

How Lincoln Won and Lost at Gettysburg

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By the spring of 1863, as the Civil War cast a dark shadow across the land, it became more and more evident to soldiers and civilians alike that the terrible conflict between North and South had grown into a behemoth that no one could successfully control or constrain — a Leviathan, like Melville's great white whale, that set its own course and moved at its own speed and evaded every attempt to arrest its awesome power. Nothing in this awful war — what Abraham Lincoln called this "great national trouble" — had gone according to plan.¹ The war had grown in intensity, in brutality, in the vastness of misery and loss that went far beyond what any American could have imagined in the passionate years that led up to the fall of Fort Sumter. Gone now were the haughty poses and flamboyant rhetoric, the silly dreams of a picture-book war. In their place came utter sadness and the chanting of low laments heard in the creeping darkness.

When mankind turns to war, as the North and South did in 1861, it sets in motion events that cannot be predicted or harnessed. "War," wrote Thomas Paine in the eighteenth century, "involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsupposed circumstances that no human wisdom can calculate the end."² Unanticipated consequences flow out of actions that in retrospect seem tiny and insignificant. Everything is changed; nothing is familiar, for war touches everyone with no mercy and with the power of pervasive destruction. The Civil War, like all wars, swept over the land and unleashed itself from the hands of the men who had started it — men who could barely ponder its depth and fury in the wake of all that it had laid to waste.

Yet, in the spring of 1863 there was at least one man who believed that he knew how to end and win the war, one man who seemed to recognize — like Melville's Ahab — the behemoth's weakness, one man who thought it possible to take hold of the monster and slay it once and for all. Abraham Lincoln believed that if the Army of the Potomac could deliver a death blow to the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, under the command of Robert E. Lee, the conclusion of the Civil War would at last be in sight. Unfortunately Lincoln found it difficult — if not impossible — to convince his generals that such a decisive victory was achievable, if only the correct strategy could be adopted by the Army of the Potomac

and carried out with dispatch and thoroughness.

This is not to say that Lincoln was a military genius, although some historians have given him high grades for a natural ability and talent as the nation's commander in chief during the Civil War's four long and bloody years. Rather, Lincoln managed to see the Union's military situation in terms that differed dramatically from the opinions of so many of his generals — in particular the commanders of the Army of the Potomac. He recognized with the sharp focus of someone who was not a military expert those things that often clouded the perspective of the generals who knew more about the finer elements of strategy and tactics, but who, in the end, could not win victories.

Lincoln's military expertise, in fact, was severely limited; one might easily argue that he possessed no substantive military knowledge at all. As a young man, tall and gangly, he had served in the Black Hawk War as a militia captain, but he gained no combat experience and barely managed to keep his company of volunteers together by imposing a modicum of discipline. He later joked about his war experience, such as it was. In a speech he gave on the floor of Congress in 1848, when he was serving in the House of Representatives from Illinois, he remarked that "in the days of the Black Hawk war, I fought, bled, and came away." He facetiously described himself as "a military hero," saying he never saw "any live, fighting Indians" during the conflict, "but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes."³

After he became president in 1861 and faced the reality of a nation divided against itself in a war of unprecedented size and scope, he at first wisely deferred to military men with real experience in war, including high-ranking officers such as Winfield Scott, the general-in-chief of the army, and Ethan Allan Hitchcock, the elderly grandson of the Revolutionary War hero who served as Lincoln's military adviser for a time. Lincoln knew all too well that he and his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, lacked any proper military knowledge to formulate policies and strategies and wage an effective war against the Southern states. To ground himself in military thought and parlance, he borrowed books from the Library of Congress and read up on military art and practice. He also tried to learn by talking to his generals and listening closely to their responses.⁴ Inevitably he brought a common-sense understanding to his study of military affairs, often wondering why his generals seemed so mired down in matters of logistics and mobilization when, to him, the situation appeared to be much less complicated than the army commanders ever could grasp.

In some instances, his naiveté and inexperience led him to oversimplify complicated circumstances or influenced him to order military movements too hastily, as he did in July 1861, when, succumbing to public pressure, he urged Brigadier General Irvin McDowell to attack the Confederate forces near Manassas — an action that ended in humiliating defeat for the Northern troops and a good deal of embarrassment for the nation's novice commander in chief. On other occasions, however, Lincoln demonstrated a remarkable perspicacity for comprehending complex military scenarios, concepts, and conditions. In 1862, he once brilliantly summed up to a foreign correspondent why the Union armies were having such a difficult time winning victories and why the war kept going on and on. "I suppose the cause of its continuance," he observed insightfully, "lies mainly in the other facts that the enemy holds the interior, and we the exterior lines."⁵

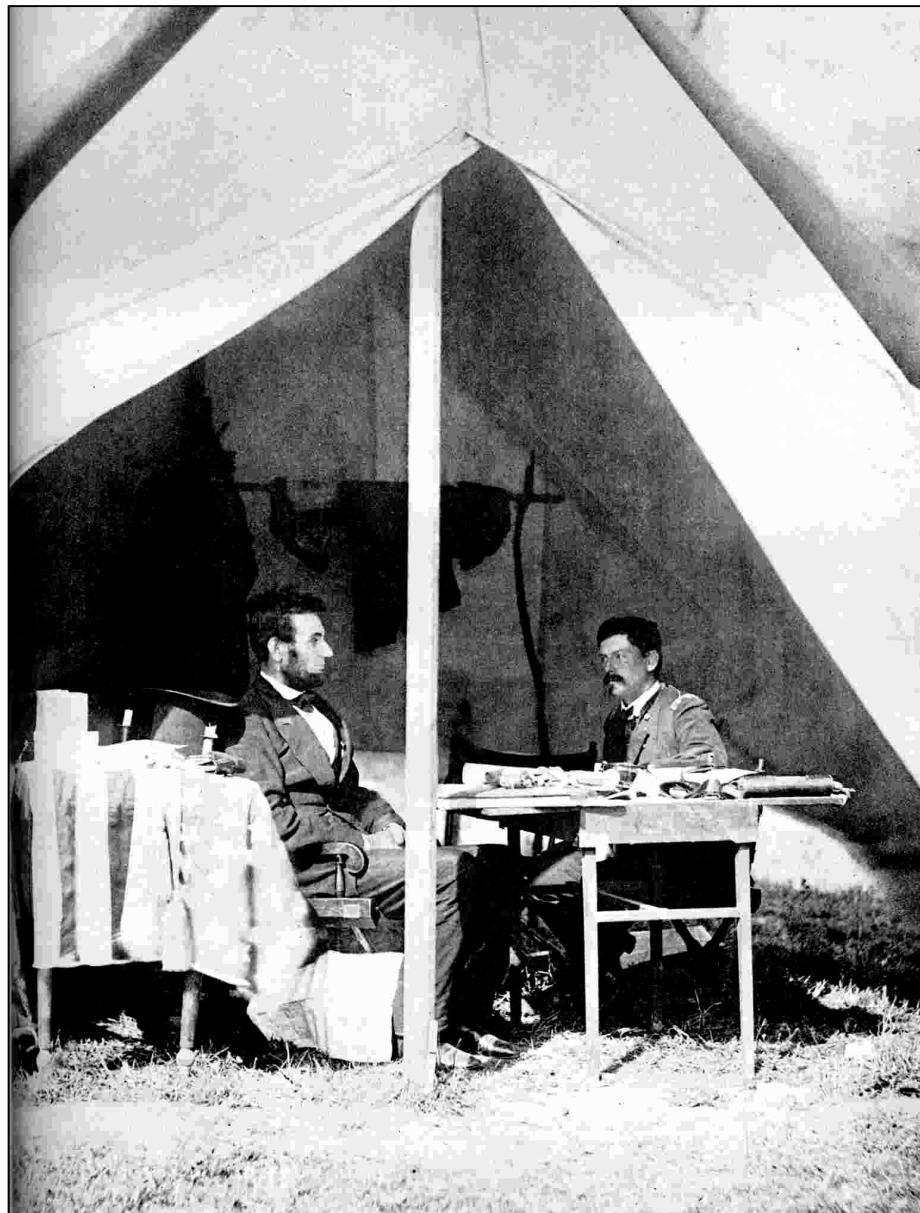
Eventually he came to realize that the war effort required him to act more aggressively in his role as commander in chief and to advise his generals on the proper course they must follow, not only in their efforts to defeat the enemy on the battlefield, but to ensure that military strategy would be based on a solid foundation of political policy and, to a lesser extent, public opinion. He also learned — mostly as a result of his unsatisfactory dealings with Major General George B. McClellan (whom Lincoln named the commander of all the Union armies in November 1861) — that the war and its outcome were far too important to be left entirely in the hands of his generals.

Lincoln repeatedly asked his generals to give the nation victories; but so few of them delivered those results that Lincoln, in frustration and bewilderment, could not understand why his commanders displayed so little martial ability or moral courage. To his secretary, John Hay, he once complained: "Thus often, I who am not a specially brave man have had to sustain the sinking courage of these

professional fighters in critical times.⁶ On another occasion, Lincoln sent instructions to a general by way of the Secretary of War and stated pointedly: "Tell him when he starts to put it through. Not to be writing or telegraphing back here, but put it through."⁷

Lincoln grew into his role as commander in chief, just as all presidents must grow into their offices, but Lincoln's conduct as head of the Union's armed forces during the first eighteen months of the war was determined to a great extent by the anguish he experienced trying to get McClellan to commit himself and the Army of the Potomac to a strategic course of action. At first, trusting in McClellan's expertise, Lincoln gave his commanding general wide latitude in organizing the army, training its soldiers, and formulating campaign plans. But as McClellan's notorious reluctance to commit his army to battle stretched from weeks to months, and from months to entire campaign seasons, Lincoln — and the rest of the nation — began to wonder if the commanding general of the Union's finest army ever intended at all to fight the enemy on the battlefield.

The president tried everything he could think of to make McClellan communicate more openly and more readily with the White House and with the War Department. Lincoln even offered friendly and avuncular advice to budge McClellan from his inactivity. In April 1862, after hearing endless excuses from McClellan and watching as the army went through countless delays, Lincoln attempted to level with McClellan in as friendly a manner as he could muster. "I beg to assure you," Lincoln told his general, "that I have never written you or spoken to



Lincoln and McClellan, October 5, 1862. LC

you in greater kindness of feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as in my most anxious judgment, I consistently can. But you must act.⁸

Throughout his ordeal with McClellan, Lincoln came to see that something more was required of him as commander in chief than simply passively waiting in Washington for his armies to march and for battles to be fought. As his anger rose steadily over McClellan's recalcitrance, the president received stern urging from his conservative attorney general, Edward Bates, to assert himself more forcefully as commander in chief in accordance with the Constitution. "The Nation requires it," Bates said to Lincoln, "and History will hold you responsible." But Bates feared that Lincoln would not heed his advice and that military affairs, like the rest of the administration's policies, would wither on the vine from lack of proper attention.⁹

But Lincoln did assume a new posture as commander in chief and became increasingly vocal in expressing his opinions to McClellan and pushing the general toward commencing an actual campaign against the enemy. From where McClellan stood, the president and Secretary of War Stanton were nothing but meddlers in army matters — civilians who knew precious little about how to fight a war or lead an army. To some degree, a good number of historians have agreed with McClellan on this score, seeing Lincoln as interfering far too much and far too often in the operations of generals and armies in both theaters of the war, east and west. McClellan held Lincoln and Stanton in so much contempt that his venom often overflowed in private letters written to his wife and his political supporters. "I have lost all regard & respect for the majority of the Administration," he wrote in July 1862, "& doubt the propriety of my brave men's blood being spilled to further the designs of such a set of heartless villains."¹⁰ But apart from how little respect McClellan had for Lincoln personally, the fact was that the general resented any civilian authority imposed on him.

To be sure, McClellan and Lincoln had diametrically opposing views of how the military was supposed to function within the republic. Expressing a firm opinion held by some military men in his own time and by many other soldiers throughout the course of American history, McClellan believed that the military should be left to the generals — and, in particular, to himself — to command, as if it represented a separate and distinct branch of the government and as if it were on equal footing with the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Lincoln — perhaps as the result of Edward Bates's prodding or his own growing impatience with McClellan's inactivity — came to understand with intense clarity that the military, as specified in the Constitution, falls entirely under the civilian authority of the president and Congress and, even more specifically, under the powers held by the president as commander in chief.

The difficulties between Lincoln and McClellan constituted an important chapter in the ongoing conflict between the armed forces and civilian control over the military, what has come to be called civil-military relations. As Lincoln saw it, the president as the commander in chief stood at the head of the military chain of command and held all authority over the making of military policy. Based on his understanding of Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution, Lincoln believed that the military was responsible for carrying out the policy established or approved by the president, not the other way around.

There was little room for interpreting the meaning of the Constitution or the intention of the Founding Fathers: Civilian control of the armed forces was a crucial element in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Lincoln emphasized this principle to McClellan in the spring of 1862 when, after ordering the transfer of an infantry division from the Army of the Potomac to the forces under the command of General John Fremont, he said: "I am confident you would justify it — even beyond a mere acknowledgment [—] that the Commander-in-chief, may order what he pleases."¹¹ He also reiterated it in the mountain of instructions he issued to McClellan and to other military commanders throughout the war.

As he grew in confidence as president, Lincoln's role as commander in chief became more distinctly defined. He asserted civilian control over the military just as other presidents — namely James Madison and James K. Polk — had done in time of war. But Lincoln accepted more responsibility and injected himself more fully into military affairs than his predecessors had, if only because the crisis at hand called

for him to play a larger part in the military contest that would, in the end, determine the fate of the Union, and because circumstances demanded that someone provide the necessary leadership.

At the core of his interpretation of how the commander in chief should control the military was Lincoln's broad and nationalist construction of the Constitution, a legal and political view that he had inherited from Alexander Hamilton, the Federalists, and the Whigs. This nationalism amounted not only to a belief, but an absolute faith. Lincoln saw the Constitution as "the charter of our liberties."¹² The wisdom of the Founding Fathers and the brilliance of the Constitution had seen the country through every difficulty in the nation's past, and Lincoln believed that the document would continue to serve the needs of the country and its people. What he recognized, however, is that the Constitution could do so while also sanctioning extreme measures and extraordinary powers. In this respect, Lincoln could justify what he had stated to McClellan: The commander in chief could issue any order over the military that he wished and it would have to be obeyed. Lincoln did not have to quote Article II, Section 2 to sustain his case. The broad language of the Constitution and the requirements of what Lincoln referred to as political "necessity" were all he needed to buttress his interpretation and his course of action.¹³

Yet the Constitution was not the beating heart of Lincoln's political philosophy. Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence most certainly was. Lincoln's reverence for the concepts of freedom, liberty, and equality defined his presidency more than any abstract devotion to the Constitution ever could.¹⁴ Because of the strong Jeffersonian strain in his otherwise Whiggish political ideology, Lincoln did not trouble himself about doing whatever was necessary to protect the cause of liberty while defending the Union and fighting a war against those who had split the nation apart. As a result, he recognized the need to take action against the secessionists during the Fort Sumter crisis while Congress was not in session, and later to suspend the right of habeas corpus in those places where dissent threatened to undermine his political policies or the war effort as a whole. Under these unusual circumstances of an emergency brought on by domestic rebellion, Lincoln believed that the Constitution gave him the latitude he needed to respond to the crisis.¹⁵ But when it came to eradicating slavery as a war measure, Lincoln asserted his authority as commander in chief to proclaim emancipation only as a "military necessity," for he recognized that nothing in the Constitution enabled him lawfully to abolish the peculiar institution even in those states that remained in rebellion.

As for other military necessities, such as what to do about George B. McClellan, Lincoln at first admitted that he lacked the proper military credentials to be judging the general fairly. He wanted a military man who could communicate with him readily and openly, someone who could at the same time assert the proper authority over problem generals like McClellan. Lincoln, having earlier demoted McClellan from general in chief back to commander of the Army of the Potomac, called in Henry W. Halleck and named him the new general in chief to serve at the War Department in Washington, within a short walking distance from the White House. Despite Halleck's qualifications as a prominent strategic thinker and a successful campaigner in the Western theater of the war, Lincoln soon became disappointed with Halleck's inability to perform his duties with any more gusto, as Lincoln himself put it, than that of "a first-rate clerk."¹⁶ For Lincoln, there seemed no way around the necessity of taking an active role in maintaining a daily civilian supervision of military affairs, which now included watching over Halleck as well as prodding McClellan.

In the wake of the Union victory at Antietam, Lincoln decided to assert his prerogative as commander in chief by issuing a preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation and by ridding the Army of the Potomac of McClellan once and for all. The two actions were intimately tied together. McClellan had earlier expressed his opinion that the Union war effort should not tamper with the institution of slavery, a piece of unsolicited advice he gave the president in what has become known as the Harrison's Landing letter.¹⁷ As Lincoln's patience ran out over McClellan's failure to crush Lee's army in the aftermath of Antietam, he also recognized that McClellan was not the general he needed to wage a war that now, by virtue of the Emancipation Proclamation, had been transformed from a limited war into a total war, from a war for the Union into a war for freedom.

So on November 5, 1862, Lincoln relieved McClellan of command and, by so doing, expanded his own role of commander in chief beyond what any previous president had done — not because he fired



McClellan and replaced him with Major General Ambrose Burnside, who turned out to be an even worse general than McClellan ever was, but because he had come to comprehend the paramount importance of civilian authority over the military and did not hesitate to define his duties as commander in chief in such a way that would enable him — and his successors down through the decades — to ensure that the president would possess supremacy over his generals and over the formulation of what James M. McPherson and military scholars have called "national strategy."¹⁸ It was not pure dominance, however, that Lincoln sought. Acknowledging that he was not a military strategist, he wanted generals who — unlike McClellan — would be willing to communicate with him along what he considered to be a two-way street. In the ensuing dialogue, as Lincoln envisioned it, he and his generals could establish the best possible strategy by gaining a mutual understanding and, better yet, a consensual agreement as to the correct course to follow, thus fulfilling the letter and spirit of the Constitution in its placing control of the military in the hands of the president. The president would tell his generals what he wanted and describe

for them the political realities of the situation; in return, his generals would inform him of the military circumstances they faced and the necessary steps that must be taken to avert disaster or to win victory. Together, Lincoln hoped, he and his generals could run the war by means of consent and concurrence.¹⁹ "All [I] wanted," Lincoln is reported to have said, "was some one who would take the responsibility and act. ... [I] had never professed to be a military man or to know how campaigns should be conducted and never wanted to interfere with them."²⁰

Lincoln wanted his generals not only to keep open a buzzing line of communication with him, but Honest Abe also needed them to be honest with him, something the long line of commanders of the Army of the Potomac found particularly difficult — if not impossible — to accomplish. Most of McClellan's failures in dealing with Lincoln stemmed from the fact that he was unable to communicate candidly with the president, whether in revealing his military plans or keeping the War Department informed of his intentions.²¹ Unfortunately, ridding himself of McClellan did not mean that Lincoln's dealings with the commanders of the Army of the Potomac improved at all. Burnside, faced with the grim defeat of his army at Fredericksburg in December 1862, the fiasco of the mud march in January 1863, and the concerted effort of his own generals to remove him from command, never achieved a rapport with Lincoln that came close to the president's hopes for developing policy out of dialogue.

In the late winter of 1863, the president was willing to gamble on placing Major General Joseph Hooker in command of the Army of the Potomac, despite Hooker's annoying tendency to talk too much and to say all the wrong things. Lincoln knew that Hooker had openly criticized the administration and had even, at one point, proclaimed that what the country needed was a dictator. In giving Hooker the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln confessed some of his doubts in a letter to the general and pointed out that only generals who won victories had the power to set up dictators. "What I ask of you now," Lincoln said, "is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship."²²

Nevertheless, Lincoln hoped that Hooker would be the general with whom he could easily communicate and in whom he could entrust the future successes of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln liked Hooker personally and felt more comfortable dealing with him than he had with McClellan, John Pope, or Burnside. The president admired Hooker's confidence and his aggressive demeanor, although "Fighting Joe" did on more than one occasion raise Lincoln's doubts when he expressed himself too forcefully and with great bluster, which reminded Lincoln of all the other "On to Richmond" generals whose rhetoric never translated into victories. It seems evident that Lincoln hoped his candid letter to Hooker about the threat of a dictatorship would set the stage for a frank dialogue between them. Toward that end, Lincoln even agreed to let Hooker communicate directly with him without having to go through the general in chief, old owl-eyed Halleck.

But in developing his strategy for an offensive against Lee in April 1863, Hooker refused to keep the president informed of his plans, holding the details very close to his vest for fear that the White House could not keep a secret. Hooker even kept his plans from his staff officers and probably withheld information from his corps commanders as well.²³ Once Lincoln finally received word from Hooker as to what the general had in mind, the president wrote him a reassuring and friendly letter, saying that "while I am anxious, please do not suppose that I am impatient, or waste a moment's thought on me, to your own hindrance, or discomfort."²⁴

After that, as Hooker plunged his army across the Rappahannock River near Chancellorsville, Lincoln remained mostly in the dark about the army's movements and its engagement with the enemy during the first days of May. It was not until the afternoon of May 6, three days after the fighting had stopped, that Lincoln learned the truth of Hooker's ignominious defeat and of the retreat of the army back across the Rappahannock. Stunned by the news and overcome with grief for the lives lost and the opportunities squandered, Lincoln paced back and forth, his hands clasped behind him, saying, "My God, my God, what will the country say! What will the country say!"²⁵ Later that afternoon, Lincoln and Halleck left Washington to visit Hooker in the field and find out precisely what had gone wrong.

Although the generals of the Army of the Potomac blamed Hooker for the defeat, Lincoln found that

the morale of the army itself remained fairly high. The president wanted to know if Hooker had a plan for going after Lee in the wake of this defeat, and he once more assured the general that he could "prosecute [sic] it without interference from me." On the other hand, Lincoln said, if Hooker lacked a plan, "please inform me, so that I, incompetent as I may be, can try [to] assist in the formation of some plan for the Army."²⁶ But Hooker could not decide whether he had a plan or not. As the days passed, Lincoln grew more concerned that Hooker had missed his best opportunity to strike at Lee and that circumstances now meant that another offensive by the Army of the Potomac across the Rappahannock would prove far too risky. Lincoln advised Hooker to proceed slowly, keeping "the enemy at bay and out of other mischief" while the general otherwise concentrated on putting his own army in good condition. In a further show of support, the president reassured Hooker that he did not want to restrain him or challenge his judgment.²⁷

Lincoln himself seemed not to know what he really wanted. He was beginning to suspect that Hooker lacked the ability to lead an army and successfully carry out complicated operations. The president's thoughts turned to finding someone else to take charge of the Army of the Potomac, and he considered offering the job to Major General Darius N. Couch, who declined it because of poor health, and Major General John F. Reynolds, who informed Lincoln he didn't want the command either. In turn, Lincoln told Reynolds he would hold on to Hooker for a while longer. He would not throw the gun away simply because it had misfired once.²⁸

Whether he could admit it to himself or not, Lincoln must have known by early June that Hooker was not the man to lead the Army of the Potomac — and the nation as a whole — to victory over the Confederacy. Even if the general possessed the heart of a warrior — the very thing that had made him known as "Fighting Joe" — he was unable in the weeks following Chancellorsville to be anything but docile. Nor could Hooker grasp how the war was becoming less limited in its scope, thus requiring new strategies and a new emphasis on destroying the Confederate armies and their vital means of support. Hooker could not shift his sights from wanting to attack and capture Richmond, while it was really Lee's army that should have been his primary target. More to the point, Hooker seemed to cower at the thought of having to face Lee again on any battlefield, anywhere. If he had not actually lost his nerve at Chancellorsville, as many historians have since claimed that he did, he at least was no longer the pugnacious and boastful general he had been prior to his disastrous encounter with the Army of Northern Virginia in the thickets around Chancellorsville.

Lincoln, despite his good intentions, probably should have thrown the gun away after its misfire at Chancellorsville. Sticking with Hooker meant hoping for the best, and the president kept wishing that Fighting Joe would come out swinging sooner or later. That's why, as May slid into June, Lincoln thought that Hooker and his army still had a chance to win a major victory over Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia — in fact, an even better chance than they had gotten at Chancellorsville. When it became apparent that Lee was moving north in another raid across the Potomac, Lincoln's optimism rose into a virtual gleefulness. Despite the leviathan's bulk and deadly course, the president saw that Lee's invasion of the North gave the Army of the Potomac a perfect opportunity to strike like lightning and destroy the Southern army once and for all.

Earlier, when he was wrestling with McClellan's overcautiousness after Antietam, Lincoln pointed out that Lee's going into Pennsylvania was something not to dread but to see as a golden opportunity. If Lee moved his whole force into Pennsylvania, Lincoln had told McClellan, he would give up his line of



Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker. NA

communications, "and you [would] have nothing to do but to follow, and ruin him." Lincoln emphasized that Lee's abandoning of his communications amounted to "a simple truth": "In coming to us, he tenders us an advantage which we should not waive."²⁹ Now, in the spring of 1863, with Lee's army headed north once more, Lincoln's spirits soared, for he believed that the enemy was creating another opportunity for the Army of the Potomac, another advantage for the Union forces to destroy in detail the Army of Northern Virginia.³⁰

No one comprehended this point less than did "Fighting Joe" Hooker. The commander of the Army of the Potomac continued to behave as if he and his army had not gone down to defeat at Chancellorsville and as if there were only one strategic purpose to the entire war, namely, the capture of Richmond. When he realized that Lee's army was marching north toward the Potomac, Hooker proposed crossing the Rappahannock to attack the rear of Lee's army near Fredericksburg. Lincoln replied with the gentle, yet emphatic, advice not to "take any risk of being entangled upon the river, like an ox jumped half over a fence, and liable to be torn by dogs, front and rear, without a fair chance to gore one way or kick the other." Offering some sound strategic "suggestions," Lincoln said that if Lee had indeed come over to Hooker's side of the river, the best thing for the Army of the Potomac to do would be to stay on that same side and fight the enemy.³¹

But Hooker still did not grasp the point and could not process the notion that he would have to find Lee's army and try to crush it. He sent another plan to Lincoln suggesting a phantasmagorical scheme by which he and the Army of the Potomac would ignore Lee's movements completely and strike forward in an attack on Richmond. After taking the Confederate capital, he proposed heading north to capture Lee. Lincoln must have thought that Hooker had lost his mind. Quickly he replied to the general with a short message that could not be misunderstood: "I think *Lee's Army*, and not *Richmond*, is your true objective point. If he comes towards the Upper Potomac, follow on his flank, and on the inside track, shortening your lines, whilst he lengthens his. Fight him when opportunity offers. If he stays where he is, fret him, fret him."³²

Finally Hooker began to move his army north in an effort to find out what Lee was truly up to. Understandably Lincoln became more nervous, spending long hours at the telegraph room in the War Department hoping to hear some word of progress from Hooker or learn with more certainty where Lee had taken his army. Lincoln was rapidly losing faith in Hooker. As he learned that Union garrisons at Winchester and Martinsburg had been invested by the advance elements of Lee's army, Lincoln called on Hooker to help them. He also observed, in a statement that was one of his best as commander in chief, that "if the head of Lee's army is at Martinsburg and the tail of it on the Plank road between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, the animal must be very slim somewhere. Could you not break him?"³³ When word reached Washington that both Winchester and Martinsburg had fallen, Lincoln — once again operating in the dark — could only plead with Hooker for news about what the Army of the Potomac was doing to stop Lee.³⁴ But Hooker's stock was quickly falling.

As a token of his displeasure with the general and his growing anxiety, Lincoln turned over Hooker's dispatches to Halleck and asked the general in chief to communicate with the commander of the Army of the Potomac, if only to impress upon Hooker the military necessity of recognizing Lee, and not Richmond, as his primary target. Hooker told Lincoln that he lacked Halleck's confidence, little knowing at the time that the president's feelings toward Hooker were plummeting as well, and Lincoln informed him in a private letter that if he and Halleck "would use the same frankness to one another, and to me, that I use to both of you, there would be no difficulty." Once again, Lincoln was asking for honest and straightforward dealings with Hooker, but he probably realized that Hooker had already stumbled beyond remedy and redemption. Lincoln tried to get his general to focus his efforts. Lee's advance, he said, "gives you back the chance that I thought McClellan lost last fall."³⁵ When Hooker, oblivious to the military opportunity the president had tried desperately to reveal to him, continued wildly to challenge Halleck's authority over him and to bewail his relations with the general in chief, Lincoln exercised his prerogative as commander in chief by giving Hooker a direct order: "I shall direct him [i.e., Halleck] to

give you orders, and you to obey them."³⁶

Lincoln, however, had no intention of giving up his own supervision of Hooker's actions as commander in chief and leaving everything military in the hands of Halleck. Instead, Lincoln was trying to use Halleck to bureaucratic advantage, distancing himself from Hooker in those matters that he regarded as minor military concerns or as issues related to military chain of command, but still exerting himself in the strategic dialogue he longed for with his generals, and particularly with the commander of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln was actually growing more desperate as the warm days of June wore on. At one point, Hooker came to Washington and conferred with Lincoln, who looked distressed and careworn. When rumors later circulated that Hooker had returned to town surreptitiously for a drinking spree, Lincoln confronted Hooker with these rumors and asked if they were true. Hooker denied them and accused Lincoln of believing everything he read in the newspapers. Lincoln assured him that the rumor he heard had not come from the press, but the whole incident only added to the tension existing between president and general.³⁷

While Hooker complained endlessly that the enemy outnumbered him and that he needed reinforcements, echoing the very phrases McClellan had used while suffering from paralysis as commander of the Army of the Potomac, Lincoln sat in the telegraph office and hoped that Hooker would take up his sword and fall upon Lee with no mercy. To Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, who waited with Lincoln in the War Department for dispatches, the president said: "We cannot help beating them, if we have the man. How much depends in military matters on one master mind! Hooker may commit the same fault as McClellan and lose his chance. We shall soon see, but it appears to me he can't help but win."³⁸

But Hooker did not have it in him. Grousing about reinforcements and wanting to siphon off soldiers from the Washington defenses to add to his ranks, Hooker asked Halleck to approve his request to abandon Harper's Ferry and assume command of that garrison's troops. While Lee's forces swept into Pennsylvania without resistance, Hooker spent his time arguing with his superiors over army strengths and garrison deployments rather than addressing the fact that the enemy army had freely crossed the Potomac and moved at will within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.³⁹ When Halleck decided not to let Hooker add the Harper's Ferry troops to his command, Hooker responded in anger, saying that he could not comply with orders "to cover Harper's Ferry and Washington" while also dealing with "an enemy in my front of more than my number." As a result, Hooker asked to be relieved of command.⁴⁰

Without hesitation, Lincoln accepted the resignation and appointed Major General George Gordon Meade to replace Hooker. Lincoln's swift action made it look like he was waiting for an excuse to remove Hooker, and perhaps he was, but his decision should not be seen as a high-stakes gamble taken by the commander in chief on the eve of a great battle. For one thing, Lincoln could not know that the battle of Gettysburg would be fought in a few days. For another thing, the president could plainly see that if a battle were to be fought soon on Northern soil, Joseph Hooker was not the general who could win it. Lincoln must have known that he had just as good a chance — or perhaps even a better chance — to get a victory out of the Army of the Potomac under Hooker's replacement than under Hooker himself.

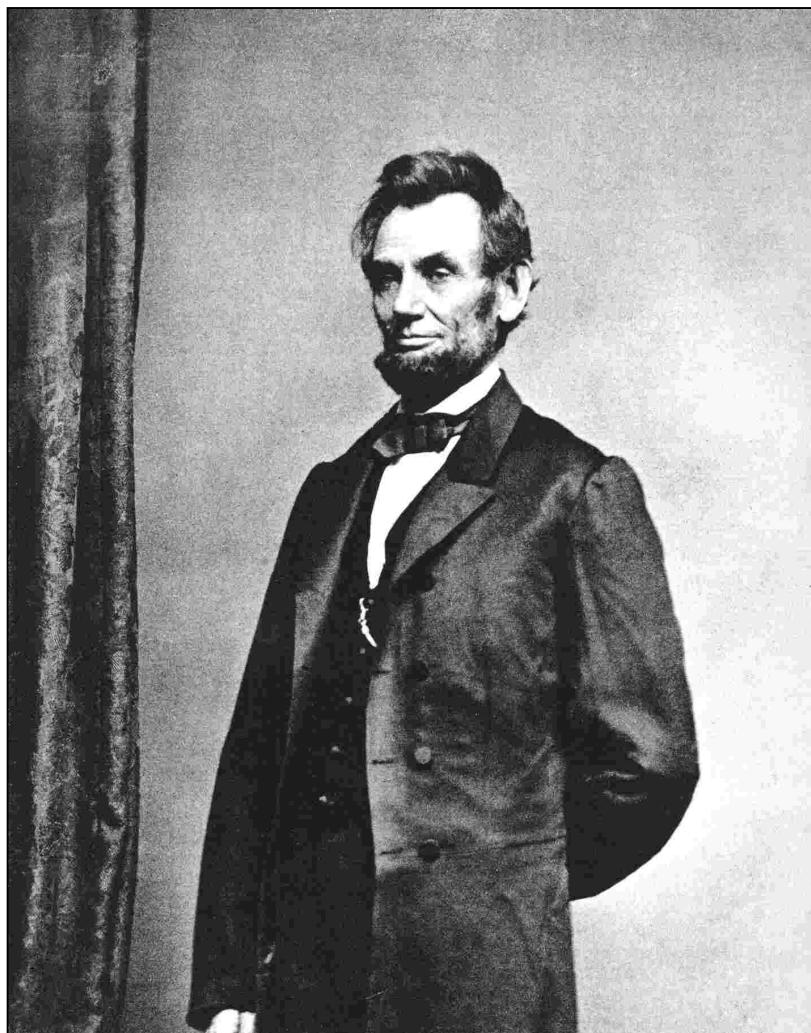
Without consulting Halleck, Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton selected Meade for the command. He was a good choice. Known and respected widely among rank and file in the Army of the Potomac, Meade had performed well in battle and as a leader of men. Although he was known to have an explosive temper, he had managed to stay out of many of the intrigues that had spun webs among the corps commanders of the army. Meade was less flamboyant than many of his fellow generals, but he was also in many ways a more competent officer on and off the battlefield. Lincoln knew of Meade and thought him a "fine fellow."⁴¹ When Stanton pointed out that Meade was from Pennsylvania, where the next battle would undoubtedly be fought, Lincoln is reported to have said rather crassly: "And [he] will fight well on his own dunghill."⁴²

The army's command was not offered to Meade; he was ordered to take it. With reluctance, Meade took up the job and tried as quickly as possible to learn the dispositions of the Army of the Potomac, to

find Lee's whereabouts, and to ready his troops for battle. Halleck, with Lincoln's approbation, sent Meade instructions to remain mindful that his army must cover Washington while also operating against "the invading forces of the rebels." No explicit mention was made of destroying Lee's army, but Lincoln somehow assumed that Meade should know that such an obliteration should be his highest priority. These instructions also assured Meade that he would not be hampered in his movements or his judgments by the powers in Washington.⁴³ Meade hoped that once he found Lee's army, he could persuade the enemy to turn and attack him. It was a sound strategy, and the plan worked well, although the fighting ultimately occurred around Gettysburg rather than where Meade would have preferred in Maryland, along the so-called Pipe Creek line.⁴⁴

Having done what he could, Lincoln waited nervously in Washington for the outcome of Meade's search for Lee's army and the inevitable battle that would take place when the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia collided. As panic spread among the citizens of the middle-Atlantic states, Lincoln was bombarded with requests to reinstate McClellan to command of the Army of the Potomac. The president politely declined the suggestions, but he was as nervous as anyone about what was happening in southern Pennsylvania.⁴⁵ After finally learning that a major battle was underway at Gettysburg, Lincoln spent long hours in the War Department telegraph office reading dispatches from the front and pacing the room in anxiety.⁴⁶ It must have taken great discipline not to dash off a string of messages to Meade telling him how to fight the battle.

When word finally reached Washington that Meade had won a great victory at Gettysburg, Lincoln was relieved and pleased, but not overjoyed. He issued an announcement to the press on Independence Day morning that displayed extreme caution in his choice of words. As of 10 P.M. on July 3, Lincoln said, the news from Gettysburg was such "as to cover that Army with the highest honor, to promise a



great success to the cause of the Union, and to claim the condolence for all of the many gallant fallen.⁴⁷ Lincoln did not use the word "victory" in his announcement and he carefully offered no effusive praise of Meade and his generals. True victory in Lincoln's estimation could only be won by the annihilation of Lee's army, not by the enemy's defeat in battle and retreat back to Virginia.⁴⁸

On July 5, Lincoln read Meade's congratulatory order to the Army of the Potomac and his heart sank when he realized that Meade's goals as a general differed considerably from what Lincoln thought they should be. Meade thanked his army for its courage and gallantry against superior numbers and for utterly defeating the enemy and forcing it to withdraw. There was more to be done, however. He wanted the Army of the Potomac "to drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader."⁴⁹ Lincoln was beside himself after reading those words. "Drive the invader from our soil!" he cried out. "My God! Is that all?" In Lincoln's opinion, as he later expressed to John Hay, "the whole country is our soil." He couldn't understand why his generals so consistently failed to grasp this fundamental point.⁵⁰

To Halleck, Lincoln sent a note saying he disliked Meade's choice of words and that dispatches were flooding in that suggested Meade was doing little to prevent Lee's army from escaping. Lincoln feared that Meade showed signs of shying away from another engagement with Lee — a phenomenon he had witnessed in every previous commander of the Army of the Potomac. The president wanted Lee's crossing of the Potomac prevented and his army destroyed.⁵¹ Meanwhile, Meade got a slow start in pursuing the retiring Confederates, and his words and actions reflected a pessimism that Lee would surely win another contest between the two armies.⁵² For whatever reason, Meade seemed to be letting the possibility of complete victory over the Army of Northern Virginia slip through his fingers.

Under the circumstances, Lincoln's worries grew into a harrowing anguish. From Major General Daniel Sickles, who had lost a leg at Gettysburg and who had returned to Washington to recuperate from his wound, Lincoln heard disturbing tales of Meade's shortcomings and his tendency to retreat in the face of Lee's aggressive maneuvering. Next Lincoln learned of other deficiencies in Meade from Brigadier General Herman Haupt, a former resident of Gettysburg who served as the chief engineer of the army's railroads. Haupt believed that Meade, his former West Point classmate, would allow Lee to escape without attempting to fight another major battle.⁵³ It's not known how seriously Lincoln weighed the criticisms of Sickles and Haupt, but given the appearances of Meade's lack of initiative immediately following the battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln could not have been sanguine about the chances of the Army of the Potomac eliminating Lee's army before it could reach Virginia.

Strangely, given all that was at stake, Lincoln seems to have satisfied himself by wringing his hands rather than taking decisive action as commander in chief. After learning that Vicksburg had surrendered to Grant, Lincoln sent another message to Halleck urging him to press Meade toward a completion of his work "by the literal or substantial destruction of Lee's army." If this could be done, said Lincoln, "the rebellion will be over."⁵⁴

Remarkably Lincoln did not communicate directly with Meade himself. Having convinced himself that the conclusion of the rebellion might be a simple victory away, Lincoln never personally informed Meade of his belief or, for that matter, of his own anxiety. Halleck dutifully forwarded Lincoln's message to Meade and he made sure that he also, although in fairly gentle terms, pushed Meade to assume a more aggressive posture. Aware of Lincoln's overwrought state of mind, Halleck even told Meade that "the president is urgent and anxious that your army should move against him [the enemy] by forced marches."⁵⁵ But Lincoln sent no word of encouragement to Meade, no indication of his own distress, no forceful direct order for Lee's army to be wiped from the face of the earth.

It was a major error. In dealing with the Army of the Potomac's other commanders, Lincoln had been direct, candid, emphatic, clear, and — in a word — commanding. Now, when the situation demanded such an approach, more than any occasion had demanded it in the past, Lincoln retreated from his duties as commander in chief and left to the devices of his generals, Meade and Halleck, the means by which total victory would be won or lost. Remaining behind the scenes, pacing in the telegraph office of the War Department or flaring up in anger while in the company of visitors or his own staff, Lincoln failed to

apply consistently all the assertive methods he had developed in carrying out his responsibilities as commander in chief. Instead of confronting Meade directly with what he wanted the general to do, he preferred to grumble in private and to complain that he was ill served by his military commanders. In a Cabinet meeting, Lincoln expressed his desire to applaud Meade's triumph at Gettysburg, but he believed that the old idea of driving the enemy out of the North remained the general's major objective. So he sent no message to Meade, fearing it would lack "the right tone and spirit."⁵⁶

It is possible that Lincoln did send a confidential order to Meade prodding him to attack Lee and offering, if the assault did not succeed, to assume all responsibility for the failure. Robert Todd Lincoln many years later remembered his father telling him of such an order, and the younger Lincoln in turn related his story to several others, including John Nicolay, Lincoln's secretary, twenty years after the president's assassination. Based on circumstantial evidence, it would seem that Hannibal Hamlin, Lincoln's vice president, delivered this confidential order to Meade on July 11.⁵⁷

If the story is true, which cannot be definitively established, then Lincoln did at least make an effort to communicate candidly with Meade. But even so, the content of his message was such that it could only have offended the good general. If Meade were to decide to throw his troops into battle, risking their lives and his own reputation, he would be a poor general indeed not to accept responsibility should such an assault fail. Nor does it seem possible for Meade to have received such an order from Lincoln and to have ignored it entirely, without either answering it in writing or obeying it by attacking the Confederates. Meade did neither. More likely than not, Lincoln sent no such message and persisted in fuming about Meade and the Army of the Potomac rather than making command decisions by the means he favored most — a direct dialogue between himself and his commanding general that would, in the end, lead to a consensus agreement on the best course to follow.

The stress of the situation seems to have taken a toll on Lincoln, even to the point of distracting him from opening up a direct and personal line of communication with Meade and of doing what in the past he had done so well with his generals. Rather than taking charge of the circumstances and effecting a positive solution, Lincoln resigned himself to the fact that the events were not under his control — that, indeed, as he later famously claimed in 1864, "events have controlled me" rather than the other way around.⁵⁸ As a result, Lincoln remained "anxious and hopeful" of a total victory over Lee's army in the days following Gettysburg, but he also grew increasingly forlorn about such a possibility. In the telegraph office, as he wore out the floor with his incessant pacing, he said, "They will be ready to fight a magnificent battle when there is no enemy to fight."⁵⁹

Indeed, by the evening of July 12, Meade faced Lee's makeshift lines near Williamsport, and while the Potomac swelled within its banks, blocking the Confederate route of retreat, it appeared as if the Army of the Potomac had succeeded in trapping the Southern army. At this crucial moment, Meade decided to call a council of war to determine what the Union army's next step should be. The council of war voted not to attack Lee until the strength of the Confederate army could be determined. Meade opposed the council's decision, but he decided to delay any assault against the enemy until he could personally inspect the Confederate's lines. Rain and mist prevented him from seeing much, but orders were given for the army to prepare for a reconnaissance in force on the enemy's works during the morning of July 14. When dawn came, however, it revealed that the river had fallen and the Army of Northern Virginia had escaped unscathed to the safety of Virginia.⁶⁰

Lincoln was in the telegraph office when the message arrived announcing Lee's escape. Distressed and sorrowful, Lincoln read the telegram and knew that all of the opportunities for ending the war had been lost. To John Hay, the president said, "We had them within our grasp. We had only to stretch forth our hands & they were ours."⁶¹ With his anger boiling over, Lincoln told Gideon Welles that he believed "there is bad faith somewhere," suggesting that Meade's lack of aggressiveness was possibly a traitorous act. For those around him, Lincoln's grief and anger were visible, tangible, and shocking to behold.⁶² To his son, Lincoln exclaimed petulantly, "If I had gone up there, I could have whipped them myself."⁶³

Halleck let Meade know that the president had expressed "great dissatisfaction" with Lee's escape,

and the general in chief urged that the Army of the Potomac pursue the Confederates as vigorously as possible and slash them to pieces.⁶⁴ When he read Halleck's telegram, Meade became furious and filled with resentment. He sent a sharp reply to the War Department: "Having performed my duty conscientiously and to the best of my ability, the censure of the President conveyed in your dispatch ... is, in my judgment, so undeserved that I feel compelled most respectfully to ask to be immediately relieved from the command of this army."⁶⁵ Halleck, no doubt with Lincoln's approval, dashed off another telegram to Meade and tried to assure the general that his earlier message "was not intended as a censure, but as a stimulus to an active pursuit." There was no reason, said Halleck, for Meade's resignation.⁶⁶

When Lincoln saw Meade's resignation telegram, he sat down and composed a stern and brusque letter of reply to the general. The president assured Meade that he was "very — very — grateful to you for the magnificent success you have given the cause of the country at Gettysburg." But Lincoln told him bluntly that he was disappointed by Meade's apparent willingness to let Lee slip away without fighting another battle. Here was the crux of the matter. Wrote the president, as forcefully as he could: "He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely." Meade's "golden opportunity" had vanished, and Lincoln wanted the general to know that he was "distressed immeasurably because of it."⁶⁷

Having committed these strong words — these searing words of rebuke and blame — to paper, Lincoln then decided not to send the letter, and Meade never knew that the document existed. The president, after considering the matter, did not want to remove Meade from command, despite his personal anger and anguish over how the general had failed to achieve a total victory. As Lincoln said to Welles, "He has made a great mistake, but we will try him farther."⁶⁸ The president also defended Meade in the face of complaints from the general's subordinate officers. "Gen. Meade," Lincoln wrote to Major General O. O. Howard, "has my confidence as a brave and skilful officer, and a true man."⁶⁹ But it was not until the following year that Lincoln was able to tell Meade directly how much he appreciated the victory at Gettysburg and Meade's unfailing devotion to the Union cause. "The country knows that you have done grand service," wrote Lincoln in a personal letter to Meade.⁷⁰ But he and Meade never enjoyed a close working relationship or even a meeting of the minds.

Lincoln never tried to establish personal ties between himself and the commander of the Army of the Potomac after Gettysburg. Instead the president's efforts went into cultivating his relationship with General Ulysses S. Grant, with whom Lincoln found communication easier and less distressing. Lincoln and Grant seemed to always be on the same wavelength. The president learned there was little need to prod Grant because the general showed more than enough initiative on his own.

Unlike so many of Lincoln's other generals, Grant also understood how a modern war must be fought, and he never wavered from comprehending that the enemy's army, and not its capital, was the ultimate target for destruction. For his part, Grant grasped the crucial importance of civil-military relations in a republic and never resented Lincoln's involvement in strategic matters or the necessity of his answering to civilian authority. The two men also implicitly agreed that necessity — a pragmatic approach to running the war — yielded far greater results in waging a total war than elaborate attempts to concoct grand tactical plans or ironclad policies. What Lincoln found in Grant was not only a general who could win battles and fight a total war, but a general who — in the fewest possible words — could keep him informed of what was going on. Lincoln had less to say about Grant's strategy and tactics because the general knew how to win victories, which is what the president knew would ultimately win the war.⁷¹

Several weeks after Gettysburg, Meade was called to Washington for meetings with the president and War Department. At one point, Lincoln turned to Meade and asked: "Do you know, general, what your attitude toward Lee for a week after the battle [of Gettysburg] reminded me of?" No, said Meade, he did not. "I'll be hanged," said Lincoln, "if I could think of anything else than an old woman trying to shoo her geese across a creek."⁷² It was an unfair comment, and despite its cutting edge, Meade seems not to have taken offense to it. Lincoln never gave up the idea that Meade should have been able to destroy Lee's army after Gettysburg, but the commander in chief relied far too heavily on his own notions of how it

should only take one decisive battle to end the war — a clear-cut victory in which the Union could win and the Confederates would be annihilated. But Lincoln's strategic hope was nothing more than a pipe dream. Over and over again during the long ordeal of the Civil War, the two armies revealed their inability to strike such a decisive blow of destruction against their foes. The result was an unbearably long stalemate. It is unlikely that even if Meade had thrown his entire army against Lee's defenses at Williamsport, he could have brought about an end to the war, as Lincoln had so ardently believed.

So, in the end, Lincoln must be given some of the responsibility for Meade's failure to win a total victory in Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863, not only for assuming that the Army of the Potomac could accomplish something that was beyond the realm of possibility, but also for failing to use his authority as commander in chief to express his own desires to his general and to make sure that together they possessed a mutual understanding of expectations and realities. Lincoln's formulation of how civil-military relations should work between the commander in chief and his generals sought to create an atmosphere of cooperation and trust that should have overcome the suspicions that have so often caused a strain between the executive branch and the military throughout the course of American history, and as they have done in our own time.

For reasons peculiar to their circumstances and personalities, the commanders of the Army of the Potomac could never quite bring themselves to participate candidly and enthusiastically in the kind of dialogue Lincoln wanted with his generals and, as a result, the nation in its time of peril could never reap the benefits of the president's unique and personal approach to civil-military relations. It should be evident, nevertheless, that Lincoln's actions as commander in chief served to make the triumph at Gettysburg possible, while they also made the prospect of total victory something that could not be achieved until Lincoln found a general who instinctively understood what the commander in chief wanted to accomplish and how he wanted to go about it.

Lincoln, of course, turned Gettysburg into a personal victory when he visited the battlefield on November 19, 1863 and dedicated the Soldiers' National Cemetery there with a "few appropriate remarks." With unparalleled eloquence, Lincoln laid forth before the American people the meaning of the war and urged the nation to embrace "a new birth of freedom." He also asked the citizens of the United States to dedicate themselves to finishing the work that had been nobly advanced by the men in blue who had fallen at Gettysburg and to pledge themselves to making sure that the nation would not perish.⁷³

Contrary to popular myth, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address was well received, both by the audience beneath the platform in the National Cemetery and by the wider public who read his simple speech in verbatim newspaper reports published throughout the land. Many were inspired by Lincoln's clarion call for a rededication to American first principles and to winning the war. But few, including Abraham Lincoln himself, could have known that sunny autumn day at Gettysburg that this great war, like a rogue leviathan, would continue to determine its own course for more than a year's time — endless months of death, destruction, and human sorrow. Like Melville's great beast, the Civil War seemed to embody both the absolute power of the Almighty and the demonic might of Satan. No one really could control its actions or its outcome — not Lincoln, not Grant, not Lee. The leviathan had a will of its own. The end would come only when the will of the behemoth was broken.

Notes

¹ Lincoln to Alexander Reed, February 22, 1863, in Roy P. Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J., 1953-1955), 6:114.

- ² Thomas Paine, “Prospects of the Rubicon” (1787), in Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2 vols. (New York, 1969), 2:624.
- ³ Lincoln, Speech in the U.S. House of Representatives on the Presidential Question, July 27, 1848, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 1:509-510.
- ⁴ Benjamin P. Thomas, *Abraham Lincoln: A Biography* (New York, 1952), 289; Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 1977), 284.
- ⁵ Lincoln to Agenor-Etienne de Gasparin, August 4, 1862, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 5:355.
- ⁶ Tyler Dennett, ed., *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay* (New York, 1939), 176.
- ⁷ Lincoln to Simon Cameron, June 20, 1861, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 4:414.
- ⁸ Lincoln to George B. McClellan, April 9, 1862, in *ibid.*, 5:185.
- ⁹ Howard K. Beale, ed., *The Diary of Edward Bates, 1859-1866* (Washington, D.C., 1933), 218-220.
- ¹⁰ McClellan to Samuel L. M. Barlow, July 15, 1862, in Stephen W. Sears, ed., *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan: Selected Correspondence, 1860-1865* (New York, 1989), 361.
- ¹¹ Lincoln to McClellan, March 31, 1862, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 5:176.
- ¹² Lincoln, Speech at Chicago, Illinois, July 10, 1858, in *ibid.*, 2:501; James A. Rawley, “The Nationalism of Abraham Lincoln,” *Civil War History* (1963), 9:283-298.
- ¹³ Gerhard D. Mulder, “Abraham Lincoln and the Doctrine of Necessity,” *Lincoln Herald* 66 (1964):59-66. Closely related to Lincoln’s reliance on “necessity” was his political pragmatism. See David Donald, “Lincoln and the American Pragmatic Tradition,” in *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War Era* (New York, 1956), 128-143.
- ¹⁴ Allen C. Guelzo, “‘That All Men are Created Equal’: Lincoln’s Declaration of Independence,” *Lincoln Herald* 96 (1994):119-126.
- ¹⁵ Harold M. Hyman, *A More Perfect Union: The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Constitution* (New York, 1973), 124-140.
- ¹⁶ Quoted in T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), 139.
- ¹⁷ McClellan to Lincoln, July 7, 1862, in Sears, ed., *Civil War Papers*, 344-345.
- ¹⁸ James M. McPherson, “Lincoln and the Strategy of Unconditional Surrender,” in *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York, 1990), 65-91.
- ¹⁹ Russell Weigley has observed: “The most desirable civil-military relations in a democracy are not simply those in which the civilian leadership almost always prevails. The most desirable civil-military relations are those in which there is nearly altogether candid exchange of ideas between the soldier and the statesman, along with a consequent founding of policy and strategy upon a real meeting of minds.” Weigley, “The Soldier, the Statesman, and the Military Historian,” *Journal of Military History*, 63 (October 1999):807-822.
- ²⁰ Quoted in James M. McPherson, “Tried by War,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*, 34 (November/December 1995):70.
- ²¹ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 81.
- ²² Lincoln to Joseph Hooker, January 26, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:78-79.
- ²³ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 237.
- ²⁴ Lincoln to Hooker, April 28, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:189-190.
- ²⁵ Noah Brooks, *Washington in Lincoln’s Time* (New York, 1895), 56-58.
- ²⁶ Lincoln to Hooker, May 7, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:201.
- ²⁷ Lincoln to Hooker, May 14, 1863, in *ibid.*, 6:217.
- ²⁸ Stephen W. Sears, “In Defense of Fighting Joe,” in *Controversies and Commanders: Dispatches from The Army of the Potomac* (Boston, 1999), 181.
- ²⁹ Lincoln to McClellan, October 13, 1862, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 5:460-461.
- ³⁰ David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York, 1995), 440.
- ³¹ Hooker to Lincoln, June 5, 1863, in U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901) [Hereafter cited as *OR*], Series 1, 27(1):30; Lincoln to Hooker, June 5, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:249.
- ³² Hooker to Lincoln, June 10, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):34-35; Lincoln to Hooker, June 10, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:257.

- ³³ Lincoln to Hooker, June 14, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:273.
- ³⁴ Lincoln to Hooker, June 15, 1863, in *ibid.*, 6:276.
- ³⁵ Hooker to Lincoln, June 16, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):45; Lincoln to Hooker, June 16, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:281.
- ³⁶ Hooker to Lincoln, June 16, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):47; Lincoln to Hooker, June 16, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:282.
- ³⁷ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 257-258.
- ³⁸ Howard K. Beale, ed., *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 3 vols. (New York, 1960), 1:344
- ³⁹ Hooker to Halleck, June 27, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):59.
- ⁴⁰ Hooker to Halleck, June 27, 1863, in *ibid.*; Halleck to Hooker, June 27, 1863, in *ibid.*, 60.
- ⁴¹ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*, 1 vol. ed. (New York, 1954), 408.
- ⁴² Quoted in Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 260.
- ⁴³ Halleck to George Gordon Meade, June 27, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):61.
- ⁴⁴ Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* (New York, 1968), 236-240.
- ⁴⁵ J. G. Randall, *Lincoln, the President*, 4 vols. (New York, 1945-1955), 2:275-277.
- ⁴⁶ David Homer Bates, *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office: Recollections of the United States Military Telegraph Corps during the Civil War* (New York, 1907), 155.
- ⁴⁷ Lincoln, Announcement of News from Gettysburg, July 4, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:314.
- ⁴⁸ Edwin B. Coddington, "Lincoln's Role in the Gettysburg Campaign," *Pennsylvania History*, 34 (July 1967):259.
- ⁴⁹ General Orders No. 68, July 4, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(3):519.
- ⁵⁰ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 265; McPherson, "Tried by War," 74.
- ⁵¹ Lincoln to Halleck, July 6, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:318.
- ⁵² Meade to Halleck, July 6, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):80-81.
- ⁵³ Coddington, "Lincoln's Role in the Gettysburg Campaign," 259-260.
- ⁵⁴ Lincoln to Halleck, July 7, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:319.
- ⁵⁵ Halleck to Meade, July 7, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):83; Halleck to Meade, July 8, 1863, in *ibid.*, (3):605.
- ⁵⁶ Beale, ed., *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:363.
- ⁵⁷ Gabor Boritt, "'Unfinished Work': Lincoln, Meade, and Gettysburg," in Boritt, ed., *Lincoln's Generals* (New York, 1994), 98-102.
- ⁵⁸ Lincoln to Albert G. Hodges, April 4, 1864, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 7:282.
- ⁵⁹ Lincoln to Jesse K. Dubois, July 11, 1863, in *ibid.*, 6:323; Bates, *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office*, 268.
- ⁶⁰ Coddington, *Gettysburg Campaign*, 567-570.
- ⁶¹ Dennett, ed., *Lincoln and the Civil War*, 66-67.
- ⁶² Beale, ed., *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:370-371; Brooks, *Washington in Lincoln's Time*, 83.
- ⁶³ Quoted in Donald, *Lincoln*, 446.
- ⁶⁴ Halleck to Meade, July 14, 1863, in *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):92.
- ⁶⁵ Meade to Halleck, July 14, 1863, in *ibid.*, 93.
- ⁶⁶ Halleck to Meade, July 14, 1863, in *ibid.*, 93-94.
- ⁶⁷ Lincoln to Meade, July 14, 1863 [not sent], in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:327-328.
- ⁶⁸ Beale, ed., *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 1:374.
- ⁶⁹ Lincoln to O. O. Howard, July 21, 1863, in Basler et al., eds., *Collected Works*, 6:341.
- ⁷⁰ Lincoln to Meade, March 29, 1864, in *ibid.*, 7: 273.
- ⁷¹ On the relationship between Lincoln and Grant, see Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 291-307, 349-354.
- ⁷² Quoted in Coddington, "Lincoln's Role in the Gettysburg Campaign," 265.
- ⁷³ On the Gettysburg Address, see Donald, *Lincoln*, 459-466.