General McClellan and the Politicians

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All who visit the city of Washington agree that it is a political hothouse. The temperature rises and falls with the oscillations in the fortunes of political causes and individual reputations, and it has ever been so. Founded as a center of government, the city depends on politics and politicians to an extent which has no European parallel; they are its lifeblood, its raison d'etre. So close is the identification of Washington with politics that politicians themselves have turned this to their advantage: on the campaign trail, "Washington" has become a synonym for incompetence and corruption badly in need of a shaking up.

Throughout the 19th century, Washington was a small, rather uncomfortable southern town, with poor accommodations, dirt roads, and planks of wood serving as sidewalks. The magnificence of its public buildings, though still incomplete (scaffolding around the Capitol was still much in evidence during both of Lincoln's inaugural addresses), contrasted with the bareness of the surrounding countryside. At no time was the political temperature of Washington more fevered than in the midst of that century, during the greatest political crisis faced by the United States, the American Civil War. Indeed, General William T. Sherman was of the opinion that political intrigue was the main reason for the defeat of so many Federal armies. In January 1868 he wrote to President Andrew Johnson:

> This city and the influences . . . here defeated every army that had its head here from 1861 to 1865, and would have overwhelmed General Grant . . . had he not been fortified by a strong reputation already hard earned . . . . Whereas in the West we made progress from the start, because there was no political capital near enough to poison our minds and kindle into light that craving itching for fame which has killed more good men than bullets.[1]

Many other senior officers were of the opinion that the hysteria generated by political activity was of material assistance to the Confederacy.

Of course it is a common characteristic of professional soldiers to complain that their operations have been hamstrung by politicians, but the position of Washington in 1861-1862 is in many ways a special case. It is rare that a war of such scale and intensity should be fought in such close proximity to the political heart of a nation in a conflict in which political issues were so heavily laden with strategic implications. The close proximity of Washington, moreover, as General Sherman observed, brought the military into the very heart of the political system as well as the decision-making process. Frequently soldiers enter the corridors of power but are not exposed to the cut and thrust of political life. In Washington during the Civil War, however, soldiers discovered that they could not adequately fulfill their responsibilities without participating in "politics."

Neither is it very likely that politicians who had experienced at first hand the drama and shame of secession would be sober and cautious; on the contrary, secession had provoked a condition of hysteria which was not to abate and a demand that the rebellion be put down without fail. As Senator Wade observed in his tract, *Traitors and their Sympathisers*, it was imperative "that treason be put down at all hazards, and by any means that God Almighty has put into our hands." The desire to put down rebellion, however, ended in disappointment and humiliation at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861. This in turn provoked more hysteria, frenetic but misdirected energy, and the demand that something be done to destroy the rebels. At the beginning of the war a certain cleavage developed between some politicians, who wished to destroy the rebellion as swiftly as possible and restore the authority of the Federal government (without a full understanding of the cost this involved), and professional soldiers, who had a bare idea of what it might cost but who had at this stage little stomach for the task. General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, who was later to advise Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, wrote: "Many friends urge my return to the Army. But I have no heart for engaging in a Civil War . . . . If fighting could preserve the Union (or restore it) I might consider what I could do to take part—but when did fighting make friends?" When demands were made to shoot the generals who had lost at Bull Run, Sherman remarked disapprovingly that "civilians are more willing to start a war than military men and so it appears now."[2]

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General John M. Schofield, who had a distinguished war career, commented on this cleavage in his memoirs, *Forty-Six Years in the Army*: "Men who have been fighting most of the three or four years generally become pretty cool, while those in the rear seem to become hotter and hotter as the end approaches . . . . They must in some way work off the surplus passion which the soldier has already exhausted in battle."

Certainly the politicians got "hotter and hotter" as the decisive success over the Confederacy, which many assumed would follow putting an army into the field, continued to elude them. Their energies were then poured into finding out why the Federal armies failed to meet the expectations that not only the politicians but the generals had encouraged. Congressman George Washington Julian, in his *Political Recollections 1840-1872*, remembered that before First Bull Run, "The confidence in General Scott seemed to be unbounded and I found everybody taking it for granted [that] when the first fight began our forces would prove triumphantly victorious." The reaction was all the stronger when they were not. Expectations were raised yet again when a new commander, Major General George B. McClellan, was called to Washington. But the political atmosphere in which he had to operate was the more volatile because of the failure of his predecessors. The success of this commander was almost as dependent on his understanding this and adapting his methods accordingly than it was on defeating the enemy in the field.[3]

The general called to restore the honor of American arms was young by prevailing standards, 36. McClellan had made a good impression by advancing into the loyal counties of West Virginia before they could be occupied by the Confederacy. McClellan was handsome and charming and looked like a hero. The President of the United States did not. At this stage of the war President Lincoln was underrated by all who came into contact with him—even by his wife. A typical comment was that "Lincoln means well but has not force of *character*. He is surrounded by Old Fogy Army Officers more than half of whom are downright traitors and the other one half sympathize with the South."

Washington was running short of heroes. The discredited Major General Irving B. McDowell, commander at First Bull Run, was dismissed as an "ass," and the septuagenarian General-in-Chief and victor of the Mexican War (1846-1848), Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, was ridiculed as a "senile bag of wind." The President, it was widely believed, had no ideas of his own as to how the war should be conducted. McClellan had had a fairly impressive military career. He had graduated as an engineer (the elite of West Point), distinguished himself in Mexico, served as a member of the commission which had reported on the Crimean War, and resigned his Army commission in 1859. Thereafter he had turned his talents to building

railroads and was appointed president of the Ohio-Mississippi. But as a commander, it must be said, McClellan had yet to prove himself.

McClellan was a first-rate administrator and set about reorganizing and reequipping his troops with dispatch, so that the demoralized regiments that had fled the field of Bull Run in panic were soon drilling and training with enthusiasm. McClellan was nevertheless treated like a hero before his talents had been put to the proof. The praise went to his head. He saw his mission as saving his country: "I did not seek it. It was thrust upon me. I was called to it; my previous life seems to have been unwittingly directed to this great end," as he informed his wife in a state of nervous excitement. In this world of dreams the nickname coined by the newspapers, "The Young Napoleon," began to assume a firm reality before a shot had been fired. Lincoln miscalculated when he encouraged McClellan to intrigue against Scott and appointed him General-in-Chief on 1 November 1861 as well as commander of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan thereafter developed a disdain for his political superiors. This was not in itself very surprising, for it appears to be the stock in trade of most generals. What was alarming about McClellan's arrogance was that he took no pains to conceal his contempt for the President and leading members of the Republican Party.[4]

Despite his weakness for posing for photographers by aping a Napoleonic pose, McClellan revealed a prudence more typical of Marshal Kutuzov[5] than of Napoleon. His grandiloquently expressed general orders revealed nothing more than yet more training and preparations. They invariably concluded lamely, "All quiet on the Potomac." For those politicians who had lived through the drama of secession, this lethargy was insufferable. There had to be a reason to explain it, something more sinister than the inveterate habit of professional soldiers of overpreparing for an advance. Accordingly, the political temperature in Washington rose. There had been no action along the Potomac for months. When a tentative advance made in November 1861 ended in fiasco at Ball's Bluff, a vociferous anti-slavery group of Republicans, known as the Radicals, began to denounce McClellan. A Republican Senator from Oregon, Colonel Edward D. Baker, had been killed at the head of his troops. Demands were made that both First Bull Run and Ball's Bluff be investigated. A Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War was set up, with Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts declaring that it "would teach men in civil and military authority that the people expect they will not make mistakes, and that we should not be easy with their errors."[6]

The formation of this committee should have served to warn McClellan of the extent of the political problems he faced. But McClellan rarely learned from experience. Baker's immediate superior, Brigadier General Charles P. Stone, a friend of McClellan and known as sympathetic to slave-holders, was immediately interrogated by the committee and then

imprisoned without trial. Nobody tried to defend him for fear of being tainted with "treason." James G. Blaine, a future Senator, recalled that "the public in that state of credulity, which is an incident to the victim hunting mania, accepted everything as true."[7]

McClellan's admirers were later to brand the joint committee "a sort of Aulic Council" empowered "to supervise the plans of commanders in the field, to make military suggestions, and to dictate military appointments." Its chairman was Senator "Bluff" Ben Wade. He was described by a future President, James A. Garfield, as "a man of violent passions, extreme opinions, and narrow views." Courageous and outspoken, Wade was completely ruthless. So was his colleague Senator Zachariah Chandler of Michigan, a master of manipulating Senate procedure, who could often be found in Washington bars celebrating his exploits over a bottle of whiskey.[8]

The gravest charge made by McClellan was that the joint committee injected the viciousness of partisan politics into the conduct of a great war, that grave national issues were tainted by ambition and greed. McClellan was not alone in this view. His successor as General-in-Chief, Major General Henry W. Halleck, complained, "*Self* and that pronoun I are too prominent in the minds of our would-be great men. Party politics! Party politics! I sometimes fear that they will utterly ruin the country." McClellan himself, in his memoir *McClellan's Own Story*, claimed that the Radicals on the joint committee wanted "to make a party tool of me." "The real object of the radical leaders," he wrote, "was not the restoration of the Union but the permanent ascendancy of their party [the Republicans] and to achieve this they were ready to sacrifice the Union if necessary."[9]

There were three forms of "politics" that McClellan found distasteful. The first was "political" generals. These were, in his opinion, a singularly nauseous variety of officer who used political influence to acquire a senior officer's commission in the volunteer regiments. This group, including Baker, John C. Frémont, Benjamin F. Butler, John A. Logan, and others, was favored by the joint committee. The second form of politics was interference by politicians in military operations. President Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton, in times of crisis, were prone to issue orders directly to the commanders in the field. It is reputed that both had taken books out of the Library of Congress to enable them to study the principles of strategy in their leisure hours. The third form was the use of the joint committee's powers to advance the careers of generals who agreed with its views and to destroy the careers of those who did not; the hapless General Stone was a case in point.[10]

In all three of these instances the word "politics" had unsavory connotations. A suspicion of party politics was deeply ingrained in the American political tradition. In his Farewell Address, George Washington

"I can't tell you how disgusted I'm becoming with these wretched politicians."

—George B. McClellan, 1862

had warned that party feeling served "always to distract the public council." Deprecating the "ill-founded jealousies and false alarms" and the "animosity of one part against the other," Washington warned that party politics was destructive of stability. In a political system in which office was a substitute for European titles and decorations, however, the growth of mechanisms designed to promote and consolidate political patronage was inevitable. "Truly incredible are the efforts men are willing to make, the humiliations they will endure," declared the orator Edward Everett, to acquire office. Thus "politics" came to mean dirty politics. In a civil war when great national issues were put to the test, the moral dilemma of pursuing patriotic ends with partisan means was resolved by equating morality with power and the assumption on one side of a monopoly of patriotism and purity of motive. It was central to the identity or self-image of both soldiers (who were traditionally acquitted of political motives) and civilian politicians that they appeared free of political skullduggery (whatever the reality). Thus Senator Wade could claim that only "the [Radical Republicans] are the men of principle. They are the men who feel what they contend for. They are not your slippery politicians who . . . construe a thing any way to suit the . . . present occasion." Thus, even among politicians, "politics" became a term of political abuse. But for McClellan politics and politicians were one and the same. "I can't tell you how disgusted I'm becoming with these wretched politicians," he wrote in 1862. "I presume I have to go after them [the Confederates] when I get ready; but this getting ready is slow work with such an administration. I wish I were well out of it."[11]

All members of the joint committee despised professional soldiers, "aristocrats," West Point "martinets," and plodding engineers. McClellan fit all categories. The stalemate along the Potomac was easily explained, said Senator Chandler: "The war had dragged its slow length along under generals who never meant to *fight*." McClellan had refused to divulge his plans on the grounds that Lincoln could not keep a secret. The President issued consecutively his General War Order No. 1 and his Special War Order No. 1 ordering an advance in Virginia, but with no effect. In February 1862, General McClellan was called before the joint committee. He would not

reveal his plans to the committee, either, and contented himself with an exposition of the military principles upon which they were based, confident in the knowledge that this would leave the members of the committee none the wiser. He was correct in thinking they were ignorant of war, but their reaction took him completely by surprise. "If I understand you correctly," observed Chandler sarcastically, "before you strike at the rebels you want to be sure of plenty of room so that you can run in case they strike back." "Or," cut in Wade, "in case you get scared." After McClellan had left, Wade asked Chandler what he thought of the "science of generalship." Chandler replied, "I don't know much about war, but it seems to me that this is infernal, unmitigated cowardice."[12]

Civilian politicians like Wade and Chandler ridiculed the idea that fancy ideas about strategy were of any value. Yet they wanted to show that they excelled at strategy. Congressman Julian claimed that one of the advantages of joint committee membership was that "it afforded a very desirable opportunity to learn something of the . . . secrets of our policy." The reaction of the committee members when they discovered that, for all of McClellan's arrogance about the theory of war, the only secret about it was that there was no secret—that the Emperor (this time embodied in the rather feeble imitation of the Young Napoleon) had no clothes—was to mount a concerted attack against him. Julian recalled that "the fate of the nation seemed committed to one man called 'General-in-Chief,' who communicated his secrets to no human being, who had neither age nor military experience to justify the extraordinary deference of the President to his wishes." He considered it "a betrayal of the country . . . to hold our grand armies for weeks and months in unexplained idleness," and it had to stop.[13]

These political tussles mirrored a vexed strategic debate. The President preferred a direct advance over Northern Virginia (like that before First Bull Run) which covered Washington. McClellan had developed a more subtle scheme for shifting the Army of the Potomac across the Chesapeake Bay to the Peninsula, thus outflanking the defenses of the Confederate capital, Richmond, from the east. On 8 March 1862, Lincoln willingly saw the issue put to a vote of a council of war consisting of all the division commanders of the Army of the Potomac. He lost by a margin of 8 to 4. Slanderous gossip, spread mainly by Wade and his colleagues, followed this decision to send the Army of the Potomac to the Peninsula. The next day McClellan was called to the Executive Mansion (as the White House was then called) and Lincoln raised "a very ugly matter"—that McClellan intended to expose the capital to Confederate attack by transporting all his troops to Virginia. The President concluded "that it did look to him much like treason."

McClellan demanded and received an apology. But Lincoln's remark, besides revealing a marked lack of confidence in his commanding

general (and McClellan was relieved of the post of General-in-Chief before setting out), reflected the atmosphere of fear in Washington and a suspicion toward McClellan that he could not shake off. Indeed, "a majority of the Committee at this time strongly suspected that McClellan was a traitor." The root of this suspicion lay in the fact that McClellan was not so innocent of politics as he liked to claim. McClellan was a Democrat. The Democratic Party had been split by the slavery question; insofar as they supported the war, Democrats looked only to a restoration of the Union, not the destruction of slavery; the Radical Republicans were anathema to them. McClellan had strong links with the Democratic Marcy machine of New York, and many Democrats looked to him to lead a conservative alignment in the congressional elections in the autumn of 1862. After he had departed to the Peninsula, Fernando Wood, Mayor of New York (and suspected of secessionist sympathies), visited McClellan and urged him to become the Democratic presidential candidate in 1864. Radical Republicans suspected him of wanting a compromise peace so that he could win the presidential election and Southern votes.[14]

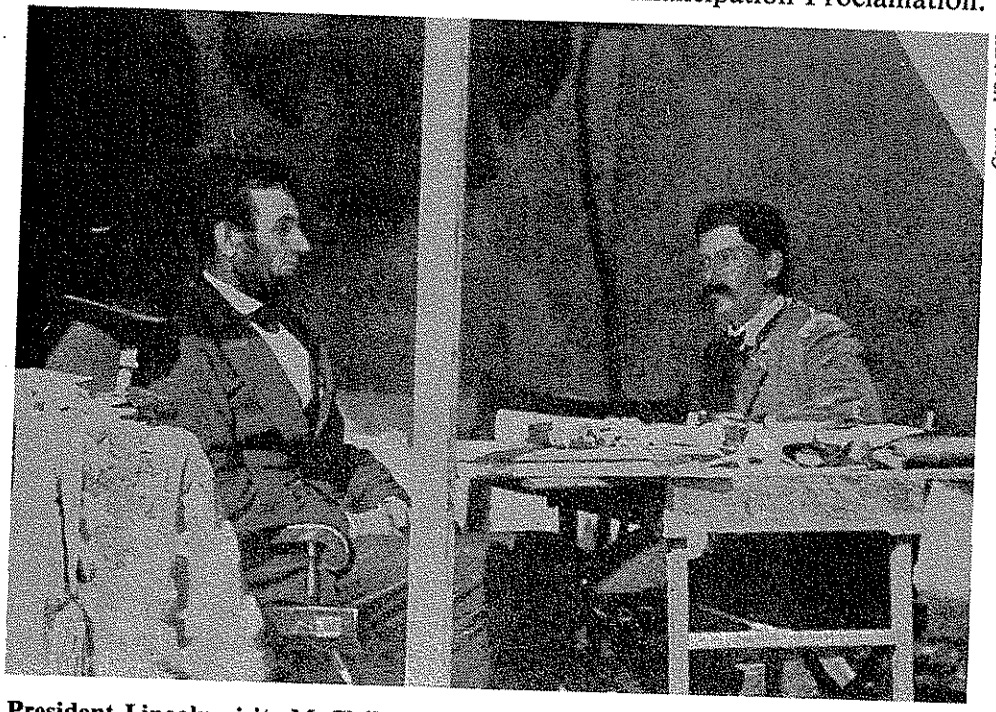
Nevertheless, McClellan's future rested in his own hands. Only the President could remove him; the joint committee had no executive powers. His deteriorating political position—the besmirching of his reputation, the suspicions of the President, the close alliance developing between Stanton (for whom McClellan had a particular loathing) and the joint committee—all could be retrieved by a striking victory. But in this McClellan failed. In June 1862 Lee drove the Army of the Potomac back to its base on the James River in a series of battles called "The Seven Days." Based upon his political views, McClellan's strategy reflected "due regard to the obligations imposed upon [him] by the laws and customs of civilized warfare." This "due regard" involved the protection of Southern civilians and their property (which included their slaves). Again, to McClellan the paramount war aim should be a restoration of the Union and not the destruction of slavery. Yet McClellan chose the moment of his defeat to write to Lincoln on this matter in what has come to be called the "Harrison Landing Letter." Now, a military withdrawal rarely advances political views. McClellan's military failures ultimately rebounded on the political position that he advanced, which in turn cast little credit on his strategy. Wade ridiculed his efforts: "McClellan's forte is digging not fighting . . . . Place him before an enemy and he will burrow like a woodchuck. His first effort is to get underground."[15]

Though McClellan remained Commander of the Army of the Potomac during the remainder of the summer of 1862, Lincoln created a new force, the Army of Virginia, commanded by Major General John Pope, a favorite of the joint committee, who supported emancipation, the shooting of civilian snipers, and "as far as practicable" the notion that Northern troops should live off the country. Though Pope was defeated by

Lee at Second Bull Run, his appointment was proof of the gradual increase in the respectability of views about punitive strategy which were now accepted by many besides the Radicals—including the President. The committee also scored a notable success by singling out McClellan's friend, Major General Fitz-John Porter, commander of Pope's Second Corps, as the scapegoat for Second Bull Run, and he was court-martialed. Porter hated the Radicals and Pope. "I wish myself away from it [the Army of Virginia]," he wrote, and to be back "with all our old Army of the Potomac." After listing Pope's stupidities, he remarked, "make what use of this you choose [in the newspapers], so that it does good."

Though McClellan was damaged by the disgrace of Porter, he was offered yet another chance to retrieve his fortunes on the battlefield, and at a moment of great national peril. Lincoln appointed him to command all troops in the field after Lee's invasion of Maryland in the autumn of 1862. The Radicals were powerless to stop it. The resulting Battle of Antietam, though forcing Lee to withdraw back into Virginia, was tactically indecisive—"not such a victory as Napoleon had accustomed the world to demand," was the shrewd comment of the Quartermaster General, Montgomery C. Meigs.[16]

McClellan's ultimate dismissal, in October 1862, was hastened by another dose of what Lincoln called the "slows" (which had permitted Lee to escape unscathed) and by the issue of the Emancipation Proclamation.



Courtesy USAMHI

President Lincoln visits McClellan in the field. Lincoln later relieved him for his military indecisiveness and his political views.

McClellan's response to the latter was that "the remedy for political errors is to be found only . . . at the polls," an indication that his eyes were fixed firmly on the 1864 Democratic nomination. There followed the disastrous defeat of the Army of the Potomac under Major General Ambrose E. Burnside at the Battle of Fredericksburg on 13 December 1862, which brought calls for McClellan's reinstatement. This the Radicals were determined to avoid. It is said of the ancient Carthaginians that they crucified failed generals whatever the circumstances that excused their conduct. The Radicals were determined to crucify McClellan's reputation, to kill him "deader than the prophets," as Chandler put it. In truth he had provided them with plenty of ammunition. The committee's campaign involved the exculpation of the commander at Fredericksburg, General Burnside, who now presented himself as an ardent emancipator. The proceedings of a joint committee investigation resembled a court where the defense had no place. Witnesses were invited to give opinions on their superiors, a procedure which was prejudicial to good military discipline. The committee met in secret and commanders called to testify were unaware that they had been criticized. Major General Joseph Hooker, for instance, ridiculed McClellan's siege of Yorktown: "I would have marched right through the redoubt and into Richmond in two days." The value of Hooker's testimony can be gauged by reference to the events of his own unhappy tenure of command of the Army of the Potomac at a later time. A scapegoat for Fredericksburg was nevertheless found, Major General William B. Franklin, commander of Sixth Corps, who had led the initial assault which had broken into Stonewall Jackson's lines only to be driven back. He was a close friend of McClellan.[17]

The Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, published on 9 April 1863, with its damning slant on McClellan's generalship and that of his friends as well, ended any hope that he might be recalled. Preliminary summaries appeared in all leading Republican newspapers and were distributed among the troops. "There must be something in these terrible reports," wrote the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, in his diary, "but I distrust Congressional Committees. They exaggerate."

At first sight the resulting complaints by McClellan and his friends seem justified. Their careers were destroyed by uncouth, self-seeking politicians who twisted the facts to their own advantage. But their case rests on a misconception, even a distortion: that they were innocent of political ambition or guile. McClellan complained, "No one seems to be able to comprehend . . . that I have no ambitious feelings to satisfy and only wish to serve my country in its troubles and when this weary war is over, to return to my wife." The image is that of Quintus Fabius Maximus, Scipio

Africanus, Cincinnatus, or even George Washington—the selfless patriot retiring from public life after dutiful service. As he claimed in *McClellan's Own Story*, "To the last I have done my duty as I understand it." But in reality McClellan and his friends—victims of political maneuver—applied absolute standards of morality to their opponents' behavior and pragmatic standards to their own. Their pique is a reflection of frustration at being denied similar power. Had roles been reversed no doubt they would have acted with equal ruthlessness. They fell well below the ideal of being able to serve governments irrespective of what party held office. The selfless soldier without political interests or ambitions fits the *chevalier* model as defined by Marcus Cunliffe.[18] McClellan himself had defined this as the "modern type of the Chevalier Bayard *sans peur et sans reproche.*" McClellan was something less than this.

McClellan had always looked for political support. What requires comment is not the existence of his political ambitions but rather his need to disguise them from himself in accord with the code of the *chevalier*. "Whenever I wrote anything of a political nature," he said later, "it was only with the hope of doing something [to further] those political principles which I thought honestly should control the conduct of the war." Thus was McClellan's self-image maintained and his political ambitions disguised from his overweening moral vanity. His greatest mistake was in supposing that his political star could be advanced whilst his military fortunes waned. His strategy did not meet the demands of politics; with strategy he tried to shape politics. He missed his opportunity to discredit his critics in July 1862 with the failure of the Peninsular Campaign. Unlike many generals, he was given another chance to redeem himself during the Antietam Campaign and failed to seize it. McClellan was an indecisive general, a ditherer. Suetonius, in his life of Nero, tells of one of the Emperor's ancestors, Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, who was so indecisive that "in a fit of desperation he attempted suicide by poison, but the prospect of immediate death so terrified him that he changed his mind and vomited up the dose—the family physician knew him well enough to have made it a mild one, which earned the wise fellow his freedom."[19] The moral is worthy of McClellan. For all his seeming arrogance he lacked the power of decision to best his opponents both on the battlefield and in the smoke-filled rooms of Washington.

If there is a striking feature of McClellan's campaigns which should be noted and underlined by all soldiers, it is that warfare emerges from a political context. As Clausewitz put it, "wars cannot be divorced from political life"; and commanders who become so immersed in the technical demands of the art of war, who arrogantly brush aside the imperatives and pressures of political life, and who lack sympathy with the way in which these impinge upon the decisions of their political masters, will mount military operations which are doomed to fail.

NOTES

1. Sherman to Johnson, 31 January 1868, in R. S. Thorndyke, ed. *The Sherman Letters* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1894, 1969), p. 300.

2. Hans L. Trefousse, *Benjamin Franklin Wade* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1963), p. 186; Ethan A. Hitchcock, *Fifty Years in Camp and Field*, ed. W. A. Croffat (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), p. 430; Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1929), p. 142.

3. John M. Schofield, *Forty-Six Years in the Army* (New York: The Century Co., 1897), p. 314; G. W. Julian, *Political Recollections 1840-1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, & Co., 1884), p. 196.

4. Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *Horace Greeley* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), pp. 275-77, 279; Hans L. Trefousse, *The Radical Republicans* (New York: Knopf, 1969), p. 180; George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story* (New York: C. L. Webster & Co., 1887), pp. 30, 59, 138-39, 141, 144, 149; James A. Garfield thought Lincoln "almost a child in the hands of his generals" (T. C. Smith, *The Life and Letters of James A. Garfield* [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1925], I, 240-41).

5. Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov was the Russian commander who opposed Napoleon in the campaigns of 1805 and 1812. His primary tenet was to keep his army in being, avoiding decisive engagement until victory was assured.

6. T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1941, 1965), pp. 61-62.

7. James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress* (Norwich, Conn.: Henry Bill, 1884), I, 282-83.

8. William H. Hurlburt, *General McClellan and the Conduct of the War* (New York: Sheldon & Craig, 1864), p. 160.

9. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1962), p. 205; McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 149.

10. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 152. If the Joint Committee could be petty in advancing the careers of its favorite generals, so could McClellan in resisting them. For instance, during a tour of the Army of the Potomac, he had Senator Wade chased away from shelter during a shower of rain. See Hans L. Trefousse, "The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War: A Reassessment," *Civil War History*, 10 (March 1964), 9.

11. Quoted in Marcus Cunliffe, *American Presidents and the Presidency* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969, 1972), pp. 97, 110; Trefousse, *Radical Republicans*, p. 3; Warren W. Hassler, *General George B. McClellan: Shield of the Union* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1957), p. 32.

12. T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals*, p. 88.

13. Julian, pp. 201-09.

14. Peter J. Parish, *The American Civil War* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1975), pp. 164-66, 173-76; Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, *Stanton* (New York: Knopf, 1962), p. 211; Kenneth P. Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), I, 817, n. 97. For an account of the council of war vote, see T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York: Knopf, 1952), p. 67.

15. McClellan to Robert E. Lee, 4 August 1862, *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 355; Thomas and Hyman, *Stanton*, pp. 148-49; Trefousse, *Wade*, pp. 175-78.

16. *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. XII, Part 2, pp. 49-50; *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. XII, Part 3, p. 700; "General M. C. Meigs on the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, 26 (January 1921), 291.

17. *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War* (Washington: GPO, 1866), I, 635-41; Julian, p. 225, claimed that Burnside's initial frank admission of responsibility "disarmed all criticism"; Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969), p. 324.

18. Howard K. Beale, ed., *The Diary of Gideon Welles* (New York: 1960), II, 23 (entry for 3 May 1864); McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story*, pp. 489, 660; Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians*, pp. 418-23.

19. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story*, p. 35; Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 210.