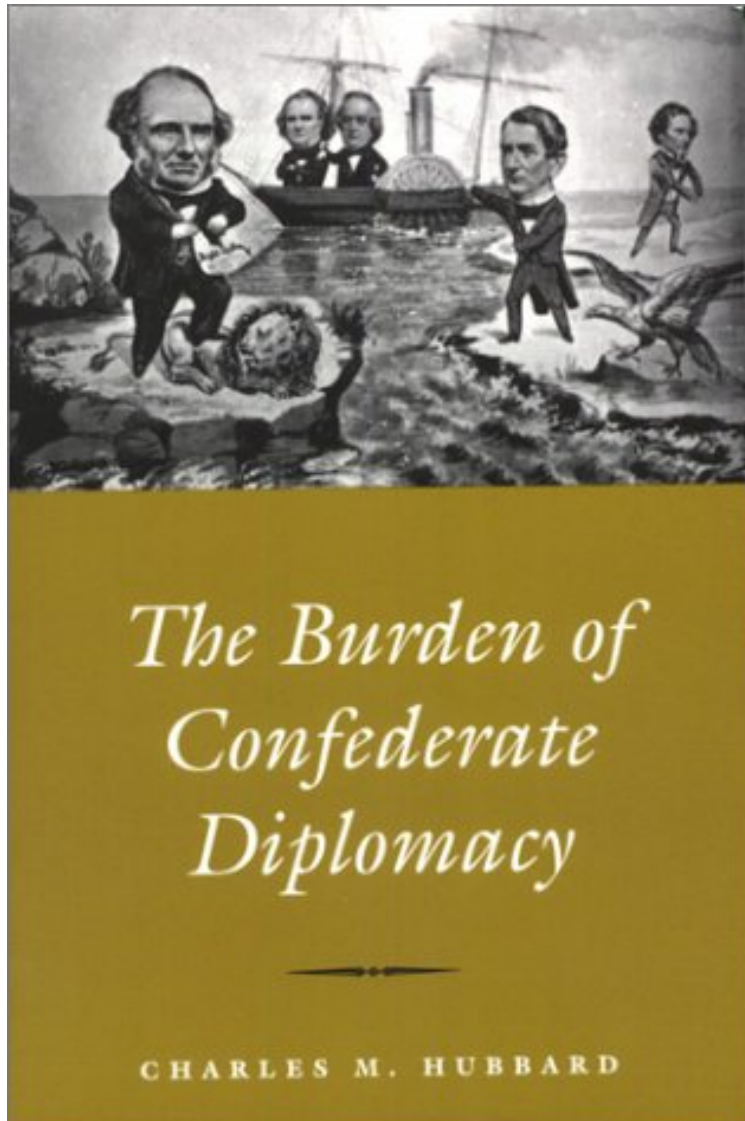


Burden Of Confederate Diplomacy

CHARLES M. HUBBARD

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#3486892 in Books Univ Tennessee Press 2000-08-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, 1.00 #File Name: 1572330929272 pages | File size: 52.Mb

CHARLES M. HUBBARD : Burden Of Confederate Diplomacy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Burden Of Confederate Diplomacy:

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing.....And Here's Why:By OdysseusI was looking forward to reading Hubbard's new survey of Confederate diplomacy. However, I was sorely disappointed: First, despite an extensive bibliography, Hubbard's study does not make any substantial contribution to the scholarly literature. The reader will not find any new revelations not already discussed or analyzed by previous studies. Second, the title of the study itself is never adaquately explained (Perhaps, given the myriad of problems confronting the

Confederate State Department, the title ought to have used the plural "Burdens" as opposed to the awkward, singular "Burden"). Third, Hubbard's study was/is in desperate need of a careful and responsible editor: Not only are there numerous typos and misspellings throughout the text, but blatant factual errors. For example, he refers to "Fort Monroe, New York" (p. 61), and describes Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston as "Joseph Johnson" (p. 89). There are cases, too, whereby the formal, official titles of "President of the Confederate States of America" (p. 3), "Secretary of War," and "Secretary of Navy" (p. 89) are not capitalized. Fourth, the book proved to be verbose and mind-numbingly repetitive. At times, the writing is fuzzy, ill-structured, and laborious -- worthy more of a first-semester college freshman rather than a tenured professor. Consider the following sentence: "Cowley, aware of Lindsay's earlier role in negotiating the commercial treaty, made the request and received an appointment for Lindsay at 1:00 p.m. on April 11th" (p. 81) [Good grief! Why not 1:33? 2:17? 3:06?]. Such writing leaves the reader feeling EXHAUSTED. Fifth, Hubbard proves to be intensely critical of Confederate diplomatic efforts, yet scholarship shows that despite all its many handicaps, lack of resources, and shortsightedness, the Confederate State Department actually accomplished a great deal under extraordinary circumstances. Indeed, partisanship aside, the Confederacy made remarkable strides in just four short years. Sixth, Hubbard propogates the old myth that there existed a cotton 'famine' in Europe in the 1860's (a shortage which proved to be the underlying lynchpin in Confederate diplomatic strategy, i.e. to place economic pressure on London and Paris so as to force the two overseas powers to intervene). Not so! Evidence clearly shows that a cotton GLUT existed in Europe -- a fatal miscalculation that undermined the southern tactic of relying solely on "King Cotton." Hubbard's outdated and blatantly incorrect misunderstanding of European economic conditions should NOT have found its way into a new study of Confederate diplomacy. Seventh, Hubbard fails to give adequate credit to where, exactly, the failure of the Confederacy is truly and honestly due: To the Federal army and navy. Despite the claims of Neo-Confederates and southern apologists, Union forces overcame initial setbacks and defeated the brave and determined Confederates. In other words, the South lost the war on the battlefield, not, as Hubbard contends, in the salons of Europe. Hubbard's own treatment of Confederate diplomacy attributes Confederate diplomatic failures as mostly due to internal faults rather than to such a minor inconvenience as.....the North's military machine. The author goes on to make the rather presumptuous claim that "A successful diplomatic strategy that obtained either European recognition or a negotiated settlement with the Union would have ensured the existence of the Confederacy as a sovereign, independent nation" (p. 177). Whoa, pardner! Its as though the Union army and navy hardly played any role in southern diplomatic reversals! Only begrudgingly does Hubbard give import to such Federal victories as Vicksburg and Gettysburg, while Lincoln's non-negotiable determination to restore the Union is allowed but fleeting recognition. Elsewhere, the decisive role of the United States naval blockade in discouraging European intervention is shamefully given only scant attention. Eighth, when Hubbard discusses last-ditch Confederate attempts to gain European recognition in the last two years of the war, he fails to remind the reader that Confederate resistance, particularly in the Western Theatre, had all but collapsed. In fact, after 1863, Confederate diplomatic overtures entered the realm of fantasy and unreality -- a phenomenon Hubbard does not acknowledge. Ninth, Hubbard does not give fair weight to the significance of the Hampton Roads Conference (1865): If anything demonstrated the ultimate futility and misguided nature of Confederate diplomacy it was the quirky, detached, and delirious nature of the proposals made by the southern delegates. Lastly, the most telling proof of the shallowness of Confederate diplomatic overtures lies in the fact that the Confederate Government, in a last-ditch attempt to win-over European approval, ultimately abandoned the precise reason for secession: In an effort to bolster the rapidly dwindling Confederate Army, the rebel government turned against the "peculiar institution" and called for the enlistment of slaves. Such a titanic irony is mentioned by Hubbard only in passing, yet remains astoundingly significant if one is to correctly -- and properly -- understand the truly handicapped position of Confederate foreign policy. I respect and admire Mr. Hubbard for attempting to write an updated, one-volume study of Confederate diplomacy, but the book -- like the rebel state department -- invariably proved a failure. I suggest that any readers interested in the subject refer to the (still) definitive work on Civil War diplomacy: D.P. Crook, *The North, The South, and the Powers, 1861-1865* (New York: John Wiley Sons, 1974). A more recent -- and nicely constructed -- survey is Dean B. Mahin, *One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1999). 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. New insightful study on the failure of confederate diplomacy By A Customer Not since Frank Owsley's KING COTTON DIPLOMACY has a book length review of confederate diplomacy been published. Charles Hubbard's THE BURDEN OF CONFEDERATE DIPLOMACY takes a look at why the South failed to gain international support. Much of the blame for blunders and failings of Confederate foreign relations are put on the Jefferson Davis's and the Confederate State Department's curious choices for envoys. Hubbard uses the example of John Pickett, a man with no tact and racist hostility towards Mexicans. Pickett's main accomplishment during his short tenure as Confederate envoy was being thrown into jail for disorderly conduct. THE BURDEN OF CONFEDERATE DIPLOMACY is well documented, with a large and well organized bibliography. I heartly recomend this book for anyone interested in the unique problems Confederate diplomats faced and why in the ned, no country recongized the independence of the Confederate States of America.

"Thoroughly researched . . . [Hubbard's] interpretation is solid, well supported, and touches all of the major aspects of Confederate diplomacy."—*American Historical Review*"As the first examination of the topic since *King Cotton Diplomacy* (1931), this work deserves widespread attention. Hubbard offers a convincingly bleak portrayal of the limited skills and myopic vision of Rebel diplomacy at home and abroad."—*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*Of the many factors that contributed to the South's loss of the Civil War, one of the most decisive was the failure of Southern diplomacy. In this penetrating work, Charles M. Hubbard reassesses the diplomatic efforts made by the Confederacy in its struggle to become an independent nation. Hubbard focuses both on the Confederacy's attempts to negotiate a peaceful separation from the Union and Southern diplomats' increasingly desperate pursuit of state recognition from the major European powers. Drawing on a large body of sources, Hubbard offers an important reinterpretation of the problems facing Confederate diplomats. He demonstrates how the strategies and objectives of the South's diplomatic program—themselves often poorly conceived—were then placed in the hands of inexperienced envoys who were ill-equipped to succeed in their roles as negotiators. The Author: Charles M. Hubbard is associate professor of history at Lincoln Memorial University and executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Museum in Harrogate, Tennessee.

About the AuthorThe Author: Charles M. Hubbard is associate professor of history at Lincoln Memorial University and executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Museum in Harrogate, Tennessee.