

Emancipation proclamation as a war strategy essay example

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



The Emancipation Proclamation meant the freedom of the slaves from bondage to their masters. It was a public declaration that made the slaves "forever free," ending slavery in the country. The proclamation happened during the American Civil War in 1861 - 1865, where the North (Union Army) went to war with the South (Confederate Army), as the eleven states of Confederacy made a withdrawal from the Union in 1860 & 1861, to reunite America, not to end slavery. During the time the Proclamation to free slaves was issued by President Lincoln, no slaves were actually freed, as he did not have control of the Confederate States. It only served as a warning or an ultimatum that the slaves will be freed on the First of January 1863 if they do not return to the Union. A declaration of the freedom of slaves might not be seen as an effective tactic to restore unity and peace especially when the freedom of slaves is one of the main reasons of the outbreak of the war. However, through President Lincoln's proper timing and planning, the Emancipation Proclamation was able to stop the war, as well as free the oppressed slaves.

The major reason why the Confederacy withdrew from the Union was their fear of the Emancipation Proclamation as it meant that they would no longer be allowed to have slaves. Black slaves were the ones who do the farming and the factory work for their masters, they were practically the ones who provided almost all types of daily physical labor. Lincoln saw the Proclamation as a strategic move to end the war and to re-unite the states, while also starting to free the slaves, allowing the slaves to render other types of services without being oppressed by a master. Missouri, Maryland, Kentucky, and Delaware were the four Border States that were "slave

owning.” During the early stages of the Civil War between the Union Army and the Confederate Army, President Lincoln was hesitant in freeing the slaves, as this move will divide the North from the South instead of re-uniting them. On March 4, 1861, the time when he took office; he said that he does not want to end slavery in places where it already existed, a statement he repeated in 1858. The Confederates were also seeking support from Britain and France, who first supported and recognized the independence of the United States; they saw the proclamation as something that can incite an indiscriminate race war, which directly encourages “ servile insurrections.” President Lincoln was quick to deflect the support through his declaration of the proclamation that will maintain and recognize of the freedom of the oppressed minority belonging to the Confederacy.

One of the radical implications of the proclamation was for the South (Confederates) to recognize the freedom of hundreds of thousands of slaves even though they have never been near a Federal soldier. These slaves were also allowed to serve the Union in fighting their former masters, which greatly weakened the Confederates. The Emancipation Proclamation, according to Allen Guelzo in his book entitled Lincoln's Emancipaton: The End of Slavery in America, is the most revolutionary pronouncement signed by an American President. It was an effective military tactic as it helped the Union increase their number, as slaves became Union Army soldiers. They were promised freedom from oppression and it is an offer that is hard to resist. Many slaves accepted this offer and help fought the war against the Confederate Army to gain freedom from slavery.

According to Burrus Carnahan, President Lincoln saw the Emancipation as an

effective means to also weaken the strength of the rebels, as slave labor in the Confederate Economy continuously weakens because the Union promises the slaves freedom and persuades them to flee their homes and seek protection from the Union Army. In Carnahan's book, *Act of Justice: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and The Law of War*, he states that the Emancipation Proclamation was based on two belligerent rights of the government under the law of war: the right to seek allies in oppressed people through promising them liberty, and the right to destroy or seize enemy properties for military necessity. These rights helped the Union gain strength and defeat the Confederate Army, making the Emancipation Proclamation an effective military strategy pulled off at the right time by President Lincoln.

The Emancipation Proclamation was treated both as a weapon for both economic and psychological warfare, whose efficiency greatly relies on the motivation of the slaves to fight the Confederacy and achieve their freedom. Without the slaves being motivated to fight against their oppression and to stand up against their masters, the proclamation would be a useless proclamation and there is a high chance for the Union to get defeated as the Confederates were gaining ground and continuously expanding before the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation was released by President Lincoln.

President Lincoln's knowledge about law played an extremely crucial part in the success of the Emancipation Proclamation in achieving his goals to bring unity and free the oppressed. He knew that his plans for emancipation might

be held against the slaves for rebelling from their masters so he devised the proclamation to protect the slaves from such matters. Furthermore, this proclamation was not only an efficient tool for military success, as it also provided an international impact, encouraging the freedom of the oppressed and equal rights to all.

Bibliography

Carnahan, Burrus. Act of Justice: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and The Law of War.

Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007.

Guelzo, Allen. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America. New

York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2004.