

Tactically Sound, Strategically Inept: Union and Confederate Missteps in Neutral Kentucky, 1861

A Monograph

by

MAJ Logan J. Small
US Army



School of Advanced Military Studies
US Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS

2018

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.
PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 24-05-2018	2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) JUL 2017 - MAY 2018
---	-----------------------------------	---

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Tactically Sound, Strategically Inept: Union and Confederate Missteps in Neutral Kentucky, 1861	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Logan J. Small	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
---	--

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Advanced Military Studies Program	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
In May 1861, Kentucky declared neutrality in the burgeoning US Civil War. Both the Union and Confederacy vied for the state's loyalty. By August 1861, the Union appeared to have the upper hand. However, the Union's gains were nearly erased when Union General John C. Fremont declared all slaves in Missouri free on August 30, 1861. The state threatened to tilt toward the Confederacy when Confederate General Leonidas Polk ordered troops to occupy Columbus, Kentucky. With its neutrality overtly violated by Polk, Kentucky declared its loyalty to the Union on September 18, 1861. Both Fremont's and Polk's actions were contrary to the policies of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Why did two senior military commanders ignore the strategic implications of their tactical actions? Using Eliot Cohen's "unequal dialogue" as a standard, this monograph argues that neither commander engaged in an adequate dialogue with their respective policymaker. Additionally, both commanders' inexperience at military command, ignorance of Kentucky's political situation, and exclusive focus on tactical issues contributed to their mistakes.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Civil War; Kentucky, Leonidas Polk, John Fremont, Neutrality, 1861, Civil-Military Relations; Eliot Cohen, Unequal Dialogue

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			MAJ Logan Small
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	51	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (720) 425-3390

Monograph Approval Page

Name of Candidate: MAJ Logan J. Small

Monograph Title: Tactically Sound, Strategically Inept: Union and Confederate Missteps in Neutral Kentucky, 1861

Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Dan C. Fullerton, PhD

_____, Seminar Leader
Eric M. Remoy, COL

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
James C. Markert, COL

Accepted this 24th day of May 2017 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

Fair use determination or copyright permission has been obtained for the inclusion of pictures, maps, graphics, and any other works incorporated into this manuscript. A work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright, however further publication or sale of copyrighted images is not permissible.

Abstract

Tactically Sound, Strategically Inept: Union and Confederate Missteps in Neutral Kentucky, 1861, by MAJ Logan J. Small, US Army, 51 pages.

In May 1861, Kentucky declared neutrality in the burgeoning US Civil War. Both the Union and Confederacy vied for the state's loyalty by overtly respecting its neutrality and covertly currying support within it. By August 1861, the Union appeared to have the upper hand. Pro-Union supporters had won recent local elections and a Union recruitment camp was operating within the state's borders. However, the Union's gains were nearly erased when Union General John C. Fremont declared all slaves in Missouri free on August 30, 1861. This proclamation caused an uproar in slave-holding Kentucky. The state threatened to tilt toward the Confederacy when, just days after Fremont's proclamation, Confederate General Leonidas Polk ordered troops to occupy Columbus, Kentucky. With its neutrality overtly violated by Polk, Kentucky declared its loyalty to the Union on September 18, 1861.

Both Fremont's and Polk's actions were contrary to the policies of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Why did two senior military commanders ignore the strategic implications of their tactical actions? Using Eliot Cohen's "unequal dialogue" as a standard, this monograph argues that neither commander engaged in an adequate dialogue with their respective policymaker. A dialogue which adhered to Cohen's model could have avoided disaster for either commander. Additionally, both commanders' inexperience at military command, ignorance of Kentucky's political situation, and exclusive focus on tactical issues contributed to their mistakes. Fremont's and Polk's actions serve as an important lesson for current and future military leaders charged with implementing policy.

Contents

Abstract	iii
Illustrations	v
Introduction	1
Strategic Context	5
Confederate and Union Policies	8
Union Narrative	12
Fremont Takes Command	14
Fremont Missteps	19
Confederate Narrative	23
Polk Takes Command	25
Polk Missteps	28
Analysis	34
Conclusion and Implications for Today	45
Bibliography	49

Illustrations

Figure 1. The Upper Heartland, 1861-1862	2
Figure 2. Upper Mississippi Valley, April-December 1861.....	19
Figure 3: Interrelated Factors Diagram	35

Introduction

I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky.

—Abraham Lincoln, as attributed in *Battle Cry of Freedom*

The discourse between policymaker and military commander is of paramount importance during a war. When this dialogue is incomplete or misunderstood, the military commander may take actions which are incompatible with the policymaker's intentions. This is especially true if there are neutral territories in the theater of war. Imagine if the attack on Pearl Harbor was not a deliberately planned attack by the Japanese government but the rash action of a single admiral, or if a frustrated US division commander in Afghanistan occupied Quetta, Pakistan in a bid to capture Taliban leaders. While unimaginable today, Union General John C. Fremont and Confederate General Leonidas Polk both took similar actions during the US Civil War.

The state of Kentucky declared neutrality at the outbreak of the Civil War. Kentucky was strategically located along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and home to the Louisville-Nashville rail line (see Figure 1). Its strategic location and abundance of farmland and military aged males made the state attractive to both the Union and Confederacy. Each side covertly supported sympathizers inside the state but avoided overt violation of its neutrality. The ultimate goal of the Union and Confederacy was to convince Kentucky to join its side. By August 1861, the Union appeared to have the upper hand. Pro-Unionists had won recent elections in the state, indicating a tilt toward the Union. However, on August 30th Union General John C. Fremont declared all slaves in Missouri free as a tactical measure to quell a growing guerilla war. His proclamation ran counter to President Abraham Lincoln's policy and threatened to reverse Union gains in slave-holding Kentucky. This immense political blunder by Fremont was overcome by an even larger one by Confederate General Leonidas Polk. On September 3rd, Polk's Confederate forces occupied Columbus, Kentucky without authorization from President Jefferson Davis. Polk justified his action on the tactical necessity of seizing the heights overlooking the Mississippi

River before the Union. This overt violation of its neutrality led Kentucky to declare its loyalty to the United States and ended any Confederate hope that the state would secede.



Figure 1. The Upper Heartland, 1861-1862. Thomas Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 2.

Both Fremont's and Polk's tactical actions ran counter to their government's policy, a perversion of operational art.¹ Why did these two senior military commanders ignore the strategic implications of their tactical actions? Fremont's proclamation alarmed even the most ardent pro-Unionists in Kentucky, a state which viewed slavery as a constitutionally protected right. Surely a former presidential candidate like Fremont recognized the implications of his tactical action. Polk's occupation of Columbus was even more egregious. Surely a slave-owning Southerner would recognize how contentious Fremont's proclamation would be in Kentucky. Yet four days after Fremont's proclamation, Polk ordered an invasion of the state. Neither Fremont nor Polk paused to ask their governments for permission. Lincoln's or Davis' approval of such rash actions

¹ Operational art is the "pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose." US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2-1.

is doubtful. The lack of dialogue between military commander and policymaker is the primary reason Fremont and Polk ignored the strategic implications of their tactical actions.

If an inadequate dialogue explains Fremont and Polk's failure, then what does an adequate dialogue look like? There are multiple theories which attempt to answer this question. A key issue in all of them is how much leeway politicians should give the military during the conduct of war. One end of the spectrum advocates for the military to have a free hand once the war commences. This originated from Samuel Huntington's argument in *The Soldier and the State* for a strict demarcation between civilian and military matters in a theory he termed "objective control."² The other end of the argument insists civilian control of the military, including in times of war, is essential. Theories on this side of the debate include Morris Janowitz's "constabulary concept" and Eliot Cohen's "unequal dialogue."³ This paper will use Cohen's model as the desired standard. Cohen's model focuses on the dialogue between commander and policymaker, what that dialogue should entail, and the nature of the dialogue. The dialogue is an open and candid discourse between policymaker and commander, where both actors offer opinions and express doubts "offensively and not once but repeatedly."⁴ This dialogue occurs throughout the war, not just at the start or end of a conflict. The nature of the dialogue is unequal, where the final decision-making authority rests with the civilian leadership.⁵ In short, Cohen's model is that of equal dialogue with unequal authority.

This paper utilizes Cohen's model instead of Huntington's for two reasons. First, Cohen's model focuses specifically on civil-military relations during war, making it applicable to this

² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 84.

³ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier, A Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960), 420; Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: Free Press, 2002), 209.

⁴ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 209.

⁵ *Ibid.*

paper. Second, Cohen's model best incorporates Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz's maxim of war as a political instrument where no arbitrary line exists between civilian and military responsibilities.⁶ Huntington did acknowledge the primacy of the statesman over the military leader in his model.⁷ However, Cohen's model is more explicit on this point. Therefore, this paper uses Cohen's model because, like Clausewitz, it emphasizes the primacy of the policymaker. With a clear standard in place, this paper can now further examine Fremont's and Polk's mistakes.

The inadequacy of the discourse between policymaker and military commander is the main reason both Fremont and Polk ignored the strategic implications of their actions. Neither's dialogue was continuous and open, nor were they unequal in favor of the policymaker as Cohen prescribes. A successful dialogue may have prevented both Fremont and Polk from committing their mistakes and could have potentially altered the course of the war. However, it is insufficient to attribute the two commanders' failures to a single reason. A further examination reveals three other factors which contributed to Fremont's and Polk's failures; inexperience at high levels of command, poor understanding of Kentucky's internal politics, and a narrow focus on tactical problems. These three factors plus the main reason are interconnected to each other.

Both commanders lacked experience at high levels of command. Fremont spent his military career leading small expeditions into the ungoverned areas of the American West. This did not prepare him to command an entire military department in the Civil War. Polk had no military experience at any level of command outside his time at West Point. This inexperience contributed to both commanders' poor communication with their political leadership. In addition to lack of experience, both commanders were completely unaware of the political situation within Kentucky. Fremont's ignorance is in part excused because only part of Kentucky was under his

⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

⁷ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 73.

command. Polk's ignorance is less excusable because events in Kentucky directly affected his command from the onset. Regardless of excuses, both commanders' obliviousness to Kentucky politics meant dialogue with their policymakers was more, not less, necessary. Finally, both commanders focused too much on immediate tactical problems. Coupled with an already weak dialogue with the policymaker, it is no surprise that both commanders acted with only tactical considerations in mind.

This paper begins with an overview of the Civil War's prelude from the viewpoint of Kentucky to explain the social, political, and economic reasons why that state declared neutrality. This overview also provides the strategic context behind Abraham Lincoln's and Jefferson Davis' policies regarding Kentucky. Part one concludes with a description of these policies and an identification of the military commanders responsible for their implementation. Part two of the paper is a narration of events from May to September 1861 from the Union perspective. Part three narrates the same period from the Confederate view point. These two parts provide the context for and description of Fremont's and Polk's tactical actions. Part four is an analysis of why both commanders made tactical decisions inconsistent with their government's Kentucky policy. Finally, the paper concludes with a review of both case studies and implications for the future.

Strategic Context

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the reasons why the Civil War erupted in 1861. However, a brief overview of the key milestones which led to the war is necessary to provide the appropriate context. This brief description highlights the unique position that Kentucky and its statesmen played leading up to the war and why Kentucky felt torn between the North and South. An understanding of Kentucky's sentiment leading up to the war will also help explain the policies of Lincoln and Davis.

Since the Constitutional Convention in 1787, slavery was a wedge issue for the nascent United States. As the young country grew, the "peculiar institution" of slavery seemed to rear its ugly head. Compromises like the 1820 Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850

temporarily assuaged sectional strife. The great Kentucky statesman, Henry Clay, spearheaded both compromises and embodied his state's torn loyalties to the North and South.⁸ Kentucky felt strong cultural ties to the Southern states and had the highest percentage of slaves in the four border states of Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware.⁹ However, a large immigrant population and steadily increasing trade with Northern states tied Kentucky to the North economically.¹⁰ In sum, Kentucky was pro-Union but also pro-slavery, and most Kentuckians saw no disconnect between the two.¹¹

Ultimately, growing enmity against slavery in the North meant past compromises were no longer acceptable. The entrance of California as a free state into the Union and lackluster enforcement of the fugitive slave law embittered the South. Key events such as the Dred Scott case in the US Supreme Court and the John Brown trial dramatically increased sectional tensions leading up to the election of 1860. The result of the election in Kentucky was indicative of its pro-Union and pro-slavery stance. Instead of voting for native Kentuckian and Southern Democratic candidate John Breckinridge, the state supported John Bell and the Constitutional Union Party.¹² This party's platform was that of maintaining the Union but hardly mentioned slavery at all.¹³ The election of Abraham Lincoln was the final straw for the lower Southern states, which all seceded from the Union by February 1861. In a final effort to head off the looming crisis, Henry Clay's successor, John C. Crittenden, proposed a series of compromises. Like Clay, Crittenden also personified Kentucky's desire to avoid war but maintain the right to

⁸ E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1966), 4-5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 24.

¹³ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 221.

own slaves.¹⁴ Many in Kentucky felt that the seceding states did not have a moral right to leave the Union, but that the Federal Government did not have the right to coerce them back into it.¹⁵ The actions at Ft. Sumter did not change this view in Kentucky. However, Lincoln's call for volunteers drew heavy criticism throughout the state. Even pro-Union newspapers in Kentucky, such as the *Louisville Journal* and the *Louisville Democrat* denounced Lincoln's request.¹⁶ The time had finally come for Kentucky to choose which side it would support.

Lincoln's call for volunteers on April 15, 1861 ignited strong secessionist passions in all the upper South states, Kentucky included. Calls for a secession convention in Kentucky were loud. Governor Beriah Magoffin supported secession but many others, led by Garrett Davis, were pro-Union. The two factions squared off on May 6th when the state legislature met to discuss Kentucky's response to the secession of the upper South states.¹⁷ Torn between cultural ties to the South and economic ones to the North, many delegates considered neutrality as an acceptable compromise. On May 20th, Kentucky declared its neutrality with support from both Magoffin and Garrett Davis. Many believed the Crittenden compromise was still a viable option for preventing war between the two sections and Kentucky could resume its traditional role as mediator.¹⁸ By the end of May, a foreign observer of the budding US Civil War could easily mistake the existence of three countries, the United States, the Confederate States, and Kentucky.

Disagreements between Unionists and Confederate supporters within Kentucky began almost immediately after the neutrality declaration. Many believed the pre-existing State Guard

¹⁴ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 5.

¹⁵ Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, *Kentucky: A Pioneer Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1885), 236.

¹⁶ Donald A. Clark, *The Notorious "Bull" Nelson: Murdered Civil War General* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011), 43.

¹⁷ Shaler, *Kentucky: A Pioneer Commonwealth*, 241.

¹⁸ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 55; Clement A. Evans, *Confederate Military History: A Library of Confederate States History*, vol. 11, *Kentucky* (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899), 23.

and its leader, General Simon Bolivar Buckner, had strong secessionist leanings. To counter this, pro-Unionists established their own militia, the Home Guard, as well as a secret Union Club, which organized and promoted pro-Union sentiment throughout the state.¹⁹ Both militias were nominally under the control of a state military board of five members, but tensions between the two remained high.²⁰ Friction between the two militias was not the only sign of discontent. One segment of Kentucky was actively against neutrality and strongly pro-secession. The Jackson Purchase included the southwest corner of the state and the strategically located towns of Columbus and Paducah; Columbus was on high ground overlooking the Mississippi River and Paducah was a key crossing site of the Ohio River.²¹ On May 27th, the Jackson Purchase held their own secession convention and considered leaving Kentucky to become a part of Tennessee.²² Although the section decided to remain part of Kentucky, the pro-Confederate sentiments of this part of the state would play a role in future events.

Confederate and Union Policies

While turmoil plagued Kentucky's inner politics, the issue of neutrality posed a unique puzzle for both Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln. A neutral Kentucky likely benefited the Confederacy more than the US. The state was a large obstacle to any movement of Union troops down the Mississippi, Cumberland, or Tennessee Rivers. The Louisville-Nashville railroad was another north-south mobility corridor unusable to the Union. Chief among the advocates for a neutral Kentucky was Tennessee Governor Isham Harris, whose state most benefited from the

¹⁹ R.M. Kelly, "Holding Kentucky for the Union," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: From Sumter to Shiloh*, ed. Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel (New York: Castle Books, 1956), 374-375.

²⁰ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 87.

²¹ McKenzie Martin, "Jackson Purchase," Explore KY History, accessed December 19, 2017, <http://explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/367>. The name "Jackson Purchase" is from the deal that President Andrew Jackson made with the native Chickasaw Indians in 1818.

²² James W. Finck, *Divided Loyalties: Kentucky's Struggle for Armed Neutrality in the Civil War* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2012), 136-37; Berry F. Craig, "The Jackson Purchase Considers Secession: The 1861 Mayfield Convention," *The Kentucky Historical Society* 99, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 351.

neutrality policy.²³ Jefferson Davis preferred a seceded Kentucky but accepted a neutral one and designed his policy to achieve this aim.

Davis combined an overt diplomatic respect for Kentucky's neutrality with a covert military recruitment effort. The approximately 150,000 military aged males within the state were too tempting of a prize to ignore completely.²⁴ As early as April 1861, the Confederacy actively recruited in Kentucky with the tacit approval of Governor Magoffin.²⁵ The Confederacy established recruitment camps along the Kentucky-Tennessee border and following the Battle of First Bull Run, it secretly authorized the establishment of a camp within Kentucky itself.²⁶ Davis used these recruitment efforts to grow the nascent Confederate Army without overtly violating Kentucky's neutrality.

The Confederacy's economic policy toward neutral Kentucky was harsher than its diplomatic and military policies. The Confederacy believed that the Northern states needed cotton for their factories. Therefore, it enacted a strict policy that prohibited products leaving its borders unless through its own seaports.²⁷ This directly affected trade crossing landlocked Kentucky. Seizure of northbound rail traffic along the Louisville-Nashville railroad was common.²⁸ This strict economic policy agitated Kentuckians of all persuasions and alienated Southern sympathy in the state.²⁹

²³ Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 40.

²⁴ US Census Bureau, *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eight Census* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1864), 168-171.

²⁵ Thos Speed, *The Union Cause in Kentucky, 1860-1865* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 128.

²⁶ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records (OR) of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ser. 4, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1882), 585. Act of Confederate Congress, August 30, 1861 (Hereafter cited as *OR*).

²⁷ Act of Confederate Congress, August 2, 1861, *OR*, ser. 4, vol. 1, 529.

²⁸ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Jefferson Davis possessed an early advantage over Lincoln; a neutral Kentucky was almost as good as a seceded one. Davis' policy reflected this reality. Kentuckians wishing to join the Confederate Army enrolled in camps outside of the state. Additionally, Davis assured Governor Magoffin of the Confederacy's respect for Kentucky's neutrality.³⁰ This policy allowed Davis to accomplish two goals; grow the newly formed Confederate Army and create political maneuver space for pro-Southerners inside the state to convince Kentucky to secede. Although his economic policy aggravated many, Davis' policy was prudent. So long as Kentucky did not declare outright loyalty to the Union, the early advantage swayed towards to the Confederacy.

Abraham Lincoln was acutely aware of this fact and sought to change it. Lincoln valued the importance of Kentucky as expressed in a letter written to a friend, "I think to lose Kentucky is to lose the whole game."³¹ Diplomatically, Lincoln took a similar approach as Jefferson Davis. Lincoln stated he would respect the state's neutrality but reserved the right to march forces through the state if necessity dictated.³² This allowed pro-Union actors inside Kentucky to rally supporters and counter the pro-Southern faction. Like Jefferson Davis, Lincoln combined overt diplomatic respect with covert military recruitment.

Within Kentucky, the pro-Confederate State Guard was in an arms race against the pro-Union Home Guard. Lincoln sent US Navy Lieutenant William "Bull" Nelson to Kentucky in May to supply the Home Guard and other pro-Union forces with arms and equipment.³³ These weapons, dubbed "Lincoln Rifles," began flowing into Kentucky on May 14th.³⁴ The North established recruitment camps in Ohio to enlist Kentuckians into the Union Army, but refrained

³⁰ Davis to Magoffin, August 28, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 396.

³¹ John G. Nicolay, *A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: The Century Co., 1902), 240.

³² Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 54.

³³ Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 278.

³⁴ Clark, *The Notorious "Bull" Nelson: Murdered Civil War General*, 50.

from actively recruiting within Kentucky itself for the time being.³⁵ Lincoln's arming of the Home Guard was a ploy to alter the power balance within Kentucky without an overt violation of its neutrality. His economic policy toward Kentucky had a similar goal.

Lincoln needed to give Unionists inside Kentucky time and space to rally support. His economic policy served this end. Unlike the more antagonistic Confederate policy, Lincoln largely ignored trade flowing south through Kentucky. Union agents turned a blind eye toward goods flowing down the Mississippi River and Louisville-Nashville railroad. Many in the North criticized Lincoln for his apparent lackluster trade embargo of Kentucky.³⁶ Despite the criticism, Lincoln's policy remained relatively unchanged; regulations and pronouncements were written with enough ambiguity so that enforcement was spotty and ineffective.³⁷ Contrasted with the stricter Confederate actions, Lincoln's policy did not alienate potential Unionists in Kentucky.

Besides his economic policy, Lincoln's treatment of Kentucky was very similar to Jefferson Davis'. Not wanting to force the issue, Lincoln treated the state with a delicate hand. Diplomatically, Lincoln's attitude was respectful of neutrality. He designed the covert supplying of arms to pro-Unionists in the state to tip the balance in the Union's favor without violating neutrality outright. Lincoln's relatively relaxed trade policy furthered his goal of luring the state back into the Union. In short, Lincoln practiced patience and aimed to give ample political maneuvering space for Unionists inside Kentucky. This policy was risky in two ways. First, neutrality favored the Confederacy more than the Union, therefore making the issue more urgent for Lincoln than for Davis. Second, the policy limited the Union Army's options for invading the South at a time when the onus for offensive action rested with the North. Restraining his military commander's wishes to cross into Kentucky was one of Lincoln's earliest challenges.

³⁵ Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War*, 277.

³⁶ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 71.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

With their policies set, Davis and Lincoln engaged in an unequal dialogue with their respective military commanders. For Davis, finding a military commander at all was an immediate problem. While Kentucky declared neutrality on May 20th, Tennessee had not officially seceded to join the Confederacy. Therefore, the Confederate Army did not have a military commander near Kentucky. Davis relied on the commander of the Provisional Army of Tennessee and pro-secessionist, General Gideon Pillow, to follow his policy. This was not ideal for Davis, since Pillow and his army were not under direct Confederate control. Davis trusted Tennessee Governor Isham Harris, a supporter of Davis' policy, to keep tabs on Pillow. It was not until July 13th that a Confederate officer, General Leonidas Polk, assumed the role of military commander responsible for Davis' Kentucky policy.

Lincoln's command structure was even more confusing. Initially, Brigadier General Robert Anderson commanded the newly created Department of Kentucky. However, he was subordinate in rank to General George B. McClellan, commander of the Department of Ohio. Therefore, it was McClellan whom Lincoln relied on to implement his policy in Kentucky until July 25th when General John C. Fremont assumed command of the enlarged Department of the West. It was these final two commanders, Fremont and Polk, who violated their respective political leaderships' Kentucky policies. To understand the reasons why this violation occurred, a narration of events from June through September 1861 is necessary.

Union Narrative

Lincoln initially relied on General George B. McClellan to implement his Kentucky policy. Anderson's Department of Kentucky focused exclusively on recruitment of Kentuckians who had already left the state.³⁸ Therefore, Anderson's role was subordinate to McClellan's much larger Department of Ohio. McClellan's command included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and

³⁸ John H. Eicher and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 830; Townsend to McClellan, May 15, 1861 *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, 379; Townsend to Anderson, May 15, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. 1, 143.

from June 6th to July 3rd, all of Missouri.³⁹ Given his rank, size of command, and regular communication to Washington, McClellan was in the best position to implement Lincoln's policy on Kentucky.

McClellan's first steps towards this was an agreement with General Simon Bolivar Buckner, the leader of Kentucky's pro-Confederate State Guard. Concerned about the buildup of Union forces in nearby Cairo, Illinois, Buckner met with McClellan on June 8th. At the meeting, McClellan assured Buckner that the Union Army would respect Kentucky's neutrality in exchange for Buckner's guarantee that the state would prevent any Confederate incursion.⁴⁰ After the agreement, Buckner went to Tennessee and gained similar assurances from Governor Isham Harris.⁴¹ Buckner's agreement with McClellan was tested on June 12th when a Union steam ship landed troops at Columbus, Kentucky and took a rebel flag.⁴² Buckner and Magoffin protested to McClellan over this violation. McClellan dismissed their protest with an excuse about the troops belonging to the Navy and not under his command.⁴³ This incident deepened both Buckner and Magoffin's suspicions over how serious the Union considered Kentucky's neutrality.⁴⁴

This episode was likely secondary in McClellan's mind as events in Missouri and Virginia accelerated rapidly. On June 15th, Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon seized Jefferson City, Missouri and sent the pro-Confederate state government retreating to the southwest.⁴⁵ Satisfied with progress there, McClellan focused on Virginia where the vital Baltimore and Ohio

³⁹ Eicher and Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 840.

⁴⁰ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 98-99; Harris to Pillow, June 13, 1861, *OR*, ser. 4, vol. 1, 377.

⁴¹ Harris to Pillow, June 13, 1861, *OR*, ser. 4, vol. 1, 377.

⁴² E. B. Long and Barbara Long, *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861-1865* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1971), 85.

⁴³ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 99.

⁴⁴ Arndt Mathis Stickles, *Simon Bolivar Buckner: Borderland Knight* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 62-64. Both Buckner and McClellan disagreed on the exact terms of the agreement. McClellan claimed that the agreement was a private matter between him and Buckner and not official US policy.

⁴⁵ Long and Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, 85.

Railroad was located and people in the western part of the state demanded statehood. On June 21st, McClellan left his headquarters and assumed command of the field forces invading western Virginia.⁴⁶ With Lincoln's department commander serving as a field commander, no one above the rank of Brigadier General focused on the upcoming congressional elections in Kentucky.

Kentucky held an election for members of Congress on June 20th, the day prior to McClellan taking the field in Virginia. Fortunately for Lincoln, pro-Union leaders in Kentucky such as Garrett Davis capitalized on political blunders by the Confederacy. Howell Cobb, the president of the Confederate Congress, commented that the South could raise cotton and let the border states do the fighting.⁴⁷ Kentucky Unionists circulated this contentious statement throughout the state. Additionally, the trade blockade enforced by the Confederacy had begun to bite and alienated Kentuckians from the South. The result was a victory for the pro-Union party; their candidates won a majority everywhere except in the pro-Confederate Jackson Purchase.⁴⁸ The vote was a clear indicator that pro-secessionists were losing influence. Lincoln's Kentucky policy was showing positive results. It was now up to a new commander, General John C. Fremont, to continue this positive momentum.

Fremont Takes Command

On July 2nd, Fremont met with Lincoln to discuss his role in the burgeoning Civil War.⁴⁹ Fremont was renowned for his exploration of the western United States and his role in the Mexican-American War. He was court-martialed for insubordination after a disagreement with his superior after the war; however, President James Polk later retracted the conviction.⁵⁰ After

⁴⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 299-300.

⁴⁷ Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War*, 283.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 284; Recent scholars argue that this vote was more an assertion of neutrality instead of loyalty to the United States, see Finck, *Divided Loyalties: Kentucky's Struggle for Armed Neutrality in the Civil War*, 152.

⁴⁹ Long and Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, 90.

⁵⁰ Robert L. Turkoly-Joczik, "Fremont and the Western Department," *Missouri Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (July, 1988): 364-65.

several years out West, Fremont ran unsuccessfully for President in the 1856 election on a strong abolitionist platform.⁵¹ Despite losing the race, he remained politically connected through his wife, Jessie, whose father was Missouri Senator Thomas Benton and related to the influential Postmaster-General Montgomery Blair. These connections helped Fremont become the commander of the newly formed Western Department headquartered in St. Louis.⁵² As of July 3rd, the Western Department included all territory west of the Mississippi River including Illinois; Kentucky was not yet in Fremont's department.⁵³ Although politically connected and well-known, Fremont lacked any large unit experience equivalent to his new duty position. Fremont remained in Washington for several weeks to procure supplies for his new command before reaching his headquarters in St. Louis on July 25th.⁵⁴

Records of Fremont's discussion with Lincoln on July 2nd do not exist. After the war, Fremont claimed he received little strategic direction for his new command and that Lincoln gave him "carte blanche" for operations.⁵⁵ This included an eventual attack down the Mississippi River to seize Memphis. Fremont's immediate problem, however, was not along the Mississippi River but in Missouri. The bold actions by Lyon left the Union Army in possession of St. Louis and Jefferson City. However, pro-Confederate sentiment was strong throughout Missouri and a guerilla war had already begun in parts of the state. Lyon himself was in southwest Missouri and faced a larger Confederate Army marshalling near Springfield.⁵⁶ Additionally, on July 28th,

⁵¹ Andrew F. Rolle, *John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 162.

⁵² Allan Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), 2:534.

⁵³ Eicher and Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 853.

⁵⁴ Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*, 2:535.

⁵⁵ John C. Fremont, "In Command In Missouri," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: From Sumter to Shiloh*, 279.

⁵⁶ Turkoly-Joczik, "Fremont and the Western Department," 373.

General Gideon Pillow had landed troops at New Madrid, Missouri and was threatening an advance on Union bases along the Mississippi.⁵⁷

Fremont's problems were not just the Confederate Army. The Western Department consisted of an undersupplied army of short-term and untrained recruits.⁵⁸ To help organize his new department, Fremont hired several European officers he knew. This proved extremely unpopular to many in his command.⁵⁹ Additionally, many of Fremont's subordinates believed he remained sequestered in St. Louis for too long and was inaccessible.⁶⁰ Unfortunately for Fremont, the Union's focus remained in the East. The Confederate victory at the Battle of First Bull Run on July 21st meant this was unlikely to change. Realizing he could not reinforce Lyon's troops in southwest Missouri, Fremont ordered him to withdraw. Instead, Lyon attacked a numerically superior Confederate force on August 10th near Wilson's Creek. The result was a disaster for the Union and Lyon was killed.⁶¹ The first three weeks of Fremont's command consisted of a military defeat, no further supplies or troops, a growing guerilla war, and at least two concentrations of Confederate troops within Missouri. While Fremont's chaotic and undersupplied army tried to stem the Confederate advance in Missouri, events in Kentucky were decidedly more favorable to the Union.

The pro-Union victory in the Congressional elections on June 20th indicated a shift toward loyalty for Kentucky. However, the state still insisted on its neutrality. Concerned over Union troop buildups in Cairo and McClellan's dismissive response to the seizure of the rebel flag in Columbus on June 12th, Governor Magoffin sent General Buckner to meet with Lincoln.⁶²

⁵⁷ Joseph Howard Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 175.

⁵⁸ Fremont to Lincoln, July 30, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 416-417.

⁵⁹ Rolle, *John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny*, 192.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 199; Some historians argue that this criticism is overblown, see Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*, 2:558.

⁶¹ Long and Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, 107.

⁶² Stickles, *Simon Bolivar Buckner: Borderland Knight*, 75.

On July 8th and 10th, Buckner met with the President to discuss the Union's attitude toward Kentucky's neutrality. Lincoln reiterated his policy that he would take all measures not to send troops into Kentucky unless necessary.⁶³ This was enough to convince Buckner, who left Washington assured of Lincoln's intentions.⁶⁴ Lincoln's conciliatory policy proved wise. Kentucky held elections for a new state legislature in early August. Like the Congressional election in June, this election proved fortuitous for the Union cause. Despite a brief surge in pro-Confederate sentiment after Bull Run, the pro-Union party won a decisive majority in both the state house and senate.⁶⁵ Convinced that pro-Union sentiment dominated the state, Lincoln gambled. The day after the election results, August 6th, Lincoln authorized Lieutenant Nelson to establish a Union recruitment camp within Kentucky itself.⁶⁶ Named Camp Dick Robinson, the camp's establishment threatened to reignite pro-secessionist sentiment in the state.

Opposition to Camp Dick Robinson was nearly immediate. On August 19th, Governor Magoffin fired off a protest directly to Lincoln requesting that he close the camp immediately; Lincoln refused by stating that the camp only consisted of Kentuckians wishing to express loyalty to the United States.⁶⁷ Lincoln believed the August elections proved that pro-Union sentiment dominated Kentucky and allowed him enough room to keep the camp open.⁶⁸ This assumption was soon put to the test. A tit-for-tat seizure of vessels on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers by

⁶³ Stickles, *Simon Bolivar Buckner: Borderland Knight*, 76.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Kent Masterson Brown, *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State* (Mason City, IA: Savas Publishing Company, 2000), 7-8; Lowell Hayes Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 11. However, many pro-Southern Rights voters boycotted the election.

⁶⁶ Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War*, 291.

⁶⁷ Frank Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 3:29-30.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 30.

Union and pro-Confederate forces ensued and threatened to escalate tensions out of control.⁶⁹ Buckner felt betrayed by Lincoln after hearing about Camp Dick Robinson and refused an offer of a commission in the Union Army.⁷⁰ Despite this, the attitude of the recently elected state legislature did not change; Lincoln's gamble paid off. Kentucky's neutrality was slowly disappearing in favor of the Union. However, at the end of August, two decisions by Fremont nearly ruined the Union's recent gains.

Back in Missouri, Fremont's predicament had not improved. With Lyon's defeat at Wilson's Creek and guerrilla activity in full swing, Fremont attempted to hold on to what few places he could. To add to his responsibilities, Fremont assumed responsibility for western Kentucky on August 15th.⁷¹ This additional area did not come with more troops or information on the enemy. It is unclear if Fremont recognized the political situation within Kentucky itself. The state capital was in the newly formed Department of the Cumberland and its commander, General Anderson, was equally oblivious to Kentucky's political situation. Anderson claimed that he "hardly [had] time to form an intelligent opinion of the state of affairs in Kentucky."⁷² Fortunately for Fremont, a newly arrived Brigadier General was assigned to the Western Department, Ulysses S. Grant.

⁶⁹ Brown, *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State*, 8; Moore, *The Rebellion Record*, 2:51; Long and Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, 111. A total of 3 Union and 1 Confederate vessels were seized on either the Mississippi or Ohio Rivers.

⁷⁰ Stickles, *Simon Bolivar Buckner: Borderland Knight*, 94-95.

⁷¹ Eicher and Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 853.

⁷² Anderson to Chase, September 1, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 255.

Fremont Missteps

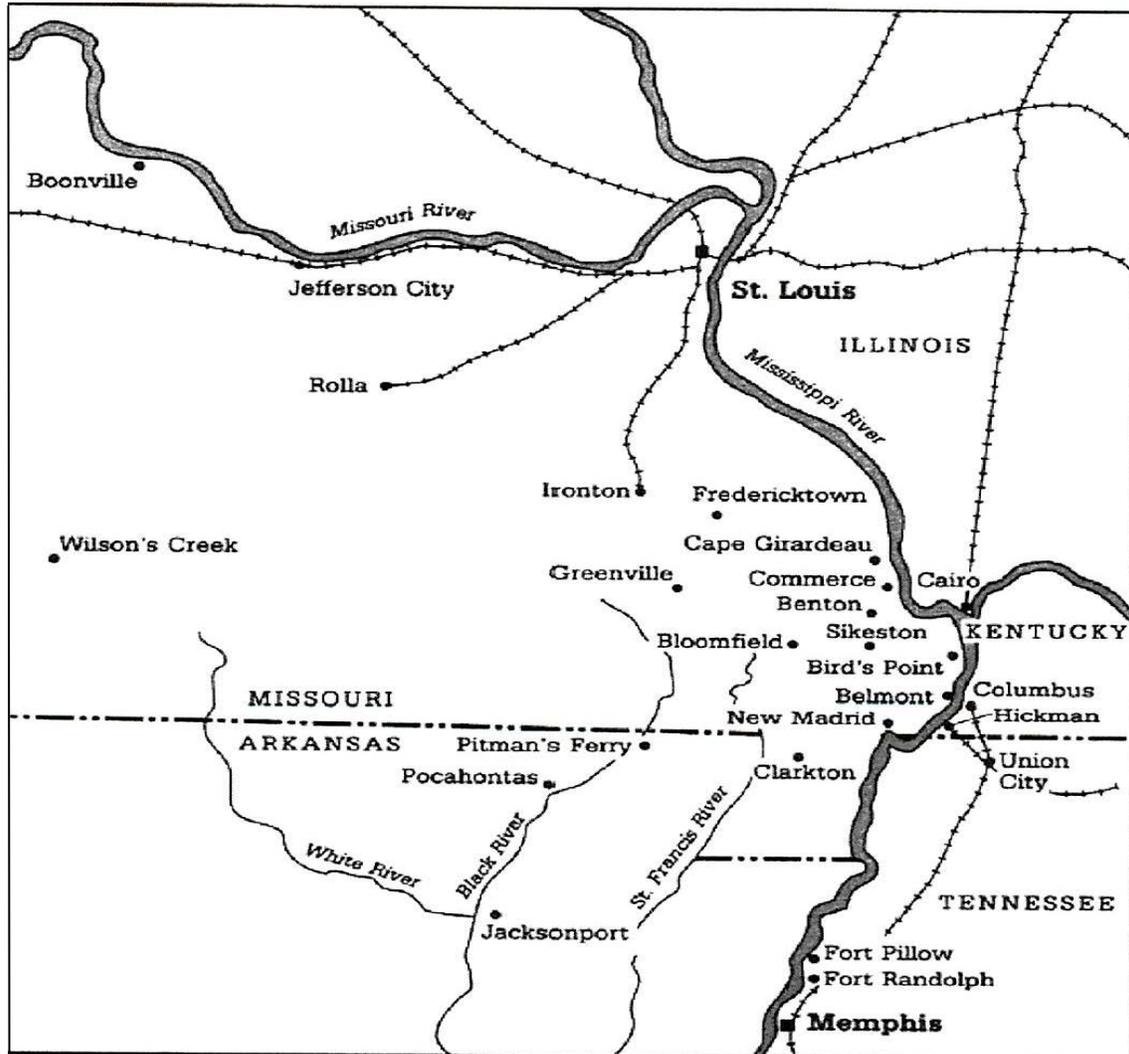


Figure 2. Upper Mississippi Valley, April-December 1861. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes and Roy P. Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 178.

Fremont recognized Grant's potential and assigned him command of southeastern Missouri and southern Illinois on August 28th and ordered him to prepare an expedition against General Pillow's forces near New Madrid, Missouri. This expedition's objective was to destroy Pillow's forces in Missouri and occupy Columbus, Kentucky "as soon as possible."⁷³ Fremont appeared to disregard Kentucky's neutrality when planning this expedition, highlighting his

⁷³ Fremont to Grant, August 28, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 141-142.

complete ignorance of political events in the state. Fremont appeared unaware that the newly elected and pro-Union state legislature was scheduled to meet on September 2nd. Fortunately for the Union, Grant's expedition did not occupy Columbus because of operational delays and actions by the Confederates. Grant delayed the expedition because of a disagreement with General Benjamin Prentiss over matters of relative rank.⁷⁴ By the time this issue was sorted out, the bulk of the Confederates were already gone. The only Union force which executed an operation was one regiment and some gunboats with orders to destroy the now non-existent Confederate position at Belmont, Missouri. When the regiment arrived at Belmont on September 2nd, they found no enemy positions and its commander was unsure of what he should do.⁷⁵ Two days later Grant considered seizing Columbus himself and may well have done so if the Confederates had not beaten him there.⁷⁶ The seemingly small action around Belmont, Missouri had served as the trigger for Confederate forces to invade Kentucky. Fremont and Grant's failed expedition was a blessing in disguise for the Union. It was another decision of Fremont, which focused on events in Missouri, that would have greater ramifications.

The responsibility and criticism levied on Fremont in his first month of command began to take its toll. Fremont believed there were up to 70,000 armed rebels in Missouri, the majority of whom were Missourians.⁷⁷ Additionally, guerrilla activity had increased significantly in the slave-holding areas of Missouri where they were raiding farms, destroying infrastructure, and blending back into the population.⁷⁸ Under these circumstances Fremont gathered several close advisors and determined to change the situation. On August 30th, Fremont proclaimed the following: martial law throughout Missouri, captured rebels would be tried and shot, property of

⁷⁴ Grant to Fremont, September 2, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 145-146.

⁷⁵ Waagner to Fremont, September 2, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 151-152. Waagner inquired what he should do about Columbus and Hickman, Kentucky.

⁷⁶ Grant to Fremont, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 149.

⁷⁷ Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*, 2:560.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 561-62.

rebels seized, and any slaves of rebels set free.⁷⁹ Only one of Fremont's advisors disagreed with the proclamation while the rest ardently supported it.⁸⁰ Reaction to Fremont's proclamation was nearly instantaneous. Several Northern abolitionist newspapers and politicians supported it.⁸¹ However, it was the reaction in slave-holding but increasingly pro-Union Kentucky which mattered more.

The newly elected state legislature met for the first time on September 2nd when word of Fremont's proclamation spread. Pro-Confederate and pro-Union newspapers in Kentucky denounced the proclamation as "abominable" and "deplorable."⁸² Garrett Davis, the Union's most influential ally within Kentucky, stated Fremont's proclamation was "like a bombshell" that had "disconcerted and...scattered us."⁸³ Other Unionists called the proclamation worse than the loss at Bull Run and destructive to the Union cause in Kentucky.⁸⁴ Two Kentucky Unionists, James Speed and Joseph Holt, wrote Lincoln directly and described the immense damage of Fremont's proclamation.⁸⁵ Acutely aware of the situation in Kentucky, Lincoln quickly addressed Fremont's inopportune declaration.

On September 2nd, Lincoln wrote a private letter to Fremont urging him to modify his statement. Specifically, the letter asked Fremont to change the part about emancipation because it "will alarm our Southern Union friends and turn them against us, perhaps ruin our rather fair prospect in Kentucky."⁸⁶ Fremont's response was anything but compliant. Fremont responded on

⁷⁹ Fremont Proclamation, August 30, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 466-467.

⁸⁰ Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*, 2:568.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 565.

⁸² Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union*, vol. 1, *The Improvised War: 1861-1862* (New York: Scribner, 1959), 335.

⁸³ Garrett Davis to Salmon P. Chase, September 3, 1861, in *The Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase* (Washington DC: American Historical Association, 1903), 502.

⁸⁴ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 111-12.

⁸⁵ Moore, *The Rebellion Record*, 3:126-27; Nevins, *The War for the Union*, vol. 1, 335.

⁸⁶ Lincoln to Fremont, September 2, 1861, *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 1, pt. 1, 766-767.

September 8th, claiming he did not notify Lincoln in advance because communication to Washington took two days and that events in Missouri were too urgent to allow this. In the same letter, Fremont admitted he decided and wrote the proclamation in a single day. Fremont then asked Lincoln to order him publicly to modify his proclamation before he would comply; Lincoln did just that on September 11th.⁸⁷

Lincoln explained the reason he asked Fremont to modify his proclamation in a letter to friend and Illinois Senator Orville H. Browning on September 22nd. Lincoln objected to Fremont's proclamation on both principle and policy. For principle, Lincoln argued that military commanders do not and should not have the authority to change the law such that the permanent future condition of slaves was to "be settled according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military commanders."⁸⁸ As to policy Lincoln highlighted the effect the proclamation had on Kentucky, "the Kentucky legislature would not budge till that proclamation was modified...I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game."⁸⁹ Lincoln clearly understood that the political consequences of Fremont's proclamation outweighed their military usefulness. If Grant's expedition had occurred as planned, word of the proclamation may have coincided with a Union Army occupation of Columbus. This paper examines why the unequal dialogue between Lincoln and Fremont failed in the analysis section. For now, it is important to note that despite Fremont's mistakes, Kentucky remained loyal to the Union. The Union's failure at the unequal dialogue was topped by an even worse failure by the Confederacy. While the Kentucky legislature eagerly awaited the outcome of Lincoln and Fremont's discourse over the proclamation, Confederate General Leonidas Polk committed a larger blunder than Fremont and sent troops into Kentucky. The actions preceding Polk's fateful decision is the topic of the next section.

⁸⁷ Fremont to Lincoln, September 8, 1861, *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 1, pt. 1, 767-768.

⁸⁸ Nicolay, *A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln*, 239.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 240.

Confederate Narrative

Jefferson Davis' Kentucky policy was little different than Lincoln's. In fact, the Confederacy enjoyed an early advantage over the Union; a neutral Kentucky was nearly as beneficial as a seceded one. Davis' first challenge was finding a military commander to follow his Kentucky policy. He was unable to appoint a Confederate officer in the position because Tennessee had yet to secede when Kentucky declared its neutrality. Fortunately, Tennessee Governor Isham Harris was an ardent secessionist and agreed with Davis' Kentucky policy. On May 9th, Harris appointed native Tennessean and Mexican-American War veteran Gideon Pillow commander of the Provisional Army of Tennessee.⁹⁰ Davis relied on this controversial figure to follow his Kentucky policy.

Pillow's appointment was contentious given his record in the Mexican-American War. During that war, many believed Pillow was a spy for then President James Polk on General Winfield Scott. His actions during that war were less than commendable. For example, Pillow failed to coordinate his attacks at the Battle of Cerro Gordo.⁹¹ His poor leadership led many of his men and peers to question his competency.⁹² Even worse was his penchant for insubordination. Scott found Pillow insubordinate on multiple occasions throughout the war and eventually court-martialed him.⁹³ Pillow would carry this insubordinate tendency forward to the Civil War.

Pillow's first act regarding Kentucky occurred in late April. Governor Harris sent him to Kentucky on April 23rd to meet with Governor Magoffin and General Buckner to discuss Kentucky's intentions.⁹⁴ Pillow found the Kentuckian's desire for neutrality distasteful and

⁹⁰ Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes and Roy P. Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011), 162.

⁹¹ Timothy D. Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army: The Mexico City Campaign* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 24.

⁹² Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 30.

⁹³ Johnson, *A Gallant Little Army*, 262.

⁹⁴ Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 160.

doubted Magoffin's reliability in a letter to Secretary of War Leroy Walker.⁹⁵ From then on, Pillow's aversion to Kentucky's neutrality would clash repeatedly with Harris and Davis. He remained convinced that the Mississippi River was the most likely avenue of approach for Union forces. Pillow eyed the town of Columbus, Kentucky, as a desirable defensive position because it rested on high ground overlooking the river. Columbus was in the pro-secessionist Jackson Purchase, which led the town's mayor to express concern about a Union invasion to several Confederate officials.⁹⁶ Pillow's focus on Columbus, combined with his dismissive attitude toward Kentucky's neutrality, led to his first display of insubordination.

On May 7th, Pillow conveyed his desire to occupy and fortify Columbus to Governor Harris.⁹⁷ Harris disagreed and told Pillow that any occupation of Kentucky would invite the Union to do the same.⁹⁸ Instead of following this order, Pillow tried to convince several senior figures throughout the Confederacy of the need to occupy Columbus. He wrote Governor Magoffin, Secretary Walker, and President Davis requesting permission to occupy the town.⁹⁹ He even wrote Governor John Pettus of Mississippi falsely claiming there were Union forces in Paducah and to Governor Henry Rector of Arkansas warning of an imminent Union invasion.¹⁰⁰ Pillow failed to convince a single recipient of his alarmist letters of the need to occupy Columbus. Undeterred, Pillow continued to focus on the town and the military advantage of its high ground.

Countering Pillow's obsession with occupying Columbus was Governor Harris' desire to keep Kentucky neutral. Both Governor Magoffin and General Buckner of Kentucky wished the

⁹⁵ Pillow to Walker, April 24, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. 2, 68-70.

⁹⁶ Percy Walker to Leroy Walker, May 8, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. 2, 89-90.

⁹⁷ Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 168.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Pillow to Magoffin, May 12, 1861, Isham Harris Papers, Tennessee State Library, Nashville, TN; Pillow to Walker, May 15, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. 2, 99-100; Pillow to Davis, May 16, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 52, pt. 2, 100-101.

¹⁰⁰ Pillow to Pettus, May 12, 1861, Isham Harris Papers; Pillow to Rector, May 11, 1861, Isham Harris Papers.

same. Pillow's May letter, coupled with movements by Union forces, however, alarmed Governor Magoffin. He sent Buckner to meet with General McClellan on June 8th and, once satisfied by McClellan's response, sent Buckner to Tennessee. Harris assured Buckner that Tennessee would respect Kentucky's neutrality and informed Pillow by telegraph to "not violate her neutrality" on June 13th.¹⁰¹ This telegraph was none too soon. On June 12th Pillow prepared to march troops and occupy Columbus at the behest of its mayor. This is the same day that a Union ship seized a rebel flag from Columbus; the mayor believed it was the prelude to a larger force.¹⁰² A serendipitous intervention by General Buckner prevented this overt violation of orders. Buckner, while presumably returning from his meeting with Harris, ordered Pillow to stand down.¹⁰³ Pillow's obsession with occupying Columbus was becoming a liability for Harris and Jefferson Davis. Pillow's reputation within Davis' cabinet, especially in Adjutant General Samuel Cooper's office, was "exceedingly unpopular."¹⁰⁴ Fortunately for Davis, Tennessee finally seceded on June 8th and on the 29th formally turned over control of its army to the Confederacy.¹⁰⁵ To the chagrin of Pillow, his army was about to have a new commander.

Polk Takes Command

Leonidas Polk was an unlikely choice for commander of any Confederate force, nevertheless an entire department. A West Point classmate and friend of Jefferson Davis, Polk left the Army shortly after graduating and entered the ministry where he eventually became the Episcopal bishop of Louisiana.¹⁰⁶ His time in the ministry gave him little military experience but

¹⁰¹ Harris to Pillow, June 13, 1861, *OR*, ser. 4, vol. 1, 376-378.

¹⁰² Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 172.

¹⁰³ Moore, *The Rebellion Record*, 2:164.

¹⁰⁴ J. B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1982), 28.

¹⁰⁵ Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 172.

¹⁰⁶ Terry L. Jones, "The Fighting Bishop," *New York Times*, October 10, 2012, accessed August 28, 2017, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/10/the-fighting-bishop>.

did allow Polk to form considerable ties to several influential organizations in the southern Mississippi Valley. These ties likely led Jefferson Davis to pick Polk for command until his first choice, Albert Sydney Johnson, could arrive from California.¹⁰⁷ Polk met with Davis on June 1st and remained in Richmond for some time. Besides his discussions with Davis, Polk met with General Robert E. Lee and members of the Confederate Cabinet.¹⁰⁸ After conferring with friends, to include lobbyists from the Mississippi Valley, Polk accepted Davis's offer.¹⁰⁹ The newly commissioned general arrived at his department's headquarters in Memphis and assumed command on July 13th.

Polk's first challenge in his new command had nothing to do with the Union Army but rather his new subordinate, the recently demoted Gideon Pillow. When the Provisional Army of Tennessee came under Confederate control, many officers, including Pillow, were commissioned into the Confederate Army at a lower rank. Pillow turned his frustration toward Polk, who occupied the rank and duty position he felt were rightly his.¹¹⁰ For his part, Polk focused on organizing his new command and determining where to conduct initial operations. His Department Number Two centered on the Mississippi River and included parts of Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and western Tennessee.¹¹¹ Perhaps due to his connections down river, Polk wanted to focus on defense of the Mississippi.¹¹² However, it was events in Missouri which would determine Polk's first operation.

By the time Polk assumed command on July 13th, events in Missouri had turned against the Confederacy. Union General Lyon had seized St. Louis and Jefferson City, driving the pro-

¹⁰⁷ Steven E. Woodworth, *No Band of Brothers: Problems in the Rebel High Command*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 13.

¹⁰⁸ Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 32.

¹⁰⁹ Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop*, 168.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173-74.

¹¹¹ Eicher and Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 884.

¹¹² Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 50.

Confederate Governor Claiborne Jackson out of the state. Governor Jackson's first stop was at Polk's headquarters in Memphis. Jackson arrived shortly after Polk and convinced the new commander to execute an offensive campaign into Missouri.¹¹³ The plan was ambitious; Polk and Pillow would cross into Missouri and link up with forces from Arkansas and southeast Missouri. From there they would march north, capture St. Louis, and possibly envelop the Union base at Cairo, Illinois.¹¹⁴ Instead the campaign highlighted Polk's inexperience as a commander and his clashes with Pillow.

On July 28th, Pillow crossed into Missouri and landed at New Madrid.¹¹⁵ What followed was a series of orders, counterorders, and overall confusion by the Confederates. Governor Jackson had grossly overestimated the number of troops available from Missouri and Arkansas, rendering the initial plan unfeasible. Unsure of how to proceed, Polk vacillated between withdrawing back to Tennessee and attacking Union bases at Ironton or Cape Girardeau. He twice ordered Pillow to withdraw, only to countermand those orders days later.¹¹⁶ These orders and counterorders inflamed Pillow's intransigence. When Polk refused to send reinforcements to Pillow at New Madrid, Pillow communicated his frustration directly to Secretary Walker.¹¹⁷ He also disobeyed Polk's orders to return troops he had taken from the Confederate fort at Island Number Ten.¹¹⁸ Polk's inability to decide on a course of action, combined with Pillow's insubordination, made the expedition doomed from the beginning. The expedition ended on August 28th when Pillow withdrew most of his forces to Tennessee, leaving behind a small force

¹¹³ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 48.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹¹⁵ Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop*, 175.

¹¹⁶ Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 182-83.

¹¹⁷ Pillow to Polk, August 16, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 654-655; Pillow to Polk, August 18, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 659; Pillow to Walker, August 21, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 666-667.

¹¹⁸ Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 186.

to fortify New Madrid. After one month, Polk's army generated a lot of unnecessary movement and even more confusion and resentment between Polk and Pillow.

One staff officer summarized the entire debacle, "between Polk, Pillow, and Cheatham I don't know who is in command, they are pulling in opposite directions."¹¹⁹ Even Polk's former supporters in Mississippi began to doubt his abilities. A lawyer from Mississippi wrote Jefferson Davis stating, "Polk is respected but people lack confidence in him because he has never commanded an army in the field."¹²⁰ The Missouri expedition highlighted Polk's inexperience as a large unit commander and his inability to reign in Pillow. Ironically, this incompetent expedition had concerned the equally inexperienced Fremont for nearly all of August. It was Pillow's remaining forces near New Madrid which prompted Fremont to order the execution of Grant's expedition. This movement by Grant would cause Polk to make a fateful decision.

Polk Missteps

In his first communication to Jefferson Davis since the failed Missouri expedition, Polk gave no indication of his future plans. On August 29th, Polk wrote Davis and requested an expansion of his area of operation for the soon to arrive new commander, General Albert Sydney Johnson, to whom he was eager to hand over the command.¹²¹ With Missouri behind him, Polk turned his attention to defense of the Mississippi River which was his focus since assuming command. Influenced by his contacts in the Mississippi River Valley, Polk had urged a defense of the river as early as May.¹²² His vacillation during the Missouri expedition was in large part due to his concern over the defense of the river. Polk was not alone in his concern over the defense of the Mississippi.

¹¹⁹ Hughes and Stonesifer, *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*, 191.

¹²⁰ Lynda Lasswell Crist and Mary Seaton Dix, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 7, 1861 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 320.

¹²¹ Polk to Davis, August 29, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 688.

¹²² Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop*, 165-66.

Pillow too reinvigorated his focus on the river and his favorite target, Columbus. In his last dispatch before returning to Tennessee, Pillow urged Polk to focus on Columbus. Pillow argued that the city was the “gateway” to Tennessee and a “military necessity”; he also claimed that Union forces had mustered inside the state and violated its neutrality.¹²³ Additionally, Pillow claimed that Fremont had troops ready to seize the town if it were not for the Battle of Wilson’s Creek on August 10th.¹²⁴ It is unclear where Pillow received his information about Kentucky. He mentioned northern newspapers as one source in his dispatch to Polk. The only other possibility was information from a few Union prisoners that Pillow had captured and later exchanged.¹²⁵ Regardless of his source, Pillow’s information was largely incorrect or overinflated. The forces inside Kentucky were likely recruits at Camp Dick Robinson and the Home Guard. His claim that Fremont was prepared to seize the town in early August was dubious. Fremont’s focus was on Missouri; he did not order Grant’s expedition to begin until August 28th. Pillow’s reasoning behind an occupation of Columbus may have been tactically sound, however, it was contrary to the wishes of President Jefferson Davis.

On August 28th, the same day of Pillow’s dispatch to Polk about Columbus, Jefferson Davis communicated a very different message to Kentucky Governor Magoffin. Replying to a letter from the Governor regarding a buildup of Confederate forces in Tennessee, Davis reassured Magoffin that “the Confederate States of America neither intends nor desires to disturb the neutrality of Kentucky...so long as her people will maintain it themselves.”¹²⁶ Two days later, Davis requested one million dollars be sent to Kentucky for her own defense from the Confederate Congress and authorized the establishment of a covert recruiting camp inside the

¹²³ Pillow to Polk, August 28, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 686.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Correspondence between Pillow and Union Colonel W.H.L. Wallace, August 28 – September 3, 1861, *OR*, ser. 2, vol. 1, 504-510.

¹²⁶ Davis to Magoffin, August 28, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 396-397.

state.¹²⁷ Davis' intentions appeared to be an increase in covert aid but a continuation of his overt respect of Kentucky's neutrality. The pro-Union victory in the state legislature elections and the establishment of Camp Dick Robinson indicated to Davis that the state was sliding toward the Union. However, as his letter to Magoffin indicates, he was not ready to violate the state's neutrality openly. The uproar inside Kentucky caused by Fremont's proclamation appeared to vindicate Davis' policy.

Governor Harris of Tennessee supported Davis. On September 2nd, the same day the new Kentucky state legislature met, Harris urged Polk not to conduct any future operations in Missouri until "matters assume a different shape in Kentucky."¹²⁸ Fremont's proclamation had dominated the headlines in Kentucky and the minds of the legislators. On September 4th, Harris sent four prominent Tennessee citizens to the Kentucky legislature to convince the state to secede.¹²⁹ Recognizing Fremont's blunder, Harris attempted to reverse Kentucky's slide toward the Union.

Next to Harris, the Confederacy's most knowledgeable person about Kentucky was General Buckner, who was in Richmond at the time. On September 3rd, he wrote a now lost letter to President Davis. The contents of the letter, though, can be inferred from Adjutant General Cooper's response when he assured Buckner that General Polk would cooperate with Buckner "should the movements contemplated by you as likely to occur in Kentucky actually take place."¹³⁰ What "movements" Buckner had "contemplated" can only be surmised. A reasonable assumption is that Buckner recognized that Kentucky was inching toward the Union and planned to act with his State Guard with help from Polk's army. Cooper seemed to agree; on September

¹²⁷ Act of Confederate Congress, August 30, 1861, *OR*, ser. 4, vol. 1, 585.

¹²⁸ Harris to Polk, September 2, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 399.

¹²⁹ Woodworth, *No Band of Brothers: Problems in the Rebel High Command*, 15.

¹³⁰ Cooper to Buckner, September 3, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 399-400.

3rd he instructed Polk and Harris to cooperate with Buckner once he returned to Kentucky.¹³¹

Buckner recognized Kentucky's slide toward the Union. If Harris' and Davis' diplomatic efforts failed, then his State Guard was in the best position to use force to prevent the state from declaring loyalty to the United States.

Unfortunately, Polk appeared oblivious to these rapidly changing events. A shift in policy required a renewed effort in the unequal dialogue between policymaker and the military commander. On September 2nd, a sick Jefferson Davis replied to Polk's letter from August 29th, in which he requested that Polk "keep me better advised of your forces and purposes."¹³² The dialogue was only one way; Polk was about to act contrary to Davis' policy and without Davis' knowledge.

Polk and Pillow seemed unaware of the political situation in Kentucky and the flurry of activity in early September. Focused on supposed Union movements inside Kentucky, the two planned an occupation of Columbus and Paducah. On September 1st, Polk wrote Magoffin and inquired what the "future plans and policy" were of the pro-Southern politicians in the state and insisted that his army occupy Columbus and Paducah before the Union; Polk even sent a representative to Frankfort on the same day.¹³³ However, the movement of Union troops convinced Polk that he could not wait for a reply. On September 2nd a Union force landed at Belmont, Missouri, directly across from Columbus.¹³⁴ This force was part of General Grant's operation to dislodge Pillow's remaining troops at New Madrid. This Union force served as a trigger for Polk, and on September 3rd, he ordered an enthusiastic Pillow to march into Kentucky and occupy Columbus.¹³⁵ Polk either did not receive or ignored the messages from Harris, Davis,

¹³¹ Cooper to Harris, Polk, and Zollicoffer, September 3, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 400.

¹³² Crist and Dix, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 7, 318.

¹³³ Polk to Magoffin, September 1, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 179.

¹³⁴ Waagner to Fremont, September 2, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 151.

¹³⁵ Long and Long, *The Civil War Day by Day*, 114.

and Cooper. Grant recognized the blunder by Polk and occupied Paducah, Kentucky ahead of the Confederates on September 6th. Polk's reckless action spurred a flurry of telegrams between Polk, Harris, Walker, and Davis.

The first to react against Polk's movement into Kentucky was Governor Harris. On September 4th, the Governor sent a telegram to Polk and Davis requesting the removal of Confederate troops.¹³⁶ According to the official records, on September 4th, Walker ordered Polk's immediate withdrawal. However, on the same day, Davis seemed to acquiesce to Polk and wrote "the necessity justifies the action."¹³⁷ This apparent contradiction seemed to indicate a miscommunication between Walker and Davis and that Davis almost immediately supported Polk's action. However, in a hand-written note dated September 5th, Davis instructed Walker to order Polk's withdrawal and tell Harris that the move was unauthorized.¹³⁸ This note by Davis is not in the official records. It is here where controversy over the sequence of telegrams exists. Why would Davis write the note on September 5th ordering Polk's withdrawal just one day after telling Polk "the necessity justifies the action"? One historian argues that the official records may have been tampered with; it is Polk who supplied the correspondence to Davis which is cited in the official records.¹³⁹ With no definitive resolution to this question, it is impossible to determine Jefferson Davis' exact reaction to Polk's occupation of Columbus. What is certain are the arguments against the occupation made by Harris and General Buckner.

Harris was the most adamant advocate for Polk's withdrawal. In addition to his telegram on September 4th, Harris argued for an immediate withdrawal on the 13th. In that letter, Harris

¹³⁶ Harris to Polk, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4 180; Harris to Davis, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 188-189.

¹³⁷ Walker to Polk, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 180; Davis to Polk, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 181.

¹³⁸ Crist and Dix, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 7, 325.

¹³⁹ Polk to Davis, September 11, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 179; Woodworth, *No Band of Brothers: Problems in the Rebel High Command*, 15-17. Woodworth explains his theory that the *OR* may be inaccurate and that both Walker and Davis' telegrams dated September 4th were in fact sent on September 5th.

based his argument off the report from the now returned commissioners he sent to Kentucky on September 4th. Those commissioners argued that a withdrawal “secures to us a majority in the State [Kentucky]. If not withdrawn, overwhelming majority against us.”¹⁴⁰ General Buckner added his call for withdrawal as well. Writing to Cooper on September 13th, Buckner believed that if Polk withdrew, he could “rally thousands of neutrality Union men to expel the Federals” and that a withdrawal was “the only chance to unite the State.”¹⁴¹ He further argued that Polk’s inability to seize Paducah before Grant meant the position at Columbus was easily flanked. The two individuals with the most intimate knowledge of Kentucky politics for the Confederacy strongly believed that Polk’s occupation was a mistake.

For his part, Polk believed he had made the right decision. In letters to Harris, Davis, Magoffin, and the Kentucky State Senate, Polk argued that he had every indication that Union troops were about to seize Columbus first.¹⁴² Additionally, the previous Union transgressions on Kentucky neutrality, especially the establishment of Camp Dick Robinson, required him to act. Polk did offer to withdraw his troops if the Union forces who had seized Paducah did the same. Unfortunately for the Confederacy, the damage had already been done. On September 16th, General Albert Sydney Johnston took command from Polk and told Davis that the political events in Kentucky were irrevocable.¹⁴³ Two days later, the Kentucky legislature renounced neutrality and declared its loyalty to the Union.¹⁴⁴

Polk’s occupation of Columbus was a godsend to Abraham Lincoln. The fallout from Fremont’s proclamation had yet to subside when Polk made his decision. As late as September

¹⁴⁰ Harris to Davis, September 13, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 190.

¹⁴¹ Buckner to Cooper, September 13, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 189-190.

¹⁴² Polk to Harris, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 180; Polk to Davis, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 181; Polk to Magoffin, September 8, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 185; Polk to John Johnston, September 9, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 186-187.

¹⁴³ Albert Sydney Johnston to Davis, September 16, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 193.

¹⁴⁴ Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 114.

12th, one Unionist, James Speed, wrote Lincoln about the damaging effects of Fremont's proclamation.¹⁴⁵ Lincoln's public admonishment of Fremont on the eleventh, coupled with Polk's rash action, finally tilted Kentucky into the arms of the Union. In the end, Polk erred worse than Fremont, but it nearly went the other way. It is difficult to determine the counterfactual if Polk had not occupied Columbus prior to Fremont. Perhaps Buckner could have rallied pro-Southern support and together with Polk "liberated" Kentucky. Instead, Polk was seen as the aggressor and Kentucky remained loyal. Both Fremont and Polk made tactical decisions at the expense of a strategic policy. Dissecting why these two commanders failed at operational art is important for current military leaders to understand.

Analysis

We can now see that the assertion that a major military development, or the plan for one, should be a matter for *purely military* opinion is unacceptable and can be damaging.

—Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

War and politics, campaign and statecraft, are Siamese twins, inseparable and interdependent; and to talk of military operations without the direction and interference of an administration is as absurd as to plan a campaign without recruits, pay, or rations.

—John Hay and Jay Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln*

If operational art is the linking of tactical actions to achieve strategic objectives, then both Fremont and Polk did the exact opposite. Instead of achieving a strategic objective their actions destroyed it. How did two senior commanders so recklessly disregard the strategic implications of their tactical actions? The primary reason is that both men failed to achieve an unequal dialogue with their respective policymaker. Instead of open and continuous, the two dialogues were contentious and sporadic. In addition, both commanders balked when their policymakers admonished their actions. Fremont's dialogue focused almost exclusively on operations in Missouri and he made no attempt to notify Lincoln about his proclamation. When

¹⁴⁵ Moore, *The Rebellion Record*, 3:126-27.

Lincoln privately ordered Fremont to amend his proclamation, he initially refused. Polk's dialogue with Davis was equally inadequate. Davis had admonished Polk to keep him better informed, but communication with Davis during and after the Missouri expedition was nearly nonexistent. Polk then openly defied orders to withdraw from Columbus. The failure of both commanders to engage in an unequal dialogue is clear. Three other factors also contributed to the commanders' disregard of the strategic implications of their tactical actions.

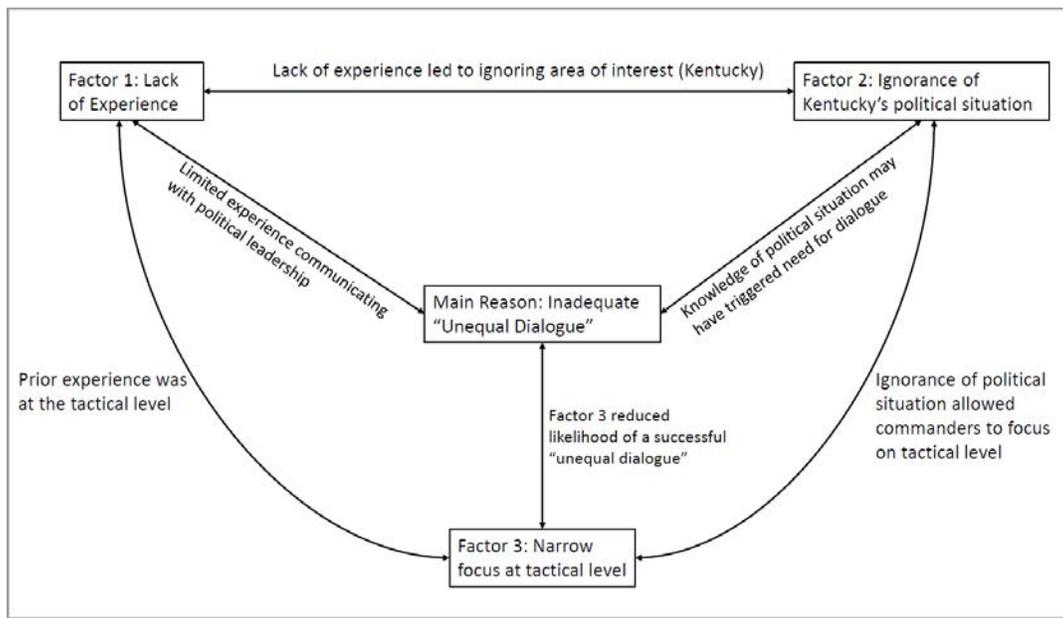


Figure 3: Interrelated Factors Diagram

These factors apply to both commanders and include a lack of experience at high command, a failure to understand the political situation inside Kentucky, and anchoring on short-term tactical problems. These factors interrelate with each other and with the failure at the unequal dialogue (see Figure 3). The lack of experience of both commanders meant neither man was accustomed to communicating with strategic leadership during war. What experience Fremont and Polk did have was at the tactical level, leading both commanders to focus their attention there. Their limited experience also contributed to their ignorance of the political situation in Kentucky. This ignorance, in turn, allowed the commanders to only focus on immediate tactical issues. If they had realized what the political situation was, it may have

prompted both commanders to reengage in a dialogue with their political leadership. Finally, the narrow focus on tactical issues by both commanders prevented them from seeing the larger strategic picture and therefore reduced the likelihood of a successful unequal dialogue. This section will first look at each commander's communication with their respective administrations overlaid with key events in Kentucky. It will then examine each contributing factor and its effect on both commanders.

Fremont's first contact with Lincoln was in person on July 2, 1861. Fremont then spent nearly a month in the capital procuring supplies and equipment for his new department. During that month, Lincoln met with Buckner about Kentucky's neutrality. It is unclear if Fremont knew about the meeting or its subsequent agreement. It is possible that he did not care; Kentucky was not a part of the Department of the West at the time. However, it can be assumed that Fremont either knew about the meeting or at least knew Lincoln's policy toward Kentucky. His connections with the powerful Blair family, along with his new duty position, afforded him access to high government officials. It is also doubtful that Lincoln would authorize an eventual attack down the Mississippi River without considering the status of Kentucky. As Fremont left Washington for his headquarters at St. Louis, it is unlikely that he was unaware of Lincoln's conciliatory Kentucky policy.

Once in St. Louis, Fremont's attention and subsequent communications with the Lincoln administration focused exclusively on his large area of operation. During Kentucky's state legislature election on August 5th, Fremont's communication with the administration focused on events in New Mexico and an urgent request for more troops and supplies.¹⁴⁶ The loss at Wilson's Creek on August 10th spurred another round of letters to the administration requesting reinforcements. Fremont even sent an angry telegram directly to Lincoln which urged the

¹⁴⁶ Fremont to Cameron, August 6, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 428; Thomas Scott to Fremont, August 6, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 428.

President to force his Secretary of War to read his messages.¹⁴⁷ Lincoln replied two days later that all of Fremont's requests were read and that it was Fremont who was not replying to messages.¹⁴⁸ This round of telegrams was the last communication between Fremont and anyone in Washington prior to his proclamation. When western Kentucky was added to Fremont's department on August 15th, Fremont was occupied with events in Kansas and Missouri.¹⁴⁹ Two weeks later, Fremont would initiate Grant's failed expedition and announce his fateful proclamation. The acrimonious dialogue prior to August 15th, coupled with the communication blackout afterwards, demonstrates that Lincoln and Fremont's dialogue was inadequate. This inadequacy nearly led to a complete collapse of Lincoln's Kentucky policy. Fortunately for the Union, Polk's dialogue with the Davis administration was equally insufficient.

Like Fremont, Polk spent some time in the capital city after his initial meeting with Davis on June 1st. Polk remained in Richmond for several weeks where he regularly met with several high-ranking Confederate officials.¹⁵⁰ Polk also visited with Governor Harris in Nashville on his way to assume command on July 13th.¹⁵¹ Therefore, it is likely that Polk not only knew about Davis' Kentucky policy but was also aware of the results of Kentucky's congressional election on June 20th. Any claim of ignorance by Polk about Davis' Kentucky policy is doubtful.¹⁵²

Polk's initial dialogue with the administration was satisfactory. On July 23rd, Polk wrote Secretary Walker to outline the upcoming expedition into Missouri; he later updated Walker on

¹⁴⁷ Fremont to Lincoln, August 13, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 440.

¹⁴⁸ Lincoln to Fremont, August 15, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 443.

¹⁴⁹ J.H. Lane to Fremont, August 16, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 446; Pope to Fremont, August 25, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 456-457.

¹⁵⁰ Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 32.

¹⁵¹ Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop*, 171.

¹⁵² Polk to Harris, September 4, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 180. In response to Harris' request to withdraw from Kentucky, Polk claimed he never received official information that Harris and Davis had agreed to observe Kentucky's neutrality.

the expedition on July 28th and 30th.¹⁵³ Afterwards Polk's communication to Richmond was nearly nonexistent. The Missouri expedition quickly turned into a debacle, however, few in Richmond were aware of this. Not until August 21st did a report about the expedition reach the Davis administration. This report originated not from Polk but from Pillow, who complained about Polk's leadership to Secretary Walker.¹⁵⁴ Polk himself had written Richmond only twice, on August 26th and 29th, simply requesting more troops and a larger area of operation. Adjutant General Cooper admonished Polk for not keeping the administration better informed.¹⁵⁵ Throughout the month of August the Confederate high command was oblivious to Polk's failed Missouri expedition. They were equally unaware of Polk's hastily planned occupation of Kentucky. The same day Pillow encouraged Polk to occupy Columbus, Jefferson Davis assured Governor Magoffin that the Confederacy would do nothing of the sort. This complete breakdown in communication between commander and policymaker led to Polk's fateful occupation of Columbus.

The inadequacy of Fremont's and Polk's dialogue with their political leadership explains why the two commanders failed to recognize the strategic implications of their tactical actions. Making this inadequacy worse was both commanders' lack of experience at high command. A commander with experience at prominent levels of command knows the importance of dialogue with political leadership. Even a corps or division commander would recognize the interplay between strategic policy and tactical actions by observing his higher commander. Neither Fremont nor Polk had that experience. Fremont's pre-war time was as a small-unit leader and explorer in the American West. Polk's military experiences were even less than Fremont's, having served in the clergy immediately after graduating from West Point. Without prior

¹⁵³ Polk to Walker, July 23, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 612-614; Polk to Walker, July 28, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3 617-618; Polk to Walker, July 30, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 620.

¹⁵⁴ Pillow to Walker, August 21, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 666-667.

¹⁵⁵ Polk to Cooper, August 26, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 682; Cooper to Polk, August 28, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 684; Polk to Davis, August 29, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 3, 687-688.

experience observing the unequal dialogue in action, neither man was prepared to execute it once in command.

Fremont's limited military experience centered around three expeditions in the American West. Each time he commanded fewer than 500 men.¹⁵⁶ More importantly, an explorer in ungoverned territory is much less constrained by political considerations than a traditional military commander. During his third expedition, Fremont flouted what little rules existed. He provided unauthorized support to the Bear Flag rebellion in California.¹⁵⁷ Although this proved beneficial to the United States' cause during the Mexican-American War, it demonstrated Fremont's significant amount of latitude prior to the Civil War. His unconstrained past in the west did not translate well when he commanded the Department of the West.

Unfamiliar with overseeing so many troops, Fremont relied on European officers to administer his new command. While this was a prudent move as few American officers were available to fill key staff positions, it created a poor command climate. Many viewed Fremont as too closed off from his command, including Lincoln.¹⁵⁸ The President sent Brigadier General David Hunter to help the new commander because Fremont "isolates himself...he does not know what is going on."¹⁵⁹ Closed off from his own command in Missouri, it is no wonder that Fremont appeared oblivious to Kentucky's internal politics. Simply put, Fremont was overwhelmed by his task. The poor quality of his army, the defeat at Wilson's Creek, and escalating guerilla war was simply more than he could handle. Unused to such a daunting task

¹⁵⁶ Rolle, *John Charles Fremont*, 35, 49, 69, 86. Fremont commanded 21 men on his first expedition, 35 on his second, and 62 on his third. During the Mexican-American War he commanded a battalion of 428 men.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁵⁸ Nevins, *The War for the Union*, vol. 1, 318. According to one of his own aides, Fremont never went farther from the door of his headquarters than the sidewalk.

¹⁵⁹ Lincoln to Hunter, September 9, 1861, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy Basler, vol. 4, *1860-1861* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953).

and closed off from his command, Fremont blinded himself to the larger strategic picture.

Fortunately for the Union, the Confederate commander was equally inexperienced.

Polk's military experience was even less than Fremont's. Resigning his commission shortly after graduating West Point, Polk found his way into the clergy of the Episcopal Church. His time in the clergy allowed him to make significant contacts in the Mississippi Valley but did little to expand his West Point training. Polk appeared not to realize the importance of communicating with political leaders during military operations. This was demonstrated in the failed Missouri campaign. Polk communicated little with Davis throughout the expedition, something a more experienced commander was unlikely to do. This lack of communication contributed to Polk's ignorance of Kentucky's internal politics. Polk's sudden shift from offensive operations in Missouri to offensive operations in Kentucky belies his inexperience. There was only a five-day interval between the Missouri expedition and the incursion into Kentucky. A more experienced commander likely would have paused to regroup and plan a more deliberate operation. This pause would have given Polk enough time to understand the political situation in Kentucky and reengage with Davis. Instead he did neither. Polk's inexperience at military operations led to reduced communication with Davis and contributed to his ignorance of Kentucky's politics. These mistakes proved larger than Fremont's and cost the Confederacy the state of Kentucky.

Inexperience at high levels of command is not the only reason Fremont and Polk failed to understand the strategic implications of their tactical actions. Arguably, the only American military leader with such experience at the time was the ageing General Winfield Scott. Even leaders with more experience than Fremont and Polk performed little better. McClellan's later mistakes in the Eastern Theater are well-known and Pillow had significantly more experience than Polk, yet he wanted to invade Kentucky as early as May. Therefore, inexperience at high levels of command is not a sufficient enough explanation for Fremont's and Polk's mistakes. A

second factor contributed to Fremont's and Polk's failures at command, their ignorance of the political situation within Kentucky.

Fremont's lack of understanding of the political situation in Kentucky is partially excusable. The state was nominally under the Department of Kentucky until August 15th when it was split in half. Therefore, western Kentucky was in Fremont's control for only two weeks prior to his proclamation. It is possible that Fremont's impression of his newly added territory was negative. The Jackson Purchase was in his new area of operation and was openly pro-Confederate. Fremont did attempt to gain intelligence about this recently added portion of Kentucky by sending a European-born spy to reconnoiter western Kentucky and Tennessee.¹⁶⁰ However, this spy's reports focused exclusively on tactical matters and did not inform Fremont of the emerging pro-Union political situation inside the state.¹⁶¹ To be fair to Fremont, the commander of the Department of Cumberland was equally oblivious. General Anderson remarked that he did not have an intelligent opinion of the affairs inside the state as late as September 2nd.¹⁶² Anderson's cluelessness, however, does not excuse Fremont's. A former presidential candidate and politically-connected individual like Fremont should have realized the effects of his proclamation on the other slave-border states. In the days leading up to his proclamation Fremont appeared blind to Kentucky's political situation.

In the single day it took Fremont to draft his proclamation, only one advisor argued against it saying, "Mr. [Secretary of State William] Seward will never allow this."¹⁶³ Fremont's other advisors, including his wife, supported his decision. Perhaps if Fremont realized the political situation inside Kentucky, specifically the September 2nd meeting of the state legislature, he would have at least delayed his proclamation. This pause might have triggered a need to

¹⁶⁰ Rolle, *John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny*, 197.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Anderson to Chase, September 1, 1861, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 4, 255.

¹⁶³ Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*, 2:568.

communicate with Lincoln and reestablish the unequal dialogue. Instead, Fremont's obliviousness allowed him to focus on the immediate tactical problems at hand and ignore the broader strategic picture. Fortunately for the Union, Polk's own ignorance of Kentucky's politics led him to a worse fate.

Polk's ignorance of the political situation inside Kentucky is less excusable than Fremont's. The happenings in Kentucky directly affected Polk's Department Number Two from the onset. His proximity to Governor Harris should have allowed Polk significantly greater insight into Kentucky than Fremont. In addition to Harris, General Buckner was an invaluable source of information on Kentucky for the Confederacy. Ironically, Buckner had met with McClellan and Lincoln but not with Polk. Polk's distracting operation in Missouri and Buckner's own vacillation between joining the Confederacy or remaining in Kentucky are the likely reasons the two never met. Regardless, Polk did not consult with Harris or Buckner prior to his invasion on September 3rd. What is worse is that Buckner, Harris, and the Davis administration were all on the same page in early September. Buckner was poised to lead the State Guard against any pro-Union votes by the new state legislature. He even requested Polk's assistance, via Cooper, to help any potential operations. However, Polk's total ignorance of Kentucky's political situation did not give him pause. If he knew about the state legislature's meeting and the role Buckner planned to play, perhaps he would not have occupied Columbus. A delay of even one day could have been enough time for Polk to reengage the dialogue with the Davis administration. A new dialogue might have led to a more comprehensive plan by the Confederacy on what to do with Kentucky. Instead, Polk was so oblivious that he acted with little thought to the political situation and put the Confederacy into reaction mode.

The final factor which precipitated Fremont's and Polk's failure was an exclusive focus on tactical issues. The criticism levied by this paper on both commanders is not for the tactical unsoundness of both commanders' actions. Fremont's liberation of rebel-owned slaves was not only morally laudable but also tactically sound. Many of the guerilla leaders and supporters were

slave-owners and seizing their property, including slaves, was a prudent war measure. Abolitionist Republicans used a similar argument a year later in the lead up to the Emancipation Proclamation.¹⁶⁴ Both commanders were right about the tactical advantage of the high ground near Columbus. The river-bluff interface of the Mississippi River played an important role in the Western Theater of the war. The river was a major north-south mobility corridor and therefore securing travel along it was vital for both sides. Where the river butted up against the bluffs gave a tactical advantage to the defender; ships travelling near the bluffs were vulnerable to a defender's fire. Columbus was the closest location of this river-bluff interface to the Union base at Cairo, making control of it vital for any Union advance down the river. The next two river-bluff interfaces were at Fort Pillow and Memphis. These two locations were too far south for Polk to adequately defend western Tennessee from a Union advance. Therefore, the tactical advantage of Columbus is undisputed. What is controversial is the narrow focus each commander had on tactical issues at the expense of the larger strategic picture.

Fremont's exclusive focus on tactical issues is evident in his reasoning for his proclamation and his plan for Grant's expedition. Fremont justified his proclamation on tactical, not moral, grounds. In response to the sole aide who argued against the proclamation, Fremont replied, "The time has come for decisive action; this is a war measure, and as such I make it."¹⁶⁵ Fremont's refusal to follow Lincoln's initial order to amend the proclamation also proves his focus on tactical issues. Instead of disobedience, Fremont could have amended the order in such a way as to reassure the Unionists in Kentucky and still punish guerrilla-supporting slave owners. A possible solution could have included a temporary liberation of slaves until the Federal government decided on their final status. Regardless, Fremont's focus on the tactical issues in

¹⁶⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 494.

¹⁶⁵ Nevins, *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*, 2:568.

Missouri blinded him to the larger strategic picture and reduced the likelihood of an adequate dialogue with Lincoln. His ordering of Grant's expedition is another example.

In his orders to Grant, Fremont outlined his plan to descend the Mississippi River to defeat Pillow's forces at New Madrid and to secure Columbus. Not only does the plan itself ignore the larger strategic picture but also its timing. Fremont's order to Grant was only five days prior to Kentucky's state legislature first meeting. Why the urgency to conduct an assault down the Mississippi River? Perhaps Fremont felt pressured to show some progress in his department after the disaster at Wilsons Creek and increasing guerilla attacks. Regardless of the reason, Grant's expedition would have made matters worse for the Union cause in Kentucky. The combination of Fremont's proclamation with a Union force occupying Columbus may well have pushed even the most ardent Kentucky Unionists towards secession. Again, Fremont's laser-like focus on tactical issues blinded him to the larger strategic picture. It also led to a reduced dialogue with Lincoln precisely at a time when more dialogue was needed. Luck and Polk's larger mistake were what eventually saved Fremont.

Polk's focus on tactical issues is evident in his Missouri expedition and in the speed in which he occupied Columbus. The Missouri expedition shows Polk's exclusive focus on tactical issues because it ignores even the larger military strategic picture. At this point in the war, the Confederacy was on the strategic and operational defense; the onus for offensive action was on the Union. Instead of reinforcing positions in western Tennessee, Polk decided to launch his inept expedition into Missouri. When he finally realized the impossibility of the expedition, Polk then only focused on defense of the Mississippi. He failed to construct any defenses between the Mississippi and Union City, leaving his numerous river outposts vulnerable to a flanking attack.¹⁶⁶ Polk's inability to see the larger military picture translated into his ignorance of the larger political one.

¹⁶⁶ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 51.

Just five days after withdrawing from Missouri, Polk launched his incursion into Kentucky. Why such haste? Polk at first seemed to realize the political sensitivity of invading Kentucky by writing to Governor Magoffin on September 1st. However, he did not wait for a reply when the presence of one regiment at Belmont triggered his fears of a Union occupation of Columbus before him. The speed of his decision to invade Kentucky shows how much he focused on the tactical situation. Why else would he not wait for a response from Governor Magoffin? Polk's narrow focus on tactical issues were detrimental to the broader military and political picture. By focusing exclusively on tactical issues, Polk limited his dialogue with Davis at a time when the unequal dialogue was of paramount importance. This focus contributed to the Confederacy's loss of Kentucky.

Conclusion and Implications for Today

An incomplete or misunderstood dialogue between a military commander and policymaker can have dire consequences. Both Generals Fremont and Polk illustrated this during the Civil War. At the war's onset, Kentucky declared neutrality. Both the Union and Confederacy vied for the state's loyalty by overtly respecting its neutrality while covertly garnering support inside it. By late August 1861, the state began sliding toward the Union. However, two decisions by Fremont nearly ruined the Union's prospects. He first ordered an expedition which, if executed as planned, would have sent Union troops onto Kentucky soil. Additionally, he proclaimed all slaves in Missouri free which caused an uproar in Kentucky. Fortunately for the Union, Polk followed Fremont's mistakes with an even larger one. Concerned with the defense of the Mississippi River, Polk sent troops to occupy Columbus, Kentucky on September 3rd. Outraged by this overt violation of its neutrality, Kentucky declared its loyalty to the Union. Why did two military commanders ignore the strategic implications of their tactical actions?

Both Fremont's and Polk's poor decisions were due to the same four reasons. First, neither commander participated in an "unequal dialogue," as described by Cohen, adequately with their respective policy maker. A more robust discourse, in favor of the policymaker, could

have prevented both commanders from committing their mistakes. Second, both commanders lacked experience at high levels of command. This inexperience contributed to both commanders' poor communication with their political leadership. Third, neither man understood the political situation inside Kentucky. Knowledge of the political situation would likely have prompted both men to communicate with their respective political leadership prior to their tactical actions. Finally, both Fremont and Polk focused their attention and action at the tactical level. Such a narrow focus on tactical issues meant neither commander thought about the greater strategic picture. These four reasons have implications for current military professionals.

Getting the unequal dialogue "right" is as difficult today as it was during the Civil War. A key takeaway from Fremont's and Polk's case is the necessity for the military commander to have a voice in the making of the policy. Neither Fremont nor Polk were involved in Lincoln's and Davis' decision to respect Kentucky's neutrality. Early involvement from the military commander in the development of the policy helps minimize any future misunderstanding. However, this is not an easy endeavor. The disconnect between General Stanley McChrystal and President Barack Obama regarding the 2009 "surge" in Afghanistan is a recent example of how difficult this is. McChrystal was involved in the policymaking but eventually failed to give Obama what he requested. Instead of different strategic options, McChrystal offered separate troop levels to execute the current population-centric counterinsurgency strategy, which infuriated the President.¹⁶⁷ Although this is a negative example, it illustrates the difficulty of the unequal dialogue and why both statesmen and military leaders need to understand its importance.

As described, even an experienced leader like McChrystal can struggle at the unequal dialogue. Neither Fremont nor Polk had the military expertise of McChrystal, contributing to their failures. Senior military leaders today need experience not just in tactical employment of forces but at the operational and strategic levels as well. Current Army doctrine supports this, "Modern

¹⁶⁷ Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 278, 280.

organizational leaders have developed a strong background in fundamentals as well as an appreciation for the geopolitical consequences of their application.”¹⁶⁸ In selecting leaders for senior commands, the US military must continue to consider non-tactical experience as important as tactical. Experience at non-tactical levels also gives leaders a greater appreciation for the non-military aspects of an operational environment.

Neither Fremont nor Polk understood the political situation inside Kentucky. This ignorance was a failure at the first step of the commander’s role in the operations process, understand. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 5-0, *The Operations Process*, states that understanding is essential for a commander to “establish context” and is “essential in decision making during planning and execution.”¹⁶⁹ This case serves as a cautionary tale for commanders who ignore the non-military aspects of their operational environment. By failing to gain understanding, Fremont and Polk were unable to conduct the remainder of the commander’s role in the operations process adequately and made detrimental decisions. Commanders today must ensure they understand their operational environment so that it provides context for future decision making.

If Fremont or Polk had better understood the complexity of their operational environment, they likely would not have focused exclusively on the tactical level of war. Instead, both commanders were overwhelmed with tactical problems and remained blinded to the larger strategic picture. Today, doctrine designates certain roles and responsibilities for different echelons of command. For example, a combatant commander links the operational and strategic levels of war, a corps links the operational and the tactical, and a division is a tactical

¹⁶⁸ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 10-1.

¹⁶⁹ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-3.

headquarters..¹⁷⁰ At the onset of the Civil War, neither army had developed such a system, leaving Fremont and Polk with responsibilities at all three levels of warfare. Current commanders should recognize the importance of how their commands are structured. Ensuring that one headquarters can focus “up” at the strategic level of war while another can focus “down” on tactical issues can help prevent a repeat of Fremont’s and Polk’s mistakes.

What is most striking about Fremont’s and Polk’s mistakes is that they made sense at the tactical level and yet were reckless at the strategic. If Kentucky was firmly on the side of the Union or the Confederacy, then the two commanders’ decisions would be far less controversial. Instead their actions had major implications on the future conduct of the Civil War. The reasons why the two commanders acted the way they did have implications for future wars. Today’s doctrine adequately covers the importance of experience, understanding the operational environment, and not focusing too much on tactical actions. However, the ability for a senior military commander to engage successfully in Cohen’s unequal dialogue with a policymaker is not something easily executed or described. Despite this difficulty, the importance of the unequal dialogue must not be forgotten, lest a future commander errs like Fremont and Polk and alters the course of a war.

¹⁷⁰ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), I-13; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps; Division Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1-6-1-7.

Bibliography

- Chase, Salmon P. *The Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase*. Washington DC: American Historical Association, 1903.
- Brown, Kent Masterson. *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State*. Mason City, IA: Savas Publishing Company, 2000.
- Clark, Donald A. *The Notorious "Bull" Nelson: Murdered Civil War General*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Cohen, Eliot A. *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*. New York: Free Press, 2002.
- Connelly, Thomas Lawrence. *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.
- Coulter, E. Merton. *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*. Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1966.
- Craig, Berry F. "The Jackson Purchase Considers Secession: The 1861 Mayfield Convention." *The Kentucky Historical Society* 99, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 339-361.
- Crist, Lynda Lasswell and Mary Seaton Dix, eds. *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*. Vol. 7, 1861. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991.
- Eicher, John H. and David J. Eicher. *Civil War High Commands*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Evans, Clement A. *Confederate Military History: A Library of Confederate States History*. Vol. 11, *Kentucky*. Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899.
- Finck, James W. *Divided Loyalties: Kentucky's Struggle for Armed Neutrality in the Civil War*. El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2012.
- Fremont, John C. "In Command In Missouri." In *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: From Sumter to Shiloh*, edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, 278-288. New York: Castle Books, 1956.
- Gienapp, William E. "Abraham Lincoln and the Border States." *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 13, no. 1 (1992): 13-46. Accessed February 11, 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.2629860.0013.104>.
- Harris, Isham, Papers, 1857-1862. Tennessee State Library, Nashville, TN.
- Harrison, Lowell Hayes. *The Civil War in Kentucky*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975.

- Hay, John and John G. Nicolay. *Abraham Lincoln: A History*. Vol. 4. New York: Century, 1890.
- Hughes, Nathaniel Cheairs and Roy P. Stonesifer. *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.
- Janowitz, Morris. *The Professional Soldier, A Social and Political Portrait*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960.
- Johnson, Timothy D. *A Gallant Little Army: The Mexico City Campaign*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007.
- Jones, J. B. *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capital*. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1982.
- Kelly, R. M. "Holding Kentucky for the Union." In *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: From Sumter to Shiloh*, edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, 373-392. New York: Castle Books, 1956.
- Leonidas Polk Papers 1767-1935, Collection #2965, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Library of Congress. "Abraham Lincoln and Emancipation." Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Accessed February 11, 2018.
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/abraham-lincoln-papers/articles-and-essays/abraham-lincoln-and-emancipation>.
- Lincoln, Abraham. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Edited by Roy Basler. Vol. 4, 1860-1861. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953.
- Long, E. B. and Barbara Long. *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861-1865*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971.
- Martin, McKenzie. "Jackson Purchase." Explore KY History. Accessed December 19, 2017.
<http://explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/367>.
- McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Moore, Frank. *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events*. Vols. 2-3. New York: Arno Press, 1977.
- Nevins, Allan. *Fremont: The West's Greatest Adventurer*. Vol. 2. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928.
- . *The War for the Union*. Vol. 1, *The Improvised War: 1861-1862*. New York: Scribner, 1959.
- Nicolay, John G. *A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: The Century Company, 1923.

- Parks, Joseph Howard. *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962.
- Reid, Brian Holden. *America's Civil War: The Operational Battlefield, 1861-1863*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008.
- Rolle, Andrew F. *John Charles Fremont: Character as Destiny*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.
- Shaler, Nathaniel Southgate. *Kentucky: A Pioneer Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1885.
- Smith, Edward Conrad. *The Borderland in the Civil War*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927.
- Speed, Thos. *The Union Cause in Kentucky, 1860-1865*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907.
- Stickles, Arndt Mathis. *Simon Bolivar Buckner: Borderland Knight*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940.
- Turkoly-Joczik, Robert L. "Fremont and the Western Department." *Missouri Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (July, 1988): 363-85.
- US Census Bureau. *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eight Census*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1864.
- US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Operations*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2017.
- . Army Doctrine Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *The Operations Process*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.
- . Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.
- . Field Manual (FM) 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014.
- US Department of Defense, Joint Staff. Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017.
- US War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. 127 vols. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894-1927.
- Woodward, Bob. *Obama's Wars*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.
- Woodworth, Steven E. *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990.
- . *No Band of Brothers: Problems in the Rebel High Command*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999.