no such scruples and championed internal and external improvements designed to extend the Confederacy's dominance across not only North America, but also the Atlantic world.

Southerners were well aware of the importance of the Mississippi to northern opinion. As early as January 14, Bragg noted "already the accounts are that difficulties are springing up, about the navigation of the Mississippi River upon which the authorities in Mississippi have placed a guard to examine all boats from above. This question will be the one most likely to breed difficulties and give trouble..." The Virginian Presbyterian theologian, teacher and author Robert Lewis Dabney referred to "the insulting nonsense which has been everywhere vented, to make the south an offender for acts of self-defense... It is urged if the Union is not maintained, the interests of the North in the navigation of the Gulf and Mississippi, in the comities of international intercourse... may be jeopardized." In this context, much may be expected when, in the words of Smith, Confederates "have made the Mississippi a free highway of commerce."³⁴

Confederates expected that free navigation on the Mississippi would exert an attractive force on the Northwest. On February 25, 1861, Davis signed into law a bill to

³⁴ Thomas Bragg, "Diary," 23, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; Robert Lewis Dabney, *Letter of the Rev. R. L. Dabney to the Rev. S. J. Prime on the State of the Country, republished from the Central Presbyterian* (Richmond, Va.: Macfarlane and Fergusson, 1861), 10.

declare the free navigation of the Mississippi. The river and its navigable tributaries were “hereby declared free to all citizens upon its borders.” A week before the bill was introduced into Congress, on February 5, 1861, the *Charleston Mercury* mused on the “altered relations to be established with the riparian states of the upper Mississippi.” The newspaper speculated about a break-up of the Union into separate eastern and western pieces. In January, Hunter and *De Bow’s Review*, likewise, had predicted the commercial subordination of both the West and Northwest to the Confederacy. The alternatives for these states were to “either claim to be admitted into a new confederacy of free trade states” or “in their independent condition, endeavor to recover their losses...by the adoption of free trade principles.” In both outcomes, these states were destined to be subordinate economically “to the great predominating republic of slaveholding states of North America.” Both Confederate government officials and newspapers thus predicted the Confederacy’s dominance of the continent.³⁵

Such aspirations for continental primacy presented dangers to slavery that disturbed some Confederates. On March 30, Smith declared that because “sentiment in nations never long rules master of interest...so as sure as the Mississippi flows towards the Gulf, and bears on its bosom the great commerce of the West – and as sure as we are consumers of western products and our tariff will be lower than that of the US, so sure will the trouble be, not to have the West with us, but to keep it from us.” Earlier that month, the *Mercury* fretted about the risks of admitting non-slaveholding states into the

³⁵ *CJ*, 1:82; “The Southern Congress and Free Trade,” *Charleston Mercury*, February 5, 1861; “The Secession of the Cotton States: its Status, its advantages, and its power,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):93. Meaning ‘Northwest’ from a Confederate vantage; principally the states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. *De Bow’s Review* also extended its membership, for as “to this political and commercial condition, Canada and the British provinces must come at last; and to this condition Cuba and Mexico would willingly assimilate, either by annexation to the Southern and Western confederacy, or by the practice of free trade principles as sovereign and independent nations.”

Confederacy. In that context, the Provisional Congress debated the merits of securing, in the Confederate Constitution, the effective disqualification of non-slaveholding states. Eventually, delegates reached a decision that majorities of two-thirds of both houses, in a future Confederate Congress, would have to approve the admission of non-slaveholding states. On March 30, Smith declared that in the immediate term “this provision secures us as amply against the admission of undesirable associates as language can.”³⁶

Smith and other Confederates also looked forward to a time when these restrictions on the admittance of non-slaveholding states would be relaxed as a result of greater self-assurance among Confederate legislators and an ebbing of northern anti-slavery sentiment. Smith declared that he was “looking to the future with full confidence that our domestic policy will justify itself and long outlive the puny assaults of maddened fanaticism, led on by ambitious politicians.” Vice President Alexander H. Stephens also welcomed the chance non-slaveholding states might join the Confederacy. In a speech delivered in the Savannah Athenaeum on March 21, 1861, Stephens declared that it was “not beyond the range of possibility or even probability that all the great states of the North West shall gravitate this way.” Stephens navigated the sensitivity of the issue, while suggesting that “our doors are wide enough to receive them,” he added “but not until they are ready to assimilate with us in principle.” To Stephens, inclusion of free

³⁶ Robert Hardy Smith, *An address to the citizens of Alabama on the constitution and Laws of the Confederate States of America, by the Hon Robert H. Smith, at Temperance Hall, on the 30th of March, 1861* (Mobile, Ala.: Mobile Daily Register, 1861), 20; “Admission of Northern States into the Southern Confederation,” *Charleston Mercury*, March 25, 1861; “Debate on Permanent Constitution,” March 6, 1861, *CJ*, 1: 874. For example, South Carolinian delegate Robert Barnwell Rhett’s amendment to constitution made clear: “nor shall any state remain in the Confederacy which does not authorize the institution of slavery within its limits.” South Carolinians in particular feared the old tensions would reappear that beset the United States if non slaveholding states were allowed to join the Confederacy either now or in the future. “In all such territories, as long as it remains in a territorial condition, the institution of negro slavery...shall be recognized and protected by Congress and by the territorial government.” (Permanent Constitution, Article IV, section 3, part 3, *CJ*, 1:857.) Rhett was also the father of the editor of the *Charleston Mercury* and the views of that paper coincided with his own.

states was conditional on the acceptance of slavery. To Stephens, expansionist ambition would eventually triumph over slave state exclusiveness in his ringing conclusion that the current Confederate States “are now the nucleus of a growing power, which...will become the controlling power of the continent.”³⁷

The course of the Mississippi River and the free trade policy inaugurated by the Provisional Congress would enable this Confederate dominance. As a result, Smith could “earnestly hope that not only will the kindred states join us, but abide in confidence that some of the great North West States, watered by the Mississippi, will be drawn by the strong current of that mighty river and the laws of trade, to swell the number and power of this confederation.” By admitting these states, Confederates, according to Smith, would “grasp the power of empire on this continent and announce to the startled North that it has reached its western limit, and must spread, if spread it can, towards the frozen sea.”³⁸

Other organizations within the Confederacy expressed commercial expansionist sentiments and lobbied for government and public support. Georgian Democrat, former treasury secretary and planter, Howell Cobb, was president of both the Provisional Congress and the cotton planters’ convention. The cotton planters’ convention’s executive committee met in Macon, Georgia, during March 1861 and was “convinced of the necessity of continuing and extending their operation in Europe.” The proposal was a typical one of the era envisioning “a line of steam ship packets to be established between Antwerp, Belgium and Savannah.” Cobb was appointed, and gladly accepted the

³⁷ Robert Hardy Smith, *An address to the citizens of Alabama on the constitution and Laws of the Confederate States of America, by the Hon Robert H. Smith, at Temperance Hall, on the 30th of March, 1861* (Mobile, Ala.: Mobile Daily Register, 1861), 20; “Speech by Alexander Stephens at the Savannah Athenaeum, March 21, 1861,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, April 4, 1861.

³⁸ Ibid.

position, to lead a delegation to Europe. The account of the meeting conveyed a breathless excitement in the expectation of winning new contacts, new markets, and new opportunities of the era. Cobb was just about to leave Georgia for Europe when war broke out.³⁹

Steamship lines were a particular favorite of Confederates. On February 22, there assembled in the hall of the Bank of Charleston “prominent citizens” who wished to hear the report of a Committee of “persons of experience” on the subject of an establishment of a direct line of steamships between Charleston and Liverpool. Local interest mattered; the committee reported “in common with the whole community, they recognize the necessity of a Steamship line to Europe as a means of preserving the commercial importance of Charleston.” However this act was more than the result of provincial rivalry with neighboring Savannah in mind.⁴⁰

Confederates considered they had an overarching duty, especially at this time, to project themselves as a dynamic force in the world. The steamship committee members considered much greater issues were at stake in the decision whether to proceed with the steamship line; that it was “but too certain that if, with our profound conviction of the importance of steam communication with Europe, at a moment when that importance assumes the proportions of a vital necessity, we decline to seize such an occasion of establishing a line, not only will foreigners undervalue the honesty of our declarations,

³⁹ “Account of the Cotton Planters’ Convention, Macon, Ga., June 11, 1861”, *Macon Daily Telegraph*, June 21, 1861. For a study of southern commercial conventions, see Vicki Vaughn Johnson, *The Men and the Vision of the Southern Commercial Conventions, 1845-1871* (Columbia: University Press, 1992). Although she claims to encompass the war years in her study, in reality the material covered ceases in 1859 and resumes in 1865. Up to 1859, she charts the growth of a commercial convention movement that evolved from small meetings intent on expanding direct trade into large assemblies that delved into most aspects of southern economic life. Johnson identified these individuals as a self-consciously elite group who possessed an enduring faith in southern opportunity.

⁴⁰ Liverpool and Charleston Steamships Company, *Proceedings of a Meeting held at the hall of the Bank of Charleston, February 22, 1861* (Charleston, S.C., Printed by Evans and Cogswell, 1861), 3.

but we shall...be left in the repose of an inglorious inactivity, forgotten and condemned.” If the meeting chose to proceed, the deed “will invigorate the commercial energies of our people and establish a prestige in their favor, which will be of no little consequence in the future now opening upon the South.” All such ambitions were predicated on expanding the reach of the “great staples” of the Confederacy through free trade.⁴¹

Confederate planters, merchants and manufacturers regarded the political independence of the Confederacy as not the culmination, but the beginning of the career of their nation. On March 19, the chairman of the newly formed Manufacturing and Direct Trade Association of the Confederate States, C. G. Baylor of Texas, “showed conclusively” to the assembled delegates in Atlanta, “that separate political existence, unaccompanied by financial and commercial independence was but the shadow without the substance of liberty.” The president of the Direct Trade and Cotton Spinners Convention, William Gregg of South Carolina, told the same meeting “by thus creating an export market, the spinner and manufacturer could throw their surplus stock on foreign markets and thus preserve their home or domestic trade from injury through ruinous depreciation of values.”⁴²

Confederates planned for a program of internal improvements focusing on canals, to support this economic expansion and in particular facilitate the exportation of ever-larger quantities of commodities. According to De Bow, the James River and Kanawha Canal, championed by Randolph, Letcher and Hunter, would only be the first of many canals and improvements that would connect by water the Atlantic with “the great valleys of the Mississippi, Missouri, Red River, the Rio Grande and the magnificent valleys of

⁴¹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁴² Manufacturing and Direct Trade Association of the Confederate States, *Proceedings of the Manufacturing and Direct Trade Association of the Confederate States* (Atlanta, Ga., n.p., 1861).

Mexico.” Confederates thus expected their nation would become the transit point of international trade routes running east to west and south to north.⁴³

Confederates believed such projects with international components had been hindered by the continuing crisis in the Union. Now that the Union had been dissolved, these schemes could be resumed with greater urgency and ambition. The James River and Kanawha Canal Company had an international component, as it was on the verge of obtaining French investment from Paris firm Messieurs Bellot des Minieres Brothers and Company. De Bow saw great significance in the fact that “a French company undertakes to connect, by canal, the waters of the Chesapeake and those of the Ohio.” His commission merchant in Richmond informed Massie that the crisis in the Union had delayed progress because “these disturbances in our political affairs have kept the French agent back and unless they can be settled in some six to twelve months, may be the cause of the breaking of the contract...” But it was not the prospect of a southern confederacy that worried the French and held up the canal investment, but the continued uncertainty of Virginia’s position. James and Hunt continued “though I heard today from the officer of the James River & Kanawha Canal company that the Frenchman would certainly comply if we have dissolution & a southern republic, that he preferred this should be the case...” Internal improvements had become increasingly important to southerners, but now a prompt admission of Virginia into the Confederacy would enable the perfection of the transportation system that they promised. In particular, this canal will tie into the

⁴³ “Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade – A Southern Confederacy”; “The Secession of the Cotton States” its Status, its Advantages, and its Power,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):30, 91.

heartland of Randolph's Virginia, western Virginia and beyond to the Ohio, as well as secure a community of interest with the French across the Atlantic.⁴⁴

The Confederacy and the World

Due to factors such as the James River & Kanawha Canal, transoceanic telegraph cables and steamship lines, Confederates began to plan for the preferred place of their nation in the world. They conceived of a middle Atlantic or more broadly lower latitude community of interest between nations. This association of countries would be underpinned by a shared interest in slavery. However at this early stage in the Confederacy's existence and with hopes for peace still extant, Confederates considered that their existing commercial relations with the Union and Great Britain took precedence.

Confederate press and politicians encouraged their countrymen to think more about this southern destiny. De Bow declared that as a result of the French-backed canal, "the mouth of the Chesapeake is about to be united in the intercourse of commerce with the mouth of the Mediterranean." France's power was integral to a larger Confederate vision, expounded in the press, of a southern latitude alliance system. In January, De Bow explained that "the Mediterranean latitudes in Europe, Asia and Africa and the country south of the Mason and Dixon line, is the only true...seat of high civilization...France,

⁴⁴ Ibid.; James C. Hunt to William Massie, December 29, 1860, February 15, 1861, Box 2E493, William Massie Papers, UT; John Letcher, *Governor's Message and documents, January 7, 1861* (Richmond Va.: William F. Ritchie, 1861), xl-xli, folder 389, John Letcher Papers, #L5684 a FA2 VHS. Massie was a regular user of the canal from Lynchburg to Richmond. The prospect that the French might be more interested in the canal as a result of secession alarmed some however. R. W. Thompson of Washington D.C., asked Letcher whether it would be a good idea "at such a time as this to admit French influence into the state?" "Might it not be a bad policy to have the French government directly or indirectly interested in any of our public improvements?" After all, "secession might invite Napoleon III to seek direction over your internal affairs – with a canal to serve him...he might make your interests subordinate to his own." (Thompson to Letcher, January 11, 1861 folder 383 "Governor's Correspondence, 1861 January", John Letcher Papers, VHS.)

Italy, Greece and Spain and our own southern Confederacy, are in the ascendant. The course of trade trends southward and the march of empire ever follows the course of trade.” In South Carolina, the *Mercury* agreed: “[W]e in the South have always looked to France as our friend.” On February 11, Wigfall wrote to Davis expressing his optimism on French recognition. This confidence showed how these Francophile sentiments percolated upwards, even if Confederate government policy did not yet express the expectation of a world moving toward a southern alliance challenging the hitherto dominant North Atlantic powers of Britain and the Union.⁴⁵

Slavery as well as trade sustained international expansion. On March 24, the Spanish vice consul at Mobile, Manuel D. Crozat, wrote to the Secretary of Navy Stephen R. Mallory, “Spain naturally is destined to be the warmest friend of the South, in Europe as well as America, if for nothing else, the similarities of institutions in its West India colonies.” De Bow also saw the importance for the future of slavery that it continued to exist in regimes other than the Confederacy’s. The State Department did not take up, at this time, his request in January for “treaties of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Spain and Brazil.” The periodical also suggested that the Confederacy sign commercial treaties with Brazil and Spain, as these countries were “neighbors and natural friends and customers of the South.”⁴⁶

There were evident financial benefits to such arrangements, which were only possible under a Confederate government. On February 17, William Preston was in Madrid negotiating with the Spanish government for an agreement on behalf of the

⁴⁵“Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade – A Southern Confederacy,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):30; “Talk on East Bay and Among the Jobbers,” *Charleston Mercury*, March 20, 1861; Louis T. Wigfall to Jefferson Davis, February 11, 1861, *JDP*, 7:38. According to *De Bow’s Review*, “the French government endorses and encourages the scheme.”

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:12.

Buchanan government to liberalize trade with Cuba and bemoaned the opposition in the U.S. Congress that had thwarted its successful conclusion, “the treaty was very advantageous to us, but the anti-slavery movement defeated it. I could lift the Cuba trade to \$40m, by a commercial treaty, if the government were strong and united as it once was, and if I were properly supported...” The same month, Grayson noted, “it is admitted on every hand that Cuba is one of the most prosperous communities in the world.” Not only were there commercial opportunities, but slavery could also be sustained internationally.⁴⁷

Commentators suggested a policy that could promote commercial growth and proslavery by supporting the current Cuban regime. De Bow recommended the government to “guarantee Cuba to Spain so long as she preserves negro slavery intact...” For as Grayson added, “the fortune of Cuba is certainly not dependent on her connection with Spain. The connection is an injury. It retards her progress. Her immense productions are due to her slave labor only.” Slavery, as well as trade, both compelled and encouraged the Confederacy to consider expansion by informal, as well as formal, means. Confederates understood slavery to be vulnerable because it was so successful as a means of extracting wealth in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Hence other countries, especially Britain and the Union would be expected to develop their own alternative ‘coolie’ labor systems supplied with Chinese ‘hands’ across Asia and Latin

⁴⁷ William Preston to his father, 17 February, 1861, Preston Family Papers - Davie Collection, 1658-1896., #A\P937d, FHS; William John Grayson, *A Reply to Professor Hodge on the “state of the country”* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans and Cogswell, 1861), 11.

America and import surplus German agriculturalists to run the labor force. Confederates envisioned a world that would not just be interdependent, but also competitive.⁴⁸

The evident Confederate desire to associate with France, Brazil, Cuba, and Spain on the grounds of assumed southern sympathy and proslavery sentiment did not dictate Confederate foreign policy. As Vance declared in Washington, North Carolina, since “nations are not founded and controlled by a sentiment merely. Self-interest controls the individual and a nation is but an aggregation of individuals.” The government believed the governments of overseas countries would, now that the Deep South states had left the Union, quickly subordinate their anti-slavery feelings to the need to do business with the Confederacy. The initial diplomatic overtures therefore were not toward those countries seen as proslavery, but instead to the two nations of primary economic importance to the Confederacy, missions were announced to the Union on February 27 followed by Britain on March 16 with virtually identical language to “reestablish” and “establish” friendly relations respectively.⁴⁹

Confederates expected their real message to Britain and the Union to be from their products and not their diplomats. Hence they would have been surprised by Bunch’s reaction to Yancey’s appointment as commissioner to Britain; he described Yancey as “a rabid secessionist, a favorer of the revival of the slave trade and a filibuster of the extremist type of manifest destiny.” In Montgomery, he was understood to be just the representative of, as Davis termed it in his February 18 inaugural, “an agricultural people whose chief interest is the export of commodities required in every manufacturing

⁴⁸ “Cuba, the March of Empire and the Course of Trade – A Southern Confederacy,” *DBR* 5 1 (January 1861):30.

⁴⁹ Zebulon Baird Vance, *To the citizens of the Eighth Congressional District of North Carolina, February 13, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: H. Polkinhorn, 1861), 3; Jefferson Davis to James Buchanan, February 27, 1861, to “all whom these presents shall concern [in the British government]”, March 16, 1861, *OR*, 94- 95.

country...it is alike our interest and that of all those to whom we would sell and from whom we would buy that there would be the freest possible restrictions upon the interchange of these commodities.” In particular, there can be “but little rivalry between ours and any manufacturing and navigating community such as the North East States of the American Union. It must follow therefore that mutual interest will invite to good will and kind offices on both parts.”⁵⁰

During the Confederacy’s brief peacetime existence, expansionist ambitions were emphatically expressed. Congress had established a clear mechanism to admit new states and territories. After much debate, this path to membership included the option of non-slaveholding states. Both the legislature and the executive branches of the government had accorded priority to controlling the Indian Territory and Native Americans in general, including those in Mexico. The Provisional Congress had taken steps to incorporate the entire New Mexican territory, including Arizona, into the Confederacy. Confederates viewed slavery as an institution within an international context with the beginnings of debate on approaches to Brazil and Spain. Confederates expected inevitable territorial expansion into Mexico and elsewhere as slavery’s relative advantage over all other forms of labor adapted to exploit tropical and subtropical lands became more apparent. Confederates presented their nation as one governed in pursuit of peace and expansion of commerce. Once economic growth was resumed, other Confederate ambitions would be realized, such as the dominance of the North American continent and

⁵⁰Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, March 14, 1861, FO 5/780, p. 149, PRO; Jefferson Davis, “Inaugural Address of the President of the Provisional Government,” February 18, 1861, *OR*, 92-94.

possibly an alliance with France. Confederates viewed France as the natural southern ally and the potential dominant power in Europe.

The Confederate States had not turned inward on independence. To quote Howell Cobb as president of the Provisional Congress, the “Revolution” did have the “remarkable characteristic” of “the importance of conservative principles.” But embracing such conservatism did not mean the Confederates shunned expansionist ambition. The Confederates envisaged the nation as the extension of an ambitious individual; hence the Confederacy was destined in 1861 to pursue a “separate political career.” Development and growth were integral to this objective. In order to achieve admission into the family of independent nations, the Confederate States had not only to demonstrate they were capable of self-government, but also be “possessed of the power to maintain their independence.” War would provide ample opportunity to display the latter.⁵¹

⁵¹ Howell Cobb, “Address of president of the Provisional Congress,” February 17, 1861, *CJ*, 1: 845-6.

Chapter 3

“The Necessity of Continuing or Extending” *April 1861 to February 1862*

During the period from the outbreak of war until February 1862 – the time both of the formation of the permanent Confederate government and the start of the great Union military offensives in both the western and eastern theaters – the war exercised a profound influence on Confederate expansionist ambitions. Confederates became inhibited about the expression of such aspirations at a time when the war needed to command everyone's complete attention. Uncertainty as to the war's duration and the nature of Confederate independence added a degree of uncertainty about predicting and therefore planning for the future.

However, the experience of war also made expansionist ambitions more necessary. Confederates endeavored to prove both to forces opposed to the Lincoln administration within the Union and to the European great powers that the Confederate government harbored no designs on any part of the United States. Especially early in the war, Confederates hoped that an early peace would ensue together with at least either coexistence or even an alliance with the Union. However as the war lasted longer, so the constant pressure in Congress and elsewhere on the Government to formalize the status of the territories and the Border States within the Confederacy became more intense. Confederates became more vocal in their hopes for separatism in the Pacific states. Confederates regarded these developments as necessary if their nation was to prosper despite continuing Union enmity.

War with the United States meant Confederates had to confront the possibility that their enemy might not only compete for influence in Latin America and the Caribbean, but also might use northern Mexico as a base to invade the Confederacy. As a result, the Confederate State Department determined to strengthen its supporters across

this region. In particular, it became more necessary than before for Confederates to renounce the practice of filibustering by Americans during the 1850s as indicative of future Confederate policy. However, Confederates still wished to expand their nation southward in the future. Therefore the Confederate State Department adopted a policy that was both proslavery and good neighbor. It strove to keep central governments either weak or allied and in particular support the Spanish government's endeavor to reclaim its colony of Santo Domingo. Confederates envisaged these steps as first moves to claiming the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean as in its zone of influence.

Confederates based these ambitions on a perception of their increased strength as a nation. The Confederate revolution appeared to claim clarity of purpose and unity of support that more than compensated for the disparity in numbers between the Confederacy and an internally divided United States. During this period, Confederate expectations increased of the beneficial consequences of a growth in staple crop production and the new government's embrace of free trade. At the same time, the Union's blockade, evident reluctance on the part of the European great powers to challenge its effectiveness, and the continuing war meant Confederate commercial policy became a subject of debate. Many Confederates wished to use the commercial power of their nation backed up by a growing stockpile of cotton in a more instrumental manner, such as challenging overseas nations to negotiate treaties. At the same time, some Confederates argued for the need to rapidly develop a stronger domestic market with an accelerated scheme of internal improvements. Confederates believed in their capability to achieve their ambitions because the system of slavery had passed its crucial test of

endurance with the outbreak of war and would support commercial and territorial expansion.

PART I: THE CONFEDERACY EMBARKS ON EXPANSION IN WAR

A Tentative Approach to Westward Expansion

Now that war was underway, Confederates became more inhibited about the expressing of expansionist ambitions. There was a debate spelled out in newspapers, diaries, and correspondence about whether it was proper and appropriate to air such ideas at a time when soldiers were dying and increased resources had to be devoted to the war effort. Confederates considered that to articulate expansionist ambitions invited hubris and they viewed such conduct as unchristian. War placed a premium on harmony and unity and this made expansion more controversial. The prewar arguments in *De Bow's Review* and the *Charleston Mercury* about the tension between expansion and homogeneity were more strident in war. "Annexation would bring foreign and conflicting elements" wrote Virginia journalist and diplomat John M. Daniel in the *Richmond Examiner*, so "filibustering, conquest and annexation will be no part of the policy or practice of the southern Confederacy." For the present, visions of a prosperous future and grand ambitions provided a justification for sacrifice. Above all, the war provided evidence of Confederate power, especially at times of military victory. Victory also brought peace closer, which made ambitious expansion more acceptable and feasible. Power and the prospect of peace together drove expansionist ambition.¹

The main constraint on expansionist ambition, as illustrated by the resolution of the executive committee of the Cotton Planters' Convention, which met in Macon,

¹ Jones, *Blue and Grey*, 1; *Richmond Examiner*, June 18, 1861.

Georgia, on April 24, 1861, was a sense of the unknown. Therefore the committee, “in view of the troubled state of the country...the all absorbing war excitement, the dark uncertain future...[the committee] determined to postpone all further action.” This decision was temporary, but captures the confusion and uncertainty in the days following the shelling of Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s call for volunteers. A couple of days later, at a reception given by Mrs. Davis, Stephens had clearly lost his earlier optimism as he chatted with South Carolina diarist Mary Chesnut. As they conversed, Stephens and Chesnut digested the “dismal news” of “certain civil war.” Stephens was then in a gloomy frame of mind as “fears for the future and not exultation at our successes pervade his discourse.” War had raised both personal and national stakes and the earlier peacetime feelings were exaggerated. It meant that when the going was good, expansionist ambition was all the more excited, but when the war news was poor, expectations plummeted.²

Politicians desired a combination of virtue, suitable for a country at war, and ambition in keeping with their expansionist plans. They achieved this feat by studied vagueness about which territories and states should be included within the Confederacy. The debates of the second session of the Provisional Congress, which sat from April 29 to May 21, defined the people of Confederate states as simply those who “will refuse to cooperate with the government of the United States in those acts of hostility and aggression.” Politicians believed that such a definition of the Confederacy embraced not just all fifteen slave states, but also the territories of Arizona and New Mexico and the “Indian territory south of Kansas.” Further discussions expanded the entity still further; the third session, which opened on July 28, just after the news of First Manassas, was

² “On the Cotton Planters Convention,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, April 26, 1861; Mary Chesnut, 27 April, 1861, *Diary from Dixie*, 43.

particularly bullish. The former Virginia senator, James M. Mason, used a naturalization bill to extend those who were citizens of the Confederacy to Washington. Other bills offered opportunities to reaffirm the enlarged territorial extent of the Confederacy.³

The third session of the Confederate Provisional Congress passed two other pieces of expansionist legislation. First, lawmakers continued to bring the Indian Territory into closer judicial and commercial relationship with the Confederate states. Immediately after the formation of the Confederacy, army officers stationed in Arkansas and concerned with its defense began to press Native American tribes to clarify their allegiance, with the question “is it your intention to adhere to the United States Government?” As early as June, Confederates did not view neutrality as an option. Brigadier General Ben McCulloch instructed the Confederate negotiator, Albert Pike, to “say to the Indians that he sits between two stools.” Only supporting the Confederacy offered the chance for slaveholding Native Americans to “keep the full possession” of both “their lands” and “their negroes.” McCulloch pretended that Native Americans had a real choice because “nations, like individuals, are apt to be governed by their own interest, let them judge and choose between us.” But in reality, McCulloch added, the Confederate government “will never consent to see their country settled or governed by abolitionists.” Pike agreed on the need to keep the Union out of Indian country, provided

³ “Bill recognizing the existence of war between the United States and Confederate States,” May 3, 1861, *CJ*, 1:176; James Mason, “Resolution” and “Amendment,” on “a bill to make temp provision for naturalizing as citizens of the Confederacy persons now citizens of Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, Delaware,” July 31, 1861, *CJ*, 1:288, 302. For example, in the definition of enemy aliens and the bill authorizing the establishment of recruiting stations in border slave states. The Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) was fought on July 21, 1861. The forces of Confederate Generals Pierre G.T. Beauregard and Joseph E. Johnson defeated the United States Army commanded by General Irvin McDowell. News of the result reached the Confederate Congress, by now in nearby Richmond, the same day, telegraphed from the battlefield by Davis himself who had “turned up at the moment of victory.” “The South erupted in joy over a victory that seemed to prove that one Southron could indeed lick any number of Yankees.” (McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 345-6.)

Native Americans “may not conclude that they are fighting for us only and not acting equally for themselves.” Hence Pike supported the move to secure their representation in Congress, even in the face of resistance by some in the Cabinet.⁴

The second expansionist congressional action was the bill for the organization of the territory of Arizona, which also first came before Congress in the heady days of August 1861. Congressional action once again mirrored events on the ground with Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley securing Davis’s blessing for his expedition in May. His brigade later departed from Texas for New Mexico and, by the end of the year, reports of both the territory’s aridity and mineral wealth began filtering back to the Confederacy. At the same time as these reports in December, the bill’s formal introduction in the fifth congressional session provoked a discussion on the proposed territory’s northern boundary. The relevant member of the committee on territories, J. A. P. Campbell, had proposed the 36° 30’ line as Arizona’s northern boundary. But this boundary was rejected, and Congress agreed on a 34° line instead. This decision was not a territorial concession, as the bill accorded the Confederacy the right to claim to both the remainder of New Mexico “or to any other territory north of the 34 degrees north line.” The possibility of additional states to be carved out was also left open. These stipulations were clear indications that congressmen wished to pursue expansion in the West.⁵

⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Kannady to John Ross, May 15, 1861, GLC00066.128; McCulloch to Pike, June 17, 1861, correspondence 6-2-60 - 27-9-61, Hines, Thomas Henry papers, #A H662 1, FHS; Pike to Benjamin, November 27, 1861, *OR* vol. 8 697-8, box 2, Robert Douthat Meade Papers, #9989, UVA [collection hereafter cited as Meade Papers]. On November 30, Bragg conceded on Native Americans that “it is important to have them on our side, but they are an inferior race and ought not to come in now without limit to population to entitle them to admission.” (Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” 72, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC.)

⁵ “Bill to Organize the territory of Arizona,” December 24, 1861, *CJ*, 1:612. Following on the military proclamation, “to the people of the territory of Arizona: I, John R. Baylor, Lieut. Col. Commanding the Confederate Army in the Territory of New Mexico, hereby take possession of the said Territory in the name of and on behalf of the Confederate States of America.” (August 2, 1861, Parrish, *Confederate*

Expansionist ambitions of the Confederate Congress officially did not extend to the Pacific states and territories. That region was peripheral to Confederates, as the future Confederacy was to be centered on the Mississippi-Missouri River basin. But Confederate newspaper reports pressed for access to the Pacific Ocean via Mexico and drew readers' attention to Confederate sympathizers in Los Angeles. On July 11, the Columbus Georgia, *Daily Sun* reported "intelligence" that in California, a "formidable movement is on foot on the part of rebels to proclaim the southern part out of the Union" and form a new state south of the 36 30 parallel seek "admission into the Confederacy."⁶

The Confederate press expected that while the "Pacific slope" would break from the United States, it would not necessarily join the Confederacy. A belief in the establishment of a "European style geographic frontier," defined by mountains and river watersheds, suggested that the western border of the Confederacy lay along the continental divide. Beyond the Rocky Mountain ridge, a Pacific Confederacy or a Pacific Republic would emerge. A future Pacific confederacy was approvingly, although vaguely, peopled with "European immigrants" and had a free trade policy; so, whilst not part of a formal Confederate empire, the Pacific Confederacy was clearly associated with

Imprints, 1359.) The choice of northern boundary recalled both the Crittenden Compromise and the Missouri Compromise line. A member of Silbley's army invading New Mexico noted, "I cannot see what this country is made for if it is not rich in minerals, for there is no soil or water." "Latest accounts of the Pino[s] Alto[s] gold mines are very encouraging...new silver mines in the Papago Country [AZ] have been discovered of exceeding richness, combination of silver, copper and lead." ("Letter from Sibley's Brigade," "Letter from Tuscon," *The Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas, 30 December, 1861, GLC05959.51.013).

⁶ "Secession in California," *The Daily Sun*, Columbus, Georgia, July 11, 1861, GLC05959.03.01. In May 1861, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* depicted California as another victim of Union avarice; in planning privateer raids against the Union's specie ships sailing with Californian gold, the pledge was made that the Californians would not be injured "anymore"; their target was the New York merchants; hence presumption of Californian sympathy and support (*Richmond Dispatch*, May 16, 1861.)

the Confederate economic ‘system’ as an inferior and subordinate polity on the American mainland.⁷

The expected fragmentation of the United States would enhance relative Confederate power. The State Department, in particular, promoted the vision because, in order to obtain international recognition, the Confederacy had to deploy sufficient power to convince the relevant audiences, principally in Britain and France, of Confederate capacity to both defend its independence and function as a great power. In September 1861, Hunter, now secretary of state, instructed Mason to stress to the British the Confederacy’s “great but undeveloped capacities, and its developed strength.” The eleven states, on their own, were “large enough to become the seat of an immense power” in which “nothing is wanted but time and peace for their development.” To achieve the necessary projection of power, Hunter needed to add expansionist ambitions. Therefore “to these states will probably be added hereafter Maryland, Missouri and Kentucky whose interests and sympathies must mind them to the South...to say nothing of the once common territories west of these States which will probably fall into the new Confederacy.” As Hunter wrote in his instructions to Henry Holtze, whose publication of *The Index* in London in 1862 would be devoted to this purpose, it was vital in communicating to overseas audiences “a just idea of the ample resources and vast military strength” of the Confederacy and consequently “raise the character and government of the southerners in general estimation.”⁸

⁷ Parrish, *Confederate Imprints*, 518; *Richmond Examiner*, May 17, 21, October 22, 1861; *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 16, 1861. The limit of Confederate formal expansion shown by the failure to extend Confederate citizenship to Californians; in a Bill to naturalize citizens, Texan delegate and prominent support of reopening the international slave trade, William B. Ochiltree, attempted an amendment on August 7, 1861, (*CJ*, 1:325.)

⁸ R. M. T. Hunter to J. M. Mason, September 23, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:84-90; R. M. T. Hunter to Henry Holze, November 14, 1861, in Robert F. Durden, *The Index: Confederate Newspaper in*

Admitting the Border States into the Confederacy by any Means

Congress supported the State Department's attitude to expansion by the process of easing admission of potential new states into the Confederacy. In the debates over Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, the rectitude with which politicians had earlier boasted regarding secession gave way to the compromises demanded by war. Although, as Davis declared on May 25, "conquests of other states are wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principles and subversive of the very organization of this government," annexation could be achieved by other means. South Carolinian Lawrence M. Keitt offered a resolution that simply admitted into the Confederacy "certain states by the proclamation of the President." In his message to Congress regarding Kentucky's admission, Davis argued, "there is enough merit in the application to warrant a disregard of its irregularity." This irregularity arose from the predicament of the Kentuckians who, thanks to an occupying United States army, "had been unfortunately deprived of that right of Constitutional secession." Finally, when dealing with Maryland, even the pretense of an application was dropped as Congress simply resolved "to facilitate the admission of Maryland...no peace ought to be concluded with the United States which does not insure to Maryland the opportunity of forming a part of this Confederacy."⁹

There was an affectation of Confederate reluctance to incorporate the Border States because the Provisional Congress prided itself on not being swayed by popular short-term hopes and fears. As Howell Cobb said in his closing presidential address, the

London, 1862-1865, MA thesis, (Atlanta: Emory University, 1947). For further information on Holtze and the Index, see Charles P. Cullop, *Confederate Propaganda in Europe, 1861-1865*, (University of Miami, 1969) and Robert E. Bonner, "Slavery, Confederate Diplomacy and the Racist Mission of Henry Hotze," *Civil War History* (September 2005), 51.

⁹Jefferson Davis to the Committee of the Maryland legislature, May 25, 1861, *JDC*, 5:100-1; Keitt, "Resolution," May 14, 1861, *CJ*, 1:220; "Communication from the president in reference to Kentucky," December 7, 1861, *CJ*, 1:536; "Resolutions relating to Maryland," December 19, 1861, *CJ*, 1:589.

legislature had achieved a “revolution secluded from the excited passions of the people.” But aloofness had not prevented the Congress from defining the Confederate States of America in unambiguously expansive terms. Furthermore, outside pressure on the government could deliver results. In November, pro-Confederate Kentuckians established a provisional government in Russellville and proceeded to lobby the Confederacy for admittance. On December 6, Attorney General Thomas Bragg, having read the “able” communication from the provisional governor of Kentucky, George W. Johnson, accepted of the Kentuckians that “some agreement, offensive and defensive will be made with them, they will hardly ask to be admitted into the Union.” Yet within a day, having heard the arguments of the Kentuckian commissioners to Richmond, T. L. Burnet and Simms, that “the large majority of the people were in sentiment with the South but that feeling will be crushed out without assurance of protection,” the cabinet was “unanimous in submitting the matter to congress with a favorable expression of opinion” on Kentucky’s admittance as a Confederate state. Bragg agreed with Davis that the proceeding was “irregular” but “deemed a necessity when the people are in a state of revolution.”¹⁰

Apparent Union coercion neutralized any Confederate qualms about the absence of due process over Border State admission. On July 29, Hunter explained to the Confederate commissioners in Europe that “the occupation of Missouri and Maryland by the United States troops, and the forcible disarming of her citizens...have rendered impracticable for those states finally to sever their connection with the late federal

¹⁰ Howell Cobb, “Address as President of the Provisional Congress,” February 17, 1862, *CJ*, 1:845; Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” December 6, 7, 1861, pp. 78, 79-80, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; Kentucky Confederate Provisional Government, “Proceedings of the Convention Held in Russellville,” FHS.

Union.” However the conduct of the soldiers had excited a “spirit of indignation and resistance,” which meant “they only await a favorable moment to rise in their strength and force the invaders from their soil.”¹¹

Confederates predicted Border State admission into their new nation would be difficult, on account of not only federal occupation but also lingering loyalty to the Union. Underlying these concerns, Confederates feared a weakness in the common interest in the maintenance of slavery. On January 28, in reaction to the news of the Confederate reverse at Somerset Kentucky, Consul Bunch observed that “it is in the Border States that the weakness of the new government lies, there is in them a divided sentiment that will incline them to the winning side, in these states the war is truly a civil war.” Letcher agreed with this assessment. He believed that a Confederate offensive to the Susquehanna would “save Maryland.” In his governor’s message on December 12, he declared “let our actions show to her people we feel for her condition and intend to aid them in effecting their deliverance from the tyranny that oppresses them.”¹²

The outbreak of war brought about a desire among Confederates for clarity of allegiance among all Americans. As with Native Americans, Confederate supporters in Kentucky did not believe the neutrality position adopted by that state was tenable. On May 7, writing to his father back in Kentucky, James A. Headley observed from Atchison Kansas, “a state that will not actively exert herself for her sister states must sympathize with the enemy.” The middle ground above all could not exist for slaveholders. Hines considered “neutrality is the silliest idea that ever entered a thinking man’s head as the

¹¹ Hunter to Yancey at al., July 29, 1861, *OR*, 228.

¹² Robert Bunch to Earl Russell, January 28, 1862, FO 5/843, p. 50, PRO; John Letcher, *Message of the Governor of Virginia, December 2, 1861* (Richmond, Va.: William F. Ritchie, 1860), in Cridland to Russell, December 1861, FO 5/846, p. 344, PRO.

free states are now engaged in a war for the twofold objective of plunder and emancipation of slavery. They envy the men who own slaves and relatively as they injure them, they benefit themselves.” Moreover, in the coming conflict the neutral would lose by being an enemy of both sides, Hines warned “Woe to him that stands in the path neutral armed or unarmed, for they will be crushed.”¹³

In order to attract Border State support, Confederates needed to present a compelling proposition that transcended safeguarding slavery and the social system it protected. As Johnson declared in his November 27 message to the provisional government of Kentucky, admission to the Confederacy was a chance for Kentuckians to “establish a tariff system to suit her own views” because the “natural markets of Kentucky are with the South.” At the same time, Johnson was mindful of ties with the Union and so wished to see free trade closely follow any Confederate military advance so that “the contrast between the condition of this part of the State, under such a system of free trade with the South, compared with that of our own people beyond our lines, would tend to make our cause many ardent friends.” Moreover as part of further assuring Unionists, Johnson wished to see “independence and free trade between North and South” and by “this arrangement restore the legitimate advantage of the old Union.” Confederates worried whether the ties between the Border States and the Confederacy were strong enough to counteract those of the Union. On November 22, E. Fontaine, president of the Virginia Central Railroad, reported to the stockholders that there had been a missed opportunity beyond their dividends in not completing the railroad beyond White Sulphur Springs. “If this road has been completed, the enemy would not have

¹³ James A. Headley to his father, May 7, 1861 Thomas Henry Hines Papers, # A H662 1, FHS

gotten possession of the Kanawha Valley and Kentucky would have identified with Virginia in her struggle for independence.”¹⁴

Planning Post-War Relations with the Union

The war redefined expansionist ambitions in the Confederacy. At first, in order to blame the conflict on the Union, the Confederate government tried to demonstrate that it had no aggressive designs on any northern states. Expansionist ambitions in general were distinguished from those directed toward the Union. In Davis’s April 29, speech to Congress, when he stated “all we ask is to be left alone,” he specifically prefaced that desire with “we seek no conquest, no aggrandizement, no concession of any kind from the states with which we have lately confederated.” On May 28, Toombs forwarded this paragraph to the Confederate commissioners in Europe with his endorsement of “the object and desires of the people of the Confederate States cannot be better expressed than in the concluding paragraph of [Davis’s] message to Congress.” The day before Davis gave his speech, John A. Campbell, his commissioner to Washington, wrote to him in the belief that peace with the Union was still possible and therefore “we must consider with great care the effect of every measure upon our Northern antagonists and conciliate them if we can...I read with dismay the loose vaunts in the papers and the public men of what conquests are to be made at their expense.”¹⁵

Newspapers and the government held expansionist designs elsewhere in the North. Despite official denials of such designs beyond the fifteen slave states and the

¹⁴ Kentucky Confederate Provisional Government, “Proceedings of the Convention Held in Russellville,” FHS; Virginia Central Railroad Company, *Twenty-sixth annual report of the president and directors of the Virginia Central Railroad Company to the stockholders, at their annual meeting, November, 1861* (Richmond, Va.: K. K. Ellyson, 1861), 14.

¹⁵ “Message of President Davis to the Confederate Congress,” April 29, 1861, *JDC*, 5:84; Robert Toombs to William L. Yancey, Ambrose D. Mann, Pierre A. Rost, May 28, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:31; John A. Campbell to Jefferson Davis, April 28, 1861, *JDP*, 7:137.

District of Columbia, the *Richmond Examiner*, in the first flush of war, declared on April 16, 1861, “We believe that in less than a year, the federal government will cease to exist. New Jersey and several of the North West states will be annexed to the Confederacy and New York will be erected into a great free port and independent city state.” The day before, Davis had received a letter from a Jersey City merchant assuring him of endemic pro South sentiment in New York and New Jersey. Another Confederate commissioner to Washington, John Forsyth had earlier told Davis about a move to declare New York a free city. In the vital weeks before and after the decision to bombard Fort Sumter, expectations circulated about large scale territorial gains against the United States.¹⁶

An early peace with the Union however would tend to rule out enticing states south or any offensive action. On April 23, Georgetown resident, William Norwood advised Virginian politician James Lyons to rule out an invasion of the Union, because “a peaceable separation and recognition of the South will be agreed to by the North...surely an attack on Washington City under these circumstances is not wise?” Such hopes for an early settlement were soon dispelled and by July, Davis predicted “a long and costly war.” Confederates continued to expect or at least hoped that the United States Government would see the folly of its policy because of three factors: first, the impossibility of conquering the Confederacy militarily; secondly, the unanimity of Confederate opinion on independence; and, thirdly, the Union war effort would collapse due to internal weaknesses, especially fragile public support and precarious finances.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Richmond Examiner*, April 16, 1861; Edward Jackson to Jefferson Davis, April 15, 1861, *JDP*, 7:102; John Forsyth to Jefferson Davis, April 4, 1861, *ibid.*, 7:91.

¹⁷ William Norwood to James Lyons, April 23, 1861, folder 46, box 6, Lyons Family Papers, HL; Davis quoted in Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, July 22, 1861, FO 5/781, p. 41, PRO. Norwood added, “I and all mine are all for the South, if you can send me a letter by private hand, tell me will Washington City be attacked?”

In this context of an anticipated early peace with the Union, Confederates debated the nature of relations between the two nations and what this meant for the Confederacy. Those who had been earlier hostile to immediate state secession tended to argue that warm relations with the Union and perhaps even more would result, provided peace came quickly. On June 6, Letcher told a group of northerners, “let us part in peace and you will gain more for it than by undertaking to whip us into the Union.” In a speech on September 22, Sam Houston declared “the sooner the war is ended, the greater the possibility of friendly relations.” Although like Letcher, he considered that “no reunion is possible,” but there was a chance of a negotiation to achieve “peace and an extent restore prosperity.” But the onus was on Lincoln to agree to an armistice until the “meeting of Union and Confederate congresses” to discuss terms.¹⁸

Confederates expected the Union to concede much in the event of such negotiations, given the context would be what Hunt & James, William Massie’s Richmond commission and forwarding merchants, termed on May 11, “the great Back Down” on the part of the Lincoln administration. On June 22, John Jones told Massie that the Confederate government must “insist on an indemnity for being forced into a defensive war”; this would consist of an “immediate surrender of half the fleet, forts, etc., and territories.” Moreover, the government should also “defer commercial treaties to future negotiation.” On May 17, in a public letter addressed to the editors of the *Church Journal* in Mobile, W.T. Walthall wrote that such terms should be expected by the Union, “we have offered a full settlement of all undivided interests in public property and equal apportionment of the public debt.” Therefore “all that is necessary to restore peace and

¹⁸ John Letcher, “To Gentlemen,” June 6, 1861, folder 387, Governors Correspondence, 1861 June-July, Letcher Papers, VHS; Sam Houston, “Position of General Sam Houston,” Cedar Point, Texas, September 12, 1861, box 2R48, vol. XVI, January 1861 – May 1928, Sam Houston Papers, UT.

quiet to the land is for Lincoln to withdraw his war proclamation and leave the Confederacy to its peaceful pursuits.”¹⁹

Some supporters of an independent Confederacy believed that a thriving nation could prosper in an alliance with the Union. But these tended to be from people at a distance from the actual events. In a speech delivered on August 10, a Californian Democrat, Charles Tyler Botts, declared that as a result of such an understanding could be “the practical desirable reconstruction,” which would be “amity, allied offensive and defensive against the rest of the world” and relations between the American powers governed by “emulation and competition.”²⁰

The hatred Confederates professed toward their former associates seemed an impossible obstacle to reconciliation let alone reunion. Even the Unionist Nelson County, Virginia, slaveholder and former secession convention delegate Frederick M. Cabell wrote Massie on September 9, the Union has to be “based upon affections and interests of the people.” Across both North and South Carolina, Bunch reported to Russell on July 22, “the hatred of the North is the most intense that can be imagined.” As a result, “I therefore treat any possibility of a future reconstruction of the Union as perfectly chimerical.” He then qualified that the two sides would remain not only independent but hostile “except under some improbable contingency be brought together for purposes of foreign aggression.” But even in that scenario, the consul added, it was “much more

¹⁹ “Hunt and James” to William Massie, May 11, 1861, general correspondence folder April-May 1861; John Jones to William Massie, June 10, 1861, general correspondence folder June-September 1861, box 2E493, William Massie Papers, UT; W. T. Walthall to the editors of the *Church Journal*, Mobile Ala., May 17, 1861, in Rev. J. J. Nicolson, *Government or no Government: Or the Question of State Allegiance. A Tract for Churchmen* (Mobile, Ala.: Farrow & Dennet, 1861), 7. Both John E. Jones and J[ames] M. Hunt were members of a committee appointed to publish resolutions at a public meeting at Nottoway Court House, April 11 (Virginia Secession Convention.) The warehouse of Hunt and James was on the corner of Cary and Virginia Streets. (*Richmond City Business Directory* [1860], 8, Library of Virginia, Richmond.)

²⁰ Charles Tyler Botts, *An Address to his fellow-citizens, of the State of California* (Sacramento, Calif., n.p., 1861), 12-13.

likely that one will be the ally of enemies of the other in the event of a war between either and an European power.”²¹

Confederates portrayed the prosecution of the war as the latest in a series of northern crimes against a too forbearing southern people. The result would be a lasting estrangement between the two nations. Former U.S. Representative William J. Grayson of South Carolina warned, “The season even for friendly commercial treaties is past already and every blow increases the mutual hatred.” That season may have ended even before the Confederacy’s formation. According to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Congress’s report issued in May, the United States Government missed its opportunity for a mutually advantageous arrangement with slaveholding states during the secession crisis. If the United States had been sensible, “they would have hastened to propose terms of friendly accommodation; and if it had failed to secure a union with us, they would have obtained such arrangements as might have made the South as valuable to them, as the United States proved to England after their separation.” According to the committee, Confederates had been much too tolerant for too long because “the Union was the great theatre on which the genius of the South was displayed” and hence the South was “slow to surrender a government rendered illustrious by the southern public mind and reflecting its glories in themselves.”²²

Confederates had hoped to end the threat from the North to their way of life by seceding. It had failed. The Confederate response to this provocation was threefold. First,

²¹ Cabell to Massie, September 9, 1861, box 2E493, general correspondence folder June-September 1861, William Massie Papers, UT; Robert Bunch to Lord John Russell, July 22, 1861, FO 5/781, p. 41, PRO.

²² William John Grayson, *Remarks on Mr. Motley’s Letter in the London Times on the war in America* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans and Cogswell, 1861), 4; Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Congress, Confederate States of America, *The Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the President’s Message relating to the affairs between the Confederate and the United States* (Montgomery, Ala., n.p., 1861), 9.

the Confederacy could turn inward. As the Milledgeville Ga., *Daily Federal Union* declared on December 5, the Confederacy should draw up the barricade against its foe. “It is not too soon to say that it will be in the interest of the South to erect a wall no less impassable than that of the Chinese between the territories of the two governments.” Legislators, according to the paper, should “talk not now of naturalization laws” instead the “safe policy” would be to “allow no man who is a citizen of the United States at the time of peace ever to locate in the South.” On October 12, colonel and Democrat William N. Bilbo had agreed in a speech at Nashville Tennessee that the government should “guard the country with a greater restriction of foreigners” and “stress the right of citizenship is a most distinguished honor.”²³

Confederates could also present their nation as the true embodiment of the promise of the American Revolution. The Virginian Presbyterian theologian Robert Lewis Dabney told northerners of the possibility that circumstances became such in the Union that “the voice of reason and justice is no longer to be permitted to be heard.” In such a situation, Dabney continued, Confederates “invite you to help us here to construct and defend another temple where constitutional liberty may abide secure and untarnished.”²⁴

As well as separation and the revolutionary tradition, Confederates had also to construct a nation state of sufficient power to act as a counterweight of the Union. Bilbo envisaged the role of the Confederacy to “secure the liberty and consolidate the quiet of

²³ “Further Political Relations of the North and South,” *The Daily Federal Union*, Milledgeville, Ga., December 5, 1861, GLC05959.01.01; William N. Bilbo, *The past, present and future of the Southern Confederacy: an oration delivered by Col. W. N. Bilbo, in the city of Nashville, Oct. 12, 1861* (Nashville, Tenn.: J. D. W. Green, 1861), 26 [hereafter cited as Bilbo, *Oration*].

²⁴ Robert Lewis Dabney, *Letter of the Rev. R. L. Dabney to the Rev. S. J. Prime on the State of the Country, republished from the Central Presbyterian* (Richmond, Va., Macfarlane and Fergusson, 1861), 12.

two republics by preventing the United States from being dictator of the western world by placing in the opposite scale the opinions, wealth and maritime power of a new republic.” Hunter agreed, on September 3 he explained to the new commissioner to France, John Slidell of Louisiana “[B]y the establishment of a great southern confederacy, a balance of power is secured in North America and schemes of conquest and annexation on the part of a great and overshadowing empire would no longer disturb the repose of neighboring nations.”²⁵

Complicated Expansion into Mexico

Before the War, Confederate expansionist ambitions had been chiefly directed against Mexico. The war complicated government policy, so Davis, as well as adhering to his aggressive stance, had also been made aware of Mexico’s importance both in terms of arms trade and of the need to cultivate alleged support from Mexican officials of the Confederate cause. Consequently, Toombs, in drafting instructions for Confederate agent and former diplomat John T. Pickett, asserted a friendly tone. He told Pickett to impress upon the Mexicans that “there are many reasons why Mexico should desire to...sign a treaty of amity, commerce and navigation.” Toombs argued that Mexico’s peonage labor system was similar to slavery, so there was a “harmony of interests, which would lead to intimate trade relations as well as to cordial diplomatic cooperation.” Geography mattered, as “Mexico, being coterminous with the Confederate States, renders the existence of a friendly alliance with the latter of the highest importance to the former.” Toombs wished to assert Confederate primacy over that of European powers in Mexico’s affairs over European, as well as United States interest in Mexico’s affairs, when he argued that the Confederacy could “guarantee Mexico against foreign invasion...more

²⁵ Bilbo, *Oration*, 16; Hunter to Slidell, September 3, 1861, *OR*, 271.

promptly and effectively than any more distant nation.” Toombs summed up the Confederate overture by reaching back to his Whig background and suggesting to Pickett that he should “remind [the Mexicans] that southern statesmen and diplomats from the days of Henry Clay to the present...have always been fast friends of Mexico, and that she can always rely on the good will and friendly interest of the Confederate States.”²⁶

Not only Confederate expansionist ambitions, but also Indian raids and United States intrigue meant Toombs’s claim of friendship toward Mexico was blended with menace. Pickett had to impress upon the Mexicans that any “grant to the United States of commercial, political or territorial advantages, which are not accorded to the Confederate States would be regarded as evidence of an unfriendly disposition...which it would protest against in the promptest and most decided manner.” To deal with Indian raids across the Texan border, Toombs instructed Pickett to communicate that “border feuds and forays must be put an end to by an extradition treaty” and in return, Pickett should tell the Mexicans that the Confederacy “will undertake to enforce the clause (now absolute) in the treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo restraining incursions of wild tribes in consideration of certain commercial privileges and rights of way across Mexican territory.” Confederates treated Mexican inability to control its Indian tribes as a reason to intervene in its internal affairs. The government had no interest in seeking Mexican

²⁶ John Forsyth to Jefferson Davis, March 20, 1861, *JDP*, 7:75; Robert Toombs to John T. Pickett, May 17, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:21-5. For Confederate diplomatic relations with Mexico, see Thomas David Schoonover, *Dollars over Dominion, The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 13-48; 78-101. In attitudes to the borderlands, Stagg argues, like Bonner, to an ideology of American continentalism or a belief that a secure and independent United States should be the successor state to the rival European powers of North America. But this ideal of Madison was undone by the reality on the ground of “ambition, greed, idealism, patriotism, religious chauvinism and racial contempt for local and indigenous populations.” See John C.A. Stagg, *Borderlines in Borderlands: James Madison and the Spanish-American Frontier, 1776-1821* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009). For the complexity of the triangular relationship between Americans, Mexicans and Native Americans, see Brian Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S. – Mexican War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008).

recognition; instead, Toombs told Pickett specifically to cultivate the mercantile community and encourage Mexican privateering against United States vessels. The Confederate press likewise disclaimed any interest in Mexico beyond peace. According to the *Examiner*, “one of the first acts” of the Provisional Congress had been to send a commissioner “to propose amicable relations with the South.” The Confederacy did “not want Mexico” on the grounds of the “evil consequences of annexation with wide elements,” meaning the majority Indian population.²⁷

The progress of the war and Mexican developments resurrected calls from newspapers for expansion at Mexico’s expense. After First Manassas in July, the tone of the Confederate press became much more hostile and aggressive toward Mexico. Both the *Richmond Examiner* and the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reacted violently to the perceived provocation of the Corwin Treaty negotiated between Mexico and the United States; where, in return for allowing the latter’s troops to cross Mexican territory, the United States would provide a loan and in addition, according to one version, promise to return Texas to Mexico. On September 4, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* stated that “part of Mexico would be annexed to our magnificent Empire.” Two days later the *Richmond Examiner* threatened that “the first account of the new nation will be settled with Mexico” A month later, the *Richmond Examiner* repeated its threats before stating that “the same Southern race who aided the earlier conquest [in 1847] could do so again” and

²⁷ Ibid.; *Richmond Examiner*, June 18, October 6, 1861. Article XI of the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo stipulated “it is solemnly agreed that all such incursions shall be forcibly restrained by the Government of the United States whensoever this may be necessary.” (Government, U. S., & Mexico. [1999]. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In *American Journey. Westward Expansion*. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media. Retrieved from <http://ic.galegroup.com>.) For a discussion of the racial attitudes between Confederates and Mexicans, see Sarah E. Cornell, *Americans in the U.S. South and Mexico: A Transnational History of Race, Slavery, and Freedom, 1810–1910* (New York University Press, 2008) and of the dissemination of anti-Mexican propaganda during the Mexican war and the reaction against it, especially in the North, see Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

“teach a similar lesson when it becomes necessary.” Mexico thus had to consider “the risk of thus losing two or three rich provinces.” The paper concluded that while the path of Mexico’s “interest and safety” lay in peace, Mexico “can have war to her heart’s content.”²⁸

Expansionist demands from newspapers aligned with Confederate government activity. Members of the State Department, while concerned with the activities of Corwin, sought to take advantage of a breakdown of central government in Mexico. Two days before the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* article, William M. Browne, the assistant secretary of state, composed instructions for special agent J. A. Quintero. In May, Toombs had sent Quintero to Monterey to wait on separatist provincial governor Santiago Vidaurri. As well as conducting diplomacy, Browne expected Quintero to “collect and transmit accurate and minute information with regard to New Leon and adjacent friendly provinces.” Specifically, Quintero had to research “the amount of population of each [province], divided into races and classes.” Brown told Quintero to establish the land area and the economy of this part of Mexico, as well as the “general condition of the people; on a social, political and commercial point of view.” The nature of these instructions suggested the Confederate State Department was considering future annexation. More immediately, Brown wanted Quintero to establish the veracity of claims about the Corwin Treaty and to make known “the disastrous consequences of which must necessarily ensue” of “so flagrant a violation of neutrality.” The Confederate State

²⁸ *Richmond Examiner*, September 6, October 6, 1861; *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, September 4, 6, 1861.

Department was considering either war on Mexico or peaceful annexation of her northern provinces.²⁹

In the immediate term, Confederates wished to play off the provinces against the central government in Mexico in order to prevent any pro-Union policy emerging. On December 9, Browne informed Quintero that “it is to be hoped that “Governor Vidaurri will succeed in inducing Governor [Ignacio] Pesqueira [of Sonora] and the governors of the other frontier States of Mexico to unite with them in a protest to the Mexican Government.” Browne hoped that such a protest would frighten the government in Mexico City from its feared agreement to admit U.S. troops.³⁰

Both Confederate peaceful and hostile expansionist ambitions against Mexico were not just reactions to Union intrigues in Mexico against the Confederacy. At the immediate outset of the war, Davis outlined general Confederate foreign policy and declared that “agents should be sent at an early period to the independent American powers south of our Confederacy” as “it is in our interest and earnest wish to maintain the most cordial and friendly relations.” *De Bow’s Review* had explained the Confederate interest in Mexico and central and South America was due to the cotton plant’s being indigenous in these regions: “All that is required by these countries is a strong and permanent government...to make them serious competitors with us in supplying the world with cotton.” Hence Confederate support of a provincial rebellion could be motivated to thwart the emergence of a competitor or to exert informal expansion. De

²⁹ William M. Browne to J.A. Quintero, September 3, 1861; Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:77-80; Toombs to Quintero, May 22, 1861, *OR*, 217. For the Corwin mission, see Schoonover, *Dollars over Dominion*, 16-25. These were the provinces of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and Coahuila; Davis had the week before been alerted to the friendly disposition of the provincial governor (W.W.Kincheloe to Jefferson Davis, August 22, 1861, *JDP*, 7:285.)

³⁰ Browne to Quintero, December 9, 1861, *OR*, 308.

Bow remarked that “in the continual revolutions and civil wars that are occurring in Mexico and South America, southern men may with great propriety ally themselves with one of the contending parties.” Once “peace, quiet stability and security” were restored, “it will be easy for the South to form good commercial treaties with these regenerated states.”³¹

The Confederate policy toward Mexico and the remainder of Latin America would be conducted in accordance with “the duties of good neighborhood.” Hunter agreed with De Bow in declaring an end to the era of filibustering and the Confederate government wished “to prevent border raids and lawless invasion of the soil of Mexico by our citizens.” Instead, the State Department desired to promote between Confederates and Mexicans “those commercial relations which conduce so beneficially to their mutual welfare.” An alliance was the condition for this relationship, although “it is our interest and our purpose to cultivate peaceful relations with our neighbors, but our neighbors must evince a similar disposition towards us.”³²

Supporting the Status Quo in Cuba

Nowhere was this interventionist policy more obvious than with Cuba. Once the war began, Confederates disassociated themselves from previous southern designs on the island. The Confederate government and newspaper commentators were in agreement that rumors of a Confederate desire to annex Cuba must be quashed. Instead, the Spanish colonial regime of the captain general, Count Serrano, had to be overtly supported. Both *De Bow's Review* in May and the *Examiner* in September suggested it would be better than annexation to instead guarantee Cuba as a possession of Spain. These articles

³¹ Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress,” April 29, 1861, *JDC*, 5:72; “We Must Develop Southern Industry,” *DBR* 5 4 (April 1861):449.

³² Hunter to Vidaurri, September 9, *OR*, 255; Toombs to Quintero, May 22, 1861, *OR*, 217.

matched evolving government policy. In July, Toombs dispatched a special agent, Charles J. Helm to Cuba to ensure that “the two countries may exist separately but are bound together in the firmest manner by the most friendly and unlimited commercial intercourse.” In August 1861, Hunter extended the remit of the commissions to Europe from Britain and France to include, at Serrano’s urging, an approach to Spain. As with Mexican Governor Vidaurri, a policy of propping up weak, decentralized regimes was discernable. Hunter’s instructions to the envoys included the argument that of “all the great powers in Europe, Spain alone is interested, through her colonies, [in slavery]. The close proximity of these colonies to our shores, and the great mutual dependence of social and commercial interests between them and our own states, seem to invite close and intimate alliance between the two countries.”³³

A shared interest in slavery and the prospects of growing commerce increased the importance of this Spain-Cuba-Confederacy triangle. An anonymous pamphleteer from Charleston wrote that “for many years a trade of growing importance has been carried by Spanish vessels in southern ports” Having sold their outbound cargoes in Cuba, Spanish merchantmen increasingly sought to load up with cotton for their return trip to Spain “and may soon export for other parties.” Meanwhile in wartime Cuba served another use, on January 8, according to Bragg the Cabinet meeting was spent “chiefly on the propriety of

³³“Southern Trade,” *DBR* 5 5&6 (May 1861):567; *Richmond Examiner*, September 17, 1861; Toombs to Helm, July 22, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:46-48; Hunter to Yancey et al., August 24, 1861, *Ibid.*, 2:72-73. Hunter referred to Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico as well as Cuba. Note the prevalent press belief that Spanish possession of Cuba was dependent on Confederate goodwill and permission. The correspondence possibly implies that Serrano felt he needed Confederate support to bolster his relations with the Court of Spanish Queen Isabella II; certainly Serrano had a record of intrigue and enemies back in Spain. Significantly, Boswell Bach of New Orleans wrote to Davis on September 19, 1861, suggesting he thank Serrano for his friendly stance and make sure Madrid was informed of his gratitude (*JDP*, 7:345.)

making contact with a Spanish gentleman to run a line of steamers from Cuba to Matamoras ostensibly to carry mail but in reality a war measure for dispatches etc.”³⁴

In these approaches to Spain and Cuba, both secretaries of state advised their representatives to attribute previous attempts by southerners to acquire Cuba entirely on the need to maintain the sectional balance within the United States. This re-writing of history subsequently became the basis of the accepted historical account of the fate of expansionism. The real explanation was due to the war and a shift within government opinion about the best way to protect slavery. Hunter expressed that the Confederacy “would earnestly desire to see the nations thus bound together armed with the means to protect their common social system.” Possibly an international slavery league was in the making, Confederate newspapers extended the reach of this alliance to protect slavery to Brazil. On May 6, the *Richmond Dispatch* reported about the presence of a Brazilian agent in Montgomery, Don Felix de Castro. The envoy had both expressed his “warm feeling for the Confederacy” and his confidence that Brazilian power “not only will sympathize with us, but will strongly protest against the United States blockade” of Confederate ports.³⁵

The government of the Confederacy patronized any expansionist ambitions of the other slaveholding powers. Especially, Hunter declared, the new republic “can never find any cause for jealousy or regret in the steady growth in the power and resources of Spain.” However, even in this correspondence, it was clear which country was imagined to be the more powerful. It was up to the Spanish to embrace the opportunity of allying

³⁴ Anon, *Remarks on the Policy of Prohibiting the Exportation of Cotton, by one of the People* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans & Cogswell, 1861), 9-10; Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” January 14, 1861, p. 103, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC.

³⁵ Hunter to Yancey et al. August 24, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:72-73; *Richmond Dispatch*, May 6, 1861, box 2, folder title “1861 285 items on index cards,” Meade Papers, UVA.

with “a nation that would be a great empire at no distant day... a great friendly power.” The Confederate State Department condescended to the Cubans and Spanish, as “it was the policy of the government of the Confederate States that Cuba shall continue to be a colonial possession of Spain.” In similar fashion to northern Mexico, Confederates betrayed an interest in the resources of Cuba, with Mason writing to Hunter in November 1861 that, whilst waiting for transit to Nassau, he would spend his time fact finding in Havana. Furthermore, by also blessing Spain’s efforts in Santo Domingo, the Confederate government was developing a Caribbean policy.³⁶

The foundation of the policy was amity and a sense of shared interest. Helm declared this immediate objective had been successfully achieved. On December 12, he confided to Hunter: “[I]t affords me very great pleasure to inform the Department that public feeling here is now nearly unanimously with the Confederate States.” Confederate merchants and blockade runners “could not have greater facilities for trade than they now do.” Above all, “the Confederate flag flies honored and respected, in all the ports of this island which are visited by our merchant vessels.”³⁷

Helm was appointed special agent not only to Cuba but also to the Spanish, British, and Danish islands of the West Indies. Toombs formally instructed Helm to just establish “friendly commercial relations” with these islands. But verbally, according to Helm, Toombs had additionally suggested that he establish, at least, a depot for the reshipping and storing of cargo at Nassau in the British Bahamas. As the war progressed, blockade running and commerce raiding promoted Confederate interests in Latin

³⁶ Hunter to Yancey et al. August 24, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:72-73; James M. Mason to Hunter, 18 October, 1861, *Ibid.*, 2:105. Mason’s trip was as Confederate emissary to England, accompanying him was John Slidell, emissary to France. At Nassau, they boarded the British mail packet H.M.S. *Trent*. For the latest study of the Trent Crisis see Jones, *Blue and Grey*, 83-113.

³⁷ Charles J. Helm to R. M. T. Hunter, December 12, 1861, *OR*, 309.

America and the Caribbean. In early 1862, *The Richmond Examiner* studied the patterns of blockade running because the newspaper believed the routes of the smugglers marked a preview of the connections of trade that would be established in time of peace. The evidence of the appointment of Helm and the proposal by Toombs to establish a depot at Nassau may suggest that the government was endorsing such a project.³⁸

The wartime establishment of trade routes across the Caribbean and the approach to Spain for alliance fulfilled not only a protection of slavery but also something of a world view and the position of the Confederacy within it. The outbreak of war saw this commercial vision at its most expansive. In May 1861, *De Bow's Review* claimed that "in all ages of the world, those nations have become most wealthy and enlightened that have carried the most southern trade. We of the slave states are admirably situated to trade with Mexico, the West Indies, and South America, and better situated than European countries for trade with southern Asia and the isles of the Pacific." The basis of the future was that, as Toombs had argued, "the Confederate States embrace an immense agricultural region...able to supply...on advantageous terms with numerous commodities. On the other hand...articles of growth and manufacture...will find a sure and profitable market at our ports, burdened with no heavy taxation for revenue."³⁹

The Confederate government expounded a world vision with the Confederacy playing a key role. In his address to Congress at the beginning of the war, Davis had linked staple production and slavery with the world at large. He declared that "the

³⁸ Robert Toombs to Charles J. Helm, July 22, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:46-48; Charles J. Helm to R. M. T. Hunter, November 9, 1861, *Ibid.*, 2:114; *Richmond Examiner*, January 24, 1862. For blockade running, see Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988). Britain, as the colonial power controlling Bahamas and Bermuda, was the power concerned in particular.

³⁹ "Southern Trade," *DBR*, 5 5&6 (May 1861):567; Robert Toombs to Charles J. Helm, 22 July, 1861, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:46-48.

production of the South in cotton, rice, sugar and tobacco for the full development and continuance of which labor of African slaves was and is indispensable...had become absolutely necessary for the courts of civilized man.” The government saw the Confederacy as the symbol of the moral cause of minimal government, the promotion of free trade, and slavery.⁴⁰

PART II: CONFEDERATE REASONS FOR EXPANSION

Realizing the Ideals of the Confederate Revolution

Confederates cast their revolution in grandiose terms, which in turn promoted the exercise of expansionist ambitions. In its report published in early May, the Committee on Foreign Affairs explained that the content of Davis’s speech to congress on the outbreak of war was necessarily portentous. “All who propose to change the general order of things among nations stand at a disadvantage” because such nations “are looked upon as assailing the peace of the world.” The Confederates had committed an act that destabilized the world order, “in breaking up a long established government and affect thereby the interests of the other nations.” The committee members argued that the task of the members of the Confederate government was, “as they owe it to [other nations] as well as themselves, to make the justification of their course as complete as possible.”⁴¹

Confederates did not see the Civil War as a trial of strength with the Union because, according to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, “wars too often determine nothing.” Confederates believed the conflict was over universal issues because the war was a “contest for constitutional government in which the interests of mankind are

⁴⁰ Jefferson Davis, Message, April 29, 1861, *JDC* 5:72-84.

⁴¹ Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the President’s Message relating to the affairs between the Confederate and the United States* (Montgomery, Ala.: n.p., 1861), 1.

concerned.” For the world had an interest in agreeing, as Bilbo argued, that “governments are instituted for the general welfare and protection of the people, and should they fail to accomplish these ends the people have a duty to destroy the government by force.” Botts cited the authority of “the founders of the early Democratic Party, who thought that men were best governed when they were least governed.” The outcome of such an arrangement was that “the people were strong and rich in proportion as the government was weak and poor.”⁴²

Confederates believed that minimal government would unleash the latent energies of the people to achieve their ambitions post war. They believed this liberation from the constraint of the Union gave the revolution its dynamism and power. As Headley observed, popular revolutions “never go backward, but when they begin they rush forward with the speed of the whirlwind.” In his December 2 address, Letcher declared, “the revolutionary struggle is the noblest and most glorious in its results in history.” Quoting an 1848 speech of Lincoln’s with approval, Letcher continued, “It is the quality of revolutions not to go by old lines or old laws, but to break up both and make new ones.”⁴³

At an individual level the results were bewildering, but collectively the revolution enabled the Confederates to unite. Reflecting Sam Houston’s earlier exhortation, “let us have no past except the glorious past”, Randolph confessed on January 18, “my life has so changed that I really question my own identity at times.” Individuals found it hard, but a clean slate appealed to politicians; during the fall, while campaigning to be elected for

⁴² Ibid., Bilbo, *Oration*, 6; Charles Tyler Botts, *An Address to his fellow-citizens, of the State of California* (Sacramento, Calif.: n.p., 1861), 14.

⁴³ James A. Headley to his father, May 7, 1861, Thomas Henry Hines papers, # A H662 1, FHS; John Letcher, *Message of the Governor of Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: William F. Ritchie, 1861), FO 5/786, pp. 342, 348-49, (PRO).

the permanent Congress, Virginia secessionist James P. Holcombe told Nicholas F. Cabell on September 17, “now removed from party conflicts in the past, I have endeavored since the secession of the South to unite our people by discountenancing everything that tends to revive or perpetuate old differences.” On November 8, Georgia Governor Joseph Brown called on the people “in one common grave we must bury every personal aspiration and every feeling of ambition, pride and jealousy which may tend to hinder united and harmonious action.”⁴⁴

The result of such unity, Confederates believed, was a nation of great power. In November, Yancey declared in London, “[T]hey are a people, a nation exhibiting elements of power that few states of the world would possess.” This popular unity would enable the Confederacy to win the war. Bilbo assured his listeners that “the true source of invincibility is will.” The Mobile, Alabama, cleric, the Reverend J. J. Nicolson, argued that Lincoln and Seward would quickly realize how wrong were their misguided notions of southern Unionism and with that understand the futility of continuing the war. He wrote “the North need to realize we are a people...to conquer which would be a stupendous scheme neither Caesar nor Napoleon in his wildest flights ever dreamed of such a thing.” On December 3, a Houston public meeting resolved, “The Union sentiment

⁴⁴ Sam Houston, “Sam Houston’s Speech at Independence, Texas,” May 10, 1861, box 2R48, vol. XVI, January 1861-May 1928, Houston Papers, UT; Randolph to Mary Randolph, box 5, folder 5:101, The Papers of the Randolph Family of Edgehill and Wilson Cary Nicholas, #5533, UVA; Holcombe to Cabell, September 17, 1861, box 47, folder title “1860 letters, circulars, essays and other literary works of N. F. Cabell,” Joseph C. Cabell Papers, #111, UVA; “Inaugural Address of Governor Brown to the Senators and Representatives at Milledgeville,” clipping in E. Molyneux to Russell, December 7, 1861, FO 5/786, pp. 513-16. Writing from his post in Savannah, Georgia, Molyneux told Russell that Brown’s speech “appears to have given much satisfaction to the people.”

in the South, which the federal administration relied so much upon for cooperation, is conceded now not to exist...a nation thus conceived in unity is simply invincible.”⁴⁵

Provided they remained united, Confederates considered they would win the war. But, as the Union forces began their seaborne offensives, there was a precarious element to this unity that extended beyond the divisions in the Border States. On November 4, War Secretary Benjamin complained to General Braxton Bragg, that the various state “governors are unwilling to trust the common defense to one common head...each governor wants to satisfy his own people and they are not wanting in politicians in each state to encourage the people to raise the cry that they will not consent to be left defenseless at home.” By January 17, according to Bragg’s brother Thomas, Davis was so exasperated by obstruction on the part of the governors that he told the cabinet “if such was to be course of states to the government, the carrying on this war is an impossibility, that we had better make terms as soon as we could.”⁴⁶

The Commercial Imperative to Expand

Confederates had other sources of power to rely upon than revolutionary élan. The principal foundation for Confederate expansion would be the growth of its commerce. Confederates believed their nation was vital to the world economically on account of its huge, and predicted to rapidly increase, production of cotton. But cotton was also part of a larger commercial economy. But for the war, Bilbo believed the entire commerce of the Confederacy, including industrial and mineral as well as agricultural

⁴⁵“William L. Yancey at the Fishmonger’s Company on Saturday,” *London Globe*, November 12, 1861, in *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas, December 18, 1861, GLC05959.51.011; Bilbo, *Oration*, 10-11; Rev. J.J. Nicolson, *Government or no Government: Or the Question of State Allegiance. A Tract for Churchmen* (Mobile, Ala.: Farrow & Dennet, 1861), 15; *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, December 6, 1861, GLC05959.51.007.

⁴⁶ Judah P. Benjamin to Braxton Bragg, November 4, 1861, Box 3, folder title “1861 – 325 notes on index cards,” Meade Papers, UVA. Thomas Bragg, “Diary”, January 14, 1861, pp. 115-16, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC.

productions, would be worth “today” \$600 million and “experiencing an unexampled rapidity of growth.”⁴⁷

Cotton would continue to be the basis of Confederate wealth. On July 4, the Cotton Planters’ Convention gathered in the concert hall, Macon, Ga., and predicted that the 1861 cotton crop would come in at, or a little below, the three year average of four million bales. Any decline in cotton production was on account of a ten percent reduction of acreage devoted to its production. But perfect fall weather meant Confederates increasingly anticipated the harvest to be at the higher end of earlier estimates.

Mississippi Planter Abram Archer reported to his overseer Henry J. Hennington on August 7, that “crops around Port Gibson are very good to what they were last year and if we have a late fall we will make a large crop. I am afraid we will have too much.” But, if states such as Mississippi and South Carolina were producing to capacity, the growth that Bilbo expected would come from Texas. According to Arthur Lynn, the British consul in Galveston, Texas had produced just 400 thousand bales in 1860; but, with railroad construction opening up new lands, he expected the production to rise to between two and six million bales. Moreover, the buoyancy of the agricultural sector was enhanced by the fact that provision crops and other staples such as rice and sugar had all experienced exceptional yields due to the same conditions that benefited cotton.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Bilbo, *Oration*, 15.

⁴⁸ Convention of Cotton Planters, *Proceedings of the Convention of Cotton Planters, held in Macon, Ga., July 4, 1861. With a communication on the proposed issue of treasury notes by the Confederate Government, by Duff Green, Esq* (Macon, Ga.: n.p., 1861), 5; Abram Archer to H.J. Hennington, August 7, 1861, box 2E650, folder 1 “immediate family, 1858-1865,” Richard Thompson Archer papers, UT.; Arthur J. Lynn, “Annual Report of Shipping and Navigation, Trade and Commerce”, FO 5/788, pp. 349-55, PRO. The planters were conscious of choosing such a significant date for their meeting, as Green reported “you gentlemen cotton planters assembled this convention on the anniversary of the memorable and ever glorious July 4, 1776 all seem ready and anxious to contribute according to their ability...” Hunt and James replied to Massie on May 23, “we are glad to hear such good accounts of your crops, all reports represent the wheat crop as very fine all over the state and the South...” The British Consuls scattered across the

Independence meant that Confederates expected to benefit more from the export of these bumper crops. The Committee on Foreign Affairs declared that no longer would Confederates be forced “by prohibitory duties to consume the dearer manufactured commodities of the North instead of the cheaper ones from Europe.” Confederates believed their supply of cotton had always been exceeded by demand and as reported at the Cotton Planter’s Convention, at most the warehouses of Liverpool had twenty weeks supply. Confederates believed that they would be enriched by not only being able to purchase cheaper imports from Europe but the Europeans by the working of theory of comparative advantage would be able to pay more for Confederate cotton. Confederates would be twice “richer by the trade.”⁴⁹

In the context of bumper crops past and present, Confederates sought to capitalize on their anticipated commercial power by advocating free trade after the outbreak of war and contrasting it with the Union’s protectionist policy. Members of Congress made it their priority to pass the tariff bill after reconvening in Montgomery on April 30. The Committee on Foreign Affairs followed Davis’s message with an attack on the Union’s

Confederate ports, confirmed these optimistic opinions, on July 1, Thomas Mure summed up for Russell, “The weather in the Confederate States has been very propitious for the grain crops – there has been an increase of about 15-20% in the cultivation of wheat and corn – in Tex. and the southern sections of Ark. and Tenn. the wheat harvest is already finished and is reported to be abundant and of excellent quality. Although it is too early to give any definite report regarding the cotton crop the prospects are so far favorable....” Molyneux reported to Russell on December 4, that the “weather during the past three months has been so propitious for maturing of the cotton plant that the total crop is estimated to be a slight increase from last year.” On July 8, Bunch observed that “the rice crop promises to be unusually abundant.” (Hunt and James to William Massie, William Massie Papers, UT; Mure to Lord John Russell, July 1, 1861, FO 5/788, p. 167, PRO; Molyneux to Earl Russell, December 4, 1861, FO 5/786, p. 497, PRO; Bunch to Lord John Russell, July 23, 1861, FO 5/781, p. 57, PRO.)

⁴⁹ Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the President’s Message relating to the affairs between the Confederate and the United States* (Montgomery, Ala.: n.p., 1861), 3; Convention of Cotton Planters, *Proceedings of the Convention of Cotton Planters, held in Macon, Ga., July 4, 1861. With a communication on the proposed issue of treasury notes by the Confederate Government, by Duff Green, Esq* (Macon, Ga.: n.p., 1861), 5. A member of the Confederate Department of State, perhaps Toombs himself, had twice written “the richer/much richer by the trade” on the Committee’s Report.

Morrill Tariff describing it as a declaration of “war on the foreign commerce of the country.” agreed, calling the tariff “legal sectional plunder.” In this analysis, the Confederacy stood for peaceful cooperative prosperity, whilst the Union stood for antagonistic competition. Moreover, according to Confederates, trade wars would soon lead to military conflicts.⁵⁰

Free trade would lead to domestic harmony. On January 6, Davis explained to his Cabinet why “he was for free trade and direct taxes after the war.” He argued that any duties on exports, even for strictly revenue purposes, would set one interest group against another and “would lead to class legislation and protection, notwithstanding the Constitutional prohibition.” Henry K. Burgwyn of North Carolina agreed, looking back at the politics of the tariff in the Union, he wrote “tariffs constantly altered have done no good, but carried distress almost to ruin into interests of another kind insomuch as to beget an attitude of almost open hostilities.” In keeping with the stress on national unity, Davis saw tariffs as domestically divisive and free trade as promoting harmony and this situation would also be replicated abroad.⁵¹

The advocacy of free trade rapidly assumed more than an economic policy and an assault on the Union, it defined the Confederate world. Charles Botts declared in California in August that “so linked are the commercial relations of civilized nations that

⁵⁰ Bunch to Russell, May 1, 1861, FO 5/780, p. 210, PRO; Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the President's Message relating to the affairs between the Confederate and the United States* (Montgomery, Ala.: n.p., 1861), 3; William John Grayson, *Remarks on Mr. Motley's Letter in the London Times on the war in America* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans and Cogswell, 1861), 21-22. Bunch told Russell “The southern congress met yesterday in Montgomery, it is supposed that the tariff will be soon discussed.” On May 22, news of the secret session deliberations reached Bunch with the passage of the tariff effective August 31. Bunch observed of the tariff, “that the chief provisions of this tariff are eminently favorable to British interests as compared with the US tariff cannot be denied...” (Bunch to Russell, May 22, 1861 FO 5/780, pp. 253-55, PRO.)

⁵¹ Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” January 14, 1861, p. 98, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; H.K. Burgwyn, *Our currency: some of its evils and remedies for them. By a citizen of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: John W. Syme), 45-46.

what redounds to the interest of one is immeasurably for the interest of all.” The basis of such interdependency was that “people are most prosperous when left to their own interests untrammelled by opposing the laws of trade.” As with the expansion of slavery, Confederates believed they were governed by natural laws, which “are immutable, men will sell where they can sell highest and buy where they buy lowest.” Another commentator in Charleston added, “you cannot stop the currents and eddies of commerce any more than the Mississippi.” So ambitious was Botts in the universal application of the ‘laws of trade’ in the fostering of peaceful commercial relations that “the time will come when the people of the Confederacy will again be the best customers of New England.”⁵²

Even if Confederates drew the line at New England, they certainly expected free trade to deliver a system of international relations that gave them the central role as its guarantor. The State Department followed suit as in “a question of the supply of this great staple [of cotton] there is a worldwide interest and if the nations of the earth could choose for themselves a single depository for such an interest, perhaps none could be found to act so impartially in that capacity as the Confederacy of the Southern States.” The Confederate government’s policies would be a force for global peace, as “it would be the greatest interest to such a power to preserve peace and to improve the opportunities for the pursuits of the useful arts.” The Confederacy would be an influence over other powers directly and indirectly because it was “harmonizing influence on human society,”

⁵² Charles Tyler Botts, *An Address to his fellow-citizens, of the State of California* (Sacramento, Calif.: n.p., 1861), 11-12. Anon, *Remarks on the Policy of Prohibiting the Exportation of Cotton, by one of the People* (Charleston, S.C., Evans & Cogswell, 1861), 11.

and “it would not only desire peace itself but to some extent become a bond of peace amongst others.”⁵³

The Confederate newspapers took these outlines of a world vision and speculated on what it might mean for specific countries. The *Richmond Examiner* included both India and China within its latitudinal trade system. The Confederate ports were closer to these countries than those of the United States, so the paper expected New York to lose that carrying trade. Given the Richmond based paper’s desire to funnel commerce through Virginia, the papers were uninterested in a Transpacific route; instead trade would go east, from the Chesapeake across the Atlantic, through the Mediterranean then, via the to-be-constructed Suez Canal, across India and Thailand, via railways, to reach China. Most importantly, Confederates feared China and India, along with Africa, Egypt, Turkey and South America, as potential alternative cotton growing sites. This belief meant that these countries and regions became areas of interest, concern, and even as threats to the Confederacy. On May 13, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* wrote that the British had tried everything in India - American seed, American gins, even American planters, “but all to no avail.” Four months later, the *Richmond Examiner* also appraised, for the first time, both Indian and Chinese cotton capability. In the newspaper’s opinion, population density and limited available land, together with high domestic demand for cotton goods, prevented any emulation of the Confederate paradigm of cotton surplus. Potential cotton growing regions in central Africa lacked even the underlying “progressive” agricultural base to begin to plan any cotton production.⁵⁴

⁵³ Jefferson Davis, April 29, 1861, *JDC*, 5:72; R. M. T. Hunter to James M. Mason, 23 September, 1861, *Richardson Messages and Papers*, 2:84-90.

⁵⁴ *Richmond Dispatch*, May 1, 13, 18, 1861; *Richmond Examiner*, April 23, September 6, 1861; *Richmond Dispatch*, May 13, 1861; *Richmond Examiner*, September 13, 1861.

The wartime meetings of the commercial conventions and cotton planters' conventions joined government and newspapers in espousing ambitions. Howell Cobb decided he could not go to Europe on his mission because he "deemed it advisable to delay his departure for the present with the impression that commercial and agricultural interests could not be advanced under the circumstances." However, far from the continuing conflict terminating any more of these activities, the Civil War seemed to have the opposite effect. On October 14, the Southern Commercial Convention, with 400 delegates from nine different states, did meet for three days. Some of the delegates, and committee members in particular, were associated with the promotion of expansionist policies elsewhere. The convention's president, A. O. Andrews, said it was up to the Confederate States for the first time in world history to test "the practicality of unfettered trade...[because] as a new government, we have no old revenue system to unsettle – no class or business interests to be endangered, and if it succeeds we shall have the glory of inaugurating it." As a new nation, the Confederacy alone had the chance to adopt pure free trade. The convention made two concrete recommendations: first, "in order to encourage the importation of articles necessary...return cargoes ought to be furnished to all vessels, introducing commodities within the confederate states"; second, the convention recommended that the Confederate "post master general take such steps to establish postal relations to Europe." Coincidentally, Davis had just sent to Hunter, "for consideration and conference," a proposal to establish an 'Ocean Penny Post Fortnight Express' to Europe.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Macon Daily Telegraph*, 15 October, 1861; Davis to Hunter, September 2, 1861, *JDP*, 7:319. The Southern Commercial Convention subsumed, for that meeting, the Cotton Planters' Convention. Such meeting mergers had occurred before the war. In terms of attendance comparison, only 62 delegates attended the Vicksburg, 1859 convention and 95 the Montgomery, 1858 convention. 400 delegates

The vigor of the arguments of supporters of free trade was in part because they were increasingly being challenged within the Confederacy. There was an inherent problem with free trade, as Burgwyn declared, “no commercial people are or at this day can be perfectly independent.” By the summer, a debate arose between those who continued to advocate a perfect free trade system as the logical ambition for the post war Confederacy and other Confederates who began to wish for a Confederacy less dependent on other nations. There arose a debate over the current and future policy of the Confederate government, which had implications for the nature of the Confederacy and its foreign relations. The nation would still be one committed to growth and expansion, but it also wished to use its resources in a less altruistic manner. As a result, the Confederacy would become a stronger stand-alone nation, more like the Union in some respects, with a mixed economy; it would also boast a secured currency and specific reciprocal agreements with overseas nations.⁵⁶

From the beginning, the exigencies of war had compelled a postponement of pure free trade. The behavior of Congress’s in delaying in peacetime and then adoption of the May tariff reflected this regrettable necessity. But by the summer, advocates of a more thorough review of Confederate commercial and foreign policy had become more prominent. In large part, this development was due to the apprehension that the Union

represented the highest number since the 804 delegates attended at Knoxville, 1857. (Johnson, *Men and Vision*, 5, 27.) An example of an individual with diverse roles was David Hubbard was also a member of the Provisional Congress’s committee on territories, later First Confederate Commissioner of Indian Affairs, (Thomas McAdory Owen, Marie Bankhead Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, [Chicago: S.J. Clark, 1921], 3:854.) Duff Green’s interests ranged from canals, including the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Railroads, in particular the Southern Pacific Railroad; at the time the war began, Duff Green was arranging with the Mexicans to connect Texas to the Pacific coast via railroad. Even the British had a “system of exorbitant duties” and France had, in signing the 1860 commercial treaty with Britain, only loosened “the rusty sinews of her protective system a hair’s breadth.”

⁵⁶ H. K. Burgwyn, *Our currency: some of its evils and remedies for them. By a citizen of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: John W. Syme), 34.

blockade was here to stay. At first, Lincoln's declaration did not alter the confident predictions of massive Confederate exports of staple crops and cheaper European manufactured imports. The blockade had been instituted only after ninety percent of the 1860 cotton crop had already been shipped and it would only be from the fall in 1861 that business would resume in the Deep South ports. Moreover, away from the easily policed exits of Norfolk and New Orleans, the blockade appeared to be nominal in character.

Other factors, as well as the approach of the business season, also contributed to the cooling towards free trade. Europeans seemed prepared to put up with the blockade and, in particular, the British failed to follow their recognition of Confederate belligerence with more meaningful action. There was also the growing realization that there would be a sizable war debt to pay after the war, and connected with this government borrowing, the problem of rising inflation. From the armies to the railroads, the complaint was of shortages of supplies from munitions to rolling stock. These challenges necessitated a response that in turn would influence what the Confederacy was going to be.

The solution to these problems would arise from, as the Cotton Planter's Convention phrased it, the "concentration of commercial power." By promoting commercial agreements and direct trade, Confederates would attempt to exert a system of commercial coercion or preferences on other powers. In order to guarantee autonomy of action, the Confederacy would need a merchant fleet and a navy to guard it. Confederates would also have to initiate a more active commercial policy in order to both maintain and increase the market for its crops, including marketing opportunities such as attending the next year's World's Fair in London needed to be seized and by means of stockpiling and

rationing of cotton supplies the market be manipulated. Finally, the cotton stockpile and limiting imports would enable Confederates to tie their currency either to cotton itself or specie drawn from overseas countries in return for its export.⁵⁷

The context for these ideas was the growing unpopularity of free trade and the rise of the embargo movement in the Confederacy during the second half of 1861. On August 3, Bunch had been informed by a “trustworthy source” of a “strong disposition at Richmond for a Congressional Embargo.” Although congressional action did not happen, it was not necessary, for on August 12, a paper was published in Charleston following moves in Mobile and New Orleans, which announced that the cotton factors “recommend that planters send none of their produce to market until the blockade is raised.” Therefore, as Bunch told Russell on September 28, Congressional claims that the “Ports of the South are thrown open to commerce” were rendered redundant by “the uncontrollable will of an irresponsible community...the self-styled committee of safety in Charleston and Wilmington.” The following month, free trader, coal mine owner and railroad president L. Gifford visited Bunch and told him that while a majority of the cabinet still supported free trade with only “Benjamin disposed to coercion,” public opinion in Richmond was changing. By January 1862, the cabinet reflected that shift, only Davis and Bragg supported free trade and even the free trader Hunter told his colleagues “direct tax is insufficient to support the government and pay interest on the debt” the absent and ill Bragg noted “I believe all concurred with him.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Convention of Cotton Planters, *Proceedings of the Convention of Cotton Planters, held in Macon, Ga., July 4, 1861. With a communication on the proposed issue of treasury notes by the Confederate Government, by Duff Green, Esq* (Macon, Ga.: n.p., 1861), 8.

⁵⁸ Bunch to Russell, August 3, 12, September 28, October 28, 1861, FO 5/781, pp. 192-93, 225-27, 343-45, 372-75, PRO; Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” January 14, 1861, pp. 98-99, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC. Bunch described the embargo for the Confederacy as “an inglorious retreat from its offers of free trade and untrammelled intercourse.” Gifford was son of the British Tory political writer and

The Confederate government struggled to reconcile the free trade ideal it presented to the world with the reality it faced. In October, Assistant Secretary of State Browne reiterated to the Confederate Commissioner to London, James M. Mason, that “It is the earnest desire of this government to promote and encourage by all the means in its possession the most intimate and liberal commercial intercourse with neutral powers.” Mindful of concerns expressed by Bunch, Browne complained “The impression prevails to some extent in England that the government has prohibited the exportation of cotton by sea to neutral and friendly nations.” He told Mason to “take means to correct this error.” Britain has a “legal right to trade in every port of the Confederate States.” The only Congressional prohibition concerned cotton “for the use of the enemy or through the enemy’s territory.”⁵⁹

The objective of the new policy was, according to the Cotton Planters’ Convention, to “effectually concentrate the cotton crop where it was most effective for political and commercial purposes.” As a war measure, Davis had suggested that during hostilities free trade be offered to all nations as an inducement to raise the blockade. But such devices of trade trials could have application after the war, as a Charleston pamphleteer suggested. “Let us throw open our ports to the commerce of the world without duties, limitations or restrictions for one year with promises of future commercial treaties with all friendly states who shall engage heartily in the trade.”⁶⁰

historian John Gifford. According to Bunch, Gifford had been in Virginia for twenty one years and “has risen to some distinction...He is well known to some of the commercial MPs such as [William Schaw] Lindsay and [George] Moffat and has had interviews with [James Henry] Hammond.” In 1856, Gifford had been involved with the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad, (Special Collections, University of Tennessee.)

⁵⁹ Browne to Mason, October 29, 1861, *OR*, 290.

⁶⁰ Convention of Cotton Planters, *Proceedings of the Convention of Cotton Planters, held in Macon, Ga., July 4, 1861. With a communication on the proposed issue of treasury notes by the Confederate*

To some Confederates, the ability to negotiate such reciprocal treaties could only be undertaken from a position of strength; specifically, according to Bilbo, “in time when secure against foreign competition in foreign and domestic trade.” In California, Botts looked at examples across the Pacific when “weaker states have been compelled to divide with a stronger advantages of a partial nature” as evidenced by the United States and the opening up of China and Japan. Bilbo argued that in order to be ‘secure,’ the Confederacy would have to have its own merchant marine and a navy to guard the ships. To this end he called for “navigation laws to discriminate against foreign vessels” and stressed the “need to develop an interest in a navy for protection.”⁶¹

Building up Resources at Home: Cotton and Industry

A more immediate source of security for Confederates was at hand, the rapidly growing stockpile of cotton. Confederates understood its vulnerability to damage due to exposure, shortage of bags and ropes, and enemy action. On October 6, Archer wrote to his son Abram “you will have probably seen from the newspapers that [Louisiana] Governor [Thomas] Moore had proclaimed the probation of the carrying of cotton to New Orleans, I see this of little additional force as cotton that has been sent cannot be sold and is exposed to great risk.” He added, “I still hope to make 400 bales of cotton on the two places...But I am apprehensive that much will be injured.”⁶²

The anticipated pent up demand in Europe and from the future Confederate textile industry would offset such depreciation by a rise in prices for the remaining cotton. In

Government, by Duff Green, Esq (Macon, Ga.: n.p., 1861), 9. Anon, *Remarks on the Policy of Prohibiting the Exportation of Cotton, by one of the People* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans & Cogswell, 1861), 8.

⁶¹ Bilbo, *Oration*, 36-39; Charles Tyler Botts, *An Address to his fellow-citizens, of the State of California* (Sacramento, Calif.: n.p., 1861), 6.

⁶² Richard Thompson Archer to Abram Archer, October 6, 1861, box 2E646, folder title “letters written 1860-7 and undated,” Richard Thompson Archer Papers, UT.

October, “an old citizen” of New Orleans believed that even if the Union forces were able to destroy half the estimated store of four million bales, such an action “would produce such a vacuum of supply that the remaining two million would attain a value nearly equal to the four million previous.” By this process, planters would be in the future always “over-renumerated for their nominal sacrifices.” Dr. Peter Randolph of Point Coupe, Louisiana, argued to Archer “to burn all the cotton as has been suggested by a Mississippi Planter would be to deprive our factories of what they require and consequently cut off the supply of a fabric in such universal demand throughout the slaveholding states and if the blockade is broken will still be in greater demand.”⁶³

But the distribution across the Confederacy of the December 13 resolutions of the State of Tennessee, circulated to all the state governments and which called for a shift from cotton to provision production, made an impression on those pondering the future of the Confederate economy. As Governor Francis W. Pickens of South Carolina declared in a public letter, “we are at a great turning point in our history” and agreed that “the Confederate people in their present definitive independence must enlarge their cultivation and production of [provisions].” In other words, planters must curtail the production of cotton and instead direct their energies to the growth of wheat.⁶⁴

But the effective cessation of cotton production for the 1862 crop did not mean that Confederates turned their back on a future of staple crop production. The Resolutions of Tennessee declared that two cotton crops un-exported would result in a glut and enable European customers to “dictate price and terms of sale.” But if the 1862 crop was not

⁶³ *Providential Aspect and Salutary Tendency of the Existing Crisis* (New Orleans, La.: Picayune Office, 1861), 15; Randolph to Archer, October 18, 1861, box 2E647, folder title “letters received 1861-8 and undated,” Richard Thompson Archer Papers, UT.

⁶⁴ Pickens to the South Carolina Legislature, December 1861, GLC09206.01.

raised, the store on hand would rise in value and planters would once more “hold a great staple which is a necessity and hence compel both purchase and remunerative price.” The “iron” laws of supply and demand would enable the Confederate cotton industry to rapidly recover after the war even if planters had switched to arable crops in the meantime.⁶⁵

The stockpile of cotton would also serve as a guard against changes in the world cotton market. Pickens accepted that the effects of the Union blockade and Confederate embargo “may result in forcing up new sources of supply for the raw material” in India and Australia. “In this contingency, we should hold a large supply of cotton on hand, so as to secure the continued monopoly of the market in Europe and breakdown immediately any new sources of supply that may have been forced upon other countries under the artificial stimulus of blockade and our measures.” Confederates did not consider themselves to be complacent; rather they believed they would have to flood the market with cheap cotton to drive competitors out of business.⁶⁶

Confederates also expected the value of their cotton to solve the growing problems with the currency. The Report of the Cotton Planter’s Convention declared “the Confederate States has \$200 million of vegetable gold ready to gather and place it voluntarily at the disposal of the government.” Confederates pondered the convertibility of cotton to gold and silver. Burgwyn argued “what we really want from foreign commerce is more gold and silver and a less, much less amount of costly foreign manufactures and wares.” Duff Green in his address to the Cotton Planters called for a “regulation of foreign trade” by limiting inessential imports and obtaining specie in

⁶⁵ Kentucky Confederate Provisional Government, “Proceedings of the Convention Held in Russellville,” p. 64, FHS.

⁶⁶ Pickens to the South Carolina Legislature, December 1861, GLC09206.01.

exchange for cotton exports. The result “we could by our exports so regulate our foreign exchange so as to control the money market from fluctuations,” by which he meant the present depreciation of Confederate treasury notes. As Green told the meeting, the basis of his system was faith in Calhoun’s argument that historically “the excess of northern imports was paid for by the excess of southern exports.” Now with Confederate independence, a trade surplus was possible which would bring in the specie “inasmuch as the products of the South constitute so large a part of the basis of the trade and industry of European nations.”⁶⁷

In order to reduce risk, Confederates also wished to pursue new markets with new and existing products. In his adopted resolutions at the Cotton Planter’s Convention, Thomas E. McNeil of South Carolina argued that “the products and resources of the Confederate States are little known to the world and with the world’s fair coming up there is an opportunity to place them before the world in the proper manner.” As well as agricultural products, he suggested Confederates display their “native woods, minerals and ores.” Mining was thus becoming a resource of the Confederacy but no mention as yet of any textile industry as yet.⁶⁸

For some Confederates, the prospect of becoming a giant producer of raw materials was not sufficient in order to realize the potential of their new nation. Those from the Upper South States in particular argued that the Confederacy had to develop an industrial sector. As George Johnson in Kentucky declared on November 27, the

⁶⁷ Convention of Cotton Planters, *Proceedings of the Convention of Cotton Planters, held in Macon, Ga., July 4, 1861. With a communication on the proposed issue of treasury notes by the Confederate Government, by Duff Green, Esq* (Macon, Ga.: n.p., 1861), 8, 27.); H. K. Burgwyn, *Our currency: some of its evils and remedies for them. By a citizen of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: John W. Syme), 41.

⁶⁸ Convention of Cotton Planters, *Proceedings of the Convention of Cotton Planters, held in Macon, Ga., July 4, 1861. With a communication on the proposed issue of treasury notes by the Confederate Government, by Duff Green, Esq* (Macon, Ga.: n.p., 1861), 3-4.

Confederacy would “soon rise by independent development of her own vast resources into the position of first power in America.”⁶⁹

But at the same time, such a process required government support. On January 16, Bragg observed the phenomenon of “private industrial companies appealing to government for aid instead of devising remedies for the evil.” As a result of such weakness, he concluded, “private enterprise seems unequal to the enterprise.” Although by way of mitigation for such helplessness, Bragg added it was “true that all our foundries and iron establishments are taxed to the extent of their means.” His fellow North Carolinian, Burgwyn, called for “encouragement of the right kind...in order to import less foreign products.” In Tennessee, Bilbo saw the answer in Protection; he considered “free trade is a hare-brained, exploded and impractical theory as it does not foster domestic industry.” The Confederacy has to “establish, perfect and multiply” manufacturing establishments in order to compete against the United States, Britain, France and Russia. “We must establish these or else we will be kept fearfully dependent on foreign nations for supply.” On October 10 in Virginia, Randolph predicted immediate benefits arising from industrializing for the Spring 1862 campaign. “Our manufacture of arms and munitions carried on all winter will enable us to take the field with a better equipped army than heretofore.”⁷⁰

The more free trading North Carolinians stressed the need for internal improvements. On November 23, former governor John Motley Morehead told Judge

⁶⁹ Kentucky Confederate Provisional Government, “Proceedings of the Convention Held in Russellville,” p. 26, FHS.

⁷⁰ Thomas Bragg, “Diary,” January 14, 1861, p. 112, folder 3, Thomas Bragg Papers, #03304-z, SHC; H. K. Burgwyn, *Our currency: some of its evils and remedies for them. By a citizen of North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C., John W. Syme), 41-42; Bilbo, *Oration*, pp.32-33; Randolph to Mary Randolph, October 10, 1861, box 11, Edgehill-Randolph Papers, #1397, UVA.

Thomas Ruffin to lobby the State Convention and Congress for cross-state railroads given that as for those running “north-south under the old Union, those days are gone forever.” Instead he saw the priority was to construct railroads to “the two magnificent deposits of coal and iron near the Deep and Dan rivers.” According to Morehead, the Confederate government now “depends on these deposits to give the Confederate States their great strength in furnishing materials for defense.” The Confederacy has sufficient resources, “the great difficulty is to keep a supply.” A former Whig and now candidate for the Confederate Congress, Thomas Samuel Ashe, looked across his state’s southern border with satisfaction at North Carolina’s improvements and South Carolina’s comparative neglect of them. On December 2, he told Ruffin unless “pride of state...is accompanied by earnest efforts for substantial state improvements, it can hardly much effect much towards rendering [South Carolinians] materially superior to [South Carolina’s confederates.” The products of the planter economy were not alone sufficient. “Few states possessing her advantages are so little improved...Having men of great wealth, cultivation and inherited intellect” was no longer enough when South Carolina’s “resources are undeveloped” compared with the “beneficent changes that mark her more unsophisticated neighbor.”⁷¹

Internal improvements, a more industrial future, and Confederate foreign policy converged with the appointment of John Slidell as commissioner to Paris. Hunter used that opportunity to stress the advantages to both the Confederacy and France of an alliance and in particular to Virginia. In his September 3 letter of instructions, Hunter referenced back to the proposed French investment in the James River and Kanawha

⁷¹ Morehead to Ruffin, November 23, 1861, folder 447, Ashe to Ruffin, December 2, 1861, folder 448, series 1.6 box 29, Thomas Ruffin Papers, #641, SHC.

Canal, “the great water line in Virginia.” He regretted that “Nothing but the occurrence of civil war prevented the completion of this arrangement between this French Company and the Virginia legislature, by which France would have secured a certain and almost inexhaustible supply of cheap coal, iron and timber.” Confederate independence would lead to the reactivation of the canal agreement and would “give France such an independent source [of supplies] so as to place her more nearly on terms of equality with Great Britain in building up a navy and merchant marine.” Otherwise, if the Union won, “France would have much cause for apprehension in regard to the future condition of her commerce and manufactures.”⁷²

Slavery Has Passed its Test to Support Future Expansion

Far from struggling to defend slavery where it existed, Confederates interpreted the events of first months of the war with a sense of vindication and relief. These feelings led to a greater confidence in the future of the institution which in turn laid the basis for expansion. Slavery had demonstrated a surprising resilience given the fears that pervaded during the secession crisis. On June 20, even the anti-slavery Consul Bunch in Charleston reported to Russell that “no insurrection of the negroes is to be feared unless concocted and directed by white men.” With no repetition of John Brown’s Raid conceivable, the only possible scenario was an invasion by Union forces; but when that eventuality became a reality, for example at Port Royal, Bunch observed on December 2, that “no attempt has been made by the slaves to attach themselves to US forces, they have in some cases refused to move...”⁷³

⁷² Hunter to Slidell, September 3, 1861, *OR*, 269-71.

⁷³ Bunch to Russell, June 20, 1861, FO 5/780, p. 281, PRO; Bunch to Russell, December 2, 1861, FO 5/781, pp. 414-15, PRO.

Confederates believed they were not complacent, but their attitude to slave uprisings changed. As Mississippi planter and soldier Kempe Sprague, stationed with the Army of Tennessee wrote that when his mother, Frances Sprague, had “told me particulars of the intended insurrection around Natchez. I need not tell you I was uneasy.” Sprague expressed his concern about the vulnerability of women alone in the country, “I would not go on a plantation to live however.” But Sprague also argued “I have seen enough of mobs in my lifetime to know what they will do and I know very well they are the easiest things to quell.” He vowed “if I live through this war, I can make them pay for it.” Now that the Confederacy had separated from the Union, slavery was no longer a simmering problem that might explode in a racial upheaval, such as had happened in Haiti, but a matter of labor relations.⁷⁴

Confederates saw their independence as a chance to strengthen slavery. Carnes, who hoped for harmony between the Union and Confederacy, wrote that separation will enable each side to solve its division of labor problems, “the quest for progressive solutions to the twin problems of hirer and hired in the North and owner and owned in the South.” On November 23, Morehead told Ruffin that he anticipated that as “our southern republic is going to assume something of a military character, its domestic institutions will require that those that rule shall be always be prepared to control those under them.” During same month, the provisional governor of Kentucky saw the advance of Confederate armies and prosperity as mutually reinforcing as, “the presence of the negro

⁷⁴ Kempe Sprague to Margaret [Sprague] Winchester, box 2E911, folder 1 “family, 1836-1881, undated,” Winchester Family Papers, UT.

adds to the military spirit and strength of the Confederate States in enabling ordinary pursuits not to be interrupted in war.”⁷⁵

Slavery therefore became more important to Confederates during the early months of the war as not only the foundation of the war effort, but also of the Confederate nation. As Botts asked a meeting in August, “What is the meaning of slavery?” He answered his own question, “nothing but separation can make a harmonious people.” Given slavery’s centrality, George W. Kendall, the editor of the *New Orleans Picayune*, published a pamphlet in October by “an old citizen” of the city in order to provide Europe with a clearer idea of the “character of the people, magnitude of resources and nature of institutions.” Echoing other Confederates, the writer believed “the crisis” would not harm slavery but instead “will materially advance our interest, facilitate our capacity to render slavery subservient to the well-being of our race and accelerate our progress in prosperity and national development.”⁷⁶

Confederates expected the expansion of slavery on racial and economic grounds. The New Orleans based pamphleteer argued that, as “slavery is most conducive to the welfare of the negro,” Confederates had a “duty to extend it.” Moreover he believed that “white laborers cannot be employed in sufficient numbers and at wages low enough to render the cultivation of cotton renumeration.” In any case, whites cannot “endure the intense heat of the climate in the field.” The writer concluded, “cotton must be raised by negroes or not at all” and anticipated that production would fall from over four million bales to under half a million in the event of emancipation. But the Confederate did not

⁷⁵ Morehead to Ruffin, November 23, 1861, folder 447, series 1.6 box 29 Thomas Ruffin Papers, #641, SHC; Kentucky Confederate Provisional Government, “Proceedings of the Convention Held in Russellville,” p. 26, FHS.

⁷⁶ *Providential Aspect and Salutary Tendency of the Existing Crisis* (New Orleans, La.: Picayune Office, 1861), clipping on inside cover, 17-19.

just rehearse the King Cotton argument for the Europeans; he wished to persuade the British to “accept historical and statistical evidence rather than the narrow and bigoted Exeter Hall definition of slavery.” Above all, Europeans had to understand that as “slavery is designed to vindicate the wisdom of the Creator...[so] finite attempts to arrest its resistless career must prove as futile as efforts to quench the sun.” Slavery’s achievements were great to date, “though to a very limited extent compared to its future availability.”⁷⁷

Confederates considered that slavery was just another form of forced labor system employed by many countries; but at the same time, it was both more efficient and less cruel than competitor versions when deployed in the tropics. The New Orleans-based writer contended that “having extinguished natural slavery, England and France resort to artificial slavery.” These countries “dodge the name” with the legalization of the “cooly slave trade, but with only limited success as it did not prevent a material decline in the productiveness of the West Indies.” Bilbo for all his stress on the need for industrialization still considered it was slave based agriculture that was needed “in order to compete with pauper abolition labor...the pillar of stable government...the fountain of wealth and power.”⁷⁸

The experience of a year of war meant both press and government of the Confederacy asserted more vigorously the Confederate right to membership of the clubs of great powers and of advanced industrial nations in the world. At the same time, the War deepened the Confederate sense of connection with overseas countries and territories

⁷⁷ Ibid., 8, 10, 13, 15, 17-18

⁷⁸ Ibid., 7, Bilbo, *Oration*, 3.

- especially if those on Mediterranean and southward latitudes or areas of potential cotton production. These informal expansionist ambitions did not preclude their formal versions. Newspapers and both the executive and legislative branches of government continued to articulate the expansionist demands and security needs of the slavery economy. At the very least, for their neighbors, Confederates were prepared to tolerate fragmented and sympathetic entities, for example, of Spanish colonies, a chaotic Mexico and further secessions from the United States. If these conditions of weakness and friendliness were not met, outright annexation of territory was the logical alternative.

Confederates remained confident of the strengths which sustained their expansionist ambitions. The Confederate revolution continued to endow the nation with a sense of unity that compensated for weakness in numbers. The potential of slavery appeared to be enhanced as a result of its survival in circumstances of war, which in antebellum days would have meant certain slave insurrection and racial war. The Union's blockade had the effect that some Confederates believed that the Government's devotion to the principles of the political economy of free trade would have to be supplemented by other measures; this would be done by using the stockpile of cotton in a more instrumental manner and the development of an industrial base. However away from its coasts, the sources of power of the Confederacy had not been seriously challenged by the Union. By February 1862, that threat became a reality and with it came a reappraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the Confederacy and that led Confederates to reconsider where and how their nation would expand.

Chapter 4

Duty or Destiny: Confederate Expansionist Ambitions in 1862

From February 1862, Confederate expansionist ambitions had to withstand a crisis of confidence when a series of military reverses brought the country to the brink of collapse by late spring. Rather than thinking about their own plans, insecure Confederates became obsessed with those of the Union. Yet at the same time in February, the establishment of a permanent government indicated Confederate progress. Later, the sequence of military successes in the Eastern Theater occurred. These Confederate victories began in May with Stonewall Jackson in the Valley, and then consolidated with the emergence of Robert E. Lee in the aftermath of the Seven Days' battles. Confederates held these events as military feats against the odds and in due course began to instill in them a sense of achievement under unpropitious circumstances. This opinion in turn magnified what Confederates believed they could do as a nation once the shackles of war had been removed.

Confederates also believed that over the course of 1862 they had developed the foundations of their future expansionist ambitions. Owing to a technological revolution, a way seemed open for the Confederate government to swiftly establish a world-class navy. Moreover by the fall of 1862, with two conscription acts passed, Confederates considered they had already achieved the feat of building the fourth largest army among the powers of the earth. Existing sources of strength had also been enhanced. Confederates celebrated a sense of vindication over the continued survival of slavery and, after sustaining immense losses in the Lower Mississippi Valley in May and June 1862, by year-end, the cotton stockpile seemed secure.

Although cheered by these successes, Confederates appeared ambivalent about what kind of nation they wished to be and this had implications for the nature of its

expansionist ambitions. The saving of the cotton had raised the hope among Confederates that their nation would resume its triumphant progress toward becoming the world's principal free trading, commercially expanding, staple crop producer. But at the same time, some Confederates welcomed their progress toward establishing a more diversified self-sufficient economy that would perhaps be less territorially expansive. In international relations, these conflicting strands of opinion meant Confederates wanted their nation to be both an assertive and treaty-worthy presence in world affairs, as it oscillated between confrontation and pursuit of reciprocal partnerships with other nations.

This same ambivalence manifested itself with the Confederacy's dual approach to dealing with Native Americans and both western and southern expansion. Confederates appeared genuinely split between coercion and cooperation and also whether short-term expedients dictated by present insecurity would have long term implications. In Latin America, Confederates had a clear goal that eventually their nation would assume a dominant influence. However the demands of the war dictated a refocus from political opportunities to facilitating transit of trade in order to circumvent the Union blockade. In the meantime, Confederates hoped a combination of their own friendly overtures and missteps by the United States government would enable their own State Department to cement alliances with Latin American republics. Such considerations necessitated a guarded welcome of the slowly unfolding French plans in Mexico.

Whatever future role the Confederacy would have in Latin America, Confederates recognized that it would have to be based on a secure or even dominant position in North America. They sensed an opportunity arising from the intensifying war effort on the part of the Union and the opposition this aroused among northern Democrats, especially the

U.S. government's progress toward adopting emancipation as a war aim, which combined with the fall off-year elections. More than earlier in the war, Confederate politicians debated the need to encourage Pacific and, especially, Northwestern state separatism. As the military position improved from the Confederate perspective in the summer and fall, so these hopes increased. Confederates invested great expectations in Braxton Bragg's incursion into Kentucky. Even after his retreat, Jefferson Davis remained confident that as long as the army retained its hold on the Mississippi at Vicksburg, eventually the unpopularity of the war upstream would prove the Union's undoing; this would open the way for the Confederacy to fulfill its ambitions.

From Crisis of Confidence to Expansionist Resurgence

Regret both at past complacency and relaxed sense of entitlement dominated the mood of Confederates as the permanent government assembled on February 22 in Richmond. Three days later, in his message to the first Confederate Congress on February 25, Davis confessed failure, "the government had attempted more than it had the power to achieve." He had to react to the confirmation that Fort Donelson had fallen. Final news of that disaster reached Richmond only the day after Davis's Inaugural. The loss of much of Tennessee and forward positions in Kentucky was a disastrous backdrop for this rite of passage of the Confederacy.¹

¹ Jefferson Davis, "Message to Congress," *JDP*, 8:58; John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), 1: 111 [hereafter cited as Jones, *Rebel Diary*]; Robert Garlick Hill Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government*, ed. Edward Younger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 25 [hereafter cited as Kean, *Confederate Government*]. Thomas J. Massie told his father "The clouds are awfully dark – we have lived and traded upon Manassas until ruin is upon us," (TJM to William Massie, February 23, 1862, folder January – May 1862, box 2E494, William Massie Papers, UT.) The following month, the *Examiner* condemned "the Micawbir policy of waiting for something to turn up – and doing nothing by exertion" as "the most dangerous policy in the world." (*Richmond Examiner*, March 18, 1862.)

Confederates reacted with a mixture of apathy, resignation and determination to change for the better. The incoming secretary of state, Judah P. Benjamin also chose February 22 to start a diary to record the momentous events that were unfolding. It was a few months before the entries ceased to be a monotonous list of cities, forts, and entire regions falling to “the enemy.” On the day the dire news from Tennessee was confirmed, R. M. T. Hunter had resigned as secretary of state to become a senator for Virginia. Despite the choice of offices open to him, Hunter confessed to his wife that they were “affording me none of those keen sources of interest which once could fire me.” Down in North Carolina, having lost both a son and his army at Roanoke Island on February 7-8, Henry Alexander Wise was also in a reflective mood, promising his wife he would undertake “for the future, a serious effort to change my whole life and try and live for something else other than this world” - a far change from the man who had so changed the sentiments of the Virginia convention in April 1861.²

Confederates had earlier in 1861 asserted their claims to be a great nation with all the requisite power and responsibility. This demand included, above all, the expansionist ambition so necessary to fulfill that role. Now, in these months of failure, it appeared that Confederates had renounced their worldly ambitions and instead turned inward toward a mentality focused on day-to-day survival. The sudden shift from elation to dejection was hard to bear. In May 1862, Howell Cobb told the morose Cotton Planters’ Convention, “no organization ever had before it a more brilliant and inviting future. But the

² Judah P. Benjamin, diary, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA); Hunter to Mary Evelina (Dandridge) Hunter, undated personal memorandum, Box 9, Hunter Collection, VHS; Wise to Mary Elizabeth (Lyons) Wise, February 10, 1862, Box 2, Wise Collection, VHS; Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 1:111. For Wise at the Convention, see Freehling and Simpson, *Showdown in Virginia*, 193-94.

devastating war, in which this country is trapped, for the present suspends our operations...”³

It appeared that the experience of these early months of 1862 had wrought a permanent change in these leading Confederates. In September 1862, when the war news was much better, South Carolina novelist William Gilmore Simms asked the readers of the newly launched *Southern Illustrated News*: “[W]ho can give his whole mind to...abstract topics, when the whole country is heaving with the throes of a mighty revolution...? All our thoughts revolve themselves into the war.” At the end of the year, the paper would consider the transformation “in very truth, the war, if it has not taken from us at once and entirely the habits of our whole existence in the past, has so altered and modified them that they are no longer the same.” The duty of participating in the desperate struggle was either postponing all thoughts of destiny and ambitions to the afterlife or inward to the family and home. As ever, what was true of the individual was also true of the state.⁴

Leading Confederates changed dramatically in outlook during 1862, but they did not renounce expansionist ambition. Instead there was a redefinition. The necessity of national power to combat the United States meant there was a reassertion of expansionist ambition, which, as the fortunes of war began to change after May 1862, began once more to assume hemispheric and even global proportions.

The foundation behind the maintenance and then resurgence of expansionist ambition was the Confederate belief that the Confederacy became, during the second half

³ “Correspondence of the Telegraph – Cotton Planters’ Convention,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, May 23, 1862.

⁴ *Southern Illustrated News*, December 13, 1862.

of 1862, a leading military power. Earlier, the Confederacy had been a great commercial power on the basis of mass production of staple crops made possible by the slave-based labor system. While this commercial power remained, it was augmented by the components of the needs of being a military power - an ironclad navy and, more important, a mass army; a permanent government; an increasingly diversified economy, and an independent foreign policy based on self-assertion. These new facets of power supplemented, but did not replace, the existing Confederate strengths of staple crop production and slavery.

Confederates increasingly defined their nation's power in relation to its deadly rival, the United States. Hence the progress of the war was critical in determining the nature and scale of these expansionist ambitions. Furthermore, leading Confederates often obtained their intelligence on the war from northern newspapers, especially the *New York Times* and *New York Herald*, as well as from their own press. This supply of information ensured they became obsessed about northern public opinion on the War and a belief that divisions on the other side were extremely important. Not only were expansionist ambitions driven by Confederate strengths and needs, but also by the wish to take advantage of weaknesses or counter threats from the other side. Finally, Confederates also understood the ordeal of the early months of 1862, both at the time and especially in immediate hindsight, as a vital stage in the rise of a nation.⁵

Confederates believed their establishment of a permanent government marked a point when they could decisively differentiate themselves from a rebellion and claim for

⁵ The *Examiner* spoke for many as it declared "the late reverses will prove the greatest of blessings if they awaken the sense of duty...we must become the arbiters of our national fortunes" *Richmond Examiner*, March 7, 1862.

themselves the promise of the early American republic. In the first instance, the Inauguration of Davis on George Washington's birthday, February 22, signified a claim to the legacy of the Revolution of 1776. The Confederate creation of the institutions of government asserted that not only Confederates claimed the right of de facto recognition, but also de jure. Confederates assumed they had also successfully distinguished themselves from the chaotic Italian nationalists in the affirmation of their possession of considerable power and stability.⁶

Confederates understood their achievement of orderly government as a feat of organization in the unpropitious circumstances of an enemy military offensive. From April 4, the first session of Congress continued to deliberate within earshot of the guns of the Union Army of the Potomac advancing slowly up the Peninsula of Virginia. It begged the question, what could this government and people achieve in times of peace, when the enemy was not so pressing upon the very institutions of government? As with the legacy of the revolution, the achievement of the permanent government offered both the inevitability of, and a right to, a great future once the shackles of the war were removed. However there were also more immediate and tangible instruments of power to hand.⁷

⁶ On March 15, Representative Henry S. Foote of Tennessee told the House that "the true spirit, intent and meaning of the Constitution of the Confederate States...to foreign powers, as well as to our own citizens, that a permanent government, both de facto and de jure, is now in existence...." (*CJ*, 5:103.) Henry Hotze contrasted southern constitutionalism to Giuseppe Garibaldi's revolt against legitimate authority and likened the "utterances of [Giuseppe] Mazzini with the unbridled license of the Republican Party in America." ("Garibaldi's Attempted Revolution," *The Index* 1 16 [August 14, 1862]: 256. "Manifesto of the Republicans in Italy," *The Index*, 1 24 [October 9, 1862].)

⁷ As early as April 4, Jones in Richmond wrote of the Union artillery "shelling our camp at Yorktown. I can hear the retorts of the guns of a damp evening." Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 1:118.

A Steam Powered Fleet and an Army of World Proportions

A timely technological breakthrough enabled Confederates to believe they could quickly develop a navy of the first rank. In February, the report of the select committee of cotton planters in Memphis noted that “the rapid increase of war steamers...are giving to the affairs of the world an accelerated motion.” On hearing the news of the naval action in Hampton Roads when the CSS *Virginia* sank both the USS *Cumberland* and *Congress* on March 8, Benjamin declared, “the battle was a demonstration for the first time in naval warfare that wooden vessels however well built or powerfully armed are helpless against ironclad vessels properly constructed.” A month later, Benjamin wrote, “European journals discuss the naval engagement in Hampton Roads and argue that wooden vessels are superseded.” The consequence of this situation was the belief that for all the Union’s superiority in wooden ships blockading the ports, that ascendancy rested on a vulnerable basis. As the Confederate commissioner to Brussels, Dudley Mann, told Benjamin, “steam is steadily superseding the wooden, this most fortunate for the Confederate States.” Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory of Florida concurred with this analysis, he earlier wrote to Davis on March 20, that the battle tested “the relative advantages of widely different applications of iron as a defensive armor for ships of war against heavy ordnance, and it cannot fail to attract the general attention of the naval powers of Europe.”⁸

Mallory had already translated this belief into policy. He prefaced his report of February 27 with the words, “we cannot compete with the United States in terms of

⁸ Planters’ Convention (1862: Memphis Tenn.), *Report of Select committee appointed by the Planters’ Convention* (Memphis, Tenn.: n.p., 1862), 7. Benjamin, diary entries, March 8, April 15, 1862, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA); Mann to Benjamin, May 5, 1862, *OR*, 410; Mallory to Davis, March 20, 1862, *JDP*, 8:108.

numbers therefore must concentrate on plated or ironclad ships.” A few days later on March 6, the House passed a resolution asking the President what additional means would be required for operations in 1862. On March 18, Mallory assured Charles Magill Conrad of the House’s Navy Committee: “The importance of iron plated vessels to us cannot be underestimated.” Mallory informed Davis that the navy would need fifty light draft iron clad steamers and four ironclad frigates. Davis’s response to the House showed that he agreed with his navy secretary on the need for the fifty shallow water ironclads but raised the estimate on the ocean deep-water ironclads to ten. P. M. Eachin of Robeson County, North Carolina, grudgingly told his representative, Thomas David Smith McDowell, that he “sees the Government is going into the construction of a navy on a scale somewhat proportionate to the circumstances under which we are situated.” Being in the timber business, Eachin looked forward to the Government establishing navy yards at both Georgetown, South Carolina and Wilmington, North Carolina. Appropriation bills followed through Congress during the two 1862 sessions. Given the Royal Navy had just eight ocean going ironclads, Confederates certainly wished to project their power on the high seas.⁹

Beyond potentially breaking the Union blockade, the navy also had offensive implications for the Confederacy. James D. B. De Bow saw a naval war as preferable, “if

⁹ Mallory to Davis, February 27, 1862, *JDP*, 8:66; Henry S. Foote of the Committee on Foreign Relations, “Amendment on Bill introduced by John Perkins of Louisiana to authorize the president to send additional commissioners to foreign nations,” *CJ*, 5:43, 65; Mallory to Conrad, 18 March 1862, GLC08155.01; Eachin to McDowell, March 31, 1862, folder 99, Thomas David Smith McDowell Papers, #460, SHC. The House Committee on Foreign Relations reported that the President “is further authorized and empowered to adopt such measures for the removal of the blockade ports...alone or in connection with foreign powers...and to pledge such a portion of the proceeds of the sales of cotton and tobacco as he may find expedient.” The Appropriations bill passed on April 16 with two million dollars “for construction of ironclad vessels in Europe.” (*CJ*, 5:247.) On September 16, in secret session, the House passed a bill to authorize the issue of Confederate State bonds to meet a contract made by Mallory for six ironclad vessels. (*CJ*, 5:386.) On September 24, Davis again requested an additional appropriation, which was approved by the Senate. (*CJ*, 2:325, 338.)

we had a navy we could conveniently fight the United States for years; and a navy we *must* have.” Not only would the navy be vital in taking the war to the United States, it would also safeguard the international commerce the Confederates expected their country to possess for “as we can get the specie only in exchange for our productions, it is of vital importance that we look for and get a navy at least to insure us an outlet for our productions...” A navy would offer what, the cavalry officer, novelist, and historian of Virginia, John Esten Cooke called “commercial enfranchisement” otherwise “until we can have a navy, our products and the markets we offer for foreign commodities must buy for us and for our interests protection.” The writer was encouraged therefore by with the fact “there is an increasing taste with our people for commerce and navigation.” Anticipating capital shortages at the close of the war, both Liverpool businessman James Spence and London-based shipowner and politician William Schaw Lindsay submitted plans to the State Department for steamship lines to connect the Confederacy directly with European markets. As well as guaranteeing commercial autonomy, according to De Bow a navy would assist in securing the Confederacy’s republican foundations for “nothing will so soon open a prospect of peace and rid us of a standing army as a navy.”¹⁰

If the navy remained a future aspiration, the mass army was a more tangible expression of present-day Confederate power even if it could not match the Union’s in

¹⁰ “Article IV – Shall we have a Navy! Shall we Pursue the Defensive Policy, or Invade the Enemy’s Country?” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862): 211; John Esten Cooke, *Commercial Enfranchisement of the Confederate States of America, with original articles on a new system of weights and measures, and new coins for the Confederate States, by a Virginian* (Richmond, Va.: West & Johnson, 1862), 11; Spence to Mason, end April, *OR*, 402-3; Mason to Benjamin November 4, 1862, Lindsay to Mason November 3, 1862, *OR*, 592-97. Spence considered that “a great desideratum will be a Cunard Line to a southern port – a line of steamers to connect with Europe without the thralldom of the North.” Lindsay argued that “for the first few years of your existence as a nation you will require to study the most rigid economy consistent with efficiency” therefore propose to get this done by means of the capitalists of other nations – he proposed French Government subsidized steamers “till you desire to subsidize a line of your own” on at least two routes: St Nazaire to New Orleans and Le Havre to Norfolk.

size. In contrast to the sessions of the Provisional Congress, the principal topic of debate for the First and Second Congresses was first, “a bill to provide for the public defense,” which was conscription between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five and, secondly, the amendment of that bill to take the upper age to forty-five. The creation of a mass army by the fall of 1862 gave Confederates a belief in their significance in the world; although, as De Bow noted, with its standing army implications this mobilization threatened Confederate republicanism.¹¹

The Confederate volunteer army that had fought First Manassas had, by early 1862, lost its luster. As future head of the Bureau of War and diarist Robert G. H. Kean noted on the fall of Fort Donelson, “[O]ur men surrender without an effort to cut their way out when surrounded or outnumbered, and the enemy are rapidly acquiring the character of being better soldiers than ourselves.” That January, Kean had been struck by the silence of the Provisional Congress on the subject of conscription, “the most just cause of alarm of all is the capacity of the people, their anxious desire to avoid military service, and the apparent cowardice of the legislature, which seems afraid to do anything

¹¹ April 12, 1862, *CJ*, 5:219; “Article IV – Shall we have a Navy! Shall we Pursue the Defensive Policy, or Invade the Enemy’s Country?” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862): 211. DeBow however asked elsewhere, “What government in Europe could be less hurt than ours has been by an army of 600,000 men?” (“Article X – Abolitionism a Curse to the North and a Blessing to the South,” *DBR* 7 3-4 [March 1862]: 295.) On October 20, George W. Randolph informed Davis that he had examined the 1850 census and based on that, estimated the white male population of the Confederacy as 2.5 million, and that 718,500 were subject to conscription (18-35); extending to 40, would make it 145,000 and to 45, 101,500 more. Hence up to 40, there was an available pool of 863,500; Randolph estimated with 3/7 exceptions, “we shall have a force in the field of 493,500” warns whether a larger number can be fed and supplied. Randolph noted that 500,000 men constituted 5% of total population, which was “a larger proportion than European powers place in the field” and recommended, despite Congressional authorization to 45, that the maximum age be held at 40. Davis agreed. (Randolph to Davis, October 20, 1862, *JDP*, 8:453.) Of the Great Powers, only France with 608,000 and Russia with 862,000 military personnel had larger armies than the Confederacy – with the exception of the Union (Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 155.) The 1860 census suggested that 984,475 were liable to conscription in the Confederate States aged between 18 and 45 inclusive and by January 1863 the returns indicated the Confederate army was 446,622 strong. (Thomas L. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861-65* [1900; reprint, Carlisle, Pa.: John Callman, 1996], 21, 45.)

worthy of the occasion.” The *Richmond Examiner* agreed that only “conscription will give us success and enduring power.” In April, De Bow considered by way of excusing the provisional legislature, “it was not until after the fall of Fort Donelson that our people became [alive?] to the necessity of the occasion...Until then it would have been in vain for our governments, State or Federal, to have called out anything like a levy en masse. That is now done.” The army was a vital source of the Confederacy’s relative power in the field, a vivid demonstration of the commitment of its people, capability of its institutions and, after the battles of the Seven Days and Second Manassas, on its way to being the symbol of Confederate nationhood.¹²

By the late summer of 1862, confidence in the Confederate army had returned. The message of the August 12 report of the secretary of war, George W. Randolph, was that Confederates would now be able to look back with satisfaction on the solved “problems of last spring.” With 85,000 men added under the conscript act, the Confederacy had an army of half a million men and “now we are advancing with increased numbers, improving organization, renewed courage and the prestige of victory.” As a result, the defeats of the spring and early summer “can be easily corrected.” On September 26, undaunted by the reports of the Confederate losses at Antietam, Randolph told the British consul in Richmond, Frederick Cridland, to focus on the level of casualties sustained by the U.S. Army of the Potomac since June 26. He told

¹² Kean, *Confederate Government*, 26, 23; *Richmond Examiner*, January 14, 1862; “Conduct of the War and Reflections on the Times.” *DBR* 8 1 (May, 1862):33. In April, De Bow welcomed the conscription law’s passage “and we have a force in the field quite large enough to cope with and conquer our enemies.” In his Message to Congress on August 18, Davis connected the army with the expression of the will of the people. (Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress,” *CJ*, 5:296-99.)

him that the “official” figure of 60,000 was likely to be too low, his estimate was 98,000.¹³

Confederates saw the formation of the army as something having long-term significance. Despite the conscription bills of 1862 being set for three years or the length of the war, the *Examiner* was not alone in considering the merits of a substantial peacetime army given the expectation that “our relations with the North will always be unfriendly and precarious.” In a December 26 speech in Jackson, Mississippi, Davis agreed and affirmed a very Prussian idea of a three-year universal military service. By 1862, the first three volumes of Thomas Carlyle’s *Frederick the Great* had been published to acclaim. As the Confederate newspaper, founded and edited by Henry Hotze in London in May 1862 with the express intention of forcing a reevaluation in Europe of the Confederacy, *The Index* observed, “a mighty lesson [is] taught...by this book.

¹³ “Message of Jefferson Davis accompanied by other documents laid before the Senate and House of Representatives,” August 15, 1862, enclosed in Cridland to Earl Russell, 24 August, 1862, FO 5/846, pp. 460-3, PRO; Randolph quoted in Cridland to Earl Russell, September 26, 1862, FO 5/846, p. 498, PRO. Randolph pressed for a sufficient part of this force to be concentrated in the western theater to retake New Orleans and secure the lower Mississippi Valley and western Tennessee; these objectives being preconditions for the planned recovery of Missouri and Kentucky. (George Green Shackelford, *George Wythe Randolph and the Confederate Elite*, [Athens: the University of Georgia Press, 1988]; Randolph to Jefferson Davis, October 20, 1862, *JDP*, 8:453; Jefferson Davis note to Randolph, October 27, 1862, *JDP*, 8:466; Randolph to General Theophilus Holmes, October 27, 1862, quoted in Archer Jones, “Some Aspects of George W. Randolph’s Service as Confederate Secretary of War,” *The Journal of Southern History* 26 3 [August 1960]:299-314; Randolph to Holmes, October, 20, 27, 1862, Edgehill-Randolph Papers, UVA.) On August 25, Benjamin recorded in his diary that Mrs. John Selden of Westover Plantation, Charles City County, Virginia, who knew Union General George B. McClellan well on account of his being headquartered at nearby Berkeley Plantation, told Benjamin that “McClellan stated to her that he had lost from battle and disease since he entered the Peninsula, 100,000 men.” (Benjamin Diary, [Microfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA].) According to Thomas Livermore, using war record returns, the Confederate Army was 401,395 strong in April 1862 and 446, 622 in January 1863, so Randolph’s estimate for the strength in the summer may be accurate. In terms of verifying Confederate estimates of Union casualties, McClellan and Randolph had almost certainly overestimated the Union losses in terms of casualties (killed, wounded and missing), even including the battles of Cedar Mountain and 2nd Manassas, in which McClellan did not participate, U.S casualties amounted to just under seventy thousand. On the other hand, McClellan pointed out he was counting losses from disease. Given that the U.S. sustained in the battles of the Peninsular Campaign 38,353 casualties and furthermore that twice number died from disease as from battle, perhaps McClellan was accurately presenting a worst case scenario in his information to Selden. Thomas L. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861-65* (1900; reprint, Carlisle, Pa.: John Callman, 1996), 43-45, 80-93.

Prussia, with three million inhabitants became a European Power...by the inflexible will of its King and the loyalty of its subjects. A small nation united is unconquerable when the numbers against it are great; and if aggressive, it will be well nigh irresistible.” But it was the present-day Prussia that was significant to Davis, and Hotze writing in *The Index* also drew attention to the current “Prussian Crisis” between King William and his parliament over funding for the army and noted a significant connection between power and a three-year universal army, increased trade and territorial aggrandizement.¹⁴

Commercial and Industrial Aspiration

Slavery sustained Confederate commercial and industrial ambition. In January, De Bow predicted “one of the happy results of the present war will be the proofs afforded it, that neither slavery nor slaves, in the European sense of the terms, have any existence at all in the Confederate States of America.” According to De Bow, African American slavery was “natural,” destined to survive the stresses of war, and correct the European understanding of slavery as something that “withheld the natural rights and privileges of man” and would certainly not have survived the intensification of war in 1862.¹⁵

¹⁴*Richmond Examiner*, January 14, 1862; Jefferson Davis, “Speech at Jackson,” December 26, 1862, *JDP* 8:573; “The Prussian Crisis,” *The Index* 1 26 (October 23, 1862):401; “Review of Carlyle’s Frederick the Great,” *The Index* 1 3 (May 15, 1862):33. Carlyle’s first three volumes came out between 1858-1860 (Thomas Carlyle, *History of Friedrich the Second, Called Frederick the Great*, 6 vols. [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858-85] .) Davis told the meeting at Jackson that in view of the “peace between us and our hated enemy will be liable to be broken at short intervals for many years to come...if every young man shall have served for two or three years in the army, he will be prepared when war comes to go into camp and take his place in the ranks an educated and disciplined soldier.” *The Index*’s editor, Henry Hotze noted the usurpation of constitutional government in Prussia was due to the army serving the King. King William demanded appropriations for three-year service; the liberal dominated Diet opposed the measure. The new Prime Minister, Otto von Bismarck, went ahead with three years and was able to extricate the government from the difficulty by fostering the idea of nationality by an aggressive expansionist move against the Danish duchies of Schleswig Holstein. At the same time, the government confronted the Diet over its trade treaty with France, as being detrimental to the pan German customs union, the Zollverein.

¹⁵ “Article II - Southern Society and British Critics,” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862):187.

Davis agreed that slavery's resilience meant it could be applied to tasks beyond planting. In October, when Mallory suggested coal miners needed to be exempt from conscription, Davis replied, "[W]hy not use slave labor?" During 1862, slavery became more important to the Confederates in order to support the demands of conscription. Natural population growth of slaves would in any event offset temporary losses to the Union armies. De Bow computed that such growth would give "the slaveholding states, including New Mexico and the Indian Territory west of Arkansas nearly one hundred million [people] of whom twenty four million will be slaves, enabling the South to furnish twenty four million bales of cotton." Slavery would both support the diversified economy of the evolving Confederacy as well as continue to boost staple crop production.¹⁶

The continued commercial growth of the Confederacy was, like slavery, taken for granted. In wartime, there were short-term issues with which to contend that in turn would have long-term consequences for the Confederacy. The cotton interest, having already missed one harvest in October 1861, now had to consider whether by early 1862 further curtailment of the growth of cotton was necessary. "It is clearly in our interest," De Bow argued in March 1862, "to supply the general demand, at a fair and remunerative price. So long as we do this, we defy competition and hold Europe at our feet...[for] commercial reciprocity is the surest base of a permanent peace and national prosperity." But De Bow believed this diversion would not impair the resumption of the growth of cotton production as, "[I]f such a course...be carried out, we shall be in a position in 1863 to raise such a crop of cotton as the wants of the world may demand: the

¹⁶ Davis to Mallory, October 4, 1862, *JDP*, 8:426; "Article XI – Commercial Importance and Future of the South," *DBR* 7 1-2 (January 1862):120.

independence of the Confederate States and unrestricted trade with Europe being considered a foregone conclusion.”¹⁷

Pending the resumption of international trade, meetings of planters expected government to provide the necessary rapid demand for any surplus crop. On February 27, a cotton and tobacco planters’ convention met in Richmond and passed resolutions, in turn presented to Congress by Senator Albert Gallatin Brown of Mississippi. These resolutions urged “the government to adopt measures for the purchase of the entire crop of cotton and tobacco now on hand throughout the Confederate States, in order to prevent their appropriation by the enemy.” Reduction of the crop took on greater salience as the Union forces advanced. On May 13, after the fall of New Orleans, the Cotton Planters’ Convention met in Americus, Sumter County, Georgia, and envisaged long-term changes to the staple crop industries of the Confederacy. Howell Cobb told the gathering, “I deem it a reasonable conjecture...that the [cotton] crop has been reduced by 5/8...for cotton planters are universally turning their attention to the production of provisions.” Cobb believed the affects of such a transformation may be permanent because “it may reasonably be supposed that the war has created such a revolution in the farming interest of the cotton states, that many years at least, will elapse before we shall fall into the mode of business.” As far as Cobb was concerned, the Confederacy would never again be solely the staple crop producer it had been before the war.¹⁸

¹⁷ “Article VIII – The Cotton Interest and its Relation to the Present Crisis,” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862):279. De Bow was also an early advocate of cotton loan finance, which also drove his argument that the cotton interest must remain productive and spend the quiet time in improvements.

¹⁸ “Preamble and Resolutions Adopted by a Meeting of Cotton and Tobacco Planters held in the city of Richmond,” March 3, 1862, *CJ*, 2:30; *Macon Daily Telegraph*, May 23, 1862.

The question of a permanent cessation of cotton production would have great repercussions for expansion plans and the nature of the Confederacy after the war. While planters considered the likelihood of a continuing change in what they cultivated, Davis delivered in his inaugural speech an argument that suggested otherwise. He contended that Confederates neither wished to cease being staple crop producers, “nor would the constancy of such supplies be likely to be disturbed by war...By the character of their products [the Confederate people] are too deeply interested in foreign commerce to wantonly disturb it.” Even in a deteriorating military situation, Davis was determined to portray the Confederate commercial policy as focused on maintaining and increasing those existing international trade links.¹⁹

The experiences of 1862 did not change the policy as leading Confederates continued to project increases of staple crop exports. Benjamin wrote to his commissioners in Europe at the end of 1862 and stated that “we have to offer the cotton, tobacco and naval stores accumulated in the Confederacy...I feel confident that at one third the present European prices for our staples, we have exchangeable value of \$300m.” Benjamin advised his commissioners to suggest to their contacts in Britain and France to counsel that “European governments, pending the negotiations, [to end the war] could devise some means of communicating in advance to their markets the assured conviction of an early renewal of commerce with the Confederate States, and to encourage the

¹⁹ Jefferson Davis, “Inaugural,” February 22, 1862, *JDC*, 5:200.

formation in their West Indies colonies of large depots of the supplies known to be needed there, ready for immediate introduction to the Confederate States.”²⁰

Despite Davis and Benjamin, the members of the legislature were more akin to the opinion of the planters in relation to the future of the cotton and tobacco industries. On March 15, the Senate passed a resolution recommending that planters of the Confederacy “refrain from the cultivation of cotton and tobacco, and devote their energies to raising provisions.” This measure had been defeated in an earlier vote, but now passed ten votes to eight; Hunter, the senator closest to the government, voted in the minority. Senators wished to supply the army with provisions and at the same time to limit the growing of any staple crops that could fall into the hands of the Union soldiers. This policy changed during the year.²¹

Following De Bow’s earlier advocacy of a cotton loan, other leading Confederates quickly saw the importance of staple crops in financing the war effort. Yancey’s resolution of March 28 authorized the secretary of the treasury to receive from subscribers to the produce loan, in exchange for bonds, their subscriptions in either cotton or tobacco. With this realization, the priority became secure storage of staple crops. It also encouraged a belief that the Confederacy would remain the leading staple crop producer and exporter – a hope central to the wealth and power of the Confederate

²⁰ Benjamin to Slidell and Mason, December 11, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:369-73. Slidell told the French foreign minister, Eduard Thouvenal, that “If peace were now established, it is not extravagant to suppose that the exports of the Confederate States would within a year reach the value of \$250 million, with a crop of 4.5 million bales perhaps even 5 million of cotton, most of which would be exported....” (Slidell to Thouvenal, July 21, 1862, *Ibid.*, 2:276.) A month later, Hotze predicted: “Cotton production will increase, due to rise in investment and a natural increase in the number of slaves, from 4.7 million bales to 6 million bales in the first year after peace...” (“Federal and Confederate Resources,” *The Index* 1 18 (August 28, 1862):273.)

²¹ “Bill for Prevention of the Cultivation of Cotton during the year 1862,” March 15, 1862, *CJ*, 2:59.

economy, the importance of slavery, and to commercial and territorial expansionist ambitions.²²

In the early summer of 1862, Confederates believed the whole of their cotton store was at risk of destruction by the enemy. On June 17, as he advised Earl Russell of the fall of Memphis, Tennessee, Consul Bunch also warned him of the losses of cotton and that “one million bales have been destroyed already.” Furthermore, the great planting families of South Carolina, “the Hamptons, Mannings, Prestons” plan to plant no cotton. But by the late summer, it became clear that not only would the Confederacy succeed in saving the bulk of its stored cotton, but also there would be a sufficient 1862 crop to offset the losses in the Lower Mississippi Valley. The consuls computed a store of between 3.5m and 4 million bales; as Benjamin argued a bale was worth \$200 in specie in the northern markets, this meant a value of \$800 million. Cotton assumed the central role in domestic government finance and attempts to raise money abroad.²³

All the same, cotton was not the be all and end all of Confederate ambitions for their economy. Indeed, Confederates neither wanted nor expected their occupations to revert to what they had been in the 1850s. From 1862, De Bow ran a series of articles

²² William L. Yancey, “Resolution,” March 29, 1862, *CJ*, 2:107.

²³ Bunch to Russell June 17, FO 5/843, p. 249, PRO; Bunch to Russell, August 14, 1862, FO 5/844, pp. 38-40, PRO; Molyneux to Russell, December 6, 1862, FO 5/849, pp. 283-84, PRO. In the spring of 1862, Governor Joseph Brown of Georgia recommended a tax of \$20 on every bale of cotton grown that year, by November he requested it increase to \$100. (Molyneux to Russell, May 10, November 11, 1862, FO 5/849, pp. 219, 244.) Designed to encourage planters to shift to provisions crops, such measures could have unintended consequences, as Ann Barnes Archer told her son, as “our funds were not sufficient to meet all the tax now due – we have to plant cotton.” (Ann Barnes Archer to Abram Archer, March 31, 1862, folder 3, box 2E649, Archer Papers, UT.) International financial implications also became apparent by the fall. On September 18, Mason in London told Benjamin “money may be commanded here by the obligations for delivery of cotton by the Confederate government...every reason to believe four or five million pounds sterling or more if required could be commanded in this form...” On October 28, Slidell confirmed to Benjamin that Erlanger committed to five million pounds. (Mason to Benjamin, September 18, Slidell to Benjamin, October 28, 1862, *OR*, 531, 569.)

entitled “What We Are Gaining by the War.” He reported that the Confederate government had issued a circular letter requesting replies from the states about mineral and manufacturing developments. The responses “are placed in our hands for public use, and indicate a general industrial movement throughout the Confederacy...” It was a listing by city and county of existing and development of new factories and by May had covered Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. There was clearly a campaign to promote the development of and public pride in manufacturing enterprises.²⁴

To an extent, such activities were a reflection of the loss of export markets, De Bow advised planters to “turn more attention to spinning and weaving repairs...overlooked during the speculative excitement of the past few years.” Some planters took his advice, cotton storage sheds and other improvements were implemented. Moreover a Confederate textile industry began to take shape by the end of 1862. On December 6, the British consul in Savannah, Christopher Molyneux, informed Lord Russell that the cotton “used for home consumption is now enormously increased, fully 500,000 bales per annum.”²⁵

Encouragement of industry went beyond the government and the press. On February 27, a railroad corporation convention met in Richmond. De Bow applauded the meeting, and of the several resolutions adopted “the most important...to the defense of the Confederacy [is] that every facility be extended to the development of the mineral wealth of the Confederacy.” Robert Rufus Bridgers of Edgecombe, North Carolina, railroad president and congressman agreed, especially about iron. Writing from

²⁴ “Article XVI – What We Are Gaining by the War,” *DBR* 7 1-2 (January 1862):158; “Article XV – What We Are Gaining by the War: Virginia; North Carolina; South Carolina,” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862):327.

²⁵ “Article VIII – the Cotton Interest, and its Relations to the Present Crisis,” *DBR*, 7 3-4 (March 1862):279; Molyneux to Lord Russell, December 6, 1862, FO 5/849, pp. 283-84, PRO.

Richmond on February 17, he told Judge Thomas Ruffin: “Our only chance is to put up forges, foundries and rolling mills...there is but one rolling mill I understand in the Confederacy. It will with proper engagement take six months to get under headway.” The convention identified a short cut when it noted that, as “a large proportion of this wealth is now owned by enemy aliens,” Congress should “pass a law confiscating and selling the...various mines of minerals which will enable a southern operator to work [the mine].” The activities of the convention and De Bow, by May working in Richmond, had resonance, given the amount of time Congress spent on the passage of a sequestration bill.²⁶

Such developments had international implications. An industrial base was necessary to be a power of the first rank, one that had to be taken seriously. With French needs in mind as Confederates believed France to have limited reserves, the *Richmond Examiner* on April 4 drew attention to the Confederacy’s iron and coal resources. On February 8, Hunter had sent the same message to his commissioners and asked them to assure the French and British governments that the Confederacy’s “commercial and industrial development will be unparalleled.”²⁷

Despite promoting their economy’s potential, Confederate commentators typically regarded industrialization as an unavoidable necessity driven by war and isolation rather than as a development to be pursued for its own sake. On June 6, *The Mobile Register* considered “the productive uses of the South.” In a similar tone to De Bow, the paper concluded “the war is teaching us a lesson to exist within ourselves, need industry and

²⁶ “Railroads of the Confederacy,” *DBR*, 8 1 (May 1862):95; Bridger to Ruffin, February 17, 1862, Ruffin Papers, SHC.

²⁷ *Richmond Examiner*, April 4, 1862; Hunter to Mason and Slidell, February 8, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:174.

material independence and in so doing cripple those whom the war will leave as our hereditary enemies.” If the Confederacy found itself in an isolated condition only then would industrialization become a vital condition.²⁸

The export of ever increasing staple crop yields would dictate the levels of wealth and prosperity in the Confederacy. The goal was to “repatriate” gold by running a trade surplus. De Bow put the case bluntly: “[W]e cannot hope to exist as a people by *mere sufferance* [De Bow’s italics]...let us move forward in peace, and with an unfettered commerce, we will export three hundred million dollars and by one hundred and fifty, say two hundred million - how long before the specie basis of trade and commerce of Europe would be transferred to the Confederate States?” Manufacturing was important to limit Confederate imports, but not at the cost of crowding out resources devoted to the Confederacy’s staple crop exports.²⁹

Even so, there was a failed attempt to proclaim the Confederacy as a new industrial nation. In Congress on March 6, Representative William G. Swan of Tennessee presented legislation, which seconded McNeill’s resolutions that had passed the Cotton Planters’ Convention on July 4, 1861. He introduced a bill to authorize the appointment of commissioners to represent the Confederate States at the Industrial Exhibition, which was to be opened in London on May 1, 1862. It was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and reported back on March 6 and the committee asked to be “discharged from further consideration.” No more was heard of this plan. Significantly, *The Index* neither mentioned the proposal nor the exhibition itself, suggestive that in 1862,

²⁸ “As to the Future of the South,” *The Mobile Register* in *The Index* 1 7 (June 16, 1862):97.

²⁹ “Article IV – Shall We Have a Navy! Shall We Pursue the Defensive Policy, or Invade the Enemy’s Country?” *DBR* 7 3&4 (March 1862):211.

Confederate interest in demonstrating its arrival as an industrial power by such a step was slight.³⁰

If Confederates wished their nation to industrialize in the future, they would have followed Randolph's argument to the Virginia convention in March 1861 and enacted some sort of protective tariff. The Constitution prohibited such any measure; but, on April 7, the Senate passed a bill "to increase the production of pig metal, iron plates for gunboats, foundries, armories, railroad iron and saltpeter." On April 16, Representative Thomas J. Foster of Alabama tried and failed to amend it in the House. His amendment explicitly connected the need to grow industry at the expense of staple crop agriculture. Foster reminded the house of the cost of the recent loss of the Tennessee rolling mills and iron forges and he added that tobacco and cotton planters had now switched from these manpower intensive activities to the less demanding, in terms of slaves, growing of corn for the troops. Foster argued that these slaves should be sent to new mines and plants in the Confederacy for they constituted "a great redundancy of valuable labor; and whereas such labor cannot be so well or so profitably employed...[than] in the development of said ores and coal." The failure of Foster's amendment showed that doubts remained among legislators as to slavery's applicability in new industries and reluctance to see any industries develop at the expense of the Confederacy's staple crops for export.³¹

³⁰ Swan, Foote, March 1, 6, 1862, *CJ*, 5:44, 64.

³¹ Tennessee senator Gustavus Henry, "Bill S40 to increase the production of pig metal, iron plates for gunboats, foundries, armories, railroad iron and saltpeter," April 7, 1862, *CJ*, 2:134; Foster, "Amendment to a bill to encourage the manufacturer of saltpeter and of small arms," April 16, 1862, *CJ*, 5:246. The bill stated that entrepreneurs "shall be entitled to receive from the Government an advance of 50% of the amount required for the erection and preparation of the works and machinery necessary for such manufactory or manufactories." (*CJ*, 5:232.) On August 27, Georgia senator Hershel V. Johnson wrote to Hunter and recommended, "A well adjusted tariff [which] would build up such branches of business as would enable us to be independent of other powers. That independence is vastly important [as] this war

Over the course of 1862, a belief in the importance of industry grew and it was one that was expected to grow more significant in the future. Throughout, Davis had found the idea of a self-sufficient Confederacy rhetorically useful in his attacks on the Union's blockade and European recognition of its effectiveness. In his inaugural comments on February 22, Davis declared that the blockade "is fast making us a self-supporting and an independent people [and] could only serve to direct our industry from the production of articles for export and employ it in supplying the commodities for domestic use." Almost a year later on January 7, 1863, in a speech to the Army of Tennessee at Murfreesboro, Davis marveled at "the immense resources, which nature has lavished upon us...our mines have been made to yield up neglected wealth, and manufactories start up as if by magic. We are becoming independent in several ways. If the war continues, we shall only grow stronger and stronger as each year rolls on."³²

Confederate military success in the second half of 1862 led to a general belief in the prospect of improved economic prospects and perhaps also a life beyond planting. Like Davis in Mississippi, Wise had earlier in the year lost his Princess Anne County, Virginia, plantation to Union forces; but, by November 3, he branched into new ventures and had purchased land and timber and wrote to his wife on November 8, "I have heard of several places, good bargains in high times, but I think of pausing a while until the mania of speculation abates a little."³³

Taken together, in the words of Davis, these "immense resources" - a permanent government, ironclad navy, mass army, slavery, staple crop production, and a

painfully demonstrates." Despite being a member of the Senate's committee on finance, Hunter made no such move. (Johnson to Hunter, August 27, 1862, box 10, Hunter Papers, VHS.)

³² Jefferson Davis, "Inaugural," February 22, 1862, "Speech," January 7, 1863, *JDC*, 5:200, 390.

³³ Wise to Mary Elizabeth (Lyons) Wise, November 8, 1862, box 2, Wise Papers, VHS.

diversifying economy - resulted in an assertive commercial and foreign policy and a renewed interest in expansionism. The shift in focus of expansionism from the South and West to the North and West reflected the other ingredient in the Confederate assessment of their power, the strength of the United States. The progress of the war and the Confederate assessment of the Union's commitment to its continuance determined the change in the focus of Confederate expansionist ambitions.³⁴

The belief in an improved economic future was linked to the commercial and foreign policy of the Confederacy. Confederates continued to hold on to their earlier, 1860-1861, view that possession of a cotton monopoly gave them immense leverage in the world. But the experiences of 1862 informed Confederates that they would have to work harder to deploy this power. The voluntary withholding of cotton of the embargo period was not sufficient to influence the behavior of overseas countries. Confederates recognized that, in addition to the propaganda campaign to convince Europe of the virtues of their civilization and combat misrepresentations of the Confederacy and its slave economy, the government would have to offer bespoke commercial treaties as incentives to other countries to become partners in a new world order for the Confederate interest.

The proposal to France could only be credible if it rested on the projection of a vision of a strong and expansive Confederacy sustained by growing cotton production and slavery expansion. Hunter understood that the Confederacy had to be in a position to convincingly offer inducements. In his February approach to both Britain and France, Hunter added, "it must be the matter of deepest interest to [the powers] to not only

³⁴ Jefferson Davis, "Speech", January 7, 1863, *JDC*, 5:390.

increase and cheapen the supply of cotton and sugar, but also to enlarge the market and multiply the products.” A Confederacy that increased staple crop production from a growing territory under cultivation would strengthen the proposed commercial agreement. The Confederate partner “would enlarge the area in which agriculture would be the principal employment and increase greatly the number of customers who would desire to purchase [the partner’s] manufactures...” Confederate territorial expansion would accompany the partner power’s commercial expansion for “if this trade is likely to be valuable to [either Britain or France] then it is in her interest to enlarge the area from which she exacts tribute.”³⁵

Finally, the expansive Confederacy offered the prospect of peace. An enlarged Confederacy would be able to “protect its own independence and interests” and therefore not require further great power support against a vengeful Union. The alternative was a continuance of either a hot or, at best, cold war between a rump Confederacy and the United States, in which in accordance with political economy, would harm combatants and non-combatants alike. It now remained for the Confederates to define what the expanded Confederacy would encompass.³⁶

Confederate Ambitions for a Balance of Power in North America

To achieve a secure independence and to be a credible partner to Britain and France, the Confederacy had to expand. In 1862, the territory that constituted the dimensions of this projected Confederacy shifted. Hunter made it clear “no treaty of peace can be accepted which does not secure the independence of the Confederacy,

³⁵ Hunter to Mason & Slidell, February 8, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:172.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:173.

including Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri and the states south of them and the territories of Arizona and New Mexico.” To this entity, Hunter then added that “streams of commerce will flow from sources far west of the Mississippi...if the Pacific and Atlantic shores are ever to be united by railroad, its line will most probably run within [the Confederacy’s] limits.” This vision was predicated on the existence of a permanent, revolutionary government, possession of a mass army and ironclad fleet, cotton staples and slavery, and a diversified economy. The progress of the war both increased the size of what the Confederate nation needed to be and repositioned it from a country focused on the priority of gaining a close alliance with European powers toward a power basing its claims to consideration in the world on its possessions across the American continent. In this quest, the Confederacy laid claim to the Indian Territory, Arizona, and New Mexico, sought influence over Mexico and Cuba, wanted either the independence or to absorb the Far West and the Northwest, and overall pursued a goal of hemispheric dominance.³⁷

As part of their expansionist and imperial agenda, Confederates asserted that Native Americans instinctively looked to them for leadership. This supposition was based on Native Americans’ slaveholding affinities on account of the Cherokee owning slaves, geographical proximity, and shared antipathy to the Union. Throughout 1862, Confederates continued to proclaim their suzerainty over the Indian Territory. In its last actions in early 1862, the Provisional Congress completed its legislation to organize, on January 8, the Superintendancy of Indian Affairs and, by February 14, judicial districts. The permanent Congress then established a committee on Indian affairs. Congressional

³⁷ Ibid. The Far West was the Pacific coastal states of California and Oregon and Washington territory.

legislation stressed the promotion of commerce; as with the European powers, Davis wished to establish reciprocal relations with the Native Americans.³⁸

In return for their loyalty to the Confederacy, the Confederate government granted Native Americans considerable autonomy in running their internal affairs. Davis accorded his Indian policy importance in his message to Congress of August 18: “I am happy to inform you that...the Indian nation within the Confederacy has remained firm in their loyalty and steadfast in their observance of their treaty engagements with this government.”³⁹

The fruits of this policy toward the Indians appeared clear. On May 5, John Ross, the principal chief of the Cherokee, sent Davis copies of his act calling out volunteers for Confederate service. He also requested arms for defense, noting that Confederate troops were far to the south in the Choctaw nation and that United States forces were threatening the Cherokees in the northeastern part of Indian Territory. By June 10, the Confederate envoy to the various Indian Nations, Albert Pike, could assure Davis, “the Indian country is *wholly* [Pike’s italics] in our possession, I hope to keep it so.” In his message, Pike asked for authorization to raise more troops, and Davis instructed the secretary of war with the message “the special authority asked for may be given.” Davis clearly endorsed the policy of autonomy within the Confederacy.⁴⁰

³⁸ *CJ*, 1:640, 832; 5:11. On April 8, Davis approved and signed into law s3 to provide for the organization of the Arkansas and Red River Superintendancy of Indian Affairs to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indians therein and preserve peace on the frontiers (*CJ*, 2:138.)

³⁹ Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress,” August 18, 1862, *CJ*, 5:299.

⁴⁰ John Ross to Jefferson Davis, May 10, 1862, *JDP*, 8:170; Pike to Jefferson Davis, June 10, 1862, *JDP*, 8:235.

Not only would the Indians constitute a distinct nation, but they also were represented in Congress. On October 4, Representative Felix I. Batson of Arkansas announced the presence of Native American lawyer and secretary of the Secession Convention of Arkansas, Elias Cornelius Boudinot, a delegate elect from the Cherokee nation; by October 10, Davis had approved Boudinot's election and there were to be more delegates from the several Indian nations in alliance with the government. If all of these tribes were to send delegates, it would have given the assembly a decided cosmopolitan air and an institutional manifestation of the Confederacy's ambitions to include Native Americans in its government.⁴¹

Confederates contrasted the success of their government's policy with that of the Union. On September 18, Hotze wrote in *The Index* that he understood the priority of Confederate policy was to keep Native Americans out of the war, and Davis's objective was that he "kept friendly relations and told them to stay neutral." By contrast, the U.S. Government had continued persecution of Native Americans and hence encountered distracting unrest among its tribes. That paper probably had in mind the Sioux rebellion

⁴¹ *CJ*, 5:502, 527. The process was not without some reservations from representatives, Foote forced Boudinot's qualification to be considered by the committee on Indian affairs and on October 7, Thomas B. Hanly of Arkansas demanded to see a copy of the relevant treaty (*CJ*, 5: 505.) Representative John Milton Elliott of Kentucky from the Committee on Indian Affairs reported that Boudinot could fulfil the following functions: "to propose and introduce measures for the benefit of the [Cherokee] nation, and to be heard in regard thereto, and on other questions in which the said nation is particularly interested." Benjamin noted in his diary on August 20, the *Richmond Dispatch* report that Pike had concluded treaties with (as well as the Cherokees) the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, Osages, Cadoes, Anodakas and Wachitas and recently had effected treaties with the Comanches, Kiowas, and Apaches. (Benjamin Diary, [Micform #9989, Meade Papers, UVA].)

in Minnesota, recorded also by Benjamin between the end of August and mid-September. Pacification and commercial expansion appeared to be the objectives with the Indians.⁴²

Tension arose between Confederates who wished to integrate the Indians more formally into the Confederacy and those who opposed this policy. On March 11, Hunter blocked, in the Senate, an attempt to annex the Indian Territory to Arkansas. In letters to Davis of August 25 and November 19, Pike complained that just such an action was being perpetrated by the command of the department of the trans-Mississippi.⁴³

Davis was confronted with opposing complaints from Pike and General Theophilus H. Holmes, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, and as a result Davis seemed to be genuinely divided on what to do. On the one hand, he wrote to Randolph that "General Pike has an influence over the Indians which it is difficult for another to acquire and on which I counted much for the conduct of operations on the frontier." Yet, at the same time, he sympathized with the wish of the Arkansas District Commander, General Thomas C. Hindman, to disband the Indian cavalry and place Indians under military supervision. "There is great manifestation of zeal and energy, and as far as I can judge the dispositions are well made, the remarks about undisciplined cavalry agree entirely with conclusions I reached many years since." In 1862, Davis knew he wanted the Indians under control, but was not clear on whether this was best

⁴² "American Indians," *The Index* 1 21 (September 18, 1862):21. Benjamin recorded on August 28, "Accounts from the North report an extensive Indian outbreak in Minnesota." (Benjamin Diary, p. 93, [Micform #9989, Meade Papers, UVA].)

⁴³ Hunter, "Motion on the Bill to Organize Arkansas and Red River Superintendency of Indian Affairs," March 11, 1862, *CJ*, 2:55; Pike to Davis August 25, November 19, 1862, *JDP*, 8:358, 498. In his earlier letter, Pike complained that he had only "accepted command of this department with the stipulation that it would never have been part of trans-Mississippi." By November, he complained the commanders "Holmes and Hindman had produced the result I had long ago predicted" and the Indian Territory "cannot be redeemed."

achieved by experts with a great knowledge of Indians acting with autonomy or by more formal military coercion. Overall, the looser alliance structures that Pike constructed were replaced with something more organized in 1862, reflecting the changes across the Confederacy toward a more defined and assertive power.⁴⁴

There were exceptions. Davis stopped the actions of the governor of Arizona, John R. Baylor, to “exterminate the Apache,” on the basis of Confederate practice has been “to cultivate friendly relations even with the nomadic tribes.” Davis’s concern had been heightened because, in order to chastise the Indians, Baylor had invaded Mexico and aroused the ire of the governor of Chihuahua province, Don Luiz Terrajas. Moreover, the man who reported Baylor to the president was Davis’s friend, General Henry H. Sibley. The plight of the Indians had connections with Confederate policies toward Arizona and New Mexico and Mexico itself.⁴⁵

Confederates’ claim to Arizona and New Mexico as territories of the Confederacy retained their importance as a route to the Pacific and other parts of northern Mexico. Davis approved an act for the organization of the territory on January 22, and Granville H. Oury, delegate elect, took his seat in the Provisional Congress. There was a personal

⁴⁴ Ibid., Holmes to Davis, August 28, 1862, *JDP*, 8:360-62; Randolph to Davis, September 23, 1862, *JDP*, 8:403; Davis to Randolph, November 19, 1862, *JDP*, 8:498; Davis to Seddon, December 6, 1862, *JDP* 8:528. Holmes on August 28 urged Davis to accept Pike’s resignation as he “has ruined us the Indian country, and I fear it will be long before we can re-establish the confidence he has destroyed.” On December 6, Davis promoted the experienced Douglas H. Cooper as Superintendent, but then had him complaining as Pike had done before of having to take orders from the trans-Miss department. There is no evidence that any more Indian delegates took their seats in the congress in 1862

⁴⁵ Williamson S. Oldham to Davis, August 18, 1862, *JDP*, 8:347-48; Davis note, September 3, 1862, *JDP*, 8:376; Davis to Randolph, October 27, 1862, *JDP*, 8:466.

relevance to Davis as his own secretary, Robert Josselyn, resigned that post to become secretary to Baylor on March 13, 1862.⁴⁶

For all its small size, the Sibley expedition was not a sideshow for Confederates but an important expression of their aspirations. In the first six months of 1862, there were in both Benjamin's diary and in the papers of Davis regular correspondence and updates on Sibley's campaign in New Mexico. For example, on March 29, news reached Benjamin of a dispatch from Houston of March 23 of the battle of Fort Craig. This battle led to the passage in Congress of a joint resolution, proposed in the House by Representative John A. Wilcox of Texas, to congratulate Sibley and his command on April 10. Benjamin had judged it important enough to include in his report to his commissioners, declaring the "liberation of the territory from the presence of the federal forces." Texan politician and soldier, Thomas P. Ochiltree, reported to Davis from San Antonio on April 27 that the Confederate flag was flying at Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Davis had earlier been convinced by Sibley that a military occupation of New Mexico was "essential" and as late as June 7, offered congratulations "on the distinguished services of your command" and sent two more regiments to Sibley from Texas.⁴⁷

According to Sibley's Proclamation, announced in the Confederate press on February 10, the New Mexico territory belonged to the Confederacy due to "geographical

⁴⁶ *CJ*, 1:691, 701; Davis to the Senate, March 13, 1862, *CJ*, 2:59.

⁴⁷ Benjamin Diary, Meade Collection; Benjamin to Mason, Slidell & Mann, April 5, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:215; *CJ* 5:204; Peterson T. Richardson to Davis, March 3, 1862, *JDP*, 8:83-84; Ochiltree to Davis, April 27, 1862, *JDP*, 8:156; Lubbock to Davis, May 1, 1862, *JDP*, 8:158; Davis to Sibley, June 7, 1862, *JDP*, 8:229. When Davis was Secretary of War, he got to know Sibley and in July, 1861 the latter travelled to Richmond and obtained Davis's approval for his plans to occupy New Mexico for the Confederacy. Sibley's expedition was tiny. Flint Whitlock informs readers at the outset that action in New Mexico was "the second-smallest campaign of the Civil War in terms of number of combatants. No more than 7,000 men total were involved in the four main battles ... and fewer than 300 were killed in combat." (Whitlock, *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums: The Union Response to the Confederate Invasion of New Mexico* [Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2006], xvii.)

position, similarity of institutions, by commercial interests and by future destinies.” Confederate administration, Sibley continued, would offer New Mexicans a “mutually advantageous government.” He understood Union rule to be one of tyranny from which the Confederates has liberated the population. Therefore “the people are to follow their peaceful avocations and your religious, civil and political liberties are to be reestablished.” Finally, Confederate government meant a reduction in the financial burdens on the people and Sibley announced the “abolition of the laws levying U.S. taxes in New Mexico.”⁴⁸

Texans, with their experience of an extensive frontier, were not as supportive of the project as politicians in distant Richmond. On March 6, the Rusk county, pioneer farmer and physician, Peterson T. Richardson, had written to Davis, when Sibley seemed successful, that “Arizona and New Mexico would materially increase that frontier...expense of holding the same by a standing army, will in all probability cost more than the profits.” On May 1, Texan governor Francis R. Lubbock wrote to Davis about the hardships of the brigade “so distant from friends and suppliers” and suggested that if it was not reinforced, it should be withdrawn. Lubbock pointed out he had received a request from Sibley to send reinforcements and feared he could not send any.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ “The Proclamation of Sibley,” *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas. February 10, 1862. The paper’s editor, Edward Cushing, described Sibley “as skillful a diplomatist as well as a gallant warrior.” GLC05959.51.022. The proclamation may have been initially welcomed, many resident Anglos in New Mexico favored the Confederate cause at least until the actual occupation when economic strain and both political and legal infringements caused defections to the Union side. See Anthony Mora, *Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011) and William S. Kiser, *Turmoil on the Rio Grande: The Territorial History of the Mesilla Valley, 1846-1865* (College Park, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2011).

⁴⁹ Peterson T. Richardson to Davis, March 3, 1862, *JDP*, 8:83-84; Lubbock to Davis, May 1, 1862, *JDP*, 8:158. According to Sibley’s ordnance officer Willis L Robards, who wrote to Davis on December 8, 1862, the New Mexicans had resented the Texan dominance of Sibley’s brigade (Robards to Davis, December 8, 1862, *JDP*, 8:536-37.) On Sibley’s expedition as a fiasco, see Gary W. Gallagher, “Bold rebel venture in

Although Sibley's expedition had been forced to withdraw to Texas by the summer, it was anticipated that, after a furlough, it would rendezvous that November for a return. But these hopes were dissipated during the fall. On November 20, Judge and Representative Peter W. Gray of Texas wrote to Davis from Houston "popular feeling amounted to absolute resentment and condemnation in reference to the abandonment of Galveston...." Texans anticipated worse news to come, Gray added "the effect of the possession of Galveston by the enemy and their late movements on the coast and the information acquired by them on our condition...will, I feel assured, induce them to send a large expedition against Texas this winter...The numbers of troops now in this State, including Sibley's brigade, can hardly exceed 8,000 men..." With that situation, any renewed incursion into New Mexico was out of the question, and, as Davis well knew, Sibley's abandonment of El Paso meant the Arizona project was also suspended.⁵⁰

Confederates did not abandon the Far West because of the setbacks in the second half of 1862. As with other areas, Confederates deemed the loss of these territories to be temporary. Even before the end of the year, signs of a possible recovery of the territories as consequent from General John B. Magruder's apparent restoration of the Confederate position in Texas. On December 31, the Confederate envoy to Russia, L. Q. C. Lamar, reported to Davis, "when I passed through Houston ...reports of [Magruder's] purpose to

the desert: General Sibley's Southwestern conquest fell far short of his boasts," *Civil War Times* 53 2 (2014):20.

⁵⁰ Gray to Davis, November 20, 1862, *JDP*, 8:499-500. Sibley had sent word to Randolph on September 30 that Baylor had resigned his commission and quitted Arizona for the East. Hadley had written to Davis that Baylor could have held Arizona with one regiment. But, as Davis noted on October 27, the authority given to Baylor was only to raise troops in Arizona, and the withdrawal of Sibley from El Paso made that impossible (*JDP*, 8:466.) Baylor, as well as persecuting Indians, had also championed a trans-Mississippi department. According to Louisiana Governor Thomas O. Moore, Baylor had advocated an appointment of a general of the western department "invested with plenary powers." Davis agreed, noting he had "previously concluded to form a Dept. – it is now a necessity." (Moore to Davis, May 4, 1862, *JDP*, 8:163.)

attack Galveston are rife throughout the State. He has quite won the hearts of the Texans...” The mood of optimism extended to invading lands beyond Texas, Lamar continued, “I have just seen a Captain Skillney...He says there are only fifty [Union] men at El Paso and that they are to leave in a short time, Arizona to be abandoned. [U.S. General James H.] Carlton’s force is moving on to New Mexico for the purpose (so reported at El Paso) of suppressing a formidable rebellion in the latter territory.” As 1862 closed, the western territories remained in play, and once the Confederacy had achieved independence would be included in the future state.⁵¹

Southern Expansion to Mexico and Cuba

The Confederate policy toward Mexico sought to keep the regimes of sympathetic border governors in place and the central regime weak. This objective explains Davis’s anger over the antics of Baylor. On January 14, Assistant Secretary of State William M. Browne wrote to Quintero in Monterey, Mexico, that the State Department wanted to “form a clear idea of the complications that now exist in Mexican affairs and the power of the republic to extricate itself from them.” Quintero replied on January 25 that Santiago Vidaurri, the governor of Nuevo Leon, had offered his support and ammunition but needed funds to provide help. Benjamin appreciated Quintero’s efforts, as he wrote to Wigfall on February 15 that “Quintero’s services are highly appreciated by this department [of war] and he has...received the commendation of this government for his

⁵¹ Lamar to Davis, December 31, 1862, *JDP*, 8:591. According to Lamar, “reports of [Magruder’s] purpose to attack Galveston are rife throughout the state.”

zeal...with which he has maintained cordial relations with the functionaries of the Mexican frontier.”⁵²

Confederates wished a shift in priority toward an economic relationship and Mexican neutrality. Legislators demonstrated this need in their amendments to a bill to prevent the exportation of either cotton or tobacco of the present crop. On April 17, in the House, Peter W. Gray of Texas moved to amend “that this act shall not apply to exportation of cotton or tobacco by loyal citizens overland to Mexico, a coterminous neutral country...” Confederates hoped that their exclusion of Mexico from their embargo would contrast favorably for Mexicans with the Union’s coercive blockade.⁵³

The government changed Quintero’s priority as agent from the promotion of provincial separatism to focusing on economic matters; this revision was symbolized by his removal from the provincial capital of Monterrey to the port of Matamoras. On April 8, Benjamin wrote to Slidell that “...by a letter recently received from Quintero’s who is now the commercial agent at Matamoras, of which an extract is herewith forwarded, you will perceive that not only is [a blockade of that port] openly enforced, but that the naval officer in command of the blockading sloop of war has declared that cotton *exported* from Matamoras is *contraband*.” The change in Quintero’s role showed that the emphasis

⁵² Browne to Quintero, January 14, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:151-52; Vidaurri to Davis, January 25, 1862, *JDP*, 8:28; Benjamin to Wigfall, February 15, 1862, box 1, folder title “Photostats of primary sources,” Meade Papers, UVA. Pickett writing to Davis from Vera Cruz, agreed that Vidaurri might look favorably on an alliance with the Confederacy (Pickett to Davis, February 22, 1862, *JDP* 8:55.)

⁵³ Gray, “Amendment of Bill to Prevent the Exportation of either Cotton or Tobacco of the Present Crop, Except in Certain Cases,” April 17, 1862, *CJ*, 5:257-58.

in policy was shifting to the export of cotton via Mexico, in common with the expansionist staple crop growth as the priority of the Confederacy.⁵⁴

There were other agents at work in Mexico. Texan Judge Simeon Hart purchased cotton and traded through Mexico for supplies and another agent, James P. Hickman, was based in Chihuahua. Lamar summarized the Confederate effort at the end of the year, “the sympathies of the governments of the Northern departments of Mexico are in our favor, nothing but wise and judicious conduct on the part of our officials is required to insure us against prejudice in that quarter...” The objective of the current Confederate policy in Mexico was above all “the plan of converting the cotton of Texas into means of carrying on the war” and that was “working admirably.”⁵⁵

Confederates continued to fear the possibility of a Union invasion from Mexican soil. On January 20, John T. Egger of Tarrant County, Texas, warned Davis that the United States army intended to march across Mexican soil and attack across the Rio Grande into Texas. On March 3, Benjamin wrote in his diary about a rumor that Seward had nominated Winfield Scott as “minister or special envoy to Mexico.” The Havana correspondent of *The Index* wrote on April 6 that “rumors are rife here that the American minister, Mr. Corwin, is about to conclude a treaty with the Juarez government, contemplating pecuniary and military assistance against the [conservative] allies, in consideration of important cessation of territory.” Lamar, at year-end, speculated about United States payment of Mexican troops to assault Confederate forces. To combat these

⁵⁴ Benjamin to Slidell, April 8, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:220-23.

⁵⁵ Memminger to Davis, 22 October, 1862, enclosing a letter from Magruder, JDP, 8:458-59; Lamar to Davis, December 31, 1862, JDP, 8:591; Benjamin to Captain Alexander. M. Jackson, June 30, 1862, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA). Jackson was assistant adjutant general near Dona Ana in New Mexico. Benjamin referred to Hickman as “citizen of the Confederate States, resident at Chihuahua.” On March 13, Jackson had been appointed chief justice of Arizona (*CJ*, 2:59.)

intrigues required the same measures as those to facilitate the export of cotton, the maintenance of friendly regimes on the border.⁵⁶

Confederate pursuit of commercial and territorial expansion, together with the need to preempt Union intrigue, combined to produce particular interest in northwestern Mexico. Sibley had dispatched Colonel James Reilly on a mission to Chihuahua and Sonora with a series of objectives. Reilly sought to establish friendly relations between Confederates and Mexicans and “disabuse the public mind about filibustering proclivities.” He was also directed to tell the Mexican authorities to “stop the negotiations with the U.S.” Once Reilly had achieved these initial goals, in Sonora, he then had to “negotiate the free use of the port of Guaymas” on the Pacific for Confederates. Newspaper proprietor and editor, Edward H. Cushing of Houston, Texas, explained: “The use of the Port of Guaymas is of the greatest importance to us, it opens to us the markets of the whole Pacific coast and the eastern world.” In time, Cushing expected that, as “Guaymas is the best port on the Pacific south of San Francisco...It will be in future the metropolis of the whole coast.” Not only was Guaymas a viable port, but the overland route from Guaymas to San Antonio in Texas was “the only feasible railroad route from the Mississippi to the Pacific.”⁵⁷

Confederates needed to be in a position to take advantage of the fluid political situation in Mexico if they wished to annex territory and construct a railroad. Cushing

⁵⁶ Egger to Davis, January 20, 1862, *JDP*, 8:24; Benjamin Diary, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Collection, UVA); “Our Havannah Correspondent,” *The Index*, 1 1 (May 1, 1862):3; Lamar to Davis, December 31, 1862, *JDP*, 8:591. The correspondent from Havana could be the Confederate agent Charles Helm whom Hotze met on his way to London.

⁵⁷ “Colonel Reilly’s Expedition,” *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas. May 12, 1862, GLC05959.51.036. See also Patrick Kelly, “The North American Crisis of the 1860s,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* (September, 2012):337-368 and Martin Hardwick Hall, “Colonel James Reilly’s Diplomatic Mission to Chihuahua and Sonora,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 31 3 (July, 1956):232-242.

speculated: if “the result of the Reilly mission be in the end to make the rich state of Chihuahua a portion of the Confederacy, the old manifest destiny of our country will rise again prominently in the perspective.” The Confederacy had to be in a position to “take advantage in future years of changes in Mexico and add to the Confederate States those rich states so necessary for our future development.” A correspondent of Cushing’s newspaper accompanying Reilly anticipated that the negotiations between Mexico and France, Spain and Britain “will lead to a revolution in Chihuahua, Sonora, Chinalos, and Durango and other northern Mexican states and perhaps their annexation to the Confederacy.”⁵⁸

The opening stages of the French “grand design of the Americas,” Napoleon III’s unfolding ambition to create an empire in Mexico, provoked a more complex reaction among Confederates. Slidell and Pickett, in Paris and Vera Cruz, Mexico, respectively, approved French actions without instructions to do so. Hotze, reviewing a report from the *Richmond Dispatch* in *The Index*, speculated that when Henri Mercier, the French minister visited Richmond on April 17 and met Benjamin their meeting involved an understanding that in return for “consideration of the monopoly of commercial advantages, and aid of some kind from the Southern States to Mexico, the Emperor had agreed to use his influence with the Federal Government to end the war upon terms securing to the Southern States an independent nationality.” On May 21, Jones, also not privy to the discussions, wrote, “I think it was tobacco. There are sixty million dollars worth in Richmond, at French prices.” Nothing about Mexico emerged from the discussions in terms of instructions from Benjamin to Slidell. Perhaps to provoke its

⁵⁸ Ibid.; ‘Escort’ of Mesilla, Arizona, “The Confederate Flag Planted by Houstonian on the Waters of the Pacific,” *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas. May 12, 1862, GLC05959.51.036.

British-based readership, *The Index* continued to trumpet “identical interests in Mexico” between France and the Confederacy. There was a “mutual desire for a strong government and free of anarchy.” The paper certainly reflected Slidell’s views.⁵⁹

The Confederate government in Richmond was much more suspicious of French intentions and with good reason. On September 11, Lubbock wrote to Davis enclosing copies of correspondence between himself and French consul at Galveston, Benjamin Theron, who had “asked if Texas’s decision to secede was final and whether the Republic of Texas be reestablished.” Lubbock replied “yes and no.” The disclosure made little impression on Davis and Benjamin. Very different was the reaction when Senator William S. Oldham of Texas wrote to Davis on October 13 on the subject of his meeting with R. Henry Tabouelle, French consul at Richmond. Tabouelle had enquired whether Texas might wish to become independent again. On hearing this news, Benjamin expelled the consuls immediately.⁶⁰

Benjamin’s letter of explanation to Slidell revealed Confederate opinions on Napoleon III in Mexico. He explained the consuls’ behavior arose from two factors: first,

⁵⁹ Slidell to Thouvenal, July 21, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:282-84; Pickett to Davis, February 22, 1862, *JDP*, 2:55. *The Index* 1 2 (May 8, 1862):17; “Letter from Paris, June 18,” *The Index* 1 8 (June 19, 1862):113; Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 1:127. Confederate hopes that the French would need their assistance had been influenced by the recent French setback at Puebla. Pickett told the French minister at Vera Cruz that the Confederacy would not oppose the French conquest of Mexico. Slidell told Thouvenal, “although the undersigned has no instructions from his government in relation to the military expedition of Napoleon III sent to Mexico, he does not hesitate to say that it will be regarded with no unfriendly eye in the Confederate States. They can have no interest or desire than to see a responsible, and stable establishment in that country.” In an earlier note of July 17, Slidell proposed to the French foreign minister “alliances, defensive and offensive for Mexican affairs. For this last, commissioner has no express instructions, but he has large discretion.” (Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:289.) Benjamin’s diary entry of April 17 was simply “Mercier called at the department of state and had a long interview,” (Benjamin Diary, [Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA].)

⁶⁰ Lubbock to Davis, September 11, 1862, *JDP*, 8:385; Oldham to Davis, October 13, 1862, *JDP*, 8:444. The consuls were ordered to leave on October 17, although Theron was still, to Benjamin’s chagrin, still in Texas at the end of the year (Benjamin to Slidell, October 17, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2: 334.)

that “Napoleon III has determined to conquer and hold Mexico as a colony, and is desirous of interposing a weak power between his new colony and the Confederate States, in order that he may feel secure against any interference in his designs in Mexico”; second that, “the French government is desirous for itself an independent source of cotton supply...as Texas would in [France’s] opinion be in effect as dependent on France and as subservient to French interests as if a French colony.” Both a suspicion of French motives and an aversion to colonialism were clear from Benjamin’s commentary.⁶¹

Historians consider Confederate diplomats as welcoming French intervention in Mexico, but reaction to the venture was negative in 1862. The reason for this coolness stemmed from the Confederacy’s own ambitions in Mexico. Benjamin concluded that Napoleon III should either be stopped or at least limited in his plans before it was too late. Britain should be made aware of Napoleon’s plans, and the Confederate attitude as Benjamin’s goal was “the establishment of southern independence on a secure basis (and with a strength sufficient to counterbalance the United States as well as prevent extensive French colonization on our southern border) would promote the true interests of Great Britain.”⁶²

Confederates disavowed a formal conquest of Mexico. De Bow thought that the result of conquering Mexico “would be to subvert the foundation of our government, founded as it is on the consent of the governed. It would bring with it such a chain of abuses and corruption that the [republican] government could not survive.” *The Index*

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.; Jones, *Blue and Grey*, 307-8.

agreed that if there were to be a union between the Confederacy and Mexico it would “have to be [a] voluntary act of the people of the latter country and not by conquest.”⁶³

Any long-term Confederate regeneration of Mexico would need a suppression of the present anarchy. In this context, although suspicious of overall French intentions, Confederates regarded a limited French invasion of Mexico as potentially useful. According to *The Index*, the French should be materially assisted. In addition to duty free tobacco and cotton promised in the commercial agreement, the assistance the Confederacy would offer would be “an abundance of men, and the [just] enterprise will be exceedingly popular.” Some kind of partition with France seemed in mind, as *The Index* disagreed with those who argued, “the South has surplus lands for the production of cotton and no need of Mexican territory.” The paper saw no issue in an enlarged Confederacy having a mulatto minority. With that long-term plan in mind, the preference for the interim was for Mexico to remain weakly neutral.⁶⁴

By the end of the year, Confederates reconciled themselves to a French presence on their southern border. Lamar advised Davis, “the possibility of [the French] occupying Matamoras is desired by some of the intelligent men in this place [San Antonio]. I do not think the interest of your government would suffer. The occupation of that part of Mexico

⁶³ “Article IV – Shall we have a Navy! Shall we Pursue the Defensive Policy, or Invade the Enemy’s Country?” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862): 211; “Reviews on the Destiny of Mexico,” *The Index* 2 33 (December 11, 1862):97.

⁶⁴ “Letter from Paris, June 18,” *The Index* 1 8 (June 19, 1862):113. “Reviews on the Destiny of Mexico,” *The Index* 2 33 (December 11, 1862):97. Hotze continued to predict in June that “The south could afford to give a fifth of its army [so 100,000 men] for the pacification of Mexico What was crucial was Mexico would then have a “white government.”

by the French would bring us, to the opposite side of the Rio Grande, supplies for our troops.” The short-term imperative of the war coexisted with expansionist ambitions.⁶⁵

Cuba served three purposes in 1862 – as an important depot for blockade running; an opportunity to assert a common interest with Spain; a longer-term symbol of slavery expansion in the tropics. On January 16, the Confederate agent and contractor of supplies, N. Beverley Tucker of Virginia, informed Davis from Havana “powder and muskets can be brought in Havana, but cash is required.” Tucker also ridiculed the effectiveness of the blockade. Meeting Tucker in Havana, Henry Hotze, en route to London to take up his duties as commercial agent, assured Hunter that “we may confidently rely upon Havana as a port of exchange of at least a portion of our commodities against the necessities we require from Europe.” He sent as proof of this claim a list of blockade runners compiled by the Confederate agent in Havana, Charles Helm. This list had been prepared for the Confederate commissioners in Europe to show their host governments how ineffective the blockade had been thus far. Helm conceded “it is not possible for me to give a list of those vessels which run the blockade from other than Cuban ports, but I am satisfied the number would reach four hundred with only eight to ten captured, and none in the actual attempt to run the blockade.” Cuba would remain an entrepot for blockade running for the next twelve months.⁶⁶

As well as blockade running, Cuba also provided a Confederate entrée into Spanish court intrigue, rumor and the self-governing military despotism of Cuba. On

⁶⁵ Lamar to Davis, December 31, 1862, *JDP*, 8:591.

⁶⁶ Beverly Tucker to Davis, January 16, 1862, *JDP*, 8:20; Helm to Hunter, January 7, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:150. Tucker’s letter was conveyed by the Georgian commissioner to Europe, T. Butler King, there were quite a communion of Confederate operatives passing through Havana in January 1862, Henry Hotze had transited through on January 6.

January 17, Helm took Tucker with him to wait on the captain general of Cuba, Francisco Serrano. “The general expressed the opinion, in a most emphatic manner, that the Confederacy would be recognized by England, France, and Spain in sixty days. He also informed us that the fleets of these nations, now rendezvoused at Vera Cruz, had been ordered back here to be in readiness for operations in another quarter...” The connection between Cuba and Mexico was clear. Serrano had a less pleasant piece of news to impart to his visitors, as “owing to ill health,” he was returning to Spain. Helm believed Serrano’s successor, Juan Prim, “will feel an equal interest in our cause, and would continue the policy of General Serrano.” Helm continued to be optimistic; he informed Benjamin on September 3 “our recent successes have gratified the Spaniards of Cuba immensely.”⁶⁷

Confederates believed their military successes would meet with Spanish approval because they were fighting for the international future of slavery. As De Bow declared: “[O]n the question of slavery, the Spaniards are our natural allies and this consideration may...override every other.” Making such a claim might also be useful in allaying Spanish concerns about Confederate intentions toward Cuba. At the same time as De Bow’s article, the Spanish foreign minister, Calderon Collantes, challenged Confederate commissioner Pierre Rost on past southern aggression toward Cuba. In particular, the Spaniard cited Seward’s argument that “no private expeditions had ever sailed from [northern] ports for the invasion of Cuba, but invariably from the those of the South; and

⁶⁷ Helm to Hunter, January 17, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:152; Helm to Benjamin September 3, 1862, *OR*, 524. Helm’s optimism was corroborated by the reports in *The Index*, for example “From our Madrid Correspondent,” May 1, 1862, in *The Index* 1 2 (May 8, 1862):17 noted that in Cuba “the authorities take great pleasure in quietly insulting the Yankees.”

that if the Confederate States become hereafter a strong government, their first attempt at conquest would be upon that island.”⁶⁸

Confederates denied aggressive intentions towards Cuba. An independent Confederacy would, Rost assured the Spanish foreign minister, echoing De Bow, “deem in its interest that a great country like Spain should continue a slave power. The two, together with Brazil, would have a monopoly of the system of labor, which alone can make intertropical America and the regions adjoining it available to the uses of man.” Yet the *Southern Illustrated News* observed “the Confederate system of slavery was much superior to the slave in Brazil, where his condition is infinitely worse than it is here, or in Cuba, where it is even worse than in Brazil.” In the interests of diplomacy, such attitudes were reserved for domestic audiences.⁶⁹

According to De Bow, in the international economy of slavery, Cuba would have great importance as a center of sugar production, in conjunction with Louisiana. Hence, as with Brazil, Cuba had a future, even with its inferior form of slavery. Alone however, the three countries would not be able to provide a long-term secure base for slavery. It had to expand, and Confederates could not afford to be complacent about threats abroad.⁷⁰

Confederates worried especially about U.S. colonization schemes as they would indirectly undermine slavery in the Confederacy. itself. On August 5, in a letter to

⁶⁸ “Article I – European Recognitions – the Experience of our Fathers,” *DBR* 8 1 (May 1862):1; Rost to Hunter, March 21, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:202-6. For an analysis that suggests that slavery was less harsh in Latin America than in the United States due to the structure of society and the influence of the Catholic Church, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1946).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; *Southern Illustrated News*, October 4, 1862.

⁷⁰ “Article X – Abolitionism a Curse to the North and a Blessing to the South,” *DBR* 7 3-4 (March 1862):295.

Benjamin, the historian and diplomat William H. Trescot of South Carolina stated, “the question of what is to become of the negroes now in possession of the enemy is a very important one to those of us who have [them] in the invaded sections of the country.” In particular, Trescot wished to draw Benjamin’s attention to United States plans to transplant freed slaves as “interests and the various propositions make settlement in Liberia, in central America, in Mexico confirm that intention...”⁷¹

Trescot warned the secretary of state that an earlier variant of the scheme, relative to Africans captured from the illegal African Slave Trade, had been aired when he had been acting (in the absence of Lewis Cass) United States secretary of state in the Buchanan administration. Although the plan had then been “courteously but peremptorily rejected,” it was championed by the Danish agent, M. Bothe, “a very respectable and intelligent man, himself a planter at St. Croix, [who] was very anxious that it be considered.” Trescot added that he “had several long conversations with Bothe.” The memory of these earlier meetings, combined with current circumstances arising from the U.S. capture of the South Carolina Sea Islands, meant Trescott was “satisfied that nothing would be more desirable for those islands than just such an importation of labor as would be furnished by the confiscated negroes now in possession of the United States forces.” According to Trescot, the captured slaves would provide “a supply of educated and docile laborers far superior to the African and peculiarly adapted to the organizational wants of the islands...”⁷²

⁷¹ Trescot to Benjamin, August 5, 1862, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA).

⁷² Ibid.

Trescot had heard rumors of United States Government attempts to deport freedmen, with “various propositions to make settlements in Liberia, Central America or Mexico that confirm that intention.” He also worried about European connivance with these Union activities and in particular “the agreement with Denmark to receive all Africans, taken by United States slavers, as apprentices at St. Croix.” In his prompt reply, Benjamin agreed that the United States “may possibly attempt to deport our own slaves captured at the frontier, I shall [write] a dispatch on the subject calling the Danish government to our view of our rights...and hence defeat any attempt of the Yankees to palm off southern slaves for captured Africans.” To Confederates, slaves remained property and the Confederacy was determined to assert that right in the international sphere. Promptly on August 14, Benjamin ordered Dudley Mann to warn the Danes. By October, Mann reported on a mission accomplished and that in their meeting the Danish foreign minister “justly appreciated the solicitude of the Confederate government in relation to this matter.”⁷³

Confederates saw international implications of the Union’s colonization schemes as extending across Central America. They believed that the rumors were alone sufficient to bring regimes previously hostile to the Confederates on account of the legacy of filibustering into positions of active support. A correspondent of Mann’s from Nicaragua confirmed that the government of President Tomás Martínez regarded “Lincoln’s meetings with free negroes as an insult.” According to Mann, the Nicaraguans had heard an account that “Lincoln is prepared to colonize the U.S. free negroes in Central America under the protection of the U.S. flag and intends to make them the equal with the best of

⁷³ Ibid. Benjamin to Trescot, August 11, 1862, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA).

them.” At once, this rumor “changed the sympathies of those who were not with the South.” Martinez “conferred with all Central American governments and they are united in their opposition to the introduction of free negroes.”⁷⁴

The labor migration Trescot predicted would soon happen in the Caribbean was another example of the Confederate contention that “the productive industry of a people is the true source of her wealth.” The movement of people and the control of these methods of production would determine the nature of international relations. An example was De Bow’s assessment in January of the consequences of the recently fought Second Opium War, fought between the European Powers and China between 1857 and 1860. Britain and France “made it a condition of peace with China that they should be permitted to introduce their manufactures into China, and to take Chinese coolies, as laborers to Australia and Algeria - the purpose of going to use them as *slaves* in the culture of cotton...the facts...show the relation which the growth and manufacture of cotton have on the progress and civilization of the age in which we live.” The ambition and progress of commerce, like slavery, saw no boundaries.⁷⁵

Central America was not isolated from these pressures. As well as U.S. colonization schemes, on June 23, Mann warned Benjamin that Napoleon III had by then realized that “Algeria is a profitless colony” and “to get rid of the redundant population

⁷⁴ Mann to Benjamin, November 2, 1862, *OR*, 589-90. The Latin American leaders were probably reacting to reports on Lincoln’s address on colonization delivered when he met a group of free black leaders at the White House on August 14, 1862. William E. Gienapp, *The Fiery Trial: The Speeches and Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 130-4. On Lincoln’s interest in colonization not only of Haiti, but also Panama and the British West Indies, see Sebastian N. Page, “Lincoln and Chiriqui Colonization Revisited,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 12 3 (September 2011):327-346 and Philip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page, *Colonization After Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011).

⁷⁵ “Article XI – Commercial Importance and Future of the South,” *DBR* 7 1&2 (January 1862):120.

ever hostile to orderly government, a more promising field of adventure must be presented.” Such a field was Mexico. Yet if the Confederates could not allow a situation to emerge that would “confine slave territory within a boundary that will shut us out of three quarters of the undeveloped territory of the continent adapted for slavery.”

Pamphleteer Joseph C. Addington of North Carolina termed the latitudes between thirty five north and thirty five south “the black man’s natural belt,” and when African Americans labored under Confederate control this tract of land would become a “garden extending and enlarging daily its boundaries.”⁷⁶

Confederates believed their control of this southern world would be facilitated by advances in communications as well as expansion of commerce. Howell Cobb stated in May 1862 that “there is not now, nor will there probably soon be, in the commercial world so interesting a question as the laying of a telegraph cable across the Atlantic.” Cobb told the planters of his earlier 1860 correspondence with Senator Alfred Iverson and Matthew Fontaine Maury and how he, Cobb, was “impressed with the importance of the work and the impossibility of its [construction] from Cape Race [Newfoundland] and Cape Clear [Ireland].” Commander Maury had written to Cobb, “[Y]ou will be gratified to learn that you are not alone in your opinion as to your route. The idea was broached, pending the famous Atlantic Telegraph, that the best route would be from England, via Spain and Portugal, thence to Madeira, thence to the Cape Verd [sic] islands, thence to Penede de San Pedro, thence to Brazil, and overland to the Cuayanes thence a along the windward and leeward islands and Cuba, to the United States.” Cobb had earlier accepted

⁷⁶ Mann to Benjamin, June 23, 1862, OR, 447-48; “Colonel Reilly’s Expedition,” *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas. May 12, 1862, GLC05959.51.036; Joseph C. Addington, *Reds, whites and blacks, or, the Colors, dispersion, language, sphere and unity of the human race, as seen in the lights of scripture, science and observation* (Raleigh, N.C.: Strother & Marcom, 1862), 33.

that “all questions of this kind were necessarily postponed - hoping our difficulties would not be of long continuance.” However by May 1862, as “the country is involved in a war of indefinite continuance,” Cobb feared the delay had become open-ended.⁷⁷

Confederates maintained a position of readiness to embark upon the project of constructing this oceanic cable. At the same time as Cobb’s gloomy prediction, on May 5, Dudley Mann told Benjamin: “It is in contemplation to lay a cable and a company is in embryo for the accomplishment of the object.” The southern trans-Atlantic telegraph was “regarded by scientific men as practicable and it is estimated that one million dollars will perfect the undertaking.” Mann concluded that the cable was “a timely and well-matured policy to make the Confederate States a great telegraphic and traffic highway between the old world and West Indies, Mexico, central and south America and the ports of the south seas.”⁷⁸

The Leading American Power

Such Confederate expansionist ambitions of both a hemispheric and global nature were increasingly seen as resting on one fact: a domination of the American continent. This bid to secure the Confederates their necessary place in the world would be realized by more than one route. Confederate dominance would be secured by either a formal Confederate state including the Pacific coast and the whole Mississippi valley or, less ambitiously, to focus on internal dissent in the United States and foster a break-up of the Union into Pacific and Northwest Confederacies. Confederates would then negotiate with these new entities with as a model a variant of the reciprocal commercial pacts that

⁷⁷ *Macon Daily Telegraph*, May 23, 1862.

⁷⁸ Mann to Benjamin, May 5, 1862, *OR*, 409.

Confederate diplomats attempted to broker with Britain, France, Spain, Russia and Belgium.

Confederate diplomatic activities did not on occasion keep up with the expansionist ambitions of legislators. Politicians expressed frustrations with the apparent disconnect between the either failed or secret or timorous diplomacy in Latin America and the vaunting ambition and might of the Confederacy. The House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee split in late September over whether to recall the commissioners sent to Europe. A day later on October 1, the members of the committee agreed over a resolution that Davis “be requested to cause the State Department to ask for and transmit to this House estimates of the expense incident to the sending of diplomatic agents (supplied with such instructions as he shall deem most wise and proper) to the court of His Majesty the Emperor of Brazil, and such other of the South American States as he shall suppose to be judicious to open diplomatic relations with.” The House wished an overt Latin American policy and asserted their interest by offering an appropriation to support such a move.⁷⁹

Davis rejected the resolution on October 1 on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. Representative John Perkins of Louisiana, from the committee, responded that the committee moved this resolution because the representatives were “deeply impressed from information before them with the importance of negotiating for the opening of diplomatic intercourse with Brazil and other South American States, they deputed one of their number to confer unreservedly with [Davis] on the subject.” At a

⁷⁹ Henry S. Foote, “Resolution from Foreign Affairs Committee,” William Smith (of Alabama), “Minority Report of Foreign Affairs Committee,” September 30, 1862, *CJ*, 5:464-67, 468.

time when, despite Lee's retreat from Maryland in late September, the position of the Confederacy seemed much more secure than it had been earlier in 1862, certain Congressmen decided the time had come to adopt policies more in accordance with the ambitions of Confederates.⁸⁰

Confederate extension to the Pacific was also more than vague aspirations expressed in newspapers. Hunter had written to the Confederate commissioners in Europe that the vision of proposed ally of the European governments had to be an entity that extended to the Pacific. Confederates believed in the sympathy and support of leading Californians. On January 15, Thomas B. Lewis of Maryland, of the firm of Washington & Lewis Ltd., of Baltimore, editors and publishers of the *American Farmer*, reported to Davis information from Henry G. Mackin of Maryland and included in the disclosure news that former senator William M. Gwin of California and Joseph L. Brent of Los Angeles would join the Confederacy as soon as possible. According to Benjamin, Gwin did indeed reach Richmond, although not until April 3, having run the blockade and called on Benjamin and provided "much valuable information." At the end of the year, Lamar communicated to Davis his belief of "a serious revolution in southern California." Confederates were convinced that California demanded commercial relations with the Confederacy and resented the eastern dominated protectionist policies of the Lincoln administration. In particular, according to Confederates, Californians resented the exactions imposed by the war.⁸¹

⁸⁰ "Communication from the President to the House," October 1, 1862, *CJ*, 5:478-79; John Perkins, "Report," October 4, 1862, *CJ*, 5:493.

⁸¹ Hunter to Mason, Slidell, February 8, 1862, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:174; Lewis to Davis, January 15, 1862, *JDP*, 8:19; Benjamin Diary, (Micfilm # 9989, Meade Papers, UVA); Lamar to Davis, December 31, 1862, *JDP*, 8:591. Lewis also noted strong Confederate sentiment in Maryland. *The*

Congress strove to take advantage of Californian resentment, and its plans extended to the rest of the West. On October 1, Foote introduced in the House of Representatives a Joint Resolution recognizing “the practical neutrality of the States of Oregon and California and the territories of Washington and Nevada.” Foote also argued that communication should be made “suggesting the advantages which result to the people thereof for an immediate assertion on their part of their independence of the United States.” Finally, Foote explained how he saw the Far West’s future relationship with the Confederacy; he proposed “the formation of a league offensive and defensive between the said States and territories and the Confederacy.” The bill disappeared into the deliberations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and was not heard of again, but the House agreed in ordering it to be printed, a sign of support of the measure.⁸²

The far West was secondary to the main Confederate focus in the second half of 1862 being the states of the Northwest. The debate over the status of the old Northwest went back to secession and the commercial convention movements. The discussions continued in 1862. In January, De Bow reviewed a pamphlet, which had been written in 1860 by an anonymous Virginian who suggested that a new confederation may be formed between the “southern Section and the western agricultural States.” De Bow disagreed, “he attributes to the free soil people of the Northwest a greater degree of conservative and

Southern Illustrated News had declared on November 8, “the natural and commercial position of Vicksburg must inevitably secure to it a splendid and glorious trade, population and wealth. With the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Texas Railroad extending immediately from the opposite bank of the Mississippi through the fruitful and teaming cotton fields of Louisiana to the Texan border, thence to be connected with the great ‘Southern Pacific Railroad’ to California...” The information Gwin provided included an accurate representation of Union military plans, “inducing the belief that McClellan had moved the Army of the Potomac to Fortress Monroe with a view to an attack on Yorktown.” (*The Cultivator and Country Gentlemen* vols. 31-32 (1868), 329.) On the reality of increasing loyalty of Californians to the Union, see Glenna Matthews, *The Golden State in the Civil War: Thomas Starr King, the Republican Party, and the Birth of Modern California* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁸² Foote, “Joint Resolution,” *CJ*, 5:469-70.

just feeling than they are entitled to be credited with.” But De Bow conceded, “it is, perhaps, conceivable that at some period we may safely and beneficially enter into some commercial relations with these States whose natural outlet is the Mississippi.” The Confederacy was seen at its proponents as a nation whose center would be based on the Mississippi valley.⁸³

The Northwest had an essential part in the Confederate vision of its economic place in the world. “We will be more than half way on the route to China,” De Bow wrote, “which is to become the chief market; and if England and France do not unite with us in coercing a peace, the shipping interest of the East and the manufacturing and agricultural interests of the North West will soon unite and give us a peace.” Confederates believed in a vibrant northwestern separatism based on the desire for a reciprocal economic relationship with the Confederacy, indifference to slavery and opposition to the Union’s protectionist Morrill Tariff. De Bow expected the Northwest to “become a separate government” and “if that section establishes proper commercial relations with us, it will become the seat of the richest manufacturing industry in the world.” For the Northwest would provide the manufacturing products demanded by the Confederacy “and receiving their supplies of the raw material and tropical products from the South, these two peoples will be bound together by interests stronger even than the late constitutional Union.” A commercial pact with the Confederacy would outweigh the advantages of remaining in the Union for the northwestern states.⁸⁴

⁸³ “Article V – Experiences of the Past – Our Guide for the Future,” *DBR* 7 1&2 (January 1862):63. Pseudonym was “Barbarossa” – De Bow described him as of “both political and literary distinction and now in charge of a distinguished corps.”

⁸⁴ “Article XI – Commercial Importance and Future of the South,” *DBR* 7 1&2 (January 1862):120.

Confederate business leaders advocated a commercial union with the Northwest. At the Planters' Convention held in Memphis, Tennessee, J.B. Gladney chaired a committee which presented a paper entitled "new issues before the people of the Western States." It called for the Confederate government to foster divisions between the Northwest and New England. Gladney had planned to get the paper published in *De Bow's Review* and in August desired Davis to help in spreading the message. Another advocate was Hershel V. Johnson who also wrote to the president on this topic on March 26 and again, at length, to Hunter on August 27. "If my view of their feelings and aims is correct, the western States have nothing to fight for but the free navigation of the Mississippi River and advantageous commercial relations with the Confederate States...let them be convinced that the Confederate States design no hostile policy toward them, in relation to these great interests, and I should have strong hope that they would rapidly abandon the federal flag." Johnson recalled that the Provisional Congress at Montgomery did announce the policy of freedom of the river, but he felt "the policy has not been made sufficiently prominent and notorious." Johnson concluded that Hunter should move the subject in the Senate.⁸⁵

The February and March recommendations from the Planters Convention and Johnson for an appeal to the Northwest met with little response while the Confederates were struggling in the war; but once the military situation improved, talk became action.

⁸⁵ Planters Convention (1862: Memphis, Tenn.), *Report of Select committee appointed by the Planters' Convention* (Memphis, Tenn., n.p., 1862), 7; Gladney to Davis, August 7, 1862, *JDP*, 8:327; Johnson to Davis, March 26, 1862, *JDP*, 8:118-19; Johnson to Hunter, August 27, 1862, box 9, Hunter Papers, VHS. The Planters' Convention looked forward to "A further dissolution of the old union into grand natural sectional divisions, and each sectional grand division put under its own confederate or general government for the protection of sectional rights." The planters wanted "friendly alliances offensive and defensive with the Confederate States," which would lead to "A union of these grand divisions into one power through friendly treaties for the protection of the whole."

In the aftermath of Second Manassas, the House of Representatives, Davis, and the military pushed forward an aggressive expansionist policy toward the Northwest. The military revival was a critical precondition; this was especially the case once the prospect of a military incursion into Kentucky and even beyond became a reality to many. Another factor governing the move was a need to counter, with an eye on the approaching off year elections in the Union, what Confederates believed to be Republican propaganda that an independent Confederacy would close the Mississippi.

The advancing army was to be the carrier of the Confederate message to the people of the Northwest. On September 7, for inclusion in his generals' proclamations, Davis wrote to Lee, Bragg, and Kirby Smith "that among the pretexts urged for the continuance of the war is the assertion that the Confederate Government desires to deprive the United States of the free navigation of the western rivers although the truth is that the Confederate Congress by public act, prior to the commencement of the war, enacted 'the Peaceful Navigation of the Mississippi River is Hereby Declared Free to the Citizens of the States Upon its Borders [and those of its] Navigational Tributaries'" Johnson had earlier argued that the Mississippi had to be understood, as Calhoun had decades before declared, as a shared asset, an "inland sea." The Confederates drew on a heritage of free trade and opening of the West and an assertion of their right to enact legislation.⁸⁶

Congress debated the content and purpose of such a proclamation directed toward the Northwest. On September 19, Foote, leading the majority of the House Foreign

⁸⁶ Davis to Lee, Bragg, Kirby Smith, September 7, 1862, *JDC*, 5:338; Johnson to Hunter, August 27, 1862, box 9, Hunter Papers, VHS.

Affairs Committee, argued that not only should Davis be recommended to proclaim free navigation, but also “the opening of the market of the South.” Foote and his supporters asserted that a “delusion” existed in the Northwest and therefore that such a proclamation “would have a tendency greatly to strengthen the advocates of peace in the North West states, [and so] withdraw them ultimately together present injurious political connection.” In a context of military success, Foote saw the prospect of access to the Confederate market as a great inducement to the Northwest’s withdrawing its support from the war effort.⁸⁷

Confederate power would be immensely strengthened by a fragmentation of the Union. According to Foote and the majority of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the result of such northwestern secession would be a direct boost to the Confederate war effort and “thus enable us to dictate the terms of a just and honorable peace from the great commercial emporium of that region...” The peace would lead to Confederate commercial domination. Foote also requested that Davis, in addition to free navigation, “make known, in said proclamation, the willingness of the government and the people of this Confederacy to enter hereafter into a reciprocity commercial treaty or treaties with one or more of [the seceded states].” However Davis omitted this clause on commercial treaties in his instructions to the generals, perhaps because of the Foreign Affairs Committee could not agree.⁸⁸

A public approach to the Northwest divided Confederates. Representative Ethelbert Barksdale of Mississippi and the minority of the Foreign Affairs Committee

⁸⁷ Foote, “Majority Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs Relating to the True Policy of the War,” September 19, 1862, *CJ*, 5:404-6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

saw Foote's resolution in the guise of a "recommendation that this government should tender to a portion of the citizens of the government with whom we are at war exclusive commercial privileges." The minority "repel the suggestion that the people of the South are willing to purchase a peace by such a sacrifice and so degrading a concession to northern cupidity." The consequence would be an "imputation of pussillanity...a confession of conscious weakness, and its inevitable tendency would be to prolong the war." The minority felt the majority was mistaken in the existence of a desire for peace in the Northwest; but if it did exist, then it was the result of the Confederate government's "manifestation of purpose to prosecute the war with vigor and effect." Barksdale argued that a degrading appeal to base commercial interests of the northwestern states would undermine Confederate resolve.⁸⁹

The Confederate military both enacted and extended the government's message to the citizens and electorate of the Northwest. As well as including Davis's material, Bragg's September 26, proclamation to the people of Northwest also declared that the United States was using them "to fight the battles of emancipation, a battle which, if successful, destroys our prosperity and with it your best markets to buy and sell." As he entered Kentucky, Bragg portrayed the U.S. war effort as focused on emancipation and not the Union, which he felt was much less popular as a cause in the Northwest in particular. In addition he was holding out the economic incentive of beneficial trade with a Confederacy that had preserved slavery and hence the existence of its staple crop exports. Although the proclamations of Bragg and other army commanders were

⁸⁹ Barksdale, "Minority Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Relating to the True Policy of the War," September 19, 1862, *CJ*, 5:406-7. James Robert McLean of North Carolina and William R. Smith of Alabama were also signatories to the minority report.

addressed to the people of Kentucky, they served a wider purpose, as Bragg told Davis on October 2, “I have deemed it best to issue my proclamation to the people of Ohio, and all the North West, before invading their country, and at a time when their elections are pending....”⁹⁰

To the end of 1862, despite Bragg’s retreat after Perryville on October 8, Davis continued to believe in the need to appeal to the Northwest. Davis knew such an approach on his part appealed to sentiment in Mississippi. After Bragg’s retreat, there were concerns as to morale in the western theater, as Lamar wrote to Benjamin from Vicksburg on December 10, “great depression pervades just now in the South West...The promised visit of Davis has infused drive into all.” Davis linked the retention of Vicksburg and with it the Mississippi river with the appeal to the Northwest. On reaching the city, Davis wrote on December 21 to Holmes that a United States capture of Vicksburg would enable the Lincoln administration to answer “the exigent demand of the North West States for restitution to them of the unrestricted use of that river and by utilizing the heretofore fruitless possession of New Orleans.” In a speech in Jackson, Mississippi, on December 26, Davis told the audience that “by holding that section of the river between Port Hudson and Vicksburg...the people of the West, cut off from New Orleans, will be driven to the East to seek a market for their products, and will be compelled to pay so much in the way of freights that these products will be rendered almost valueless.” Commercial needs would drive political behavior, and, Davis declared,

⁹⁰ Braxton Bragg to Davis, October 2, 1862, *JDP*, 8:416-20; Bragg to the Kentuckians, September 14, and Simon B. Buckner, “Address to the Freemen of Kentucky,” September 24, 1862, in Hanleiter and Adair, *Southern Confederacy* 2 203 (October 12, 1862) GLC05959.09.084; Edmund Kirby-Smith, *Kentuckians, I am authorized by the president, of the Confederacy, to organize troops and issue commissions*. Broadside 1862 (GLC04507.01).

“I should not be surprised if the first daybreak of peace were to dawn upon us from that quarter.”⁹¹

The attractiveness of the appeal to the Northwest was that, if successful, it would weaken the Union and, especially after the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, provide a chance for revenge. If the Union appealed to servile insurrection, the Confederates responded with an appeal to the commercial interests of the Northwest states. For the context in which Confederates framed their ambitions was the need to provide security from the United States. The Confederacy in 1862 had to measure itself against the United States government. Leading Confederates relied on northern newspapers not only for intelligence on the war but also the assessing the fortunes of the Confederacy and any weakness on the part of its adversary. In his diary, Benjamin consistently recorded two sets of data, the premium asked for gold over the equivalent United States dollars quoted in New York and the price of cotton asked for Liverpool. The movements of these two sets of numbers summed the relative credit of both sides, the former of the United States and the latter of the Confederacy. Expansionist ambitions were part of Confederate attempts throughout 1862 to boost the latter and diminish the former.⁹²

⁹¹ Lamar to Benjamin, December 10, 1862, (Micfilm #9989, Meade Papers, UVA); Davis to Holmes, December 21, 1862, *JDC*, 5:386; Jefferson Davis, “Speech at Jackson,” December 26, 1862, *JDP*, 8:577.

⁹² Gold went from 102 over US\$100 May 3 to 119 5/8 by July 26, 1862. The parallel with the progress of the war was striking. With General John Pope’s move in Virginia, gold fell to 115, but after his defeat at Second Manassas it recovered to 119. It stayed high for the rest of the year. Just before his promotion to Brigadier General, Prince Camille Armand Jules Marie de Polignac had recorded in his diary that he saw Benjamin on December 17. Benjamin told Polignac that he had closely examined Salmon P. Chase’s U.S. Treasury Report, especially its revelation that the US government was borrowing US\$66m per month. Benjamin added, “Now the question arises whether Lincoln’s administration will be able to find that enormous amount of money with its credit already shaken and the interest of the debt coupled with the premium asked for gold which now strains at 128...” (“Notes from Prince Camille de Polignac’s diary 1862-5 (unpublished) in connection with Benjamin,” Box 1, Meade Papers, UVA.)

By the end of 1862, the military disasters of the late winter and spring seemed a distant memory to Confederates; even though they bitterly regretted the failure in Kentucky, much more so than Lee's setback in Maryland, which barely registered in Confederate calculations. Yet, buoyed at year end by Lee's victory at Fredericksburg, Confederates confidently assumed they had made progress toward independence and an expansive future. They believed that such a destiny had now been constructed on more solid foundations than had existed in 1861. The estimate they placed on the resources of the nation—military strength on land and sea, the value of the cotton store, and a growing industrial base—had advanced. Confederates believed that the developing war policy of the United States government, with its inclusion of emancipation and a harder war, had alienated world opinion. As a result, Confederates considered that the numbers of their supporters had increased in the Northwest, throughout Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. They expected these trends to continue and this belief sustained their expectations of an expansive future once the war had been concluded. However, the continuing vast scale of the Union's war effort, demonstrated by its winter campaigns in both the eastern and western theaters, showed Confederates that much more work remained to be done in 1863.

Chapter 5

"Weal or Woe": Confederate Expansionist Ambitions in 1863

Future expansion remained extremely important to Confederates in 1863 as an incentive to fight and the necessary outcome of victory, which they often considered a certainty. The Confederacy's survival as a government into the third year of the war enhanced Confederates' sense they were worthy of expansion. They believed that as the Confederacy represented the last hope of republican self-government on Earth. Given the Union's definitive surrender to tyranny by the majority, their nation had a responsibility and duty to expand.

Confederates deemed post-war expansion a necessity in order to offset current weakness with evidence of future enhanced national power. Confederates regarded expansion as the necessary hope to cherish in the context of times of gloom. Expansionist ambitions constituted the equal and opposite counterbalance to the fear of subjugation. This apprehension arose intermittently; for instance, in the early spring, when the Confederacy's Gibraltar on the Mississippi, Vicksburg, appeared bound to fall and General Joseph Hooker began his offensive in Virginia. Banished by Lee's costly triumph over Hooker at Chancellorsville, despondency returned among Confederates when Vicksburg surrendered on July 4 (Gettysburg made a much smaller impression). It returned a third time at the end of the year after the Union's victory at Chattanooga in Tennessee.

During 1863, Confederates began to consider expansion as less of an agreed future to which they were entitled and more a contested outcome dependent on centralization of the management of scarce resources. Earlier, they had regarded expansionism as the logical outcome of balance between state sovereignty and delegated powers to the new national government. Confederates also worried that the pursuit of

expansion promised to be a diversion from a war that required total commitment.

Additionally, they believed that a sense of entitlement to expand meant individual complacency would undermine collective advancement.

Confederate expansionist ambitions depended on the recovery of lands then under Union control. To this end, Confederates needed to ensure a popular vote in their favor in the expected peacetime state plebiscites in the occupied states. In order to influence opinion, the Confederate government had to present a compelling vision of opportunity arising from a commercially and territorially expanding Confederacy; one that the oppressed population of the lands under the transient government of the U.S. military would see as the fulfillment of their dreams. In contrast to earlier in the war, Confederates expressed unwillingness to consent to free states joining their nation. However, northerners would be welcome to associate their states in the free trade international economy the Confederate government championed. Confederates counted the cost of damage to slavery and the loss of stored and cultivated cotton, but still believed in the resiliency of both the labor system and the export of staple crops that depended on it.

A sense of weakness restrained expansionist ambition. Confederates worried about the loss of slaves across Union lines and the loyalty of Native American tribes. As a response, they committed to sustaining what Confederates believed to be a racially hierarchical, moderately expansionist and socially stable republic. Especially after the fall of Vicksburg had completed the Trans-Mississippi Department's isolation from the

rest of the Confederacy, western and southern expansionist impulses had to rely on the championship of agents in the localities, such as Confederate sympathizers in California.¹

Meanwhile, in Richmond, the Confederate government dedicated its foreign policy, which still aspired to hemispheric dominance, to the complementary three objectives: first, denouncing the Union's Monroe Doctrine and colonization efforts; second, free trade; and, third, the Law of Nations. Confederate reliance on moral superiority cast a glimpse forward of a Lost Cause mentality: Confederates resorting to posthumous vindication in the event, still deemed by them to be remote, of catastrophic defeat. At the same time, Confederate assertion of their national virtue revealed continued confidence in their strength as a nation; based on its inherently sound cotton-backed finances, status as the best governed society on Earth, and dedication through commerce to be the force for peace in international relations.²

¹ Connecting in turn with events in Mexico, transnational studies have assisted our understanding of a more complex set of processes than a simple story of predatory expansion on the part of the United States. See Gregory P. Downs, "The Mexicanization of American Politics: The United States' Transnational Path from Civil War to Stabilization," *American Historical Review* 117 2 (April 2012):388-91. Such studies reinforce the Confederate belief that they could still pursue expansion, even from a position of weakness, because they were pulled into it by events and individuals operating in the territories and Mexico.

² Bruce Levine presents in the early months of 1863, confidence in slave loyalty and "a belief that the coming year was full of promise for slaveholders and their republic." But, after the July disasters, "the more perceptive, less blinkered slaveholders and their politicians began grudgingly to recognize such truths" that slavery was finished. Likewise Robert Bonner noted that early 1863 witnessed a Confederate "fascination with an exaggeration of the Copperheads," which had led to expectations of "Confederate domination of the continent." These notions had been sustained by a "combination of war weariness and hopes for impending northern schism." But, according to Bonner, again this phenomenon was of brief duration as "the capture of Vicksburg led to the end of this and expansion as a whole." From then on, "the cumulative effects of war conscribed indelible limits to the Confederacy." However to counter this slide to oblivion, Michael Bernath writes of "the sense of excitement among Confederate nationalists that they were witnessing the stirrings of an intellectual and cultural renaissance of the South." This process began in the fall of 1862 and lasted until at least the end of 1864. Paul Quigley contends that the violence inflicted by US soldiers and escaped slaves on southerners solved the "problems" that had bedeviled Confederate nationalism: of being unable to reconcile the continuity of being Americans versus the novelty of being Confederates. But Confederates were also preoccupied with founding a new nation, and the ambitions of the Founding Fathers, as described by Elija Gould show that independence was not just a matter of obtaining diplomatic recognition, but the exercise of a claim of rights that other nations would respect. Confederates believed that they inherited the position of being in a community of international relations that sat with and drew strength from their domestic compact between sovereign polities. Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie: How the Civil War Remade the American South*, (Random House: New York,

Expansionism as an Answer to the Questions of Changing Times

Even in the militarily inauspicious times of 1863, defeat was not an option and the majority of Confederates viewed peace and independence as inevitable and obtainable reasonably soon. In this time of peace, they continued to expect that they would revert to their usual occupations, which included the pursuit of expansionism. By 1863, the experience of war had intensified Confederate desire for expansion. This demand existed despite the occasional denials from Confederate diplomats who emphasized the Confederacy's willingness to adhere to existing boundaries. Confederates saw in expansion a future reward for present suffering and a logical outcome of the war's revolutionary experience.

Throughout 1863, members of the Confederate government did not view peace as an abstract dream, but as a concrete reality that required planning and preparation. President Davis reminded legislators in December: "war is but temporary and...we desire that peace shall be permanent." Other Confederates, such as the South Carolinian planter and soldier Eldred S. Simkins, also viewed war as a transient aberration: "I expect we shall have to start again when Peace, Glorious Peace shall restore quiet to our land & us

2013); Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America*; Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds*; Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*; Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth, The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

to our homes.” For leading Confederates, preparations for this new beginning needed to commence during the war.³

Many Confederates constantly, but often with poor information, sought to judge the progress of the war. However, they predicted the coming of peace with more certainty because of a consensus that the northern people would tire of the war before the Republican administration. This feeling especially prevailed in the winter when memories of Fredericksburg and the “Mud March” in January of the Army of the Potomac encouraged Confederates and news of the unpopularity of the Emancipation Proclamation filtered down from the United States. On February 24, Representative Owen Rand Kenan of North Carolina told his daughter: “The war news is unimportant, yet many [in Richmond] think we will have an early peace as the people of the North are now speaking out and demanding of the authorities that the war must stop.” “If we should be successful in Charleston and Vicksburg,” Kenan argued, “the feeling for peace at the North will be greatly increased and there is great hope and confidence that the enemy will be badly repulsed at both places and if so it is hoped it will virtually end the war.” Although the end of war would be determined by the political calendar of the Union, Confederates saw expansionist ambitions as the ‘dividend’ arising from peace.⁴

Confederates realized such attitudes created complacency and were especially inappropriate at times of bad news from the front. The optimistic mood would then suddenly evaporate. “What do you think of the ‘signs of the times’?” Kenneth Rayner asked Thomas Ruffin on March 8. “I feel more gloomy than I have been for sometime past, up to within ten days ago, I felt very hopeful we should have peace by May or June.

³ Eldred J. Simkins to Eliza J. Trescot, August 19-20, 1863, SIM 142, box 1 (correspondence 1842-1863) Papers of Eldred J. Simkins, 1842-1977, HL.

⁴ Kenan to Daughter, February 24, 1863, series 1 folder 11, box 1, Kenan Family Papers, #4225, SHC.

Now I regard a duration of war as certain for another year.” At the same time, the prospect of an indefinite war also bred a sense of resignation among Confederates. At the end of July and after the fall of Vicksburg and the defeat at Gettysburg, the New Orleans diplomat and lawyer, Pierre Soulé visited various members of the Confederate government in Richmond. “The effect which these disasters have produced upon the country were visible in the dejected countenances and gloomy looks,” Soule reported to Confederate diplomat Edwin de Leon, “I must confess that, with the exception of the President, I found them all plunged in the most deplorable supineness and indifference.” Small wonder that Edward Cushing complained in his newspaper: “We southern folk are very mercurial...a reverse here and there is sufficient to cast a gloom over our communities and make men begin to speculate as to the results of the war.”⁵

In order to control these countervailing forces, the Confederate government needed to keep the future prospect of peace, with its commercial and territorial expansion, as something tantalizingly out of reach but possible, so as to stimulate present military effort. Davis noted the danger of a different approach in his proclamation to the Confederate people on April 10: “[I]f through a confidence in early peace, which may prove delusive, our fields should now be devoted to the production of cotton and tobacco instead of grain and livestock...necessary for the subsistence of the people and the army, the consequence may prove serious, if not disastrous.”⁶

Those Confederates engaged in wartime production complained that the problems confronting the nation arose from inattention to the war effort; in particular, they

⁵ Rayner to Ruffin, March 8, 1863, folder 454 Ruffin Papers, SHC; Soulé to Edwin de Leon, August 12, 1863, GLC04570; “The Situation,” *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Texas. July 27, 1863 (GLC05959.51.085).

⁶ Jefferson Davis, “Proclamation to the people of the Confederate States called by resolutions passed in Congress on April 4, 1863,” April 10, 1863, *JDC*, 5:472.

criticized those engaged in blockade running. On April 7, the manager of the Purdie Plantation in North Carolina, which produced Naval Stores, bitterly protested to his master and Representative in the Confederate Congress, Thomas David Smith McDowell. “For heaven’s sake, try and have something done to stop this infernal traffic with the Yankees by blockade runners into Wilmington. Several of the principal houses...are engaged in the trade,” he lamented, and these businesses were “doing immense damage to our cause and causing a rapid depreciation of our currency.” The manager concluded “their steamers and cargoes ought to be confiscated.” The acting British consul in Charleston, Henry Pinckney Walker, agreed that a surge in blockade running had taken place, that the “trade of the port of Charleston has been most active during the past year, notwithstanding the increased number of blockading vessels which have been maintained on the coast during that interval and that during the last quarter cotton exports and customs receipts have been much heavier than during any other quarter...”⁷

Expansionist ambitions were important to Confederates as the necessary counterpoint to the prospect of subjugation. In its March 14 editorial, the *Southern Illustrated News* demonstrated the extreme scenarios the Confederacy faced: “The question is very simple, we are to be exterminated or made the slaves of the most loathsome of human species, or we are to conquer and become the wealthiest and best of modern nations.” In an August speech in Charlotte, North Carolina, Vice President Stephens told his audience they “would be the veriest fools in the world to sit down and nurse our depression until it grew into despair [instead] come *weal or woe* take care that

⁷ “Purdie of Bladen Co.” to McDowell, April 4, 1863, folder 109, McDowell Papers, SHC; Henry Pinckney Walker to Earl Russell, April 22, 1863, FO 5/906, PRO.

we do not use the fact of our recent reverses and its consequent depression as an excuse for a want of inclination to work and help in the cause of the Confederacy.”⁸

Confederates did not view future expansion as a deserved reward for present sufferings. They feared the moral consequences of a sense of entitlement that might encourage complacency and vice. The Reverend Calvin Henderson Wiley, also superintendent of public schools in North Carolina, wrote “coming glories do not, in a proper legal view, account for past inflictions which were never heeded and the future state of the world does not furnish a satisfactory solution for the wars which its inhabitants have already endured.”⁹

With the aftermath of President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in January and even more so after the fall of Vicksburg and General Robert E. Lee’s retreat after Gettysburg in July, Confederate leaders had to offer a hope to restore morale. In an August 27, memorandum presented to General Richard Taylor in the Trans-Mississippi Department, Colonel Joseph Lancaster Brent wrote: “Unless some change takes place, the dark portents of the future of the department will in a few months burst into an overwhelming and fatal storm...the remedy is to be found in instilling hope into the soldiers and people, now almost despairing of our cause.” To achieve this goal, Confederate leaders pointed out the great, prosperous, future to be had as a citizen of an independent Confederacy with expansionist ambitions.¹⁰

⁸ “Lincoln is made Dictator of the North,” *Southern Illustrated News*. Richmond, Va., March 14, 1863 (UVA); “Speech,” *The Tri-weekly Telegraph*. Houston, Texas, August 21, 1863 (GLC05959.51.086).

⁹ Calvin Henderson Wiley, *Scriptural views of national trials: or, The true road to the independence and peace of the Confederate States of America by Rev. C. H. Wiley* (Greensboro, N.C.: Sterling, Campbell and Albright, 1863), 110.

¹⁰ Joseph L. Brent, “Reflection on the Situation of Public Affairs in the Trans-Mississippi Department,” August 27, 1863, Box 1, BT 80, Papers of Joseph Lancaster Brent, HL.

The context in which Confederates found themselves facilitated expansion. Surviving the war for so long increased the sense of power Confederates believed they possessed. Senator Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia saw the war as accelerating the rise of a nation at an astonishing pace as he declared on January 7, “we began in weakness, in the very struggle for life we are growing strong...” Confederates considered the rapid emergence of a new power on the world stage as possible because time itself seemed to be accelerating. In August, the *Southern Illustrated News* summed up this sense of speed: “One single month now is worth an ordinary age, and before that month is past, the die may be cast, nay...will be cast – for your weal or your woe.”¹¹

The war also swept away any impediments Confederates believed existed to expansion. By 1863, the war had wrought changes to the people and nation unthinkable three years before; to Confederates, this meant expansion would be both possible and permissible in the new era. In February, a prominent Georgian planter, John Schley took as his theme that all shibboleths were gone because the war meant “the case been altered, alters the case.” Later in November, former Virginia governor, Brigadier General Henry A. Wise agreed with Schley when he told his wife: “[I]t seems as if all old things were passing away and as if the nation, North and South, and all things in them were becoming new.” But at the same time, in a public letter, Wise predicted the consequences of this new state of affairs for the Confederacy. Self-reliance had to become the motto for the

¹¹ Benjamin H. Hill, *Speech of Hon. B. H. Hill delivered before the Georgia Legislature in Milledgeville, on the evening of the 11th December, 1862* (Milledgeville, Ga.: R. M. Orme & Son, 1863), 19; *Southern Illustrated News*, Richmond Va., August 15, 1863.

Confederate people for “we must be able to maintain ourselves after the war ends...become the strong men of America.”¹²

Confederates therefore began to consider measures promoting expansion that would have been unthinkable to southerners before the war. Given the measure’s earlier anti-slavery reputation as it promoted the independence of non-slaveholding whites, nothing better illustrates the self-conscious transformation of the Confederacy than the fact that the Confederate Congress considered a Homestead Bill that spring. In April, a special committee recommended that the bill pass the House. The fact this legislation was under active consideration demonstrated the changes that were occurring and required a Confederate response. In this circumstance, representatives endeavored to grapple with how Confederate soldiers could be compensated after the war for their services.¹³

Some Confederates thought about expansion because the war changed present state boundaries. They expected that the political map of the entire continent of North America would be subject to upheaval. William J. Buchanan of Maryland saw novel possibilities, writing that “the new map of America is as yet a blank – new issues, new facts, other principles are springing to the surface.”¹⁴

¹²John Schley, *Our position and our true policy February 2, 1863* (Augusta, Ga., n.p., 1863), 9-10; Wise to Mary Elizabeth (Lyons) Wise, November 13-14, 1863, Wise Papers, VHS; Henry A. Wise, *The currency question. Letter of Gen. Henry A. Wise, to Hon J. E. Holmes, of S.C. Headquarters Sixth Military District, Department S.C., Ga., and Florida, November 11, 1863* (n.p., 1863), 9.

¹³Conrad, “Joint Resolution to provide a homestead for the officers and privates of the army of the Confederate States,” February 2, 1863, *CJ*, 6:62. The Homestead Bill came before the House on February 2, Charles Magill Conrad introduced a Joint Resolution to provide a homestead for the officers and privates of the army. He moved to refer this Resolution to the Committee on Military Affairs, but William P. Chilton successfully amended Conrad’s resolution to instead refer it to a ‘Special Committee to consist of one member from each State.’ On April 22, Conrad reported back to the House from the Special Committee with the recommendation that it pass with an amendment. But the House decided to postpone consideration of any bill (*CJ*, 6:402.)

¹⁴W. Jefferson Buchanan, *Maryland’s Crisis: a political outline* (Richmond, Va.: J.W. Randolph, 1863), 16.

European observers debated the question of boundaries more vigorously than Confederates, who in turn asserted their right to fluid boundaries and therefore to expansion. The anonymous writer *Juridicus* explained the Confederate attitude for “the recognition of the Confederacy is not an admission or a guarantee of a certain specified territory, it is the admission of the existence of an independent government, the territorial possessions of which may be affected by the chances of war, or other circumstances which enlarge or constrain territorial limits.” Tennessee Representative William G. Swan made the Confederate stance clear when he demanded in the Confederate House that “no European trace our boundaries, measure our domains and limit our institutions.” Fixed boundaries meant a confined slavery institution, which was intolerable to Confederates outside the insincere platitudes of diplomacy.¹⁵

Only Confederate diplomats explicitly disavowed expansionist ambitions. Seeking international recognition, diplomats tried to tell the foreign office of each country what they thought it wanted to hear. On September 4, Mason advised Benjamin that the State Department needed to adopt a supportive new policy towards France as a result of Napoleon III’s Mexican adventure. The objective of such diplomacy would be that the Confederacy would have “France, through its interest in Mexico, as our ally.” Privately, Confederates were more dismissive, Senator Hershell V. Johnson of Georgia

¹⁵ *Juridicus* (pseud), *The recognition of the Confederate States: considered in a reply to the letters of “Historicus” in the London Times* (Charleston, S.C., Evans & Cogswell, 1863), 39; William Graham Swan, *Foreign relations: speech of Hon. W.G. Swan, of Tennessee, delivered in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States, February 5, 1863* (Richmond, Va.: Smith, Bailey & Co., 1863), 5. First published in letter form in the *Charleston Courier* “The Recognition of the Confederate States” was subsequently circulated as a pamphlet and also published in the *Index*. *Historicus* was a rising and well-connected British Whig politician, the son in law of the cabinet minister the Duke of Argyle and future Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Vernon Harcourt.

believed that without Confederate support, Napoleon “cannot maintain his foothold in Mexico.”¹⁶

In their approach to the Spanish, Confederate diplomats likewise assured the government of Isabella that the Confederacy had no designs on Cuba. On May 9, Benjamin told Paris Commissioner John Slidell to assure the Spanish on his mission to Madrid that Confederates were “desirous ourselves of no extension of our boundaries, seeking our safety and happiness solely in the peaceful development of our own ample resources”¹⁷

To the British, the Confederate propaganda effort, led by Henry Holze’s *The Index* newspaper, would be to present the Confederacy as a force for stability in a future world disrupted by Union aggression. Holze tailored contents of the newspaper to the presumed prejudices of its British readers. In January, Holze explained that he had designed and edited the paper to be “in appearance and content acceptable to English ideas.” Holze explained criticism the paper had received, Confederates expected more ambitious and assertive copy and the “tone of studied moderation which this imposed upon me was mistaken by many of our countrymen for lukewarmness, timidity and lack of spirit.” The restraints on the expression of expansion, imposed by this Confederate diplomatic policy, ebbed and flowed with the progress of the war. In early July, when

¹⁶ James M. Mason to Judah P. Benjamin, September 4, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:556-57; Johnson to Davis, August 6, 1863, *JDP*, 9:321. Confederates knew that Europe remained a factor in ending the war at any time. However, they were under no illusion; by 1863, they understood that as a standalone issue, the American Civil War played an intermittent and usually unimportant role in the foreign policy formulation of the Great Powers. But Confederates hoped and believed that once the conflict in America merged with the worsening rivalries in Europe then its true significance would be revealed. For an astute Confederate understanding of the realities of the European situation see L.Q.C. Lamar to Judah P. Benjamin, March 20, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:454. “The nations of Europe constitute a federative league, a commonwealth of nations...Lord Palmerston is far more deeply engrossed with the conferences, jealousies, and rivalries between the leading powers of Europe than with the fate of constitutional government in America.”

¹⁷ Benjamin to Slidell, May 9, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:481-85.

news of Gettysburg and Vicksburg had not yet reached Europe, Henry Hotze then could tell Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin that “the time has undoubtedly arrived when we have little to gain by a conciliatory policy and when we may with manifest advantage assert our national dignity to the fullest extent.”¹⁸

Confederates saw expansionist ambitions as the logical outcomes of what Senator Albert G. Brown of Mississippi termed the need to “act upon more enlarged principles.” As 1863 wore on, the sense of awe at the scale of the war and its implications grew. Colonel George A. Gordon in November asked an audience in Savannah, Georgia that because “all the records of the many campaigns have demonstrated that we have carved out for ourselves a historic name...a question for nations as well as individuals – what shall we do with the liberty purchased at the price of so much blood?” For Confederates, each day of surviving the epic war added to their increased sense of national purpose, so that “the question assumes an awful magnitude, as the circle of responsibility enlarges and it embraces the nation at large. Tomorrow, and tomorrow will add to the weight of responsibility and we cannot refuse to say what we will do with it.”¹⁹

The sense of responsibility was compounded by the ‘universal’ issues of the war as Confederates saw them: the survival of republican self-government; slavery as the only system that reconciled capital and labor; the Confederacy at the forefront of the ‘new thinking’ of scientific racism. Historians have noticed that Confederates have generally

¹⁸ Henry Hotze to Judah P. Benjamin, January 17, July 4, 1863, *OR*, 662-62, 832. After the disappointing news of July, the newspaper resumed its moderate posture as “the most ordinary discretion forces one at least for the present to retain a purely defensive position...sometimes at great restraint.” (Hotze to Benjamin, September 26, 1863, *OR*, 916.)

¹⁹ Albert Gallatin Brown, *State of the Country. Speech in the Confederate Senate, December 24, 1863* (n.p., 1863), 9; Gordon, George Anderson, *What Will He do with It? An essay delivered in the Masonic Hall, Savannah, on Thursday, October 27, 1863, and again by special request, on Monday December 7, 1863, for the benefit of the Wayside Home in Savannah and repeated with slight variations for similar objects in Augusta, Milledgeville, Macon, Atlanta, La Grange & Columbus; by George A. Gordon* (Savannah, Ga.: George N. Nichols, 1863), 8, 23.

placed their 'revolution' in a wider context, especially the 1848 failed European revolutions and thwarted quest for national self-determination in Hungary, Italy and Germany. But, at least in 1863, Confederates distinguished their 'cause' in two significant ways: first, they were of the Anglo Saxon race and hence their revolution was greatly ideologically well ahead of those of continental Europe; second, the Confederacy presented to the world a new nation infinitely more powerful than the, to date, products of European nationalism. Confederates did compare their own experience with that of Europeans, but were conscious that their cause of independence from the United States would be more harmed than helped by comparisons drawn too far.²⁰

As well as continuing to fight for slavery and republican self-government, Confederates sensed the new power unleashed by the centralization of their state. President Davis, in particular, saw a virtuous circle between the experience of war and national power. He declared on January 5 that it was necessary that the Confederacy "should be tried in this severe crucible in which we are being tested in order to cement us together." Not only that, he continued, "when peace and prosperity shall come to us, we will go on assisting each other to develop the great political ideas upon which our government is based and the immense resources which nature has lavished upon us. Of the former we are awakening to an appreciation of their deep significance. In the latter we are displaying unexampled energy."²¹

²⁰ On the ironies and problems generated by Confederate efforts to define their crisis in European terms, see Andre M. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: the American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012). For a contrasting view in which Americans viewed Europe as increasingly distant from what they came to view as their own exceptional republic see Timothy Mason Roberts, *Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

²¹ Jefferson Davis, "Richmond Speech," January 5, 1863, *JDP*, 9:11-14.

In addressing the present crisis and the need to provide uplifting political rhetoric as a war-fighting tactic to rally the troops, Confederates attempted to lay the foundations for future greatness. In 1863, Davis became increasingly convinced of the dire need for the states to draw together, as he told the senators and representatives of Arkansas in April: “[O]ur safety – our very existence – depends on the complete blending of the military strength of all the States into one unified body, to be used anywhere and everywhere as the exigencies of the contest may require for the good of the *whole*...” In desperation after the fall of Vicksburg, he privately told Senator Robert W. Johnson of Arkansas that “it would be mad, suicidal, for any State of the Confederacy to seek safety by separation from the rest.”²²

Before 1863, an adherence to state rights had not conflicted with possessing expansionist ambitions. Confederates had seen the dynamic created by individual state competition and collaboration as, if anything, even more productive of expansion than a consolidated government. It was certainly the case that state rights in 1863 could still work in harmony with the wider and expansive Confederate objectives. The example of the Georgia State Guard demonstrated this duality. The guard was presented by Governor Joseph Brown, in his August 4, 1863 Proclamation, as a strictly defensive militia. He had authorized the militia’s creation “solely for the purpose of repelling raids or incursions by the Federalists against their homes and property.” To the distress of the acting British Consul in Savannah, on account of its implications for recruited resident aliens, the militia morphed into something else. As a result of “insinuations” in the general orders of the Guard’s commanding general, Howell Cobb, the militia were now commanded to

²² “Letter to the Senators and Representatives of Arkansas,” March 30, 1863, *JDC*, 5: 460-3; Jefferson Davis to Senator R.W. Johnson, July 14, 1863, *JDC*, 5:448.

“come forward and follow the patriotic example of their brethren now in the field who have declared their willingness to waive all territorial limits and go wherever the interest and safety of the state require them to go...” But during the military setbacks of 1863, some governors began to consider the possibility of separate futures for their states, especially in Arkansas and North Carolina. In a bid to counteract this development, the advocates of a strong Confederate government began to push more strongly than before the great expansive future to be had provided the states pulled together in this quest.²³

In his tour during the aftermath of Chickamauga in October and early November, Davis was once again able to reveal the significance of the new united nation “with resolute purpose and united effort we would regain all that we had lost, and accomplish all that we have proposed...the Confederacy would spring forward in a career of happiness and prosperity surpassing the dreams of the most sanguine.” Even foes of Davis, such as his former Mississippi Senate colleague Albert Gallatin Brown, saw unity as necessary to win the war and in so doing forge something that would transform the population and its prospects for “the times in which we live, call for the exercise of all our faculties, and the unreserved use of our resources. We must liberalize our views – act upon more enlarged principles and cultivate a more comprehensive patriotism.” If the Confederate people met such demands, it would transform the future as well as the present.²⁴

²³ Allan Fullarton to Earl Russell, October 17, 1863, FO 5/909, PRO. The acting consul, a Savannah banker, was concerned that the revision of the militia’s terms of reference may mean any enlisted British resident aliens would be in violation of Britain’s declaration of neutrality in the Civil War.

²⁴ “Speech at Wilmington”, November 5, 1863, *JDP*, 10:50; Albert Gallatin Brown, *State of the Country. Speech in the Confederate Senate, December 24, 1863* (n.p., 1863), 9. See also Brown’s resulting Senate Resolutions, December 10, 1863, *CJ*, 3:455.

Only an expansive realm would have sufficient resources to rebuild a devastated economy and pay off a national debt, the size of which defied contemporary belief. Kenneth Rayner had “supposed the Confederate States could manage a debt of \$800 million or \$1,000 million. But another year’s war at the present enormously high price of everything will cost the country \$500 million or \$600 million.” He asked Ruffin, “Can we stand such a debt bearing such an enormously high rate of interest; or rather will the people stand it?” Representative John B. Baldwin of Virginia declared in a speech that within eight months, as long as they behaved with the wealth and patriotism as the citizens of his native Augusta County did in a recent bond drive, “it is not beyond the capacities of our people...to fund \$700 million.” Therefore in 1863, in order to maintain the ‘credit’ of the government, even the most optimistic Confederates realized that the future had to, at the very least, help to pay for the present. Baldwin concluded with the hope: “It is believed that once we have established our independence, we shall be entitled by our resources to take a position of high credit among the nations, and that we could make loans at much lower rates of interest.” Because they needed to know how much taxation could realistically be raised to meet long and short-term debt obligations, various Confederates embarked upon a series of computations of expected government revenues, line item expenditures and amounts of inward investment.²⁵

A picture of the future Confederacy therefore began to emerge. The currency crisis of 1863 and its attendant congressional debates stimulated production of financial plans that included predictions about future peacetime Confederate policy. Pamphlets circulated, for example, “A Plan of Financial Relief” by Jacob N. Cardozo, and Charles

²⁵ Rayner to Ruffin, March 8, 1863, folder 454, Ruffin Papers, SHC; John Brown Baldwin, *Substance of the remarks of Mr. Baldwin, of Virginia, on offering “A bill to fund the currency,” House of representatives, January 16th, 1863* (Richmond, Va.: Macfarlane and Fergusson, 1863), 15-16.

P. Culver's "A Scheme for the Relief of the Financial Embarrassments." Culver also wrote an open letter to Senator Hershel V. Johnson in which he attacked the estimates of P. Clayton, the assistant treasury secretary, who predicted the civil expenditures of the peacetime Confederate government to be about \$35 million dollars. Culver retorted "Clayton has overlooked the fact that we have a navy to build and equip, lands to purchase, and dockyards and forts to build and supply...I agree with him that a standing army will not be necessary, but an efficient navy will be our arm of defense both at home and abroad."²⁶

Government Policies for the Future Expansive Confederacy

In 1863, the Confederate government, especially members of Congress, Davis and the State Department led by Judah P. Benjamin, aimed to prepare policies for this future by the following means: one, continued efforts to promote the fragmentation of the Union; two, the protection and growth of slavery; three, support of Spain in the Caribbean; four, continued efforts to adopt a naval policy to support an extensive overseas commerce; five, renewed efforts to include Indian Territory, New Mexico and Arizona in the Confederacy; and, six, a policy toward Mexico that would provide both the short term security and long term expansion needs of Confederates. Confederates conceived these preparations as interrelated and developed a world-view to support their

²⁶ Jacob Newton Cardozo, *A Plan for Financial Relief, addressed to the Legislature of Georgia, and the Confederate States Congress, as originally published on the Atlanta Southern Confederacy, by J. N. Cardozo* (Atlanta, Ga.: J. H. Seals & Co., 1863); Charles Post Culver, *A Scheme for the relief of the financial embarrassments of the Confederate States: based upon real estate* (Richmond Va.: Geo. P. Evans & Co., 1863); Culver, "Letter on the Currency," *Daily Chronicle & Sentinel*, Augusta, Ga., November 11, 1863 (GLC05959.07.03); John Schley, *Our position and our true policy*, February 2, 1863 (Augusta, Ga.: n.p., 1863). There was a tradeoff, if the nation could not afford to pay any of its debt now, its credit would collapse and that would impair, perhaps fatally, confidence in the Confederate government. At the same time, Confederates argued it was impractical to raise all the money now when areas were occupied by the enemy and half a million people of slave property were in the possession of the Union. Clearly the models had to estimate an end date for the war, on the whole in 1863 Confederates tended to predict that the war would come to an end in late 1864 after Lincoln lost the election. The exception to this confidence was immediately after the fall of Vicksburg.

actions and their future power; the Confederacy was to become the leader of an impartial and just system of foreign relations based on political economy.²⁷

Throughout early 1863, the Committee on Foreign Affairs chaired by Representative Henry S. Foote considered resolutions on the Confederate conditions for peace with the Union. At the same time, the Southern Carolinian writer William M. Bobo anonymously publicized these secret deliberations in Congress to a wider audience and set out what implications the resolutions had for the extent of the Confederacy. In exchange for peace and a commercial agreement with the Union, perhaps encompassing the whole of North America, “the integrity of the Confederacy must be preserved intact,” meaning the inclusion of Maryland and the continued northern boundary being the “Ohio [River] to the north of Missouri and thence west” indefinitely.²⁸

Confederates understood that a recognized independent Confederate government would lead to withdrawal of all Union forces occupying the large swathes of territory within these enlarged boundaries. Some Confederates from areas occupied by Union forces began to dispute whether this expectation was tenable in the event that the Union advance would continue further into the Confederacy during 1864. In the aftermath of the defeat of Chattanooga, in December, Brown warned his fellow senators: “One year ago Mississippi was as secure as you think yourselves to be...if we lose the country, personal

²⁷ British political economist David Ricardo had established that the advantage by which two countries derive from trading with each other results from the more advantageous employment which thence arises, of the labor and capital of both countries. The circumstances are such that if each country confines itself to the production of one commodity, there is a greater total return to the labor of both together; and this increase of produce forms the whole of what the two countries taken together gain by trade. For Confederates, this relationship led to the reciprocal obligations that governed foreign relations. See J.S. Mill, *Essays on Political Economy*.

²⁸ Henry S. Foote, “Joint Resolutions on the pending war and matters appertaining thereto,” January 13, 1863, *CJ*, 6:8-20; February 6, 1863, *CJ*, 6: 80-84; April 11, 1863, *CJ*, 6: 331-350; William M. Bobo, *The Confederate by a South Carolinian* (Mobile, Ala.: S.H. Goetzel, 1863), 100. Representative William W. Boyce of South Carolina wished to extend free trade treaties to Canada. Although, like Boyce, a harsh critic of Davis’s administration, it is very important that Foote shared the same ultimate goals as the President and in a letter on August 26 to the *Richmond Whig*, Foote praised Davis’s “lofty goals” (*JDP*, 9:356.)

liberty, habeas corpus and the Constitution go with it. We can never wrest these from Yankee hands if our country is conquered.” Brown still believed that the loss of territory could be reversed, but “if it be not, I drop the curtain and refuse even a glimpse into the future.” Most Confederates believed that these states and parts of states would be recovered after peace on account of their populations wishing to either join or remain in the Confederacy.²⁹

On peace, Confederates still expected that popular votes would be held in all the Border States to determine whether they remain in the Union or ratify their admission into Confederacy. Public opinion, up to this point suppressed by Republican Party tyranny according to Confederates, would instantly join the states’ destiny with the Confederacy. However in contrast to 1862, the task of readmitting the Border States would be difficult. On April 16, Kentuckian J. Warren Grigsby, serving in the Army of Tennessee, told his friend Governor John Letcher of Virginia: “We Kentuckians still hope that we will be permitted to make one more effort to redeem our old commonwealth.” The job had got harder however: “But if the Yanks are permitted to fill the state with troops, the chances of accomplishing much seems to me to be rather slim.” At the very least, the Unionist populations in the Border States would either have to submit or leave. In his speech to the Virginia Assembly of Delegates, J. Marshall McClue expected that “all the Union population conscious of the severe retribution that will await them...will flee out of Kentucky, Missouri, North West Virginia into Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania...”³⁰

²⁹ Albert Gallatin Brown, *State of the Country. Speech in the Confederate Senate, December 24, 1863* (n.p., 1863), 14-16.

³⁰ Grigsby to Letcher, April 16, 1863, folder 413, Governor’s Correspondence, Letcher Papers, VHS; J. Marshall McCue, *Speech of Mr. McCue, of Augusta, delivered in the House of Delegates, on the 16th and*

Some Confederates recognized that payment or exchanges might be necessary to persuade the Union to surrender the strong points it occupied in the Confederacy. In a letter to Hershel V. Johnson of October 27, Culver regretted that “our army as yet does not (nor is it likely) to hold any possessions within the Federal Government that would be an equivalent exchange for New Orleans...” He expected that “the Federal Government will not yield up its present positions without a valuable consideration”; hence advised Johnson that Confederates needed to budget to compensate the Union for the surrender of its forts in the Confederacy. Consistent with their view that “money is one the greatest levers of the world, if so use it properly to buy a peace” Confederates expected their postwar booming slave economy to both attract the border slave states and payoff the United States.³¹

Confederates assumed that their future economic strength and the commercial inducements they could provide by means of free trade would deliver to them dominance of the American continent. Foote considered that, on the grounds of slavery, “to admit any free or partly free state would be suicidal” to the Confederacy. Confederates, especially early in 1863, continued to promote the fragmentation of the Union with promotion of northwestern and Pacific Confederacies, but the Emancipation Proclamation did change some Confederate attitudes especially to the Northwest, whose inhabitants had long been deemed by Confederates to be indifferent to Free Soil and

17th of October, 1863, on the bill to protect sheep and increase the production of wool (Richmond, Va., Printed by George P. Evans & Co, 1863), 12.

³¹ Culver, “Letter on the Currency,” *Daily Chronicle & Sentinel*, Augusta, Ga., November 11, 1863 (GLC05959.07.03).

hostile to abolition. As a result of the United States government's policy of emancipation, the idea of any free states joining their nation became less popular among Confederates.³²

Confederates still assumed they could profit from divisions within the United States. On January 5, in a speech in Richmond Davis looked toward "first the separation of the North West from the Eastern States, the discord among them will paralyze them both; then for us, peace and prosperity." A month later, Rayner agreed, he told Ruffin "you notice the news from the North West" "There is no doubt great agitations and excitement there, which I hope will rebound to our benefit." The idea of a suffering Northwest was a clear departure from earlier plans for a mutually beneficial Mississippi basin free trade area. Governor John Milton of Florida reacted with suspicion to news of moves to admit the States of the Northwest. In a letter to Davis, the governor referred to "an effort is being made to form a political party which will prove troublesome if not dangerous to the permanency of the Confederate state." A circular written by "Confederate" had been sent to the governor calling for "the admission of Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana into the Confederacy." The writer argued that the inclusion of these states would "broaden and strengthen the nation and free it from its old dependence on slavery and cotton." Given that slavery and cotton were to be the central focus of Confederate power, this proposition was objectionable to Davis, even if he wished to sow discord in the North.³³

The idea of a southern-led Union, which had been popular among cooperationists in 1860-1 and again advocated by some leading Confederates in the fall of 1862,

³² William M. Bobo, *The Confederate by a South Carolinian* (Mobile, Ala., S.H. Goetzl, 1863), 100.

³³ Jefferson Davis, "Speech in Richmond," January 5, 1863, *JDP*, 9:12; Rayner to Ruffin, February 16, 1863, folder 453, Ruffin Papers, SHC; Governor John Milton to Jefferson Davis, April 15, 1863, *JDP*, 9:143.

continued in 1863 to be voiced by some Confederate politicians, pamphleteers and newspaper editors. In particular, at the beginning of the year when Murfreesboro was still believed to be a victory and Fredericksburg a recent memory, A. M. Keiley wrote to Benjamin that when peace comes “we can dictate to the returning States (excluding New England) the terms of admission to Our Union.” In June 1863, as Lee’s offensive northward began to get underway and Confederates still held Vicksburg, such ideas resurfaced. Henry Hotze presented to his English readers of the *Index* a vision of a “southern dominated Union, excluding New England” resulting from Confederates closing “with the offer the Northern Democrats are only too ready to make.” With his audience in mind, Hotze speculated that the new country might be more protectionist than an independent southern Confederacy would be. On the whole, Congress, as well as Hotze, preferred to see commercial relations effect Confederate dominance rather than the politically risky admission of the non-slaveholding states into the Confederacy.³⁴

Confederate expansionist ambitions would be achieved by negotiating commercial treaties with all states outside New England. Foote stressed the benefits that would accrue to Confederates as a result of access to the Pacific Ocean and its coast. Foote argued that any commercial agreements had to ensure the Confederacy and allied States could share “the exclusive use of all the rich mineral lands stretching along the slopes of the Pacific...free trade with all the nations of the earth and the future maritime growth and power that has no parallel and lastly a monopoly of the trade of the Pacific

³⁴ A.M. Keiley to Judah P. Benjamin, January 9, 1863, box 1, Meade Papers, UVA; “A Conceivable Calamity,” *The Index* 3 62 (July 2, 1863):145.

Ocean.” The Confederacy had clear ambitions both of mining in the West and expanding commerce and trade toward China and Japan, as well as toward Europe.³⁵

Confederates wished to expand into the Pacific markets because they believed Pacific commerce was of significant importance to the Union. On August 21, A. J. Grayson wrote from Mazatlan, Mexico, to Davis requesting letters of marque to aid in outfitting vessels for coastal trade in South America and harass Union commerce in the Pacific. In October, Jules David of Vancouver Island, another would-be sponsor of privateers, told Benjamin “if you will for a moment reflect upon the extensive US commerce with South America, California, the islands, China and Japan you can well imagine what a rich field we have before us.” David announced himself as President of the Vancouver Island and British Columbia Southern Association. There were also the actual activities of Confederate privateers in the Pacific, for example, Representative Thompson Campbell announced to the Californian assembly on June 30, ‘there are twenty Confederate pirates in Alcatraz this day.’ The *Chapman* had just been captured and the Unionist representative accused the Confederates of “preying not only the commerce, but also the citizens of Los Angeles.”³⁶

The foundation of international commercial growth remained free trade, at least as an ideal. Davis and some other leading Confederates, especially from Texas, were still formally committed to this policy. Davis believed protectionism to be socially divisive, as well as economically unsound. But the 1862 cabinet decision remained in place - the need to pay down the post war debt, meant duties on exports and tariffs on imports for

³⁵ William M. Bobo, *The Confederate by a South Carolinian* (Mobile, Ala.: S.H. Goetzel, 1863), 100.

³⁶ A. J. Grayson to Jefferson Davis, August 21, 1863, *JDP*, 9:350; David to Benjamin, October 16, 1863, *OR*, 933; Thompson Campbell, *Union and Secession. Speech of Hon. Thompson Campbell, of San Francisco, Delivered at Sacramento, July 30th, 1863. [Reported in Phonographic Short Hand, for the Sacramento Union, by A.J. Marsh.]* (Sacramento, Calif.: n.p., 1863), 9.

revenue purposes would be essential in the future. However, the surge in blockade running during the first half of 1863, exceeding peacetime trade levels in both Charleston and Wilmington, demonstrated to Confederates that as Commodore Matthew F. Maury termed the “transatlantic revolution” was already underway and direct trade, especially with Britain, was set to grow to unprecedented levels.³⁷

Confederates looked forward to the postwar establishment of direct trade links with Britain and France. Duff Green hoped that the Confederacy could play the two European maritime powers off against each other. But the State Department declined to pursue negotiations or make offers of preferential arrangements as it had done in 1862. Instead, Confederates preferred to use as evidence of the ineffectiveness of the blockade as a means of persuasion to the Europeans of the economic importance of their nation. In September, 1863, Benjamin included in a dispatch to Slidell “an official statement of the foreign commerce of Charleston and Wilmington...they exhibit a trade constantly and largely progressive in spite of the additions made to the federal [blockading] naval force” To Benjamin the evidence of buoyant commerce despite the blockade was conclusive: Charleston’s trade of the first five months of 1863 pro rata exceeded that of 1858, the last year of peace that had available records; while Wilmington had undergone an even greater relative transformation, with a trade more than four times the entire North Carolinian foreign commerce of 1858.³⁸

This trade provided a glimpse into the future and also a Confederate belief in the sense of community of interest and mutual obligations which existed by now between the Confederacy and the European powers. In Lancashire, England on September 2,

³⁷ “What the north is fighting for,” *The Index* 3 58 (June 4, 1863):81.

³⁸ Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, September 2, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2: 546-50.

Commodore Maury argued that the growth in direct trade between the Confederacy and Europe provided the basis for “the present position and future prospects” of the Confederacy. Benjamin wrote to Mason on June 6 referring to the “fleets of the Confederacy and the neutral steamships engaged in regular trade between neutral countries and the Confederate ports, and this trade is daily increasing.” A few days later Benjamin assured Slidell that by now “it is entirely safe and much more prompt to send [dispatches] by closed British mail to our agents at Nassau or Bermuda whence they are forwarded by our government steamers, now run with the regularity of pickets.” It is important to note for that for all the difficult diplomatic irritations between Britain and the Confederacy during 1863, Benjamin always envisaged that after the war it would be “England, with which nation our commercial relations will be very extensive.”³⁹

The promise of an abundant harvest in 1863 also boded well for the future Confederate economy. Overlooking the problems of supply caused by speculation and a lack of transportation, leading Confederates focused on the forecast figures of production as firm evidence of the strength of the Confederate economy even under such unpropitious circumstances as war. “Our crops are magnificent,” Benjamin told Slidell on August 17, “and supplies of grain and forage will be super abundant for at least twelve months to come.”⁴⁰

³⁹ “What the north is fighting for,” *The Index* 3 58 (June 4, 1863):81; “The Confederate Cause in Lancashire,” *The Index* 3 71 (August, 27, 1863):293; Judah P. Benjamin to James M. Mason, June 6, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2: 495-7; Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, June 22, 1863, *Ibid.*, 2: 518-20; Judah P. Benjamin to Senator C. C. Clay, January 3, 1863, *OR*, 669.

⁴⁰ Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, August 17, 1863, *OR*, 872. In July, Consul Cridland concurred with Benjamin’s optimism, recording the likelihood of a “most abundant harvest” of wheat, with Alabama’s harvest of 1.35m bushels exceeding that of the previous three years’ average of 1.2m and he also predicted a bountiful harvest also for corn. But he also warned that due to transportation problems, such plenty could not offset rampant inflation and also cautioned “that no market for grain or cotton exists or has existed here [in Mobile] for a long time.” (Cridland to Earl Russell, July 16, 1863, FO 5/908, PRO.) Benjamin also

Confederates saw the expansion of their navy as crucial to the growth of their seaborne commerce in the more distant future. In early 1863, naval successes on the Mississippi and in Charleston harbor stimulated visions of a naval destiny in the government, to be realized in the short term by commerce raiding on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. With Davis's encouragement, the bill to establish a volunteer navy passed the House on April 18 and looked to the long term because "the laws of success, in all enterprises, is that you must commence, make progress and succeed...each step of progress facilitating every succeeding step."⁴¹

The government expected each state to establish its own navy in addition to that of the Richmond government. Here at least, proponents of a navy hoped that competition between the states would stimulate the development of a significant naval capability. In January, Joseph Seawell told Letcher: "I understand that the Governor of North Carolina has sent to Europe officers to purchase and equip a vessel of war and then to command and officer her, to cruise against the merchant vessels of the enemy." Surely, Seawell added, "if North Carolina can do this, why not Virginia and every other Confederate State?"⁴²

remarked upon the harvests in Europe were looking bountiful and therefore depriving the restive north western states of the US of their market.

⁴¹ A. Georgian, *Remarks on a volunteer navy by a Georgian* (Atlanta, Ga.: Intelligencer Steam Power Press, 1864), 4-5. On February 25, 1863, Senator Brown presented the Bill (s58) to establish a Volunteer Navy, it was immediately referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs and passed the Senate on March 30, 1863 (*CJ*, 3: 100-101, 215; 6:275.) On the connection between steamboats and modernity and progress in the South, see Robert Gudmestad, *Steamboats and the Rise of the Cotton Kingdom* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011). On a presentation of antebellum proslavery politicians as confident imperialists sponsoring an ambitious and costly expansion of American naval power in order to both protect slavery against foreign encroachment and to exert national influence overseas, see Matthew Karp, "Slavery and American Sea Power: The Navalist Impulse in the Antebellum South," *Journal of Southern History* 77 2 (May 2011):283-324.

⁴² J.A. Seawell to Letcher, January 12, 1863, folder 410, Letcher Papers, VHS. The Richmond Government focused on the direct naval warfare with the United States, for example, on April 1, 1863, Mallory asked Davis, "that measures be immediately adopted for the construction, equipment and delivery to this government in southern Europe of ten ironclad warships of the classes whose draught shall not exceed

Progress was slow, but by September, the Virginia Volunteer Navy had been organized and Captain Edward C. Stiles had purchased on account the steamer *Hawk*. Slidell concurred “we have to say we think it very important that the *Hawk* should proceed with as little delay as possible on her cruise against the commerce of the enemy.” Edward Archer received his appointment from James A. Seddon as Assistant Engineer for the Virginia Volunteer Navy Company on September 26, 1863. But delays, chiefly caused by financing difficulties, meant the new navy only got underway in 1864. Other states also began to make preparations, in his November 23, 1863 Message, Governor Bonham of South Carolina recommended to legislators the “favorable consideration of a memorial from B.J. Sage suggesting the establishment under act of congress of a volunteer navy.” The acting British consul in Charleston noted the demands for the creation of the navy were prompted by the failure of Britain and France to raise the blockade.⁴³

In the short term, the volunteer navies of each state intended to focus breaking the blockade and to “cause [US maritime] insurance to double [in price] and even difficult to obtain.” In the future, the bill’s passage would mean the Confederates “succeeding in the organization of a navy...necessary for our social independence after peace.” For Confederates, nationhood meant commercial as well as political independence, with the former to be achieved by the export of staple crops.⁴⁴

sixteen feet...it affords a fair prospect of success. The amount seem large when the demands of other branches of the public service are considered but the vast importance of building screw ships which may enter the Mississippi is so evident that I do not hesitate to earnestly recommend it.” (Mallory to Davis, 1 April 1863, GLC08155.02.)

⁴³ Stiles to Mason and Slidell, September 29, 1863, *OR*, 918; Slidell to John H. Reagan, September 29, 1863, *OR*, 919; Seddon to Archer, September 26, 1863, GLC01896.063; Walker to Russell, November 26, 1863, FO 5/969, PRO.

⁴⁴ A. Georgian, *Remarks on a volunteer navy by a Georgian* (Atlanta, Ga.: Intelligencer Steam Power Press, 1864), 13.

Confederate expansionist ambitions were underpinned by the belief that the nation's economy would revert after the war to one predominantly agricultural and based on slavery. Some Confederates welcomed wartime industrialization, but with the possible exception of mining, they viewed these occupations as temporary. The secretary of state increasingly saw the period of transition back to staple crop production as necessarily protracted, Benjamin predicted that "after the war, the supply of cotton for some years must be less than in the past, owing to the diminished quantity of labor resulting from not only the ravages of war, but from the diversion of much slave labor to mining & other pursuits." Although the postwar years would witness an initial period of austerity as the country recovered from the devastation and loss of markets during wartime, Confederates believed the succeeding recovery must be swift due to an anticipated surge of foreign investment—while they also predicted that the Confederacy's agricultural economy would resume peacetime expansion quicker than the more industrialized Union.⁴⁵

Rapid growth would be possible because Confederates believed that they were sitting on an enormous stockpile of cotton built up since 1861, which could be quickly sold leading to an infusion of cash into the economy and with an export duty, revenues to the Government. Confederates dismissed the viability of possible alternative sources of cotton supply as postwar competitors. A "most experienced cotton broker" assured the British Consul in Mobile that even taking into account wastage, burning by Confederates and seizure by Union forces some 4.5 million bales remained in store in the Confederacy.

⁴⁵ Benjamin to Slidell et al, January 15, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:406.

Such a supply, once roped and bagged could be immediately exported on peace and be subject to a duty of five cents per pound.⁴⁶

Some Confederates did begin to see that diversion from agricultural pursuits as, not only becoming more permanent, but even as something to celebrate. Wise welcomed the fact that the experience of war was “teaching us the mechanic arts”; having these meant the Confederate people “will be surely successful in war and as surely prosperous in peace...and make us the strong men of America.” Wise asserted that Confederates to “be free and truly independent, they must be self reliant.” Prominent North Carolinian planter and soldier, Archibald Alexander McLean, agreed, he informed McDowell: “The citizens of Fayetteville have engaged in an enterprise that we have very much to heart and one for the good of the State and Confederate government if we can succeed.” He explained that they had “formed a company with a sufficient amount of capital” to send agents to Europe “to purchase for our company machines for making cotton cards, clothing and material for the cards on a large and extensive scale and machinery of various kinds.” McLean believed that the objective of establishing a textile industry in

⁴⁶ Cridland to Earl Russell, December 5, 1863, FO 5/908, PRO. In London, Hotze obtained the British consul’s prior year estimates and predicted “therefore peace and the reopening of southern ports would liberate a year’s crop” and as plans to grow cotton in alternative sites such as India or Egypt were “based on high prices continuing so this risk could wreck the viability of such plans.” *The Index* 2 40 (January 29, 1863):208. He remained confident throughout the year, in August Hotze reviewed a pamphlet by Samuel Smith *The Cotton Trade of India* and concluded that due to the inferiority of the quality of Indian cotton as well as its price, New Orleans “will again assume the highest position” as cotton entrepôt; but Hotze warned the British that “every day peace is postponed adds to the difficulty of resuming the culture on an adequate scale and at best many years must elapse before we can get cotton at the same price and quantity as before the war.” (“Can India save our cotton trade?” *The Index* 3 68 [August 13, 1863]:241.) Finally in September, Hotze affirmed “from India the accounts of the cotton crop are very discouraging to those who believed that that country could supply the place of the Confederate States.” (*The Index* 3 72 [September 10, 1863]:307.) Hotze’s representation of Samuel Smith’s pamphlet was accurate. In the winter of 1862–3, Smith went to India on behalf of the Manchester chamber of commerce to test the cotton-growing possibilities there, in view of the depletion of the English market owing to the American Civil War. In a communication to the *Times of India* (embodied in a pamphlet published in England), Smith questioned India’s fitness to grow cotton (G. Le G. Norgate, “Smith, Samuel [1836–1906],” rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [Oxford University Press, 2004].)

Fayetteville was to manufacture “every necessary article that can be had without trading with or encouraging the Yanks in any way.”⁴⁷

Sustaining Slavery Both at Home and Abroad

Despite some Confederates welcoming industrialization, the expectation of the preservation and growth of slavery remained their paramount objective. The production and export of staple crops, dependent on slavery, remained integral to the foreign and economic policies of the Confederate government. Although mindful of the losses inflicted on slavery, especially in the lower Mississippi valley, Confederates continued to be confident that it would survive and recover. They also hoped that in time slavery would resume its expansion and, to that end, paid close attention to Union colonization of freedpeople in Latin America. Confederates remained fearful that the United States, Britain, and France were poised to impose their own forced labor systems on the tropics. The final element of Confederate pro-slavery policy was an effort to support the Spanish colonial regime in Cuba, believed to be vulnerable both to governmental instability in Madrid and pressure from the United States to emancipate its slaves.

Most leading Confederates rejected the vision of a self-sufficient, perhaps protectionist, state propounded by Wise and McLean. Instead they favored one that was an important participant in the global economy by means of maximum staple production; even if that highest output might have to be delayed by a readjustment from wartime industrialization. According to John Schley, central to this Confederate strength was “the increase of staple products which will bring wealth, prosperity and independent power” based on the “preservation, increase and perpetuity of slavery.” Confidence in the

⁴⁷ Wise, Henry A. *The currency question. Letter of Gen. Henry A. Wise, to Hon J. E. Holmes, of S.C. Headquarters Sixth Military District, Department S.C., Ga., and Florida, November 11, 1863* (n.p., 1863), 8-9; McLean to McDowell, April 9, 1863, folder 109, McDowell Papers, SHC.

institution of slavery had increased in 1863 due to its apparent resilience in the face of the continued war and sustained what historian Robert Bonner termed the slaveholders' "imaginative vision." McCue, in his speech to the Virginia assembly, said the war by then amounted to a vindication of the "preservation of the institution of slavery" and that Britain, France and New England had all been "disappointed in finding the institution not as an element of our weakness, as they hoped, but of our strength."⁴⁸

Confederates debated the effect of the damage inflicted upon slavery by the advance of the Union armies during 1863. Davis declared in his December 7 message to Congress that "in all localities where the enemy has gained a temporary foothold the Negroes...will have been reduced by mortality during the war to half their number." Eldred Simkins agreed that "our greatest loss will be the Negroes – and this amount depends on the duration of the war – for if it lasts four years longer – the greater number of negroes in the Yankee lines will die or emigrate." Simkins saw the losses of slaves as something that was still to occur in the future; but many slaveholders had, by 1863, sustained serious losses. Louisiana Planter Richard T. Archer believed in this mortality when he reported that forty of his slaves had died in Union hands. A friend from Jackson, Mississippi moaned to Josiah Winchester in Natchez about the losses in immense financial terms for "my grandchildren have lost \$146,000 in negroes, cotton, mules, wagons, &c."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ John Schley, "Our Position and Our True Policy"; J. Marshall McCue, *Speech of Mr. McCue, of Augusta, delivered in the House of Delegates, on the 16th and 17th of October, 1863, on the bill to protect sheep and increase the production of wool* (Richmond, Va.: George P. Evans & Co., 1863), 4. McCue sent his speech in pamphlet form to the Governor of South Carolina amongst others. Arming and freeing of slaves was still viewed in government circles as the "ultimate sacrifice of the future for independence." Bonner, *Mastering America*, 275.

⁴⁹ "Message to Confederate Congress," December 7, 1863, *JDC*, 6: 126; Eldred J. Simkins to Miss Elizabeth J. Trescot, February 2, 1863, SIM 135, box 1, Papers of Eldred J. Simkins, HL; Richard T. Archer to Abram Archer, August 22, 1863, box 2E646, folder—letters written 1860-7 and undated, Richard

Slaveholders believed the helpless and dependent slaves to be especially subject to infectious diseases when not under the master's care. They were also alarmed by the consequences of the Confederate government's requisitions of slaves. In January, Mississippi soldier and planter Abram Archer found "that the smallpox is scattered to some extent almost everywhere...I hope that it will not get down here but I am looking for something of the kind everyday as almost everyone has some negroes at Yazoo City working at the navy yard..." Governor Bonham of South Carolina instructed the assembly to investigate allegations of "mismanagement of and want of proper care shown for the slaves impressed to labor for the defenses of Charleston. The British consul in Charleston reported to Earl Russell that the losses of slaves from the South Carolinian plantations was, up to January 1863, still slight, at 3,000 slaves. During 1863, Confederates believed that these losses were temporary and that slavery would recover.⁵⁰

Even in the Mississippi Valley, subject to extensive Union raids and occupation during 1863, planters trusted in the resilience of slavery and expected a Confederate military revival. Jane Kempe wrote that a neighboring planter's "negroes have gone back to work and I hope the troops in the neighborhood will keep them in their place, they know by this time the plantation belongs to their master and mistress and not to them." Furthermore, Confederates also considered an experience of temporarily working for the Union armies would be salutary for the slaves, Margaret G. Winchester also wrote "most of the negroes have come home and are well contented to stay here, they are tired of the

Thompson Archer Papers, UT; "JCF" to Josiah Winchester, August 20, 1863, box 2E921, folder 5, Winchester Family Papers, UT.

⁵⁰ Abram S. Archer to Richard T. Archer January 9, 1863, box 2E650, folder 1—immediate family 1858-1865, Richard Thompson Archer Papers, UT; "Message of Governor Bonham," November 23, 1863, clipping in Walker to Earl Russell, November 26, 1863, FO 5/907, PRO; Robert Bunch to Earl Russell, January 24, 1863, FO 5/906, PRO.

Yankees as they say the Yankees gave them their freedom, [but] nobody to care for them.” On the whole, Confederates expected the war to end sooner than Simpkin’s four years and hence slavery would survive. The assumptions of the postwar Confederacy for the repayment of debt usually included an estimate of slave numbers at or near the pre war level. Culver based his calculations on a postwar population of 3.5 million.⁵¹

Diplomats echoed these slaveholder beliefs about the true welfare of the African American. Mann informed Benjamin that he told Pope Pius that “true philanthropy shuddered at the thought of the liberation of the slave in the manner attempted by Lincoln and company...” According to Mann, the true victim of Union policy was not the slaveholder, but the slave. “Such a procedure would practically convert the well cared for negro into a semibarbarian; that such of our slaves as had been captured or decoyed off by our enemy were in an incomparably worse condition than they were in the service of their masters.” On Confederate independence, African Americans would return to the plantations as slaves because “they wished to return to their old homes, the love of which was the strongest of their affections...”⁵²

While the Confederate priority was protection of slavery within the Confederacy, this policy did nevertheless extend to a consideration of its future growth. Confederates worried that the United States would use its population of former slaves to undermine

⁵¹ Jane Kempe to Frances E. Sprague, June 6, 1863, box 2E912 Margaret G. Sprague Winchester papers: Correspondence, folder 6 – 1860-5, Winchester Family Papers, UT; Margaret Winchester to Frances E. Sprague, November 2, 1863, box 2E913 Frances E. Sprague papers: Correspondence with Margaret G. Sprague Winchester: 1840-1878, 1889, undated, folder 3– 1860-4, Winchester Family Papers, UT; Charles Post Culver, *A Scheme for the relief of the financial embarrassments of the Confederate States: based upon real estate* (Richmond, Va.: Geo. P. Evans & Co., 1863), 11.

⁵² Dudley Mann to Judah P. Benjamin November 14, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:593. Although, as Benjamin noted, there would be a time lag as slaves were reoriented from wartime pursuits: “The first few years of peace the supplies from this country will still continue to be limited by the exhaustion produced by the war and the diversion of slave labor to many other pursuits.” (Benjamin to Mason, January 15, 1863, *Ibid.*, 2:399.)

slavery by colonization schemes not only into occupied areas of the Confederacy, but also into places where the Confederacy wished, after the war, to expand slavery; specifically, the Caribbean and Central America. Although Confederates believed that these ‘coolie labor’ schemes were less efficient for staple crop production, these projects posed a threat to the recapture of lost slaves and to slavery’s future expansion. Hence, Confederate diplomats took active steps to terminate these alleged projects by intense lobbying of European colonial countries.

Rumors of various colonization schemes continued to exercise Confederates throughout 1863. A report published in Britain in January and reached the Confederacy that spring, “directs the English public to the expectations for sea island cotton in the West Indies, the islands lie idle, the planters and authorities are willing, transportation is easy and now the course of events in America furnish the resource: 200,000 contrabands.” According to reports reprinted from the *London Illustrated News*, United States minister Charles Francis Adams had made the suggestion to the Earl Russell. In February, Slidell assured Benjamin the British government had refused, for now, to entertain the proposal. At the same time, an alleged French plan to import former slaves into Martinique has come to Slidell’s attention and so seriously did he take it that he went to the French foreign minister, Drouyn in order to obtain a definitive disavowal. Slidell told Drouyn about Dudley Mann’s recent successful mission to Copenhagen to stop the Danes allowing the United States settling freed slaves in St. Croix.⁵³

Confederates continued to be concerned about the expansion of United States colonization efforts, as these schemes were invariably targeting lands into which the

⁵³ “England’s Policy,” *The tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Tex., April 3, 1863 (GLC05959.51.060); Slidell to Benjamin, February 6, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:423-4.

Confederacy wished to expand or even the Confederacy itself. In April, Governor John Milton wrote to Davis about his fear that in the event of a Union conquest, there was now a plan to colonize Florida with freed slaves; both European and Union Emigrant and Aid Societies had championed this scheme. In May, the Houston Texas based *Tri-weekly Telegraph* was exercised by a story in the *Baltimore Sun* that New England manufacturers, whose mills had been idle, were looking to employ native and free negro emigrant labor across various Central American republics, which had been fortuitously “emptied of filibusters.”⁵⁴

Sustaining slavery wherever it existed remained a priority. Hotze hoped to take advantage of a row between Britain and Brazil. According to Hotze, the Brazilian minister had withdrawn from London “on account of the gross outrage perpetrated at Rio by the British Admiral under instructions from Lord Russell.” As a result, he continued, this “suspension of diplomatic relations affords us the golden opportunity for establishing with the slave power of the southern hemisphere such relations as will bear us most important fruit in the future.” For now, however, Brazil remained unimportant as Confederates deemed slavery to be secure there.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Milton to Davis, April 15, 1863, *JDP*, 9:144; “Cotton,” *The tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Tex, May 11, 1863 (GLC05959.51.070). On the persistence of Lincoln’s interest in colonization even after the Emancipation Proclamation, see Sebastian N. Page, “Lincoln and Chiriqui Colonization Revisited,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 12 3 (September 2011):327-346 and Philip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page, *Colonization After Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011).

⁵⁵ Henry Hotze to Judah P. Benjamin, June 6, 1863, *OR*, 784. The British gunboat diplomacy of Lord Palmerston had been engaged in stamping out the transatlantic slave trade and was renowned for its heavy-handed treatment of Brazilian shipping in particular. Historians have debated the extent to which such aggression was the result of cultivating public opinion at home or the basis of incipient liberalism, see David F. Krein, *The Last Palmerston Government: Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics, and the Genesis of “Splendid Isolation”* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1978); E. D. Steele, *Palmerston and Liberalism, 1855-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). After 1859, Palmerston had to share foreign affairs with Lord John (after 1861, Earl) Russell and historians have portrayed him as either a replicate or a restraint on the Prime Minister’s foreign policy, see John Prest, *Lord John Russell* (Columbia, SC:

According to Confederates, slavery was more vulnerable to United States pressure in the Spanish colonies than in Brazil. Furthermore, the State Department still harbored hopes that Spain would reintroduce slavery into Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo. These factors combined to render the support of Spain an important Confederate foreign policy objective. An opportunity for Confederates to increase their influence in Madrid and protect slavery in those islands arose with the January departure of the pro-Confederacy captain general of Cuba to Spain as foreign minister. The Confederate agent in Havana, Charles Helm, wrote a letter to General Serrano in which he stressed “the community of interests between the Confederacy and the Spanish possessions in the West Indies” Spain needed to act as the Confederacy’s spokesman in the Concert of Europe because “the interest of the South requires a slave power in Europe to cooperate with her in the protection of the peculiar institution in the Confederate States, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Santo Domingo...” In exchange for Spanish support in London and Paris, the Confederacy would protect slavery in the islands, as “our people will be as jealous of your rights in the West Indies as of her own at home.” Confederates deemed it essential to sustain slavery in the Spanish colonies in order to both have slavery existing under a foreign regime and have a representative in Europe of the “slaveholding-interest.”⁵⁶

University of South Carolina Press, 1972); Paul Scherer, *Lord John Russell: A Biography* (Selinsgrove, Pa.: Susquehanna University Press, 1996).

⁵⁶ Helm to Serrano, February 22, 1863 as enclosure in Charles Helm to Judah P. Benjamin, March 3 1863, *OR*, 700-701. Helm sent minutes of his last meeting with Serrano to Slidell who told Benjamin of the “emphatic manner in which he declared his hearty sympathies with our cause, and his determination, on his arrival in Spain [as minister of foreign affairs], to exert all his influence in favor of the recognition of the Confederate States.” (Slidell to Benjamin, February 6, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:424.) It proved a short lived wish as Serrano soon fell from power in the rapid ministerial convulsions that characterized Isabella II’s Spain (May 28, 1863, John Slidell to Benjamin, *Ibid.*, 2: 493.) The Confederates believed Spain would be successful in its recovery of Santo Domingo. For a discussion of the temporary reemergence of Spain as a power under the administration of Leopoldo McDonnell and Calderon Collantes between 1858-1863, see Wayne H. Bowen, *Spain and the American Civil War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011).

Benjamin amplified these arguments in the subsequent decision to send the Paris commissioner, John Slidell, to Madrid. Benjamin presented the Confederacy as the region's force of stability, trade and morality and as a contrast to the aggressive, acquisitive United States. A close alliance made sense because, due to commerce and slavery, "relations were destined to be intimate." Benjamin argued that the reciprocal action of Spain should be to recognize the Confederacy not only on the basis of the shared interests of slavery and commerce, but also on the "gratitude and respect of mankind" and the "interests of common humanity." The ending of "the war of extermination" and the creation of "cordial amity" with a Confederate States devoted to the peaceful development of her own natural resources would redound to Spain's glory.⁵⁷

The paramount interest of the Confederacy was to prevent Cuba from falling into the hands of the United States. Benjamin wrote that the Confederate government "cannot fail to foresee attempts by [the United States government] to seek elsewhere for acquisitions it has failed to receive from us." Benjamin cited as evidence for this Union covetousness the refusal of then United States Secretary of State, Edward Everett, in 1852 to add the United States signature to the Tripartite Convention with Britain and France guaranteeing Spain's possession of Cuba. The argument deployed foreshadowed the case the Confederacy would later make to Mexico - the presentation of an aggressive destabilizing United States.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, May 9, 1863, *Richardson, Messages and Papers*, 2: 482-5. Benjamin had made the appointment on Slidell's own suggestion: "As Gen. Serrano is now minister of foreign affairs at Madrid, I think it is to be regretted we have not there a diplomatic agent ready to avail himself of his friendly disposition." (Ibid., 2:424.)

⁵⁸ Ibid., 2:484. In rejecting the proposal, Everett argued that the United States had a special interest in Cuba on account of its proximity, that she had already purchased Louisiana and Florida, and that it was not "within the competence of the treaty-making power in 1852 effectually to bind the government in all its branches; and, for all coming time, not to make a similar purchase of Cuba." (Everett to the Comte de Sartiges, December 1, 1852, U.S. Department of State, *Message from the President of the United States: In*

Territorial Expansion to the West and South

Confederates conceived Native Americans as natural, albeit inferior, members of their realm governed by gradated races. Their possession of Indian Territory remained integral to the Confederate ambition intended to increase trade, settle and, in the long term, occupy portions of Mexico. To that end, it was vital to achieve three interrelated objectives in 1863: first, keep alive the Confederate claim to New Mexico and Arizona; second, end the anarchy in Mexico that interrupted trade and the security of foreign residents; and third, prevent the United States from occupying the country. However, with the exception of the Native Americans, the attention of the Confederate government was only sporadic during much of 1863. Instead, expansionist ambitions relied chiefly on the efforts of agents on the ground to petition for aid and mobilize scarce resources with at best verbal encouragement from Richmond. This inattention was not because the Government had turned cold on expansion however, and at the end of the year, the State Department sensed an opportunity with the establishment of a conservative regency in Mexico to actively engage in Mexican affairs and formulate a distinct Confederate foreign policy.

Confederates hoped that a future of mutual advantage beckoned in their relations with Native Americans. In his report sent to Congress on January 12, the acting Confederate Indian Commissioner, Kentuckian Sutton S. Scott assured the Native Americans that the Confederate government was much more friendly and reliable in its dealings with Native Americans than that of the United States. Scott declared President

Answer to a Resolution of the Senate Calling for Information Relative to a Proposed Tripartite Convention on the Subject of Cuba [1853], state document 13, p. 17.)

Davis “loves you...the treaties were about extending rights and privileges which had been denied by the old government...” Moreover, Native Americans would occupy an advantageous position in the racial hierarchy of the Confederacy, Scott affirmed that “you are made to occupy a high and exalted position, one adapted to your civilization and advancement and suited to your pride and independence of character.”⁵⁹

In their hierarchy of races, Confederates deemed Native Americans to be in a category above that of African Americans. In the *Index* of April 23, Hotze explained on reviewing Scott’s report that Native Americans “are not some kind of wild negro, but with the exception of a few tribes are a high spirited and superior race” He argued that Scott has had “no trouble confirming their loyalties” because their “interests were with the South and [possessing] similar institutions being slaveholders.” It was up to the Indians to make the most of their profitable position; the Confederate government had placed “facilities for advancement” within their reach and if properly used “it will become easy for you in a few years to become powerful and prosperous nations.”⁶⁰

The Confederate government also wished to maintain control of the Indian Territory. At the end of the year, Representative Thomas B. Hanly of Arkansas, from the House’s Indian Affairs Committee, introduced and had passed resolutions confirming that Indian delegates from the respective Nations be seated in the House, they could not only introduce legislation relative to their Nation, but also one of their number would become a non voting member of the House committee. On December 14, Hanly introduced to the House resolutions that included the following clause; “that each delegate from the several Indian Nations with whom treaties have been made and

⁵⁹ Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Report of the commissioner of Indian Affairs, Confederate States of America, War Dept., Office of Indian Affairs, Richmond, January 12, 1863* (Richmond Va.: n.p., 1863), 9-11.

⁶⁰ “Confederate States Executive Documents,” *The Index* 2 52 (April 23, 1863):401.

concluded by the Confederacy shall have and be entitled to a seat on the floor of this House, may propose and introduce measures for the benefit of his particular nation and be heard in respect and regard thereto, or other matters in which his nation may be particularly interested.” The Confederate policy on Indians, which had oscillated between coercion and conciliation in 1862, during 1863 became firmly on the side of conciliation. This attitude reflected the wider Confederate interest in the primacy of commercial relations and presenting themselves as the champion of humanity.⁶¹

In an article circulated in spring 1863, Albert Pike wrote that he had earlier “secured to the Confederacy, a magnificent country, equal in extent, fertility, beauty and resources to any one of the States...nay superior to any.” Pike argued that the army officers on the ground in 1862 acted with “conduct calculated to mute our Indians’ loyalty and broke promises [of supplying provisions and clothing to the Indians] made to the commissioner.” Pike saw larger consequences of the soldiers’ actions; “so far as they related to our Indian allies, I notice them here because if we lose the Indian Country, as we are almost certain to do, Arkansas and Texas are ruined.” Pike’s argument clearly persuaded the government; On April 29, Pike was requested by Congress to examine and approve the quartermaster’s accounts relating to payment of Indian troops. Although the Apaches and other “Reserve Indians” were not held in so much regard as the settled tribes, it was significant that Davis on March 28 wrote on information received from General John B. Magruder that if Governor Baylor had exterminated the Apache in Arizona, it would be “an infamous crime.”⁶²

⁶¹ Hanly, “Indian Affairs Committee Resolutions,” December 14, 1863, *CJ*, 6: 529.

⁶² “Letter to Holmes,” *The tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Tex., March 16, 1863 (GLC05959.51.055); Albert Pike, *Address, to the senators and representatives of the state of Arkansas in the Congress of the Confederate States* (La.: n.p., 1863), 8; William P. Chilton, Committee on Commissary and

Confederates regarded the territory of New Mexico, including Arizona, as the gateway to Mexico. The favored route of the Southern Pacific Railroad would run through the southern edge of the territory, before heading south along the Yaqui Valley in Mexico to the province of Sonora's port of Guaymas on the Gulf of California. Davis actively considered renewed moves into New Mexico and Arizona in both March and December 1863. Malcolm H. MacWillie, the territorial delegate of Arizona, was active throughout the year in trying to prompt action in Richmond. He promoted the growth of mining as well as the railroad. MacWillie wrote to Davis that New Mexico was in a state of revolution and, on June 8, recommended that Davis move swiftly to establish governments in both New Mexico and Arizona. Otherwise in the absence of organized territorial governments on the ground in New Mexico and Arizona, the Confederacy had ceded de facto these to the United States as the default owner and in any mediated peace negotiations these territories would be awarded to the United States. MacWillie feared that the aftermath of Chancellorsville and apparent deadlock on the Mississippi a negotiated peace was imminent and the Confederacy stood to lose its claim to the territory.⁶³

Davis forwarded MacWillie's request to the attorney general for legal opinion, but Confederates were confident that they would secure these territories even if, as with other large parts of the Confederacy, it remained under temporary Union control. At the end of the year, the latent claim became active once more. On December 16, Lanford W. Hastings wrote to and then saw Davis and presented a proposal to raise between 3,000

Quartermasters' Departments, "Joint Resolution," April 29, 1863, *CJ*, 6:454; Davis, note, March 28, 1863 on Baylor to Magruder, December 29, 1862, *JDP*, 9:117.

⁶³ Malcolm H. MacWillie, to Davis, March 21, June, 8, 1863, *JDP*, 9:113,211. MacWillie cited *Uti Possidetis*, Latin for "as you possess under the law".

and 5,000 troops in California, seize Arizona and New Mexico for the Confederacy and thus maintain communication with the Pacific. Davis requested a conference with Secretary of War Seddon to discuss the topic.⁶⁴

As regards Mexico itself, antebellum expansionists recognized that the reality of war necessitated a suspension of any active designs by the government upon the country and to some degree had become spectators. As Sam Houston wistfully declared in a speech on March 18, “Napoleon III steps forward to grasp the prize, which is beyond our reach; and we who are the most interested have but to make the best of it.” In 1863, Confederates, mindful of their weakness, attempted to exploit opportunities that arose and the initiative lay with people “on the ground,” especially in the neighboring states of Texas and California.⁶⁵

The Confederate government expected future settlement and development of mining in Mexico by Confederate sympathizers from California once Maximilian’s regime was stabilized in Mexico City. On December 15, Slidell explained to the French Minister of Marine “the necessity of the occupation of Guaymas with a small corps sustained by a squadron...this force may be made the *point d’appui* of an extensive emigration from California of natives of southern states.” Therefore to achieve that ultimate objective, during 1863, Confederate government policy toward Mexico was

⁶⁴ Davis note, April 2, 1863, *JDP*, 9:113; Davis note December, 18, 1863 referring to Seddon “for consideration and conference with reference to other papers.” *JDP*, 10:112.

⁶⁵ Sam Houston, “Speech in Galveston,” March 18, 1863, printed in the *Texas Republican*, April 4, 1863, box 2R48, vol. XVI, January 1861-May 1928, Sam Houston Papers, UT. The attitude of acceptance and ‘making the best of it’ summed up the attitude of the Unionist Houston to the Confederacy, although he never ceased to believe secession was a mistake.

dictated by “an overriding interest in law and order” to be established in that country, for “a regenerated Mexico will be the natural ally of the Confederate States.”⁶⁶

As early as April 1863, it was rumored in Richmond that “large numbers” of southern men were immigrating to Mazatlan, Mexico. By the summer one of their number, A. J. Grayson, had written to Davis with regard to Commerce raiding in the Pacific and using Mexico as a conduit between California and the Confederacy. Davis subsequently raised the proposal with Benjamin.⁶⁷

Confederates did see other immediate uses for Mexico to support the war effort and break the blockade. It was regarded as a vital source of horses. Communications with the outside world could be made via Mexico. Grayson recommended to Davis the need to establish an international mail route via Matamoras and Monterey. Senator Edward Sparrow of Louisiana in the Senate reported a bill for the transmission of foreign mail from Havana to Matamoras. On August 15, William H. Houston suggested to Davis that Mexico would be a promising source of artillerists to which proposal Davis responded “if men come to Texas and organize of the service of this country I see no objection to receiving them.”⁶⁸

Due to their border, Texans especially stressed the importance of expansion of trade with Mexico. In his March speech, Houston declared it “our interest that the condition of Mexico should be changed and that she may be opened to our trade under

⁶⁶ John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, *OR*, 3:976. Former Californian Senator Dr. William M. Gwin in conversation in Havana with William Preston, Minister to Mexico for following year put the number of willing Confederate migrants at between 15 and 20,000. (Preston to Jefferson Davis, June 28, 1864, Letter book of William Preston, Minister to Mexico from the Confederacy, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, FHS.)

⁶⁷ L. Lowyle to Joseph Lancaster Brent, April 24, 1863, BT 156, box 1, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL; Grayson to Jefferson Davis, August 21, 1863, *JDP*, 9:350.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*; Sparrow, “Resolution,” March 23, 1863, *CJ*, 3:189; Houston to Davis, Davis to Seddon, August 15, 1863, *JDP*, 9:346.

peaceful auspices.” As Jonathan T. Harcourt of Columbus, Texas, wrote to the *Weekly Telegraph*, Jose “Quintero was sent as commissioner into Mexico to enter into the Texas Trade.” In April, Senator Williamson S. Oldham from the Commerce Committee confirmed that Davis had revoked the cotton orders across the Rio Grande; a step calculated to increase the trade between the two nations.⁶⁹

A correspondent of the *Weekly Telegraph*, “Rebel” from Matamoras, Mexico, complained of the Confederate general order announced on November 25, 1862. It had stated that cotton could only to be taken out of the Confederacy in return for goods previously imported. The correspondent attacked it as benefiting larger corporate interests and speculators and violating the rules of political economy: “The remedy for speculation is competition – no law can govern prices but supply and demand...the orders had prevented planters from getting down to Brownsville...also prevented Mexicans from entering the trade” The correspondent concluded that it was both bad for morale and contrary to government policy which aimed to look “to make trade free as far as the enemy would permit” Texan legislators in Richmond forcefully pressed for the adoption of free trade. Houston praised Oldham’s efforts and “your advocacy of the measure of receiving foreign goods duty free, I regard as a piece of pure statesmanship.”⁷⁰

From his vantage point in Mexico itself, Confederate agent Quintero saw the looming French occupation chiefly in the consequences of the commercial relations

⁶⁹ Sam Houston, “Speech in Galveston,” March 18, 1863, printed in the *Texas Republican*, April 4, 1863, box 2R48, vol. XVI, January 1861-May 1928, Sam Houston Papers, UT; “Letter,” March 28, 1863, *The tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Tex., April 3, 1863 (GLC5950.59.060); Oldham, “Senate Commercial Committee Motion,” April 23, 1863, *CJ*, 3:333.

⁷⁰ *The tri-weekly Telegraph*, Houston, Tex., May, 11, 1863 (GLC5959.51.070); Sam Houston to Williamson Oldham, February 24, 1863, box 2R48, vol. XVI, January 1861-May 1928, Sam Houston Papers, UT.

between the Confederacy and the French protectorate. He wrote to Benjamin from Monterey that “as soon as the French shall occupy Matamoras, the necessary steps shall be taken to have the full use of the port. Under her rule most of the obnoxious duties on cotton will be repealed.”⁷¹

In 1863, Confederate policy was the promotion of free trade and competitive exploitation of undeveloped areas and the consequent condemnation of spheres of interest. Confederates denounced the record of U.S. policy in Latin America in general and in Mexico in particular. The cornerstone of Confederate policy was the renunciation of the Monroe Doctrine. Confederates defined this policy as the U.S. interdiction of European attempts to revive Latin American economies and the application of inappropriate forms of republican self-government for backward regimes. The result, according to Confederate understanding, was that successive U.S. administrations had consigned Latin American nations to successive corrupt and anarchic regimes.⁷²

Some Confederates saw U.S. adhesion to the Monroe Doctrine as out of step with their understanding of progress. In the context of the opening up of the China market in the aftermath of the Second Opium War, The Index’s Paris correspondent declared that “the Chinese walls of exclusiveness are falling in the extreme east, amid the applause of all enlightened nations, and the American democracy seeks to rebuild them in the New World! And whilst the spirit of liberty and progress tend to build together and unify modern society, the American Republicanism seeks to segregate them in savage isolation.” Others saw the issue in moral terms, Wiley described the Monroe Doctrine as

⁷¹ José Quintero to Judah P. Benjamin, September 16, 1863, *OR*, 899-900.

⁷² Historian Jay Sexton argues that the term ‘Monroe Doctrine’ for the first time “became a nationalist symbol, a permanent feature of political and diplomatic landscape, during the Civil War.” Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011), 156.

an act of “presumptive arrogance” and “hence we [Confederates] must repudiate the doctrine of a single dominion for America, not simply because we are no longer interested in it: we must repent of the sin of having aided [when part of the Union] this unholy lust of Universal Control.”⁷³

In December, the instructions prepared for the future envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary castigated the U.S. guarantee of republican governments in the Americas as tantamount to “leaving Mexico to anarchists.” In the same month, Davis declared in his message to Congress that Confederates, although “preferring our own government and institutions to those of other countries,” had “no disposition to contest the exercise by them of the same right of self government which we assert for ourselves.” His priorities were a “sincere and friendly interest in their prosperity...the continuance of those peaceful relations which have been maintained on the frontier and even a large development of the commerce already existing to the mutual advantage of the two countries.”⁷⁴

Commercial expansion and the development of reciprocal obligations were the twin pillars of short-term Confederate policy. For most of 1863, Confederates maintained this commercial policy toward Mexico. Confederates hesitated on diplomatic moves due to distrust of French intentions. But when an opportunity arose for a deeper engagement, from an approach from the Mexican Regency, as well as from Maximilian in Europe, it was seized. In December, the Confederate government secretly resolved on the

⁷³ “Letter from Paris,” *The Index* 3 71 (September 3, 1863):302; Calvin Henderson Wiley, *Scriptural views of national trials: or, The true road to independence and peace of the Confederate States of America* by Rev. C. H. Wiley (Greensboro, N.C.: Sterling, Campbell & Albright, 1863), 182-84 .

⁷⁴ Instructions quoted in William Preston to General Almonte, June 6, 1864, Letter book of William Preston, Minister to Mexico from the Confederacy, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, FHS; Davis, “Message to the Confederate Congress,” December 7, 1863, *JDC*, 6: 107-8.

appointment of an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico. It was significant that the decision was made to request Congress's approval only after the Regency in Mexico had made approaches to Richmond and, it was thought, from the future Emperor Maximilian to Slidell. The need for secrecy was on account of, according to Benjamin, the "great danger that the U.S. would endeavor to defeat the object of the mission if known." For as the instructions to the envoy make clear "both states [are] united by a community of danger and interest."⁷⁵

To an extent France as the occupying power was the least bad outcome. The *Richmond Enquirer* summarized the policy conclusion, "Mexico in her chronic anarchy was bound to come under the influence of either Britain, the United States and France...[France] is the only one we could tolerate on our southern border...a regime that would secure security for foreign residents and hold out some hope of order, development and rational freedom." Confederate diplomatic policy toward Mexico was conducted by the State Department on the basis of a distrust of French motives and behavior. The legacy of the French consuls' intrigue of late 1862 remained. Although, of the commissioners in Europe, Dudley Mann alone consistently sent Benjamin information suggesting that Napoleon III harbored designs on Texas and even Louisiana. An unnamed University of Virginia professor confirmed Mann's allegations with a detailed recollection of a meeting with the Emperor. Benjamin remained guarded, on August 4 he wrote to Slidell that there was "open a wide field of speculation as to the probable action of Napoleon III" and Benjamin confessed his "inability to conjecture the result but no one

⁷⁵ Benjamin to Davis, December 28, 1863, GLC069919.01; Senate Executive Session, December 28, 29, 31, 1863, *CJ*, 3:493-4, 508. As Benjamin wrote to Davis, "it has not been usual to keep secret the fact of sending a mission to a foreign country." The Senate was still considering the resolution on appointment and instructions at the end of the year.

can fail to foresee the deepest and permanent influence on the affairs of this continent by the new state of things on the southern frontier.” Benjamin’s caution frustrated the more enthusiastic Mason who complained in September of a lack of policy on Mexico.⁷⁶

Confederates believed the French would need their help in maintaining the Mexican regime. As Hershel V. Johnson told Davis in August, Napoleon III would move toward recognition since he cannot maintain his foothold in Mexico if the Confederacy reunites with the United States. Confederates believed the Mexican Empire Napoleon envisaged would be dependent on Confederate independence and support. But some Confederates welcomed the chance to deepen an affinity they believed they had with the French. Alfred G. Haley of Louisiana wrote to Davis on February 21 suggesting an alliance with France, guaranteeing part of Mexico and in return for this aid allowing Confederate emigration, the result will be “the South should mingle with the Gallant Gaul in Mexico.” But even then it was often a marriage of convenience; on January 9, Keiley wrote to Benjamin that Napoleon III desires “a great American friend to be the present defense of this colony [in Mexico].” This alliance would be temporary as within five years “we can purchase the supremacy of the western world at the cost of our friendship with the eastern.”⁷⁷

Confederates expected their friendship with the Mexican regime to be balanced by Union hostility. Looking forward to the result of what they were convinced would be

⁷⁶ “The Southern Press on Mexico,” *The Index* 3 72 (September 10, 1863):372; Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, February 2, 1863, *OR*, 3:685-6; Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, August 4, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:541-3; Mason to Benjamin, September 4, 1863, *Ibid.*, 2:557. Mason informed Benjamin: “You have not informed us as to the president’s policy it may become us to pursue in the event, now at hand, of a monarchy established in Mexico by France. Would it not be well that such policy should be defined and put in possession of [Slidell] and myself?”

⁷⁷ Johnson to Davis, August 6, 1863, *JDP*, 9:321; Haley to Davis, February 21, 1863, *JDP*, 9:71; Keiley to Benjamin, January 9, 1863, box 1, Meade Collection, UVA. Haley had also been in contact with the Quartermaster’s Department with regard to procuring horses and mules from Mexico (Quartermaster General Abraham C. Myers to Davis, March 4, 1863, *JDP*, 9:89.)

the final 1864 campaign, Davis and Benjamin believed “the United States will be anxious to enter into a peace with the Confederacy on the basis of the Monroe Doctrine as one of its stipulations.” A hostile Mexican – Union relationship served Confederate interests. Otherwise, with an eye on a Southern Pacific Railroad, MacWillie warned Davis “any alliance between Mexico and the United States will be inimical to the interests of the Confederate States.” In January, a Californian, Cameron Erskine Thom spelled out the Confederate need even more clearly for an “imperative necessity will shortly exist for some port in the Pacific...to be occupied by another power than that of Lincoln.”⁷⁸

Confederates Attempt to Lead North America both in Theory and Practice

Confederates conceived of their place in the world based on a combination of the claims based on Victorian political economy and reaching back to enlightenment ideas of Natural Law and government based on virtue. In part a reliance on these concepts reflected the position of diplomatic isolation and military weakness of the Confederacy. Yet Confederates also believed that this thinking helped plan for their postwar independence and was based on their strengths as a nation.⁷⁹

With an aim to become the dominant power on the North American continent, the Confederacy sought not conquest or even necessarily acquisition of territory. Confederates rather hoped for ‘a first among equals’ status that would maximize their nation’s commercial and slavery expansion in the less developed areas of the tropics. The Confederate commissioner to Brussels, Dudley Mann told Benjamin that, as a result of

⁷⁸ MacWillie to Davis, June 8, 1863, *JDP*, 9:211; Cameron Erskine Thom to Joseph Pembroke Thom, January 5, 1863, HM 47967, Papers of Cameron Erskine Thom, HL. Thom wrote from Los Angeles just before departure to fight for the Confederacy in Virginia. He was reacting to news that the Mexican province of “Sonora is professed to be occupied by a French division.” Thom asked whether this French move was “because we have a turbulent element here [in southern California]?”

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the role of natural law in the formation of the United States and how the law of nations was not a simple constraint on power, but enabled the powerful to exercise their power with limited oversight from other nations, see Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth*.

efforts now, “in a comparatively short time we shall develop a republic that will exercise in its dignified administration of affairs as controlling an influence upon the destinies of the American Continent as France exercises in Europe.”⁸⁰

Confederates believed that their political and commercial power was sustained by moral superiority because their revolution affirmed the right to self-government. Calvin Henderson Wiley of North Carolina explained this sense of ethical leadership, which inevitably fell to Confederates. He wrote that the Confederate government “believes that the existence of other distinct nations on the continent is not inconsistent with its own rights and interests; and it is willing to accord to others what it claims for itself, the privilege of living under a government and laws of their choice.” In 1863, Confederates stressed a form of ‘liberal internationalism’ to both legitimize and sustain their postwar ambitions – a stance that contrasted with the assertiveness of 1862 and the quasi imperialism of 1861.⁸¹

Confederates had always conceived that their advocacy of free trade entitled themselves to be considered as an international promoter of peace; however, increasingly Confederates sought to include a moral dimension to that of political economy. They turned to the works of Vattel. He argued that there certainly exists a natural law of nations since the obligations of the law of nature are no less binding on states, on men united in political society, than on individuals. What particularly appealed to Confederates was Vattel’s point which ‘built’ on earlier maxims of Roman Law, Grotius and Hobbes that, “we may truly apply to states a maxim which has long been

⁸⁰ Dudley Mann to Judah P. Benjamin, June 25, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2: 520-2.

⁸¹ Calvin Henderson Wiley, *Scriptural views of national trials: or, The true road to independence and peace of the Confederate States of America* by Rev. C. H. Wiley (Greensboro, N.C.: Sterling, Campbell & Albright, 1863), 7.

acknowledged as true with respect to individuals...the best and safest policy is that which is founded on virtue...To inspire a love of virtue...is worthy of homage and even productive of solid advantage. It is also a sacred rule to respect the truth and the interests of the human race.”⁸²

As hopes of international recognition faded in 1863, this guidance became more important to Confederates. Confederates did not use the term liberal internationalism, rather they talked generally of the Confederacy as the safeguard of the “interests of humanity and advancing civilization.” But sometimes, depending on the audience, they were more specific. For example, the State Department prepared instructions to agents to head to Ireland to follow up on rumors that Union agents were trying to encourage Irishmen to emigrate. Confederates believed northerners enticed them with the false promise of a homestead when in actual fact the Irish were, contrary to neutrality laws, enlisted straight into the army. In this context, Benjamin wrote of the Confederacy as a place “where all religions and nationalities meet equal justice and protection.”⁸³

A Confederate stress on liberal internationalism suited both the diplomatic isolation and military weakness of the time. After all, as Howell Cobb stated “we have no friends in the world.” When Confederates spoke of the shared international values of ‘civilization,’ they meant something that was certainly intellectual, as Benjamin told Alabama Senator C. C. Clay that Confederate power rested on “superiority of reason and intellect over raw strength.” But it was more than simply aspiring to be members of a

⁸² Emerich de Vattel, *The law of nations; or, Principles of the law of nature, applied to the conduct and affairs of nations and sovereigns. From the French of Monsieur de Vattel...From the new ed., by Joseph Chitty with additional notes and references, by Edward D. Ingraham, esq* (Philadelphia, Pa.: T. & J. W. Johnson, 1855), preface.

⁸³ Benjamin to Lieutenant J. L. Capstone, July 3, 1863, *OR*, 828-29. Capstone had been appointed an agent to Ireland.

transatlantic community of advanced ideas, Confederates also considered liberal internationalism to be a practical policy after independence.⁸⁴

Confederates believed their present actions reflected their future policy. Permitting British debt collection from the state of Alabama was justified, as Benjamin told Slidell, as evidence that “the states of the Confederacy have under the most adverse circumstances made great efforts and sacrifices to effect punctual payment of their debt to neutrals.” Confederates extended their grievance over European recognition of the Union’s blockade into a statement of principle, as “the Treaty of Paris declarations commend themselves to our judgment as more just, humane and consonant with modern civilization than the belligerent positions, which great powers have heretofore sought introduce into the maritime code.” Davis summarized that “the future policy of the Confederacy must be to uphold neutral rights to their fullest extent.”⁸⁵

Confederate liberal internationalism was more than a necessary product of military inferiority toward the Union and an inability to secure alliances with European powers - it was also the logical consequence, Confederates believed, of their celebration of state rights, now safely enshrined in their amended Constitution. With reference to the Lyons-Seward treaty in particular and treaty making in general, Benjamin affirmed “the

⁸⁴ Judah P. Benjamin to C. C. Clay, January 3, 1863, *OR*, 3:668. Liberal internationalism can be best defined, as following William E. Gladstone’s later argument at Midlothian in 1879, to “foster the strength of the nation and to reserve it for great and worthy occasions fostered by just legislation and economy at home...The result is the growth of the great elements of national power, wealth, which is a physical element, and union and contentment, which are moral elements...To preserve to the nations the blessing of peace especially when we recollect the sacred name we bear as Christians for the Christian nations...To strive to cultivate and maintain, ay to the uttermost, what is called the Concert...neutralise and fetter and bind up the selfish aims of every other nation.” The foreign policy must follow the following maxims, to “avoid needless and entangling engagements,” hold that “all nations are equal” and let “no one declare a pharisaical superiority” The foreign policy of civilized nations must be inspired “by the love of freedom.” (John Charmley, *Splendid Isolation? Britain, the Balance of Power and the Origins of the First World War 1874-1914* [London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1989], 172-80.)

⁸⁵ Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, October 8, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:579; Davis, “Message to the Confederate Congress,” December 7, 1863, *JDC*, 6:107.

superior efficacy of Confederate constitutional provisions on the African Slave Trade than any treaty provisions.” Benjamin believed that the commissioners needed to persuade European diplomats that the maintenance of the sovereignty of the individual Confederate states provided the strongest safeguard for the government’s adherence to international civilized norms. Whereas agreements reached via secret diplomacy, such as that conducted between the U.S. State Department and British Foreign Office with regard to the resumption of the slave trade, could be revoked on a whim.⁸⁶

In thinking about what their nation stood for in the world, Confederates linked the older thinking on the location of sovereignty to those of early nineteenth century political economy. Slidell explained to Napoleon III that the policy he carried out in Paris was driven by his seeing the Confederacy as “a community of men and interests whose existence is fully established and who should be as responsible as a single individual...the community has a real existence, since it forms treaties, contracts and makes loans.” The anonymous writer Juridicus agreed when noting “the position which the Confederate States truly occupy...and that nations like individuals acknowledge the obligations of moral laws.” Juridicus considered that “the duty of states is to a certain extent the duty of individuals.” As with the Union, this duty “may be neglected: insane passion or insatiate ambition may for a time seem to crush beneath the car of conquest the right of the weak and the duty of the strong.” But Confederates should not give up hope for “retribution is surely destined to punish those who have thus abused their power.” Juridicus concluded “that a great God direct the conduct of men in their individual relations all admit; that the same power directs men in their aggregated communities all

⁸⁶ Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, L. Q. C. Lamar, James M. Mason, January 15, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2: 404

may in like manner admit.” Confederates believed their national power to be based on virtue, amongst other factors.⁸⁷

The Confederate nation had to also rely on sound finance. The credit of the government was essential to its international respectability, an important precondition for its liberal internationalism to be credible and for future expansion. Hence the interest in the Erlanger Loan as evidence of international confidence in the credit of the Confederacy, Benjamin wrote to Slidell that although “we want no money on this side of the water...your intimation of the political advantages likely to be derived from the loan carried great weight.” Mason greeted the issue of the loan in the London Stock Market and Paris Bourse as likewise more than a mere financing operation. As he wrote to Benjamin, “I think I may congratulate you, therefore, on the triumphant success of our infant credit; it shows that dispute all detraction and calumny that cotton is king.” Hotze explained to Benjamin that “the financial credit of the Government is one so inseparably connected to our foreign policy and it forms so large an ingredient of public opinion.”⁸⁸

While sound finance could buttress Confederate claims to respectability in the world, systematic chaos undermined it. Hotze continued: “[I]t is undeniable that the credit of the government has suffered most seriously by the clashing interests, the rivalries and hostilities, sometimes the disgraceful public squabbles of contractors, and by the lax manner which in many instances contracts have been granted.” The government was deemed to be the product the activities of its speculators who have “constantly kept the Confederate Government before the trading community as a necessitous, shift-

⁸⁷ Slidell, “Memorandum,” in Slidell to Benjamin, April 20, 1863, *OR* 743-45; Juridicus (pseud), *The recognition of the Confederate States: considered in a reply to the letters of “Historicus” in the London Times* (Charleston, S.C.: Evans & Cogswell, 1863), 34.

⁸⁸ Benjamin to Slidell, January 15, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:406; Mason to Benjamin, March 30, 1863, *OR*, 730.

making, doubtful and not over fastidious buyer.” It was a testament to Confederate resilience that it has survived thus far, as according to Hotze “I doubt whether the credit of any other government in the civilized world could have withstood so successfully and for so long as ours has done under such reckless and damaging handling.”⁸⁹

Confederate confidence in their place in this world order also rested on the inherited strengths, especially stability of institutions, provided by slavery and staple crops. To this foundation, Confederates believed their “power for repelling aggression becomes more manifest as the contest is lengthened.” Due to their ability to withstand Union pressure, “the government of the Confederacy has been as stable as any government within the confines of civilization.” On this promising basis, the government would practice a virtuous policy as it “entertains no Utopian theories, no propaganda schemes, no notion of bettering the condition of countries by attempting to intermeddle directly or indirectly in their affairs. In its intercourse with foreign governments its steady policy will be the maintenance of cordially harmonious relations.” As Confederates expected the war to close soon, “we will not be long in forcing our way to a higher position as relates to the maintenance of the probity of international law and the just observance of the principles which should obtain in international intercourse, than the mightiest of European powers.”⁹⁰

The problem was predicting when this time would come and it was possible to see that by the end of 1863 this confidence in vindication had slipped into fatalism. In December, Benjamin reflected to Slidell his impressions of Davis and that “it is a

⁸⁹ Benjamin to Slidell, January 15, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2:406; Henry Hotze to Judah P. Benjamin, October 3 1863, *OR*. 3:920.

⁹⁰ Dudley Mann to Judah P. Benjamin, January 5, 1863, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 2: 387; Dudley Mann to Judah P. Benjamin, January 16, 1863, *Ibid*, 2:410.

spectacle really sublime to observe the utter abnegation of self...the entire willingness to leave his vindication to posterity.” Davis did not keep this rather long term or even eternal apotheosis to his confidants. He declared to the nation that same month that “if the Confederate army fail to command the respect or sympathy of the civilized nations of today; it cannot fail to be recognized by less deceived posterity.”⁹¹

Confederate expansionism needed to be sustained by having the confidence of an assured place in the world. During 1863, forces were at work undermining that positive outlook. The sense of victimhood, corrosive to planning for the future, grew. Historian Paul Quigley observes that sense of martyrdom and suffering could be a source of internal strength for Confederates—but such mentality could not sustain Confederate expansionist ambitions. The rise of anti-foreigner sentiment provided an indication of this state of mind, in particular against British residents in the Confederacy. Davis did try to resist the pressure to act from congressmen, or at least portray it as a temporary wartime phenomenon. But the need to make diplomatic gestures of frustration toward other nations, such as the expulsion of the consuls over resident alien conscription (ironically the consequence of Confederate belief in the laws of reciprocal obligation) demonstrated the vulnerability of Confederate self-esteem. Confederate diplomat Edwin de Leon saw the danger, writing to Davis that his proposed expulsion of the consuls would be seen more as a “personal pique against a small minister, and to impatience of recognition, than to the calm, consciousness of strength or to deliberate and settled policy.”⁹²

⁹¹ Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, December 9, 1863, *OR*, 972; Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress,” December 7, 1863, *JDC*, 6:93.

⁹² Edwin de Leon to Jefferson Davis, October 1, 1863, *JDP*, 10:3; Paul Quigley, *Shifting Boundaries* 181-86.

Consular dispatches noted that anti-foreigner sentiment grew during 1863. On August 21, Henry Pinckney Walker wrote to Earl Russell: “[T]he disasters which have been sustained by the ‘so-called’ Confederate States have tended in a great measure to increase the bitterness towards Englishmen, to which all persons in this locality [Charleston] have, of late, been in the habit of giving utterance.” On November 16, Cridland detailed the other symptoms of loss of confidence and a “growing mistrust as to future events in the Confederacy.” These included speculation, a general collapse of morals and vicious ad hominem attacks on Davis and General Braxton Bragg in particular. In such a context, Confederates increasingly focused on their virtue, as Judge William G. Jones declared in court: “To forego our undeniable right to the exercise of those [belligerent] pretensions is a policy higher, worthier of us and our cause, than to revoke the adherence to principles that we approve...[we will] awaken a great people...by our forbearance.” However, the sense of confidence in expansionist power built on slavery and the production of staple crops and enhanced by the experience of war remained the predominant basis of Confederate Government policy during 1863.⁹³

In 1863, Confederate expansionist ambitions remained both in thought and deed; but there was a reliance on commercial growth and moral values, as opposed to military strength and territorial annexation, for their accomplishment, at least in the short term. In part, this stance did result from the circumstances of the time, when their military weakness vis-à-vis the Union seemed to be ever more pronounced. However, the Confederates continued to be very confident both in the imminent prospect of peace and

⁹³ Walker to Russell, August 21, 1863, FO 5/907, PRO; Cridland to Earl Russell, July 2, November 16, 1863, FO 5/908, PRO.

the accomplishment of their independence. Not only were these justifications for expansion at the forefront of what Confederates saw as civilization, but they also provided the true basis for an enduring national power.

Confederates had to carefully navigate their way to an expansive future through the potential pitfalls of “weal or woe.” If they were too confident of a prosperous and expansive future, Confederates worried they might indulge in distracting speculations. However, if Confederates became too preoccupied with dread of defeat, they again succumbed to a stupefied inaction, although this time as a result of panic. In both circumstances, they then neglected vital attention on the primary objective of supporting the war effort. As a result of these circumstances, expansionist ambitions remained in place, especially to the West and South, but they became somewhat less important as practical policy objectives. Instead, more abstract expansionist ambitions indirectly served as motivators for Confederates to persevere with present-day fighting and sacrifice. At year end, however, serious military reverses in Tennessee, together with a gathering financial crisis, meant the Confederate future now appeared as an inadequate solution to current problems. On December 14, Kenneth Rayner asked Ruffin: “How can the country stand the scarcity of this winter and next spring?” He did not expect Ruffin to answer the question because he added that “all knowledge on the subject is experimental.” Clearly, if the Confederacy was to survive the approaching winter and spring, a greater sense of purpose would be needed in 1864.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Rayner to Ruffin, December 14, 1863, box 30 “series 1.6 1862-5,” folder 458, Ruffin Papers, SHC.

**Chapter 6: “The Bulwark Against Tyranny”: the conservative Confederacy,
January to the fall of 1864**

During 1864, Confederates portrayed their nation as the bulwark of stability on the verge of outlasting the Union in the Civil War. They argued that the deadlock of the U.S. military offensives in both Virginia and Georgia would lead to Lincoln's electoral defeat in November. These circumstances remained in place until that month when U.S. General William T. Sherman commenced his advance from Atlanta coinciding with the re-election of Lincoln. The solid immovable Confederate armies appeared to contrast with what Confederates regarded as the recklessly improvident, in terms of lives and money, mob democracy of the Union.

The continued survival of the government into the fourth year of the war further elevated the meaning of their revolution to Confederates. The institutions of the Government represented a reassuring continuity to the people, not only with previous years but also the promise of the Founding Fathers. During 1864, Confederates continued to believe that the role of government was to unleash the energies of the people in contrast to that of the United States which had succumbed to despotism. They also insisted that the strength of the future Confederacy remained based on the power of slavery and fortified by the stockpile of cotton.

In 1864, however, the experience of rampant inflation, serious privations that winter, and intense debates over two currency bills in Congress in May and June amended Confederate thinking. They became more conscious of the need for sound finance to the future Confederate government. Confederates expressed remorse over the memory of the 1840s debt defaults by southern states. They tracked the performance of the Cotton Loan in London and Paris and more obsessively the dollar-gold convertibility prices in New York. Such present-day preoccupations had future consequences for what

Confederates wished their economy to become. The Confederacy would strive to run an external balance of trade that would deliver a surplus, and hence lead to a flow of gold and silver into Confederate coffers. Imports would be limited by the establishment of a significant manufacturing sector—Confederates not only sought to import goods and knowhow in order to boost wartime munitions production, they also consciously set about the development of new advanced industries.¹

In terms of territorial ambitions, Confederates likewise adopted a stance of both continuity and change. They continued to resist any idea of *Uti Possidetis*; aiming instead to recover lost land not only at the polls but also by military re-conquest. At the same time, the imminence of the U.S. presidential elections meant the defeat of Lincoln would in short time deliver peace. Confederates reacted to this situation by debating the extent to which they should be magnanimous toward the Union in the context of what they believed to be a moral victory. Tactically, Confederates considered whether they should actively seek to boost the electoral fortunes of northern Democrats by offers of commercial and even military alliance. However, Davis in particular knew that the biggest factor in the terms of any settlement with the United States government would be the fortunes of war delivered on the battlefield. If the Confederate armies held firm to their positions outside Atlanta and Petersburg, any outcome seemed possible.

¹ Historians of Confederate nationalism have moved from the earlier argument of Emory Thomas that 1864 was the time of disintegration of Confederate nationalism. Factors, such as celebration of the Army of Northern Virginia as the symbol of the Confederate nation, proximity of victory and a feeling of collective victimhood, if anything, strengthened Confederate national identity in 1864. But beyond historians' investigations of the remarkable ambition and activity of Confederate printing presses and literati, Robert Bonner's contention remained unchallenged that the fall of Vicksburg in July 1863, at the latest, saw the final quashing of the last, faint embers of antebellum southern dreams. See Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate Nation*, ch.11; Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 61-112; Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 229; Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 199; Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds*, 199, 277-280; Coleman Hutchison, *Apples and Ashes*, 69; Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America* 286-322.

Meanwhile, buoyed by this state of affairs, Confederates continued to look for opportunities for expansion. Notwithstanding overtures to northern opinion based on a joint application of the Monroe Doctrine in Latin America, in 1864, Confederates continued to develop an alternative. The approach by the Mexican regency at the end of 1863 especially raised hopes in this regard, especially as evidence came in of the evident Union hostility to the regime of Emperor Maximilian. Toward Native Americans, Cuba and other Latin American countries as well as Mexico, Confederates focused on the immediate wartime needs of blockade running. In the long term however, they sought to put in place an alliance either with the elites of European descent when present or sympathetic colonizers expected across this region. Confederates demonstrated this arrangement would be necessary to counter a United States government seemingly committed to the overthrow of these regimes, colonization of former Confederate slaves and the support of African equality in place of the carefully calibrated racial hierarchies of both Confederate and Latin American regimes.²

Expanding the Confederate Revolution

Confederate ambitions for their nation's future greatness required global leadership. They asserted that their Confederacy alone perpetuated the universal values of the American Revolution, which they equated with true conservatism, against those

² The Confederacy represented a world vision profoundly at odds with those historians who argue the mid nineteenth century witnessed the coming of 'globalization.' This period was a time when, according to world historian Chris Bayly, the birth of the 'modern world' was well underway; a world of free and mobile labor, nations industrializing under protective trade barriers, and international relations managed by alliances between centralized nation states dominated by cities. Confederates proposed instead a world order determined by the balance of power and where nations of a different sort played an important role in world affairs. These countries were characterized by rural and decentralized societies, dominated by commercial agriculture sustained by forced labor growing crops for export. These polities were complementary to, rather than competing with, industrialized nations with whom they had reciprocal commercial relations dictated by the creed of free trade. (Chris A. Bayly *The Birth of the Modern World*, 161-164.)

radical ideals of the French Revolution that Confederates saw reborn in the Union. Hotze therefore could sum the cause up as “the Confederacy is fighting the great moral and political battle of this generation; the battle of established right against popular will, liberty versus democracy, law versus numbers.” The Confederacy was simply “the representative of all conservatism, vested right, traditional institutions, solemn constitutional compromises...determined by inherent rights of the States and explicit provisions of the Constitution.” The state governments served the same function as the House of Lords and monarchy in Britain; Hotze believed that, by their protecting slavery, “the States are checks on which liberty is protected against the populace, the few secured against the uncontrolled and unlimited tyranny of the many.” Hotze concluded that the Confederacy fought the war on behalf of global elites and advocated “the case of the educated classes of the world.”³

Confederates viewed their revolution’s simple survival in 1864 as proof of its strength. They marveled at the survival of its functioning government in such unpropitious circumstances. In his message to the session of Congress assembling that May, President Davis observed that in considering “the state of the country, the reflection is naturally suggested that this is the third congress of the Confederacy and you the second congress of the permanent government” and “are now assembled at the time and place appointed by law for commencing your session.” The Confederate commissioner to Brussels, Dudley Mann, added on March 18, “We should be held up as a model people really capable of governing ourselves in adversity more wisely than a monarch ever governed his subjects.” As well as pride in institutions, there was an interconnection

³ Henry Hotze, “Our Stake in the War,” *The Index* 5 182 (March 23, 1865):186.

between the strength of principles such as the right of self-government and the duration and nature of the war, for on March 16, Vice President Alexander H. Stephens declared the revolutionary principles are “burning more brightly for the intensity of the conflict in which we are engaged.”⁴

Politicians argued that the consequences of the Confederate revolution were rendered greater as a result of the shared suffering of the people. The blend of the original ideas of republican self-government and the endurance of the war led to the articulation of a higher purpose for, as Davis put it, “ours is not a revolution.” Rather, according to Lucius Q. C. Lamar in a speech at the Atlanta Athenaeum, “our cause rests on higher ground than revolution.” The elevation of the Confederate cause was based on the vindication its principles had received as a result of surviving three years of war, which meant the very principles were strengthened, developed and extended. Lamar saw the Confederacy in “moral transition” because of its unique legacy, its “high reputation” of “the capacity of self sacrifice, higher tone of thought and feeling, greater earnestness of purpose, purer motives of action and a deeper moral life.” On May 5, Representative John Perkins of Louisiana said that stoicism in battle meant it was “the sublime earnestness that caused a people to become more hopeful under disaster” and then to “grow in devotion to their cause under danger.” The consequence of this devotion would

⁴ Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress,” May 2, 1864, *CJ*, 7:9; Henry Hotze, “Confederate Official Documents,” *The Index* 4 121 (August 18, 1864):520; Dudley Mann to Judah P. Benjamin, February 29, March 16, 1864, *OR*, 1042, 1067; Alexander H. Stephens, *The great speech of Hon. A. H. Stephens, delivered before the Georgia legislature, on Wednesday night, March 16th, to which is added extracts from Gov. Brown’s message to the Georgia legislature* (1864).

manifest itself in a “moral force beyond increase in numbers”, which will in the end “compel success.”⁵

Confederates regarded their nation as the sole surviving representative of republican self-government. They did so with a growing sense of responsibility and increasingly regarded it as their government’s purpose to work in the future for the containment of the Union and the international balance of power as well as expand their nation. As Davis remarked in a speech made on September 22, in Augusta, Georgia, thanks to the Union resorting to coercion, northerners have forsaken the priceless “heirloom of their fathers” and hence “upon the success of the Confederacy alone depends the existence of Constitutional liberty in the world...if the Confederacy fails, constitutional government and political freedom will fall with it.” Such a sentiment imposed a daunting burden of expectations on the future. Lamar spoke of the challenge that would face the postwar Confederacy, to live up to the “high reputation which our arms have acquired.” That lofty sense of responsibility would lead to “higher and more solid attainments.” Such a nation would have to be expansive in the future in order to be worthy of the heroic present.⁶

Confederates reconciled the apparent contradiction between expansion and conservatism because while the Confederate Government and its institutions represented

⁵ Jefferson Davis, “Speech in Augusta,” October 5, 1864, *JDC*, 6:357; Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, *Speech of Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, on the state of the country: delivered in the Athenaeum, Atlanta, Ga., Thursday evening, April 14, 1864 reported by A.E. Marshall* (Atlanta, Ga.: J. J. Toon & Co., 1864), 13; Henry Hotze, “The Moral Side of the War,” *The Index* 4 106 (May 5, 1864):285; John Perkins, *Remarks of Mr. Perkins of Louisiana in the House of Representatives, Tuesday. May 3, 1864* (Richmond, Va.: n.p., 1864).

⁶ Jefferson Davis, Speech in Augusta, October 5, 1864, *JDC*, 6:357; Jefferson Davis, “Speech in Augusta,” September 22, 1864, *JDP*, 11:60; Lamar, *Speech of Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, on the state of the country: delivered in the Athenaeum, Atlanta, Ga., Thursday evening, April 14, 1864 reported by A.E. Marshall* (Atlanta, Ga.: J. J. Toon & Co., 1864), 11.

continuity, the people as a whole encompassed both the nation and its future. The Constitution provided the conservative core of the Confederate government, in contrast to the Union, where popular passions ruled. In March, a Confederate captain, Thomas W. Bulitt, a lawyer and an imprisoned veteran of John H. Morgan's raid into Kentucky, described the Constitution as representing "the unbroken chain in the course of events through the ages to the civilization of today." The people lived by "the moral law" meaning "the principles of eternal and universal obligation both to standards of individual conduct and the forces that shape and control the revolutions and destinies of nations." Bulitt concluded by defining the nation as "the actual construction of a grand moral intellectual machine and the actual temper of the people." The Constitution protected the Confederacy's conservatism, yet it also provided the basis for the Confederate people to achieve a great destiny.⁷

The role of the Confederate government was to be confined in future to that of being an enabler for the people to achieve collective greatness. In his February 1864 eulogy of representative Muscoe Russell Hunter Garnett, James Lyons of Virginia told the House of Representatives that a statesman had to "resist the passion for notoriety, that infirmity of finite minds" and instead to focus on "higher and more solid attainments." Government, to Confederates, was only the "means of protecting the liberty and promoting the happiness of the people, not an end to be obtained or an idol to be

⁷ Thomas Walker Bulitt, "Diary, 1862 to 1864," # A B937, FHS.

worshipped.” Therefore Garnett was “a stout adherent of the Constitution and advocate of rights and political principles of the South.”⁸

Slavery Remains the Foundation of Confederate Ambitions

The main purpose of the Confederate government was to protect slavery, which remained the foundation of Confederates’ ambitions for the postwar years. The sovereign states checked popular will and so safeguarded the existence of slavery from demagogues. In Columbus Georgia on September 30, Davis declared “the great state institution of the South was the true basis of such a government – a great law of nature pointed out a menial class, distinct from the governing class” and as a result of slavery’s existence, “here and only here every white man is truly, socially and politically equal.” Despite the beginning of the challenge of pressure for slave enlistment, as well as the flight of slaves to Union lines, Confederates remained confident that slavery would resume its expansion after the war. They were optimistic because they continued to believe in African American loyalty, that the northern alternative of factory work was much worse and slavery remained the basis of staple crop production.⁹

⁸ James Lyons, “Eulogy on Muscoe Russell Hunter Garnett,” February 14, 1864, box 7, folder 22, Lyons Family Papers, HL.

⁹ Jefferson Davis, “Speech at Columbus,” September 30, 1864, *JDP*, 10:75. The agitation for slaves to serve as soldiers and hence achieve emancipation did not begin to emerge in earnest until, at the earliest, the autumn of 1864 and the reassembling of Congress that November. An early sign of the agitation occurred in October when the Governors of the Confederate States met and asserted that any changes had to emanate from the States. Congress was notified soon after reassembling on November 7, 1864 (“Letter from Governor of Virginia Transmitting the Proceedings of the Governors of the Confederate States,” November 8, 1864, *CJ*, 7:257-58.) On arming the slaves, see Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves during the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Even at this late stage, slaveholders deluded themselves into believing slavery had a future, for examination of this topic of sincere self-deception, see Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie* and Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Thomas Carlyle’s *Past and Present*, first published in the United States in April 1844, remained the bedrock of critique on industrialized society’s treatment of their workers, as Raymond Williams phrased it, Carlyle believed that “a society is more than economic relationships with

Confederates continued to insist that slaves were loyal and were either coerced or duped into fleeing to Union lines. Due to enemy propaganda, slaves would continue to flee in the presence of Union forces and there would be instances of collusion between the two, but Confederates generally supposed that any damage to slavery would be either temporary or at least contained. Planter Abram Archer, after losing fifty slaves to a Union fleet in the Mississippi in February, that March hoped to claim the “negroes back from Vicksburg as long as they promise to be ‘good and faithful servants.’” Later, Archer believed that his own deprivations suffered while serving as a cavalry officer gave him an increased sense solidarity with his slaves.¹⁰

Confederates accepted that slavery had changed in its nature due to the war, but not so much that it could not be reconciled with their concept of a Christianizing mission for African Americans. Returning escaped slaves did pose problems. In July, the chief clerk to the comptroller of the treasury, John Ott, in Richmond wrote to Mrs. Maria Massie, planter of Nelson County, Virginia, and recommended her to sell a returned runaway because “freedom once tasted, even though it be the delusory article tendered by the enemy, is enough to disturb the equilibrium of most negroes.” Even if these runaways returned to the plantation, the relationship between planter and worker would change. The slaves would change into paid laborers, Jane Kempe told her Natchez based brother in law Josiah Winchester in January, “the hands that left will return if hired.” But other Confederates were more sanguine; General Nathan Bedford Forrest later that month predicted “that after peace,” most runaways who “have been decoyed from their homes

cash payment the sole nexus.” (Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society from Coleridge to Orwell* [London: Hogarth Press, 1990], 71-86.)

¹⁰ Abram Archer to Richard Thompson Archer, February 16, to Mary Archer, March 12, to Mrs. Archer, July 9, folder 1, box 2E650, Richard Thompson Archer Family Papers, UT.

will gladly and joyfully return – ultimately preferring slavery among the southern people to freedom in the North.” Confederate independence would expose the Union’s alternative future for African Americans as being an infinitely worse fate.¹¹

The Confederacy’s strength was based, Confederates believed, on a superior system of labor. Because the system of slavery attended to the welfare as well as the output of its workers, patriarchal slavery worked better than factory systems, at least for staple crop production in hot and unhealthy climates. Confederates argued that escaped slaves suffered at the hands of cruel northerners and they believed that all advanced civilizations, including that of the Union, needed some form of forced labor system if such countries wished to extract the staple crops in the subtropics and tropics. The conduct of northerners in occupied areas appeared to confirm this hypothesis. In March, cavalry under Texan brigadier general Lawrence Sullivan Ross retook Yazoo City and other parts of the Yazoo Valley as far as Washington County, Mississippi. According to the acting British consul in Mobile, the cavalrymen discovered that after the fall of Vicksburg the previous summer, “the plantations were devastated and abandoned by the Confederates and the slaves were carried off by the U.S. troops.” But with no planters and slaves, northern speculators had arrived and cultivated the “most productive” plantations with “slaves, stolen from various planters on the first invasion.”¹²

¹¹ John Ott to Mrs. Maria Massie, July 20, 1864, box 2E495, folder June – September 1864, William Massie Papers, UT; Jane Kempe to Josiah Winchester, January 18, 1864, box 2E911, folder 1, Winchester Family Papers, UT; Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, September 2, 1864, JDC, 6:327-29; James A. Seddon to Jefferson Davis, September 3, 1864, JDP, 11:6-7; “Nathan B. Forrest and the Negroes,” *Richmond Enquirer*, quoted in *The Index* 4 125 (September 15, 1864):583.

¹² Fred J. Cridland to the Earl Russell, March 29, 1864, FO 5/970, pp. 176-77, PRO. Cridland alleged that one of the speculators was John H. Dent, brother in law to U.S. General Ulysses S. Grant.

Confederate-managed slavery was most effective form of labor system in the region because, as the New Orleans correspondent of *The Index* insisted, the northern speculators were too exploitative of the slaves and careless of the working environment, especially about disease. The journalist continued that as a result, “the condition of the slaves on the United States Government Plantations is sad beyond expression – in contrast to the mild paternal government of the planters – the negro is disappearing like the Indian – smallpox raging on the plantations of Bayou la Fourche.” John Tyler Jr. writing in February 1864 for *De Bow’s Review* saw this situation arising from the war aims of New England, “emancipation and the apprentice system of negro labor leading, yet further, to the reopening of the slave trade, disguised as the apprentice trade.” A former governor of Kentucky, Charles S. Morehead, contended that northern abolitionists were both radical and cruel; as revolutionaries intent on overthrowing order, the abolitionists were motivated only by their hatred of the ‘aristocratic’ slaveholder. These northerners were devoid of any genuine feeling of sympathy for the African American whom they simply wished to conscript into their new, more oppressive, but also inefficient labor model.¹³

Such arguments about northern abolitionists, Confederates believed, appealed to European conservative tastes. Confederates recognized that the prejudice could not be cured until after the war, when Europeans would be able to see for themselves slavery’s similarities to, and superiority over, the coolie labor schemes they patronized.

¹³ “Letter from New Orleans,” January 23, 1864, *The Index* 4 95 (February 18, 1864):108; Major John Tyler Jr., “Our Confederate States: Foreign and Domestic,” *DBR* 34 1 (July and August, 1864):25; Morehead, Charles S. *Slavery and Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation*, reviewed in *The Index* 4 98 (March 10, 1864):145. After travelling and conducting unofficial diplomacy in Europe, Morehead returned to the Confederacy in 1864; on his way home in Havana, he wrote to Davis explaining that his work was written for “British taste. It is useless to argue the abstract question of slavery in Europe, and I have endeavored to present it in a different light,” (Morehead to Davis, April 27, 1864, *JDP*, 10:368.)

Commissioner James M. Mason wrote on January 25, that “anti slavery feeling among the British has become with them a sentiment akin to patriotism” with no solution possible until “after independence when our people and theirs become better acquainted by direct communications, when they see for themselves the true condition of African servitude, the film will fall from their eyes.” Confederates continued to believe that European anti-slavery sentiment was the result of ignorance and northern propaganda, the effects of which could be eradicated in time. Meanwhile the success of the Confederate economy based on slavery would demonstrate to the French and British how wrong their governments were to emancipate the slaves in the West Indies.¹⁴

Confederates would not offer to disband slavery in order to appeal to foreign sympathies because it remained economically the heart of the Confederacy. Even though a nephew recorded “most of Aunt Jane’s slaves have left her” by this time, Jane Kempe determined to keep her plantation going. On January 18, Kempe wrote to her brother Josiah Winchester, asking him to come and work with her for there were “out of forty five slaves still in the plantation, twenty five hands and besides seven children large enough to pick cotton.” She looked forward to 520 bales of cotton production that season. Confidence in slavery’s survival equated to faith in the future of the Confederacy as a whole. In early 1864, at a time when the survival of the Confederacy seemed in question, merchants Gunn and Bowe of Yanceyville, North Carolina, wrote to Judge Thomas

¹⁴ James M. Mason to Judah P. Benjamin, January 25, 1864, *OR*, 1007-8. Tyler believed the British were just awaiting the suppression of Confederate slavery before they could introduce coolie labor cotton production schemes across their colonies, (“Our Confederate States: Foreign and Domestic,” *DBR* 34 1 [July and August, 1864]: 6; Judah P. Benjamin to James Spence, January 11, 1864, Box 1, Meade Papers, UVA; Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, July 6, 1864, JDP, 10:503.)

Ruffin “the indebtedness of the Confederacy is assuming a darker and more threatening aspect – greatly fear that our rights in slave property is doomed at an early day.”¹⁵

Credit and commerce both rested on slavery as well as the Confederate Government. The credit of the Confederacy was based on the security provided by possession of the stockpile of cotton the slaves had produced. Once the war was over, this store would be exported, easily displacing from overseas markets what Tyler termed the “coarser material from India.” Price as well as quality underpinned Confederate cotton’s market superiority. Hotze considered “if the American war has proved anything, it certainly has proved that no cotton country can compete with America.” Consequently, “peace in America will produce a genuine and well founded panic among non-American growers...the supplies from India etc., will be instantly checked, they depend on high prices.” Hotze confidently expected that the Confederate cotton growers would be able to manipulate the market after the war.¹⁶

The cotton store in the Confederacy was estimated to be still huge, three million bales according to *The Index* on August 25. Given this amount of cotton would be worth as much as 600 million dollars, this calculation enabled James D. B. De Bow to declare, “We care not what the amount of debt.” He estimated the debt may be as much as two billion dollars, but its interest would be easily paid by a tariff of five cents per pound on exports of cotton. In addition, De Bow expected manufactured exports with a twenty

¹⁵ Jane Kempe to Josiah Winchester, January 18, folder 1, Henry Winchester to Frank Winchester, January 11, 1864, folder 8, box 2E911, Winchester Family Papers, UT; Gunn & Bowe to Thomas Ruffin, January 22, 1864, folder 459, Thomas Ruffin Papers, #641, SHC. The Industrial Schedule of the 1850 census lists “Gunn & Bowe Boot and Shoe Makers,” employing an average of seventeen workers.

¹⁶ John Tyler, Jr., “Our Confederate States: Foreign and Domestic,” *DBR* 34 1 (July and August, 1864): 6; Henry Hotze, “Will Peace Immediately Bring Down the Price of Cotton?” *The Index* 4 124 (September 8, 1864):569.

percent tariff, which would net, together with the cotton tariff, the necessary hundred million dollars in taxation to pay off the debt at five percent interest per annum. Hotze suggested the cotton store be nationalized and exported to pay off the interest, “if it is properly husbanded, it will be inexhaustible reducing on an export of 150,000 bales would last twenty years.” With effective Government regulation, Confederates believed that the “Cotton Standard” was to become and remain the Confederacy’s equivalent of the Gold Standard.¹⁷

Sound finance mattered to Confederates because of the effect it had on the future reputation of the Confederacy. Addressing the convention of the commissioners of appraisement in September in Montgomery, the meeting’s president, former Mississippi governor and U.S. congressman, John J. McRae, said solvency mattered because “the happiness and welfare of our people after the war are too deeply involved.” Old arguments about northern financial discrimination in the antebellum United States remained in force to sustain the case for Confederate financial potential; McRae asked his audience: “Why should our ability to bear this burden be doubted? Before this war, it was alleged (and my opinion with great truth) that a sum fully as great as this [estimated

¹⁷ Henry Hotze, “Confederate Financial Prospects and Plans,” *The Index* 4 122 (August 25, 1864):537; De Bow, “The War of Independence,” 34 1 *DBR* (July and August, 1864):47-59. The estimate of the cotton store probably provided by De Bow, cotton agent until August 5. The British consul in Mobile, Cridland, had earlier estimated the stored cotton to be 4.5 million bales, see Fred Cridland to the Earl Russell, December 5, 1863, FO 5/908, PRO. De Bow had also been in Mobile so possibly briefed the Consul. The Convention of the Commissioners of Appraisement meeting in Montgomery in September 1864 also fixed the debt at \$2 billion and called for Confederates “to replace the gold standard with the cotton standard.” (John J. McRae, *Proceedings of a convention of the Commissioners of Appraisement from the states of Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, meeting in accordance with instructions from the Hon. Secretary of War, at Montgomery, Alabama, September 20, 1864* [Montgomery, Ala.: Montgomery Advertiser Job and Book Office, 1864], 5) The phrase ‘cotton standard,’ according to Hotze, was Seddon’s. Hotze asked that given “the Confederate Government had already undertaken to pay the interest on the part on its domestic funded debt in cotton (the cotton loan), why not extend this expedient to the principal of its future unfunded debt?” (Henry Hotze to Judah P. Benjamin, January 16, 1864, *OR*, 1001-3; Jefferson Davis to Zebulon Vance, March 26, 1864, *JDP*, 10:299-301.)

interest on the debt] was annually paid in tribute to the northern states. Why should it not be paid with equal ease to our own government?" But current events, such as rampant inflation and arrears in army pay, meant it was precisely that this future credit worthiness was doubted.¹⁸

Any Confederate military successes would hasten the time that this stockpile of potential specie could be exported. In June, Kentuckian Representative Eli M. Bruce declared to the House "the victories of Lee and Johnson will solve the financial embarrassments." The relationship also worked in reverse, at the end of September, in the aftermath of the fall of Atlanta and with initial setbacks in the Shenandoah, Kenneth Rayner wrote to Thomas Ruffin "with our military reverses, our financial and pecuniary difficulties seem to intensify – if we have another serious reverse to our arms, Confederate money will cease to go out at all and we shall come to a state of barter." Relying only on the contingency of war was not enough. Investors had alternative investment opportunities in, for example, state and county bonds, perhaps seen to be a lower risk than their Confederate variants. Leading Confederates finally had to act in order to address popular anger over inflation by attempting to infuse confidence into government finances; as a result, planning for the future was vital in order to convince the people that the whole debt and not just its interest would be paid over time.¹⁹

¹⁸ De Bow, "The War of Independence," 34 *1 DBR* (July and August, 1864):47-59; John J. McRae, *Proceedings of a convention of the Commissioners of Appraisement from the states of Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, meeting in accordance with instructions from the Hon. Secretary of War, at Montgomery, Alabama, September 20, 1864* (Montgomery, Ala.: Montgomery Advertiser Job and Book Office, 1864), 5.

¹⁹ Eli M. Bruce, *Remarks of Hon E. M. Bruce, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States of America, June 9th and 10th, 1864: on the financial policy of the government* (1864), 3; Kenneth Rayner to Thomas Ruffin, September 29, 1864 folder 462, Thomas Ruffin Papers, #641, SHC. Early in 1864, Maria Massie wrote to James M. Cobbs in Lynchburg asking for investment advice. On February 10, Cobbs replied "I do not think there is any difference between the solvency of the banks' stock

After the war, Bruce predicted, the Confederacy would run a trade surplus based on exportations of cotton and a more self-sufficient economy. The bonds “will appreciate postwar as the exchange of the world will go to the Confederate States,” he said and foreign investors would beat up the price of Confederate bonds as “countries must provide these bonds rather than exhaust themselves of coin.” Bruce explained that the “excessive exportations” to Europe from the postwar Confederacy will “give us control of the coin of the world for all time to come.” Rather than planning an economy based on roughly equivalent imports and exports, as they had earlier done, Confederates expected to run a surplus and hence build up reserves of gold.²⁰

Action in 1864 to arrest the flood of paper money in the Confederacy would hasten this future of gold-backed Confederate membership in the global economy. Davis told Congress in his May 2 message that “nothing could so much retard the beneficent influence of peace on all the interests of our country as the existence of a great mass of currency not redeemable by coin.” Hence the need now to restrict circulation of paper in the hope that “payment of public dues would give place to precious metals, the only basis of currency adapted to commerce with foreign countries.” Confederates expected their state would become a central participant in the international economy as quickly as possible; therefore Bruce anticipated that the Confederate Government would be able to “resume specie payments within six months of the end of the war.” The reason for this

and the stock of the Confederacy—for if the Confederacy goes down—my own opinion is the banks will go down with it.” Cobbs did give a positive recommendation, for he added: “But not so with the stock of Virginia—for the Confederacy might go down and yet Virginia might pay her debts...” His opinion had immediate effect, for five days later he confirmed to Massie that “I have deposited the checks enclosed in the bank of VA as requested...” (Cobbs to Massie, 10, 15, February, 1864, box 2E494, folder January-May 1864, William Massie Papers, UT.)

²⁰ Eli M. Bruce, *Remarks of Hon E. M. Bruce, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States of America, June 9th and 10th, 1864: on the financial policy of the government* (1864), 11.

optimism was the belief that, as Hotze observed, “a single year’s cotton crop will form the basis of the foreign specie market.” In the meantime, a currency bill would be required to prepare for that future that was “comprehensive enough to reduce Confederate States finance into sound and manageable shape.”²¹

With such future expectations dependent on present behavior, Confederate commentators rapturously received the currency bills of February and June 1864. The precise details or effectiveness of the legislation was not important, but the fact the bills demonstrated apparent Confederate resolve. This emphasis on sound finance, in conjunction with robust military performance, would set the condition for the postwar Confederacy, which “must become the wealthiest nation and people.” The mundane details of legislation acquired an important symbolism of Confederate resolve. In a pamphlet, the editors of *The Sentinel* concurred, to dispel the possibility of future repudiation “better than any victories, it will satisfy Europe that a people so honest and self sacrificing will never be conquered.” The paper marveled at “what a spectacle will be presented to the world” if Confederates now taxed themselves sufficiently in wartime to pay off their debt. Confederates supported the currency bills because the legislation represented to them the appealing idea of present sacrifice for future gains, while, at the same time, these measures presented to the world the evidence of a desire for fiscal probity in contrast to the perceived reckless expenditure of the Union.²²

²¹ Jefferson Davis, “Message to Congress,” May 2, 1864, *CJ*, 7:8-11; Bruce, Eli M. *Remarks of Hon E. M. Bruce, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States of America, June 9th and 10th, 1864: on the financial policy of the government*. 1864. Call No. P&W 5202 (BA); Henry Hotze, “Foreign Loan,” *The Index* 4 116 (July 14, 1864):441.

²² [From *The Sentinel*]. *To the Congress of the Confederate States*. (1864), 5.

The Confederacy as International Commercial Power

In 1864, Confederates remained in awe of the potential power of their commerce and blamed present difficulties on account of this resource being ineffectively harnessed for the war effort. Free trade in the future was still the way the power of this commerce would serve the Confederate people. Davis may have been a vigorous proponent of government legislation in wartime, but this did not preclude his promotion of a free trade argument about the future commercial relations of the Confederacy. On October 3, he told a crowd in Augusta, Georgia, that tariffs would be abolished and “with peace and freedom a glorious career opens for the Confederate States—relieved from class legislation, free from taxes—indirect it is true, but imposed by your rulers for twenty years past—no longer subject to northern speculators, grinders in the face of the poor and deniers of the rights of men, you will start forward in the brightest of futures.” The removal of the burdens imposed by tariffs and the absence of subsidized northern capitalist competition would lead to a prosperous outcome for the Confederacy.²³

Such a future was dependent on cotton production. The staple crop remained the tangible gift of the Confederacy to the world. On January 16, Hotze explained to Benjamin that the Confederacy had learnt after trials with alternatives that it was via cotton that the elusive self-interest of the Europeans could be appealed to. “We have appealed to political sagacity, to the justice, the humanity in vain – an embargo would then come home to all classes in Europe that they are fast paying the cost of the war in the enhanced cost of cotton and clothing.” ‘King Cotton’ arguments still had resonance,

²³ Jefferson Davis, “Speech in Augusta,” 3/5 October, 1864, *JDC*, 6:358-9, *JDP*, 11:79. See also William Emmett Simms, “Resolutions on the Foreign Commerce Regulations Bill,” May 23, 1864, *CJ*, 4:76-7; “Message of Jefferson Davis on the Foreign Commerce Regulation Act of February, 1864,” December 20, 1864, *CJ*, 7:368-371.

as Hotze explained a week earlier in *The Index*, “it was a true and remarkable fact that all the productions of the southern States conduce to the moral and physical well being of man.” As a result, the “interests of the world coincide with the dictates of law, justice and humanity.” Confederates believed any relations they were to have with other powers were to be determined by the primacy of economic self-interest combined with lingering anti-slavery prejudice and distrust of the Confederate republican mission; therefore cotton exports, which promised to better the human condition, would be the Confederacy’s proxy diplomacy.²⁴

Even in wartime, Confederates expressed confidence that despite the blockade, the channels of this postwar international cotton trade could be discerned. On September 9, *The Index* reported that “it is said that one of two reasons for the US withdrawal from Brownsville” was that “the cotton trade of Matamoras will now receive a new lease of life.” The U.S. interest in this resumption of the Confederate cotton trade to Mexico was because “the North must have cotton.”²⁵

In 1864, Confederates had an undimmed vision of their future as a trading nation. In July, in his re-launched periodical, *De Bow’s Review*, the former cotton agent, James D. B. De Bow predicted Confederate exports would be worth five hundred million dollars. The Confederacy had to become a naval power in order to protect this overseas commerce, notwithstanding the significant setbacks suffered in 1864. Confederates deemed possession of a fleet of ironclads as both essential to combat the Union at sea and

²⁴ Henry Hotze to Judah P. Benjamin, January 16, 1864, *OR*, 1001-4; “Independence and Recognition,” 4 89 *The Index* (January 7, 1864):9.

²⁵ Henry Hotze, “Will Peace Immediately Bring Down the Price of Cotton?” 4 124 *The Index* (September 8, 1864):569-70. See above for Confederate belief that alternative sources of cotton supply would not survive a resumption of competition from their exports on peace.

to be a great power in the future. Despite the significant obstacles of iron shortages at home and obtaining supplies from Europe, Confederates made encouraging progress in wartime. The acting British consul from his observations both in Charleston and Wilmington, together with a report made to the Confederate congress on naval management, informed British foreign secretary Lord Russell that there was “evidence of the progress towards construction of a national navy.”²⁶

The frustrations Confederates felt in their thwarted attempts to obtain ironclad vessels from Europe together with the ever tightening blockade meant they became more convinced in 1864 on the vital need for a strong navy. On June 2, Slidell told Benjamin emphatically “no further attempts to fit out ships of war in Europe should be made at present.” However “when the war shall have ceased, one of our earliest cares should be to lay the foundation of a respectable navy.” No longer could the Confederacy simply pursue the “arcadian dream of following undisturbed the peaceful pursuits of agriculture.” Instead, “the condition of national existence now is capacity of each to defend itself and inflict injury on others.” Hence in this otherwise anarchic world of competing nation states, a conservative power would need a strong navy to protect its merchant marine and secure overseas markets at sea and balance of power structure to protect on land.²⁷

Confederates believed their state had to be a naval power because of geography, expansion, and strategy. On June 23, Hotze argued, “the Confederacy must have a navy in same proportion to the magnificent sweep of gulf and ocean coast.” With the

²⁶ “Article IV: The War, Independence, Watchman, What of the Night,” *DBR* 34 1 (July 1864):47-59; Walker to Russell, February 22, 1864, FO 5/968, PRO.

²⁷ John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, June 6, 1864, *OR*, 1139.

“development [both] of Mexican prosperity and Texas,” the Confederacy would be less vulnerable to a Union paper blockade, and hence would probably mean its attitude to maritime law would become like Britain’s; specifically, the Confederate government will defend the “right of maritime capture...as it would be needed as a weapon against any invader.” The future plans for naval power, in which the Confederacy was currently so weak, show most clearly that expectations for the future Confederacy included a ‘blue water’ offensive strategy overseas to protect and expand markets combined with defense at home and a conservative foreign policy.²⁸

Self-sufficiency at Home in Order to Enable Self-assertion Abroad

Confederates were aware that as part of being a future great power, it needed to be more self-sufficient, less vulnerable to an enemy blockade and less dependent on the whims of outside markets. In looking to a future of trade surpluses, the Confederates also began to prepare for a partially industrialized mixed economy in order to limit imports. In 1864, nascent industrialism began to be significant in terms of future expectations. Up to this time, industry outside the Upper South had been of marginal importance compared with commercial agriculture. In July, De Bow predicted that as “manufactured products of the old government reached two thousand million dollars – says ours after peace to be half that sum, who can doubt that it will reach a quarter, for peace will bring a tenfold increase in our industry.” Confederates did not expect to industrialize at once during the postwar period, but remained committed to the development of and expansion into foreign markets. Even with war mobilization, the Confederacy remained predominantly agricultural and it was expected that those temporarily involved in war industries would

²⁸ Henry Hotze, “The Confederate Navy,” *The Index*, 4 113 (June 23, 1864):395.

revert to peacetime agricultural occupations after the war. Confederate looked toward a mixed economy, which included a degree of industrialization.²⁹

Confederate confidence in this postwar vision was sustained by the achievements during the war and how these were conceived as a prelude for what was to come. As Edward Keatinge and Thomas A. Ball, the engravers and printers of Confederate Treasury Notes, declared “to make progress under these difficulties and peculiarities in the Confederacy is therefore gratifying and gives assurance that when the clouds of war have dissipated, the commerce of the world again admitted to our silent wharfs and peace, health and blessings to a wise and happy Confederate people...[it will be] important that industry takes its legitimate rank.” The foundations for this role of industry were laid in 1864: first, from changes within the Confederacy itself; second, from interaction with other economies, principally Britain; and third, underpinning the above—from growing consciousness of an industrial revolution, which had now spread to North America, as part of a world transforming event.³⁰

There were incremental changes taking place in the Confederacy that drew notice from Confederates and commentators. Observers, such as the British Consul at Galveston, Arthur J. Lynn, noted the developments that were ongoing with the textile industry in Texas. Confederate concern about the importance of Atlanta reflected a growing awareness of, as Kenneth Rayner wrote from Raleigh, North Carolina, in July, “of its foundries and manufactories.” In January, the *Richmond Examiner* declared in

²⁹ De Bow, “The War of Independence,” 34 1 *DBR* (July and August 1864):47-59. De Bow added that during the war “industry has been exerted as it never has been exerted before.”

³⁰ Keatinge and Ball, *Remarks on the manufacture of bank notes, and other promises to pay. Addressed to the bankers of the Southern Confederacy, January 30th 1864* (Columbia, S.C.: F. G. De Fontaine & Co. 1864), 30-31.

reference to mining across the Confederacy, there was by then a “more abundant production and a far greater prospect of military sufficiency than we have yet enjoyed” adding this was the case “despite the paucity of laborers, fluctuating prices and temporary occupation of districts with the richest deposits by the enemy.”³¹

Despite these advances, there was a consciousness among Confederates of the tremendous gulf in industrial development between them and the Union and Britain. This unease meant Confederates began to stress the importance of a technical education and the need to learn about and implement more advanced industrial practices. Bulitt made a case for a technical education, which may have provided some rationale for congressional proposals at the same time to develop a system of polytechnics. Bulitt argued, “science renders nature subject to man, rendering possible the grand schemes for the development of national resources for alleviating the wants and comforts of life.” More than that, it would “bring into combination the highest moral and physical powers” and so “defining the age and the people” as “the central and controlling force in the progressive civilization of modern times.” Hence the Confederacy had to seize the opportunities offered by the industrial revolution lest it fall further behind.³²

Confederates undertook rapid steps that addressed immediate wartime needs and also paved the way for longer-term industrialization. Edward R. Archer’s father worked

³¹ Arthur J. Lynn to James Murray, October 22, 1864, FO 5/970, p. 50, PRO; Kenneth Rayner to Thomas Ruffin, July 4, 1864, folder 461, Thomas Ruffin Papers, #641, SHC; *Richmond Examiner*, “The Material Resources of the Confederacy,” *The Index* 4 93 (February 4, 1864):71. Lynn continued, “there are in the course of construction, two buildings for the manufacture of cotton and woolen cloths; the Confederate authorities have erected at Marshall in Harrison County works for smelting, casting and rolling iron...should the state remain free from hostile invasion, the people by their industry will soon be able to supply all their necessities. Murray was permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office in Britain.

³² Thomas Walker Bulitt, “Diary, 1862 to 1864,” # A B937, FHS. In February, The House considered a Senate Bill s198 to establish a Bureau for Polytechnics, but just before recess representative William Porcher Miles of South Carolina recommended its consideration be postponed. In June, Senator Williamson Oldham introduced another bill, s64, for the same purpose (*CJ*, 4:138, 146, 6:840,862.)

at Tredegar Ironworks in Richmond. In March, while in Britain for the launch of the Virginia Volunteer Navy, Archer also found time to visit the Cyclops iron and steel Bessemer furnace in Sheffield as the guest of the director, George Wilson. With the valuable information Archer had gathered, and sent as detailed drawings to his father to show him the process of steel manufacture, he was confident that there would be a “revolution at Tredegar.” The director of Tredegar, Joseph Reid Anderson, who had married Archer’s sister, wrote to Davis asking that a soldier, James L. Patton, be detached to Tredegar for two years in order that he go to Europe to procure vital supplies. Davis agreed that this matter was of “such importance” to “justify compliance.” Confederates also needed to develop an advanced textile industry, M. Chadwick told Davis on July 5 that he was going to join George McHenry in Britain to gather intelligence “with a view to the erection of a modern cotton mill in the southern States at the earliest possible period.”³³

An industrial revolution was spreading to the Confederacy. On January 31, the president of the Alabama Coal Company Railroad, John R. Kenan, wrote to his brother, North Carolinian Representative Owen Rand Kenan, from Kenan Plantation near Selma, Alabama, to tell him that his son, John Jr., had entered claims in Tuscaloosa for coal and iron mines. This move was significant because, “should we be successful in this revolution, the mineral lands in Shelby and Bibb counties will be immensely valuable and John is securing as much of it as he can...” Maryland pamphleteer, W. Jefferson

³³ Edward R. Archer to Dr. Robert Archer, 18 March, to Frances Archer, 29 March, 1864, “E. R. Archer’s letterbook,” GLC01896.159; J. R. Anderson to Jefferson Davis, April 30, 1864, *JDP*, 10:375; M. Chadwick to Jefferson Davis, July 5, 1864, *JDP*, 10:501 For Dr. Robert Archer’s connection with Tredegar, see <http://www.the-visitor-center.com/pages/Tredegar-Iron-Works-Richmond/index.htm>. For the Wilson brothers, see <http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/GeorgeWilson>. According to Archer, Wilson “was in Richmond a few years ago and knew Anderson ... and saw them at the Tredegar.” Chadwick sought exemption for 25,000 bales of cotton to export through Wilmington.

Buchanan predicted in January that with the steady disappearance of slavery from his state, there would be “room for the new interest of manufacturing,” if that state joined the Confederacy. He forecast rapid growth as a result: “In twenty years, Maryland will outstrip the industry and wealth in manufacturers that Massachusetts accumulated for a century.”³⁴

The expectation that not only was the industrial revolution spreading to the Confederacy, but that it was also accelerating, rested on Confederate observation of broader hemispheric and global changes at work. Buchanan stated that “a grand revolution in the industrial system of America” was now underway. From London, Hotze believed that there was a global industrial revolution in progress, he noted that “in the past forty years, steam, electricity, mechanism have realized miracles of swiftness, accuracy, saving of labor and of time – a hundred fold increasing of man’s power to develop the resources of the soil.” In Buchanan’s case for Maryland to be included in the Confederacy, he argued that there was a vital “need for the Confederacy to establish a manufacturing locale” because industrialization meant “a complete change.” Although Confederates stressed the conservatism of their country in terms of what it stood for in the world, its power could not be based on a slavery-based, agrarian society alone. Yet the tardy nature of the conversion showed that planters turned industrialists reluctantly, given their adamant belief in the sufficiency of slave produced staple crops for Confederate power.³⁵

³⁴ J. R. Kenan to O. R. Kenan, January 31, 1864, folder 12 series 1, Kenan Family Papers, #4225, SHC; W. Jefferson Buchanan, *Maryland’s hope; her trials and interests in connection with the war*. By W. Jefferson Buchanan (Richmond, Va.: West & Johnson, 1864), 52.

³⁵ Ibid, 45; Henry Hotze, “The Empire of Mexico,” *The Index* 4 99 (March 17, 1864):170.

Confederates Maintain Their Claims to Border States and Territories

With the North American continent in such change, Confederate pretensions to be a bulwark demanded their nation exhibit requisite territorial stability. As far as the Union was concerned, there had to be no doubt about the boundaries of the Confederacy. While whole States could choose their destiny in ‘fair’ elections, ‘adjustments’ left to negotiation with the Union after an armistice were not about changing ‘historic frontiers.’ The fear, as John Tyler had made clear in the July *De Bow’s Review*, was any scheme of European mediation meant the adoption of the concept of *uti possidetis*. Tyler contended that if this principle had been followed, it would have led to the “Confederacy denuded of all States and territory possessed by the North.” In effect, Tyler concluded, “foreign diplomacy will bind the Confederacy where the arms of the enemy placed us.” Not only would the Confederacy become a rump state as a result, but adopting such a principle to be used in international relations would lead to anarchy.³⁶

Confederates conceived of two ways for recovering lost territory, first by statewide referendum. In his major speech delivered on March 16, Stephens outlined the process. “Let all armed force be withdrawn, and let that sovereign will be freely expressed at the ballot box by the legal voters” and so “each state determines its own destiny in its own way.” Confederates were confident that the result of any such ballot would be in their favor, but Stephens cautioned that if even “with the great truth before

³⁶ John Tyler Jr., “Our Confederate States Foreign and Domestic,” 34 1 *DBR* (July and August, 1864):1-33.

them, a majority of her people should prefer despotism to liberty” then let a “wayward sister depart in peace.”³⁷

Therefore such a process of plebiscites should be so managed as to give the desired result, and Confederate anti-immigration sentiment added impetus to the need for ballot manipulation. On October 13, as part of a method to be followed should McClellan be elected and concerned about hordes of new voters from the north in the Border States, D. H. Armour defined ‘legal voters’ to Davis, as “only native born citizens should vote on the question of which government they go into.” Bruce likewise told the Unionists of Kentucky to “rely on the virtues of the people and principles of the Constitution”, meaning the ballot box. Not all Confederates were so lenient toward opponents; [Captain] Edward K. Ward told his sister on April 21 from Dalton, Georgia, that “there is no power that can protect reconstructionists in Memphis.” Direct military force was the second method of recovering territory.³⁸

Ward had his faith that military force, in this case the Army of Tennessee, would be decisive in determining the status of Tennessee. Lee agreed, and argued that the sword was more efficient than the word. On May 5, he told Davis that “success in resisting the chief armies of the enemy will enable us more easily to recover the country now occupied by him, if indeed he does not voluntarily relinquish it.” Advocates of both military and civil means of ejecting Union occupation agreed that “federal occupancy is not conquest”

³⁷ Alexander H. Stephens, *The great speech of Hon. A. H. Stephens, delivered before the Georgia legislature, on Wednesday night, March 16th, to which is added extracts from Gov. Brown’s message to the Georgia legislature* (1864).

³⁸ D.H. Armour to Jefferson Davis, October 13, 1864, *JDP*, 11:103; Eli M. Bruce, *Remarks of Hon E. M. Bruce, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States of America, June 9th and 10th, 1864: on the financial policy of the government* (1864), 3; Edward K. Ward to his sister, April 2, 1864, #GLC002232.30.

and would “disappear like the mist if the main army is driven from the field” and the reality of a “precarious military tenure” would be abruptly revealed. A military victory, even if not directly clearing the conquered land from Union forces, would lead to a shared sense of Confederate moral superiority, which would compel their voluntary evacuation.³⁹

Confederates believed in the fragility of the Union military occupation of parts of their nation because they insisted that the population remained loyal to the Confederacy. Confederate incursions into Union occupied territory appeared to encourage this belief, notwithstanding the earlier disappointments during the autumn of 1862 in both Maryland and Kentucky. By 1864, with increased Union military exactions on the population and emancipation a formal reality wherever Union forces reached, Confederates had become more confident that the inhabitants under Union control would not waver in their long-term commitment to returning to Confederate rule. When William Henry Mayo passed through Leesburg on July 16, as General Jubal Early’s Army of the Valley returned from shelling Washington, he was pleased to witness, on his twenty first birthday, the “waving of handkerchiefs from pretty ladies.” Mayo interpreted this scene as proof that “this part of Virginia is noted for its loyalty to the Confederacy notwithstanding they are mostly within Yankee lines.”⁴⁰

Moreover from spring until fall of 1864, Confederates confidently assumed that the armies were poised on the brink of a substantial recovery of territory. This upturn promised to be especially true in the Southwest and would result in the most extensive

³⁹ R.E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, May 5, 1864, *JDP*, 10:390; Henry Hotze, “Independence Day,” *The Index* 4 115 (July 7, 1864):425; “The War,” *The Index* 4 116 (July 14, 1864):441.

⁴⁰ “Diary Kept by William H. Mayo,” 1864-1865, HM 70373, Etha Mayo Woodruff Memorial Collection of Family Papers, HL.

change in the map of control since the summer of 1862. Even before the defeat of Union General Nathaniel P. Banks by Confederate General Richard Taylor at Mansfield, Louisiana, on April 8, Confederates keenly anticipated such successes. On March 21, compared with the defensive operations necessary in Georgia and Virginia, the New Orleans correspondent of *The Index* looked to a “better opportunity for offensive operations in the southwest.” These actions were intended to “close the navigation of the Mississippi; Memphis, Vicksburg, Port Hudson and even New Orleans may be wrested from the enemy as part of a summer campaign in the Mississippi Valley.” On July 23, Mayo heard rumors in Winchester that Taylor had indeed recaptured New Orleans. Confederates clung onto their hopes of progress in the Southwest until into the autumn of 1864.⁴¹

The Border States would also return to the Confederacy via military means, especially Kentucky, which would return in conjunction with a rebellion against Lincoln in the Northwest. Exiles from Missouri in the Confederacy continued to trust that even their state was on the verge of rejoining the Confederacy, and unlike the heady days of 1861, it was believed to be realistically so. The former governor, Thomas C. Reynolds cautioned on February 20 to Davis, “I am in no haste, patiently watch for those chances of war which may throw Missouri into our possession.” However he worried that “others are not so patient” and added that “the great curse of Missouri affairs is the revolutionary wild senseless spirit that exists among disappointed aspirants”, which he blamed for the

⁴¹ Ibid.; New Orleans Correspondent, “Confederate Prospects in the South West,” *The Index* 4 94 (April 21):247. General Leonidas Polk outlined a similar proposal to Davis on March 21, 1864; Davis passed Polk’s plan to Braxton Bragg, who replied a month later “practicality and policy seem to me doubtful.” (*JDP*, 10:288.) Taylor wanted to march in force on St Louis by midsummer, (copy of Richard Taylor to Kirby Smith, April 27 1864, BT 217, Papers of Joseph Lancaster Brent, HL.)

failure of 1861. Now any recovery would be based on firmer conservative foundations of mutual interest and Confederate strength.⁴²

Confederates added strategic and commercial arguments to those of public opinion and territorial integrity as justifications for recovering territory. Border States effectively provided insulation to protect the slavery dominated areas of the Confederacy. George Fitzhugh declared that either “the eastern shore and Maryland must be part of the Confederacy or else the North will command the Chesapeake and be virtual master of Virginia,” which would lead to the permanent loss of western Virginia. Moreover, he asserted, “Virginia will be abolitionized.” Buchanan agreed that “the territorial integrity of the South must be preserved” and that “nothing south of the Mason-Dixon line upon which slavery as a right existed before the war can, when it ends, be given up on any other terms than the will of the people.”⁴³

In making a case for the inclusion of the Border States with small and declining slave populations within the Confederacy, Buchanan was also reaffirming the need for future trade surpluses and industrialization. The Confederacy would possess internally balanced economy with a “reciprocal” relationship between its northern states and southern states, creating “equilibrium of interest.” The Border States, as well as selling their slaves south to meet cotton state needs, would become increasingly manufacturing in economic orientation, thereby replacing New England both as suppliers to the Deep

⁴² Thomas C. Reynolds to Jefferson Davis, February 20, 1864, *JDP*, 10:248-250. Reynolds continued “all intelligence from Missouri confirms the accounts of the intense dissatisfaction of the inhabitants with the intrusive govt. but our friends frankly declare that they will not rise unless they see a decided chance of success. They are like the English Whigs at the landing of William of Orange. Before we enter the state we must take care that our expedition shall result like William’s and not like Argyle’s or Monmouth’s.”

⁴³ George Fitzhugh, “Eastern Shore of Virginia,” 34 1 *DBR* (July and August, 1864):79-93; W. Jefferson Buchanan, *Maryland’s hope; her trials and interests in connection with the war. By W. Jefferson Buchanan* (Richmond, Va.: West & Johnson, 1864), 41.

South market as well as a source of demand for its raw material production. Hotze welcomed the pamphlet's publication as "sure to evoke a vast amount of enthusiasm among southerners." Self Interest meant the Border States would vote to join the Confederacy over the Union.⁴⁴

As part of their territorial integrity and as vital gateways to Pacific markets and northwestern Mexico, Confederates continued to assert their claim to Indian Territory, Arizona, and New Mexico. In textbooks and in government, these territories remained on paper as part of the Confederacy as before, but these titular claims had always been supplemented by attempts to control and intervene in these lands directly. By 1864, however, there was a perception of the growing gap between the ambition and the reality of limited military power; this meant any practical plans of operation had to rely on the support of local elites. Pioneer and Arizona territorial judge, Landford W. Hastings, and Colonel Spruce M. Baird, former attorney general of New Mexico, lobbied the Richmond government on the status of Arizona and New Mexico, writing and meeting with Davis, Seddon and Benjamin. Control of these territories mattered because, as Baird warned on May 10, "New Mexico and Arizona territories in the hands of the United States would be an irresistible refuge for runaway slaves and isolate the Confederacy from the Pacific." During the dark days of the early months of 1864, and before the victories in Louisiana transformed the prospects in the Trans Mississippi, there had been silence from Richmond, but in May and again in October, Davis made attempts to encourage his subordinates to attend to this issue. Seddon's reply was that while he agreed with the future goals, he lacked the current means. Confederates claimed these lands, but with the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 44; "Review of Buchanan's Pamphlet," *The Index* 4 107 (May 12, 1864):300.

war ongoing, the Government could only encourage and not support its agents on the ground.⁴⁵

Confederates conceived their nation as one that embodied the prospect of a stable racial hierarchy that included Native Americans. In 1864, they considered that the Union's further military advance imperiled this goal. Therefore while the Indian Territory also remained rhetorically an integral part of the future Confederacy, it was one to which Confederates dedicated more effort. The winter and spring witnessed a period of military crisis of control in the Indian Territory. On January 20, General Kirby Smith wrote of "much discontent in the Indian Territory due to the loss of territory, failure to comply with promises of arms and supplies and want of confidence in commanders." In April, the Arkansas senators warned that the Union forces under their new commander James G. Blunt were poised to take the offensive. The Confederates seemed to be on the verge of surrendering the territory.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ L.W. Hastings to Jefferson Davis, January 11, 1864, *JDP*, 10:167; S.M. Baird to Jefferson Davis, May 10; Davis to Seddon, June 6; Seddon to Davis, June 8; Davis to Benjamin, undated, *JDP*, 10:406; L. W. Hastings to Jefferson Davis, October 17, 1864, *JDP*, 11:111. Davis forwarded Hastings's letter to Seddon on November 7 with the remark: "this subject is known to you and I think has been heretofore presented." Such proposals appealed to Davis as they promised local support. Hastings had a plan to separate California from the Union and unite it with the Confederacy. According to Michael T. Bernath, in their textbook published in 1864, geographers John Rice and Miranda Moore sought to instill national pride by lauding the Confederate political system, catalogue its resources, celebrate wartime achievements and predict still greater accomplishments to come; they reinforced the plausibility of these expectations by "optimistically including" Missouri, Kentucky, New Mexico, and Arizona within the limits of the Confederacy (Bernath, *Confederate Minds*, 202-3.) As well as Confederate textbooks, the production of which peaked in 1864, Confederate literature in general often took an expansionist, even imperial tone. Augusta Jane Evans's *Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice* was also published in 1864. For a discussion of the novel's ambition, see Coleman Hutchison, *Apples and Ashes*, 63-98.

⁴⁶ General Kirby Smith to Jefferson Davis, January 20, 1864, *JDP*, 10:188-90; Charles B. Mitchel and Robert W. Johnson to Jefferson Davis, April 29, 1864, *JDP*, 10:375. On June 28, during congressional recess, as he was perhaps wary of opposition from Arkansas politicians, Davis made a special order constituting Indian Territory a separate territory from Arkansas. The inclusion of Indian Territory as part of Arkansas had long been a Native American grievance.

Instead of capitulation, the Confederacy asserted its right to rule over Native Americans on the basis of their cooperation. On George Washington's Birthday, February 22, Davis formally wrote to the president of the Council of the Six Confederate Nations, Israel Folsom, telling him, with a paternal note, that Native Americans were "especially entitled to [the Confederacy's] fostering care." Indeed more than that, "our cause is one and our hearts must be united." Having a common mission with the original inhabitants had its attractions for Confederates now that the Confederacy had defined itself against Union aggression and revolution. Moreover, on June 28, Davis also yielded to the earlier requests of the Cherokee representative in the House, Elias Boudinot, made in January, to constitute the Indian Territory a separate territory from Arkansas, with Douglas H. Cooper appointed as superintendent. Again, the more propitious summer months were the ideal time for this assertion of Confederate claim to the Indian Territory.⁴⁷

The April 1864 report of the Confederate commissioner of Indian affairs, Sutton S. Scott, noted that he visited the territory twice and has afforded "encouragement and maintained loyalty" adding that it was "important that the Indians should be dealt with in a spirit of reconciliation and liberality." What sustained this approach was the belief, exemplified in the promotion of Cherokee chief and member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, Stand Watie, to command the First Indian Brigade on May 6, that "the great body

⁴⁷ Jefferson Davis to Israel Folsom, February 22, 1864, *JDC*, 6:184-86; Elias Boudinot to Jefferson Davis, January 4, 1864, *JDP*, 10:151.

of Indians, notwithstanding their losses, is attached to the Confederacy and confident in its fortunes.”⁴⁸

Confederates Reconsider Their Relations with the Union

The future of Confederate relations with the Union underwent change in 1864 because it was a presidential election year. Confederates had long confronted the realization that even with fifteen slave states and the territories their nation would need the assistance of northern allies to contain the Union after the war. But now these potential supporters seemed more powerful and Confederates expected that the ‘conservative party of the North’ would either beat the Republicans or at least force them to change their policies. This belief had consequences for how Confederates envisaged their relations with the Union in future.⁴⁹

By the beginning of 1864, while not a consensus, most Confederates understood that an anti-Lincoln movement in the Union existed—but not what it meant for the Confederacy. Some Confederates hoped these ‘conservative men’ in the North would recognize the Confederacy because they shared “the great fundamental principles maintained by our common ancestry...the right of self government and the sovereignty of the States.” Other Confederates doubted whether such an organized conservative movement could exist in such conditions as prevailed in the Union - or even if it did,

⁴⁸ Report of the Indian commissioner was included in “The Report of the Secretary of War,” April 28, 1864, *The Index* 4 121 (August 18, 1864):516. The Arkansas Senators had lobbied for Watie’s promotion as it “will also signal appreciation of Indian soldiers” Davis immediately asked Samuel Cooper “has a brigade been formed to which Stand Watie could be properly assigned?” (*JDP*, 10:375.)

⁴⁹ Confederates relied on more than just rumors of an organized movement against Lincoln. On the extensive political opposition to Republican Party rule in the United States, which reached its apogee in the summer of 1864, see Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln’s Opponents in the North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). On the more clandestine activities of the Knights of the Golden Circle and other secret societies, see Mark A. Lause, *A Secret Society History of the Civil War* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

whether it would be sufficiently powerful to stand a chance to influence, let alone overthrow Lincoln. Finally, in the event that their party was strong enough to win the election, Confederates feared that even though the conservatives opposed Lincoln's methods to achieve reunion by force they agreed with him on the objective.⁵⁰

Confederates derived expectations about their future relations with the Union in part from their encounters with northerners in places under Union occupation. In the Mississippi Valley, where much interaction had already taken place, Confederates had ample evidence that forging any 'closer' arrangement with the Union meant both continuity and change. There were Confederates who insisted that northerners would simply retain slavery by another name together with the plantation system. Some northerners told Confederates they had other plans for the future. In January, Henry Winchester of Boston promised his Natchez, Mississippi, relations "the emigration from North to South will be very great after the war...in fact it has already begun – the confiscated wasteland of North Carolina within our lines will be mostly occupied and cultivated by northerners." For the Mississippi Valley, Winchester predicted that northern "companies will be formed" to operate former plantations and "you will soon see Yankee notions and Yankee enterprise, activity, and thrift in full blast along the Mississippi River." Slavery, southern work practices, and even southerners themselves would be swept away. In this context, it was not surprising that there were many Confederates who doubted that northern conservatism existed, let alone that it could restrain such free labor

⁵⁰ Stephens, Alexander H. *The great speech of Hon. A. H. Stephens, delivered before the Georgia legislature, on Wednesday night, March 16th, to which is added extracts from Gov. Brown's message to the Georgia legislature* (1864). Davis loyalists also saw northern Democrats, especially in the North West, as "natural allies of State rights and popular liberty" (Clement C. Clay to Judah P. Benjamin, August 11, 1864, Bryan Hagan Collection.)

pressures in the event of some sort of reunion or even just reconciliation with the United States.⁵¹

Buoyed by their military effort in the spring and optimism that therefore Lincoln would lose the election, Confederates confidently redefined the conservatives in the Union as wanting peace and separation as opposed to peace and reunion. As a result, Confederates began to speculate on the future Confederacy in light of the triumph of the peace party in the Union. On June 2, James L. Orr in the Senate and Henry S. Foote in the House declared that once the commissioners were received by the United States government and an armistice was established, “it is confidently believed would eventuate in the restoration of peaceful and amicable relations with each other.” Foote’s use of the word ‘restoration’ was ambiguous; but he was not alone in predicting a glorious future as the result of a peace party triumph in the elections, even if, in the summer of 1864, the precise relationship between North and South post war had to be left vague for the sake of Democrat Party support in the Union.⁵²

Confederates closer to Davis sought to boost peace or conservative support in the Union by the resurrection of arguments common in early 1861 that the Union would be better off without the southern states. They argued both sections would regain in their separation the lost internal racial and commercial harmony of early republic. On April 28, Hotze argued “the loss of southern territory diminishes nothing of splendor of Yankee destiny and brightness of its future.” To the contrary, there would be a greater prosperity

⁵¹ Henry Winchester to Frank Winchester, January 11, 1864, box 2E911, folder 8, Winchester Family Papers, UT.

⁵² Henry S. Foote, “Amendment to the Joint Resolutions on the Subject of Peace,” June 2, 1864, *CJ*, 7:150-1. In the Senate, James L. Orr introduced a Joint Resolution in relation to the opening of negotiations for peace between the Confederacy and the Union on the same day, (*CJ*, 4:143.)

for the Union arising from separation because of the “confinement of American energies to a climate where whites can work without injury and without competition.” Separation would rid the Union of slavery and render free white labor safe from African American competition, which would now be restricted to the Confederacy and its complementary, not competing, economy. Yet if the war party prevailed, the Union would “risk losing southern trade because of resistance to separation.” This unnatural outcome should be easily avoided with a conservative peace government because “proximity and geography would secure to the North, if ever a good understanding should be established, a large and profitable trade with the South.” Hotze concluded with a warning to conservative believers in reunion, the Union government “ought not to ask for more.”⁵³

There were limits to any desire to compromise with the Union. Confederates read newspapers with their coverage of that day’s latest “atrocities story” of massacre and outrage committed by United States soldiers. Increasing numbers of Confederates also had direct contact with what they deemed to be the rapacity of Union armies as they advanced deeper into the South. With these provocations, such a future of cordial amity and vigorous trade with the Union was difficult to imagine. Such Confederates would be prepared, through necessity, to conduct the latter, but the former, at least in the immediate term, was impossible.⁵⁴

Anger would be replaced by magnanimity on the part the Confederate government at least, if, as appeared likely in the summer, the Union became the first country to recognize Confederate independence. As Benjamin told Slidell on July 12,

⁵³ Henry Hotze, “Southern Independence and Northern Liberty,” *The Index* 4 105 (April 28, 1864):266

⁵⁴ The atrocities story term is from Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 182-84.

“the present state of northern finances and the fierce and passionate dissensions among the northern people” meant “the first recognition of the Confederacy will come from our enemies.”⁵⁵

The State Department had to consider whether the government should offer concessions to the Union as incentives, much as it had done earlier in 1862 in offering commercial agreements to Britain and France. Confederates had to consider both constitutional implications and the consequences for their future. Davis was adamant that there could be no compromise on independence, but he told Senator Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia that he too wished to support the peace party. Davis added that northerners then “would fully realize the blessings of peace and much more numerous sustain the policy of stopping the war.” Considering what terms would be acceptable, Davis vaguely wanted an outcome that reconciled “the peaceful solution of the question at issue and the future obligations to our States and people.”⁵⁶

Davis believed that an offer of eventual closer relations would act as an inducement for the United States government to seek peace. During Confederate-Union meetings that summer, when northern envoys James R. Gilmore and James F. Jaquess visited Richmond and when former Confederate senator Clement C. Clay and others met Horace Greeley at the Canadian Niagara Falls, speculation about the future of the Confederacy and its relations with the Union grew most intense. In Richmond, Davis told the northern emissaries on July 17, “there are essential differences between North and South that will, however the war may end, make them two nations.” Separation did not

⁵⁵ Judah. P. Benjamin to John Slidell, July 12, 1864, *OR*, 1172-1173.

⁵⁶ Jefferson Davis to Hershel V. Johnson, September 18, 1864, *JDC*, 6:336.

necessarily mean alienation, Davis also told them he hoped “that your coming may lead to a more frequent and more friendly intercourse between North and South.” On account of the continued prosecution of the war by the Union, this future amity had to be postponed for a generation, because Davis warned “the north is sowing such bitterness that our children may forget this war, but we cannot.” He ended by an emphatic justification of current Confederate hostility, “if you enter my house and drive me out of it, am I not your natural enemy?” Davis therefore did not preclude the mutual benefits arising from a relationship of sorts between the United States and Confederacy; but a reconstruction was out of the question and in the near future even a degree of reconciliation was unrealistic. Perhaps a commercial treaty, at most, could be negotiated between the two, if the Union restored the conquered lands back to the Confederacy and hence removed grounds for a continuing enmity.⁵⁷

Some Confederate agents in Canada went further in planning future relations with the Union. At the Niagara Falls conference, the unofficial Confederate delegation tried to be as accommodating as possible. There were tactical reasons behind this apparent flexibility, as Clay explained to Davis on July 25, the Confederate position had to be “in such a form that would be most valuable to the friends of peace in the North and West” for “they hug the idea of reunion would follow peace at no distant period.” Despite northern press reports to the contrary, the Confederate envoys did not totally appease the Unionist peace party. As Clay attempted to clarify to Benjamin on August 11, there was no Confederate proposal for reunion, “but the South will agree to an armistice of six or

⁵⁷ Jefferson Davis, “Interview with northern emissaries,” July 17, 1864, *JDP*, 10: 533-34. Clay was accompanied by James P. Holcombe, Jacob Thompson, William W. Cleary, George N. Sanders and Beverley Tucker. (*JDP*, 10:559.)

more months and to a treaty of amity and commerce.” This consequent treaty between Union and Confederacy would be ambitious in scope and would be achieved by “securing peculiar and exclusive principles to both sections,” meaning the retention of slavery in one and its illegality in the other. Moreover, the treaty might also have military and foreign policy components for it held open “possibly to an alliance defensive, or even for some purposes, both defensive and offensive.” In what they deemed to be a significant concession, Confederates prepared to discard some of their conservative attributes, in order to participate in a joint revolutionary “American Foreign Policy.” They expected the Union to recognize the independence of the Confederacy in exchange for an ambitious alliance dedicated to ejecting both Europeans and monarchies from Mexico, Canada and Cuba.⁵⁸

There was now a qualification on Confederate independence, at least in terms of its external relations, for there would be not just “amity” but an “identical foreign policy.” Additionally, to administer this power posture there would be a tangible overarching polity composed of representatives of the “twin confederacies,” which would be “morally and physically stronger than the old Union.” The *Richmond Sentinel* reflected on this supervisory body, and thought it may well be acceptable to Confederates, provided it offered “us something that will preserve equal rights in the Union.” Hotze promoted this possibility to scare Europeans out of their expectation of constant enmity between the Confederacy and the Union, but it also reflected strands of

⁵⁸ Clement C. Clay et al., to Jefferson Davis, July 25, 1864, *JDP*, 10:559-61. Clay explained that “our last response is not as pointed as we would have made it in repelling the idea of peace on any terms inconsistent with territorial integrity and with the maintenance of the authority of the States to manage their own social institutions...But it was thought advisable to leave it in a form which, without committing ourselves to the surrender of any right, would be most valuable to the friends of Peace in the North and West.” (Clay to Benjamin, August 11, 1864, Bryan Hagan Collection.)

thought in the Confederacy itself. Confederates believed an alternative did exist to the conservative alliance with European powers to offset Union expansionism. This choice was a new imperialist Union.⁵⁹

The idea of a loose Confederation between the North and South with an expansionist policy in all directions had its attractions to Confederates in the late summer of 1864, especially if southerners could share in its bounty and lead it. They interpreted the success of the northern Democratic Party as evidence of northern support for such a future. On August 30, Samuel J. Anderson told Davis, “the northern mind is in an extremely malleable condition” and with Confederate military successes, “they pant for the restoration of the southern leadership of the Union” being “fully conscious of how it led the Union before 1860.” Anderson believed the Democratic Party’s presidential candidate, George B. McClellan, was a doughface and would accept reunion on the basis of southern sectional dominance. Anderson warned it was a fleeting opportunity and, if rejected, the Confederates faced a “war with a united North, a reign of terror much worse than Lincoln’s.” With Atlanta’s fate still in the balance and the Democratic convention meeting in Chicago, there was a sense that this was a time of opportunity for Confederates.⁶⁰

Although Davis remained defiant about complete independence, in the context of a worsening military situation first in Georgia and then in the Shenandoah Valley, there was growing pressure from other Confederates to concede a looser association with the

⁵⁹ *Richmond Sentinel*, “Terms of Peace,” *The Index* 4 122 (August 25, 1864):541; Henry Hotze, “The Prospect of a Speedy Peace,” *The Index* 4 121 (August 18, 1864):521-22.

⁶⁰ Samuel J. Anderson to Jefferson Davis, August 30, 1864, *JDC*, 6:324-26. As seen below, those Confederates optimistic about McClellan’s flexibility with regard to Confederate independence had to swiftly re-evaluate their assessment as a result of the Democratic Party convention.

Union as part of ending the war. Some Confederates suppressed any misgivings about McClellan even after they read his letter, which accepted the Democratic nomination for president but indicated that he would only do so on a war platform. Other Confederates thought McClellan's nomination was a setback to any settlement with the Union. On September 5 in Charleston, Eldred Simkins considered that "if McClellan is elected we will be worse off than under Lincoln," and a week later, Jacob Thompson then in Toronto accepted that "the McClellan nomination smothered peace feeling." Other Confederates refused to accept that all was lost and an accommodation with the Union still seemed to be possible in the event of McClellan's election.⁶¹

In particular, some Confederates and their supporters advocated a convention of all states that would result in some level of reconstruction, if not of the Union then at least a confederation. On September 22, the champion of antebellum manifest destiny, John L. O'Sullivan asked Davis to help him be elected a "delegate to a convention McClellan calls on his election to elaborate a new system which with complete sectional autonomy and substantial independence will equal a true compact of federation." On September 12, Thompson agreed with O'Sullivan, but warned Davis, as a result of such negotiations, the best that could be hoped for was that "we will be one people militarily and as far as practicable commercially."⁶²

⁶¹ Eldred Simkins to Eliza Trescot, September 5, 1864, SIM 181, box 2, Papers of Eldred J. Simkins, HL; Jacob Thompson to Jefferson Davis, September 12, 1864, *JDP*, 11:25.

⁶² John L. O'Sullivan to Jefferson Davis, September 21, 1864, *JDP*, 11:58; Jacob Thompson to Jefferson Davis, September 12, 1864, *JDP* 11:25. Based in London during this time, O'Sullivan wrote pamphlets urging northern Democrats to end the war, the British Government to recognize the Confederacy, and working closely with George McHenry, the northerner O'Sullivan wished to be awarded Confederate citizenship.

If the resulting Union could be of a sufficiently loose association, such as that originally intended by the Articles of Confederation adopted in 1781, then at least these Confederates could argue that state rights protecting slavery had been secured. On September 15, Hotze in *the Index* predicted that the convention would be preceded by an armistice and the result would be the “reconstruction of the Union into its original elements by the removal of the federal government as interlocutor.” In effect a reversion to the Articles of Confederation. Hotze saw reconciliation at least with part of the Union population as possible for the “Confederate people and Government feel more kindly towards the northern Democrats than since 1860.” The paper’s Richmond correspondent anticipated that if the Union “were the first to recognize Confederate independence” it would be able to “secure commercial privileges” with the Confederacy “to the chagrin of Europe.” There was growing recognition that a complete separation from the Union may be impossible. But in order for Confederates to retain slavery and with it a substantial degree of autonomy, commercial and foreign policy concessions could be made and it would be reversion to the spirit of 1776-1781, as opposed to the Constitution of 1789.⁶³

Confederate supporters of offering concessions to the United States government argued that only such a move would save republicanism. On September 29, the South Carolina representative William W. Boyce recommended to Davis a convention of all the States to end the war and added that “our republican institutions are lost unless we have a peace accompanied with harmony with the North.” Not only would the act of summoning a convention be “the highest acknowledgement of State Rights,” but also “your only hope of peace is with the conservative party of the North.” Boyce was an opponent of Davis,

⁶³ Henry Hotze, “The Nomination and the Platform,” *The Index* 4 125 (September 15, 1864):584; “Letter from Richmond,” August 18, 1864, *The Index* 4:126 (September 22, 1864):604.

but he agreed on the importance of promising military context as a backdrop to any talks. Therefore he added that prior to holding negotiations, Confederates should militarily improve their bargaining position and “fortify if you can by victories.” Military successes would help in any negotiation to secure the best future outcome for the Confederacy.⁶⁴

During 1864, the Union represented a greater element in Confederate calculations about the future because of their need to find northern allies both to win the election and then help contain Union military power. The *Richmond Sentinel* speculated that the reconstruction of a southern dominated Union required the expulsion of New England. At the same time, Confederates depended on the separation of the northwestern states. In both cases, Confederates recognized that as a ‘consolidated Government’, the Union in 1864 was too powerful to be contained by the Confederacy alone. Hence the Union needed to be broken up.⁶⁵

Confederates believed that opposition to Lincoln was acute in the old Northwest and went beyond politics-as-usual. By the summer of 1864, in the context of military successes both secured and anticipated and the approaching election, Confederates recognized the potential of this northern opposition in the creation of a new and allied nation in North America. This expectation was felt especially among Kentuckian Confederates, who saw the liberation of their own state from the Union as intimately tied up with issue of Northwest secession. On June 9 and 10, Kentuckian representative Eli Bruce told the House of a “vigorous and rapidly growing party for a separate republic, which will form a close alliance with the Confederates States to fight a common foe: the

⁶⁴ William W. Boyce to Jefferson Davis, September 29, 1864, JDP, 11:73.

⁶⁵ *Richmond Sentinel*, “Terms of Peace,” in *The Index* 4 122 (August 25, 1864):541.

enemy of constitutional government and mankind.” The next month, a former governor of Kentucky, Richard Hawes, told Davis that Bruce was “willing to visit Canada...to carry out operations by electing a Democrat President.” “Or better for us” Hawes added, Bruce would also go after the “most material fruits,” by achieving secession of one or more Northwest states.⁶⁶

While some saw Northwest secession in the context of the approaching election, other Confederates saw it as part of a longer-term westward tilt of American civilization with implications for the balance of power. Hotze welcomed the prospect that the Northwest was finally awakening to a “consideration of its real interests” and the “absurdity of the part it has hitherto played.” It has “no interest in humbling the Confederacy but in resisting and humbling the east.” Looking forward on September 22, Hotze saw “the election that November as marking the transfer of political power and the decadence of New England and aggrandizement of the West” and which will divide the Union once more into antagonistic sections. Hotze, with his British audience in mind, also represented a northwestern confederacy would have a specific additional purpose to weaken the Union and establish the balance of power involving Canada and Mexico as well as the Confederacy. Both the Confederacy and Canada would also benefit by the carrying trade of this landlocked nation. On June 23, *The Index* argued that the

⁶⁶H. V. Johnson to Jefferson Davis, January 4, 1864, *JDP*, 10:152; Leonidas Polk to Jefferson Davis, February 27, 1864, *JDP*, 10:263; J.W. Tucker to Davis, March 14, 1864, *JDC*, 6:204-5; Eli M. Bruce, *Remarks of Hon E. M. Bruce, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives of the Confederate States of America, June 9th and 10th, 1864: on the financial policy of the government* (1864), 3; Richard Hawes to Jefferson Davis, July 18, 1864, *JDP*, 10:535. Hawes noted that Bruce “has had an interview with you looking to the best mode of opening communications with those in Kentucky and the North West United States who may have a powerful agency in directing public affairs in that quarter...” Hawes mentioned he already had an agent, Cleary, in Canada, the secretary of the Niagara Conference and “who is highly fitted to do what he can to aid our cause in Kentucky”; but he wanted a more prominent personage, such as Bruce or former Governor Charles S. Morehead, to go to Canada as well.

Northwest's "true avenues of commerce flowing past Quebec and New Orleans, rather than New York and New England."⁶⁷

Confederates also saw the creation of a new northwestern confederacy as an ally to help safeguard republicanism. John Tyler Jr. wrote that northwesterners "realize they cannot afford the subjugation of the South," and the "conservative elements fear permanent subversion of government and loss of liberty." On June 28, in a pamphlet titled *Rebellion in the North*, an anonymous writer declared that the "time has come for Indiana, Ohio and Illinois to free itself of usurpations and tyranny." On August 11, Clay agreed, he regarded north-westerners as "natural allies of State Rights and popular liberty." Deep-seated northwestern republicanism, indifference to slavery and predominance of economic motives in pursuing the contest meant the Northwest would be amenable to negotiation with the Confederates. Confederates believed, in addition, the longer the war lasted, the greater these republican virtues were imperiled by Union oppression.⁶⁸

The prospect of a new republic, or at least a serious rebellion against Lincoln, appeared tantalizingly close to Confederates. Proponents insisted a single Confederate military success in the West would trigger the underground to emerge and change everything. Clay told Benjamin on August 11, that the Northwest would rise "if our

⁶⁷ Henry Hotze, "The West and the War," *The Index* 4 116 (July 14, 1864):442; "The Growing Power of the West," *The Index* 4 126 (September 22, 1864):601. Hotze was prompted by the publication of letters from Major General Morgan of Ohio and W. M. Anderson calling for an armistice.

⁶⁸ Henry Hotze, "The Confederate Navy," *The Index* 4 113 (June 23, 1864):395; John Tyler Jr., "Our Confederate States Foreign and Domestic," 34 1 *DBR* (July and August, 1864):1-33; Anon, *Rebellion in the North! Extraordinary disclosures! Vallandigham's plan to overthrow the government! The peace party plot! Full details of the organization. Its declarations, oaths, charges, signs, signals, passwords, grips, &c., &c* (Richmond Va.: n.p. 1864) forward; Clement C. Clay to Judah P. Benjamin, August 11, 1864, Bryan Hagan Collection. In the forward to a series of documents dated June 28, 1864, and allegedly smuggled from the Union, the anonymous writer contends that *Rebellion in the North* was "evidence of strongly prevalent opinion in the North."

armies occupied any states north of the Ohio for a month or a week.” A day later, Kentuckian Austin H. Price concurred with a similar proviso, suggesting to Davis that the “Confederacy send troops to Missouri and Kentucky.” The following month, with Sherman now in Atlanta, Thompson was less ambitious for Confederate arms; but he still believed there was merit in the “application of proper stimulants” because “there is no question that there is a strong revolutionary element in the North West, if we can hold our own militarily.” Once that military deadlock was achieved and in the event of Lincoln’s reelection, “the violent feeling will blow up.”⁶⁹

The Culmination of Confederate Efforts: Mexico

It was not just a possible northwest confederacy that would be needed to contain the Union, which was exhibiting the passions of unchecked ambition. In early 1864, Confederates looked at Mexico with the greatest of interest since the war began. As Davis wrote to Maximilian on January 7, the Confederate government wished to “establish and cultivate the most friendly relations” with Mexico. Privately, as Benjamin told the new Confederate envoy, Brigadier General William Preston, “the future safety of the Mexican Empire is inextricably bound up with the safety and independence of the Confederate States.” Confederates planned a future of economic exploitation both indirectly and directly. They also believed Mexico to be dependent on the Confederacy and planned Mexico to be a supporter of the conservative cause, which would be

⁶⁹Clement C. Clay to Judah P. Benjamin, August 11, 1864, Bryan Hagan Collection; Austin H. Price to Jefferson Davis, August 12, 1864, *JDP*, 10:609; Jacob Thompson to Jefferson Davis, September 12, 1864, *JDP*, 11:25-27. Price provided information on “the grand council of leading men from the states of Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana” held recently in Chicago, dedicated to “the overthrow of the despotism under which we live.” Even after Atlanta fell, Confederates remained confident for some weeks that Sherman’s extended supply lines would compel him to undertake a humiliating and dangerous retreat.

extended to the whole of Latin America and by so doing shut out any United States influence.⁷⁰

The installation of a new regime in Mexico with its promise of stability offered commercial opportunities to Confederates. On March 20, Preston requested the long serving Confederate agent in Monterrey, Mexico, Jose Quintero, to continue to “communicate with me regularly with regard to the events and policy of the country, especially the condition of affairs, trade and intercourse on the frontier.”⁷¹ On January 5, the Senate unanimously passed the resolution to send an envoy to Mexico but amended the envoy’s instructions, which had been drafted by Benjamin, “with the qualification that the reciprocal free trade proposed on the frontier be extended to the ports of the two countries and to articles of growth, produce and manufactories.” Trade seemed to be the key priority for the legislative branch; moreover, Confederate commentators enthused about the long term opportunities in Mexico, because “the wretchedly abject condition of Mexico during the past forty years” was not necessarily “the standard of what always has been and will be” *The Index* stressed that Mexico was potentially “the richest and most beautiful country on the globe.” Its fertility and climate were ideal for cash crops. De Bow agreed that for Confederates, Mexico was “a great treasure of future wealth and commerce.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Jefferson Davis to the Archduke Maximilian, January 7, *JDP*, 10:158; Benjamin to Preston, January 7, 1864, *OR*, 989.

⁷¹ William Preston to Jose Quintero, March 20, 1864; to General Almonte, June 6, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS.

⁷² James L. Orr, “amendment to second resolution advising that negotiations be entered upon His Imperial Majesty on the basis proposed in the draft of instructions accompanying the President’s message,” January 5, 1864, *CJ*, 3:515-16; Henry Hotze, “Mexico in the French Chambers,” *The Index* 4 93 (February 4, 1864):74; De Bow, “The War of Independence,” 34.1 *DBR* (July and August, 1864):47-59; Rose Greenhow to Jefferson Davis, January 2, 1864, *JDP*, 10:143; John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, June 2, 1864, *OR*, 1139-40. Orr’s amendment passed unanimously.

As well as trade, some Confederates hoped to achieve a joint interest in slavery or at least slave-like forced labor with Mexico and with its French sponsor. Tyler, writing in *De Bow's Review*, saw great potential in what he regarded as French plans to acquire in Mexico another tropical region, for according to Tyler, Napoleon “has already a coolie and modern apprentice system in Algeria.” Tyler believed the “peon servitude [system] in Mexico is easily convertible to slavery.” Therefore he looked forward either way the establishment of a “permanent labor system” and hence assurance of crop production and the outcome of a pro slavery alliance with the Confederacy.⁷³

The existence of a new and sympathetic Mexican regime finally offered a chance to exploit the potential wealth of the country. Moreover, its access to the Pacific and Mexican Gulf would potentially improve the Confederacy's maritime position both for exports and in war. In a letter to Preston on January 7, Benjamin envisaged that part of the Confederate Mexican policy would be to destroy “the commerce of the enemy in the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Mexico” because the commerce of the Union was then “defenseless on the Pacific.” He sent copies of Letters of Marque to Preston, with the view that Mexican ports would become bases for Confederate privateers. In the longer term, a close maritime alliance with Mexico would render the Confederacy invulnerable to future blockades.⁷⁴

The integration of Mexico into a system of North American alliances led by the Confederacy would guarantee the success of the plan of a former senator from California, William Gwin, to colonize Sonora. The northwestern Mexican province of Sonora, that

⁷³ John Tyler Jr., “Our Confederate States: Foreign and Domestic,” 34 1 *DBR* (July and August, 1864):1-33.

⁷⁴ Judah P. Benjamin to William Preston, January 7, 1864, *OR*, 988-89.

potential Confederate outlet to the Pacific Ocean and also a land of precious metal mining, returned as a factor in Confederate thinking during the summer of 1864. Preston assured Davis that there were estimated to be 15,000 to 20,000 “men of southern birth in California who are now restless and persecuted under the severe social and political prosecutions of the Civil War.” With them too far away to help the Confederacy directly, it would be much better to have these sympathetic individuals moving into Mexico than the alternative of French investment consisting of “corporate privilege and wealth” or worse. But these pro Confederate Californians “can only be induced to colonize Sonora or emigrate to Mexico if there are friendly relations between the Confederacy and Mexico.” Not only would such immigrants be a lobbying group on behalf of the Confederacy in Mexico, but they also had experience in mining and skills in repelling “savage Indian” assaults, that would help develop this neglected region.⁷⁵

Not all Confederates welcomed the prospect of an infusion of free whites from California into Sonora. Confederate suspicion of Union infiltration in such a plan combined with a wish to not further complicate the situation on the ground in Mexico. On January 7, Benjamin warned Preston that it was an unnamed U.S. senator from California who had proposed threatening resolutions in the Senate, and he added, “Lower California, Sonora and Sinaloa have long been looked upon by Californians as their easy and assured prey whenever the occasion shall be opportune for seizing these defenseless provinces.” Confederate concerns about United States expansion into northwestern Mexico under the guise of the colonization of these provinces by Californian refugees

⁷⁵, William Preston, “Memorandum,” June 26, William Preston to Jefferson Davis, June 28, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS; John Slidell to Judah Benjamin, June 2, 1864, *OR*, 1139-40.

explained the initial skepticism with which Gwin's plan had been received in Richmond in 1863, before the former senator left for Paris.⁷⁶

Slidell, when briefed by Gwin on his plan in Paris, was cautious in his reaction, even though Gwin had been able to meet both Napoleon and Maximilian repeatedly and "his scheme has been fully examined and approved." Slidell guardedly told Benjamin on June 2 that Gwin's ambitious plan "offers fair chance of success. If carried out, its consequences will be most beneficial." But Slidell added his own preference "it is better that we should be quite untrammelled as to our future movements in that direction." Settling a portion of Mexico with free white Californians, however sympathetic, may not have been the most optimal outcome envisioned by Confederate diplomats in the summer of 1864 for the Confederacy.⁷⁷

By June, Confederates hoped that California, as part of a Pacific coast confederacy, might break away from the Union. Writing on June 23, Holze declared: "The birth of an independent Pacific Confederacy is only a question of time. It will take place on the day when it is for the interest of the people of those distant states and territories to cut loose from the political mismanagement and indebtedness of the United States." Although not as important as the Northwest, it formed part of the balance of power and free trading future Confederates saw for North America and looked forward to the day when "San Francisco will be the New York of the Pacific." Therefore

⁷⁶ Judah P. Benjamin to William Preston, January 7, 1864, *OR*, 989. In London, Greenhow noted Gwin was active in his machinations by the beginning of 1864. (Rose Greenhow to Jefferson Davis, January 2, 1864, *JDP*, 10:143.)

⁷⁷ John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, June 2, 1864, *OR*, 1139-40. A Confederate agent in Mexico City, Captain A.M.T. Beauregard, wrote to Preston on June 18, "the French are or are expected to be in Acapulco en route for the possession of Sonora, said to be threatened by Yankee sympathizers from California." (Beauregard to Preston, June 18, 1864, 1864-65 letter book, correspondence, Preston Family Papers - Davie Collection, # A\P937d, FHS.)

Confederates remained reluctant to have Californians complicate their plans in Mexico and preferred that pro southern Californians had better remain where they were in order to foment trouble in their home state.⁷⁸

Preston was convinced that the Gwin plan could help shore up the Mexican regime and help make it stable for more exploitation. Meeting in Havana in June en route from Paris to Mexico City, Gwin told Preston of “the importance of establishing a good understanding at the beginning between two adjacent nations, having many vast interests in common and which must hereafter augment their growing wealth and population.” Preston agreed, and told his ADC, then in Mexico City, Captain R. T. Ford, “it was my intention to recall you, but now will remain until further orders...you are to remain in Mexico City until Gwin gives definite information...”⁷⁹

Preston advised that the Mexican regime would need direct Confederate military support in the future. A solution was to hand because the Confederacy soon would have a demobilized army. After the war, “some of the veteran soldiers of the Confederate States will prefer service to civilian life” and will be available “to reestablish the military power of Mexico.” In February, Preston, already in Havana, worriedly noted the “disturbed condition” of Mexico in the absence of certainty of Maximilian’s intentions and the threat posed by supporters of the ousted liberal Mexican leader Benito Juárez. Not only was Maximilian unpredictable and opposition to his regime evident in Mexico, but Confederates also doubted the constancy of his patron Napoleon III to the project. As

⁷⁸ Henry Hotze, “The Confederate Navy”, *The Index* 4 113 (June 23, 1864):395.

⁷⁹ William Preston to Captain R.T. Ford, June 23, August 20, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS. Preston told Ford that both Mason and Slidell had advised him to abort his mission, but Preston had been persuaded otherwise by Gwin as the former senator “takes a very different view of matters and regards the impediments as merely temporary.”

Slidell observed on March 16, “Maximilian may be obliged to rely on his own resources earlier than he recognized.” Hence Slidell made a point of speaking to the Mexicans in Paris who were in Maximilian’s entourage. He warned them “that without the ready, active friendship of the Confederacy, Maximilian will be entirely powerless to resist northern aggression.” It was not surprising that Confederates agreed with Lamar on April 14, who proclaimed that the Mexican regime amounted to a “French protectorate whose durability depends on the establishment of the Confederacy.”⁸⁰

Confederates looked forward to a time when they believed Maximilian would have more autonomy from France and they more power in Mexico. On August 25, Hotze anticipated that the “sooner Napoleon III bestows on Maximilian the privilege of independent action the faster the nascent empire will attain the dignity of an independent nation.” Hotze hoped that as a result, “Maximilian may be impressed with the grandeur of his mission” and therefore not only rise above his own inadequacies and hesitations, but also be a part of the Confederate sponsored balance of power in North America.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Henry Hotze, “The Empire of Mexico”, *The Index* 4 89 (March 17, 1864):169; William Preston to Judah P. Benjamin, February 13, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS; John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, March 16, 1864, *OR*, 1063-65; Lamar, *Speech of Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, on the state of the country: delivered in the Athenaeum, Atlanta, Ga., Thursday evening, April 14, 1864 reported by A.E. Marshall* (Atlanta, Ga.: J. J. Toon & Co., 1864), 10. Preston later told Benjamin that “a single corps of our army might maintain or destroy his government if deprived of the aid of France.” He warned Benjamin that the “adherents of Juarez occupy the northern routes.” (William Preston to Judah P Benjamin, April 28, June 2, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS). Slidell saw Union opposition and above all the unpopularity of the Mexican project in France as bigger obstacles; these challenges were not helped by the French foreign minister’s “great dissatisfaction at the tardiness of the Archduke’s movements.” Slidell spoke to the chief of the Mexican commission sent to Europe to offer Maximilian the throne, Don J. M. Gutierrez de Estrada, and later to Maximilian’s army chief of staff General Adrián Woll. (John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, April 30, June 2, 1864, *OR*, 1108-9, 1140; Judah P. Benjamin to John Slidell, April 23, 1864, *OR*, 1100; Dudley Mann to Judah P. Benjamin, April 4, 15, 1864, *OR*, 1076; Henry Hotze to Judah P. Benjamin, April 16, 1864, *OR*, 1086-90.)

⁸¹ Henry Hotze, “The Mexican Policy,” *The Index* 4 122 (August 25, 1864):537-38.

The Confederate belief in Mexican dependence increased with every revelation of Union hostility to Maximilian's regime. On April 4, the Henry Winter Davis joint resolution had been reported in the United States House of Representatives; Confederate newspapers provided extensive coverage of the proceedings and to members of the government it revealed popular Union antagonism to the French backed Mexican government that not even the forensic skill of Seward could disguise. For Confederates, it meant Mexicans would depend on them even more. On April 12, Littleton D. Q. Washington wrote to Senator R. M. T. Hunter that he felt that the resolution lent weight to the tendency to make an alliance between the Confederacy and France and Mexico. Archer wrote to his brother Bert on May 6 that he looked "to Maximilian to make his first duty the recognition of the South and that Napoleon III, provoked by the resolution, will follow." Archer therefore concluded that "Maximilian stands more in need of our recognition than we do of him – we know by whose power and alone Maximilian can become firmly seated on the throne." Confederates believed the French and Mexican members of Maximilian's administration recognized this situation and would invite Confederate aid. Slidell cheerfully told Benjamin of Maximilian's chief of army staff that "General Woll is perfectly capable of appreciating the necessity of the support of the Confederacy to protect the new government against the aggression of the North."⁸²

⁸² Henry Winter Davis, "The Empire of Mexico" in *Speeches and Addresses by Henry Winter Davis*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1867), 395; L.D.Q. Washington to R.M.T. Hunter, April 12, 1864, box 9, folder v-w, Hunter Family Papers, #H9196aFAZ, VHS; Edward R. Archer to Bert Archer, May 6, 1864 letter book, GLC01896.159; John Slidell to Judah P. Benjamin, April 30, 1864, *OR*, 1108-9. The Resolution declared "that the Congress of the United States were unwilling by silence to leave the nations of the world under the impression that they are indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the Republic of Mexico; and that they therefore think fit to declare that it does not accord with the policy of the United States to acknowledge any monarchical government erected on the ruin of any republican government under the auspices of any European power."

Confederates predicted that Maximilian's regime might become the pattern for Latin American governance. With his installation by the French as emperor, the Union's Monroe Doctrine for republican governments and against European intervention in the western hemisphere was apparently discredited. The *Richmond Dispatch* declared of the Monroe Doctrine, "It is from this time forth, an exploded humbug." Indeed, the world owed the Confederacy, "a debt of gratitude" for having "forbidden" the Union ruling an empire stretching "from the St. Lawrence to Cape Horn." Confederates attacked the Monroe Doctrine as an exercise in idiocy in policy as well as megalomania by the insistence of the imposition of ill-suited republican forms of government on the backward peoples of Latin America. Confederate foreign policy had "no new-born admiration of monarchical institutions," but was committed to allowing "every people to choose its own form of government." In addition, Confederates denied the applicability of republican self-government everywhere because they doubted that "federalism and universal suffrage contain in themselves some hidden virtue capable of redeeming evils in national character..." and hence Confederates opposed what they saw as the U.S. policy of the "dedication of the western world to democratic government." As well as being inappropriate for the racial and class mix of peoples to be found in Latin America, Confederates also conceived U.S. promotion of republicanism as simply a cynical fig leaf covering Union imperialism.⁸³

Confederates believed monarchical forms of government in Latin America would mean that the nations so governed would be open to Confederate domination. Lamar

⁸³ "The Southern Press on the Monroe Doctrine," *The Index* 4 107 (May 12, 1864):295; Dudley Mann to Jefferson Davis, February 29, 1864, *OR*, 1042-43; William Preston to Juan Nepomuceno Almonte, June 6, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS.

declared of Mexico: “[A]s a republic, she will be at the mercy of the United States, as a monarchy she will be our friend and ally.” The type of government established there would determine which of the two North American powers would dominate in both Mexico and across Latin America. It was in that context that Preston focused his lobbying not on Maximilian, but on prominent Mexican conservatives.⁸⁴

In formulating an alternative to the Monroe Doctrine, Confederates tentatively framed an approach they would adopt in Latin America. From his base in Havana on May 6, Preston wrote to a prominent Mexican conservative, General Juan Nepomuceno Almonte. Preston argued the United States government’s policy toward Latin America was determined “alone by selfish motives.” So “even when the just interest of civilization demand it,” Union administrations “forbade all intervention by the powers of Europe in American affairs” and hence “beheld republics lapsing into anarchy.” Preston alleged that successive U.S. administrations had adopted a policy of paranoid suspicion of Europeans’ motives, seeing behind every debt collection enterprise a scheme to reestablish colonial rule. Preston contended that only a small minority of reactionaries had such intentions, but it was this basis that the U.S. government chose to “refuse to incur the slightest risk to remedy discords and arrest ruin” across Latin America. Not only would the United States government prevent attempts at outside intervention to pacify chaotic republican governments, but it would actively destabilize conservative regimes; in Mexico, specifically, Preston charged, “if the United States succeeds in crushing the Confederate States, they will assist the anarchists to overthrow Maximilian.” The independence of the

⁸⁴ Lamar, *Speech of Hon. L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, on the state of the country: delivered in the Athenaeum, Atlanta, Ga., Thursday evening, April 14, 1864 reported by A.E. Marshall* (Atlanta, Ga.: J. J. Toon & Co., 1864), 10-11.

Confederacy would guarantee the establishment of resilient conservative regimes not only in Mexico, but also across Latin America with European cooperation.⁸⁵

As with Mexico, Cuba was precluded from republican government on the grounds of race and class divisions, which had worsened in Cuba since the departure of Captain General Serrano. Confederate confidence in the permanence of the colonial regime and its commitment to slavery had diminished since the Spanish retreat from Santo Domingo in 1863. Preston described a complicated situation when he wrote to Benjamin from Havana, there were divisions among Cubans—"the native Spaniards are almost unanimous in their sympathies for the Confederacy and the creoles generally pro US and advocate gradual emancipation here either from fear of the future or hostility to Spaniards." In agreement with the Confederate agent in Havana, Charles Helm, Preston regarded the fate of Cuba as remaining within the orbit of the ongoing contest for supremacy on the American continent. As he wrote in June, "[T]he great struggle between Grant and Lee absorbs all minds in Havana." Cuba's destiny and survival like that of Mexico depended upon the outcome of the fighting in Virginia.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ William Preston to J. N. Almonte, June 6, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS.

⁸⁶ William Preston to Judah P. Benjamin, March 4, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS. In Havana, Preston observed that the Spanish Government in Madrid was "greatly embarrassed with Santo Domingo" and that it was "probable that after these years of struggle that Spain will halt in her purpose and abandon the island." The reason for such a policy shift was that "the effort is unpopular and costly in Cuba" and therefore "the new liberal government of Arrazola in Madrid had ordered no new troops." Preston expressed his skepticism at the 'liberal' explanation of the retreat, the "fear of servile insurrection in Cuba." (Preston to Benjamin, March 11, 1864, *Ibid.*; Charles Helm to Judah P. Benjamin, January 1, 1864, *OR*, 987.) Lorenzo Arrazola y Garcia's administration lasted only a few months as Spain subsided into chaos. (Charles Helm to Judah P. Benjamin, April 14, 1864, *OR*, 1085; William Preston to Jefferson Davis, June 2, 1864, letter book 1864-65, correspondence, Preston Family Papers – Davie Collection, #A/P037d 39, FHS.) Preston tired of Cuba rapidly and quit at the end of the month for Europe; just before he departed, he wrote to Davis that "Cuba is exceedingly disagreeable...the Captain General, though professing sympathy for the Confederacy, is really afraid of the North..." (William Preston to Jefferson Davis, June 28, 1864, *Ibid.*)

Through the end of the summer, 1864 had been a year of significant Confederate optimism, juxtaposed with significant disaffection with the government, as factors, both internally and externally, had raised the belief of the outcome of the war to its most elevated proportions. Confederates portrayed their future nation as a mighty power committed to preserve its economy, society and revolutionary traditions in the face of a massive assault by the Union. It would still be an expansive and ambitious realm because not only would it be made up of a people of such a character that sustained a nation, but also it had to be in order to contain the Union. Additionally, Confederates had to seek allies to support its mission of saving the world from the Union. In reconciling these demands, the Confederate Government stood for universal values, those also inherently conservative values of continuity, peace and stability in order to provide a framework for the individual and collective ambitions of its people. To convince overseas countries as well as maintain support, the Government undertook to sell the Confederate future both at home and abroad.⁸⁷

The stalwart posture of the Confederacy rested on two contingencies: first, that the Confederate military would continue to resist Union attacks; and second, that Lincoln would not be reelected president of the United States. By the end of November 1864, with the important exception of Lee at Petersburg, these hopes had been dashed. In the face of military disaster in Georgia and Tennessee and political disappointment in the northern Democrats, Confederates had to confront a new set of circumstances. They had to accept that adverse events had jeopardized their nation's future; in that context, by the

⁸⁷ For an emphasis on disagreement over the Confederate national vision during this period, see George C. Rable, *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 236-76. I would rather stress that at this stage Confederates exhibited a greater degree of consensus on the ends of the Confederate nation, while they bitterly contended about the means.

end of the year, Confederates began to consider that such a pervading sense of uncertainty might not be a sufficient basis for expansionist ambitions.

Chapter 7

**“Between Revolution and Survival”: the Choking of Confederate
Expansionist Ambitions, November 1864 - May 1865.**

The reelection of Lincoln doomed Confederate hopes for independence, but they did not behave as if they knew it. Confederates based their expectations for survival on what they regarded as incontrovertible facts demonstrating the residual strength of the Confederacy. They also insisted, despite Lincoln's repeated statements to the contrary, that the Union, or at least opponents to the Republicans, would agree to terms short of reunion and emancipation. Finally, until well into 1865, Confederates did not deem the military situation to be hopeless. While Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia remained in the field, confidence remained.

As a result of these factors, some Confederates continued with their nation-building plans, which included expansion. Those who probably felt such ideas were delusional retreated into silence and a focus on individual pursuits. Even vigorous proponents of the Confederacy conceded its future as an industrial power had come to an end. Instead they debated the nature and purpose of its agricultural economy. Some Confederates predicted their nation would become a smallholding and possibly slave free subsistence economy. Others still looked forward to the day when the Confederacy would resume its promise of large-scale commercial plantation agriculture based on slavery or at least a tied African American workforce. Such a society would look to expand, with a policy of reciprocal free trade to open foreign markets.

These individuals who still harbored a belief in the growth of their nation considered that the Confederacy would be able to project its power abroad as a result of its commerce. For example, it would be able to compete for a share of the lucrative Pacific trade about to explode in volume as consequent to the opening up of the huge market of China. Access to the Pacific dominated the final hopes of Confederate

expansionists who looked via the territories to a toehold either directly via colonization of northwest Mexico or indirectly with separatism rising in California.

A significant minority of Confederates believed that the only route to such an expansive future rested on some degree of cooperation with the Union. Confederates expressed optimism that they would be able to collaborate with their enemy even after the apparent fatal setback to such hopes arising from Lincoln's re-election. Despite Davis's own skepticism, many Confederates insisted on misconstruing messages from events such as Blair's visit and believed the Thirteenth Amendment was a wartime measure that was up for negotiation. Besides, if Lincoln and his party proved obdurate, northern opposition forces might rise in significance once more. Confederates considered that, given the magnitude of its war effort, the United States had demonstrated that it could still be a great power without the southern states in the Union. As a result, they expected that the Lincoln administration would consent to Confederate self-government, especially in exchange for Confederates conceding some limited federal institutions, an alliance defensive and offensive and a joint foreign policy committed to expansion. Confederates, because they had possessed such expansionist ambitions themselves, insisted the United States government did so as well and would be tempted to agree to such a proposal.

Even as Confederates continued to dream of such possibilities, they found it becoming impossible to imagine, or at least agree on, an expansive future for the Confederacy. Some hoped that African American enlistment did not mean the undoing of the racial and social model that slavery sustained. A few even hoped, including Davis, that such selective emancipation would be another step of Christianizing mission of uplift for African Americans. Though they declined to then speculate what the next step in such

a program would be. Other Confederates believed such freedmen would have to be expelled from an independent Confederacy. On the ground, slaveholders likewise reacted with a mixture of relief at the end of responsibility and hope that the African Americans would remain in some kind of share cropping subjection. The end of slavery as a mission ended any hopes of the expansion of the institution southward.

The changes in slavery rippled through to the future of the Confederacy. As the struggle for survival intensified in the late winter and spring of 1865, Confederate visions for their independent nation diverged. Some chose an introspective, conservative approach that sought to protect what little that remained. If Confederates adopted such a posture, they tended to oppose expansion if they thought about it at all. Alternatively, Confederates tried to galvanize a last heroic phase of resistance in an appeal to a commitment to a revolutionary upheaval. In such circumstances, they jettisoned all ideas of the future in order to sacrifice for independence. Confederates therefore either confronted a final choice between either provincial obscurity or revolution at any price—in neither would expansionist ambitions have any role whatsoever.¹

¹ In the final months of the War, Confederates did not behave as if they, as Bruce Levine argues, were “looking to a way to salvage at least something” from the wreckage, after “Sherman broke the power of the secessionist government.” Historians tend to identify this period as when Confederates confronted their failure, when they ceased to believe in their government and prepared for the inevitable future of reunion with a substantial downgrading of expectations. Robert Bonner observes that “the crisis faced by the Confederacy in late 1864 changed the old arguments” and “the southern hopes of securing Confederate independence by going around Lincoln and his party vanished.” Confederates chose not to respond to adverse events in, as George Rable contends, a reactionary or even counter-revolutionary way, having deemed their revolution a failure. Instead they sought to find a solution in their revolution, sustained by a profound sense of entitlement, which Paul Quigley notes the sufferings inflicted by the war had only intensified. There was no conscious movement to postpone the bid for national independence to a better time and a more protracted method, which Michael Bernath believes was the case for cultural nationalism. There was no moment before surrender when Confederates came to the realization that “racism was far more durable than southern nationhood.” Bonner rightly sees this development as a postwar phenomenon. Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie*, 238, 248, 251. Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America*: 286-323. George Rable, *The Confederate Republic*, 277-298. Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds*, 212-13. Michael T. Bernath, *Confederate Minds*, 268-70.

Why Confederates Still Thought Their Nation Might Survive

Confederates believed their faith in the nation was justified on the basis of hard evidence. In January, the Senate inquired into the military resources of the Confederacy; on seeing the War Department's response on January 26, a department clerk and diarist, John B. Jones, wrote the Confederacy could still field 600,000 men, despite an estimated 200,000 casualties for the war thus far. The authority seemed good, and even lower forecasts appeared encouraging. The assistant secretary of war, John A. Campbell, had been more pessimistic about the level of casualties. He told Jones, 500,000 men remained with 200,000 killed and in addition 50,000 permanently disabled and 55,000 languishing in Union prisons. Whether the lower or higher estimate, Confederates believed half a million men were ample, unaware that in reality that their armies numbered just 155,000 men by the beginning of 1865.²

On January 30, believing the War Department's report, Senator Williamson S. Oldham concluded that the Senate committee "unhesitatingly declare that [the military resources] are ample to enable us to maintain ourselves indefinitely against any force the enemy can send against us." On February 9, the speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, Hugh W. Sheffey, confidently asked a 10,000 plus crowd assembled in Richmond to pass his resolution that "we have sufficient resources therefore we will be successful." The troop count remained apparently resilient; on March 11, Senator Benjamin H. Hill told the citizens of La Grange, Georgia., "the Confederacy has more

² Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:399; report for duty number sourced from Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 182. According to the returns published in the War Records, the total for the Confederate army on January 1, 1865 was 445,203, which show that on paper at least the War Department relied on good information. The degree to which Confederates were deceived was therefore in army commanders counting those absent as still effectives. The discrepancy can be shown that the Army of Northern Virginia was in theory over 150,000 strong on January 1, but only had 54,000 present for duty on March 29, 1865, when the Appomattox campaign got underway. Livermore, *Numbers & Losses* 46, 137.

than 500,000 white men within military age east of the Mississippi and provisions, ordnance, artillery all still abundant...”³

Such narratives had to be believed because there appeared little alternative, at least at first, to the prolongation of the war. Initial Confederate reaction to the re-election of Lincoln, which they knew promised only continued war, was that, far from rendering reunion more likely, it instead portended a deepening of divisions. Henry Hotze viewed the re-election of Lincoln on November 7 as disastrous for the Union and “the day of doom for the model republic.” Confederates interpreted Lincoln’s triumph in the Electoral College as disaster for northern republicanism in general and for the future of northwestern opposition in particular. But rather than resignation, those who believed in the Confederacy more often found refuge in defiance. This attitude was exemplified by Charles W. Russell’s unanimous resolution of November 21, which declared to the House that the Confederate people “will never politically affiliate with a people who are guilty of an invasion of their soil and the butchery of their citizens.” On November 28, even Davis’s opponent, Representative Henry S. Foote of Tennessee accepted it was “unwise and unpatriotic to make separate peace or engage in peace movements.” Representative John B. Clark of Missouri added that “separate state action is mischievous and worse than useless.”⁴

³ William Simpson Oldham, *Speech of Hon. W. S. Oldham, of Texas on the resolutions of the State of Texas, concerning peace, reconstruction and independence. In the Confederate States Senate, January 30, 1865* (Richmond, Va., n.p., 1865), 9 [imprint hereafter cited as Oldham. *Speech on Texas Resolutions*]; “Another Mass Meeting in Richmond,” *The Index* 5 149 (March 2, 1865):133; Hill to Davis, March 25, 1865, *JDP*, 11:462-67. Hill’s speech tour was recounted in the *Augusta Chronicle* on March 31 and Hill also sent a copy of his La Grange speech to Jefferson Davis.

⁴ “Presidential Elections,” *The Index* 4 132 (November 3, 1864):697; Foote, “Resolution on a convention of the states,” November 28, 1864, *CJ*, 7:286; John B. Clark, “Amendment on the resolution on a convention of the states,” November 30, 1864, *CJ*, 7: 312.

Confederates believed that northerners as a whole had become more hostile toward them, the proof being the re-election of Lincoln. In his message to Congress on November 7, Jefferson Davis conceded that “it is true that individuals and parties have indicated a desire to substitute reason for force.” The movement was weak because the U.S. government “has too often and too clearly expressed resolution to make no peace except on terms of our unconditional submission and degradation.” On November 16, Alexander H. Stephens wrote an article in the *Augusta Constitutionalist* attacking Davis for being insufficiently encouraging to northern opposition. On December 13, he added in a letter to Davis that his behavior had the “effect, not only to dampen ardor of peace men, but even to excite and arouse in them bitterness of feelings against us.” Therefore from November, not much was to be hoped for from the anti-Lincoln forces of the Union.⁵

Confederates considered that reconstruction was impossible on the grounds of mutual enmity and the destruction of republican self-government in the Union. Opponents of reunion argued that the Union policy was not restoration but subjugation. According to the *Richmond Enquirer* of January 2, the real Union intentions toward the Confederacy were shared between the two parties in Washington. One, the radical Republicans, was “for reducing these States to territories and confiscating property of all the citizens”; the other more moderate and conservative Republican group, for “retaining State organization but applying the confiscation to property of every kind.” The paper concluded, “both mean the same thing.” Apparently, all northerners wished to subjugate the Confederacy.⁶

⁵ Jefferson Davis, “Message of the President,” November 7, 1864, *CJ*, 7:256; Jefferson Davis to Alexander H. Stephens, November 21, Stephens to Davis, December 13, 1864, *JDP*, 11:172, 223.

⁶ “Extracts from the Southern Papers,” *The Index* 5 143 (January 26, 1865):46.

Confederates believed the rule of mob democracy in the Union meant northerners were committed in the pursuit of a counterproductive subjugation of the Confederacy. On January 15, commissioner William Preston wrote to his son Wick, “however rich or strong the North may be, yet when they have no more generosity or magnanimity than to try to seize women and children, they are indeed *Magna Inter Opes Inops*.” Ex-Governor Letcher put it simply; northerners were “insolent oppressors” and the Union a “wicked foe.” In his pamphlet, William N. McDonald saw that the “human passions animated masses of the North against established laws and institutions.” Having usurped power in the Union, the northern proletariat dominated government has the “design of expropriating the estates of the Southern Slaveholder and extirpating the most insignificant sum of Southern chivalry.” General Wade Hampton predicted what remained of the southern people “shall have to pay the United States debt and live under a base and vulgar tyranny.” A day later, Hotze asked “what hope of the future when [northern politicians] behave like vulgar demagogues in accordance with the sentiments of the people?” The future of tyranny, mob rule, racial amalgamation and rule by numbers was coming to the Confederacy if it consented to reunion.⁷

On January 23, a North Carolinian state rights opponent of Davis echoed this sentiment in Congress. James T. Leach’s preamble argued that in the Union mob rule had

⁷ William Preston to Robert Wickliffe Preston, January 15, 1865, Letter Book of William Preston, Minister to Mexico from the Confederacy, Correspondence, 1865, Preston Family Papers, #A P937d 37, FHS; John Letcher, “Reflections Upon the State of Our Situation of the Country,” draft letter to the editor, undated 1864 but almost certainly December, folder 421, John Letcher Papers, VHS; William Naylor McDonald, *The two rebellions; or, Treason unmasked. By a Virginian* (Richmond, Va.: Smith, Bailey, 1865), 8, 121; Wade Hampton to Jefferson Davis, April 19, 1865, *JDP*, 11:548; “The Northern Exultation,” *The Index* 5 156 (April 20, 1865):249. Preston’s Latin phrase translates as “poor in the midst of great wealth” from Horace, D.E. MacDonnell, *Dictionary of quotations, from the Latin, French, Greek, Spanish, and Italian languages: also including maxims, proverbs, law phrases, family mottoes, & c., carefully translated into English, with illustrations, historical and idiomatic* (London: E. T. Gover, 1858), 176. Peter J. Sehlinger, *Kentucky’s Last Cavalier: General William Preston, 1816-1887* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

“claimed the exercise of rights over the States” and the property of citizens no longer guaranteed. Confederates derived evidence for northerners’ intention toward them from their “brutal manner of conduct of war, contrary to the usages of civilized nations.” A week later, Oldham asked the senators: “Can we forget this cruel and inhuman war they have made upon us?” As a public letter to the Virginian chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, William C. Rives, stated, “[W]e are enemies in war, in peace we can never be friends.” By choosing war, the “North has destroyed a great Republic” and the writer meant the antebellum Union.⁸

Confederate distrust of the Union persisted until and even after the moment of surrender; for, as Oldham warned the Senate on January 30, “the past history of the Yankee faithlessness and treachery exists to warn us against further association.” On April 22, Postmaster General John H. Reagan told Davis, “I do not conceal the danger of trusting the people who drove us to war by their unconstitutional and unjust aggressions and who now add consciousness of power to their love of dominion and greed of gain.” Further events appeared to render harmony even less likely. On April 27, James M. Mason wrote to Hotze that he regarded “the murder of Lincoln as the necessary offspring of these scenes of murder and bloodshed in every form of unbridled license that signalized the invasion of the South.” The same day, Hotze observed, the assassination sounded “the knell of anarchy and chaos,” which would have deleterious consequences for the southern people upon surrender.⁹

⁸ James T. Leach, “Preamble to resolutions on the war,” January 23, 1865, CJ. 7:483; Oldham. *Speech on Texas Resolutions*. (BA); “The Destiny of the South,” *The Index* 5 155 (April 13, 1865):230. The letter was from “an eminent citizen of Charleston” and dated from September 1863, but Holze reprinted it eighteen months later on account of “its peculiar interest at the present crisis of affairs.”

⁹ Oldham. *Speech on Texas Resolutions*. (BA); John H. Reagan to Davis, April 22, 1865, *JDP*, 11:556-57; “The Assassination of Lincoln,” *The Index* 5 157 (April 27, 1865):264, 268.

Before the disasters of April 1865, Confederates clung to the chances inherent in an apparently unpredictable military situation as a basis for their nation's survival. On December 1, Hotze had dismissed Lincoln's "offer of an amnesty" as a delusion on his part, "especially due to the Confederacy recovering two thirds of its lost territory and the last chance of reunion lost in four years of cruel and savage war." Away from Georgia and Virginia, Hotze believed that Confederate arms were still making progress. In any event, where the Union armies were advancing, the people exhibited hatred toward, rather than meek submission to, the invader. Above all, contingent military events always meant success could be just round the corner. On February 6, Davis gave a speech to a white crowd of 10,000 at the First African Baptist Church in Richmond. He assured them that a turning point in the war had finally been reached and now, given "we are on the verge of success, we should not again be insulted by such terms of peace as the arrogance of the enemy had lately proposed." Given the repeated cheers Davis received from the large audience, it seemed as if many Confederates agreed.¹⁰

Confederates united around their contention that peace could only be achieved by military success and not from submitting to reunion. Captain William L. Maury wrote to 'Nan' on February 7, "I hope it will have the effect to unite our people and convince the faint hearted that the only road to peace was war." At the time, the mood in Richmond seemed to vindicate this new belligerence. On the same day, the *Richmond Dispatch*

¹⁰ "The Lincoln Program," *The Index* 4 136 (December 1, 1864):761; Jefferson Davis, "Speech," February 6, 1865, *JDP*, 11:383-84. Historians have long argued that Confederate morale drooped, especially once Sherman and Sheridan had commenced their respective advances, but Jacqueline Campbell suggests a more complicated picture with initial gloom being replaced by resilience in the wake of Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas. However effective the campaign was on destroying the logistical basis of the Confederate war effort, psychologically the result was mixed. Jacqueline Glass Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press: 2003). The First African Baptist Church is on the corner of College and Broad Streets in Richmond.

announced Davis had said the Confederacy “no hope of obtaining honourable terms while our armies are meeting reverses.” In short, if the Confederate government wished to conduct any more negotiations with the Union, it would have to win some military victories.¹¹

Until April, Confederates believed that their armies had yet to be sufficiently defeated to compel them accept both reunion and emancipation, such as Lincoln and Seward had offered at Hampton Roads. According to Navy Secretary Stephen R. Mallory, both Davis and Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin were “utterly hostile” to peace and also that “opposition in the Senate was very strong and dreaded been charged with weakly abandoning the contest whilst we yet had three armies in the field.” The chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, Josiah Gorgas, agreed; in his diary, he asked “are we ready to make terms with the enemy before we are half beaten?” In these circumstances, as Oldham queried, can northerners realistically expect to “compel us to submit to a Union of force after having driven us from that of consent?” On February 6, Davis explained why this outcome was necessary: “[W]e are not even allowed to go back to them as we came out.” The *Examiner* added a day later, Confederates would return to the Union “but as a conquered people.” Some more war would be necessary before Confederates could be convinced they had been conquered.¹²

Though northern opposition to Lincoln had been of little use to Confederates and the contingency of war meant Confederates could always hope for military success, the help northern opponents to Lincoln could offer them remained their main source of hope

¹¹ William L. Maury to Nan, February 7, 1865, folder title “Various, 1863-1865,” Maury Papers Including CSS *Georgia* List of Prizes, GLC0472; *Richmond Examiner* quote in *JDP*, 11:388.

¹² Mallory and Gorgas quoted in *JDP*, 11:388; Oldham, *Speech on Texas Resolutions*, 11; Jefferson Davis, “Speech,” February 6, 1865, *JDP*, 11:384; *Richmond Examiner*, February 7, 1865 quoted in *JDP*, 11:387.

for an acceptable form of independence as the military situation deteriorated. Thus despite the election result, Confederates continued to vest hope in opponents to Lincoln. As early as November 16, a former envoy to the Niagara Falls Conference, James P. Holcombe, told Benjamin that “the Republicans cannot secure the same degree of public support for the prosecution of the war on a policy of confiscation and emancipation as on the restoration of the Union.” Lincoln was, therefore, even in the North, “reproached with unwillingness to make peace on any other basis.” Confederates had to argue constantly for their future state in the context of a tangible threat of reunion.¹³

The Future Confederate Economy

Confederate expansionist ambition remained in the debate over the type of economy the Confederacy should have. Some Confederates thought the Confederacy would continue to rely in the future on the exportation of agricultural productions and they disagreed with others who believed that the government had to take the lead in building an industrial sector. An agricultural economy, based on slavery and committed to an increase in staple crop production for export would be different in territorial and commercial scope to a more self-sufficient balanced economy with a significant manufacturing element. The problem with the latter endeavor was it was expensive, difficult and time-consuming because Confederates understood the development of a manufacturing sector went against the instincts of the people.

General R. E. Lee and members of the Davis administration argued for action by government in order to persuade the people to undertake steps to develop an industrial

¹³ James P. Holcombe to Judah P. Benjamin, November 16, 1864, *OR*, 1237-38. Now back in Richmond, Holcombe considered that only “a great delusion as to the extent of military successes has induced the reelection of Lincoln” and despite the result, the war party in the Union has been “permanently weakened and distracted...and there is much reason to hope that before many months intervene” it will be deprived of Democratic Party Support.

sector. They believed that manufacturing enterprises were both necessary for the war effort and for the longer term prosperity of the Confederacy. The government pursued this ambition to the end and continued to send agents abroad to learn about advanced industrial practices. George W. Randolph combined his health cure in Europe during the winter with visiting Bessemer Steel plants in Sheffield, England, and Bordeaux, France, on behalf of the War Department's Nitre and Mining Bureau. The problem was that for too long Confederates had imported not industrial intelligence, but manufactured goods. With the imminent effective loss of the last Atlantic port of Wilmington, as Union forces threatened Fort Fisher, Robert E. Lee grasped the consequences with the imminent cessation of European imports. On January 17, he told Davis the government "must support manufacturing and should have done so from the beginning." Confederates needed to be weaned off traditional pursuits with government aid, "otherwise capitalists would continue to be apprehensive that the return of peace would leave them with their means involved in an unprofitable business." Lee understood the risks associated with industrialization—the cost of capital investment in plant for example—had become too great in the face of an uncertain future.¹⁴

North Carolinian representatives in the House anticipated Lee in reiterating demands they had long made for government support for enterprises in their state. With an eye on developing the area's iron and coal, John A. Gilmer saw the "necessity of establishing government works in Deep River, N.C." Meanwhile existing private industrial enterprises struggled to survive. At the beginning of 1865, the major industrial

¹⁴ George W. Randolph to General Colin L. McRae, February 3, 1865, box folder 16, box 1, Papers of Randolph Family of Edgehill, #5533-c, UVA; "List of Expenses due to George W. Randolph from the Nitre and Mining Bureau," folder 9, Dickins and Kirk Families additional papers, #5533-k,j, UVA; Lee to Davis, January 17, 1865, *JDP*, 11:338-39.

enterprise remaining in the Confederacy succumbed to the pressure. The director of Tredegar Iron Works, Joseph R. Anderson, requested that his works be taken under government control due to the “acute shortage of capital and labor and need for impressment of supplies.” On April 1, Davis tried to assure Lee about Tredegar, noting that “we will endeavor to keep them at work, though it must be on a reduced scale, there is difficulty of even getting iron for shot and shell.”¹⁵

Given the adverse circumstances, any industrial activity in the Confederacy would be modest in scale. In future, as Lynchburg engineer Thomas E. McNeill suggested to Davis on February 19, all factories should be “small” and removed “to mountainous areas where they can be defended” and “women can be collected around them” to provide the labor force. Tredegar survived the conflagration at Richmond, but the dreams of an industrial future of the Confederacy had perished. This outcome was due to the difficulties, which defied any hope of solution, such as shortages of skilled labor and machinery, enemy action and the prospect of more lucrative opportunities in the traditional occupations of the South. Engagement in the latter still offered the chance for Confederates to realize expansionist ambitions.¹⁶

The Confederacy would remain an agricultural economy both during the war and in the future. Confederates disagreed whether it should become a pastoral smallholding subsistence economy or remain focused on production of commercial staple crops for export . Some preferred to continue to rely on commercial instincts of the people and

¹⁵ Gilmer, “Resolution for Committee on Ordnance and Ordnance Stores,” December 5, 1864, *CJ*, 7:329; Anderson quoted and Davis to Lee, April 1, 1865, *JDP*, 11:492-94. On November 21, William Russell Smith of North Carolina wanted to know “what legislation is required to prevent the prostration of the industrial interests of the country?” On December 5, Gilmer argued for “the necessity of establishing government works on Deep River, N.C., to secure more effectually the benefits of coal and iron so important to our defense.” (*CJ*, 7:289, 312.)

¹⁶ McNeil to Davis, February 19, 1865, *JDP*, 11:412.

attempt to sell cotton and other staple crops to the Union armies in order to obtain by direct exchange, manufactured goods or the money for their purchase. Lee supported this endeavor because “the interest and cupidity of individuals will be found far more effectual than the most energetic efforts of government agents stimulated only by official duty.” Lee’s view seemed to correspond more with reality: planting remained a visceral need for Confederates. Planter Frances E. Sprague asked her daughter in Natchez, Mississippi: “Is anyone making a crop near Natchez?” she needed to know because “I do so feel if I knew my friends were doing well, I would put up with my troubles better...I think the Yankees will take the place before I work it again. I hope in two years time there will be a change for the better.” Even if they had ceased for now, Confederates hoped to resume cotton production in the near future.¹⁷

Other Confederates disagreed. On December 6, General John B. Magruder told the people of Arkansas the “cotton trade with the enemy must be stopped, it is illegal and substitutes the love of money, luxury and convenience for the Roman virtues of patriotism and self denial.” The end result, Magruder concluded, was demoralization. With the loss of foreign markets and the financial crisis, which demanded urgent attention but seemed beyond solution, Confederates reconsidered what were the resources of the nation and where its strength lay. If these problems were permanent, radical change in the future would be the inevitable outcome; perhaps making the Confederacy a pastoral smallholding society. On February 15, the Methodist minister Augustus W. Ashton wrote to Davis that the solution lay in the land of the Confederacy and owners should “give up land to government to pay debt.” For the former planters, just two

¹⁷ Lee to Davis, January 17, 1865, *JDP*, 11:338-39; Sprague to Margaret G. Winchester, February 24, 1865 folder 3, correspondence: Margaret G. Sprague Winchester, box 2E913 Frances E. Sprague Papers, Winchester Papers, UT.

hundred acres would be set-aside “for property owners.” Meanwhile, “small tracts” would be awarded by government to military pensioners and disabled veterans.¹⁸

Other Confederates thought about the consequences of such a vision for Confederate society and whether it would become expansionist. On January 12, Hotze tried to make the best out of a bad situation as he reflected that the “life of commercial powers has generally been short and influence temporary....” To Hotze, history demonstrated that “it was by agricultural and military states that empires are founded and systems of civilization spread over the world.” Conversely, “trade and manufactures slowly deteriorate the physical and moral character of the race.” Finally, commercial powers were vulnerable to loss of overseas markets due to naval attacks by enemies, so a commercial power, “whenever worsted at sea, is deprived of the foundation of its prosperity.” Whereas “an agricultural power can always recover, even if ravaged and overrun.” In conjunction with the new phase of the war, the loss of coasts and cities converted the Confederate future into that of a self-sufficient agricultural subsistence economy.¹⁹

This view was contested. Many Confederates held that the export of agricultural products, underpinned by free trade, was essential to obtain hard currency, and Congress made numerous attempts to promote exports. On January 24, Abram Archer advised his father, “[Y]ou can sell more cotton if they are going to open the free trade as I hear they are.” On the same day, Joseph H. Echols told the House, while it was the case that Confederates had “to purchase freedom by the last analysis of liberty, ‘the blood of the

¹⁸ “General Magruder to the People of Arkansas,” *The Index* 5 147 (February 16, 1865):109; Ashton to Davis, February 15, 1865, *JDP*, 11:402. From Washington Co., Va., he met Davis on January 24.

¹⁹ “The Perils of Commercial States,” *The Index* 5 142 (January 12, 1865):26. Holze added a month later that the Confederacy had “no commercial intercourse” remaining with the outside world. (“The Negotiations for Peace,” *The Index* 5 147 [February 16, 1865]:104.)

brave.” The government still had to give “assurances to the people that we intend to place our currency upon a metallic basis and reorganize our finances upon the intelligent principles of political economy.” Echols wanted a return to free trade in the future, arguing that export duties were “an annual incubus” on the producer, which “lessens production” and “array in perpetual antagonism bondholders and agriculturalists.” Instead he recommended the government should “lay as few restrictions on trade as possible and leave it to the operation of its own unchangeable laws.”²⁰

For the sake of revenue as well as by instinct, Confederates wanted their nation to remain based on a commercial economy rather than retreat to a closed, smallholding entity. However the free trade ideal had to accommodate the reality of the requirement of tariffs to satisfy the obligations of future indebtedness. By the end of 1864, the debt would be due to not just the war, but also possibly compensation to the owners of any emancipated slaves. On February 8, John H. Stringfellow told Davis that an export duty on cotton needed not only pay for two billion dollars of debt but also four billion dollars to slaveholders.²¹

The commercial economy was not just about the provision of an essential future revenue stream, it was also the foundation of expansionist ambitions. On January 30, Representative Daniel C. De Jarnette of Virginia complained of the insularity of agricultural people, “nothing is more difficult than to convince them, that agriculture is not the great and absorbing interest that should control the action of governments.” Confederates, De Jarnette continued, had to realize that commerce “has been the great

²⁰ Archer to Richard T. Archer, January 24, 1865, folder 1, immediate family correspondence, box 2E650, Archer Family Papers, UT. Joseph Hubbard Echols, *Speech of Hon. Joseph H. Echols: The House of Representatives, on January 19, 1865* (Richmond, Va.: n.p., 1865), 6.

²¹ Stringfellow to Davis, February 8, 1865, *JDP*, 11:391-92.

archimedian lever which has shaped the world...the highest hopes and aspirations of all nations has been to possess and control it because they know that no wealth can be acquired and no power preserved without it.” Only by understanding this maxim, De Jarnette argued, can Confederates “appreciate the nature of this great struggle in which we are now engaged and the effect of its results on the commercial interests of the world.” “Prizes,” such as the control of the Asian trade, were at stake and it was vital for the Confederacy to understand this.²²

By the end of 1864, Confederates interested themselves once more in the future of commerce on the Pacific Ocean. On December 29, Duff Green told Davis that it was now an urgent question as to which nation would control “the Pacific Trade.” A month later, De Jarnette examined the question in his speech to the House. He declared that it is a “trade which ever has been the source of commercial power and wealth in all ages springing as it does from the labor of eight hundred million Asians.” California was the ideal base for participation, as it had the “finest deltas, rivers, harbors, climate, productive mineral wealth” to support two hundred million people. As well as this commerce, Confederates needed to be busy “exploiting the rich silver and gold reserves as well as developing the rich pastoral and arable resources” of the Mexican Provinces of Sonora, Chihuahua and Baja California.²³

²² Daniel Coleman De Jarnette, *The Monroe Doctrine. Speech of D. C. DeJarnette, of Virginia, in the Confederate House of Representatives, January 30th, 1865, pending negotiations for peace* (Richmond, Va., n.p., 1865), 6, 8 [imprint hereafter cited as De Jarnette, *Monroe Doctrine*].

²³ Duff Green to Davis, December 29, 1864, *JDP*, 11:258; De Jarnette, *Monroe Doctrine*, 19. According to Duff Green, Britain and France may join with the Confederacy “to divide with us the occupation of the Pacific States and the control of the trade of the Pacific.” Davis replied, “I have just received yours of this date. It will give me much pleasure to see you at my residence in the evening...”

Residual Confederate Territorial Retention and Expansion

To participate in this market, the Confederacy had to become a nation state of considerable size. Not only would it consist of all eleven Confederate states evacuated by Union forces, but also Confederates still desired to include the long-occupied Border States within the Confederacy. Davis perceived the Confederacy's claim to the Border States as an impassable barrier to negotiations with the Union. On November 17, Davis confidently told Georgian politicians the status of West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee, "we assert them to be members of the Confederacy." To Davis, even holding a convention of all the states in order to negotiate with those of the Union was impossible, because given the Union's claim there would be the absurdity of two delegations from these states. On February 20, when all hope was gone for the foreseeable future militarily to even menace these states, John Gilmer told the house "in settling the boundary" of the Confederacy, "let the states of Missouri and Kentucky determine for themselves by a free and fair vote of their people, bona fide residents in these prospective states at the commencement of hostilities."²⁴

Moreover, rumors of military successes in November and early December revived, for a time, a *de facto* as well as *de jure* claim to the Border States and reminded Confederates that such claims were not necessarily delusional. In his message to Congress of November 7, Davis said "our forces have penetrated into central Missouri, affording to our oppressed brethren in that state an opportunity of which many have availed themselves, of striking for liberation from the tyranny to which they have been subjected." If the state could not be conquered permanently at this time, at least further

²⁴ Davis, "Meeting with the Georgia Senators," November 17, 1864, *JDP*, 11:162-65; Gilmer, "Amendment to the resolutions of the committee of foreign affairs," in "Congressional Resolutions," *The Index* 5 151 (March 16, 1865):166 and 20 February, 1865, *CJ*, 7:607.

Missouri exiles could be gathered for future incursions. Although in that autumn, General Sterling Price had already been twice defeated and, by November, was in retreat out of the state, this was not known yet east of the Mississippi. On November 13, the *Augusta Constitutionalist* expressed the confident belief that Price would winter in Missouri. Seddon agreed with the prevailing optimism in his November 3 report, stating, “Where Union occupation has been lightened in Kentucky and Tennessee, people rally to the Confederacy.” In late November and early December, both Davis and General P. G. T. Beauregard were hopeful that General John B. Hood could force the war back to the Ohio River by cutting Sherman off. Confederates continued to claim states even when under complete Union control, but the chance of a military incursion cheered these hopes.²⁵

Confederates confidently assumed that problems associated with the control of Indian Territory could be easily solved. The zeal to maintain Confederate territorial integrity extended to the Native American tribes. On November 5, Senator Robert W. Johnson of Arkansas recommended to Davis the appointment of Alfred B. Greenwood for superintendent of Indian Affairs, citing the need to “protect Indian interests, afford relief to exiled families of allies who are in an extremely destitute state.” The object of such an appointment, Johnson stressed, was to “secure confidence and loyalty and eradicate sentiment for an independent Indian confederation.” Problems of displacement and estrangement existed, yet Native Americans had to remain part of the Confederacy. On January 4, Davis did nominate Greenwood as superintendent. In the final days of the

²⁵ Davis, “Message to Congress,” November 7, 1864, *CJ*, 7:249; Kirby Smith to Davis, November 21, 1864, *JDP*, 11:175-78; Davis to Beauregard, November 30, Beauregard to Davis, December 6, 1864, *JDP*, 11:194, 206. Price had been defeated at Pilot’s Knob on September 26 and Westport on October 23. On both the grandiose objectives and significant numbers of forces engaged in Price’s 1864 Missouri campaign, which only became a ‘raid’ in retrospect, see Mark A. Lause, *Price’s Lost Campaign: The 1864 Invasion of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011).

Confederate congress, senators continued to debate appointments in the Indian Territory—on February 22, the Senate referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs, War Secretary John C. Breckinridge’s nomination of the veteran General Douglas H. Cooper as superintendent of Indian affairs.²⁶

In December, control of the Indians assumed a greater importance to the Confederate government as it became part of the last plan to retake formally the claimed territories of Arizona and New Mexico. On December 21, the former Confederate governor of Arizona, John R. Baylor, wrote to Seddon with a proposal to form a “formidable alliance with Indian tribes” in order for him to be able to “recruit in California, New Mexico and Arizona.” The purpose of these activities was to “recapture Arizona and New Mexico and defend Texas.” The plan was endorsed by Samuel B. Callahan and Elias C. Boudinot, the Creek-Seminole and Cherokee delegates to Congress respectively. When Seddon forwarded the matter to Davis on December 30, he added that the “scheme was earnestly commended and pressed on my attention by Colonel James E. Harrison.”²⁷

President and war secretary differed as they had done previously about the immediate importance of the Southwest in the context of the Confederacy’s struggle for survival. Despite the influential persons backing the plan, Seddon advised Davis that there were “no resources” to support such a scheme and instead “all forces should be brought over here or create diversions in our favor.” Davis was more enthusiastic, although he had no intention of overruling his subordinate. On January 5, he agreed with

²⁶ Johnson to Davis, November 5, 1864, *JDP*, 11:138; *CJ*, 4:590.

²⁷ Davis to Seddon, January 5, 1865, *JDP*, 11:281. By now a Brigadier General, Harrison, fluent in Choctaw and Creek had been earlier in 1861 commissioner to the Indian Tribes for Texas (Texas State Historical Association.)

Baylor that it was “desirable to have friendly relations with the [settled] Indians” and additionally “secure cooperation of nomadic tribes.” Davis believed that because Baylor had the “peculiar capacity to be an Indian agent,” Seddon should encourage Kirby Smith, “if he can spare troops,” for “every feasible effort should be made.” The commander in the Trans-Mississippi Department would get no practical help in this endeavor and only be encouraged to carry it out.²⁸

Meanwhile, Congress continued to attend to Indian concerns and praise their efforts in the war. On December 29, Boudinot secured unanimous passage of bills “to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indians.” Early in January, Thomas B. Hanley of Arkansas, chairman of the House Committee of Indian Affairs submitted resolutions on the “organization of the Arkansas and Red River superintendancy of Indian Affairs to regulate trade and intercourse with the Indians there and to preserve peace on the frontier.” These steps coincided with a congressional Joint Resolution of thanks to Brigadier General Watie and Colonel Gano offered by William Porcher Miles of South Carolina on the “brilliant and successful gains” they and their men had performed in the Indian Territory. Into February, Congress continued to concern itself with appropriations for Native Americans, even as the larger plan of alliance and expansion died in the preoccupied hands of Kirby Smith. The Confederate government to the end maintained its claim to the loyalty of and trade with the Native Americans, even as it ceased to exercise any direct influence on events in the Indian Territory.²⁹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Hanley, “Resolutions,” January 11, 1865, *CJ*, 7:405; Miles, “Joint Resolutions,” January 19, 1865, *CJ*, 7:465. Hanley’s resolution passed the same day (*CJ*, 7:445). Miles praised “the daring and skill exhibited in the capture of over 250 loaded wagons from the enemy in the Cherokee nation on September 19, 1864, and for other brilliant and successful services in the Indian Territory.”

The Baylor plan also had a view to invoking the supposed loyalties of some Californians to the Confederacy to assist in retaking Arizona and New Mexico. As well as securing the loyalties of Native American tribes, Confederates approved of the plan's emphasis on maintaining a route to the Pacific and Mexico. In this battle for regional supremacy, Confederates believed they were the only allies of Mexico, a hope that gave them a feeling of security as prospects elsewhere darkened. They considered that they had some basis for this reasoning. Allegations of French greed had already apparently alienated the Mexicans, as Slidell told Benjamin, Maximilian had regretted his cession of northwestern Mexico to France as he "found such an arrangement would be distasteful to his new subjects." Most importantly, De Jarnette and others believed that as the French government returned to focus on global rivalry with Britain, "Mexico will be left as France found her to be absorbed by contact and association with us."³⁰

As part of long-term confidence in the ultimate integration of Mexico into the Confederacy, Confederates perceived encouraging progress in the immediate plan to exploit Mexican resources. On November 25, Colonel Calhoun Benham, awaiting embarkation in Wilmington bound for Sonora, told Brent, that their fellow Californian

³⁰ Slidell to Benjamin, February 7, 1865, *OR*, 1262; De Jarnette. *Monroe Doctrine*, (BA). According to the February 8 *Tri-weekly Telegraph*, Colonel C. L. Pyron, stationed in San Antonio, Texas, and General Florentino Lopez from across the Rio Grande exchanged messages of goodwill; Pyron said Confederates "frankly offer their friendship" and Lopez on January 10 from Piedras Negras, Coahuila declared he was a "warm friend to the cause." ("The Mexican Empire and the Confederacy", *The Index* 5 151 [March 16, 1865]:167.) As the Confederacy collapsed, Mexico became a potential refuge. Mrs. Stella Bringier in Shreveport told Brent, "Mexico I think will be my next move for I cannot and will not live under Yankee rule." (Bringier to Brent, April 19, 1865, BT 92, Papers of Joseph Lancaster Brent, HL.) Wade Hampton wrote to Davis that if Confederates "will seek the protectorate of Mexico we can still make head against the enemy." (Hampton to Davis, April 22, 1865, *JDP*, 11:556.) Thomas Schoonover argues that while Confederates focused on short term benefits in their relations with Mexico, the French intervention on behalf of Maximilian aided both the conservative Mexicans and Confederates and weakened liberal and republican institutions everywhere in the new world. Thomas Schoonover, "Napoleon is coming! Maximilian is coming? The International History of the Civil War in the Caribbean Basin," in Robert E. May, ed., *The Union, the Confederacy and the Atlantic Rim* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1995), pp. 101-130.

exile former Senator William Gwin had been appointed by Maximilian “director in chief of colonization in the departments of Sonora and Chihuahua, which it is proposed to colonize with southern people from California; driving back the Apache and then exploiting the rich silver and gold reserves as well as developing the rich pastoral and arable resources of the lands.” On February 9, Hotze reported progress; Gwin “had established himself at the head of a numerous and well equipped body of resolute pioneers.” In addition, as demonstrable proof of Gwin’s imperial favor, Hotze noted that it was “announced in some Mexican paper that Maximilian had conferred on him the title of Duke of Sonora.” As a result, Hotze concluded, “it bodes no good to the United States that a bitter enemy is established in her most exposed frontier at the head of a colony of southern refugees and sympathizers.”³¹

At the same time as these Mexican developments, Confederates continued to have faith in the states bordering the Pacific coast being tenuous in their loyalty to the Union. So the threat posed by Gwin’s colony was rendered all the more formidable when on November 17 Hotze assured his readers of the vulnerability of the far western United States. He asserted that as “California and the Pacific States have taken very little part in the war,” it naturally followed that “the connection with the Union was so nominal that it may be severed without shock.” On account of the war, migrations of supporters and geopolitics, Confederates considered Mexico was passing within their sphere of

³¹ Benham to Brent, November 25, 1864, BT 13, Papers of Joseph Lancaster Brent, HL; “The Reported Cession of Mexican Territory,” *The Index* 5 146 (February 9, 1865):81. Benham added, “I have sanguine hopes as to Sonora. If I did not have faith in your achievement of still higher distinction in the service, I would indulge the hope of seeing you there too.”

influence; as a result, they continued to believe that they could pursue expansionist ambitions in the west and south as extensive as they imagined in earlier days.³²

Confederates interpreted their expansion within a global context as part of a shift in power from East to West. De Jarnette declared that it was “no fancy to say to the west, the star of empire takes its sway” because “the march of human events, the standards of civilization, move from East to West” leading to “the spectacle of an Empire that shall rise on the shores of the Pacific surpassing in grandeur the most opulent nation in history.” It was the challenge to the Confederacy to, if possible control and direct this new environment or at the very least remain a participant. As De Jarnette asserted, of his Pacific destiny, “it is part of the wise legislation of our country to see that the language of this great empire shall be our language that its principles shall be our principles and its future history shall be the history we are making today.”³³

Accomplishing Confederate Objectives with Union Help

Some Confederates believed their nation’s expansion into the marketplace of the world could be achieved in cooperation with the Union. At the same time as discussions between Davis and U.S. politician Francis P. Blair, Sr., Jehu A. Orr proposed in the House that the Confederate “commissioners be authorized to bring into view the possibility of cooperation between the Confederate States and United States in maintaining the principles and policy of the Monroe Doctrine in the event of a prompt

³² Reconstruction,” *The Index* 4 134 (November 17, 1864):729. On the significant Californian participation on the Union side in the war, including the 17,000 men who volunteered for military service, see Glenna Matthews, *The Golden State in the Civil War*.

³³ De Jarnette. *Monroe Doctrine*, (BA).

recognition of the independence of the Confederate States by the United States Government.”³⁴

Confederate proposals to form an alliance with the Union in place of reunion had predated Lincoln’s reelection, but in the wake of his victory, seemed to recede as such ideas had tended to rely on northern Democrat support. However, by the end of 1864, ideas of a looser confederation with northern states in place of reunion returned, advocated by some Confederates in the House of Representatives for three reasons: first, Confederates envisioned the outcome as in the best interest of, and even a preference of some in, the Union and possibly be acceptable to members of the Lincoln administration; second, it would be via a constitutional process as the outcome of a convention of all the states; and third, to Confederates, while it was inferior to complete independence, there were compensations in terms of retention of slavery, control of the social system of the South, a prospect of a boost to republican self-government and participation in an expansion policy abroad. From the official Confederate perspective, independence was nonnegotiable, yet even Davis accepted it could be qualified in ways that, over time, could result in a new arrangement of an American confederation.

These Confederates insisted that northerners could agree to such an alliance, despite Lincoln’s firm opposition. The Confederates who advocated such schemes both tended to have faith in the northern Democratic opposition to Lincoln and also resisted the centralizing policies of the Davis administration. Slavery and self-government, even if the latter fell short of complete independence, could be salvaged. The Confederate journalist Edward A. Pollard believed Lincoln’s policy of reunion without conditions was

³⁴ Majority Report from Committee of Foreign Affairs, “Sundry Resolutions on the Subject of Peace,” January 12, 1865, *CJ*, 7:451-52.

in reality a matter of “preference not passion.” As a result, the United States government might be “disposed to an accommodation with certain treaty favors in lieu of union.” Confederates assumed northerners suffered from war weariness and the constant concern of foreign intervention. With the authority of four month’s sojourn in the Union as a prisoner of war, Pollard published a pamphlet in February which suggested that accommodation with the Union was certainly feasible because “northerners are no longer fighting for Union,” but just for power and fulfillment of ambition. But these desires could be now sated without conquering the Confederacy because by 1865 the Union’s wartime boom has taken off and “with the development of her resources and oil and mines” meant the imminent prospect of “fabulous wealth.” According to Pollard, northerners had only denied southern secession because they needed southern money; but after four years of industrial development, the United States had changed. Now the Union, “even apart from the South has it within herself the elements of a great national existence.”³⁵

Confederates accepted that northerners would exact some sort of price before they consent to separation. There was a great degree of latitude in speculation as to what might be agreed or conceded. On January 29, Jones predicted, as the Confederate commissioners departed for Hampton Roads, “we have suffered so much that almost any treaty granting us independence will be accepted by the people.” Therefore he warned: “All the commissioners must guard against any appearance of a protectorate on the part

³⁵ Edward Alfred Pollard, *A Letter on the state of the war. By one recently returned from the enemy’s country* (Richmond Va.: n.p., 1865), 2-3.

of the United States.” Provided “the honor of the southern people is served, they will not haggle about material losses.”³⁶

Politicians believed that commercial agreements would be prominent in any settlement with the Union. On February 2, former U.S. congressman Brigadier General Henry W. Hilliard wrote to Davis, “[O]nce independence is settled, we might concede much in a commercial way...” He suggested that the Confederate government propose “a commercial league so as to provide against any restriction upon trade between the two peoples.” On February 20, John A. Gilmer agreed, telling the House that each nation would have to be “perfectly free and independent of the other” but as long as “right of navigation, trade and transit properly agreed on fairly and settled.” Again, some Confederates had misgivings but were prepared to swallow them, Hotze considered this “new Union of two sovereign powers” as the “commutation of [a] capital sentence to penal servitude for life” but in such a choice of evils, it had to be “tempting.”³⁷

Confederates believed the Union’s commercial interest would assist the process of negotiation. On January 29, Jones believed “if it was possible to subjugate us, it would only be killing the goose that lays the golden egg, for the southern trade would be destroyed.” The next day, in his speech to the House, De Jarnette enlarged on this theme, “it is in the interest of the United States Government to recognize us on the basis of reciprocal free trade and free navigation of our rivers and harbors” because “it will give them the advantages the Union formerly gave them” and so this “peace proposal could

³⁶ Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:402.

³⁷ Hilliard to Davis, February 2, 1865, *JDC*, 6:461-62; Gilmer, “Amendment to Joint Resolution Expressing the Sense of Congress on the Subject of the late Peace Commission,” February 20, 1865, *CJ*, 7:607; “The Negotiations for Peace,” *The Index* 5 147 (February 16, 1865):104. Davis’s response to Hilliard’s letter was guarded as it risked compromising his pursuit of complete independence, he told his secretary on February 15, “Please acknowledge in terms suited to the known facts.”

give them a more satisfactory result to the northern mind than the subjugation of the South.”³⁸

Confederates who advocated a commercial agreement usually also accepted that a new Union would have to mean more than just commercial and foreign policy alignment between two nations. As Hilliard added to Davis, there had to be a transnational structure created in order to “reconcile the North to political separation” and “prevent future quarrels.” He suggested that something be created in order to “realize Calhoun’s idea of a dual executive,” perhaps a “president of each of the two of each of the two great geographical divisions.” Hilliard therefore conceived of a supranational entity of which the Confederacy had to be a part. Efforts continued to define ‘America’ institutionally. Looking to the German example in operation in Frankfurt as inspiration, Gilmer of North Carolina proposed to the House on February 20 that an “American diet be created.” Each section would be “at liberty to send delegates and up to each how many.” Gilmer suggested that its exact privileges had to be “clearly and definitely defined”; but minority protection was crucial, the Diet would have “but two votes, one each and only binding when ratified by President, Senate and House of each.” Confederates also conceived of closer arrangements.³⁹

Confederate notions of northern avarice underpinned these ideas. As Hotze argued on February 2, northerners “prefer reality of Union to its mere name” and hence would be prepared to “propose to the South local government on condition of so close an

³⁸ Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:402; De Jarnette. *Monroe Doctrine*, 3-4.

³⁹ Hilliard to Davis, February 2, 1865, *JDC*, 6:461-62; Gilmer, “Amendment to Joint Resolution Expressing the Sense of Congress on the Subject of the late Peace Commission,” February 20, 1865, *CJ*, 7:607. As well looking to the example of the German diet balancing Austria and Prussia, Gilmer was also drawing on Calhoun’s ideas on a dual executive. (John C. Calhoun, “A Disquisition on Government,” http://www.constitution.org/jcc/disq_gov.htm.)

alliance “as to mean a practicable Union of two States” with each just having the “prestige of [its] own material power.” The Confederate States would be able to maintain slavery and sufficient armed force to police, but probably not much more. Although Confederates recognized that Lincoln was opposed to this policy and that the Thirteenth Amendment had passed the U.S. Congress, neither circumstance would necessarily be an insuperable obstacle to a negotiation, especially if Confederates conceded some form of reunion.⁴⁰

Confederates believed that a constitutional mechanism existed to effectively neutralize the opposition from Lincoln and the Republican Party, an all-state convention. On November 29, Gustavus A. Henry of Tennessee told other Senators, “we can now say to the United States Government we are sincerely desirous of peace and willing to enter negotiations to that end...through a convention of States.” These discussions had to be on the “basis of separate independence, repudiating reunion or reconstruction.” Earlier the same month, Hotze considered that Lincoln’s “political ambition” and need to recover the lost lucrative commercial arrangements “requires the continuation of the war.” Lincoln could still be overthrown or overruled. Hotze believed that this desire was evidence of “surely a madness that seizes at times whole nations as well as individuals.” In that context, one could only hope that “the prolongation of the war increasingly imperils the cohesion of the United States.” In that scenario, Hotze predicted that eventually the individual states of the Union would face the unpalatable choices of “prolonged war or satisfactory peace, increased anarchy or orderly redistribution of power.” Undoubtedly, Hotze believed, these states would choose the wonderful future of an American continent not governed by “one overgrown and overbearing Empire but many prosperous and

⁴⁰ “Peace Rumors,” *The Index* 5 145 (February 2, 1865):64.

improving States” whose relations were those of “friends not confederates” and collectively would prove a “blessing to both America and the World.”⁴¹

The Confederate Congress predicted a loose association of states would result. On January 12, the House committee of foreign affairs led by Jehu A. Orr and Rives resolved that notice be taken of “a just and sound sentiment manifested by a large portion of the United States people since the last session of congress.” As a result, there was a shared understanding between Confederates and some northerners that “all associations of States be voluntary not forcible and appeal to forum of reason that matters of controversy can be properly and justly adjusted by negotiation.” As well as commercial interest, a common ground of republicanism would permit such negotiations to be undertaken.⁴²

Such attitudes coexisted with more grandiose expectations of Confederates based on rediscovering a shared sense of expansion with the Union. It was in this context that Francis P. Blair Sr., contacted Davis on December 30, suggesting a meeting to discuss ideas “that may not only repair all the ruin the war has brought on the nation, but contribute to the welfare of other nations that have suffered from it.” Blair had been sent by Lincoln behind the lines to try to convince Davis to end the war, but it could be treated as a mission which had an ambiguous outcome that suggested Confederates would become members of a Union devoted to a global mission based on a shared republicanism. In January, when meeting Davis, Blair explained in more detail an idea of a shared external mission for both North and South in expelling European aristocratic government from the western hemisphere. On January 12, Blair told Davis that

⁴¹ Gustavus Adolphus Henry, *Speech of Hon. Gustavus A. Henry, in the Senate of the Confederate States, November 29, 1864* (Richmond, Va., n.p., 1864), 6; “Reconstruction,” *The Index* 4 134 (November 17, 1864):729.

⁴² House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “Sundry Resolutions on the Subject of Peace,” January 12, 1865, *CJ*, 450-2.

reconciliation “must depend on time and events,” and as for this there was “none better than united in a war on a foreign power assailing principles of government common to both sections and threatening their destruction.”⁴³

In his account of the meeting, Davis passed over Blair’s insistence on reunion and focused on the opportunity for mutual expansion. The idea of a joint application of the Monroe Doctrine appealed to Davis on the grounds that it appeared to encourage southern expansion. According to Davis’s own record of his conversation with Francis P. Blair on January 12, in order “to preserve southern honor, Blair envisioned an extended southern territory to the Isthmus of Darien [Panama]”; this expansion intended to open “a new channel for bitter waters” and would provide “a common bond” between the Union and the Confederacy. Two days later, Blair reviewed Davis’s record of their conversation and observed, “Davis’s memoranda prescribed the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine as the main object” of any agreement between Union and Confederacy.⁴⁴

Confederates also supported this alliance because it incorporated a rousing appeal to a shared sense of republicanism. On January 30, Oldham spoke to the Senate of “a war that has destroyed the republican system of government, which has reestablished and confirmed despotism in Europe and made it exultant, and has rolled back the sum of liberty for a century.” In this context, there was pressure that perhaps the Confederacy should unite with the United States to combat this development. On February 5, R. C. Midhurst looked to wider implications of the failure, for “democracy has discovered how

⁴³ Blair to Davis, December 30, 1864, *JDC*, 6:432; Blair, “Conversation with Francis Preston Blair,” January 12, 1865, *JDP*, 11:316-20.

⁴⁴ Jefferson Davis, “Memorandum,” January 12, 1865, *JDP*, 11:321; Blair, “Second Interview,” January 14, 1865, *JDP*, 11:328.

very few friends it has in Europe amongst its ruling class”; however, he added with a hint of menace, at the same time “its strength has been mutually discovered.” Perhaps the advance of aristocratic government could be rolled back by an alliance between the Union and the Confederacy.⁴⁵

As Blair recorded on January 12, Davis vowed that rather than ally with European Powers “he would die a freeman in all respects.” According to Blair, Davis was “convinced all the powers of Europe felt it their interest that our people should exhaust all their energies in destroying each other and therefore be easy prey to potentates who felt the destruction of our system of government was necessary to the monarchical principles of their own.” Hence, in some respects Davis agreed with his foe Foote who earlier told the House on November 28 that “the Confederate Government and people have as deep an interest in the firm and inflexible maintenance of what is known as the Monroe Doctrine as the United States.” Therefore if an “early peace” and “provided ample justice in other respects” were granted to the Confederates, then the Confederate Government “would doubtlessly unite with the United States Government in support of the Monroe Doctrine.”⁴⁶

Those Confederates who supported such a republican league also believed that this alliance would, if not bring friendship, be at least the guarantor of peace between sections. On February 2, Hilliard wrote to Davis that the Union and the Confederacy should “agree a treaty of mutual defense with an alliance defensive offensive which would wield the military energies of the American people in a way to secure us perpetual

⁴⁵ Oldham. *Speech on Texas Resolutions*, 11; “Letter of R.C. Midhurst to the Hon. B. R. Wood,” *The Index* 5 154 (April 6, 1865):215.

⁴⁶ Blair, “Conversation with Francis Preston Blair”, January 12, 1865, *JDP*, 11:316-20; Foote, “The Monroe Doctrine Resolution,” November 28, 1864, *CJ*, 7:308.

peace.” On February 16, Hotze agreed, “a common foreign policy with the Union would guard against all destabilizing forces of foreign intrigue” although he cautioned, “however dishonorable for her to be dragged at the wheels of a foreign policy influenced by the North.” As a result, the Confederacy would exhibit “equal carelessness for the good of the wider world” as a complicit Europe. On February 2, Hotze also noted “peace between the two belligerents means war for the rest of the world” and noted that “for such a war” the Union was already “deliberately preparing with the abrogation of the Canadian treaties and insults of French Mexican policy and strengthening the navy in European waters.” The fact that the Union had succumbed to despotism would lead to, as Jones observed on January 29, it “embarking on a foreign war.”⁴⁷

Some Confederates possessed more modest expectations of negotiations with the Union, perhaps a cession of fighting, or even just an amelioration of its nature. On December 19, the former governor of Washington Territory, Lafayette McMullin, told the House, although “it will be incompatible with Confederate dignity to send commissioners to Washington City for an armistice,” he still wanted to do so “without delay.” Three days earlier, Josiah Turner advised the House that in the event they failed at securing peace, these commissioners might still “come to such understanding with the enemy regarding the further conduct of the war as may tend in some degree to mitigate its horrors and atrocities.”⁴⁸

Moreover, Confederate distrust in the Union remained to raise doubts about the sincerity of northern approaches based on the Monroe Doctrine. On February 7, a

⁴⁷ Hilliard to Davis, February 2, 1865, *JDC*, 461-62; “The Negotiations for Peace,” *The Index* 5 147 (February 16, 1865):104; “Peace Rumors” *The Index* 5 145 (February 2, 1865):64; Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:402.

⁴⁸ McMullin substitute for Turner’s Resolution “tendering negotiations for peace and a mitigation of the horrors of the war,” December 19, 1864, *CJ*, 7:360-3.

skeptical John Slidell warned Benjamin that the Union's fear of its own imminent collapse meant ruses, such as Blair's mission, were only an "attempt to gain time" from the threat of northern opposition. On January 30, Oldham warned those senators who wished to negotiate with the Union on independence, "while we may believe in a peace party in the North, they believe in a reconstruction party in the South." But Confederates also felt they could play a two faced game. Confederates hoped that its advocacy, as De Jarnette made clear, would also act as a way to threaten Britain, France and the latter's regime in Mexico in order to extract concessions.⁴⁹

Confederates expected to realize their territorial ambitions by being in a position to play off the competing parties for their advantage. In late December, Duff Green told Davis that "Britain and France were interested in preventing a monopoly of the western slope of the American continent by the United States and may decide to join with the Confederacy to divide with us the occupation of the Pacific States." "France must hold a position on the Pacific Coast," De Jarnette announced to the House, if that country was to successfully compete with Britain; as a result, Slidell, as he told Benjamin on February 7, believed in Mexican compliance with the "rumored secession of Sonora and Lower California to France." Even though, Slidell was "not able to establish truth" he considered it to be "a real case" and a "private arrangement" between French Emperor Napoleon III and his Mexican counterpart, Maximilian. The territories were to be granted in lieu of Mexican debt owed to France, and the French, apparently, were keen to conclude the deal on account of the "Sonora gold fields." Hotze had also picked up the story, which had been reported in a New York newspaper. Underpinning such an

⁴⁹ Slidell to Benjamin, February 7, 1865, *OR*, 1261; Oldham, *Speech on Texas Resolutions*, 6; De Jarnette, *Monroe Doctrine*, 18.

arrangement, as Dudley Mann informed Davis on December 17, was the fear of “an undertaking between France and the United States” in which the latter would “consider the Monroe Doctrine as entirely obsolete” in return for the former “[declining] for an indefinite period to establish relations with us.”⁵⁰

Expansion with or without Slavery

The future of the Confederacy and any expansion it might undertake remained inextricably bound up with slavery. Although even in areas under Confederate control, Confederates noticed the disintegration of slavery, they insisted it had not declined beyond recovery. Planter G. L. Stucker of St Mary’s Parish, Louisiana, complained to General Joseph L. Brent, “no plan has been adopted for re-establishing discipline on the plantations and organizing for a new crop. On the majority of the estates, the negroes are without control. On many, they work as they please or do not work at all and steal for a living. There are planters who do not feed their slaves, but on the contrary receive the shares that the negroes will give them.” The crucial fact, which meant a restoration of slavery was possible, Stricker pointed out, was that many slaves had not yet deserted the plantations. According to the planter, a visible deployment of the Confederate army in the locality would be sufficient to reestablish the plantation system and even “on such places, the presence of a strong arm during the planting season would insure bountiful harvests.” Slavery continued to be regarded as the basis of the Confederate economy. As late as April 6, Colonel Louis A. Bringier in Le Blanc, Vermillion Parish, Louisiana, told Brent “all the influential men I have met agree that negroes are better disposed and do more

⁵⁰ Duff Green to Davis, December 29, 1864, *JDP*, 11: 258; De Jarnette, *Monroe Doctrine*, 8; Slidell to Benjamin, February 7, 1865, *OR*, 1262; “The Reported Cession of Mexican Territory,” *The Index* 5 146 (February 9, 1865):81; Mann to Davis, December 17, 1864, *JDP*, 11:236. Holze added that the news had reached New York via telegram from San Francisco.

work than they have since the commencement of the war, they understand the urgent necessity of making crops and have gone to work in earnest.”⁵¹

Therefore some Confederates considered the proposal to arm slaves would undermine both the economic and social structure of the Confederacy and with that any chance of a prosperous and expansive future. According to the British consul in Charleston on November 19, Barnwell Rhett wrote a public letter to former South Carolina Governor William Aiken asking “who would live in such a country as ours without slaves to cultivate it?” He predicted “hideous ruin” for a Confederacy inhabited by four million emancipated slaves. On Christmas Day, the South Carolina planter William F. Robert bluntly told Davis that nothing could be worse than arming the slaves, “uncontrollable anarchy” would result.⁵²

Not only were slaves vital to work the plantations in the future and under secure control of overseers and slave patrols, but also slavery sustained the Confederate revolution. The revolution sustained any sense of national power and ability to expand the Confederacy. On November 28, Governor Zebulon Vance of North Carolina declared that the proposed “emancipation of slaves render our whole revolution nugatory.” Instead the Confederate revolution would become “a mere objectless waste of human life” because “our independence is chiefly desirable for the preservation of our great political institutions, the principal of which is slavery.” The opponents of arming the slaves saw

⁵¹ Stucker to Brent, January 13, 1865, BT 208 Papers of Joseph Lancaster Brent, HL; Bringier to Brent, April 6, 1865, BT 89, Papers of Joseph Lancaster Brent, HL.

⁵² Acting Consul Pinckney Walker to Lord Russell, November 19, 1864, FO 5/969, PRO; Robert to Davis, December 25, 1864, *JDP*, 11:252. Walker considered that despite his retirement, Rhett’s “opinions are nevertheless held in very high esteem and the views brought forth will be embraced by the people of S.C., without any dissent.”

themselves as preservers, and as Virginian lawyer John H. Gilmer phrased it, its proponents were “a faction of bad and wickedly ambitious men.”⁵³

By 1865, to many Confederates, even to contemplate slave enlistment was to acknowledge the emergency facing the Confederacy’s very existence. On January 8, Edward R. Archer wrote “when Lee gives us his opinion ‘we had better arm the slaves’ we must confess that a dark cloud hangs over us.” The same day, Howell Cobb wrote to Secretary of War James A. Seddon that slave enlistment constituted “the most pernicious idea that has been suggested since the war began.” If the scheme was successful, it jeopardized the future of the Confederacy: “[W]hite soldiers will be lost and if the slaves proved good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong.” For Cobb, it was dangerous to suggest, as Hotze did in *The Index*, that “the negro may prove as orderly, as virtuous, and as happy in his new estate” as in slavery. Cobb would have seen this outcome as fatal to the race relations that he saw as underpinning the Confederacy, although he did not abandon the Confederacy when slave enlistment was eventually adopted as policy by the government.⁵⁴

Expansion had long been predicated on the Confederate vision of the hierarchy of races that would enable Confederates to dominate the tropics. Some insisted that the proposal to arm some slaves did not mean any significant change in the overall status of the African Americans as an inferior race. On December 21, in his reply to Charleston newspaper owner Fred A. Porcher, Benjamin was emphatic that it remained the

⁵³ “Legislature of North Carolina with Message of Governor,” November 28, 1864, in Walker to Russell, December 2 1864, FO 5/969, PRO; *Letter from John H. Gilmer to Peter Saunders Esq., a member of the Virginia Senate, on the position and duties of Virginia in the existing state of political matters. Richmond, Dec. 28, 1864* (Broadside 1864).

⁵⁴ Archer to his mother, Mrs. Robert Archer, January 8, 1865, “E. R. Archer’s letterbook”, GLC01896.071; Cobb quoted in JDP, 11:347; “The southern press and negro emancipation,” *The Index* 5 143 (January 19, 1865):41. Archer added “but of the two evils, subjugation or arming the slaves, I will say the latter...” Seddon forwarded the Cobb letter to Davis on January 21.

Confederate “objective to vindicate our faith in the doctrine that the negro is an inferior and unfitted for social or political equality with the white man.” In his November report, Seddon agreed that although “no compunction should be felt in using slaves as soldiers, slaves are confessedly inferior in all aspects to our white citizens in the qualifications of the soldier.” As a result, “it will not do to risk our liberties and safety on the negro while white men may be called to the sacred duty of defense.” While there remained white soldiers, it would be “best to leave subordinate labors to the negro.”⁵⁵

Confederates believed African Americans accepted this inferiority and would remain loyal to the Confederacy on account of the alternative fate that awaited them at the hands of the Union forces. On November 4, Seddon argued that the “slaves are more vitally concerned than us” in the cause of Confederate independence. He explained that while “with whites, the future is one of nationality, honor and property”; for African Americans, the “dread issue in no distant future” was “the question of their existence as a race.” Confederates believed the very survival of African Americans depended on a hierarchy of races, which would be guaranteed if not by slavery then at least by the existence of the Confederacy guaranteeing African American subordination. Therefore the emancipation of the slaves, or at least those of government service, was presented as a means to forestall a worse fate for the African Americans. On March 16, Charles J. Hutson, then in the trenches with the Army of Northern Virginia around Petersburg, informed his father that the “Confederate army was the safest place for negroes now.”

⁵⁵ Porcher to Benjamin, December 16, Benjamin to Porcher, December 21, 1864, box 1, Meade Papers, UVA; James Seddon, “The Report of the Secretary of War,” November 4, 1864, printed in *The Index* 4 136 (December 1, 1864):766. In his letter of December 16, Porcher called for arming slaves on the grounds that it is better to “anticipate rather than await the decision of events.”

The only way African Americans could save themselves was by supporting a Confederate military victory.⁵⁶

As an incentive for this loyalty, Confederates held as well out prospects of better conditions for African Americans in the Confederacy. They would be inferior, but protected, participants in a booming expansive nation. According to Hotze on November 10, African Americans would occupy a very different place in the scale of civilization than a mere tool of a foreign enemy employed in crimes against humanity.” Furthermore, “if any population of negroes can make good use of freedom, it must be those of the Confederacy.” On December 31, physician Charles B. Leitner assured Davis that “every negro bond or free is identified with us in soil, climate and association.”⁵⁷

Even though Confederates believed African Americans were loyal and would remain inferior to whites, there was little chance that slavery would continue unchanged in the future, given the crisis facing the Confederacy. If that were the case, the implications for the future Confederacy would be profound. On November 25, Judge Robert S. Hudson told Davis that African Americans should remain slaves, but if they can be “put into service and permitted to have all the fruits of their captures in land and money, then they might face the fire.” If slaves were to own large amounts of property, presumably they would be able to buy their own freedom and perhaps over time a class of wealthier free African Americans would emerge in the Confederacy as a whole, as had been true in New Orleans before the war. Earlier the same month, the wealthy Mississippi planter William S. Price assured Davis that slaves did not need the incentives of freedom

⁵⁶ Ibid.; Walker to Russell, February 27, 1865, FO 5/1030, p.92, PRO; Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:321-3, 449; Hutson to Richard W. Hutson, GLC08165.69.

⁵⁷ “The Negro in the Southern Armies,” *The Index* 4 133 (November 10, 1864):713-14; Leitner to Davis, December 31, 1864, *JDP*, 11:266.

or even booty to fight; instead they “should be conscripted and trained under experienced overseers to make them fit for army service.” Perhaps to Price, as with the other planter Strucker, the army offered the chance to get the slaves back under effective control and restore order to slavery.⁵⁸

There was general agreement among Confederates that slavery had to change in order to survive and change was most acceptable if slavery would continue to underpin notions of white equality. This feat could be achieved best by spreading ownership more widely across the white population. On February 3, Representative John DeWitt Clinton Atkins of Tennessee moved in the House that the addition of slaves to the armies would mean “we should at once put 100,000 slaves in the field.” But, rather than emancipate the slaves at the end of hostilities, in order to “make them more effective and to interest all our soldiers in the institution,” it was “expedient that the Confederate Government should purchase all the slaves and give to each white soldier now in the army or [who] will join within three months, a slave to be his absolute right and property...” J. W. Ellis of Raleigh, North Carolina, suggested to Davis on January 28, the Government should “offer to any soldier who was not a slaveholder or landholder...one slave and fifty acres.” Ellis’s purpose was to “spread the institution and make every family interested.” Moreover, Ellis argued the Government should also declare that “all negroes captured from the enemy will belong to the captors” and as an inducement to add to the

⁵⁸ Hudson to Davis, November 25, 1864, *JDP*, 11:188-89; Price to Davis, November 14, 1864, *JDP*, 11:159. But other planters vehemently opposed blending slavery with army service. Abram Archer complained to his mother, while he was away with his cavalry regiment, that even to threaten slaves with enlistment undermined discipline: “I am sorry pa threatened Tom with the soldiers as it does more harm than good to do so—and besides this has a bad effect on the others after this if any them show a disposition to misbehave.” Abram Archer to his mother, March 1, 1865, box 2E650, folder 1 immediate family 1858-1865, Richard Thompson Archer Family Papers, UT.

Confederate armies, the fifty acres and a slave offer should be extended as an incentive to recruit both Union army deserters and European immigrants.⁵⁹

A slavery Homestead Act had an implicit expansionist basis with its promotion of diffusion of slaves following their greater numbers of slaveholders to farm undeveloped lands. Moreover, some Confederates continued to believe that slavery's very survival and success depended on territorial expansion southward. De Jarnette told the House the Confederacy had to become a commercial power and hence partially free labor, "the African will resume his march to the equator; there to work out his destiny on the Amazon and La Plata." De Jarnette believed "successful agriculture, the handmaiden of commerce, demanded the absolute control of labor." Senator Robert M. T. Hunter of Virginia expected the migrating blacks to remain slaves and be accompanied by their white masters, in his speech at the First African Methodist Church in Richmond on February 9, he told the crowd in the future Confederacy "we shall solve the problem of the extension of the black race to the south of us and show that the white and black race may be extended together."⁶⁰

Expansion and diffusion of slavery could also be accompanied by amelioration and the emergency presented at the front also offered the chance to boost the international reputation of the Confederacy with a step that could "relieve the institution [of slavery] of that which is unjust and impolitic." Hence, Benjamin recommended "cautious

⁵⁹ Atkins, "Amendment to Peace Resolution of Samuel J. Gholson of Mississippi," February 3, 1865, *CJ*, 7:535; Ellis to Davis, January 28, 1865, *JDP*, 11:358. On the concept of slave south as a "Herrenvolk democracy," see George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 61-70. For an argument for white inequality in the South, see Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 93.

⁶⁰ De Jarnette. *Monroe Doctrine*, 7-8; "Another Mass Meeting in Richmond," *The Index* 5 149 (March 2, 1865):133.

legislation” leading to “ultimate emancipation after an intermediate stage of peonage.” With an eye on opinion in Britain and France, Benjamin suggested that over the short-term African Americans be given “certain rights for property, certain degrees of personal liberty and legal protection for the marital and parental relations.” Confederates considered the international repercussions of such a move would be immense. On November 10, Hotze foresaw that the “unanimous verdict of the world will be that Confederate blacks are the best physical, moral and intellectual type of their race” which will add to the fact that, as Hotze added on January 26, the Confederacy was already “seen in Europe as a Christian God fearing community continuing with no more than human faults the highest human virtues”; so the removal of slavery would not “only deprive the enemy of a weapon and deprive the Great Powers of an excuse for inertia.” On March 2, Hotze went further in his propaganda effort, calling slavery “the hateful name of relations between the two races inhabiting the southern country is the sole serious stumbling block in the path of a just and wise European policy.”⁶¹

Although Davis sanctioned the State Department’s approach of implicitly offering emancipation in return for recognition by Britain and France, it was neither his primary motive for emancipating slaves nor did he think the offer would of great importance in determining European policy. On March 22, he told J. D. Shaw of Carroll County, Mississippi, it “cannot be doubted that the obstacle to recognition of the Confederacy has been the unwillingness of the Great Powers to be embroiled in a quarrel with the United States.” However, Davis did warn him, “if slavery or any other cause has been the impediment” to foreign recognition, the Confederate government would be keen to

⁶¹ Benjamin to Porcher, December 21, 1864 Box 1, Meade Collection UVA; “The Negro in the Southern Armies,” *The Index* 4 133 (November 10, 1864):713-14; “A False Road to Recognition,” *The Index* 5 144 (January 26, 1865):49. “*The Times* on Seward’s Dispatch,” *The Index* 5 149 (March 3, 1865):129.

comply with foreign power requirements “if willing to negotiate on terms we could honestly concede.” He also assured Shaw that nothing would be done by Kerner, Mason, and Slidell in London and Paris without subsequent ratification back home, “the government can make no agreement or arrangement with any nation which would interfere with state institutions.” In the event therefore that the commissioners had offered emancipation in return for recognition, “it would be necessary to submit terms for the Confederate States for separate action” before any emancipation could take place. It was arming slaves, not their emancipation, that was the priority of the Confederate government.⁶²

Proponents instead argued that arming selected slaves would constitute another step in the Confederate Christianizing mission to improve the condition of African Americans as a whole. Such a mission had expansive implications. Davis saw the eventual emancipation of the 40,000 men he estimated were needed to plug the gaps in the Army of Northern Virginia as simply part of a wider Confederate goal. On November 7, in his message to Congress, he said “the stability of our republican institution, resting on the actual equality of all our citizens, includes the fulfillment of a task already begun: the Christianization and improvement of blacks.” On February 10, William Preston assured his son Wick, whilst waiting in Matamoras, Mexico, to return to the Confederacy, of the continuing importance of this mission; he disapproved of slavery, but for the African Americans, he “thought it was right for me to hold, govern and protect them according to the best of my ability as it was better for them and indispensable to the harmony and well-being of my country.” As Benjamin told the crowd in Richmond on February 9, the Confederate government “invites the negro to the highest exercise of

⁶² Davis to Shaw, March 22, 1865, *JDC*, 6:518.

judgment and will” and as a result, the Confederacy in the future will be “bestowing the freedom on the most deserving and best able to use it.” Benjamin perhaps had in mind a caste system across the Confederacy such as already existed in his native New Orleans.⁶³

Other Confederates, even if they accepted the change, had a less exalted view of the outcome of changes to slavery and with it of their own future ambition. Some expected emancipated slaves to remain in the Confederacy as sharecroppers and appeared to welcome the prospect. On March 27, Governor William Smith of Virginia told Davis that the slave soldiers “will be able to return home after the war.” Perhaps not to a great future - earlier on February 8, Stringfellow, who still professed to support slavery in theory, predicted to Davis “after independence, landless blacks will still have to labor for whites on terms as economical as though owned.” On January 2, Sprague was relieved when she told her daughter Winchester “I have at last got rid of, I hope, a great deal of trouble by hiring out this plantation for two years.” As Sprague added on February 24, she wanted the social aspect of slavery preserved whilst glad to be rid of its burdens, “I do not want slavery again, but I wish the negroes to be kept in their proper place, we will not have half the care upon our minds were formerly had when they were sick and we were trying to improve them.” This admission was a diminution of the mission of the Confederacy, but one that still preserved much of its social and economic structure.⁶⁴

Some Confederates went further in renouncing responsibility for African Americans and wished to see them depart from the Confederacy. A Confederacy without

⁶³ Davis, “Message to Congress,” November 7, 1864, *CJ*, 7:254; William Preston to Robert Wickliffe Preston, February 10, 1865, Letter Book of William Preston, 1864-65, #A P937d 37, Preston Family Papers, FHS; “Another Mass Meeting in Richmond,” *The Index* 5 149 (March 2, 1865):133. According to the account of the *Richmond Dispatch*, Benjamin’s speech was greeted with “rousing cheers.”

⁶⁴ Smith to Davis, March 27, 1865, *JDP*, 11:476; Stringfellow to Davis, February 8, 1865, *JDP*, 11:391-92; Sprague to Winchester, January 2, February, 24, 1865, box 2E913– Frances E. Sprague papers, folder 3 “Correspondence: Margaret G. Sprague Winchester,” Winchester Family Papers, UT.

slaves, if it survived at all, would not be expansive. Leitner told Davis on December 31, although he was convinced of African American loyalty, there must be African American colonization back to Africa on Confederate independence. The next day, prosperous Nelson County, Virginia, planter Alexander Fitzpatrick told Davis, the United States government had no interest in destroying the Confederacy and instead sought “above all things the freedom of the negro.” In these circumstances, the Confederate government would finally be left alone if it “not only emancipate them, but hand them over.” Fitzpatrick possibly agreed with Mason, who on January 21 warned Benjamin, any increase in “free blacks after the war” would cause “great mischief and inconvenience.” Therefore Fitzpatrick made it a condition that if the Confederacy voluntarily surrendered its slave population, the Union in return had to “colonize them in Liberia etc., and take care of them.” The outcome Fitzpatrick sought was that Confederates “live in perpetual separation from Yanks and Blacks.” A rigidly demarcated white only Confederacy would be the result.⁶⁵

To many Confederates, such an outcome of isolation and abdication of responsibility meant their nation would be a diminished force in the world and without expansionist ambitions. On January 26, Hotze wrote “the welfare and training of the negro race is a trust peculiarly confided to the South. To surrender that trust in an hour of peril is to prove herself unworthy of it.” On an individual level, slavery also meant a sense of obligation for African American welfare, as well as means of production, especially if the adult male slaves had fled; as Sprague informed her daughter Winchester on January 2, “I would willingly go with you to Europe, but these poor children have no

⁶⁵ Leitner to Davis, December 31, 1864, *JDP*, 11:266; Fitzpatrick to Davis, January 1, 1865, *JDP*, 11:266-67; Mason to Benjamin, January 21, 1865, *OR*, 1259.

one but me to attend to them or their interest.” As well as a sense of duty, self-interest mattered. In the Mississippi Valley under Union control, hired African Americans remained vital as a source of labor on southern plantations, although only if the price was right. Sprague wanted to know the prevailing rates in Natchez, and added on February 24, “I will not give twenty five dollars to a negro who will only work about half his time.”⁶⁶

Proponents and Opponents of Confederate Revolution Discard Expansion

Confederates not only understood slavery as central to the purpose of their race in the world, but slavery also underpinned their sense of the Confederate nation as a continuing revolutionary force. The ideas of race and revolution were essential to undertaking expansionist ambitions. On February 10, Jones interpreted the views of Cobb and others in resisting slave enlistment as rich men rushing to defend their property. Oldham indignantly denied the charge, telling the Senate on January 30, “the slavery question [constitutes] an issue vastly more important than any mere question of property.” The question was instead “to preserve our freedom and sovereignty without which all else is worthless.” Legislators agreed and the parting message of Congress, issued on March 6, was full of defiance whilst accepting that the effect of Union depredations “has seriously diminished our agricultural labor.” The “relationship with the servile race intensified this feeling” of the right to Confederate self-government because it “invested love of liberty with the sentiment of personal privilege.”⁶⁷

The threat to slavery meant Confederates reconsidered their revolution; such an exercise had implications for the future of their nation and whether it could or should

⁶⁶ “The False Road to Recognition,” *The Index* 5 144 (January 26, 1865):49; Sprague to Winchester, January 2, February, 24, 1865, box 2E913– Frances E. Sprague papers, folder 3, Correspondence: Margaret G. Sprague Winchester, Winchester Family Papers, UT.

⁶⁷ Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:416; Oldham, *Speech on Texas Resolutions*, 9-10; “Supplement to March 6, 1865 Address of the Confederate Congress to the Country,” *The Index* 5 154 (April 6, 1865):221.

expand. On January 2, The *Richmond Enquirer* opined the Government needed to correct the confusion and present the moves to modify or even abolish slavery in the context of a re-launched Confederacy with “a manifesto of its objects and purposes” in order to “convince the world that we are fighting for the self-government of whites, not of blacks” and that “the freedom of the negro is not the purpose of the enemy,” but rather to secure “our commercial vassalage and dependence.” The newspaper saw the decision to contemplate slave enlistment and ultimate emancipation as a chance to clarify the purpose of the Confederacy.⁶⁸

The agitation for the enlistment of African Americans contributed to Confederate thinking about the nature of their revolution, which was asserted more forcefully although at the same time had to be defended against internal and external threats. Confederates debated whether such a revolution would need to be radicalized and expanded in order to mobilize the people and perhaps end as dictatorship. Confederates had the parallel of the French Revolution in mind with its example of *levee en masse* and later career of conquest and dictatorship.

Confederates believed that their revolution, as with slavery, had become dynamic and this had implications for the extent of its expansion. At the end of 1864, Letcher wrote “the Confederate people have sustained a revolution more gigantic in its operation than any that has ever occurred on Earth.” In January 1865, Confederates still cast their revolution in the broadest possible terms. McDonald referred to it as a “commotion, a great revolution that is destined to change the direction of human progress, a great drama that now fills a continent.” At the same time, in Shreveport, Louisiana, Brent told General Simon B. Buckner that Confederates “have reached the advanced stages of the

⁶⁸ “Extracts from the Southern Papers’ Latest Dates,” *The Index* 5 144 (January 26, 1865):45-46.

revolution.” This development was “a sign that would defeat the enemy, a pledge of terrible energy to be manifested.”⁶⁹

The re-election of Lincoln necessitated this increased revolutionary fervor. Even Confederates who had earlier devoutly believed in the Confederacy as a conservative power now celebrated a sense of revolution. On November 17, Hotze looked back to secession and deemed it “not the work of politicians”; rather “it arose, as great revolutions do, from the spontaneous impulse of the person.” Over the previous three and a half years, this original revolutionary impulse had been further radicalized by “a war waged against every individual citizen...a mortal feud not a national tournament.” Finally, the reelection of Lincoln “serves to the South to nerve their arms and quicken their purpose, they are the last hope of true republican liberty.” Confederates regarded their nation as the “champion of liberty and tranquility of the world,” The duration and nature of the war would radicalize the revolution.⁷⁰

Anger at what Confederates saw as the outside world’s betrayal meant even the invoking of the spirit of the American Revolution did not rule out revenge. On November 29, Henry told the senate “we are struggling in this war, for the right of self-government; all others are minor considerations and merged in with it...on the same principles as our fathers. We have staked our all.” The defiant tone of the last champion of self-government remained, while Henry saw the need to “invoke the judgment of the world whether we have or have not established our capacity for self-government”; he also

⁶⁹ John Letcher, “Reflections Upon the State of Our Situation of the Country,” draft letter to the editor, undated 1864, but almost certainly December, folder 421, John Letcher Papers, VHS; William Naylor McDonald, *The two rebellions; or, Treason unmasked. By a Virginian* (Richmond, Va.: Smith, Bailey, 1865), 6; Brent to Buckner, [31 December?] 1864/1865, BT 24, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL.

⁷⁰ “Reconstruction,” *The Index* 4 134 (November 17, 1864):729; “The Negotiations for Peace,” *The Index* 5 147 (February 16, 1865):104.

added, “if the governments of Europe have not seen fit to recognize us as a free and independent power and welcome us into the family of nations, it is their fault not ours” and as De Jarnette vowed “at some future day when under God’s good providence we have earned our title to freemen,” the Confederacy would seek its revenge. Seddon spoke for many in his report of November 4, when he wrote of the “separate and equal place among the nations of the earth that has been unjustly withheld from us.”⁷¹

Confederates used revolutionary rhetoric in their calls for absolute unity of action, but in so doing the language deployed took on a tone that sounded more of the French than the American Revolution. The result of such a cause being adopted by Confederates would be a great boost to national power and expansion. It was on that basis that Henry also said earlier the same month, “it shall not be the momentary occupation of the Confederate Congress and people but the business of their lives to gather together the entire strength of the country in men and material of war and put it forth as with the will of one man.”⁷²

Some Confederates regarded language invoking the French Revolution as threatening to ensure that debates about mobilization for war became disputes about the future of the Confederacy itself as a constitutional nation. But other Confederates believed that such commitment to revolution was not only possible, but necessary. On December 31, Brent argued that in advocating “the compulsory cultivation of fixed quantity of crops, and impressment of every species of property of recusant planters...whatever it may be in politics, it is difficult in morals to reason why the

⁷¹ Gustavus Adolphus Henry, *Speech of Hon. Gustavus A. Henry, in the Senate of the Confederate States, November 29, 1864* (Richmond, Va.: n.p., 1864), 2, 3, 5; De Jarnette, *Monroe Doctrine*, 5-6; Seddon, “The Report of the Secretary of War”, November 4, 1864, printed in *The Index* 4 136 (December 1, 1864):766.

⁷² Henry, “Resolutions in Congress”, November 18, 1864, printed *The Index* 4 137 (December 8, 1864):781.

property as well as a mere person's blood should not be alike devoted the cause of independence."⁷³

To some Confederates, the adoption of such measures meant the point had been reached when they had to depart from their revolution. The implications for the future Confederacy in terms of establishing, for example, a temporary dictatorship were profound. The present-day Confederacy ceased to have any relevance for the future. On December 16, Porcher challenged Benjamin, "in terms of war and invasion, the Constitution is dead, the safety of the people is the supreme law of the land." Therefore the Confederate Government cannot let a "constitutional scruple" over arming slaves stand "in the way of our subjugation." Benjamin's reply to Porcher showed the extent of the emergency, although Porcher went too far, and Benjamin "cannot concur" regarding the Confederate Government's "assumption of powers not created in the Constitution." He accepted that "alterations" would be necessary, but "best settled by degrees." Benjamin concluded that, after the manner of the ancient Roman Republic when threatened by a mortal enemy, "if the Constitution is not to be our best guide, I would prefer to see it superseded by a revolution which would declare a dictatorship." This measure would be a temporary expedient to deal with the war and Benjamin proposed, "leaving to the future the care of establishing a formal and regular government."⁷⁴

Totally detached from thinking about the future, Confederates debated the extent to which they needed to amend existing institutions in order to survive the Union's onslaught. Benjamin's desperation reflected the dark mood prevailing in Richmond that December in which a chorus of demands grew louder to make Lee general in chief of the

⁷³ Brent to Buckner, [31 December?] 1864/1865, BT 24, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL.

⁷⁴ Porcher to Benjamin, December 16, Benjamin to Porcher, December 21, 1864, box 1, Meade Papers, UVA.

Confederate armies, if necessary overruling Davis in the process. On Christmas Eve, Jones recorded in his diary “a large number of croaking inhabitants censure Davis for our many misfortunes and openly declare in favor of Lee as dictator.” Two days later, Jones noted “it is said that Lee is to be invested with dictatorial powers, as far as our enemies are concerned.” On New Year’s Eve, Jones charted further developments of this agitation, “there is supposed to be a campaign afoot to transfer some of the power of the executive to Lee. It can only be done by a revolution and the overthrow of the Constitution. Nevertheless, it is believed many executive officers, some in high position, favor the scheme.”⁷⁵

Proponents of revolution overreached themselves in their demands to establish Lee as dictator. On January 8, Jones wrote that Virginian representative, former lieutenant governor and member of the state executive council organizing Virginia's Confederate troops and appointing officers, [Robert L.] Montague, told him that a “strong party” existed to make Lee “generalissimo” without Davis’s consent. The reason given, “Lee was the only man to possess the unlimited confidence of the people.” Clearly the promotion of Lee was sought as a way to remove Davis; on January 17, The *Richmond Examiner* ran an article calling for the removal of Davis via a convention. On February 2, Hotze was unconcerned because “insane raving of the *Richmond Examiner* to depose Davis and make Lee military dictator’ can be disregarded because the “fanatical element of passion in the South is neither large nor influential.” On New Year’s Day, Jones also disregarded the plots because whilst “nearly all desire to see Lee at the head of affairs,” two insuperable obstacles remained: first, “Davis is resolved to yield the position to no man during his period of service”; second, “nor would Lee take it.” There were

⁷⁵ Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:364, 366, 370-71.

limits to the revolution; neither Lee was prepared to compromise on the primacy of civilian over military command, nor Davis on the sacred responsibility given to him as a result of his election.⁷⁶

Supporters and opponents of centralizing the Confederacy conducted their debates in terms that suggested the future of the Confederacy was at stake. In such circumstances, neither side thought about expansionist ambitions. Davis told the Georgian senators on November 17, that “distinct state action” would lead to “discordant instead of united counsels” and “to suggest to our enemies the possibility of the dissolution of the Confederacy.” Davis told Samuel J. Person, who had earlier notified him of Vance’s opposition to the use of Wilmington North Carolina, as a base for commerce raiding, the war necessitated “the most united and harmonious action” yet this need was jeopardized by “the persistent interference of State authorities, which hinder the Confederate Government, impairs its hold on the people.” Other Confederates contested these views and the debate moved beyond the confines of how to conduct policy in the Confederacy to whether a Confederacy should continue to exist.⁷⁷

Supporters of state rights argued that if an expansive powerful Confederacy required the surrender of reserved powers, then it was not worth the cost. On 28 December, John H. Gilmer asserted that “the jewel of State Sovereignty is far more valuable than the dominion of power or the wealth of the world in the absence of civil and religious liberty.” He demanded that “the proper influence and independent existence

⁷⁶ Ibid., 2:380; “Peace Rumors,” *The Index* 5 145 (February 2, 1865):64. Montague added that “some of the Georgian members [of the House] declare that their state will reenter the Union unless Lee be speedily put at the head of the military affairs...” ‘Jones “argued with him that Davis ought to be approached in a proper manner.” (Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:372.)

⁷⁷ Davis, “Meeting with the Georgia Senators,” November 17, 1864, *JDP*, 11:162-65; Person to Davis, November 12, Davis to Person, December 15, 1864, *JDP*, 11:157, 227-33.

of the States must be properly respected and fairly protected, and the writ of Habeas Corpus must not be repealed.” Foote agreed, on November 30, he told Congress that he accepted it was “allowable for the Confederate States to confer in general convocation to impart to the common agent, the Confederate Government, additional powers for the efficient prosecution of the war.” Having nearly fought a duel with John Mitchell of *The Examiner* on November 22, Foote was “threatening to leave the Confederacy if Habeas Corpus suspended and martial law declared,” according to Jones on December 19. On January 28, Foote finally quit the Confederacy after a failed initial attempt. On December 5, Leach highlighted the importance of the writ as one of the “great bulwarks of freedom and as the Confederate people are engaged in a great struggle for liberty, no emergency exists for its suspension.”⁷⁸

The conservative case received a boost by the approach of the official beginning of Lincoln’s second term in early March 1865. Confederates pondered that this event might render the Confederacy the more established power in North America and possibly entitled to expand. On January 5, Hotze remarked “now the revolution of North America undergoes a new phase” because on March 4, a “new state will be created in the Union whilst the Confederacy has been in existence for four years.” The *Sentinel* agreed, the inauguration of Lincoln’s second term will mean his presidency will “assume a new character” because the Confederate States had “no part in electing him” and hence on a “sound intellectual principle, Britain and France may be able to abandon their present

⁷⁸ Letter from John H. Gilmer to Peter Saunders Esq., a member of the Virginia Senate, on the position and duties of Virginia in the existing state of political matters. Richmond, Dec. 28, 1864 (Broadside 1864); Foote, “Resolutions,” November 30, 1864, *CJ*, 7:312-13; Jones, *Rebel Diary*, 2:337, 359; Leach, “Resolutions,” December 5, 1864, *CJ*, 7:329; note in *JDP*, 11:467. On Foote’s attempt to cross to the Union see Davis, “Message,” January 13, 1865; John B. Clark, “chairman of Committee of Elections Motion,” January 16, 24; Gilmer of North Carolina, “Minority Report,” January 24, 1865, *CJ*, 7:454, 458, 490-91.

position [of non-recognition] with good grace.” At Charleston, Eldred J. Simkins predicted to his new wife, “the fourth of March will come and then we will see whether the United States Government will be recognized as comprising the southern states.” Above all, in this context, the Confederacy had to remain faithful to its Constitution and state rights. Although Hotze imagined such arguments would appeal especially to the conservative British, conservative Confederates in Richmond adopted the same line. On January 19, Echols demanded Congress “abandon all radical and revolutionary legislation,” the Confederacy was fighting “a war for the Constitution, it is a constitutional war.”⁷⁹

The State Department presented the Confederacy as the venerable power in North America and one that had to be sufficiently powerful to exercise influence over neighbors and be a valuable ally against an over mighty Union. Hotze declared: “The South is not fighting her own battle alone – she is fighting of good government, of balance of power, of sound progress and true liberty and the world’s peace.” At the same time, the Confederates continued to fight for the more revolutionary universal right of national self-determination. On January 5, Benjamin told Davis that whilst as a result of this isolation, “no aid or encouragement is expected from abroad”, the Secretary of State was “not without hope that success will attend the effort to recruit some thousands of Polish exiles.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ “The Recognition of the Confederate States,” *The Index* 5 141 (January 5, 1865):2; “The Fourth of March,” *The Index* 5 146 (February 9, 1865):87; Simkins to Eliza J. Simkins, February 2, 1865, SIM 203, Papers of Eldred J. Simkins, HL; Joseph Hubbard Echols, *Speech of Hon. Joseph H. Echols: The House of Representatives, on January 19, 1865* (Richmond, Va.: n.p., 1865), 1, 6.

⁸⁰ “New Year’s Thoughts About America,” *The Index* 5 141 (January 5, 1865):8; Benjamin to Davis, January 5, 1865, *JDP*, 11:278-79.

For all its appeal to balance of power and the universal cause of legitimacy, the conservative Confederacy had to renounce expansionist ambition. Hotze quoted the authority of British Judge of the Admiralty Court, Sir Robert Phillimore, whose definition of a rigidly demarcated nation emphatically rejected the possibility of territorial growth: “A people who permanently occupy a fixed territory [*certam sedem*], bound together by common laws and customs with one body politic, exercising through the medium of an organized government, independent sovereignty and control over all persons and things within its boundaries, capable of making war and peace, and of entering into all international relations with the other communities of the globe.”⁸¹

Opponents to the Davis administration likewise used the language of conservatism and elite leadership, threatened alike by the mob and by an over-mighty government. Such a vision left little scope for what the future Confederacy would become. On February 15, Leach, in attacking Benjamin’s speech of February 9, declared “our army is not composed of mob law materials; that our soldiers are law abiding men” and “in common with their representatives and their friends at home, they deprecate croakers, official insolence and mob law as being repugnant to justice, incompatible with the rights of freemen and revolting to the feelings of patriots and Christians.” On March 6, however, members of Congress perhaps provocatively asked in their address to the people, “is the cause worth the sacrifice?” In order to answer the question, the legislatures warned the people, Confederates “must keep the end for which we are contending, the sovereignty of states and the right of self-government.”⁸²

⁸¹ “The Recognition of the Confederate States,” *The Index* 5 141 (January 5, 1865):1.

⁸² Leach, “Resolutions,” February 15, 1865, *CJ*, 7:582; “Supplement to the March 6 address of the Confederate Congress to the country,” *The Index* 5 154 (April 6, 1865):221. Leach described Benjamin’s

The End of Confederate Expansionist Ambitions

A few Confederates realized that for all the inspiration of the past, the nation and its people had been transformed by the war and that this would have implications for the future. Acceptance of this alteration meant it was impossible for Confederates to tell what that future would be and hence whether expansionist ambitions would play any role. On February 13, the Richmond correspondent of *The Index* observed that “four years of war has left its impress “not only on the scenery, but in the faces, habits, customs, modes of speech” and even the “very thoughts” of the people.⁸³

The fall of Richmond in early April and the termination of the regular organized government that it represented, demonstrated conclusively that, if the Confederacy was to continue, its future had to be both revolutionary and dedicated entirely to the war. Davis declared in Danville on April 4, its loss had certainly inflicted “great moral and material injury to our cause.” Now “we have entered into a new phase of the struggle, the memory of which is to endure for all ages and to shed ever increasing luster upon our country.” On April 20, then in ignorance of Lee’s surrender, Hotze added the Confederacy was now in a position “to replace the failed trial of strength; if a war, the struggle is drawing to a close, if a revolution – it has just begun.” Davis argued that Confederates should feel liberated not despondent by the end of a conventional war.⁸⁴

The end of a conventional war meant that any existing institutions of government or peacetime pastimes of the Confederate people had to be discarded and with these went

speech as “derogatory to his position as a high public functionary of the Confederate Government, a reflection on the motives of Congress as a deliberative body, and an insult to public opinion...”

⁸³ “Letter from Richmond,” *The Index* 5 152 (March 23, 1865):181; “Another Mass Meeting in Richmond,” *The Index* 5 149 (March 2, 1865):133.

⁸⁴ Davis, “Address to the Confederate People,” April 4, 1865, *JDC*, 6:529-31; “The Fall of Richmond,” *The Index* 5 156 (April 20, 1865):248-49.

any prospect of expansionist ambitions. On April 19, in Charlotte, Davis stressed the all-encompassing dimensions the struggle had assumed; due to the dispersal of the formal armies, “this has been a war of the people for the people.” Varina Davis had seen the need for drastic measures for a while; on March 31, she advised prominent South Carolina planter and politician General John S. Preston, “Our Constitution is framed for peace “and was therefore “incompatible with the successful prosecution of the war.” Varina believed “the cohesive power of a strong government is needed when the devastating tendency of misery is at work.” On April 28, she informed her husband “you have now tried the strict construction fallacy, if we are to require a Constitution it must be more stretched during the hours of outside pressure if it covers us all.” A few Confederates thought about what ‘stretched’ might mean.⁸⁵

If the Confederacy was to survive, the precedent of the French Revolution during 1792 provided inspiration and a solution to some Confederates. It was however one in which fear and not hope mattered most. Confederates no longer had a wonderful future for which to strive, but to battle to avoid an even worse fate. On March 14, William T. Sutherlin, the mayor of Lynchburg, bluntly told Davis “the Confederate government must be clothed with the power to command the men and means of the country.” If the Government is able to “secure for the nation independence and the people will excuse everything, fail and they will excuse nothing.” On April 30 in Shreveport, Brent diagnosed the twin existential threats to the Confederacy; “want of hope and terror of the enemy.” In order “to overcome this terror, we should use a greater terror, to dissipate this want of hope, we should develop so formidable an energy as to command it.” Therefore,

⁸⁵ Davis, “Speech at Charlotte,” April 19, 1865, *JDP*, 11:549-50; Varina Davis to Davis, April 28, 1865, *JDP*, 11:569-71.

“our authorities must terrorize the country” as “the committee of public safety of the French Revolution had used gigantic energy and despotic powers to find the path to safety.” The future of the Confederacy, for Brent, had to be sufficient to be worth the “sacrifice of property and even temporarily our civil government.”⁸⁶

The calculation to be made was what effort Confederates should make for the creation of a “new regenerating morale.” The cost would be huge, as Brent insisted the people had to be capable of “holding our liberty as beyond price” in order to “protract the struggle.” Otherwise, if the people were not prepared to meet this test, “nothing adequate to compensate for the sacrifices of blood and property will be realized.” The immediate future confronting Confederates under these circumstances was bleak; on April 3, cavalryman William L. Wilson left behind in the chaos of Lee’s retreat wrote in his diary of the women of the house on whom he was billeted, “in a few hours at most they will be at the feet of the brutal soldiery” of the Union. On April 27, Hotze believed, with the assassination of Lincoln on April 15, the price had increased “if the South had been heretofore disposed to accept terms it cannot now and its resistance will become more bitter and its resistance more desperate.”⁸⁷

Confederate physical isolation heightened this sense of inward-looking detachment from the outside world. On April 22 Reagan told Davis, “Our ports are closed” and as a result the Confederate government was “unable to arm our people [even] if they were willing to continue.” Two days earlier, Hotze claimed that Richmond had only been chosen as capital with European approval in mind; “but that prestige has

⁸⁶ Sutherlin to Davis, March 14, 1865, *JDP*, 11:441; Brent to Buckner, April 30, 1865, BT 27, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL. Davis described Sutherlin’s letter to an aide as “very spirited.”

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; Wilson, William L., “Diary of William L. Wilson, B company, 12th regiment, Virginia, cavalry” [hereafter cited as Wilson, “Diary”], p.35, GLC00653.17; “The Assassination of Lincoln,” *The Index* 5 157 (April 27, 1865):264.

proved barren and too dearly bought.” With the fall of Richmond, the war was “now to be waged more with the necessities of the country” in mind, as opposed to “the formalities of a rank among nations.” If there was to be a new phase of the war, the Confederacy would be a much more introspective nation.⁸⁸

To those Confederates used to planning for an expansionist slaveholder led empire with cosmopolitan pretensions, such a fate of turning inward was tantamount to defeat. On January 30, Oldham declared to his fellow senators that the Confederacy’s downfall “means the erasing of our name and country from the maps of the world; the conclusion of our history, with no future.” The Union’s conquest entailed “the destruction of our government” and in its place, Confederates would be “governed by a triumvirate: that whining canting Yankee, the red republican; the infidel German and superior to the two, the African negro.” Hence the unfolding of the nightmare scenario to Oldham, the “provincialization of our States” oppressed by a “brutalized negro soldiery.” But perhaps a more advantageous arrangement with the United States would enable Confederates to escape this provincial fate.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Walker to Russell, February 7, 1865, FO 5/1030, pp. 64-67, PRO; Reagan to Davis, April 22, 1865, *JDP*, 11: 556-57; “The Fall of Richmond,” *The Index* 5 156 (April 20, 1865):248.

⁸⁹ Oldham, *Speech on Texas Resolutions*. 12.

Conclusion: What are you going to do?

Once the expansionist ambitions of the future were over, in the final months of their nation's existence, Confederates regarded their future nation state as the vague reflection of past deeds. Therefore at Danville on April 4, Davis challenged his audience in faithful knowledge of the answer: "Who in the light of the past dare doubt your purpose in the future?" On April 13, Hotze explained his president's rationale: "We had rather to do with the future than the past, using the latter to shed light on the obscurity of the former." Confidence in final victory, explained Hotze can be sustained because "such facts is akin to reason and harmonizes with experience, while its supreme force lies in the illustration of past deeds."¹

The future Confederacy would become a community of suffering. On February 13, *The Index*'s Richmond correspondent noted that no attempt was made by the Richmond speakers to deceive the people, "all the sufferings of the past will be as nothing compared with the future...no one pretended to see an end to the war or foreign intervention. The die is cast, the Confederate States go forth into the blackness that shrouds the future." On March 1, Representative William C. Rives, in his retirement message to his constituents and which he also forwarded to Congress, showed that the only comfort in the mystery of the future of the Confederacy would be in a common fate as determined by the shared past. "We shall still be bound together by common sentiment and common interest in the future as in the past. My constant prayer shall be to make that future as propitious and glorious as heart could wish. But whatever it is, I share it with you."²

¹ Jefferson Davis, "Address to the People," Danville, April 4, 1865, *JDC*, 6:529-31; "Four Years of War," *The Index* 5 155 (April 13, 1865):232.

² "Letter from Richmond," *The Index* 5 152 (March 23, 1865), 181; William C. Rives to the Voters of the 7th Congressional District, March 2, 1865, *CJ*, 7:674.

The more distant past served as both a inspiration and a warning to Confederates. On March 2, E. H. Winfield of Washington, Texas cautioned Ashbel Smith, on the twenty-ninth anniversary of Texan independence. The lesson of San Jacinto presented an example of “the independence they were willing to purchase with blood and unwilling to part with it for a price less than it cost.” If present-day Texans failed to emulate their forebears then the future would be one of “the utter ruin, disgrace and degradation, which would inevitably befall us.”³

Ongoing military operations and especially those of the Army of Northern Virginia offered the only motivation for Confederates to carry on their pursuits. “The planters in this neighborhood are working their fields with a firm determination to make good crops,” Colonel Bringier reassured Brent about the situation in Louisiana on April, but he added they will only continue to do so “if we will only guarantee not to abandon them.” Over in London on April 20 and still in ignorance of Lee’s surrender, Hotze continued to believe and continued to hope, for while “further misfortunes may follow but if we dare gaze with the darkest of future reverses we look cheerfully – Lee achieved his object to preserve a formidable organized force for future operations.”⁴

By that time back in the Confederacy such hope had been undone by the spread of news events in Virginia; on April 12, H. T. Douglas in Shreveport, Louisiana announced to Brent: “If the rumors of the evacuation of Richmond were true, I shall regard the cause as entirely hopeless and work as a man in forlorn hope.” By April 30, even the optimistic

³ Winfield to Smith, March 2, 1865, vol. 11, July 1861-1908 and undated, Sam Houston Papers, UT.

⁴ Bringier to Brent, April 1, 1865, BT 98, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL; “The Fall of Richmond,” *The Index* 5 156 (April 20, 1865): 249.

Brent admitted his fear to Buckner that the “torpor and despair” of the citizen would spread to the army.⁵

The spread of the news of Lee’s surrender on April 9 created bewilderment among Confederates. From the beginning of his ejection from Petersburg, soldiers in his army sensed the different significance of the defeat. On April 2, Wilson near the Appomattox River hearing news of the evacuation confessed in his diary that he felt “utterly incompetent to grasp the magnitude of the disaster that has befallen the Confederate arms.” Specifically he could not predict what the consequences were now that “Virginia, the bulwark of the South is lost” and especially he could not fathom “the fate of the Army of Northern Virginia now defeated for the first time in its proud career.” Setbacks, such as Gettysburg and Antietam, were in a totally different category to what befell the Army of Northern Virginia after its retreat from Petersburg.⁶

Confederates were unable to interpret the consequences of the events going on around them, hence the feeling of stupefaction that became general. “I am at a loss to know what is to become of us,” Douglas confessed to Brent on the “startling intelligence” of Lee’s surrender which reached the Trans-Mississippi department on April 24, adding “I am holding my hands, am willing and ready, but can do nothing.” He begged Brent “can you suggest anything to relieve this terrible suspense?”⁷

The departure of the Confederate government from Richmond began the swift process that led to this suspension of thought. On April 4, Wilson, swept up in the retreat westwards from Petersburg, fell in with the secretary of war and was concerned to find

⁵ Douglas to Brent, April 12, 1865, BT 61, Brent to Buckner, 30 April 1865, BT 27, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL.

⁶ Wilson, “Diary,” April 2, 1865, pp. 32-33, GLC0 0653.17.

⁷ Douglas to Brent, April 24, 1865, BT 109, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL.

out that “Breckenridge is as much in ignorance of Lee’s whereabouts as any of us, the more I see of [matters] the less hopeful I become.” A day later, Davis revealed his own sense of loss of control, when he told Varina that he had “hoped to speak with Lee before writing so I would be able to speak to you with some confidence of the future.” Confederates swiftly ceased to believe that Davis could influence events; on April 7, Varina informed him that in Charlotte, “numberless surmises are hazarded as to your future destination and occupation.”⁸

There came a point with Confederates when the question of individual future took over entirely from the collective Confederate destiny. On April 8, still dumbfounded, Wilson’s “thoughts turn homeward”; for twenty four hours, he tried to resist succumbing to this impulse, and even the news of the surrender did not immediately stagger this resolution. In Lynchburg on April 9, Wilson at first “tried to familiarize myself with the idea of surrender, but at last it came upon me with a staggering force.” He looked for familiar sources for guidance but “the scepter had departed, the oracles are dumb.” Instead of a disciplined army, all he saw was “men confused, demoralized, unnerved by despair.” But underpinning this was the devastating sudden realization that now “each man is a master of his own movements – what are you going to do? The question that meets you on every side, the answers are various...”⁹

⁸ Wilson, “Diary,” April 4, 1865, p. 37, GLC0 0653.17; Davis to Varina, April 5, 1865, JDP 11:503; Varina to Davis, April 7, 1865, JDP 11:513-14.

⁹ Wilson, “Diary,” April 9, 1865, pp. 77, 86-87, GLC0 0653.17. Wilson continued: “The Proud Army of Northern Virginia with all its glorious history has ceased to exist...as an organization she will never more exist to fight the battle of freedom – henceforth and for ever she will only live in the memory of her glorious valor and patriotic devotion.” Gregory Downs believes that as a result of the expansion of government during the Civil War, it pushed citizens to expect more than what the government was in a position to provide and that it was through declaring their dependence on the state that citizens could improve their lives. Such a development would explain the stupefaction and bewilderment among Confederates when both the government and army vanished at once in April 1865. Gregory P. Downs,

Leaderless ex-Confederates dispersed to either their old homes and occupations or they chose flight. For Edward Archer, his answer to Wilson's question (what are you going to do?) was that when he received parole on May 1, he travelled to Richmond on May 5, presented accounts of the Virginia Volunteer Navy to his father and by June had returned to work at Tredegar. For Wise, his answer was to try to return to his plantation; he told his wife, mentioning the name of the place for the first time since the spring of 1862, "Rolliston has been advertised to be sold, but I am told now it will not be, and that on paying taxes, I may save it perhaps." Some Confederates carried on bewildered and chasing a fleeting hope; Stella Bringier in Shreveport asked Brent "where can I direct my wandering steps now? And what is there left to hope for? The news of Lee's surrender completely crushed me. Our only safety lies in flight...no matter whither and try and hold out hope out come hope, if any." She despaired, "what must the end be of all this?"¹⁰

Suspended animation gripped Mason, abetted by his isolation in London and habits of duty too deeply engrained. He continued to believe a Confederate government existed. Mason was still working in London on May 1, "in the uncertainty of the future, or what may be the views of the government regarding the continuance of commissioners abroad I can only remain where I am and await its orders." Mason considered this conduct to be a great sacrifice for he would remain at his post "however desirous to be at home, to contribute to our great cause, whatever it might be in my power to do there, or give aid and protection to my (I fear) distressed family, I shall act accordingly..."¹¹

Declarations of Dependence: The Long Reconstruction of Popular Politics in the South, 1861-1908 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Archer, Edward Richard, "Diary, 1864-1865", entry for June 1865, #Ar234:1, VHS; Wise to Mary Elizabeth (Lyons) Wise, May 15, 1865, box 2, Henry Alexander Wise Correspondence, Wise Family Papers, # 1 W7547 bFA2, VHS; Stella Bringier to Brent, April 19, 1865, BT 92, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL.

¹¹ Mason to Benjamin, May 1, 1865, OR, 1277.

Davis discovered the limits of the sacrifice he was prepared to make amid the confusion of the retreat into North Carolina. On April 23, he could at least see a future, in terms of his marriage, telling Varina, “[T]his is not the fate to which I invited you when the future was rose colored for us both...” The couple had now “to guard against contingencies, there may be better things for us than are now in view, but my love is all I have to offer and that has the value of a thing prepossessed and sure not to be lost.” On April 28, Varina replied and agreed that the present outcome was “not the fate to which you invited me in brighter days”; however, she continued with comforting exaggeration, “you must remember you did not invite me to a great hero’s home but to that of a plain farmer.” But the diminished expectations for Davis meant her role in his life would increase for “I have shared all your triumphs, being the only beneficiary of them, now I am but claiming the privilege, for the first time, of being all to you now these plans are past.” Davis’s ambition for the Confederacy ended.¹²

As the reality of reunion dawned from mid April onward, there was a range of feelings about this future. A few maintained an uncompromising stance; on April 19, Stella Bringier assured Brent in Shreveport that she “cannot and will not live under Yankee rule.” But more Confederates asserted a deep and abiding hatred, as a public letter to Rives declared: “We are enemies in war, in peace we can never be friends.” According to Hotze, commenting on the latter, the “North has destroyed a great Republic” in its choice of war, which meant not just the Confederacy, but the United States as well. On April 22, Postmaster General Reagan told Davis “I do not conceal the danger of trusting the people who drove us to war by their unconstitutional and unjust

¹² Davis to Varina, April 13, Varina to Davis, April 28, 1865, *JDP*, 11:558-60, 569-70.

aggressions and who now add consciousness of power to their love of dominion and greed of gain.”¹³

Loyal Confederates believed the future under the Union would be a combination of continued war and racial equality. On April 20, Hotze reckoned that “Seward is ready for a foreign war, as soon as the southern job is finished.” That bleak future, not just for Confederates but the whole world, would arise from the “downfall of a power, the establishment of which alone can prevent the most arrogant nation on earth from disturbing the peace and interrupting the commerce of the world.” In a public letter on April 27, Mason informed Hotze that he regarded “the murder of Lincoln as the necessary offspring of these scenes of murder and bloodshed in every form of unbridled license that signalized the invasion of the South.” The same day, Hotze observed, it was “the knell of anarchy and chaos”, which would have deleterious consequences for the southern people. Military oppression would result, according to Hampton on April 19, when in the foreign war intended by Lincoln, Confederates would be “subject to a more rigorous conscription, forced to fight by the side of our own negroes and under Yankee officers.”¹⁴

These committed Confederates insisted southern citizens would suffer additional burdens exacted to those of racial equality and conscription, the future of tyranny, mob rule, racial amalgamation and rule by numbers was coming to the Confederacy. On April 19, Hampton predicted that the southern people “shall have to pay the United States debt and live under a base and vulgar tyranny.” A day later, Hotze asked “what hope of the

¹³ Stella Bringier to Brent, April 19, 1865, BT 92, Joseph Lancaster Brent Papers, HL; “The Destiny of the South,” *The Index* 5 155 (April 13, 1865):230; Reagan to Davis, April 22, 1865, *JDP* 11:556.

¹⁴ “The Northern Exultation,” *The Index* 5 156 (April 20, 1865):250; Mason to Hotze, April 27, 1865, “The Assassination of Lincoln,” *The Index* 5 157 (April 27, 1865):264, 268; Hampton to Davis, April 19, 1865 *JDP*, 11:548.

future when [northern politicians] behave like vulgar demagogues in accordance with the sentiments of the people?”¹⁵

However for all their vehemence of the denunciations of northerners, Confederates rapidly adjusted themselves to the new conditions. Although a few, such as Hampton on April 19, saw the only alternative as “better for us to fight to the extreme limit of our country than to reconstruct the Union on any terms.” On April 27, even Hotze wondered, “will the South seek conservative allies in the North for ultimate revenge?” Confederates came round to seeing their future within the context of the Union. For they had to react to the fact that, by April 24, as Navy Secretary Mallory warned Davis, that northerners “have conquered a reconstruction of the Union.”¹⁶

The terms of the military conventions in Virginia and especially North Carolina offered hope to Confederates that the terms of reentering the Union would be generous. On April 22, Attorney General George Davis comforted the president with the hope that “the Charlotte [military] Convention offers the chance to reenter the Union on the terms before secession.” Reagan was more skeptical, but nevertheless proposed that Confederates had to behave as “if the future shall disclose a disposition (which I fear the chance is remote) on the part of the U.S. people to return to the spirit and meaning of the Constitution.”¹⁷

Confederates believed northerners recognized the Union’s war guilt and that, together with the difficulty of accomplishing the feat of reunion, would result in relatively generous war terms. The Confederates construed a constitutional peace

¹⁵ Ibid. “The Northern Exultation,” *The Index* 5 156 (April 20, 1865):250.

¹⁶ Hampton to Davis, April 19, 1865, *JDP*, 11:548; “The Assassination of Lincoln,” *The Index* 5 157 (April 27, 1865):264; Mallory to Davis, April 24, 1865, *JDP*, 11:565.

¹⁷ George Davis to Davis, Reagan to Davis, April 22, 1865, *JDP* 11:555, 557.

broadly. The Confederates would accept the disbandment of their military and recognized the authority of the United States government as long as both the state governments and rights of property secured by the U.S. constitution remained. The terms Reagan suggested were extremely generous; “right of self government, political rights, and property, amnesty for past participation.” He expected that the Confederates would not have to pay towards the United States debt, and even the United States government would “allow us revenues etc., to satisfy our creditors.” He realized the conditions constituted a “liberality never before extended from conqueror to conquered.” Yet he also saw them as necessary for reunion, if “the object of pacification is to reconcile, then the terms must be based on perfect equity.” For as the avowed motive of the Union in fighting the war was “to secure reunion under a common government” and this “should rest on the consent and affection of the people.” There must “remain no sense of wrong to rankle in the memories and lay foundations for new difficulties leading to new wars.” Peace with self government and slavery was the *de minimis* terms if the war was to end and never recur. Reagan was adamant that because “we did not seek this war,” Confederates therefore had a right to expect leniency.¹⁸

Individual acts of, to ex-Confederates, surprising generosity by Union officers assisted this process of developing complacent expectations. The British consul in Mobile on May 12 observed “the terms of surrender and the generous treatment of many persons, who could little expect it, have received from the U.S. army and navy commands, is producing a good effect and will go far to alleviate the great depression of the southern people at the sudden termination of all their hopes after such a tearful strife.” On May 30, Wise at Isle of Wight Court House, Virginia, reported to the provost marshal, “a captain

¹⁸ Ibid.

Allen, who was very kind in showing me every protection I needed for myself, my horse and my effects.”¹⁹

The most important Confederate at liberty made a decisive public contribution to ex-Confederate adjustment to the Union. Combined with the publication of his farewell address to the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee’s return to his wife in Richmond on April 15 caused a sensation in the city. He was “received with enthusiasm, his presence encouraged the people to open again their doors and windows of houses which had remained obscured since the hostile occupation. Ladies again appeared at windows with tears in their eyes and waved handkerchiefs at the General.” Meanwhile Lee’s impeccable outward behavior helped the process, “bowing to the throngs of people he retired in silence.” He expressed a shared sense of regret and stoicism to meet the future come what may. On May 11, even Hotze felt compelled to slightly reevaluate his attitude to northerners when he predicted the military despotism of the occupation of the South would end “sooner or later, for it is not in the nature of the American people to endure the military despotism long or patiently.” As with Lee, Hotze looked not to ultimate reconciliation but for the “heroic rise from the ruins that nationality, which even in defeat reaped the moral fruits of victory.” The devastation of defeat was but a passing phase, and a revival – that of the Lost Cause – would eventually occur.²⁰

Former expansive Confederates did not only begin to work on conquering the memory of the Civil War. They also looked forward to exploiting the opportunities to be had now the South was back within the United States. The final confirmation of fatal

¹⁹ Fred Cridland to Earl Russell, May 12, 1865, FO 5/1029, p. 96, PRO; Wise to Mary Elizabeth (Lyons) Wise, May 30, 1865 box 2, Henry Alexander Wise Correspondence, Wise Family Papers, #W7547 bFA2, VHS.

²⁰ “Notes on the Events of the Week,” and “Lee’s Farwell to his Army,” *The Index* 5 158 (May 4, 1865):274, 278; “The Surrender of Joseph E. Johnson,” *The Index* 5 159 (May 11, 1865):296.

tuberculosis in spring 1865 left Randolph stranded in Europe at the time of Appomattox, having, as he put it, lost his health, fortune and country. But when he wrote from Paris that July to a niece, whatever his own prospects, he sounded like a booster for the New South, for Virginia “will yet rise to greater power and prosperity than she could have reached under the old regime. The very necessity for increased exertion will nerve the rising generation and give them far more energy and enterprise than we possessed.” Randolph argued the experience of the Civil War had not been wasted, “Adversity either quashes or elevates a people and I trust that we have too much stamina to be crushed.” Although the period of southern recovery might be a long when for Randolph added: “We old folks [he was 47] have much suffering to encounter but we mustn’t discourage you young ones and still your hopes by mourning for the past.” Randolph continued to have an undiminished faith in the future, augmented by the searing experience of the war.²¹

Turning to emancipation, Randolph likewise voiced no regrets and predicted Virginia’s return to the Union may lead to the departure of African Americans. “Slavery whether good or bad is dead, let us forget it and not be eternally haunted by its ghost. Free black labor is probably a mere transition to free white labor, at least in Virginia. Now that the slave is free to go where he likes he will obey the laws of supply and demand and go where his labor will be best paid, and I take it the cotton and sugar and hot sun of the more southern states will eventually draw him out of Virginia. Let us ease him off...striving to make the best use of him whilst he stays and wishing him a pleasant

²¹ Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970), C. Vann Woodward, *The Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), ix. Randolph did not draw on the old myth of southern superiority for his New South creed.

journey when he goes.” So even though the dream of the Confederacy was over, some of the arguments earlier used to justify secession were redeployed to show that Virginia could thrive under Reconstruction.²²

The moment of bewilderment had been short. By the summer of 1865, ex-Confederate expansionists had dispersed, some in flight, but more back to try and resurrect pre-war careers, and had begun to prepare for Lost Cause vindication and pursue racial segregation. They had endured devastating losses, but even at this time there were reminders of the old confidence. These ex-Confederates had begun to work, in the states and within Democratic Party, in order to get back into positions to once again pursue their very different expansionist ambitions.

Throughout the Confederate story, expansionist ambitions featured prominently. Confederates seemed to never discard their hopes and aspirations for the future of their nation. The reason for the prominence and importance of expansionist ambitions was their flexibility. They could always coexist with apparent contradictions, whether it was fears of Confederate subjugation at the hands of the United States armies or the constant worry of a slave insurrection. Expansionist ambitions could be flexible temporally, able to accommodate a yearning for the lost promise of the 1850s or the Revolution of 1776, as well as confident expectations of the future. Above all, expansionist ambitions were flexible in their nature—in terms of extent and the degree of commercial or territorial emphasis. Expansionist ambitions also varied in their level of dependence on slavery and, connected with this, the effect of the kind of economy Confederates expected their

²² Randolph to Sarah Nicholas Randolph, July 23, 1865, group 8, papers of Jefferson, Randolph, Taylor, Smith & Nicholas families, # 8937, UVA.

economy to have—the extent to which expansionist ambitions would be sustained and driven by either predominantly an industrial or agricultural or mixed economy.

Confederates believed they had a choice in terms of which other nations would be either partners or neutrals or foes in their enterprise, including the Union, and this influenced the geography of expansionist ambitions.

The value and importance of studying Confederate expansionist ambitions is that they reflect the contingency of the Civil War, its perceived progress and how this news was processed by Confederates. Expansionist ambitions reveal reactions to events such as the loss of territory and victories on the battlefield and also to the apparent opportunities and setbacks that arose from their diplomatic intrigues and the activities of local elites outside the control of the Confederate government. Confederate expansionist ambitions were at their core the rationalization of the world in the image of the Confederacy. Hence when the Confederacy surrendered, they also ceased to exist. But while the Confederacy lasted, expansionist ambitions both informed the decision of Confederates to continue fighting the war and provide an insight into the aspirations of a people who were prepared to sacrifice so much for what was, in hindsight, a Lost Cause.

List of Abbreviations

BA	Rare Books Collection, The Boston Athenaeum, Boston, Mass.
CG	<i>Congressional Globe</i> , 38th Congress, 2nd Session, December 3, 1860 to March 3, 1861 (Washington D.C.: John C. Rives, 1860-1861)
CJ	The Library of Congress, <i>Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America</i> , 1861-1865, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1904-1905)
DBR	<i>DeBow's Review and Industrial Resources, Statistics, etc. Devoted to Commerce, Agriculture, Manufactures (1853-1864)</i>
FHS	Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Ky.
GLC	Gilder Lehrman Collection, New-York Historical Society
HL	The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, Calif.
JDC	Dunbar Rowland, <i>Jefferson Davis Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers, and Speeches</i> , 10 vols. (Jackson, Miss.: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923).
JDP	Crist, Lynda Lasswell et al., <i>The Papers of Jefferson Davis</i> , 13 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012)
OR	United States Naval War Records Office, <i>Official records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion</i> , 30 Vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1894-1922), ser. 1, vol. 3: <i>Proclamations, Appointments, etc. of President Davis; State Department Correspondence with Diplomatic Agents, etc.</i> (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1922)
PRO	Public Record Office at the National Archives, Kew, London, England
SHC	Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
UT	Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin
UVA	Special Collections, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
VHS	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond

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