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Lincoln and the Middle East

The Beginning of American Empire

Speech by Austin Knuppe

As any good student of American history is well aware, there is nothing new to say about Abraham Lincoln. More books and articles have been published about President Lincoln than any other figure in American history. In light of this reality, what are current historians to do? And if a new angle on "Honest Abe" is discovered, how does one figure out whether this discovery is novel or just plain obscure? The topic of Abraham Lincoln and the Middle East raises such questions. It also serves to dispel several commonly held misconceptions about the sixteenth president's foreign policy during the Civil War.

The purpose of this paper is to correct two misconceptions about American diplomatic history by analyzing these events through the lens of United States' foreign policy towards the Middle East during the Civil War and its aftermath. The first misconception is that the United States did not have a coherent foreign policy with the Middle East prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during World War I.[1] Implicit in this argument is the belief that Abraham Lincoln's administration did not have any significant foreign interactions with the Arab world. The second misconception is that the foundation of American Empire was the Spanish-American War of 1898. Common knowledge holds that the presidency of William McKinley marks the genesis of American empire overseas.[2]

Despite various obstacles, I hope to convince my readers that United States' interaction with the Middle East helped lay the framework for American empire as early as 1865. I will consider my attempt a success, if I can introduce a new narrative to diplomatic history that considers Lincoln's relationship with the Middle East as important to understanding America's role as a world superpower in the aftermath of the Civil War.

Obstacles to a New Narrative

From the very beginning, this task if riddled with obstacles. For one thing, very few historians have looked at the Lincoln's foreign policy outside of foreign relations with the "Great Powers" of Britain and France. While there are a myriad of books available on diplomatic history during the Civil War, only a handful reference Arab countries. When the Middle East is mentioned, it is often in passing, with only the slightest amount of historical commentary. Turning to primary source materials only proves to be slightly more helpful. US State Department records and correspondence help align people, places and events, but that is where the historical record ends. In addition, a query of the *New York Times* archive during the years 1860-1865 for search words such as "Ottoman, Turkey, Egypt" pulls up scant results.

Trying to discern the notion of the Middle East proves to be yet another obstacle. The Middle East as we know it today did not exist until the aftermath of World War I. Prior to this time, the prestigious Ottoman Empire controlled virtually all the territory known as the "Middle East" and North Africa. Through a highly detailed and efficient bureaucracy, the Turks were able to administrate and rule over the diverse people and cultures of the region. Thus when I refer to the Middle East in this work, it will be primarily through the filter of Ottoman rule and the slow collapse of the "Sick man of Europe" during the latter half of the 19th century.

America in the Middle East: 1776-1860

During the earliest days of the American Republic, Americans were interested in the mystic and lure of the Middle East. While one often hears about the Founding Fathers in the context of diplomacy with Great Britain, legends such as Benjamin Franklin thought and wrote about the Arab World. One of the more famous examples is Mr. Franklin's work "On the Slave Trade" penned under the pseudo name Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim for the *Federal Gazette* in March 1790.[3] In this treatise, Franklin wrote under the guise of an Algerian prince who owned a number of American slaves and wished to defend his right to retain them. Franklin used this piece of fiction to serve as a scathing critic of the arguments made by American slave owners.

The presidencies of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were among the first administrations to have their foreign policy tied down to turmoil in the Middle East. During the infamous Barbary Wars, several North African states, loosely controlled by the Turkish Ottoman Empire, declared war on U.S. commercial interests off in the Mediterranean. The conflict was resolved only after President Jefferson sent a contingent of US Marines and mercenaries to attack Derna on the North African coast in 1805.[4] In the course of the next decade, President James Madison would have to dispatch another naval force to prevent Barbary pirates from threatening American commerce as well. The Barbary Wars occupied the government's mind with foreign policy abroad, even as President George Washington warned the young nation to avoid foreign engagement and "entangling alliances" in his famous *Farewell Address.*

When Andrew Jackson moved into the White House, Americans were put in the unique position of having to choose between their political ideals and economic interests. On one side were the Greeks, who, in the name of democracy, were rebelling against the autocratic rule of the Ottoman Empire. On the other, were the Turkish Ottomans, who forged a powerful economic trading relationship with the United States. When the Greeks began their war for independence in 1821, several prominent American politicians petitioned the government for US intervention on behalf of the Greeks, even as Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was warning the Congress against unnecessary foreign entanglements.[5] Frontier general (and future president) William Henry Harrison famously exclaimed: "Humanity, policy, religion—all demand it…The star-spangled banner must wave above the Aegean."

American Philhellenism was in full swing in seeking to protect the founders of democracy (and dominantly Christian nation) from the authoritarian Muslims of Turkey. Greek independence raised tempers in the Congress as well, with Daniel Webster and Henry Clay going as far as to demand US military intervention as soon as possible. John Quincy Adams persuaded President Monroe to withhold support for the Greeks in order to maintain leverage over European powers who wanted to continue their colonial exploits in the Caribbean. Because of American neutrality, the year 1829 saw an economic treaty between Austria Hungary and Americans that ensured protected US commerce passing through the Dardanelles Strait. Unknown to virtually all policy makers at the time, the United States was slowly entrenching itself in empires of commerce and nation building in the Middle East.

The three episodes above demonstrate that since the days of Founding Fathers, Americans were interested and diplomatically engaged in the Arab World. In spite of the warnings of both George Washington and John Quincy Adams, American foreign policy makers were looking beyond their shores for a new frontier.

American diplomacy during the Civil War: Beyond the Great Powers

Into the antebellum period and Civil War, the United States maintained diplomatic and economic ties to the Middle East. This comes as a surprise to the average historian, who often studies American diplomatic history in the context of the European Powers. Secretary of State Seward often comes to the forefront of the conversation, and Doris Kearns Goodwin argues that Seward was perhaps "the ablest American diplomatist of the century."[6]

In the midst of managing British and French threats to join the war after the shelling of Fort Sumpter, Seward managed to still find time to

strengthen America's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. The question of why Seward spearheaded the effort is complex, but with President Lincoln's relative inexperience in foreign affairs and his preoccupation with fighting a war on the home turf, the decision to let Seward play foreign policy quarterback made sense.

In the spring of 1861, Seward was as concerned about Ottoman neutrality as he was with the neutrality of the Great Powers. In a letter to the chief diplomat in Constantinople, Edward Joy Morris, Seward explains that the United States' "national prestige was impaired in foreign countries," and the Ottoman Porte, "accustomed as they are to wait upon power with respect, and visit weakness with distain," would take advantage of a divided United States.[7] In Morris' previous correspondence to Seward, he suggested that a naval force be stationed outside of Constantinople should the Porte refuse to stop Confederate privateering of Union vessels. Seward seemed to ignore this request, mentioning that he would pass on Morris' concerns to the Navy Department.[8] It seems as if Seward took Lincoln's advice to heart when Lincoln told him "one war at a time, Mr. Seward." While tensions ran high in both Washington and Constantinople over how Sultan 'Abdal 'Aziz would respond to U.S. pleas for neutrality, the Sultan responded to Lincoln by stating, "friendly sympathies," with the North and that the war with the Confederacy "may soon be settled in such a manner as will preserve the Union intact."[9]

In addition to the Sultan's sympathy, the Porte decided to renew a commerce treaty first signed in 1830. The "Treaty of Commerce and Navigation Between the United States and the Ottoman Empire," signed on February 25, 1862, ensured a continued trade relationship between both countries and a guarantee from Ottomans that Confederate pirates would be apprehended and detained. The renewal of this treaty is an impressive feat for the Lincoln administration as the first year of the war also saw the beginning successful negotiations of neutrality with Great Britain. President Lincoln announced in his annual message to the congress in the winter of 1862 that "[t]he new commercial treaty between the United States and the Sultan of Turkey has been carried into execution."[10]

During the course of the Civil War, America's diplomatic presence in the Middle East was minimal, limited to Edward Joy Morris, his staff, and other clusters of diplomats in cities such as Tangier and Alexandria. The presence of the Christian missionaries to the region, however, grew exponentially. Of the approximately 150 documented missionaries in the Ottoman Empire at the outbreak of the war, Morris estimated that not one sympathized with the Confederacy, not even those who come from Southern states.[11] This little known fact demonstrates that for better or worse, Christian missionaries in the Ottoman Empire served as a defacto diplomatic corps for the State Department. Back in the States, Secretary Seward proved to be a strong advocate of Christian missions in the Middle East, stating that the missionaries enjoyed the support of a "very considerable and intelligent portion of the people of the United States."[12] David Farragut, admiral of Union naval forces, was also a strong supporter missions, giving money to a missions school in Jaffa, as well as convincing the Ottoman Sultan to grant a permit for Roberts College, much to the chagrin of the Catholic and Orthodox communities in Constantinople.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, most Christian missions in the United States were not "soul winning" operations. The majority of missionaries focused on medical care and education. For example, the prominent feminist Mary Mills Patrick established the first all-women's college in Constantinople, and Reverend John Hogg, who had a prominent roll in the founding modern educational institutions in Egypt. Perhaps the best-known missionary-diplomat was Cyrus Hamlin, who founded Roberts College in Constantinople in 1863. Despite funding shortfalls during the war and the opposition of the American Board (who disagreed with Hamlin's "secular" approach to missions, Hamlin was able to secure a permit to start the school. Hamlin returned to the United States in 1861 and received a $30,000 grant from a New York philanthropist named Robert Rhinelander.[13] With these initial funds, Hamlin was able to break ground and the school officially opened its doors in 1863.

President Lincoln himself had sympathies for the missionaries in the Muslim world as well. When Lincoln received a letter from his Egyptian minister, William S. Thayer, about a Syrian Christian employed by American missionaries who had been abused by mob of angry Egyptians, Lincoln used the situation to his political advantage. His administration released a white paper entitled "Religious Toleration in Egypt: Official Correspondence Relating to the Indemnity Obtained for the Maltreatment of Faris el Hakim, an Agent of the American Missionaries in Egypt," which served as a coercive tool against the Egyptian government to exact punishment on those responsible for the abuse of Mr. Hakim. Sa'id Pasha, the Wali of Egypt for the Ottomans, ensured that those responsible would be punished and that any Confederate presence in Ottoman waters would not be tolerated. It served the additional purpose of showing solidarity with evangelical Christian missions around the world, a move that won over the highly religious, British working class.[14] With British Christians supporting Lincoln's white paper, the Crown would not dare to ally its government with the confederacy. Lincoln's support of American missionaries in Egypt proved to be a brilliant diplomatic maneuver, which served to ensure both Ottoman and British loyalty to the Union.

Outside of Constantinople, the United States also engaged the Ottoman controlled Barbary States. In February 1862, the Lincoln administration almost repeated the infamous *Trent* Affair, when two Confederate privateers, landed in Tangier for some brief sight seeing before returning to resupply their vessel in Gibraltar. When U.S. consul James DeLong heard about enemy soldiers in Tangier, he immediately petitioned the Moroccan government to expel Confederate vessels from their waters and sent for the arrest of Henry Myers and Thomas Tunstall.[15] This action infuriated the French, whose influence in North Africa was immense. They claimed that the capture of Confederate soldiers on neutral soil was tantamount to the arrest of Confederate diplomats on board the HMS *Trent.[16]* At the behest of Paris, Moroccan emperor Muhammad IV threatened to close Tangier's harbor to prevent the Union from extraditing their prisoners. Fearing that the French would announce their allegiance to the Confederacy, Lincoln decided to release Myers and Tunstall. The Union's relationship with the Barbary States was thus inextricably tied to the Washington's relationship with Paris.

Perhaps the most interesting (and utterly complex) diplomatic relationship between the United States and the Middle East occurred in the Egypt. By the 1860s, Egypt was virtually autonomous of the Ottoman Empire because of Napoleon III's invasion at the turn of the 18th century. In many political matters however, the ruling Pashas still paid homage to the Ottoman Porte. When the Union navy blockading Southern ports at the beginning of the war, the Egyptian economy received their "manna from heaven" in the form of exploding cotton exports to the European continent. While trade between the Union and Egypt virtually disappeared during the war, the Egyptian economy received their "manna from heaven" in the form of exploding cotton exports when the Union navy blockaded Southern ports at the beginning of the conflict.

When the blockade went into effort, Confederate cotton exports dropped from 13 to 6 million pounds in the course of one year.[17] Scrambling to find a new import source, the British and French turned to Egypt, which previously supplied only 3 percent of cotton to Europe. Egyptian cotton was superior quality to its Indian rivalry and through the course of the Civil War, Egyptian cotton exports to Britain rose from 60 million pounds in 1861 to 274 million pounds in 1865—a 350 percent leap![18] Pasha Ismael used this new source of wealth to Europeanize Egypt and this new economic relationship laid the foundation for the construction of the Suez Canal. Egyptian cotton also ensured British neutrality—a fact that proved invaluable to Seward and the State Department.

While the United States and Egypt enjoyed a healthy economic relationship, diplomatically her relations became strained when Sa'id Pasha sent a contingent of 500 Sudanese Egyptian troops to join Napoleon III's campaign in Mexico in January of 1863. Prior to that time Cairo had cooperated with Lincoln's request to ally with the Union. At the outset of the war, Sa'id Pasha expelled vice consul Robert Wilkinson, who pledged allegiance to the South.[19] Sai'd's "benevolent neutrality" also lead to an expulsion of all Confederate vessels from Egyptian ports. The French sought out Egyptian troops because they thought that the Arab fighters would be better accustomed to the heat and resilient to yellow fever. Ironically, while some of the Egyptian fighters fought valiantly, many died from exhaustion and disease. Because of brutality of the war at home, neither President Lincoln, nor Secretary Seward had the diplomatic leverage to expel Napoleon III from Mexico until after the cessation of hostilities in April 1865. Like US foreign affairs with the Barbary States, the Lincoln administration could not engage Egypt without being concerned about British and French interests as well.

One final area of American foreign policy in the Arab world that goes unnoticed during this time period is American support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. While many attribute U.S. support to the Jews to Woodrow Wilson or Harry Truman, Lincoln was one of the earliest presidents to support Restorationism—the belief that U.S. Christians have a theological mandate to aid in establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Michael Oren records a meeting between Canadian clergymen Henry Wentworth Monk and President Lincoln in 1863 where Lincoln readily agreed with Monk's assessment that the displaced Jews of the world needed a national homeland in Palestine. At the end of the conversation Lincoln commented, "Restoring the Jews to their national home in Palestine…is a noble dream and one shared by many Americans."[20]

Only minutes before President Lincoln's assassination on that fateful day at Ford's Theater, Lincoln remarked to his wife Mary that he "would like to visit the Holy Land" and that "there was no city on earth he so much desired to see as Jerusalem."[21] Lincoln's fascination with the

oriental mystic of the Holy Land illustrates that the United States had ideological interests in Palestine a century before the Holocaust.

The Truce at Appomattox: The Early Rise of Pax Americana

The past few pages have revealed that contrary to popular understanding, America has enjoyed a long-standing diplomatic relationship with the Middle East. In light of this, one may be tempted to ask why I do choose to focus on the diplomacy of the Civil War, rather than going back to Jefferson and Madison's diplomacy with the Barbary States at the time of the Founding. This next section will argue that after the truce at Appomattox and the Confederate surrender, American power coalesced and expanded, giving the Republic a chance to rise to "great power" status for the first time in her history. By analyzing the ideological, political and economic consensus that formed during Reconstruction, we can gain valuable insights about how America approached the Middle East differently after the Civil War. Keeping with the themes mentioned in the introduction, I will also discuss the inherent irony present in all three areas. While America was gaining momentum and power abroad, half her nation laid wounded and suffering at home.

Ideological consolidation

The end of the Civil War served as a sober warning to Americans about the dangers of factional politics. After years of bloody civil war, the political climate of the nation united around a political ideology of freedom and equality, rather than that of revolution and succession. This ideological unity expressed itself primarily through the idea of American exceptionalism.

While Alexis de Tocqueville was the first person to articulate a unique and unrivaled American character, the end of the Civil War proved to America and her critics that the Union could overcome internal divisions. On the home front, the defeat of the Confederacy placed the final period in America's long debate over slavery and the "free labor" economy. While the canons and muskets on the battlefield secured a Union military victory, Lincoln's pen was the chief weapon that won the ideological war. Abe's Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural address solidified the belief that slavery was immoral and "a new birth of freedom" was soon on the way. Gary Wills explains that Lincoln's understanding of the Declaration of Independence, as a universal document for all humankind, is essential in understanding the President's political philosophy during the War. "[The Declaration] gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promised that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance," Mr. Lincoln said.[22]

In the realm of foreign policy, Melvin E. Lee explains that "[t]he Civil War interjected discussion of natural law and freedom into U.S. policy formation."[23] The United States could now approach the international community as a whole, not having to vie for the allegiance of the Great Powers as was the case during the Civil War. After successfully keeping the British and French neutral during the war, America was now ready to flex its "great power" status on the world's stage. The Monroe Doctrine, which lay dormant since the Mexico American War of 1848, was revived after Secretary of State Seward convinced Napoleon III to abandon his imperial ambitions in Mexico. In the words of Thomas Bailey, "If Monroe enunciated the Doctrine and Polk, a Democrat, resurrected it Seward, a Republican, vindicated it."[24] Thus victory in the Civil War allowed the United States the luxury of approaching foreign policy unilaterally.

The irony of the expansion of American exceptionalism abroad, is that ideological wounds from the Civil War still existed at home. Despite Lincoln's announcement of a new birth of freedom, discrimination against the African American community was rampant until the Civil Rights movement in the late 1950s. Americans were indeed excited to promote their newly found freedom abroad, but were not ready to truly solidify it on the home front.

Political consolidation

In addition to an ideological cohesiveness present in the newly unified United States, political consolidation also occurred. First and foremost, the United States was once again whole, absorbing the Confederate States back into the Union under Reconstruction. From now on, it would be "the United States *is*" instead of "the United States *are*." In the aftermath of Lincoln's death, President Andrew Johnson pardoned key Confederate leaders through Amnesty Proclamation of July 4, 1968.[25] Johnson used Reconstruction to instate Republican governors in all the southern states, further consolidating the political power of the GOP. During Lincoln's two terms, Republicans gained power unimaginable during the time of the "pathfinder" John C. Fremont (the first Republican candidate who ran against Buchanan in 1856). Republicans in Congress were able to pass legislation for land grant universities as well as the highly controversial Homestead Act of 1862. The succession of many democratic southern states gave the Republican Congress *carte blanche* from 1860 until the end of Radical Reconstruction in 1876.[26]

Many will point to the political turmoil of Reconstruction to demonstrate that political divisiveness still ruled the day. While it is certainly true that political tension ran high, Reconstruction (both Andrew Johnson's plan and Radical Reconstruction) served to mend the American Republic. Under Johnson and Grant, the Constitution was amended three times: once in 1865 to outlaw slavery, another time in 1868 to grant citizens due process rights and equal protection under law, and finally in 1870 to give all citizens the right to vote.[27] Two peaceful transitions of power happened during Reconstruction as well, once when Andrew Johnson ascended to the presidency and again in 1869 with the election of General Ulysses S. Grant. The United States political landscaped coalesced into the two-party system that we as Americans recognize to this very day.[28] Considering the political chaos of the Antebellum period, these amendments, as well as two peaceful presidential elections, cannot be taken for granted.

While many consider the aftermath of the Civil War to be a political baptism for our two party system, inequalities still existed. It's true that slavery was ended and blacks were given the right to vote, but America did not elect her first African American president until 2008. In addition, while the War put to rest the political divisiveness of succession it lead to the growth of executive power in what Arthur Schlesinger Jr. call's "the imperial presidency." Thus political power did coalesce in the United States during Reconstruction, but at the expense of Southern voters and to a large extent, the African American community.

Economic Consolidation

The final element of American power consolidation in the aftermath of the Civil War is the economy. Walter McDougall argues that the "defeat of the Confederacy removed the last impediment to the maturation of a continental superstate with a booming population, industry, agriculture and trade."[29] In the course of only 4 short years the United States economy was transformed from an agrarian, slave-based system, to a booming industrial monolith. By the end of the war, the American economy grew "at the fastest rate of the century for a couple of decades, a growth that represented a catching-up process from the lag of the 1860's" caused by the cost of a multibillion dollar war and over 500,000 casualties.[30]

Communication and transportation technology also flourished during the 1860s, with the first transcontinental electronic telegraph transmission happening in 1861. The electronic telegraph allowed Lincoln to communicate with his generals during the Civil War, and later, allowed America's new western territories to communicate with the rest of the Union. The railroad was new technology when the Civil War erupted in American. Railroads were the primary avenue of supply, allowing generals to engage in more aggressive, far-reaching attacks without fear of outrunning their supply lines. During Reconstruction, the first Transcontinental Railroad was completed in May 1869, successfully connecting both coasts of the United States by rail.

Innovation in the sectors of communication and transportation allowed the United States to expand westward at exponential rates, allowing individuals to have their own little slice of "Manifest Destiny." At the conclusion of the Civil War, only have of the United States had been formally settled, outside of the 36 states east of the Mississippi, the Western United States was composed of mostly unsettled territories. Both the telegraph and railroad allowed the United States to communicate with these territories and immigrate to them at faster rates. Because of this

acceleration in technology that United States was able to quickly settle the frontier some forty years before Fredrick Jackson Turner issued his famous "Frontier Thesis" at the turn of the 20th century.

The discovery of oil in the Pennsylvania in 1863 provided the United States with its most lucrative export yet. Soon after its discovery, Americans started exporting oil products (primarily kerosene) to the rest of the world at an unprecedented rate. By the mid 1870s kerosene became the most valuable U.S. export to the Ottoman Empire, and thus created an export oriented trade relationship with the Turks for the first time in American history. Combined with technologically advances in manufacturing and assembly line production, American oil would dominate the world market for many decades to come. In fact, oil would not be discovered anywhere in the Middle East until May 26, 1908.[31]

Between the industrial boom, communication and transformation developments and the discovery of oil, the United States became economically consolidated. This consolidated allowed America to became a global economic powerhouse.

Foundations for Empire: America in the Middle East, 1865-Present

In the last section, we saw that the Civil War provided the consolidation and unification of power needed domestically for America to project her power overseas. Warren Zimmerman argues that, "…the record of American statecraft after the Civil War shows a persistent effort to increase influence and expand territory beyond the continental boundaries of the United States."[32] James Field concurs with this assessment by stating, "[t]he Muslim societies of North Africa and the Near East provided the school in which the American approach to the non-Western world was worked out." The next section will show how the aftermath of the Civil War fundamentally changed America's relationship with the Middle East.

Post Civil War relations with the Ottoman Empire reveal that while the United States was hesitant to become an imperial power in the region, it did diplomatically assert its self more aggressively with the Great Powers. It seems as if President John, Secretary Seward and Naval Secretary Welles all agreed with Czar Nicholas' assertion that the Ottoman Turks were becoming "the sick man of Europe."

Economically, for the first time in her history, America enjoyed a trade surplus relationship with the Ottomans due to newly conceived mercantilist trade policies and an array of competitive new exports. Ironically enough, the two chief exports to the region were petroleum and military armaments. After the discovery of oil in United States at the beginning of the Civil War, distilling processes advanced quickly. During Reconstruction, oil became a valuable commodity for export, and by 1870 petroleum products were the chief export to Syria and the Levant.[33] Interestingly enough, oil would not be discovered in the Middle East for another 40 plus years.

The second U.S. export, military surplus and armaments, was actually more valuable than petroleum. As early as 1864, the United States gave blueprints to the Turks for construction of naval steamships with advanced armaments. The diary of Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, also reveals that the Navy Department was taking offers on selling surplus warships to the Ottomans by 1867. Because of the manufacturing boom during the war, "American superiority in manufacturing techniques had brought a profitable trade in machine tools, as well as finished products," like military arms.[34] The conclusion of the war flooded the international markets with excess military weapons and even the missionary, Cyrus Hamlin, noticed what a lucrative trade, weapons had become.

On the diplomatic side, U.S. relations with the Ottoman Empire began to sour. With another Greek revolt on the island of Crete, American philhellenism flared once again. Navy warships were sent to monitor activities at the Greek port at Piraeus and Edward Morris secured rights for the U.S.S. *Ticonderoga* to travel through the Dardanelles Strait, a move that violated many neutrality agreements signed in previous decades. After being re-commissioned in 1878, the *Ticonderoga* was also the first US Naval warship to travel through the Persian Gulf in 1879 seeking new diplomatic and trade relations. Prior to the Civil War, the United States military did show a force of strength to protect commercial interests, but diplomacy during Reconstruction demonstrates that America was also willing to come to the aid of aspiring democracies in the Mediterranean. Thus, the U.S. Navy thrust Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" forward at a starling rate. To further irritate relations, the United States also supported Egyptian desires for independence from Turkey and Russian interests in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Diplomatically, economically and ideologically, the United States was embracing its role as a super power rivaling Europe, at the expense of the declining Ottoman Empire.

In North Africa, another significant economic encounters between the United States and Muslim world happened only weeks after the truce at Appomattox. One May 31, 1865 America entered into her first international multilateral treaty with the Great Powers and Sultan of Morocco over the establishment of a lighthouse on Cape Spartel, located on the southern tip of the Strait of Gibraltar.[35] While this treaty may be one of the more obscure events in American diplomatic history, it does prove a willingness on the part of the Unites States to protect her commercial and military interests in the Muslim world, even if it means allying with the Great Powers to accomplish the task. If the United States was hesitant to become a colonial power in the Muslim World, it was not so hesitant to ally with European colonial powers to protect its national interests.

If tensions with the Ottoman Empire were not high enough, the U.S. also engaged the Egyptians in similar fashion. With the Confederate defeat, Secretary Seward could now turn his eyes on Napoleon III's violation of the Monroe Doctrine in Mexico by dispatching 30,000 soldiers to establish a foothold for a new empire. After the end of hostilities at home, the State Department sent its consul in Alexandria a harsh warning to Egypt's new viceroy, Pasha Ishmael. The message stated, "What the Pasha has done in Mexico at the request of another power, the United States might do in Egypt at the request of some friendly power…if the vicious principle of interference which supports the empire in Mexico, to which the Pasha lends his soldiers, should at any time be retaliated by us."[36] Ishmael eventually backed down and refused to send further reinforcements to Mexico. This head to head confrontation marks the first time in history that the United States threatened the Middle East with invasion. It also points to America's confidence in asserting its military power overseas without much hesitation.

Just like in the Ottoman Empire, the United States also offered surplus military equipment to help modernize the Egyptian army. During the Civil War, General "Fighting" Joe Hooker mentioned to John Hay in passing that the Union army was the "finest on the planet" and "he would like to see it fighting with foreigners."[37] Little did Fighting Joe Hooker know that less than one year after the end of the Civil War, would Union and Confederate troops travel to Egypt to train and equip the Egyptian military.

In 1869, Ishmael sought to modernize his army in light of the completion of the Suez Canal. He turned to America for military aid because of their bravery during the Civil War, and their lack of imperial ambition in the Middle East (in contrast to the British and French). The first American soldier on Egyptian soil was former Union soldier, General Thadeus P. Mott, who was in charge of the initial recruitment effort. When Mott was preparing to depart, Union army legend William T. Sherman took over training efforts. Over the time span of 1869-1883 over 55 soldiers, both blue and grey, advised the Egyptian army.[38] In addition to formal military training, the advisors also instilled in Egyptian troops a sense of patriotism and pride of service. Oren explains that "[t]he representatives of American power in the Middle East thus became conveyors of America's civil faith."[39] Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" was on the march in Egypt only a few years after his death.

If the banner of Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" started with the American military, it flourished under the missionary's zeal for evangelism. The first American colony in Palestine, established by a Mormon missionary named George Adams, illustrates this point perfectly. George J. Adams was an excommunicated member of the Church of Jesus of Latter Day Saints who had missionary experience in the past when he was a Mormon elder. After a falling out with the LDS church, Adams established the Church of the Messiah in New England, then relocated later to Maine. During his time in Maine, Adams received a prophecy that the Second Coming would be triggered by the Jews restoration to the Holy Land. In response, Adams changed his name to George Washington Joshua Adams and purchased a tract of land in Jaffa, Palestine for a settlement.

Adams visited the White House in February of 1866 to be received by President Johnson and Secretary Seward, who promised to contact the Ottoman government to secure a title for the settlement property. By September of that same year, Adams departed with 156 other congregation members from Jaffa and they established a small colony based on substance agriculture and help from the local Arabs.

By October 1867 the colony went bankrupt and internal divisions ensued. Sixty of the original colonists had died, and an appeal went out to the American press for assistance. The State Department arranged the escort of all but Adam's family and twenty additional settlers who remained in Palestine, some for the rest of their lives. It is difficult to discern whether the Adams colony was fully supported by the State Department, or was simply aided by Seward's missionary zeal. Whatever the case, Adam's colony marks the first time in American history where the ideology of

Restorationism resulted in American immigration to the Holy Land. Previously, Lincoln and dozens others dreamed about experiencing the land where Jesus walked, but Adams and his follows capitalized on this missionary fever in a dramatic fashion.

Just north of the Holy Land, in Beirut, Lebanon, Dr. Daniel Bliss was in the final fund raising stages of founding Syrian Protestant College, an institution encouraged by the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. Bliss was able to raise $100,000 during the War and later received a charter from the state of New York to found the school. Like many of his contemporaries, Bliss recognized the importance of founding a secular school to help impact notions of patriotism and republicanism to local Arabs. Syrian Protestant College opened its doors on December 3, 1866 with a class of 16 students.[40] The next academic year, the college became the first institution in the Middle East to open a medical school.

In 1920, the Syrian Protestant College changed its name to the American University of Beirut. By many scholars' accounts, AUB is the most influential American educational institution in the Middle East today. If American missionaries served as defacto diplomats during the Civil War, their efforts paid off during Reconstruction. More than any diplomatic force in the Middle East, missionaries served as fine ideological foot soldiers for Lincoln's "new empire of liberty."

Conclusion

In conclusion, America has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Middle East. From the Barbary Pirates and "the shore of Tripoli", to the War in Iraq today, the United States' relationship with the region has also been wrought with tremendous irony. The Civil War provides a unique context to study US-Middle East relations because of growth and consolidation of American ideological, political and economic power in the aftermath war.

Historian Michael Oren sums it up nicely: "The United States had no need to conquer land in order to attain great-power status in the region, having bloodlessly achieved that rank through its educational and medical institutions…But while the United States lacked imperial ambitions in the Middle East, its experience furnished an excellent model for expanding American hegemony overseas."[41] Fifty years before many credit the genesis of American empire overseas, the United States was able to assert itself as a superpower in the Middle East through its diplomatic records, trade relations and the evangelism of Christian missionaries. Through these three influences, American empire gained a foothold in the region that continues to the present day.

In November of 2003, President George W. Bush gave a speech at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce commemorating the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment of Democracy. While addressing the administration's effort to democratize the Middle East, the President stated:

> *In many nations of the Middle East — countries of great strategic importance — democracy has not yet taken root. And the questions arise: Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? ... I, for one, do not believe it. I believe every person has the ability and the right to be free.*[42]

The spirit embodied in this sentiment harkens back not only to Lincoln's conception of the Declaration and a "new birth of freedom," but also back to the beginning days of the Republic itself. America's relationship with the Middle East is certain to follow a similar path as we progress through the 21st century.

Notes

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[1] Virtually every survey text of American diplomatic history in the Middle East begins in 1921 or 1945. The one exception, and thus an invaluable resource and inspiration to me is Micahel B. Oren's *Power, Faith & Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007).

[2] Historian Walter LaFeber argues against this trend in *The New Empire* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1963), pointing out that America's imperial ambitions around the world followed naturally from political, social and economic factors during Reconstruction. I rely heavily on LaFeber's argument, and will present it through the lens of America's relationship with the Middle East.

[3] Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith & Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007): 177-178. (

[4] Christopher Hitchens, "To the Shores of Tripoli," *TIME*, 4 July 2004, 58.

[5] Secretary Adams famously announced during a speech to the U.S. House of Representatives on July 4, 1821 that "[America] goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own."

[6] Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005): 364.

[7] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1862: Seward to Morris, April 1, 1862, pp. 783-784.

[8] *Ibid*

[9] Oren, 183.

[10] *FRUS*, 1862, p. 5.

[11] Oren, 212.

[12] *Ibid*, 219.

[13] *Ibid*, 215-216.

[14] Jay Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals with Foreign Affairs: A Diplomat in Carpet Slipppers* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1945): 237-238.

[15] L. C. Wright, *United States Policy Towards Egypt: 1830-1914* (New York: Exposition Press, 1969): 62.

[16] Oren, 185.

[17] Wright, 66.

[18] *Ibid*, 70.

[19] Oren, 187.

[20] *Ibid*, 221.

[21] Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (Eerdmans Publishing Company: 1999), 434.

[22] Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2002): xix-xx.

[23] Melvin E. Lee, "The Fallacy of Grievance-based Terrorism," *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2008): 71-79.

[24] Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft Inc., 1958.

[25] Interestingly enough, the brilliant strategist General Robert E. Lee did not receive a pardon or restoration of citizenship in his lifetime, despite issuing an oath of allegiance to the President in 1865. Lee regained his citizenship posthumously under a unanimous Senate vote proposed by Senator Harry F. Byrd in April 1975.

[26] James McPherson explains, "[a]fter the Civil War a century passed before another resident of the South was elected president. In Congress, twenty-three of the thirty-six speakers of the House down to 1861, and twenty-four of the thirty-six presidents pro tem of the Senate, were from the South. Fro a half century after the war, *none* of the speakers or presidents pro tem was from the South." James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 13.

[27] The Fourteenth Amendment, considered by some to be the most vague of three Civil War Amendments, has been the basis for more Supreme Court cases than any other amendment to the Constitution since the Civil War.

[28] While there have been significant third party candidates to run for the presidency (especially during the Gilded Age), no third party candidate has ever been elected to the White House.

[29] Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997): 97.

[30] McPherson, 11. Economists and historians of the New Left disagree with the "Beard-Hacker" thesis and argue that the War actually retarded growth to as much as 2 percent. They argue that one much consider the devastation of the South and the reconstruction costs that the federal government had to pay to repair a defeated Southern economy. These facts cannot be ignored when one is tempted to argue for unbridled economic growth.

[31] William D'Arcy of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (now BP) was the first to discover oil the Middle East. D'Arcy successfully drilled for oil in Iran on May 26, 1908. Oil deposits were later found in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf in 1928.

[32] Zimmerman, 31.

[33] Field, 311.

[34] *Ibid*, 312.

[35] James Field, *America and the Mediterranean World: 1776-1882* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969): 310.

[36] Oren, 187.

[37] Zimmerman, 31.

[38] L. C. Wright, *United States Policy Towards Egypt: 1830-1914* (New York: Exposition Press, 1969): 86.

[39] Oren, 198.

[40] *History of the American University of Beirut*, American University of Beirut, accessed at: http://www.aub.edu.lb/about/history.html.

[41] Oren, 271.

[42] George W. Bush, "20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," National Endowment for Democracy, accessed at http://www.ned.org/events/anniversary/20thAniv-Bush.html.