

THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR: ESTABLISHING FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR: ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, by Major Luster R. Hobbs, 48 pages.

Understanding why the Second Seminole War took seven years to reach termination is significant for modern operational planners since creating conditions for conflict resolution is the purpose of Unified Land Operations. In the future, it is probable that the United States will engage in a conflict whose ends appear to require more materiel and greater methods than are available to the operational planner. By looking at the campaigns of the Second Seminole War's commanders, it is possible to discern the elements of operational art to help understand how the arrangement of tactical actions either furthered or hindered the government's removal policy. Setting adequate conditions favorable to conflict resolution required an investment of significant thought, effort, and time of each of the commanders. Each commander learned lessons, made improvements, suffered setbacks, and handed off issues that the next commander chose to manage, resolve, or ignore. The character of the conflict evolved as the Army struggled to establish an adequate base of operations, to improve the public's perception of its activity, and finally to create end state conditions that satisfied the political objectives.

Transforming from a peacetime military to one adapted to the unique Florida environment and to the Seminole way of fighting required one Indian Agent and three commanders before establishing an adequate base of operations and effective tactics. After three commanders, the Army adapted its way of war to satisfy public expectations of a just war, which gave the Army freedom to conduct tactical actions without answering to Congress. Finally, Colonel William Jenkins Worth continued to remove the Seminoles while Secretary of State Daniel Webster isolated the Seminoles from outside support. With the strategic objective of security on the southern border achieved, President John Tyler ended the conflict. The reason the conflict lasted seven years is that establishing these end state conditions required a whole of government approach to isolate the Seminoles and defeat them militarily while building relationships with our former adversaries, Britain and Spain.

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INTRODUCTION

The effort to remain ... would be destructive to you, and the President will not listen to such a proposition.

— General Wiley Thompson, *American State Papers* 638

Understanding why the Second Seminole War lasted seven years before reaching termination is significant for modern operational planners since creating conditions for conflict resolution is the purpose of Unified Land Operations. The recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are not the only protracted conflicts that the United States waged without a declaration of war or full support from the people. Following the War of 1812, Major General Andrew Jackson invaded Spanish Florida to preempt Seminoles, former slaves, and British forces from developing a staging base along the U.S. southern border. Adopting the philosophy of Manifest Destiny, the United States sought “security through expansion” by acquiring Florida from Spain (1821), instituting a Seminole removal policy, and repopulating Florida with U.S. citizens. The enforcement of this policy resulted in an undeclared, controversial, total war with unlimited ends but limited ways and means.¹

The end state of the Second Seminole War for the United States government was security, the equivalent to Clausewitz’s political object. At the time, the Jacksonian Democrats, Jeffersonian Democrats, and Whigs, generally agreed that might made right and, therefore, the Seminole lands belonged to the United States. To achieve these ends, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830 on the condition that the policy was by consent. Despite this condition, President Andrew Jackson (1829-1837) coerced those Seminole groups who refused to accept his terms. Since the United States’ object was the removal the entire Seminole population from the

¹ Senate, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 24th Congress, 1st Session, 1836, no. 638, 59; John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1967), 26; John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 16.

Florida territory, removing each person regardless of age or gender became the military objective of the Army. In short, the undeclared war was total, and is what we would today term ethnic cleansing.²

The way in which the United States initiated the war was through Congressional funding rather than a formal declaration. Only days after the Dade Massacre (28 December 1835), Congress approved a half-million dollars to fund the Army's removal activities and abandoned their original intent of peaceful removal. Before the Indian Removal Act (1830), however, the executive branch had already transitioned removal from peaceful to coercive means using legal, factual, and moral justifications. In 1823 and 1830, U.S. Indian agents entered into treaties with a number of Seminole chiefs. Under these treaties, the U.S. settled the territory and made nominal payments to show good faith. When Seminole leaders disagreed with contract terms, agents used duress and military force to gain consent. As Seminole leaders retaliated, agents declared the Seminoles as aggressors and justified their use of subsequent force on moral grounds.³

Transforming the Army from a peacetime to wartime organization required time and effort to learn lessons and adapt to the difficult terrain and agile enemy. The operations conducted among the people and in remote areas demanded physical and mental fortitude from the soldiers, sailors, and marines. To accomplish the mission, commanders planned campaigns, attempted to build teams, and communicated with friendly and adversarial audiences. Their activities resulted

² Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783-1846* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 249-53; John Missall and Mary Lou Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2004), 76-82; Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Peret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 81.

³ John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War*, John K. Mahon, ed., (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1966), 1; Prucha, 271, 280-1; Mahon, 64; Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, eds., *America's First Battle: 1776-1965* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), x; David Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 68.

in varying degrees of success.⁴

After seven years of conflict, the commanders collectively created conditions that met the strategic objective of reducing the Seminole population to a level that did not threaten security on the U.S. southern border. Combined with diplomatic and economic activities of the State Department, which effectively isolated the Seminoles from their former allies, the President eventually authorized an end to the conflict. Convincing the Seminoles to accept the negotiated terms required the Army to transform from a peacetime to wartime organization, adjust its tactics in a manner agreeable to the American people, and maintain a position of advantage over a determined enemy.

MILITARY ADAPTATION

During the first phase of the war (1835-1838), the Army initiated the removal policy against the Seminole population of Florida. The operational approaches of Indian Agent Wiley Thompson, Major General Winfield Scott, Governor Richard Keith Call, and Major General Thomas Jesup, while not successful in ending the war, provided opportunities for commanders to understand better the nature of the conflict, which informed subsequent campaigns and established conditions for conflict termination. These first campaigns transformed a peacetime Army into an organization adapted to the terrain and enemy with basing capable of sustaining multiple tactical actions throughout the peninsula in pursuit of strategic objectives. As they set these conditions, American leaders learned lessons regarding the acceptance of risk, unity of effort, employment of the force, and legitimacy.⁵

⁴ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 6-0: Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), iv.

⁵ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 5-0: The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2; Heller and Stofft, x.

Acceptance of Risk

For Indian Agent General Wiley Thompson (29 August 1833 to 28 December 1835), removing the Seminoles was a matter of efficient contract administration and enforcement. His first experience affirmed this assumption, because a tribe of Apalachicola Seminoles moved without difficulty. Thompson believed that each of the tribes considered the land in Florida and the land west of the Mississippi as fungible. The other tribes, however, viewed removal as a threat to their existence, because it separated them from their hunting and farming grounds. This misunderstanding caused him to accept too much risk, because he planned for the most likely Seminole course of action, yielded tempo to them, and failed to mitigate the risks.⁶

Assuming that all Seminoles would likely move peacefully, Thompson insisted on consolidating the tribes at Tampa before arranging for transport. This approach prevented him from taking advantage of each tribe's circumstances, and did not account for the most dangerous course of action, that is, forming a coalition to resist movement. Had Thompson used a divide and conquer method, he could have exploited individual tribes vulnerabilities. For instance, the Apalachicola previously sold their lands making the offer of land west of the Mississippi an opportunity. By grouping all the tribes together, Thompson allowed Osceola to exploit their similar interests. For example, the Alachua Seminoles under Micanopy wanted to keep their livestock, farms, and slaves. Under the removal policy, the Black Seminoles, led by Abraham, would return to their former plantations. By grouping all the Seminoles together, Thompson made his task more difficult. As Thompson's talks progressed throughout the summer of 1835, Osceola gained a quorum of support and transitioned to the most dangerous course of action.⁷

Keeping his intentions from Thompson, Osceola increased the tempo of his preparations

⁶ Missall and Missall, 9, 32, 80.

⁷ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0: Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-14; Senate, *American State Papers*, 57; Mahon, 81-9, 101, 128, 201; Missall and Missall, 87.

by building his coalition, gathering supplies, and moving their families. Thompson used gifts and ceremonies to convince eight of the thirteen chiefs that he negotiated with to move from Florida during 1834 and 1835, however, the irreconcilables led by Osceola and the Alachua Seminoles held parleys of their own, which Thompson did to attend. To convince the remaining tribes of U.S. mal-intent, Osceola provoked Thompson to an argument and ended up in chains. When Thompson forced Osceola to sign an agreement to move, Thompson lost nearly all of his support. Meanwhile, the tribes drew gunpowder and lead from Thompson's disbursing agent. The original intent of supplying the Seminoles with ammunition was to create Seminole dependency on U.S. aid and atrophy their outside support, however, in this case it increased their war making capacity. Throughout the fall of 1835, the Seminoles vacated their towns and moved their families into the swamps. On 26 November 1835, Osceola assassinated Charley Emathla to terrorize any Seminoles considering emigration. At this point, Osceola moved into the most dangerous course of action.⁸

Up to this point, Thompson failed to mitigate the risks of pushing Osceola into resistance by the approach to his negotiations or assembling sufficient lethal force to deter aggression. Up to this point, Brigadier General Duncan L. Clinch used the forces for ceremonies at parleys. Numbering 489 soldiers and officers with fifty-three at St. Augustine, 163 at Tampa, and 303 at Ocala, Clinch force did not have sufficient lethal force to deter the various tribes taking action. Dispersed between at least ten towns, the Seminole population, totaling approximately 4,000, outnumbered Clinch's force nearly two to one assuming one-fourth of the population were fighting aged males. Recognizing the need for more combat power, Clinch recommended that Thompson display cannon at future talks. To counter the growing threat, Thompson requested

⁸ Missall and Missall, 89; Mahon, 96-101; Bemrose, 25.

additional military forces, but none would arrive in time.⁹

Caught by surprise, Thompson and Clinch failed to produce “maximum relative combat power” at the decisive places and times required. On 28 December 1835, Osceola attacked Thompson at Fort King in Ocala and ambushed Major Dade’s column, including Company C, Second Artillery and Company B, Third Artillery, on the road from Tampa to Ocala. Of the eight officers and one hundred enlisted in Dade’s column, only three survived. Thompson and Clinch underestimated the force required to deter Seminole reactions to the coercive negotiations.¹⁰

“Overly deceived by prewar facts and calculations,” Thompson underestimated “the difficulty of attaining [the]...strategic ends.” Failing to plan for a more dangerous course of action, Thompson failed to address emerging risks and yielded tempo to Osceola. As Huba Wass de Czege remarked, it is “far better to err on the side of too much rather than not enough, because any adjustments in the strength required to achieve victory will impose delays that accrue benefits to the enemy and heavy costs in blood and treasure to the American people.” In reaction to this crisis, Secretary of War Lewis Cass ordered Major General Winfield Scott to take command and remove the Seminoles.¹¹

Unity of Effort

Ordered to Florida during a crisis, Major General Winfield Scott anxiously developed his campaign plan in relative isolation using his adaptation of Napoleonic doctrine, which he entitled *Infantry Tactics*. Overly confident in its effectiveness, Scott overemphasized the importance of

⁹ Senate, *American State Papers*, 59; Mahon, 95; Woodburne Potter, *The War in Florida: Being an Exposition of Its Causes, and an Accurate History of the Campaigns of Generals Clinch, Gaines, and Scott* (Baltimore: Lewis and Coleman, 1836), 2, 9-10, 98; Senate, *American State Papers*, 57-73; Missall and Missall, 89.

¹⁰ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0*, 2-14; Senate, *American State Papers*, 59-73; Mahon, 104.

¹¹ Huba Wass de Czege, “War with Implacable Foes: What all Statesmen and Generals Need to Know,” *Army* 56, no. 5 (2006): 9-14.

“tactical instruction and an exact obedience to commands” at the expense of commitment.

Relying solely on the authority of his position and ignoring the more powerful source of power that commitment provides, General Scott failed to secure the cooperation of the U.S. Navy, the state militias, and even the U.S. Army in Florida. As a result, “Old Fuss and Feathers,” failed to achieve his objectives because he lost opportunities, maintained unrealistic expectations, and lost the confidence of his peers. In short, he lacked unity of effort.¹²

Unaware that Scott received orders to take command in Florida, Major General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, Commanding General of the West including Florida, assembled a force of 1,100 men at New Orleans and quickly departed for Tampa on three steam ships. Unaware of General Gaines’ activities, War Secretary Lewis Cass informed Scott that the line between his department and General Gaines’s department was “imaginary.” On 19 February 1836, General Gaines crossed the “imaginary” line that separated his and Scott’s departments and made his way to the Dade battleground where he interred the bodies of Dade’s force and recovered one cannon. Eight days later, the “principle force of the Seminole Indians” attacked Gaines on the “right bank of the Withlacoochee” between Tampa and Ocala. Unable to defeat the Seminole force, General Gaines ordered General Clinch to dispatch a force of 500 from Fort Drane to attack on the Seminole rear flank. General Scott, however, having already taken command of all troops in Florida beginning 26 February 1836, ordered General Clinch to stand down and let General Gaines “extricate himself from the embarrassment he has placed himself.” Rather than changing his campaign plan, General Scott argued that it would be “extremely perilous to change systems

¹² Winfield Scott, *Infantry Tactics; or Rules for the Exercise and Manoeuvres of the United States’ Infantry*, vol. 1 (New York: George Dearborn, 1835), cover letter. Senate, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry, in the Case of Major General Scott and Major General Gaines*, 24th Congress, 2nd Session, 1837, no. 224, 254; Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 564; Senate, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry*, 242.

of tactics in an army in the midst of a war, and highly inconvenient even at the beginning of one.” Unwilling to adapt, General Scott lost an opportunity to engage a large consolidated enemy force when they were vulnerable.¹³

Aware of Scott’s unrealistic expectation to use Napoleonic tactics, John H. Eaton, Florida Territorial Governor from 24 April 1834 to 16 March 1836, advised Scott that European tactics would not work against the Seminoles in the swamps of Florida. While in transit, Scott requested militia from the governors of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama along with a half-million rations to support his plan. Deciding to employ large formations from multiple points, Scott aimed his forces at his objective, the Seminole base near the Withlacoochee River, in hopes of destroying the main Seminole force to end the war. For the Seminoles, Scott’s mere presence was not sufficient to provoke a skirmish let alone a decisive battle. Determined, he tried again in March 1836 hoping for “a speedy and successful result,” but the Seminoles gave “no general battle.” After his second attempt, Scott concluded that a campaign of a single battle was not possible, and he predicted that the “war, on our part, [was], in fact, scarcely begun.” For Scott, however, the war was over.¹⁴

By May 1836, Scott lost the confidence of his colleagues because of his well-developed ability to make domestic enemies. Rather than encouraging others to help, General Scott often undertook counterproductive actions and undermined his own mission command. For example, on 30 April 1836, General Scott requested that the adjutant general provide him ““good troops

¹³ Missall and Missall, 104-11; Bemrose, 76; Senate, *American State Papers*, 62; Myer. M. Cohen, *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns* (New York: Burges & Honour, 1836), 74; Senate, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry*, 260-3, 306; The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0*, 2-13; Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Scott, LL.D.*, vol. 1 (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1864), 259, 262.

¹⁴ Mahon, 94; Senate, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry*, 227; Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Scott*, 262; Antulio J. Echevarria, II, “An American Way of War or Way of Battle?” *Strategic Studies Institute Newsletter* (January 2004), 1; Senate, *Proceedings of the Military Court of Inquiry*, 294, 306.

(not volunteers).” This communication as with many military letters and orders found its way into local papers causing Florida Territorial Governor Richard Call to ask the President for Scott’s relief. On 16 May 1836, Secretary of War Lewis Cass relieved Scott and placed Governor Call in command. At the time of his dismissal, General Scott was in Georgia suppressing Creek Indians and arguing with his subordinate, General Thomas Jesup over the poor results of a battle against the Creeks. Scott blamed Jesup failing to realize that Governor Call requested his relief. In the coming months, Congress held a court of inquiry concerning the war in which Army officers aired their dirty laundry. At the inquiry, Gaines accused Scott of starving his force and compared Scott to Benedict Arnold citing that Scott was ““the second United States general officer who has ever dared to aid and assist the open enemy.”” Scott denied all accusations. Because of his ineffective influencing skills, arrogance, and generally abrasive nature, General Scott’s operations in Florida lasted a little over a month.¹⁵

Unfortunately, Scott’s desire to implement his tactics manual superseded his desire to end the conflict. Uncomfortable with changing circumstances and quick to blame others, General Scott’s short campaign failed to take any initiative and lost an opportunity to place his army in a position of advantage when General Gaines requested help. In the end, Scott contributed to the war effort by recruiting approximately 4,000 South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida militia while requisitioning nearly a half-million rations to support the campaign.¹⁶

Employment of the Force

Having served under Major General Andrew Jackson during the Creek War and the First Seminole War, Governor Richard Keith Call used his relationship to persuade the President for

¹⁵ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 6-0*, 10; Mahon, 161-3; Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Scott*, 263-4; Mahon, 165.

¹⁶ Senate, American State Papers 628, 61; Timothy D. Johnson, *Winfield Scott: The Quest for Military Glory* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 113.

authority to take charge of the Army of the South. Governor Call's military experience as a soldier on the line and as a staff captain did not prepare him for the task. In fact, Governor Call made a better politician than a general, because he understood the strategic objectives, the Florida geography and demographics, but did not understand how to employ the force.¹⁷

From his extensive involvement in Florida politics, Call understood the removal policy well. The purpose of the policy, which started under President James Monroe, was to secure the southern U.S. border and to reduce public debt through land sales. Beginning in 1823, Call, a Congressional delegate from the Territory of Florida, prepared Florida for statehood by securing Congressional commitments for roads, a lighthouse, a naval yard, post offices, and land surveys. He also organized the sale of townships. To settle land claims authorized under Spanish rule, Call traveled to Havana, Cuba in 1830 to acquire Spain's Florida archives concerning the Arredondo cattle farm near Gainesville, as well as the Panton, Leslie and Company's, and John Forbes and Company's land claims in west Florida.¹⁸

Despite Florida's lack of development, Governor Call understood Florida's terrain and Seminole dispositions as well as any Army officer at that point could. Despite nearly three centuries of Spanish rule, Florida remained a wilderness with very little infrastructure except the Spanish port towns of St. Marks in west Florida and St. Augustine in east Florida. This lack of development favored the Seminoles who conducted attacks and vanished into the thick vegetation. In addition to fighting Seminoles with Jackson, Governor Call served with General

¹⁷ Caroline Mays Brevard, "Richard Keith Call," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1908), 7-8; The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 3-0: Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), 10.

¹⁸ James Monroe, "State of the Union Addresses by James Monroe," ed. Jim Manis, *Electronic Classics Series*, (Hazelton, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 8-10, 96; Brevard, no. 2, 8-10; Glenn Boggs, "The Case of Florida's Missing Real Estate Records," *Florida Bar Journal* 77, no. 10 (2003), 14; *Seminole Indians of the State of Florida v. United States et al.*, 13 Indian Claims Commission 326 (1964), 351; Caroline Mays Brevard, "Richard Keith Call," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1908), 10.

Clinch during a retaliatory attack on a Seminole town at the head of the Withlacoochee River in response to the Dade Massacre. During this action, the Seminoles retreated into the wilderness causing Clinch's attack to culminate due to a lack of supplies and an inability to pursue the Seminoles across water obstacles. Understanding the Seminole farming habits, Call decided to conduct a summer campaign to disrupt Seminole crops during growing season. However, due to difficulties with the Florida heat, Call delayed his summer campaign until September allowing the Seminoles to restore their supplies for winter.¹⁹

Call set out to defeat Osceola near his town at the headwaters of the Withlacoochee on 18 September 1836. Believing that the campaign would last for fifteen days, Call underestimated the resources that he would need. Given the unforgiving Florida terrain and climate, this mistake had devastating effects on his men and horses. Call might have overcome his planning shortfalls had he built better relationships with members of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army. However, he already ruined any opportunity for inter-service cooperation, because he complained to the Secretary of War about poor naval support. The Navy, instead of assisting with inland navigation of the Withlacoochee River, explored the west coast of Florida.²⁰

Ten days into his fifteen-day campaign, he arrived with his main column to find Osceola's town abandoned. Running out of supplies, his force culminated and set up camp until rations arrived on 8 October 1836. On 12 October 1836, Seminoles established a strong defensive position on the west bank of the Withlacoochee in an area known as the Cove at the head of the Withlacoochee. Just as he found himself during the retaliatory attack with Clinch, he was unable to cross the water obstacle and running short of supplies. By now, his men were malnourished and nearly 600 horses died from starvation. To make matters worse, Call's resupply boat,

¹⁹ Mahon, 174; Brevard, no. 3, 9-10; Mahon, 174-80.

²⁰ Mahon, 168; George C. Bittle, "Richard Keith Call's 1836 Campaign," *Tequesta*, no. 29 (1969): 68; Bittle, 69; Mahon, 171.

commanded by an Army officer, ran aground and sank in the mouth of the Withlacoochee leaving Call without supplies. The following month, Call attempted to give battle to the Seminoles once again. This time his exhausted force, operating on half-rations, successfully crossed the Withlacoochee between 17 and 18 November 1836 and fought the Battle of Wahoo Swamp. The Seminoles, however, broke contact preventing a decisive engagement. Unsuccessful, Call returned to his base nearly two and a half months into his campaign. When he arrived at Fort Volusia on 1 December 1836, Call learned that he had been relieved of command.²¹

While Scott's relief occurred for personality conflicts, Call's relief was for incompetence. Although Call adapted eventually to his physical environment by making the river crossing, he never understood the sustainment needs of his force. It was for this reason that President Jackson relieved him. Bewildered, Call protested to the Secretary of War that no one could have taken better care of his soldiers. Sympathetic, General Jesup, who accompanied Call on his campaign and witnessed the failures and limited successes, spoke well of Governor Call's efforts. Jesup, however, would soon realize for himself the actual difficulties of commanding in the Florida War.²²

Legitimacy

Major General Thomas Sydney Jesup, the Army's Quartermaster (1818-1836), came to Florida with recent experience fighting the Creek Indians in Alabama and, more importantly, with the knowledge of how to sustain an Army. Benefiting from Call's campaign experiences, Jesup improved the Army of the South's ability to conduct operations by extending operational reach, seizing the initiative using what today we would call Mission Command, but lost the position of

²¹ Mahon, 179-81; Bittle, 69-71.

²² Bittle, 71-2.

relative advantage by losing public support.²³

Jesup extended operational reach by adding depots to sustain a high tempo of operations across the peninsula of Florida during all seasons. As he had done against the Creeks in Alabama, Jesup used timely intelligence to target vulnerable Seminole parties between Volusia on the east coast and Tampa on the west coast. By January 1837, several detachments to develop the situation and deprive the separate Seminole bands sanctuary. This new concept enabled U.S. Marine Corps Colonel Archibald Henderson, commanding the Army of the South's Second Brigade, to seize the initiative at the Battle of Hacheelustee. These decentralized operations placed Jumper, Holatoochee, and Yaholoochee, who represented Micanopy and the Seminole tribes in a position of disadvantage causing them to agree to removal beginning 10 April 1837. It appeared that Jesup had sufficient operational reach to attack Seminole vulnerabilities throughout the territory.²⁴

Jesup empowered his subordinates by entrusting them to use their best judgment when conducting tactical actions and combining this with tactical intelligence. By allowing these officers to operate independently without his direct control and supervision, Jesup maintained pressure on Holatoochee and the Tallahassee Seminoles in vicinity of Pease Creek. Likewise, in the rest of eastern Florida during the spring of 1837, Jesup's campaign made living conditions difficult for the Alachua leaders Alligator, Micanopy, Jumper, and Abraham as well as the Mikasuki leaders John Hicks and Big Alligator, and the Isocotsattei leader, Yaholoochee. To gain a position of advantage, Jesup gathered information from prisoners captured that summer to establish a line of forts that commanded the Seminole infiltration routes between southeastern and northeastern Florida. He then used these forts as a base to patrol from east of the St. John's near

²³ Mahon, 193-6.

²⁴ Mahon, 195-200; Missall and Missall, 125-6; Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sydney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 158, 170.

St. Augustine south to Jupiter Inlet, west to Crystal River, and north to Newnansville near modern day Gainesville. In addition to cutting the Seminole lines of communication, he disrupted their ability to settle on farmable land. To maintain this high tempo of operations, the Navy's flotilla commander, Commodore Dallas, supported Jesup's efforts by providing sailors to garrison forts in the interior to free up soldiers for patrolling. Brigadier General Joseph M. Hernandez led Florida militia near Saint Augustine. In the center of the territory, Marine Corps Colonel Henderson's brigade searched for Seminole towns near modern day Orlando and captured Seminole prisoners, ponies, and supplies. Because of Henderson's actions, Micanopy, Jumper, and Abraham requested a parley on 3 February 1837, the first negotiations since Dade's massacre in December 1835.²⁵

Although General Jesup's operational reach improved allowing him to attack Seminoles where they were vulnerable, he ran into difficulty concerning national politics concerning slavery and the manner that he implemented the Indian removal policy. This is significant, because he needed public support to create conditions required to end the conflict. In other words, Henderson's tactical successes were irrelevant if the public refused to support the war.²⁶

Regionally, Jesup's messages and actions gained him support from Governor Call when Jesup commented on Call's performance as a commander. The governor and the people of Florida appreciated his words and provided support to him with General Hernandez's militia at St. Augustine. Messages that work regionally, however, can have the opposite effects nationally. For example, when writing the governors of bordering states for assistance, Jesup stoked their interest to provide militia forces by focusing on the aspect of runaway slaves stating that the war

²⁵ Mahon, 196-9; House of Representatives, *The Executive Documents*, 25th Congress, 2nd Session, vol. 1, 165; Charles Ledyard Norton, *A Handbook of Florida with Forty-Nine Maps and Plans*, 3rd ed. (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1892), xxix-xxx; Kieffer, 158.

²⁶ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0: Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 3-4.

in Florida “is a negro not an Indian war.” Jesup unwittingly encouraged abolitionists in the north to criticize his campaign. As his understanding of the character of the war developed, Jesup realized that attempts to unite the slavery issue with Indian removal only made the Seminoles stronger. So, he decided during negotiations with Jumper, Holatoochee, and Yaholoochee to allow the Black Seminoles to emigrate rather than return the former slaves to the southern states. The result of these measures drew criticism from both slaveholders and abolitionists.²⁷

As time passed, Jesup appeared to become impatient and demonstrated abusive behavior towards his adversaries such as threatening to employ Cuban bloodhounds to track down the Seminoles where they lived. In June, Osceola responded by attacking the detention camp at Fort Brooke, Tampa, releasing nearly 700 Seminoles. Frustrated by this setback, Jesup attempted to split the alliance between the Seminoles of their former-slave allies by offering the former slaves freedom and passage to the west. Overwhelmed by the difficulty of his task, in the spring of 1838 Jesup requested that Secretary of War Joel Poinsett allow the Seminoles to remain in Florida. Poinsett responded in a manner reminiscent of the Athenian response to the Melians, that to do so would only invite trouble from the other tribes. Although disagreeing with the government policy, Jesup escalated violence by announcing that he would not give quarter to Seminoles, summarily execute blacks, and hang prisoners who did not provide intelligence.²⁸

Jesup also increased the tempo of operations causing one former-slave to turn himself in to St. Augustine in September 1837, because his wife was unwilling to endure the hardships any longer. Information provided by this former-slave led to the capture of several Seminole leaders. Osceola then requested a parley under a white flag of truce. As a ruse, Jesup agreed to the parley but ordered General Hernandez to capture Osceola during the meeting. Members of the American

²⁷ Mahon, 196, 200-3.

²⁸ Kieffer, 170; Mahon, 204-16; Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Henry Dale (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875), 136.

public took both sides of the issue. The Tallahassee newspaper, *The Floridian* reported “Good News, Oseola (*sic.*) Captured,” while national papers condemned Jesup for the manner of Osceola’s capture.²⁹

The issue that General Jesup touched upon involved the differences between of the peaceful Indian Removal Act and President Jackson’s coercive removal policy. After much debate in Congress, the Indian Removal Act contained language indicating a voluntary emigration and safe passage provided by the U.S. Army, because the United States “owe[d] it to them, to ourselves, to the opinion of the world, that the process should be conducted with kindness.” Some publications such as *The North American Review* accused the United States of unjust aggression. Even President Jackson assured Congress that he would remove the Seminoles based on mutual agreement. Reality, however, created some cognitive dissonance for many members of the public as well as General Jesup. When word of General Jesup’s method of capturing Osceola made it to Washington, the *Niles’ National Register* reported Osceola’s capture as inglorious and charged Jesup with hardening the Seminole resistance. The issue divided Congress. Internationally, the Society of Friends from Canada requested that Britain get involved and indicated a willingness to assist the Seminoles from adjacent territories.³⁰

Fulfilling the *Nile’s National Register* prediction of hardening Seminole resistance,

²⁹ Mahon, 204-16; “Good News from the Army, Oseola Captured,” *The Floridian*, 1 November 1837, <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00079927/00246/3j?search=Floridian> (accessed 15 March 2013); *Niles’ National Register*, 5th ser., 3, no. 10 (Washington, DC: William Ogden Niles, 1837), 145.

³⁰ Senate, *Statutes at Large*, 21st Congress, 1st Session, 1830, c. 147, 411-412; “Removal of the Indians,” *North American Review* 30, no. 66 (1830), 62-121; “Removal of the Indians,” *North American Review* 31, no. 69 (1830), 396-442; Andrew Jackson, “Message of the President of the United States to Both Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Twenty-first Congress,” *Register of Debates*, 21st Congress, 2nd Session, 1830, ix; *Niles’ National Register*, 145; Mahon, 217; Meeting for Sufferings, “Further Information Respecting the Aborigines, Containing Extracts from the Proceedings of the Meeting for Sufferings in London, and of the Committees on Indian Affairs, of the Yearly Meetings of Philadelphia and Baltimore, Together with Some Particulars Relative to the Seminole War,” *Tracts Relative to the Aborigines*, 2nd ed., no. 3 (London: Edward Marsh, 1843), 31-34.

Coacoochee escaped from Fort Marion and sent a message to Jesup stating that "he had never made a treaty and never would; he and his people would fight it out forever." Determined more than ever, Coacoochee established his headquarters in the Everglades. Southwest of Lake Okeechobee, the Big Cyprus Swamp provided a good base of operations because of its ability to grow food on hard dry ground surrounded by a nearly impenetrable swamp.³¹

Following President Jackson's advice to Secretary of War Poinsett, Jesup aimed to "find where their women are ... and capture them –this done, they will at once surrender." This method was not new to the United States. According to historian John Grenier, violence against noncombatants and combatants was America's first way of war. When the Cherokee delegation came to Florida in December 1837 to convince Seminole leaders to emigrate, Jesup informed their leader, John Ross, that he would capture any Seminole coming in for talks. Keeping his promise, Jesup seized Micanopy under a white flag, and then he set out on his winter campaign in pursuit of Coacoochee.³²

To bring in Coacoochee, Jesup established a screen line on the west side of Lake Okeechobee and sent Colonel Zachary Taylor across the north side of the lake with over a thousand men, including regulars, Missouri volunteers, and Shawnee and Delaware Indians. On Christmas day 1837, this force battled Sam Jones and Coacoochee in the largest battle of the war, the Battle of Okeechobee. There Taylor faced fierce resistance from a well-planned and organized defense causing Colonel Taylor to suffer heavy casualties, including 26 killed in action and 112 wounded. Although Sam Jones and Coacoochee escaped across the lake, Taylor managed to capture three hundred cattle and a hundred ponies further reducing Seminoles' ability to sustain themselves. Shortly after 15 January 1838, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Levi N. Powell patrolling near

³¹ Charles H. Coe, *Red Patriots: The Story of the Seminoles* (Cincinnati, OH: The Editor Publishing Company, 1898), 120-8.

³² Missall and Missall, 149; Mahon, 222-3.

the Jupiter inlet suffered an ambush along the Loxahatchee River in southeast Florida only a few miles away from Colonel Taylor's Battle of Okeechobee. Lieutenant Powell withdrew under pressure suffering twenty casualties. Nine days later, on 24 January 1838, with the location of Coacoochee identified, General Jesup led an attack on the Seminole force, estimated at 300, in the Loxahatchee swamps with the Second Dragoon Regiment, artillerymen firing Congreve rockets and six-pounders, and Tennessee volunteers. During the difficult charge through the cypress swamp, Jesup suffered 38 casualties. The number of Seminole casualties is unknown, because, once again, the Indians vanished during the attack. This battle, the Second Battle of Loxahatchee, was the last major battle of the war although it was not the end of violence. With Osceola, Micanopy, King Philip, and Jumper in Jesup's custody, Seminole chiefs Tuskegee and Halleck Hadjo proposed an end to the conflict on the terms that they remain south of Lake Okeechobee.³³

Eager to end the war, Jesup allowed the Seminoles to remain in camp next to him while he forwarded Tuskegee and Halleck Hadjo's offer to Secretary of War Poinsett. Jesup requested that Secretary of War Poinsett allow the Seminoles to settle in south Florida until the time was better suited for removal. Secretary Poinsett, however, ordered Jesup to capture or destroy them. Jesup followed Poinsett's orders and captured approximately five hundred Seminoles in the adjacent camp. By the spring of 1838, two more chiefs, Alligator and John Cavallo, also surrendered. Troubled by the policy and by the public criticism, Jesup requested to be relieved of his command. On 29 April 1838, he received permission to turn over his command to the hero of the Battle of Okeechobee, Zachary Taylor.³⁴

³³ *The Floridian*, 1 November 1837; Missall and Missal, 149; John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: Basic Books, 2004), x, 77 ; John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 224; Missall and Missall, 141; Mahon, 226-8; Coe, 125; Mahon, 232-4; Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars: 1817-1858* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 108; Missall and Missall, 146; Mahon, 247.

³⁴ Missall and Missall, 146-7, 151.

Jesup's campaign results were bittersweet. General Jesup's successes included improved basing to enable operations improving operational reach across the peninsula of Florida for long durations. This enabled Jesup's forces to seize the initiative against Seminole vulnerabilities where they found them. Gaining commitment from his subordinates and peers alike, he was able to conduct decentralized operations through previously unexplored territory under inclement circumstances resulting in significant attrition of the Seminole leaders and their populations. Uneasily but dutifully practicing *chevauchée*, Jesup fought unfairly to remove the majority of the Seminoles from Florida. Humbled and embarrassed by his experience, he informed the Secretary of War that under the current operational approach, the war would continue at a considerable expense into the future.³⁵

Establishing operations during the first phase of the Second Seminole War required commanders to overcome internal and external obstacles. Understanding how much risk to accept, the unity of effort required, the need to adapt rapidly to changing situations, and the legitimacy of one's actions required officers to learn from their experiences in order to adapt a peacetime Army into a wartime organization. Given a clear end state to remove all the Seminoles from Florida, commanders developed their operational approaches and made significant strides in bringing about the end state. The effect of removal, however, was a threat to the existence of the Seminole population, which pushed violence to the absolutes. General Jesup relinquished his authority understanding that under these conditions the war would continue for many more years. General Taylor, however, decided to take a different approach.³⁶

PUBLIC EXPECTATION

By the second phase of the war (1838-1841), Jesup had established an adequate base of

³⁵ Mahon, 235-6.

³⁶ Clausewitz, 80.

operations and made significant progress on removal of the Seminole population. However, the public questioned the legitimacy of his operations. Well-connected in Congress and understanding the politics involved in the war, General Taylor approached the problem from a different perspective intending to correct the issues of public perception. Meanwhile, during Taylor's campaign, Major General Alexander Macomb, Commanding General of the U.S. Army, decided to come to Florida with broad negotiating powers and declare the war at a conclusion. The war, however, would be over only when all parties agreed to stop fighting. Shortly after Macomb's declaration, the formerly peaceful Spanish Seminoles initiated hostilities. With violence renewed against Florida settlers, Taylor requested relief and Brigadier General Walker K. Armistead assumed command. Owing much to Jesup for establishing a good base of operations and learning hard lessons concerning public perception, both Taylor and Armistead set conditions for conflict termination, first, by first taking an indirect approach to reduce public animosity and, then, by seizing the initiative from the Seminoles.³⁷

Indirect Approach

Following his tenure, General Jesup requested advice from his friend and subordinate, Brigadier General Taylor, concerning complaints from Congress. Taylor advised Jesup not to confront his critics without first consulting political confidants. Involved in a controversy of his own with the State of Missouri for an unflattering report from the Battle of Okeechobee, Taylor called on his friend, Kentucky Senator John J. Crittenden, for political cover. In addition, Taylor provided Crittenden with political ammunition to use against Secretary of War Joel R. Poinsett and the General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, Major General Alexander Macomb, for logistical and administrative inefficiencies. He also blamed the Florida militia for Coacoochee's escape and

³⁷ Mahon, 257; George R. Adams, *General William S. Harney: Prince of Dragoons* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 71.

explained why he believed the Missouri volunteers were unfit for Florida service. On 24 January 1838, Crittenden used the information concerning Army inefficiencies to block Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton's request for an increase in Army officers. In the Senate on 14 February 1838, Benton charged Zachary Taylor with improperly employing the Missouri Regiment during the Battle of Okeechobee. Crittenden in response lauded the Missouri volunteers and dismissed Taylor's report as an unintentional misstatement. Reciprocating, Benton dropped the demand for an inquiry and commended Taylor's quality as an officer. Instead of defending his actions in court, Taylor received "high commendation," which General-in-Chief Macomb published in the *Niles' National Register* on 24 February 1838.³⁸

In this volatile political climate, the newly promoted Brevet Brigadier General Zachary Taylor assumed command of the Army of the South on 15 May 1838. Wishing to avoid the political entanglements of Jesup, he developed a different approach altogether, which accounted for his understanding of terrain, enemy, civilian, and military capabilities. This plan attempted to avoid the moral entanglements of slavery and ethics concerning customs of war. To complement Taylor's activities, the Secretary of War Poinsett sent General Macomb to negotiate a peace with the Seminoles. Through mishap, however, Macomb's efforts caused the Spanish Seminoles to open a new front in the Everglades. Unexpectedly, another national controversy ignited over the use of Cuban dogs to hunt the Seminoles. Taylor decided on a less risky indirect approach that focused on protecting residents, denied Seminoles subsistence on the best land, and avoided

³⁸ Senate, "Increase of the Army," *Congressional Globe*, 25 Congress, 2nd Session, 1838, vol. 6, no. 1, 133; Elbert B. Smith, *President Zachary Taylor: The Hero President*, The First Men: America's President's Series (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2007), 65; Harry A. Kersey, Jr., and Michael Petersen, "'Was I a Member of Congress...': Zachary Taylor's Letter to John J. Crittenden, January 12, 1838," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (1997), 460, 451; Senate, "Increase of the Army," 133; H. Montgomery, *The Life of Major General Zachary Taylor, Twelfth President of the United States* (Buffalo, NY: Derby, Miller & Company, 1849), 58; Senate, "Missouri Volunteers in Florida," *Congressional Globe*, 25 Congress, 2nd Session, 1838, vol. 6, no. 1, 182; *Niles' National Register*, 5th ser., 3, no. 26, (Washington, DC: William Ogdén Niles, 1838), 1.

political issues.³⁹

Rather than chase the Seminoles as he did during Jesup's fall campaign of 1837, Taylor decided to protect the Florida population. He based his decision on an analysis of Florida geography, Seminole habits, and his low opinion of the utility of state militia. He believed the sandy soil of southeast Florida would not allow Seminoles to subsist for any lengthy period. Therefore, he decided to secure the rich soil of the northeast, middle, and west Florida to force the Seminoles south and make life difficult on them in the swamps. Taylor also realized that his foe tended to choose when, where, and how to fight. Based on his three weeks experience in the field during December 1837, Taylor's single battle resulted in 139 casualties and inflicted only twenty-five Seminole casualties. Although Congress touted the Battle of Okeechobee as a great success, Taylor did not view using large columns to pursue the Seminoles as worthwhile. Believing in the limited utility of militia, he only employed them along the Suwannee River while leaving his regular forces to occupy a line of forts between Tampa and New Smyrna. Taylor designed this string of forts to hold the Seminoles in the swamps south of Tampa. After socializing his plan with Governor Call, Taylor received approval from Secretary of War Poinsett to implement it beginning 24 January 1839. The plan known as his "System of Squares" required four regiments to develop townships bounded by roads twenty-miles square. With a fort and local garrison supported each township. Despite Taylor's efforts, his plan did not prevent Seminole raids against Florida and Georgia residents.⁴⁰

The Seminoles involved in the raids belonged to four remaining bands: the first led by Sam Jones, Chitto Tustenuggee, and Holata Mico; the second, Hospetarke and Passacka; the third band belonging to Chakaika of the Spanish Indians; and the last band belonging to Otalke Thloco.

³⁹ Mahon, 250-7; Missall and Missall, 166-73.

⁴⁰ Kersey and Peterson, 452; Smith, 63; Kersey and Peterson, 450; Zachary Taylor to M. Davenport, 12 March 1839, Florida Documents Collection, Box 3, Folder 31, University of Miami, Miami, FL; Smith, 67; Taylor, 2-3.

The reason the murders took place as far north as Georgia was that after the Battle of Loxahatchee, the Army significantly reduced its troop strength. Total U.S. forces in south Florida went from about 6,100 service members in 1837 to approximately 2,300 in May of 1838. Fewer troops meant greater Seminole freedom of movement, which allowed the Seminoles initially to slip back into northern Florida where they could subsist in their hammocks.⁴¹

To force the Seminoles south of the line of forts, Taylor divided Florida into five departments. Colonel David Twiggs was responsible for northeast Florida between the Atlantic and St. John's River south to New Smyrna. Colonel Alexander Fanning received responsibility for Fort Mellon at Lake Monroe in east-central Florida. Colonel William Davenport established operations near the Withlacoochee River, and Lieutenant Colonel J. Green commanded middle Florida between St. Marks and the Suwannee River. Along the Georgia border, Major Gustavus Loomis received responsibility for the Florida-Georgia border near the Okefenokee Swamp. Taylor's plan gained a position of relative advantage over Seminole bands by what appeared to be acceptable means. With decentralized operations across the departments, Seminoles moved into southeastern Florida on their own volition into inhospitable conditions and military violence appeared justifiable to protect U.S. citizens. Taylor called his war an "Indian hunt," however, it was really an anti-subsistence campaign, which he hoped would cause either "the expulsion or extermination" of the Seminoles.⁴²

In order to reduce political risk, Taylor did his best to avoid sensitive issues. Rather than placing himself between slavery and antislavery advocates, he shipped the former-slaves along with the Seminoles to New Orleans for resettlement west of the Mississippi. In addition, he honored flags of truce. By negotiating with his adversaries, he convinced the remaining tribes of

⁴¹ Mahon, 247-9.

⁴² Mahon, 253; William C. Sturtevant, "Chakaika and the 'Spanish Indians': Documentary Sources Compared with Seminole Tradition," *Tequesta* 13 (1953): 44; Taylor, 2-3.

the Apalachicola to emigrate during October 1839. Taylor, however, did not avoid all political entanglements. For example, he and Governor Call disagreed on how to employ the Florida militia. As a result, Secretary of War Poinsett requested that President Martin Van Buren (1837-1841) replace Governor Call with Judge Robert R. Reid in November 1839. Taylor also received public criticism for enforcing austerity measures, which deprived Florida residents of valuable government contracts. The most damaging incident, however, involved the use of bloodhounds. When Jesup's dogs finally arrived in Florida, Governor Reid offered them to Taylor, which he accepted the dogs for trial. Taylor, however, found the dogs ineffective and refused to employ them. The affair made national headlines causing John Quincy Adams to address the issue in the House of Representatives. Years later, Ralph Waldo Emerson used this issue against Taylor during his presidency. Despite Taylor's efforts, some controversies found him.⁴³

Somewhat surprisingly, Alexander Macomb arrived in Florida during March 1839 with expanded powers to negotiate an end to the war. Upon arrival, Macomb sent word for the remaining Seminole chiefs to attend a parley at Fort King, Ocala. In May 1839, Chitto Tustenuggee and Halleck Tustenuggee arrived for talks. Even though the Tustenugees represented only one of the four bands, Macomb conducted the parley and established a reservation under the Indian Intercourse Act of June 1834 in the area south of Charlotte's Harbor. With Chitto and Halleck agreeing to the terms, Macomb declared the war over on 25 May 1839. This declaration, however, was premature, because local Floridians felt insecure. To allay Floridian fears Macomb and Poinsett published their official letters in Florida newspapers explaining the purpose of their decision. The letter from Macomb indicated that he actually did not intend to honor the agreement, as the Seminoles understood it. Reinforcing this concept, Secretary Poinsett's letter indicated that this agreement would actually lead to a more rapid

⁴³ Mahon, 251; Louis Ruchames, "Two Forgotten Addresses by Ralph Waldo Emerson," *American Literature* 28, no. 4 (1957), 430.

emigration. Neither Macomb nor Taylor realized that the Seminoles monitored the newspapers. Colonel William S. Harney, unaware that Macomb published his letters, established a trading post on the Caloosahatchee River in support of the agreement. On 23 July 1839, Hospetarke and Chakaika led a surprise attack on Harney's trading post killing or capturing eighteen of Harney's men. The significance of this attack is that Chakaika's band of Spanish Seminoles joined the war after four years of neutrality. It is unclear exactly what motivated Chakaika to get involved in the war. Possibly, it was an unintended consequence of Taylor's campaign, which pushed warring Seminole bands south of the Tampa-New Smyrna line of forts providing opportunities for the other Seminole tribes to influence the Spanish Seminoles. Adding some credence to this hypothesis, two non-Spanish Seminoles lived amongst Chakaika's tribe during this period, and Hospetarke, of the non-Spanish Seminoles, accompanied Chakaika in the attack on Harney. Thus, it appears that Taylor and Macomb may have unintentionally established conditions for more conflict.⁴⁴

Given the politically charged atmosphere, General Taylor's indirect approach designed to create conditions favorable for settlers and unfavorable for the Seminoles placed the Apalachicola Seminoles in a position of disadvantage, thus, incentivizing them to emigrate. As for the remaining bands of Seminoles, General Macomb's offer of a reservation appeared to strengthen their resolve to fight. By the end of Taylor's campaign, Florida benefited from a significant amount of infrastructure improvements provided by the Army, including the creation of 53 new posts, 848 miles of road, more than 3,000 feet of bridges and causeways, and a mapped coastline. When, Taylor left Florida in April 1840, however, a conclusion to the war was nowhere in sight.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Missall and Missall, 173-5; Adams, 70; Mahon, 257-62; Sturtevant, 43-5.

⁴⁵ Smith, 67; Mahon, 261.

Seizing the Initiative

Taylor left command the month before Brevet Brigadier General Walker Keith Armistead assumed control of the Army of the South in May of 1840. This break in continuity may have hindered operations, but Armistead already possessed a good understanding of the environment from the vantage of observing Jesup and Taylor. As the administrative commander at Tampa during Jesup's winter campaign, Armistead understood how Jesup took the initiative during the battles of Okeechobee and Loxahatchee, and he understood Taylor's "System of Squares." In May 1840, the problem facing Armistead was a rise in Seminole attacks that terrorized Floridians in their homes and the Army along the roads in northeast Florida. To combat this, Armistead offered peace talks while launching a punitive expedition. As violence escalated throughout the territory, Armistead gained freedom of movement and controlled the tempo to seize the initiative and gain a position of advantage against two of the four remaining bands.⁴⁶

To gain freedom of movement, Armistead used Taylor's idea to establish a cordon around the fertile land and the population of northeast Florida. Taylor established a screen in the west along the Suwannee River with regular forces, employed a militia to secure the area north of Ocala, and regulars to guard the east-west line of forts to prevent Seminole infiltration from the south. To deny Seminoles sanctuary, he directed the local forces to attack the hammocks in the area south of Ocala where he believed the Seminoles resided. Armistead complimented his security with raids aimed to destroy Seminole crops in the area between Taylor's old line of forts and the new cordon he established near Ocala. Armistead's tactical actions occurred in the area bounded by the Withlacoochee River in the west, the St. Johns River in the east, Fort Mellon near Lake Okeechobee in the south, and Fort King at Ocala in the north. His intent was that life for the

⁴⁶ Missall and Missall, 182-7; Mahon, 274, 208, 222; The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0*, 2-1.

Seminoles would become so desperate that they would agree to emigrate.⁴⁷

Armistead controlled the tempo of operations by maintaining an adequate depth of basing that allowed him to attack the Seminoles at a time and place when they were vulnerable. As Call intended to do years before, Armistead attacked the Seminoles during the summer months when their crops were growing and they were less mobile. Seminole bands at the beginning of his campaign were attempting to seize the initiative through a terror campaign on civilians and military personnel at Apalachicola, Newnansville, Micanopy, and St. Augustine. In June, violence increased when Armistead located Coacoochee's hideaway at Wekiva near modern day Orlando. Coacoochee responded by increasing his terror attacks. To increase pressure on Coacoochee, Armistead reopened Fort Mellon to support operations near Wekiva. That same month, Colonel William S. Harney captured Coacoochee's mother, who provided valuable intelligence on how Coacoochee's tribe sustained itself. She showed Harney villages on the St. John's River where their band conducted trade. That summer, Armistead's forces also skirmished with a band, destroyed a village, and ruined over 500 acres of crops at Wahoo Swamp, Chocachatti, and Ocklawaha. His operations put Seminole bands in northeast Florida in a position where they might not have sufficient food to get them through the winter. However, in south Florida, Chakaika of the Spanish Seminoles raided Indian Key and killed Dr. Henry Perrine while stealing stores of powder and other supplies. Using a former-slave who escaped from Chakaika's camp to guide him, Harney led a punitive riverine expedition manned by soldiers paddling navy canoes across the Everglades from Fort Dallas in Miami to Chakaika's Island on the other side of the peninsula during the month of December. After the raid on Chakaika's Island, Harney hung Chakaika as a warning for other Seminoles. Also during the raid, Harney's force captured Chakaika's wife and the remaining Spanish Seminoles and removed them to the West. When

⁴⁷ Mahon, 274-6.

news of Chakaika's treatment reached Sam Jones, he "declared eternal hostility and cruelty to the whites." Unlike Jesup's treatment of Osceola, Harney's treatment of Chakaika did not cause Armistead's campaign significant issues with the American public.⁴⁸

By winter of 1840, Armistead's position of advantage concerning the Seminole bands manifested itself in negotiations. In November, Thlocklo Tustenuggee of the Tallahassee Seminoles and Halleck Tustenuggee of the Mikasuki Seminoles expressed an interest to negotiate. Although nothing came of their desire to talk, by December Echo Emathla, another Tallahassee, turned himself in. After the effects of the starving scheme took its toll on the tribes during the winter, Coosa Tustenuggee, Billy Bowlegs, and Coacoochee requested to negotiate in March 1841. The results of Armistead's summer campaign of 1840 included the removal of an additional 686 Seminoles leaving only an estimated 300 Seminole warriors in Florida.⁴⁹

By maintaining freedom of movement, seizing the initiative, and gaining a position of advantage, Armistead forced two of the four remaining Seminole bands to the negotiating table. Using a combination of Taylor's successful security actions and Jesup's successful pursuits at a time when the tribes were most vulnerable during the growing season, Armistead used the best aspects of his predecessors' campaigns and combined them to force the Seminoles to convince them to quit.⁵⁰

The war in Florida War suffered from poor public perception, because of Jesup's refusal to follow customs of service regarding flags of truce and getting involved in the slavery debate. The politically astute General Taylor corrected the public's perception concerning the issues of

⁴⁸ Mahon, 278-9; Toni Carrier, "Trade and Plunder Networks in the Second Seminole War in Florida: 1835-1842" (graduate school thesis and dissertation, University of South Florida, 2005), 120; Mahon, 278; Sturtevant, 48; John Titcomb Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusions of the Florida War* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1848), 319; Sturtevant, 54; Adams, 76-7.

⁴⁹ Mahon, 281-7.

⁵⁰ Missall and Missall, 186.

slavery and violations of the norms of war, but fell into a morass of his own concerning his opinion of the militia, use of contractors, and the employment of dogs to hunt people. General Macomb, attempting to end the war in haste, accidentally escalated the conflict when his influence plan backfired resulting in an uprising of Seminoles rather than a lasting peace. Able to observe the other commanders and benefit from their lessons, Armistead seized the initiative and in a year's time removed more than 600 Seminoles leaving only about 300 Seminole warriors for his successor. By fighting fairly, Taylor gained freedom of movement for Armistead to begin seizing the initiative during the summer of 1840 and in some cases achieving strategic objectives against several Seminole bands. With these successes, the Army decided to reduce its footprint in Florida.⁵¹

POLITICAL OBJECTIVE

With public dissent reduced and recent military progress made against the Seminoles, conflict resolution appeared to be in sight during the final phase of the war (1841-1842). In the sixth year of the war, the most significant event concerning termination occurred by chance. At the policy level, President William Henry Harrison died in office after less than a month of service. This allowed Vice President John Tyler, known thereafter as "his accidency," to come to power. Supporting neither Whig nor Jacksonian Democrat policies, Tyler, a Jeffersonian Democrat, made his policies along states' rights and strict constructionist principles. Harrison's cabinet, with the exception of the Secretary of State, abandoned Tyler when he vetoed the creation of the federal bank. This allowed Tyler to build a cabinet that would help him implement his policies. Given the combined effects of the Secretary of State's diplomacy and his high tempo operations, Worth reduced the Seminole population to a total of 300 Seminoles and received

⁵¹ Missall and Missall, 189-91.

permission to terminate the war.⁵²

The Role of Chance

When the nation elected President William Henry Harrison and Vice President John Tyler, “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too,” to the executive office in 1840, the belief was that the White House would execute Whig policies. President Harrison, known as “Tippecanoe” for his actions during the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 against the Shawnee Indians of modern day Indiana, believed in nationalist and strict constructionist policies. Vice President Tyler, a states’-rights and strict constructionist advocate, came over to the Whig party to help them win southern votes in opposition to Jacksonian Democrats. While Whigs welcomed Tyler’s southern votes, they did not welcome his states’ rights policies. Following Harrison’s unexpected death, Tyler vetoed an important Whig initiative. In protest, Whig members abandoned him. Opposed now by Whigs and Jacksonian Democrats, Tyler reassembled his cabinet.⁵³

What ignited his political controversy was his veto of a national bank. As an advocate of states’-rights, Tyler was concerned about the concentration of too much power in the hands of a few. In protest, his entire Whig cabinet resigned with the exception of the Secretary of State Daniel Webster, who continued to mend relations with Great Britain. Tyler appointed new members to his cabinet, including John Canfield Spencer as the Secretary of War in September 1841. Helpful to Worth, Spencer opposed the “forced removal” of the Seminoles. Previously in the War Department, Winfield Scott assumed the position of General-in-Chief of the Army on 25 June 1841 after Alexander Macomb died in office. Scott, a long-time friend, provided Worth an

⁵² Clausewitz, 85; Michael Beschloss and Hugh Sidey, “John Tyler,” *The Presidents of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House Historical Association, 2009), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/johntyler> (accessed 15 March 2013).

⁵³ Mahon, 292-3; Beschloss and Sidey; Bailey, 212.

advocate in Washington.⁵⁴

Given his political problems, Tyler managed to execute his policies, which included resolving disputes with U.S. neighbors, balancing the budget, and preparing the country for westward expansion. Among these disputes, he resolved issues with Britain concerning U.S. involvement in a revolt of Upper Canada as well as the Maine and Oregon borders. Fiscally responsible, Tyler also worked to reduce expenses, increase trade through a compromise on tariffs, and create a sound currency. To pave the way for westward expansion, Tyler planned to establish forts along our northern frontier westward to the Pacific, improve the postal service, and expand the Navy to protect the coast. Fashioning himself after Thomas Jefferson rather than Andrew Jackson, Tyler declared his intent to establish conditions for further “prosperity of our country” without “the guilt or calamity of conquest,” which he declared during his first State of the Union Address.⁵⁵

During his only term of office, Tyler changed the direction of the country by terminating grievances and focusing on prosperity. He accomplished this through compromising with Congressional Whigs and the Democrat-Republicans, which included the Jacksonian- and Jeffersonian-Democrats. Because of his cabinet abandoning him, Tyler appointed Spencer to the position of Secretary of War. Tyler’s predecessor, John Bell, a pro-slavery would likely have supported Florida’s desire to remove all Seminoles before concluding the conflict. Concerning other elements of national power significant to the conclusion of the Second Seminole War,

⁵⁴ Beschloss and Sidey; Henry A. Wise, *Seven Decades of the Union: The Humanities and Materialism, Illustrated by a Memoir of John Tyler, with Reminiscences of Some of His Great Contemporaries, the Transition State of This Nation – Its Dangers and Their Remedy* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1876), 183-9; Laurence M. Hauptman, *The Tonawanda Senecas' Heroic Battle Against Removal: Conservative Activist Indians* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011), 53-54; Wise, 201; Mahon, 309.

⁵⁵ Bailey, 210-4, 221-5; John Tyler, “State of the Union Addresses by John Tyler,” ed. Jim Manis, *Electronic Classics Series* (Hazelton, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 1-21; Wise, 231.

Secretary of State Webster mended diplomatic relations with Britain, which helped to ensure security of the United States' southern border by clearing material and moral support from the various Seminole tribes. The timing of Spencer's and Webster's conclusive actions speaks loudly to Tyler's policies. The long-standing disputes between the U.S. and Britain over Canada and between the U.S. and the Seminole Indians over Florida concluded in August 1842. This allowed Tyler to focus the country on westward expansion.⁵⁶

Diplomatic and Economic Isolation

Following the Treaty of Ghent in 1814 with Britain and the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 with Spain, the Seminole tribes suffered a decline in outside support from their traditional allies. Initially for the Seminoles it appeared that the Treaty of Ghent would not affect their relations, because Britain continued to provide war materiel and promises of future support through clandestine operations. It also appeared that, the tribes would continue to receive support from Spain after the Adams-Onis Treaty through Scottish trading companies operating under Spanish license in Florida. However, improved diplomatic relations between the United States, Spain, and Britain began to affect the ability of the Seminole bands to fight. The remaining unofficial support failed to enable the Seminoles to gain a position of advantage over the U.S. Army.⁵⁷

During the War of 1812, British Royal Marine Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nicholls landed in Florida on 31 August 1814 ““for the purpose of annoying the only enemy Great Britain has in the world,”” the United States. Even after the Treaty of Ghent (24 December 1814), Nicholls continued his mission. In a letter dated 12 May 1815 to United States Army Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, the commander at Fort Hawkins near Macon, Georgia, Nicholls asserted the rights of Seminole chiefs including Billy Bowlegs against U.S. citizen incursions into Seminole

⁵⁶ Mahon, 292-4, 310; Bailey, 212-7; Knetsch, 139.

⁵⁷ Bailey, 143, 172-5.

lands citing article 9 of the Treaty of Ghent. In other words, Nicholls intended to advocate Seminole rights against the U.S. To encourage Hawkins' compliance with his demands, Nicholls informed him that the Seminoles are "well armed, as the whole nation now is, and stored with ammunition and provisions, having a strong hold to retire upon." Additionally, Nicholls informed Hawkins that the Seminoles "signed a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain, as well as one of commerce and navigation." Britain, however, did not ratify this treaty. Nicholls wrote his letter from the fort he built for the Seminoles along the Apalachicola River at Prospect Bluff, the strong hold that he referred to in his letter to Hawkins. He equipped the fort with a cannon, small arms, and gunpowder, then escorted Hillisajo, also known as Francis the Prophet, as a Seminole representative to London in order to request further materiel support from the British government. Based on Nicholls' show of support, the various Seminole tribes had good reason to believe at this point that they and Britain were allies.⁵⁸

On 14 May 1815, Major General Edmund Gaines, commander at Fort Stoddert in the Mississippi Territory, now located in Alabama, informed the War Department of Nicholls arming of the Seminoles after the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent. Gaines enclosed a deposition of British Royal Marine, Sergeant Major Samuel Jervais attesting to the British provision of arms that "all lands, ceded by the Creeks, in the treaty with General Jackson were to be restored; otherwise the Indians must fight for those lands, and that the British would in a short time assist them." Addressing this issue, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, confronted the British Secretary of War and the Colonies Henry Bathurst, third Earl Bathurst on 14 September 1815 concerning the alleged Seminole-British treaty. During the meeting, Lord Bathurst disapproved of Nicholls actions and declared them unauthorized. On 21 March 1816, Lord Robert Stewart

⁵⁸ Mahon, 22-3; Missall and Missall, 25-6; James Monroe, *Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting, in pursuance of a Resolution of the House of Representatives, Such Further Information, in Relation to Our Affairs with Spain, as, in His Opinion, Is Not Inconsistent with the Public Interest to Divulge* (Washington, DC: E. De Krafet, 1819), 29, 35, 143-4.

Castlereagh, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1812-1822), wrote a letter to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams acknowledging that Nicholls violated the Treaty of Ghent.

Furthermore, he assured Adams that Bathurst disapproved of the attempted treaty between the Seminole chiefs and Britain and that Lord Castlereagh would ensure that British colonies and officers would be aware that the official position between the United States and Britain is peace.⁵⁹

Despite Lord Bathurst's disapproval of Nicholls consortium with the Seminoles and Lord Castlereagh's promise that his agents would be aware of the British official position, Alexander Arbuthnot continued where Nicholls left off in aiding Seminole and Creek hostilities against the United States. Arbuthnot, a British subject operating in Florida under orders to "memorial his majesty's government as well as the governor general of Havana," in other words, to provide intelligence to Britain and Spain. Based on correspondence it appears that neither Alexander Arbuthnot nor Hillisajo were aware of Lord Bathurst's decision not to form an alliance. In fact, when Arbuthnot returned Hillisajo to Ochlocknee, Florida on 20 June 1816, he solicited aid on behalf of the Seminoles. Under a power of attorney for twelve Seminole chiefs, Arbuthnot wrote letters for support to Charles Bagot, the British Ambassador to the United States, Governor Charles Cameron of Nassau, Bahamas (1804-1820), and the Spanish governor of Saint Augustine (1816-1821), Don Jose Coppinger.⁶⁰

On 27 July 1816, Major General Andrew Jackson attacked and destroyed Nicholls' fort at Prospect Bluff, known at the time as the Negro Fort. William Hambly and Edmund Doyle, British agents of Nicholls as well as employees of the Forbes Company, "turned traitor" according to Arbuthnot by providing Jackson the location of the fort. In distress, Seminole Chief Billy Bowlegs wrote a letter through Arbuthnot to Governor Coppinger in Saint Augustine on 18 November 1816 requesting assistance. Coppinger responded only with advice not to trust "two

⁵⁹ Mahon, 23; Monroe, *Message*, 41-2, 51-3.

⁶⁰ Mahon, 27; Monroe, *Message*, 20, 146-7, 151.

persons [who] have lately presented themselves as commissioners of the English nation.”

Whether the two persons were Arbuthnot and Armbrister, Hambly and Doyle, Woodbine and McGregor, or another two is unknown. Arbuthnot, determined to carry out his perceived duty, wrote a letter on 8 January 1817 to Charles Bagot, the British Ambassador to the United States, and requested aid for the Seminoles. Bagot replied indirectly through his consulate on 29 January 1817 stating that if, Arbuthnot “should write me again upon the same subject, he [Arbuthnot] will forward his letters by private opportunities *only*.” Presumably, Bagot did not want to be associated with supplying Seminoles aid.⁶¹

Based on the conviction that Seminoles were in an alliance with Britain, Billy Bowlegs requested aid from Governor Cameron of the Bahamas. Hillisajo, beginning to get desperate, took action by traveling to Nassau to collect aid from Governor Cameron during January 1817. While there, Hillisajo received only a small amount of nonmilitary goods. In a cry of frustration, Arbuthnot wrote to Nicholls on 16 August 1817 detailing his efforts to get Bagot and Cameron to provide assistance and inform Nicholls of the apparently traitorous acts of Hambly and Doyle. He also appealed to Nicholls for assistance to provide war materiel and make a request that “his majesty’s government appoint an agent with full powers and to correspond with” Cameron so that “his eyes will then be opened.” Finally, Arbuthnot wrote another letter to Nicholls on 26 August 1817 indicating that prior to leaving England, Lord Bathurst provided orders to Governor Cameron of Nassau to “watch over the Indians.” Arbuthnot appeared to be clearly frustrated in his efforts.⁶²

In 1817, Major General Jackson, acting presumably on orders of President James Monroe (1817-1825), conducted a punitive expedition into Florida in response to reported Seminole

⁶¹ Bailey, 168-9; Mahon, 22; Monroe, *Message*, 154, 203-4; Monroe, *Message*, 192; Monroe, *Message*, 209; *Niles Weekly Register*, no. 42, 12 September 1818 (Washington, DC: William Ogden Niles, 1818), 42; Monroe, *Message*, 13, 155-6.

⁶² Monroe, *Message*, 144-76.

intrusions into the United States. During Jackson's activities in Spain's sovereign territory, he captured two British subjects, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert C. Armbrister, whom he tried in a special court martial beginning 26 April 1818. Two days later, he sentenced them to death for exciting the Seminoles to war with the United States. When word of the executions reached England, the British public became enraged and demanded war. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Castlereagh upon review of the evidence dropped the matter because he could not defend the actions of Arbuthnot and Armbrister.⁶³

The foreign diplomacy of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and President James Monroe apparently isolated the Seminoles from Britain. The following year, Seminole Chief Khenhadjo arrived in Nassau on New Providence Island, Bahamas, in order to request aid from Governor Charles Cameron on 29 September 1819. The governor of Nassau summarily denied his request and sent Khenhadjo back to Florida. In 1821, another group of Seminoles attempted to receive aid in Nassau with the same result. Without any hope of aid from Britain, some Seminoles elected to resettle on the uninhabited Andros Island in the Bahamas. After several years of habitation without discovery, Governor of Nassau J. Carmichael Smyth (1829-1833) decided in 1831 to allow this group of Seminoles to remain. President Monroe's State of the Union Address on 16 November 1818 reveals further evidence of improving relations between the U.S and Britain, which in this case meant degrading relations between the Seminoles and Britain. In the address, he optimistically discussed improved trade relations and only mentioned the Arbuthnot and Armbrister affair concerning security matters with Spain. Both the official support promised to Hillisajo by Bathurst and the clandestine support provided by Nicholls, Armbrister, and Arbuthnot ended with Jackson's special court martial.⁶⁴

⁶³ Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 10th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), 169; Monroe, *Message*, 160; Bailey, 170.

⁶⁴ Rosalyn Howard, "The 'Wild Indians' of Andros Island: Black Seminole Legacy in the

During the period of Major General Jackson's invasion of Florida, Spain was relatively weak militarily and economically. Finding it difficult to secure their empire either against rebellion or criminal mischief, Spain acquiesced to U.S. demands during 1819 by signing the Adams-Onís Treaty. Under the treaty, Spain ceded Florida to the United States for a nominal fee of five million dollars, which the United States agreed to pay by settling claims on behalf of Spain. The Spanish crown apparently anticipated the United States' move towards "Manifest Destiny" and removed the Florida archives to Havana, Cuba, where Spanish authorities purportedly controlled the documentation of Florida possessions in order to benefit friends of the crown. One of the largest claims belonged to the Forbes Company, who claimed nearly 1,250,000 acres, known as the Forbes Grant, near modern day Apalachicola. The significance of this claim concerning material support of the Seminoles is that the Forbes Company stopped trading with the Seminoles apparently to improve their chances of gaining access to the land. Forbes Company, a Scottish company operating formerly under a Spanish license in Florida, transitioned its business to real estate. According to Forbes, the company acquired land grants from local Seminole tribes for outstanding debts they accrued in exchange for British goods. To settle claims such as the Forbes Grant, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams sent Colonel James Grant Forbes, no apparent relation, to Havana on 22 April 1821 in order to obtain the Florida archives from Spanish authorities. The Cuban officials, however, were not very helpful. Over the next ten years, the United States sent several other agents to obtain these documents. In 1832, President Andrew Jackson requested that the Spanish crown facilitate the delivery of the archives, and King Ferdinand VII signed the Spanish Royal Order of 1832 requiring Cuban officials to comply with the request. President Jackson then sent his friend, Richard Keith Call, the future Territorial Governor of Florida, to Cuba in order to retrieve the Florida archives. Call believed his "primary

Bahamas," *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 2 (2006): 282-4; Monroe, *State of the Union Addresses*, 14.

goal in Cuba was to acquire real estate records which would help the U.S. with this suit [the Forbes Grant] and keep this vast area in the public domain.” According to correspondence dated 8 April 1832 from John Innerarity, an employee of the Forbes Company, President Jackson interference in their land claim was a “curse to the country.” Ultimately, in 1835, the Supreme Court found in favor of the Forbes Company’s claim filed under *Collin Mitchell v. U.S.* Given this decision, Spain’s former trading company now had a stake in the United States succeeding against the Seminoles. By the beginning of the Second Seminole War, neither Britain nor Spain officially supported the Seminole cause.⁶⁵

With foreign support to the Seminoles largely disrupted, the Secretary of War John C. Calhoun (1817-1823) appointed a commission in 1823 to concentrate the Seminoles near Charlotte River south of Tampa. Calhoun intended the commission to deprive the Seminoles of their traditional hunting grounds, arable land, trading posts, and their independence. To facilitate this, Florida Territorial Governor William Pope DuVal (1821-1834), also a member of the commission, made it illegal for whites to conduct trade with the Seminoles. James Gadsden, Seminole agent, led the commission for the U.S. government during a series of parleys at Moultrie Creek, Florida. With seventy Seminole leaders present on 18 September 1823, the chiefs agreed to two reservations, one near Apalachicola and the second near Charlotte River. In exchange for moving to the reservations, the United States government agreed to compensate the Seminoles for abandoning their lands, cost of transportation, and payment of a stipend. In order to isolate the Seminoles from outside support, the commission included a stipulation to restrict

⁶⁵ “Innerarity (John) Papers (Mss. 1271, 1273) Inventory,” Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA, 5; Alfred Hasbrouke, “Gregor McGregor and the Colonization of Poyais, between 1820 and 1824,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 7, no. 4 (1927), 440; Bailey, 173; Boggs, 5; Mahon, 37; Jerrell H. Shofner, “William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Pantan, Leslie and Company and John Forces and Company, 1783-1847,” *American Historical Review* 92, no. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 484; Boggs, 13-6; Innerarity Inventory, 6; Boggs, 17.

reservation boundaries to twenty miles from the coast. Thus, the Treaty of Ghent (1814), the Adams-Onis Treaty (1819), and the Treaty of Moultrie Creek (1823) initiated diplomatic and economic isolation of the Seminoles seven years before Congress created the Indian Removal Act (1830).⁶⁶

Despite the efforts of the United States government to cut off the Seminole's materiel support from Britain and Spain, unofficial or illegal support did occur. In fact, Seminole tribes traded along inland and coastal waterways with anyone willing to assume the risk. Throughout the war, the Army discovered evidence of trade across the entire peninsula of Florida from the west coast at Charlotte Harbor in 1836, inland along the St. John's River in the northeast during the summer of 1840, and in the Everglades as late as 1841.⁶⁷

The most effective loss of support to the Seminoles, however, was the loss of moral support. The domestic and foreign moralists included American intellectuals and politicians as well as some foreign diplomats and religious groups. As the war dragged on, however, their support failed to produce any meaningful benefits for the Seminoles. Possibly the reason for this was an apparent belief among abolitionist intellectuals that the Seminole cause was hopeless. Margaret Fuller, editor of the Transcendental Club's journal *The Dial* (1842) and a colleague of Ralph Waldo Emerson, believed in the hopelessness of their cause arguing, "in the future of they face only speedy extinction." Likewise, George Caitlin, the man who painted Osceola's portraits at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina in 1833, believed that his mission was to "fly to their rescue, not of their lives or their race (for they are doomed and must perish) but to the rescue of the looks and their modes." The fate of the Seminole was to serve as a symbol of man's inhumanity in order to further the abolitionist cause. In fact, abolitionist Ralph Waldo Emerson held a very low opinion of Seminoles. In his diary, Emerson opined that Southerners "are more civilized than the

⁶⁶ Mahon, 29-47; Missall and Missall, 64.

⁶⁷ Sturtevant, 40; Carrier, 120; Sturtevant, 49.

Seminole, however, in my opinion a little more.” In the end, the intellectual narrative of inevitable destruction of the Seminole did not inspire anything resembling an underground railroad to aid their cause.⁶⁸

While intellectuals from the United States accepted the Seminole fate, religious groups from Canada and the Bahamas attempted to facilitate British support through diplomatic channels. However, these efforts were unsuccessful. In 1838, Canadian Quakers, also known as Friends, held a committee concerning the state of American Indians in Canada and the United States. The Friends published the findings of their meeting for “the Earl of Durham, Governor-General of the British Colonial possessions in North America” in order to “redress the wrongs, or promote the welfare of the oppressed.” The report specifically referred to Osceola’s capture under a flag of truce and requested that Lord Durham use diplomatic means to change U.S. government policies through members in Congress who opposed the war. To support the diplomatic efforts, the Friends pledged to support the Seminole “tribes which reside in or near British territories” with legal assistance and, presumably, with economic aid from the Bahamas.⁶⁹

At the time, John George Lambton Durham (Lord Durham), a cousin of Queen Victoria, was on a political mission to Canada. His purpose was to determine the reason for a revolt in Upper Canada, now Ontario, as well as one in Lower Canada, now Quebec. Casting his net widely, he studied the political, military, economic, and social factors that contributed to this uprising, including the sinking of the *Caroline*, a U.S. steamer, which British forces sent over Niagara Falls. In other words, he took a comprehensive and regional approach to understanding the issues of instability. Acknowledging the problem to be one of civil discord between the

⁶⁸ Annette Kolodny, “Margaret Fuller’s First Depiction of Indians and the Limits on Social Protest: An Exercise in Women’s Studies Pedagogy,” *Legacy* 18, no. 1 (2001), 1; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1987), ch. 2, 1; Saul K. Padover, “Ralph Waldo Emerson: The Moral Voice in Politics,” *Political Science Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (1959), 350.

⁶⁹ Meeting for Sufferings, 0-2, 32-34.

English and French people within the Canadian provinces rather one of discord between the people and their government, Durham issued his report to the British crown on 11 February 1839. The Durham Report focused on how to extinguish animosity between the British subjects through peaceful means. Durham acknowledged in his report that while Maine disputed the Canadian boundary, the “the United States has shown its desire ... to prevent any hostile movements of the Americans against Canada.” Lord Durham referred to “the possibility of a general Indian war on their frontier,” to which the Friends report referenced. However, Durham ignored any mention of the Seminole plight. He did use the information to infer that the United States desired peace, because “the difficulties [on the frontiers] would be fearfully aggravated by a war with Great Britain.” Four years later when Secretary of State Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton addressed American-British issues concerning the U.S.-Canada borders and the slave trade, neither side raised the issue of the treatment of Native Americans. In general, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 “resulted in a general clearing away of the poisonous atmosphere that had besmogged Anglo-American relations.” Throughout the Second Seminole War, the United States effectively isolated the Seminole tribes diplomatically and economically.⁷⁰

From the end of the War of 1812, the United States effort to isolate the Seminoles proved highly effective. The Seminole tribes lost their economic and moral support from Great Britain as well as Spain. Within the United States, the Territory of Florida made it illegal to supply the Seminoles and enforced the law using the military. Indeed, long-term trading partner, the Forbes Company, sided with Jackson resulting in reducing the Seminole military capability at Prospect Bluff. Civilian attempts to aid the Seminoles failed because of the extinction narrative. In the end,

⁷⁰ Roger K. Ward, “Bijuralism as an Assimilation Tool: Lord Durham’s Assessment of the Louisiana Legal System,” *Louisiana Law Review* 63, no. 4 (2003), 1129-30; J. Rodwell, *The Canadian Crisis, and Lord Durham’s Mission to the North American Colonies: with Remarks, the Result of Personal Observations in the Colonies and the United States, on the Remedial Measures to be Adopted by the North American Colonies*, (London: Ibotson and Palmer, 1838), 52-3; Bailey, 219.

the Seminoles who resisted emigration suffered at the hands of the United States Army.

Position of Advantage

Seeking a less expensive prosecution of the war, the Army replaced General Armistead with a colonel on 31 May 1841. Despite protests from the governments of Florida and Georgia, Colonel William Jenkins Worth further reduced the Army's reliance on militia and contractors, assumed risk in northeastern Florida, and increased the tempo of operations. The effect of these high-tempo operations, heavy-handed Jesup-like negotiations with Seminole chiefs, and a little luck in Washington, Colonel Worth officially ended the war in Florida before the close of 1842.⁷¹

Worth's campaign plan envisioned a clearance of Seminole bands from the west coast of Florida near the Withlacoochee River eastward to Fort Pierce. Realizing that the Seminoles used the terrain to their best advantage, he directed his commanders to conduct twenty-man foot patrols supported by dragoons. He intended these formations to cover more ground and prevent Seminole bands from easily bypassing large formations as had occurred using Scott's Napoleonic techniques. A daunting task for his men, Colonel Worth campaigned straight through the summer and into the fall of 1841 keeping at least forty percent of his men in the field at all times. Of the more than four thousand men in service in Florida, many succumbed to sickness during this season, however, Worth refused to relieve the pressure on his men or the Seminole bands that he hunted.⁷²

Included in Worth's campaign plan was an element of influence activities, which worked well on Coacoochee. On 1 May 1841, Coacoochee presented himself to First Lieutenant William T. Sherman at Fort Pierce on the east coast of Florida. Rather than sending Coacoochee directly to the west, Colonel Worth bribed Coacoochee on 3 July 1841 with \$8,000 to bring in his tribe.

⁷¹ Mahon, 294-8; Missall and Missall, 192-3, 198-202.

⁷² Mahon, 300-2; Prucha, 297-300.

To counter Worth's bribery, several chiefs including Halleck Tustenuggee, Tiger Tail, Nethlockemathla, Octiarche and over one hundred of their warriors promised reprisals to anyone who accepted this offer. Despite the danger of reprisal, Coacoochee brought in his band a little more than a month later on 8 August 1841.⁷³

To complement Colonel Worth's land campaign, U.S. Navy Lieutenant John T. McLaughlin conducted a brown-water naval expedition during the fall of 1841. McLaughlin led a force including 200 dragoons, sailors, marines, and other soldiers from Fort Pierce on the southeast coast westward to Lake Okeechobee and south to Fort Lauderdale on the southeast coast north of modern day Miami. During three expeditions beginning 10 October 1841 and ending 23 December 1841, McLaughlin searched for Seminole Chief Sam Jones in the Everglades. Meanwhile, Colonel Worth's land forces conducted clearance operations with little success in capturing or killing anyone, but nonetheless the constant activity exhausted Seminole sustainment. Worth's plan further placed Seminoles in southeast Florida at an operational disadvantage when Lieutenant William T. Sherman's company commander, Major Thomas Childs, stumbled upon a Seminole plantation at Crystal River near Fort Pierce. Child's force of eighty men destroyed the plantation over a two-day period. Thus Worth deprived a significant food source from the remaining Seminole warriors and their families. Nine days later, Alligator, Tiger Tail, and Nethlockemathla surrendered at Tampa on 19 October 1841.⁷⁴

Throughout the winter, Worth pushed his commanders to maintain their tempo while he attempted to convince the new administration in Washington to end the war. General Scott, who replaced Alexander Macomb as the Commanding General of the United States Army on 25 June 1841, provided Worth an old friend and ally in Washington. Following Secretary of War John

⁷³ Mahon, 299-302; Missall and Missall, 193-6.

⁷⁴ Jack Sweetman, *American Naval History: An Illustrated Chronology of the U.S. Navy, 1775-Present* (University Park, IL: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 44; Mahon, 303-4, 310.

Bell's resignation on 12 October 1841, John C. Spencer assumed the cabinet position of Secretary of War providing Worth a willing listener. On 5 February 1842, Worth requested to end the war. The new Secretary of War put the question before a council. However, General Jesup was the only member of the council to agree. Continuing to press his campaign through the spring of 1842, Colonel Worth commanded the Second, Fourth, and Eighth Infantry Regiments in the field and battled Halleck Tustenuggee near present day Lake Apopka on 19 April 1842. Halleck prepared a deliberate defense as he did at the Battle of Okeechobee and managed to withdraw. Tactically, it appeared to be a failure but, surprisingly, Halleck surrendered at Warm Springs ten days later. The war carried on throughout the summer of 1842 until Worth received permission to conduct parleys and sue for peace. Between five and 9 August 1842, Worth held talks with Holata Mico, Fuse Hadjo, and Nocese Methla as well as Tiger Tail, and Octiarche. He offered them a choice of emigrating out west or remaining in Florida. Five days later, Colonel Worth declared the war at end on 14 August 1842.⁷⁵

After seven years of war with the Seminoles, a new administration managed to end the war with the Seminoles in the same month of securing a better peace with Great Britain. Worth's high tempo of operations throughout the summers prevented the Seminoles from growing food. With already diminished sustainment capability from a loss of allies, many of the Seminole tribes lost hope and gave in to resettlement. Despite their hardships, however, many Seminole chiefs including Billy Bowlegs continued the fight and ultimately held on to a portion of their lands. In fact, during November 1843, Worth reported that Bowlegs remained in good standing and abided by the agreement to remain on the reservation. Although Worth declared the war at an end, hostilities and treachery on both sides continued. In fact, Worth resumed Jesup's ill-famed

⁷⁵ Mahon, 307-15.

practice of capturing chiefs during parleys, however, without the public outcry.⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

Understanding why the Second Seminole War took seven years to reach termination is significant for modern operational planners since creating conditions for conflict resolution is the purpose of Unified Land Operations. Furthermore, it is probable that the United States will engage in a conflict whose ends appear to require more materiel and greater methods than are available to the operational planner. By looking at the campaigns of the Second Seminole War's commanders, it is possible to discern the elements of operational art to help understand how the arrangement of tactical actions either furthered or hindered the government's removal policy. Setting adequate conditions favorable to conflict resolution required an investment of significant thought, effort, and time of each of the commanders. Each commander learned lessons, made improvements, suffered setbacks, and handed off issues that the next commander chose to manage, resolve, or ignore. The character of the conflict evolved as the Army struggled to establish an adequate base of operations, to improve the public's perception of its activity, and finally to create end state conditions that satisfied the political objectives.⁷⁷

Three overarching issues framed the nature of the war. During the first period of the conflict (1834-1838), commanders wrestled with moving beyond resourcing single tactical actions to establish a system of bases to extend operational reach. With a reliable base established, a hasty attempt to speed up the conclusion of the war resulted in an outcry from the United States public concerning the proper application of force by the Army of the South during the second period (1838-1841). With legitimacy issues diminishing, the third period (1841-1842) involved an increased operational tempo coupled with setting sufficient end state conditions to

⁷⁶ Mahon, 317-8.

⁷⁷ The United States Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0*, 2-1.

establish security on the U.S. southern border. After seven difficult years of campaigning, President Tyler terminated the conflict.

The first period of the conflict reflects the Army's struggle with transforming from a peacetime Army to one on a war footing. The greatest cognitive challenge stemmed from understanding the nature of the operational environment, because it involved learning while carrying out the removal policy. The Army's Indian agent, former Major General of the Georgia Militia and Member of the House of Representatives, Wiley Thompson, served in Florida from 1 December 1833 to 28 December 1835. Thompson assumed his position with confidence and initial success, but misunderstood the psychological effects of the removal policy on the remaining Seminole tribes. This misunderstanding resulted in the acceptance of too much risk. The first commander of the Army of the South was eager to prove the utility of his new Napoleonic tactics manual, Major General Winfield Scott, who commanded from February to May 1836, overlooked the need for unity of effort and assumed incorrectly that a single decisive battle was all that was necessary to end the war. His successor, Florida Governor Richard K. Call, who served from June to December 1836, understood the enemy and terrain, but did not understand how to employ his force or leverage unity of effort with the Navy. Ultimately, the Army's former quartermaster, Major General Thomas S. Jesup, served in Florida from 9 December 1836 to May 1838. He established an adequate basing and applied what today is termed operational art. His tactical actions removed a significant portion of the Seminole population, while exhausting their leadership. General Jesup, however, lost public trust because of his unethical methods of handling Seminole Chief Osceola. After one Indian agent and three commanders, the U.S. Army finally established adequate basing to sustain a campaign. Jesup's successor, however, restored a sense of legitimacy for the war effort. This loss of public trust

ultimately did not aid the enemy, but did cause a burden for the War Department and Congress.⁷⁸

The second period concerned public perception of the war. Although General Jesup's operations were effective in removing the Seminole population from the territory, the negative public perception of his campaign initially hindered the war effort. In reaction to this, Brigadier General Zachary Taylor, Commanding General of the Army of the South from May 1838 to April 1840, took an indirect approach by protecting Floridians and securing terrain, which denied Seminole freedom of movement through what he called the "System of Squares." In an attempt to complement General Taylor's activities, Major General Alexander Macomb, Commanding General of the United States Army, journeyed to Florida in April 1839. To achieve this, Macomb conducted a series of parleys, established a reservation in Florida, and declared an end to the conflict on 20 May 1839. Due to an operational security breach, Macomb's influence activities failed causing members of various Seminole groups to revolt. While Jesup's scheme to protect the population did not prevent Seminole atrocities on settlers and criticism from Floridians, its focus on building infrastructure and holding ground appeared to reduce public criticism. Benefitting from the lessons of previous campaigns, Brigadier General Walker K. Armistead, Commanding General of Army of the South from 5 May 1840 to 31 May 1841, regained the initiative. Armistead denied Seminoles the arable soil of northeastern Florida and gained a position of advantage by occupying a line of forts across the peninsula forcing the Seminoles into the inhospitable south Florida swamps. Armistead's campaign took the best of both Jesup's and Taylor's campaigns while avoiding their negative publicity.

The third period of the conflict involved a political environment seeking conflict resolution. With adequate basing and improved public opinion, Colonel William Jenkins Worth,

⁷⁸ Heller and Stofft, x; Donald Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 30; Senate, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, 24th Congress, 1st Session, 1836, no. 638.

benefitting from the Tyler administration's change in policies, pressed a campaign characterized by a high tempo and heavy-handed Jesup-like negotiations to exhaust the Seminoles leaders. Meanwhile Tyler's Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, settled the U.S.-Canada border disputes creating friendly relations with Great Britain and improving U.S. security on the eastern seaboard. This increased assurance of Seminole isolation from formal British materiel and moral support. Within the same week of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty (1842), President Tyler allowed the Seminoles to settle in Florida or west of the Mississippi. After seven years of conflict, the United States and the Seminole tribes officially agreed to end the conflict on 14 August 1842.⁷⁹

Transforming from a peacetime military to one adapted to the unique Florida environment and to the Seminole way of fighting required one Indian Agent and three commanders before establishing an adequate base of operations and effective tactics. After three commanders, the Army adapted its first way of war to satisfy public expectations of a just war, which gave the Army freedom to conduct tactical actions without answering to Congress. Finally, Colonel Worth continued to remove the Seminoles while Daniel Webster diplomatically and economically isolated the Seminoles from outside support. With the strategic objective of security on the southern border achieved, President Tyler ended the conflict. The reason it took seven years to end the conflict is that these end state conditions required a whole of government approach attempting to engage in complementary activities to defeat the Seminoles economically and militarily while building relationships with our former adversaries, Britain and Spain.

⁷⁹ Department of State, "Webster-Ashburton Treaty, 1842," *Milestones: 1830-1860*, <http://history.state.gov/milestones/1830-1860/WebsterTreaty> (accessed 15 March 2013).

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