# Abraham Lincoln as a war general

Abraham Lincoln was born on 12th February and died on 15th April 1865. He was well known as a lawyer and an American statesman who served as the sixteenth president of United States. Abraham basically led United States all through its bloodiest war and civil war or perhaps its greatest moral political and constitutional crisis until he was assassinated. In doing so, Lincoln fully preserved the union and created a way for abolition of slavery by strategically strengthening the then federal government as well as effectively modernizing the economy of United States (lincoln, 2008).

Being born in Kentucky, Lincoln mainly grew up as a western frontier in Indiana and Kentucky. He later on became a lawyer in the town of Illinois as well as a party leader of Whig party. He served as Illinois house representatives for eight years in 1846 where he adequately promoted more rapid modernization of the States’ economy and the opposed American-Mexican war. After his successful one term, Lincoln returned to Illinois and continued with his successful law practice. Abraham later on returned with a bang where he effectively built a new republican part which formed a statewide majority in Illinois. While campaigning for a senator post in Illinois, Lincoln tool part in serious series of publicized debates with his closest democrat and rival Stephen Douglas. Lincoln majored on his fight for slavery but painfully lost the senatorial race to Douglas. In 1860, he managed to fully secure the Republican Party president nomination though most of delegates favored other candidates. Despite his little support, he efficiently managed to sweep slaveholdings in north and south states where he was elected as the president of United States in 1860 (Lincoln, 2008).

When the famous American civil war began, Lincoln was less prepared and set to tackle set tasks as the United States commander in chief than his southern adversary. His immediate rival Jefferson Davis had just graduated from the west point and had successfully fought intrepidly in the Mexica war at Buena Vista. Jefferson also showed more superiority since he had served as the secretary of war in Franklin Pierce administration from 1853 to 1857. Lincoln’s only experience had been gained while at Franklin Pierce administration him being the secretary of war. His militia unit hardly showed no military action in the Black Hawk War which had started after Fox Indians and Sac tried to return to their ancestral homeland in Illinois. Lincoln was fond of mocking his military carrier especially after his one term in Congress.

On 15th April 1886, Lincoln called state military into the states federal service following the bombardment of Sumter. This factor facilitated his fast learning of facts as a commander in chief. Lincoln being a self-taught lawyer as well is analytical mind, he had fully mastered the relative geometry for mental exercise hence enabling him learn the war facts as the commander in chief quickly. He essentially absorbed and read various works in military strategy and history where he clearly observed his failures and success as well as adopting new conclusions where he made mistakes. He would learn from his mistakes. He effectively applied his common sense to slice through the excuses and obfuscations of his military sub-ordinates. His huge gasp of operations and strategy was enough to justify the overstated conclusion that Lincoln is the greatest war president in history (Sandburg & Carl, 2002).

As the commander in chief, a party leader as well as the president of United States, Lincoln clearly defined and shaped the States’ national policy. From the first set policy to the last policy the preservation of the states as one nation was achieved. The states became indivisible becoming a republic based on the majority rule. Most of his arguments closely corresponded to the Karl Clausewitz’s treatise on war. His political objective was to use war a tool for policy. Some of the professional commanders then in the military thought of war as something autonomous. This made some of them deplore the intrusion of existing political considerations into war militant matters. Abraham Lincoln would appoint various prominent politician with inadequate experience on military training and with time they would outrank professionals. Lincoln as well commissioned ethnic leaders as military generals (Schwartz, 1996).

Most of the historians who tend to deplore the commissioning of political generals sometimes they tend to mock the process. Many political generals have been remembered for their blunders and military defeats other than their positive achievements. Some of the often forgotten excellent military records includes some names like Francis P. Blair and John A. Logan. Even if all generals and political generals whom their appointment was influenced by politics and their performance turned out to be poor, Lincoln believed that their process would somehow have a positive result on national strategy as they tend to mobilize their subjects towards war effort. At the beginning of the war, the United Sates army has over sixteen thousand men of which 1,100 were the commissioners. Twenty five percent of this commissioners later on joined the confederate army. By the end of the first year at war, the volunteer army had grown to over six hundred. This massive mobilization was as a result of the enormous effort made by state and local politicians as well as the army’s prominent ethnic leaders (Sandburg & Carl, 2002).

The issue of emancipation and slavery was one of the important issues that rose as a national strategy and became a policy as well. Of the Lincoln’s top priorities was to keep the Northern ant abolitionist Democrats and the state Unionists in his war. General John C. issued an order meant to free Confederate supporter’s slaves but Lincoln decided to revoke the order so as to control the outcry from the Northern Democrats and the border. Afterwards, the overall thrust and push of national strategy gradually shifted away from pacifying the anti-emancipation Democrats and the Border States. The Republican Constituency that dealt with antislavery grew louder and demanding. The argument that the existing slavery had brought the war and any form of reunion with the slavery would lead the rise of more conflict become more insistent. There was clear evidence that slave labor sustained and maintained the Confederate economy and led to the strong growth of the Confederate armies. Many of the Unions gains of winter and summer were wiped out by the counteroffensives of the southern armies in 1862. Abraham Lincoln and other northerners were fully convinced that border steps were necessary and effective to win the war. He was sure that to win the existing war, the north had to strike slavery which was sustaining their enemies (Schwartz, 1996).

In 1852, Abraham Lincoln decided to take a major change in his national strategy. Instead of opposing the Northern Democrats and Border States, he decided to activate the antislavery majority from the northerners who had elected him. He would mobilize the relative potential of black manpower by enticing them to rebel against slavery. He would tell his cabinet members that extreme and decisive measures must be adopted in order to win the war. He was sure they must free the slaves or they be subdued. By trying to change the Confederate resource into a Union advantage, the act of emancipation become a major feature of his North national strategy. The big idea of supporting the black men led to a huge resistance and hostility among the Border States and the Unionists. In 1862, Lincoln made it clear to the Indiana delegates that he was not willing to lose Kentucky at the moment of war. After three weeks, Abraham authorized the then war department to start organizing black regiments on Carolina Sea Island. Lincoln had made it clear to the military governor of Tennessee that the colored army is the greatest available and yet unutilized force in restoring the union. The sight of over fifty thousand armed men and well drilled black soldiers at the banks of river Mississippi would completely end the existing rebellion at once (Lincoln, 1989).

This Lincoln prediction really proved her overoptimistic. Later on the black regiments proved their worth especially at Fort Wager and Lincoln promised them employment and in the future they will be remembered for their superiority. Lincoln is remembered to have taken more actions and hand in shaping the United States military strategy than any other presidents have done in various wars. This was not necessarily by choice but by his huge love for United State unity. Lack of any military training made Lincoln at first to submit to General Winfield Scots, the then most celebrated soldier after George Washington, but due to his lack of energy and poor health he later on placed a great burden on the president. Lincoln became disillusioned by Scott’s advice to yield to both Pickens and Forts Sumter. Scott was later on succeeded by George B. was even a more disappointment to Abraham Lincoln. George B. McClellan did little on command except conducting reviews and drills. There were various disagreements and discussions between the two like why is George distant-flanking strategy better than his short-franking strategy. Lincoln later on adopted another theme of military strategy where the war had to be won by fighting the enemy rather than by sieges and maneuvers in order to occupy places (Gienapp, 2002).

General Tardy George never at any time learn that simple lesson as outlined by the president. The same was true of other generals who did not at any time live up to Abraham’s expectation. They usually seemed paralyzed by their own responsibilities for their own lives as well as that of their men and the fate of the nation and the army. This crucial intimidating responsibility made them adopt risk-averse. The behavior of those commanders who mainly operated in the look out of the media publicity always looked at them over their shoulders. Officers like George Thomas and Philip walked up their way up from commanders to officers with larger responsibilities away from the media attention. They were effectively able to handle their responsibilities as well as learning their necessities by taking essential risks without fear of failure that normally paralyzed McClellan. Lincoln clearly understood what theorists defined as concentration in time. He expressed this by countering the Confederacy’s advantage of the existing interior lines that enabled the southerners concentrated on space. The known geography of war required the North to generally operate on the exterior lines while the Confederacy woulduse the interior lines to move troops to the point of danger (McPherson, 2008).

The only general that adopted to carry out Lincoln’s strategy was general in Chief Grant in 1864. Grant’s policy of generally attacking the enemy wherever he founds one was one way of embracing Abraham Lincoln’s strategy. His main intention was to cripple the enemy as far as possible rather than capturing and occupying places. By June 1862, the Union military forces had fully enjoyed the remarkable success of capturing Confederate cities and territory along the south Atlantic Coast, Low Mississippi valley, Tennessee as well as the cities of New Orleans, Nashville and Memphis. However, later on Confederate counteroffensives effectively tries to recapture back most of their territory. Clearly, the overall conquest required bright minds like that of Lincoln as well as massive determination since most of the places they won the war, the enemies were fully capable of reconquering them. Lincoln would view this Confederate offensives as more of an opportunity rather than a threat. Instances when the Union slowly intercepted or pursued an enemy marked the beginning of their failures. Lincoln would now and then express frustration when the Union army failed to march the fast Confederate armies as expected. The slowness of the Union’s army was as a result abundance of their logistics.

Lincoln’s administration did more than just managing the civil war. Its overall reverberations would be felt all over in a number of policies. There was establishment of the revenue act in 1862 which saw the payment of United States first income tax in order to pay for the expenses of war. There was as well the establishment of the Homestead Act which led to the settlement of the west by offering free land to the settlers. Lincoln also created Agriculture department which saw massive food production. On 14th April 1865, while Lincoln was attending a certain plat at Ford’s theatre, he was shot by a confederate sympathizer, John Booth. The assassination was meant to eliminate the northern government from power. Secretary General William Seward was as well grievously injured. Abraham Lincoln died the next day still with hope of reconstructing the nation without any form of cruelty or bitterness (McPherson, 2008).

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