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A House Divided: HD (82)

Emancipation Strategy – III

Lead: One hundred and fifty years ago the Republic was facing its greatest crisis. This continuing series examines the American Civil War. It is "A House Divided."

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Southerners were determined to preserve slavery and willing to fight for the independence that would insure that institution's continuance. Northern Democrats supported the Union but were split between those who favored the war to

force the South to give up its quest for independence and those who wished to treat with the South to effect a voluntary restoration of national unity. Yet, both War and Peace Democrats were absolutely opposed to any notion of interfering with slavery. They were united in their desire to preserve a white America and rejected abolition in any form.

The Republican Party, founded as vehicle to end slavery's expansion, was the governing party and was prosecuting a war. As each month of 1862 passed and as the effusion of blood and sacrifice became more extreme, all factions of the Republican Party, radical, conservative and moderate, increasingly came to see the

endurance of the United States as inextricably intertwined with the fortunes of human bondage. Republicans were coming to believe that slaves were the unwitting allies of rebellion. Congressman George Julian of Indiana spoke of slaves, “as laborers, if not as soldiers, they will be the allies of the rebels, or of the Union.”

Gradually the Federal government began to see that one powerful exercise of military force was to expropriate Southern property, including human property, and turning it against the South. This educed a not so subtle shift in war policy. As more of their compatriots paid the ultimate price, soldiers began to demand that the

government “take off the kid gloves” as a way of making the South pay for its bloody rebellion.

As Commander-in-chief of a military establishment that in the second half 1862 was falling onto hard times, Lincoln began to move in the direction of the Radical idea that emancipation was just one of the weapons at his disposal to inflict damage on the enemy. In July he told a cabinet member, that “emancipation was a military necessity...essential to the preservation of the Union. We must free the slaves or be ourselves subdued.” This was not a full-blown surrender to the abolitionist ideal of freedom and equality for the African,

but he was moving slowly but surely in that direction.

Another important factor for Lincoln was a growing conviction that the South might be winning the battle for European diplomatic recognition. As long as the Civil War was solely an attempt to preserve a political Union, the British and French might be tempted to meddle in American politics, deal the United States a severe blow, and recognize the Confederacy as a separate nation. Southerners had powerful economic and social ties with Europeans. Lincoln reasoned that the intense campaign Southerners were waging to pressure the British, French and Russian governments for recognition would suffer a perhaps

fatal setback if the conflict was transformed into a crusade to end slavery. Next time: Emancipation and a new kind of war.

From Richmond Virginia, this is Dan Roberts.

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