

# One Among Many: The Civil War and National Unification \*

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More than a century ago, between the years 1845 and 1870, the world witnessed a widespread efflorescence of nation-building, in the midst of which was the American Civil War. Some of those instances of people's seeking national identity and statehood remind us of the Confederacy inasmuch as they failed to achieve independence. The revolt of the Hungarians against their Austrian masters in 1848 under the leadership of Louis Kossuth was one such failure, though within two decades Hungarian nationalism achieved a kind of acknowledgment of national identity in the dual empire of Austria-Hungary. A more crushing failure was the experience of the Poles who rose in 1863 against their Russian rulers, at the very same time that the United States was struggling to suppress its own uprising in the South. Contrary to the Confederacy's fate, the Polish defeat would be reversed at the end of the First World War.

Other instances of nation-building achieved their aims. In 1847 the Swiss cantons concluded their war for a Union under a new federal constitution and with a fresh and enduring sense of nationality. In 1860, Camillo Cavour of the kingdom of Sardinia with the assistance of France and the military help of Giuseppe Garibaldi brought into being the first united Italy since the days of ancient Rome. During that same decade of the 1860s a united Germany came into existence for the first time as well. Nor were the nationalist outbursts of that quarter-century confined to Europe. They also erupted in Asia, where a new Japan emerged in the course of the Meiji Restoration, in which feudal power was forever subordinated to a centralized state that deliberately modeled itself after the nation-states of Europe.

Looking at the American Civil War in the context of contemporary efforts to establish national identity has the advantage of moving us beyond the often complacent concern with ourselves that I sometimes fear is the bane of United States historians. The Civil War is undoubtedly a peculiarly American event, one central to our national experience. In its endurance, the magnitude of its killing, and the immense extent of its arena it easily dwarfs any other nationalist struggle of its century. Yet if we recognize its similarity to other examples of nation-building of that time we may obtain fresh insights into its character and its meaning, then and now.

First of all, let me clear the ground by narrowing our comparisons. Although the European and Asian instances of nation-building in the years between 1845 and 1870 are comparable to the American experience in that they

all involve the creation or the attempt to create a national state, not all of them are comparable on more than that general level. The Meiji Restoration, for example, was certainly the beginning of the modern Japanese state but the analogy stops there since it did not involve a military struggle. The Polish and Hungarian national uprisings bear closer comparison to the Confederate strike for independence, but the differences in nationality between the oppressors and the oppressed (Austrians versus Hungarians; Russians against Poles) render dubious any further analogy to the Confederacy. After all, both the Hungarians and the Poles had been conquered by foreigners; each enjoyed a national history that stretched deep into the past, something totally missing from the South's urge to separate from the United States.

The Italian experience in nation-building comes closer to the North's effort to preserve the Union. A united Italy did emerge eventually from the wars of the Risorgimento and Garibaldi's conquests of Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples. Pertinent, too, is that Garibaldi, as an internationally recognized hero of Italian unification, was entreated by the Lincoln Administration to become a leading officer in the Union army. Yet, neither event offers much basis for comparison. The unification of all of Italy was, as English statesman William Gladstone remarked, "among the greatest marvels of our time," and simultaneously a kind of accident.

It was a marvel because Italy's diversity in economy, language, culture, and society between North and South and among the various states into which the peninsula had been divided for centuries made unification seem most unlikely. Cavour, who is generally considered the architect of Italian unification, came late to the idea of uniting even northern Italy much less the whole peninsula. That he always wrote in French because his Italian was so bad further illustrates the marvelous character of Italian unification. That the whole of the peninsula was united at all resulted principally from the accident of Giuseppe Garibaldi and his famous Thousand. Cavour had tried vigorously to prevent the irrepressible Genovese from invading Sicily only to have Garibaldi within a matter of months present Cavour's own King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia with not only Sicily, but the Kingdom of Naples as well. Historian Denis Mack Smith has suggested that the limited energy expended in achieving the Kingdom of Italy is measured in the statistic that more people died in a single day of the Franco-Prussian War than died in all of the twenty-five years of military campaigns to unify Italy. In that story there is little to remind us of the crisis of the American Union.

Can a better analogy be drawn between our war for the Union and the story of German unification? When Otto von Bismarck in 1871 finally brought together into a single nation the heretofore independent states of Germany a new country was thereby brought into existence. The United States, on the other hand, had come into existence almost a century earlier. In 1861 it could hardly be counted as a fledgling state on a par with the newly created German

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Empire. To make that observation, however, is to read the present back into the past, that is, to assume that the Union of 1787 had created a nation. That, to be sure, is the way Lincoln viewed the Union and, more important, it is the way in which many of us envision the Union, for which a war was necessary in order to excise the cancer of slavery threatening its survival. The unexpressed assumption here is that a *nation* had been endangered, that a sense of true nationhood already embraced the geographical area known as the United States. It was, as noted already, the assumption from which Abraham Lincoln operated. That is why Lincoln, unlike many other American political figures of his time, never predicted a war over the Union. A nation does not go to war with itself.

Lincoln's view, however, was not that held by many people of the time, and especially not by Southerners. Suppose we look, then, at the era of the Civil War from the standpoint of the South, and not from the standpoint of him who conquered the region, and denied its essential difference from the rest of the United States. Southerners, it is true, unlike Poles or Hungarians, had originally agreed to join the Union; they were neither conquered nor coerced and they shared a common language, ethnicity, and history. Indeed, the South's sons were among those who drafted the Constitution of the Union, headed the resulting government, and even came to dominate it. Yet, as the early history of the country soon demonstrated, that Union was just a union of states, and not a nation in any organic sense. Paul Nagel in his study of the concept of Union points out that in the first twenty-five years of the country's existence the Union was generally seen as an experiment rather than as an enduring polity. It was, he observes, more a means to achieve nationhood than a nation itself.

Certainly the early history of the country reflects that conception of the Union. Within ten years of the founding of the new government one of the architects of the Revolution and an official of the administration, Thomas Jefferson, boldly asserted a state's right to nullify an oppressive act of Congress. Five years later those who objected to the acquisition of Louisiana talked openly of secession from the Union as a remedy for their discontent, and within another fifteen years even louder suggestions for getting out of the Union came in the course of the war against England. The most striking challenge to the permanence of the Union, of course, came not from New England, but from the South, from South Carolina in particular during the nullification crisis of 1828-33. Just about that time, Alexis de Tocqueville recognized that if the Union was intended to "form one and the same people," few people accepted that view. "The whole structure of the government," he reported, "is artificial," rather than organic.

We call the struggle the Civil War, some Southerners who accepted the Southern view of the Constitution, call it the War Between the States, and officially it is the War of the Rebellion. But it was, of course, really the War for Southern Independence, in much the same league, if for different historical

reasons, as Poland's and Hungary's wars of national liberation around the same time. We know, too, that the South's determined struggle revealed how wrong Lincoln had been to believe in a broad and deep sense of Unionism among Southerners.

European observers of the time well recognized the incomplete nature of American nationalism, if Lincoln did not. William Gladstone, the English Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1862, could not conceal his conviction, as he phrased it, that "Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation." Soon after the war the great liberal historian Lord Acton, in a letter to Robert E. Lee, explained why he had welcomed the Confederacy. "I saw in State Rights," Acton wrote, "the only availing check upon the absolutism of the sovereign will, and secession filled me with hope, not as the destruction but as the redemption of Democracy. . . . I deemed that you were fighting the battles of our liberty, our progress, and our civilization; and I mourn the stake which was lost at Richmond more deeply than I rejoice over that which was saved at Waterloo."

In short, when the South seceded in 1860-61 that fact measured not only the failure of the Union, but, more important, the incomplete character of American nationalism. Or as historian Erich Angermann has reminded us, the United States in 1861, despite the Union of 1787, was still an "unfinished nation" in much the same way as were Italy and Germany.

True, a deep sense of nationhood existed among Americans, but it was confined largely to the North. Indeed, to acknowledge that nationalism is probably the soundest way to account for the remarkable explosion of popular support that greeted Lincoln's call for volunteers to enforce the laws in the South after the fall of Sumter. When we recognize that in 1860 only a truncated nationalism existed among Americans despite the eighty-year history of the Union, then the American Civil War suddenly fits well into a comparison with other nation-building efforts of those years. The Civil War, in short, was not a struggle to save a failed Union, but to create a nation that until then had not come into being. For, in Hegel's elegant phrase "the owl of Minerva flies at dusk," historical understanding is fullest at the moment of death. International comparison throws into relief the creative character of war in the making of nations, or, in the case of the Confederacy, in the aborting of nations.

For one thing, all of the struggles for national unification in Europe, as in the United States, required military power to bring the nation into existence and to arm it with state power. This was true not only of Italy and Germany, but of Switzerland as well, as I hope to show a little later. As Ernest Renan wrote in his 1882 essay "What Is a Nation?" "Unity is always realized by brute force. The union of North and South in France," he pointed out, "was the result of a reign of terror and extermination carried on for nearly a century" in the late Middle Ages. "Deeds of violence . . . have marked the origin of all political

formations," he insisted, "even of those which have been followed by the most beneficial results."

The Italian wars of national unity may not present much of an analogy with the American war, but the course of German unification is revealing. Everyone is familiar with the role of the Franco-Prussian war in the achievement of the unification of Germany in 1871. Equally relevant for an appreciation of the American Civil War as struggle for nationhood was the Seven Weeks War between Austria and Prussia, which preceded the war with France and which culminated in Prussia's great military victory at Koniggratz or Sadowa in 1866. That war marked the culmination of Bismarck's determined efforts to exclude Austria from any united Germany in order that Prussia would be both the center and the head. By defeating Austria and creating the North German Confederation under the leadership of Prussia, Bismarck concluded what many observers at the time and historians since have referred to as a *Bruderkrieg*, a German civil war. For it was neither foreordained by history nor by the power relations among the states of central Europe that a *Kleindeutschland* or lesser Germany from which Austria was excluded would prevail over a *Grossdeutschland* or greater Germany in which Austria would be the equal or even the superior of Prussia.

At that stage in the evolution of German-nationhood the closest analogy to the American experience puts Prussia in the position of the Southern Confederacy, for it was in effect seeking to secede from the German Confederation, created at the time of the Congress of Vienna and headed by Austria. Just as Bismarck had provoked Austria into war to achieve his end, so Jefferson Davis and the South were prepared to wage war against their long-time rival for control of the North American Union.

Despite the tempting analogy, however, Jefferson Davis was no Bismarck. His excessive constitutional scruples during the short life of the Confederacy make that crystal clear. (If anything Bismarck was just the opposite: slippery in regard to any constitution with which he came into contact.) Davis's rival for domination of the North American continent—Abraham Lincoln—came considerably closer to Bismarck, including the Bismarck who by his innovative actions within the North German Confederation had laid the foundations of German industrialization.

Historians of the United States have not liked comparing Bismarck and Lincoln. As historian David Potter once wrote, "the Gettysburg Address would have been as foreign to Bismarck as a policy of 'blood and iron' would have been to Lincoln." It is certainly true that the Gettysburg Address could not have been a policy statement from Bismarck, though he boldly introduced universal manhood suffrage and the secret ballot in the new Germany, much to the horror of his conservative friends and to the consternation of his liberal opponents. And it is equally true that the Junker aristocratic heritage and outlook of the mature Bismarck stands in sharp contrast to the simple origins

and democratic beliefs of Abraham Lincoln. But if we return to seeing the war and Lincoln's actions at the time from the standpoint of the South then the similarities become clearer. Once we recognize the South's disenchantment with the transformation in the Union of its fathers and its incipient nationalism, which slavery had sparked, we gain an appreciation of the incomplete nature of American nationalism. Lincoln then emerges as the true creator of American nationalism, rather than as the mere savior of the Union.

Given the immense carnage of the Civil War, not to mention the widespread use of iron in ordnance and railroads, that struggle in behalf of American nationality can hardly escape being described literally as the result of a policy of blood and iron. The phrase fits metaphorically almost as well. Reflect on Lincoln's willingness to risk war in 1861 rather than compromise over the issue of slavery in the territories. "The tug has to come, and better now, than anytime hereafter," he advised his fellow Republicans when the Crittenden compromise was before Congress. Like Horace Greeley, Lincoln was determined to call what he considered the South's bluff, its frequent threat over the years to secede in order to extract one more concession to ensure the endurance of slavery. Convinced of the successful achievement of American nationhood, he counted on the mass of Southerners to rally around the national identity, only to find that it was largely absent in the region of his birth. Only military power kept even his native state within the confines of his nation. Bismarck had to employ no such massive power to bring the states of south Germany into his new Reich in 1870-71. Rather, their sense of a unified Germany bred over a quarter-century of common action brought Catholic Bavaria, Wuirttemberg, and Baden immediately to Protestant Prussia's side when France declared war in 1870.

But then, unlike Bismarck, Lincoln was seeking to bring into being a nation that had lost whatever sense of cohesion its Union of 1787 may have nurtured. His task was more demanding and the means needed to achieve the goal were, for that reason, harsher, more deadly, and more persistently pressed than the creation of a new Germany demanded of Bismarck. Lincoln's commitment to nationhood rather than simply to the Union comes through quite clearly in an observation by James McPherson. In his First Inaugural, Lincoln used the word "Union" twenty times; "nation" appears not at all. (That description of the United States, of course, had long been anathema to the South.) Once the South had seceded, however, the dread word began to appear in his texts: three times in his first message to Congress. By the time of the Gettysburg Address, the term "Union" appeared not at all, while "nation" was mentioned five times. In his Second Inaugural, Lincoln used Union only to describe the South's actions in disrupting the Union in 1861; he described the war as having saved the "Nation," not simply the Union.

In deeds as well as in words, Lincoln came closer than Jefferson Davis to Bismarck. There is nothing in Lincoln's record that is comparable to

Bismarck's famous "Ems dispatch" in which he deliberately edited a report on the Prussian king's reaction to a demand from the French government in such a way as to provoke the French declaration of war that Bismarck needed in order to bring the south German states into his unified Germany. Over the years, the dispute among United States historians whether Lincoln maneuvered the South into firing the first shot of the Civil War, has not reached the negative interpretation that clings to Bismarck's Ems dispatch. Yet Lincoln's delay in settling the issue of Sumter undoubtedly exerted great pressure upon the Confederates to fire first. To that extent his actions display some of the earmarks of Bismarck's maneuvering in 1870. For at the same time Lincoln was holding off from supplying Sumter he was firmly rejecting the advice of his chief military adviser, Winfield Scott, that surrendering the fort was better than provoking the Confederates into beginning a war. Lincoln's nationalism needed a war, but one that the other side would begin.

The way in which Lincoln fought the war also reminds us at times of Bismarck's willingness to use iron, as well as shed blood, in order to build a nation. Throughout the war Lincoln denied that secession was a legal remedy for the South, yet his own adherence to constitutional limits was hardly flawless. If Bismarck in 1862 in behalf of his king's prerogative interpreted parliamentary government out of existence in Prussia for four years, Lincoln's interpretation of the American Constitution followed a similar, if somewhat less drastic path. As Lincoln scholar James G. Randall remarked years ago, Lincoln employed "more arbitrary power than perhaps any other President. . . . Probably no President has carried the power of proclamation and executive order (independently of Congress) as far as did Lincoln." Randall then proceeded to list those uses of power: freeing slaves, accepting the dismemberment of Virginia by dubious constitutional means, providing for the reconstruction of states lately in rebellion, suspending the writ of habeas corpus, proclaiming martial law, and enlarging the army and the navy and spending public money without the necessary Congressional approval. "Some of his important measures," Randall points out, "were taken under the consciousness that they belonged within the domain of Congress. The national legislature was merely permitted," Randall continues, "to ratify his measures, or else to adopt the futile alternative of refusing consent to accomplished fact." Lincoln himself justified his Emancipation Proclamation on the quite questionable ground "that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution through the preservation of the nation."

That slavery was the spring and the river from which Southern separatism flowed virtually dictated in Lincoln's mind that it must be extirpated for nationalist as well as humanitarian reasons. For many other Northern nationalists the fundamental role slavery had played in the creation of Southern separatism must have been a prime reasonson for accepting its eradication. Few

of them, after all, had been enemies of slavery in the South, much less friends of black people. Indeed, hostility to blacks on grounds of race in the 1860s was almost as prevalent in the North as in the South.

What the war represented, in the end, was the forceful incorporation of a recalcitrant South into a newly created nation. Indeed, that was exactly what abolitionist Wendell Phillips had feared at the outset. "A Union," he remarked in a public address in New York in 1860, "is made up of willing States. ... A husband or wife who can only keep the other partner within the bond by locking the doors and standing armed before them, had better submit to peaceable separation." The United States, he continued, is not like other countries. "Homogeneous nations like France tend to centralization; confederations like ours tend inevitably to dismemberment."

A similar objection to union by force had been advanced by none other than that old nationalist John Quincy Adams. "If the day should ever come (may Heaven avert it)," he told an audience celebrating the jubilee of the Constitution in 1839, "when the affections of the people of these states shall be alienated from each other; when the fraternal spirit shall give away to cold indifference ... far better will it be for the people of the disunited states, to part in friendship from each other, than to be held together by constraint." In Lincoln's mind, it was to be a stronger and more forceful nation, one which would mark a new era in the history of American nationality, just as Bismarck's proclamation of the new German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in January, 1871, constituted both the achievement of German unity and the opening of a new chapter in the history of German nationality.

The meaning of the new American nationhood as far as the South was concerned was its transformation, the rooting out of those elements that had set it apart from Northern nationalism. In the context of nation-building the era of Reconstruction can best be seen as the eradication of those aspects of the South that had lain at the root of the region's challenge to the creation of a nation. That meant ridding the South not only of slavery, but also of its undemocratic politics, its conservative social practices, its excessive dependence upon agriculture, and any other habits that might prevent the region from being as modern and progressive as the North.

Nowhere does this new nationalism appear in more strident form than in an essay by Senator Charles Sumner deceptively entitled "Are We a Nation?" The title was deceptive because there was no doubt in Sumner's mind that the United States was indeed a nation, and had always been. The essay was first given as a lecture in New York on the fourth anniversary of Lincoln's delivery of the address at Gettysburg. Sumner was pleased to recall Lincoln's reference to "a new nation" on that previous occasion, causing Sumner to remark that "if among us in the earlier day there was no occasion for the Nation, there is now. A Nation is born," he proudly proclaimed. That new nation, he contended, was

one in behalf of human rights, by which he meant the rights of blacks, which the South must now accept and protect.

Interestingly enough, in the course of his discussion of nationhood, Sumner instanced Germany as a place where nationhood had not yet been achieved. "God grant that the day may soon dawn when all Germany shall be one," he exclaimed. In 1867 he could not know what we know today: that the defeat of Austria at Königgrätz the year before had already fashioned the character and future of German unity under Bismarck.

No single European effort at creating a new sense of nationhood comes as close to that of the United States as Switzerland's. Although the Swiss Confederation, which came into existence at the end of the Napoleonic era, lacked some of the nationalist elements of the American Constitution, it constituted, like the United States, a union of small states called cantons, which, again like the states of the American Union, had once been independent entities. And as was the case in the American Union, the cantons of the Swiss Confederation were separated by more than mountainous terrain. The role that slavery played in dividing the United States was filled among the Swiss by religion. The Catholic cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden had been the original founders of the confederation in the days of William Tell, while the Protestant cantons were not only the more recent, but more important, the cantons in which the liberal economic and social ideas and forces that were then reshaping European society had made the most headway.

Among the intellectual consequences of that modernity was a growing secularism, which expressed itself in 1841 in the suppression of all religious orders by the Protestant canton of Aargau. The action was a clear violation of the Federal Pact of 1815, but none of the Protestant cantons objected to it. The Catholic cantons, however, led by Lucerne, vehemently protested the overriding of their ancient rights. In this objection there is a striking parallel with the South's protest against the North's attacks on slavery and refusal to uphold the fugitive slave law; both slavery and a fugitive slave law, of course, were embedded in the original United States Constitution.

The Catholic cantons' response to the violation of the Confederation's constitution was that Lucerne then invited the Jesuit Order to run its schools, much to the distaste of the Protestants in Lucerne and the Protestant cantons in general. Some of the Lucerne liberals then set about to organize armed vigilantes or *Freischaren* to overthrow the governments in the Catholic cantons. The American analogy for these military actions that leaps to mind, of course, is "Bloody Kansas." Nor was the guerrilla violence in Switzerland any less deadly than that in Kansas. When the canton government of Lucerne sentenced a captured *Freischar* to death, a group of his supporters invaded the canton and triumphantly carried him off to Protestant Zurich. More than one hundred died in the escapade.

Like "Bloody Kansas," the guerrilla phase of the Swiss conflict between old (Catholic) and new (Protestant) cantons deepened a sense of alienation between the two contending parties, which, in turn, led, almost naturally, to a move for separation from the Confederation. In December, 1845, seven Catholic cantons, including, interestingly enough, the three founding cantons of ancient Switzerland, formed what came to be called the *Sonderbund* or separatist confederation. Unlike the Southern states in 1860-61, the cantons of the *Sonderbund* did not proclaim secession, though they clearly saw themselves as resisting violations of traditional constitutional rights. Indeed, under the rules of the Swiss Confederation regional agreements among cantons were permissible, but the army the *Sonderbund* cantons brought into being, and the public stands they announced, strongly suggested to the rest of Switzerland that secession was indeed their intention. And so in July, 1847, the Diet of the Confederation ordered the *Sonderbund* to dissolve, an act that precipitated the departure of the delegates of the *Sonderbund* cantons. Again, like the Confederacy, the *Sonderbund* sought foreign support (particularly from Catholic and conservative Austria), but it was no more successful in that respect than the Confederacy. In early November the Diet voted to use force against the *Sonderbund*; civil war was the result.

Although each side mustered 30,000 or more troops under its command, the war was brief and light in cost; it lasted no more than three weeks and fewer than 130 men lost their lives. The victory of the Confederation's forces resulted in the rewriting of the constitutional relations among the cantons. The new national government was to be a truly federal republic deliberately modeled after that set forth in the Constitution of the United States. The immediate postwar era in Switzerland exhibited little of the conflict that we associate with the Reconstruction era. But then, the Swiss civil war was short and if not sweet, at least not very bloody. Yet there, too, as in the United States, the winners deemed it essential to extirpate those institutions that had been at the root of the disruption of the Confederation. Before the cantons of the *Sonderbund* were accepted back into the Confederation they were compelled to accede to barring the Jesuit Order from all the cantons. The acceptance of the Order into Lucerne had been, after all, a major source of the cantonal conflicts that led to the civil war. A measure of the depth of the religious issue in the Swiss conflict is that almost a century and a half passed before the Jesuit Order was readmitted to Switzerland. And in that context it is perhaps worth remembering that a century passed before a president of the United States—Lyndon B. Johnson—could be elected from a state of the former Confederacy.

As happened with the Civil War in the United States, the *Sonderbundkrieg*—the war of the Separatist Confederation—marked the longterm achievement of nationhood. So settled now was the matter of Swiss national identity that when Europe erupted in 1848 in wars of national liberation and

revolution, the new Swiss Federation, the embodiment of Swiss nationality, escaped entirely from the upheaval. No longer was there any question that Switzerland was a nation- just as after 1865 there could be no doubt that the United States was a nation. In both instances, war had settled the matter for good.

Finally, there remains yet one more comparison between America's achievement of nationhood through war and the unification of Germany. Contemporaries in 1871 and historians since often saw in the creation of the *Kaiserreich* something less than a comforting transformation of the European international scene. It is true that the new Empire did not include all European Germans within its confines. That is why Bismarck was seen as a *Kleindeutscher*. But never before had so many Germans been gathered within a single state and especially one with a highly trained and efficient army, as the quick defeat of Austria in 1866 and of France in 1870 forced everyone to recognize. The military presence of Prussia under Frederick the Great, once so formidable in central Europe, was easily surpassed by the new empire of his Hohenzollern descendants. It was an empire whose power would soon challenge its neighbors and the peace of Europe, despite Bismarck's original aim of hegemony without more war.

If nationhood through the agency of war meant a Germany of new power and potential danger to others, the achievement of nationhood by the United States during its civil war carried with it some strikingly similar aspects. Out of the war, the United States emerged, not only a nation, but also by far the strongest military force in the world of the time. But with the United States, as with the new German empire, military might was not the only source of a new tone in relations with other states. Nationhood brought a new self- confidence, even self-assertion, that ignited the apprehensions of neighbors. Even before its mighty victory over the South, the United States had been perceived in Europe as a rambunctious, even irresponsible Republic, challenging when not overtly rejecting the traditional ways of Europe and of international relations. As a European power, the new German empire aroused the fears of Europeans as the enhanced power of the United States, being separated from Europe by the Atlantic, never could. But those European powers which had interests in the New World soon found that the enlarged authority of the United States could well spell danger.

The first to sense it were the French, who had presumed to meddle in the internal affairs of Mexico while the United States had been preoccupied with suppressing the division within its own borders. The defeat of the Confederacy allowed the triumphant United States to turn upon the French for threatening American hegemony in the New World, a threat that never needed to be implemented since the Mexican forces themselves soon routed the meddling French. As far as the southern neighbor was concerned, the

achievement of nationhood by the United States could be seen, temporarily, at least, as supportive rather than threatening.

For the neighbor to the north, the story was rather different. Ever since their founding revolution in 1776, Americans have thought that the most natural thing in the world would be for the English-speaking people to the north to join the United States. Though most Canadians, then as now, have rejected annexation, some Canadians have always thought it was natural and inevitable. The threat of annexation reached a new height during the Civil War, especially after some Confederate agents managed to mount a successful military raid from Canada against St. Albans, Vermont. The outrage expressed by the government in Washington, coupled with new talk of annexation aroused both Canadian nationalists and British statesmen to seek ways to counter Canada's vulnerability to the power of the newly emboldened American nation.

In the age of the American Civil War, the country known today as Canada, was a collection of diverse governmental and even private units, some of which were self-governing, but all of which were parts of the British Empire. The move to create a united Canada was spawned not only by a fear of annexation by the United States, but by an even more compelling insight from the American Civil War. It was the lesson that a vaguely defined federal system such as that of the United States could end up in civil war. The upshot was that the federal constitution drawn up in 1867 (technically known as the North America Act) to unite all of Canada under one government, placed all residual powers in the hands of the national government, a lesson derived from the perceived result in the United States of leaving to the states those powers not specifically granted to the federal government. As historian Robin Winks has remarked, "In effect the war had helped create not one but two nations."

But was the Canadian union established in 1867 a nation? Winks uses that term, but is it a nation in the organic sense that we have been talking about here? Listen to his own summary description of Canadian nationhood: "Born in fear, deadlock, and confusion, Canada grew into a nation that could not afford to exhibit the rampant nationalism usually associated with young countries, and even today [that is, in 1960], due to her mother, the nature of gestation, and the continuing pressures from her large, pragmatic and restless neighbor, Canada remains a nation in search of a national culture."

Canada, of course, was one of these countries that between 1845 and 1870 struggled to achieve a truly national identity. Does the Canadian example offer any further insight into the meaning of that era of nation-building in general or of Lincoln's nation-building in particular? The Canadian experience, I think, puts the cap on the argument I have been making throughout these remarks. And that brings us back to the present, with which I began. Let me reach my conclusion with a personal anecdote.

Not so many years ago I asked several German historians of my acquaintance whether they thought the division of Germany that the Cold War

had caused would ever be healed. The general response was that there was little reason to believe that after forty years of division the two Germanies, so dissimilar now in economy, politics, and culture, would have much in common. Most Germans, they added, were too young to have ever even experienced a united Germany. But what about the united Germany that Bismarck had created, I asked out of my deeply held belief in the power of history. Oh, they responded, you forget that a united Germany has a short existence in the long history of Germans: a mere seventy years, after all, from 1871 to 1945.

Today, of course, we know that those seventy years were controlling, that the Germany of Bismarck has endured despite a period of division that is more than half the length of its years of unification. Such is indeed the power of history. Contrast that picture from today's world with that of Canada. The Canadian union of 1867 is still jeopardized by ethnic and other differences, despite the efforts by some leading Quebecers to smooth over the divergences between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians. How then does the German or the Swiss, or the American road to nationhood differ from that of the Canadians? Obviously there are a number of cultural and historical differences, but one that grabs our attention in this comparison is that only Canada failed to experience a war of national unification. During the nullification crisis in 1832 John Quincy Adams remarked to Henry Clay that "It is the odious nature of the [Union] that it can be settled only at the cannon's mouth." But as Lincoln recognized and Ernest Renan reminded us, it was a nation, not merely a Union, that blood and iron brought into existence.