FRANCE AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Stève Sainlaude. ***France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History*****. Translated by Jessica Edwards. Forward by Don H. Doyle. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-4696-4994-8 (hardcover, $45.00).**

H-Diplo Roundtable XXI-32 on Sainlaude. France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History

Introduction by Don H. Doyle, University of South Carolina, Emeritus

This H-Diplo Roundtable Review brings together several of the most distinguished historians on foreign relations during the American Civil War to discuss an important new book by French scholar Stève Sainlaude. Sainlaude's extensive work on French foreign policy had been published earlier.[1] Both of his books on the subject won the prestigious Prix Napoléon. A stunning review by David Wetzel in the American Historical Review[2] made it clear these books needed to find a broader audience, and, thanks to Mark Simpson-Vos and UNC Press, Professor Sainlaude's work is now widely available in English. It is worth pointing out that the new book is more than an English edition of the previous books, for Professor Sainlaude merged material from his earlier works and created what amounts to a coherent new book.

One of the novelties of Sainlaude's book is that it is the first major work on France and the American Civil War by a French scholar schooled in French diplomatic history. The subject of French diplomacy and public opinion related to the American Civil War had excited great interest around the time of the Civil War centennial. Among the most prominent of works from this time were Lynn Case and Warren Spencer's, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (1970), a monumental work

of scholarship based on multi-national archival research, and Alfred and Kathryn Hanna's, Napoleon III and Mexico: American Triumph over Monarchy (1971).[3] There were dozens of other books and articles on France and the Civil War published around the same time, almost all by U.S. historians. One excellent contribution from a French scholar was Serge Gavronsky's The French Liberal Opposition and the American Civil War (1968),[4] but this exception may prove the rule. Gavronsky was born in Paris but fled to the United States during World War II, and he wrote in English and was primarily known for his poetry and fiction. Sainlaude brings to his subject a broad understanding of French diplomatic history under the July Monarchy as well as the Second Empire, and his knowledge is seasoned by years of research at the Quai d'Orsay.

More importantly, Sainlaude takes a different approach from that of his predecessors. He examines the inside of the French diplomatic corps to help us understand how French foreign policy was actually made. As several of the reviewers note, some of the most original contributions in this book come from research on the role of French consuls inside the United States. Most notable is Alfred Paul, French consul at Richmond, in whose well-informed and reasoned dispatches to the Quai d'Orsay Sainlaude finds the most convincing arguments against Napoleon III's temptation to align with the Confederacy.

Several reviewers also comment on Sainlaude's finding that French foreign policy on the American Civil War, by implication unlike British policy, was not influenced by French public sentiment concerning slavery. Had they known this, it would have been disconcerting to both Union and Confederate envoys who invested much effort in winning the French public to their side.

Without contradicting Sainlaude's point, it is worth considering that Napoléon III ignored public opinion at his peril. The French failure in Mexico can be blamed largely on the refusal of Napoléon and his generals to respect or even gauge the fierce opposition of the Mexican people to the emperor's grand design for their nation. More significantly, Napoléon III's regime miscalculated the degree and effect of the growing opposition at home to his Mexico and American policies.

At home in France, it seems that Napoléon III was not so much indifferent to public opinion as he was obsessed with repressing dissent in the press and public debate. He deployed an army of spies and police to monitor and, when necessary, stifle public criticism of the Second Empire. The regime fined journalists and jailed demonstrators with by the dozens. Even the singing of La Marseillaise was banned. Historian Lynn Case's collection of reports from the procureurs généraux dealing with the Mexican and American questions reveals the keen interest of the Second Empire in dissident rumblings from Paris and the provinces.[5]

There was a good reason for Napoléon's fear of public wrath. As the savvy liberal critic Victor Lanjuinais candidly explained to a British interviewer in 1863, if the French press were free to criticize the government "I believe that it would sweep him away in three months. . . . Freedom of discussion from the tribune and in the press would render [the regime] hateful and contemptible, and part of that odium and contempt would fall on him. As soon as that happened—as soon as the peuple joined the Bourgeoisie against him, the army would fight for him reluctantly the first day, negotiate on the second, and turn against him on the third."[6]

Lanjuinais's morbid assessment of Napoléon III's frail popular support proved prophetic. As the emperor lifted restrictions on

political speech in the 1860s, the voice of opposition grew in strength. In 1865, for example, public demonstrations of solidarity with the victorious United States and its fallen leader, President Abraham Lincoln, provoked ham-fisted government efforts to stifle what were viewed as dangerous acts of subversion.

After the Union victory, there were growing fears that the emperor's defense of Maximilian might come to war with the powerful armies of the United States. The liberal opposition boldly voiced these very concerns and eventually forced France's humiliating withdrawal from Mexico. This, of course, left Maximilian to face execution at the hands of Mexico's triumphant republicans, which was easily interpreted as an insult to Napoléon III and the crown heads of all Europe.

These foreign policy blunders set the stage for Napoleon's final dénouement, which came with alarming suddenness in 1870 after the emperor heedlessly blundered into a disastrous war with Prussia and was captured in battle. The Second Empire collapsed with no real resistance, while Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie fled to asylum in England, where the former emperor died a little later.

All of which is to confirm Sainlaude's point that foreign policy on Mexico and the American question was, for better or worse, hammered out within the government and with little attention to public sentiment at home or abroad. Sainlaude portrays a mercurial emperor whose 'Grand Design' for Mexico and the 'Latin Race' was at odds with the hard-nosed assessment of national interest made by the diplomatic corps in the Quai d'Orsay. Not least among them were career diplomats in the field, particularly Alfred Paul, whose ear was close to the ground inside the capital of the rebel South. Paul represents what today

some might call France's 'deep state' working inconspicuously but determinedly to fashion a foreign policy that served the nation's best interest, sometimes by ignoring or 'slow-walking' the fickle emperor's hare-brained directives.

Paul concluded that an independent South posed more of a threat to French interests in Mexico and in the balance of power in the Americas at large than would a reunited United States. France's Mexican policy required a protracted civil war in the United States as a distraction while Maximilian's regime became firmly established, but the emperor's vision of the Confederacy as a permanent buffer state between Mexico and the United States conflicted with Paul's concern that an independent South, once unbridled from U.S. control, would follow its well-established instinct to expand southward into the Caribbean.

As it turned out, the United States, after subduing the South in 1865, posed a serious threat to the continuation of Maximilian's fragile empire. Maximilian's pleas for recognition by the United States also met with stony silence. As Maximilian prepared to take the throne in Mexico City, in April 1864, the U.S. Congress instead issued a resolution declaring the United States "shall not acknowledge a monarchical government, erected on the ruins of any republican government in America, under the auspices of any European power."[7] Instead, General Ulysses S. Grant sent some 50,000 Union troops to the border to menace the French and bolster flagging support for the republican president Benito Juárez and the Mexican Republic. Grant and General Phil Sheridan saw to it that Juárez was supplied with U.S. arms and men, veterans mustered out of the Union Army who volunteered to fight for the Mexican Republic. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Seward mounted an effective diplomatic campaign in Paris that eventually forced the emperor to withdraw all forces from Mexico in March 1867, well ahead of the schedule he had

initially proposed. French imperialist designs on Mexico and the Western Hemisphere came to an end after all.

Whether the strong U.S. support for the Mexican Republic can be counted as a miscalculation of French diplomats or not, I leave to Stève Sainlaude to assess. His robust response to the reviews of this roundtable of experts gives us all much to ponder about this fascinating episode in Franco-American relations.

Participants:

Stève Sainlaude is associate professor (Paris Sorbonne University). He is holder of the agrégation (highest teaching diploma in France) and doctor in diplomatic history. He is a specialist in the history of Franco-American relations in the 19th century, and author of numerous articles. He has participated in several symposiums and university conferences in France, Mexico and the United States. He has written two books which were awarded the Napoleon III Prize in 2013: The Imperial Government and the Civil War (1861-1865): The Diplomatic Action France and the Southern Confederacy (1861-1865): The Question of Diplomatic Recognition during the Civil War. His new book, published in 2019 by UNC Press, France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History, is a reworking and rewriting of the two books published in French. He is currently working on a longer-term study of diplomatic relations between France and the United States over a century from the fall of the Second Empire to the departure of General de Gaulle (1870-1969).

Don H. Doyle, McCausland Professor of History Emeritus, University of South Carolina, has authored and edited several books and essays, most recently The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the America Civil War (Basic Books,

2015) and American Civil Wars: The United States, Latin America, Europe, and the Crisis of the 1860s (UNC, 2017). He is currently writing a sequel to The Cause of All Nation with the working title "Viva Lincoln: America and the World after the Civil War." He is retired and lives at Folly Beach, South Carolina.

Martin Crawford is Emeritus Professor of Anglo-American History at Keele University in England. Publications include: The Anglo-American Crisis of the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Times and America 1850-1862 (1987); William Howard Russell's Civil War: Private Diary and Letters (1992); Ashe County's Civil War: Community and Society in the Appalachian South (2001); and two co-edited essay collections: Liberating Sojourn: Frederick Douglass and Transatlantic Reform (1999); and Reading Southern Poverty Between the Wars (2006). His current research is on pottery workers' emigration to the United States in the 1840s.

Howard Jones is University Research Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Alabama. After receiving his Ph.D. from Indiana University, he taught at the University of Nebraska before coming to the University of Alabama in 1974, where he chaired the Department of History in Tuscaloosa for eight years. A recipient of both the John F. Burnum Distinguished Faculty Award for teaching and research and the Blackmon-Moody Outstanding Professor Award, he taught courses in American foreign relations and the U.S.-Vietnam War.

He is the author or editor of more than a dozen books, including Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Abraham Lincoln and a New Birth of Freedom: The Union and Slavery in the Diplomacy of the Civil War

(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); and Union in Peril: The Crisis Over British Intervention in the Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992. His most recent publication is My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). He is working on a book tentatively titled Making America Great: Theodore Roosevelt, Warrior-Diplomat.

Robert E. May, Professor Emeritus of History at Purdue University, has addressed Union and Confederate foreign relations in Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and The Southern Dream of a Caribbean Empire: 1854-1861 (University Press of Florida, 2002), as well as in his edited book The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim (rev. ed., University Press of Florida, 2013) and in his article "The Irony of Confederate Diplomacy: Visions of Empire, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Quest for Nationhood," Journal of Southern History 83.1 (February 2017): 69-106. His newest work is Yuletide in Dixie: Slavery, Christmas, and Southern Memory (University of Virginia Press, 2019).

Tim Roberts is author of Distant Revolutions: 1848 and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism (University of Virginia, 2009), and "Republican citizenship in the post-Civil War South and French Algeria 1865–1900," American Nineteenth Century History 19 (2018), 81-104; co-editor of American Exceptionalism, 4 vols. (Routledge, 2012); and editor of "This Infernal War": the Civil War Letters of William and Jane Standard (Kent State University, 2018). He is currently writing a comparison of American and French imperial development 1830-1940.

Jay Sexton is Kinder Institute Chair of Constitutional Democracy at the University of Missouri. His most recent books are A Nation Forged by Crisis: A New American History (Basic Books, 2018) and, co-edited with Kristin Hoganson, Crossing Empires: Taking U.S. History into Transimperial Terrain (Duke, 2020).

Review by Martin Crawford, Keele University

On 6 November 1861, The (London) Times' correspondent in Washington wrote in his diary that there was "an opinion that ye Emperor of the French is very much opposed to ye North." William Howard Russell added that he was at a loss to see on what grounds this opinion rested, given that Northern journals "flatter & praise him & France at the top of their heart."[8] Contemporaries were often puzzled by the French response to the American crisis; historians, too, have struggled to grasp its mercurial character. As Russell's comment implies, the Emperor himself was at the heart of these confusions. What were Napoléon III's true feelings about the conflict? How did they mesh with or confound the views of other members of the imperial government, notably the foreign ministers, the two Edouards, Thouvenel and his successor Drouyn de Lhuys? And what, if any, importance should historians attach to wider public opinion, including views on slavery?

Compared to that of its neighbour, Great Britain, which has been the subject of extensive inquiry, the more limited scholarship on French policy and attitudes has left the distinct impression of work half-done.[9] That should now change. In this excellent book, translated into English by Jessica Edwards, French historian Stève Sainlaude offers a thorough reconsideration of his country's response to the sectional war. His book is sub-titled "A Diplomatic History" but is in truth much more than that: diplomats and diplomacy here act as figures in a transatlantic

tapestry woven from a complex mesh of political, economic, strategic, and personal self-interest. Eschewing a conventional chronology, Sainlaude interrogates the full gamut of Franco-American issues occasioned by the South's departure. His revisionism begins where it should, in the archives. The study is based upon exhaustive research in French diplomatic sources, prominent among which are the voluminous and previously unexplored consular dispatches from America. It is hard to oversell the value of this labour. By mining this most traditional of diplomatic material, he brings unprecedented texture and authority to his analysis; and the result is a remarkably fresh account of French responses to the Civil War and a major addition to the international history of the nineteenth century.

Although he stresses from the outset the unique challenge posed by the slave states' secession, he reminds us that America did not loom largest in imperial foreign affairs in the years 1861 to 1865. Anglo-French rivalries in Europe, the Middle East, and Mexico invariably took precedence, but also ensured that a joint approach to the American crisis would be difficult to fashion. That France would not intervene in the Civil War without parallel British action has become a scholarly truism; Sainlaude's achievement is to insist that the Gallic failure to recognize the Confederacy derived not from deference to British wishes but from a careful evaluation of the costs involved in taking such a step. At the core of his analysis is a brilliant dissection of the relationship between the Emperor, whose partiality for the South was widely acknowledged, and his foreign ministers, who better understood the benefits of having a united America as a counterweight to British power. No other historian has so effectively delineated the tension between the two branches of the French government. However, Sainlaude draws out with equal skill the tensions within the Emperor himself, between "his American ambitions and European

realities" (75). Talking to the Confederate envoy John Slidell in July 1862, Napoléon showed his awareness of the perils posed to French interests by a disunited American republic. Above all, it was his designs on Mexico, his ambition to erect a Catholic barrier to Anglo-Saxon expansion in the New World, which encouraged the Emperor to press for Confederate recognition. Sainlaude's analysis of this notorious plan brings out its contradictions and sheer irrationality, which include blindness to Southern expansionism, whose unrestrained tendencies had been evident throughout the preceding decades. More fundamentally, the plan also embodied a failure to recognize that its success ultimately required France to forego its support for Confederate independence. Relations with the Federal government were too vital to France's interests to be put at risk by such an injudicious course. "It was deluding itself," (183) Sainlaude comments on the French government's hope that Washington would soften its opposition to the Mexican adventure which in so many respects ran counter to the basic tenets of the Monroe Doctrine.

Sainlaude's forensic research comes into its own in his book's third and final section which explores French observations on the war's likely outcome and includes an outstanding discussion of Franco-Southern U.S. economic prospects, focussed naturally on the trade in cotton. His hero is the French consul in Richmond, Alfred Paul, whom he describes as "a truly great diplomat" (161). Paul provided consistently objective advice on the war's progress, and his view that the South's rebellion could not succeed proved highly influential, with even the Emperor acknowledging his contribution to French foreign policy. Not that Napoléon was always convinced: in 1864, he still believed that he had a role to play in the American conflict. Disregarding Paul's intelligence that the presidential election was a contest between two competing visions of union, Napoléon openly sided

with the Democratic candidate, George B. McClellan, in the vain belief that political defeat would prompt the Lincoln government to seek a settlement with the rebel states. In the final account, therefore, the French decision not to intervene in the Civil War occurred despite Napoléon's inclination. Yet the Emperor never disowned his two foreign ministers, who regularly thwarted the direction in which he sought to take French policy. This divided approach explains the confusion with which France's response was and still is judged; it made for "disorganized diplomacy and blurred the message that France intended to deliver," (187) Sainlaude writes.

What then of slavery? Here, comparisons with France's near neighbour are instructive. Although the organized abolitionist movement had declined in numbers and prestige since the heady days of the 1830s, as Richard Huzzey has shown in his Freedom Burning, Britain remained an antislavery nation, with the result that the Palmerston government's policy towards the American war – based, like that of its neighbour, on national self-interest – never entirely lost its humanitarian underpinnings.[10] Palmerston himself had been active in the suppression of the Atlantic slave trade and claimed to have read Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin three times; Napoléon, by contrast, showed no such predilections and unsurprisingly had little sympathy with the argument that France's response to the Civil War should be shaped by attitudes towards slavery. Consular and other diplomatic reports also rarely mentioned the subject, leading Sainlaude to conclude that the issue played a marginal role in French policy-making. Yet Thouvenel and Drouyn de Lhuys were both hostile to the South's peculiar institution, and it remains to be seen whether further investigation into antislavery attitudes among France's governing classes might yet modify, in however limited a form, this judgement. No further research is necessary, on the other hand, to confirm the

ineptness of the Confederate diplomatic effort. The South needed Europe to intervene on its behalf but did everything to discourage it. In its choice of representatives, including French-speaking John Slidell, and most obviously in its cotton strategy, which Sainlaude describes as "absurd" (157), the Confederacy demonstrated its ill-preparedness to join the international family. King Cotton diplomacy amounted to nothing short of economic blackmail, its transparency glaringly revealed when planter leaders implemented a quasi-official embargo on exports and even encouraged the burning of cotton stocks. Sainlaude's evidence of French consular reports of this self-destructive behaviour helps flesh out this history, and like much else in his fine book, adds greatly to our understanding of the Civil War's wider impact.

Review by Howard Jones, University of Alabama, Emeritus
Civil War diplomacy was integral to the war's outcome, and yet it won barely a mention in Ken Burns's highly popular television documentary and still receives little or no attention by numerous Civil War groups. Not that Civil War diplomacy is more important than other considerations, but it was one of several major determinants in the war's result. And, despite the books and articles focusing on Union and Confederate relations with the British during the war, it would be a mistake to underestimate the importance of the relations of both American camps with the French. According to historian Dexter Perkins, Napoléon III devised an interventionist plan aimed at removing the United States from the map. "No more sinister project, in terms of American interest, American influence, and American ideas," Perkins argues, "has ever been conceived in the history of the Monroe Doctrine."[11]

Stève Sainlaude's superb study establishes the importance of Franco-American diplomacy in the Civil War: French

diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy would have threatened not only the Union, but also the Confederacy as well as republicanism throughout the Americas. If not for the firsthand reporting by French consuls situated in both North and South—especially Jules Souchard in Boston and Alfred Paul in Richmond—and the adroit maneuverings of two foreign secretaries in Paris during the war—Edouard Thouvenel followed by Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys—Napoléon III might have implemented his 'Grand Design' for the Americas, which aimed to recast the republics of both North and South America into what the author calls "monarchical and imperial regimes" (4). In addition to promoting French commerce by building a canal through Nicaragua that linked the Atlantic to the Pacific, he dreamed of replacing the United States with a German type of confederation comprised of the Union, the Confederacy, and a refurbished Mexico—the last by installing a European prince on the throne under French control. No wonder his arch enemy, British prime minister Lord Palmerston, called the French emperor "the crafty spider of the Tuileries," (68) whose "mind seems as full of schemes as a warren is full of rabbits" (68).[12]

Sainlaude's intriguing story shows that Napoléon III's machinations defied reality. The emperor believed that "Polk's War" (4) of 1846-48 had led to an unjust seizure of Mexican territory by the United States and thereby undermined its reputation as defender of law and state sovereignty. He therefore sought to stop the spread of America's self-proclaimed manifest destiny throughout the hemisphere by establishing a balance of power in North America. His reconstructed French empire in the New World would surpass that of his uncle, Napoléon I, by establishing a Latin American and Catholic monarchical regime in Mexico as the hub of the Second Empire.

Napoléon III encountered many problems in attempting to establish what the author calls a "globalization" (3) program intended to counterbalance Britain, both inside and outside the Western Hemisphere. The British were not naïve about the emperor's imperial objectives. The two nations pursued an uneasy entente cordiale during the war that Sainlaude considers to have been a "common-sense measure" (63) based on neutrality, unofficial talks with Confederate representatives, respect for the Union blockade, and the need to act in harmony on the question of diplomatic recognition. But the British never became converts to Napoléon's project.

Sainlaude's research in the consular reports shows that the consuls warned their superiors in Paris that the South could not win the war because of the North's military, economic, and manpower advantages. The emperor and others, Sainlaude argues, were nonetheless "seduced by the South's charm offensive" (114), including its effort to avoid alienating the French by stifling all talk of Confederate expansion south. Thouvenel insisted that the Confederacy would resume its longtime expansionist efforts after the war and would not be a friend or ally of France. Furthermore, if the Union dissolved, a weak Mexico could attempt to maintain its sovereignty by awarding land to the Confederacy.

Napoléon nonetheless hoped that French recognition of the Confederacy would provide a buffer state (and an ally) between the United States and the Rio Grande that would help protect his choice to head a new monarchy in Mexico City—the brother of Emperor Franz Josef of Austria, Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph of Habsburg. In the midst of a civil war in Mexico, Maximilian arrived in its capital in June 1864 as a vital part of what the author calls Napoléon's "imperial scheme" (115) to "regenerate" (111) Mexico into a Mecca of wealth and

power under his puppet rule. French forces had taken Mexico City a year earlier, but it soon became evident that Napoléon's reach had exceeded his grasp. Neither the French nor Maximilian attracted popular support in Mexico. Ironically, the success of Napoléon's Grand Design depended on Southern victory on the battlefield, which would have emboldened the Confederacy's resistance to his plan. Before that time came, he calculated, the Union could do nothing to stop his violation of the Monroe Doctrine because of its ongoing war with the Confederacy. He therefore had to accomplish his objectives in Mexico at the same time the Confederacy won independence. Yet even at that time, his cabinet advisers warned, the postwar North and South could ally against their common enemies—Mexico and France—thereby bringing on the reckoning, regardless of which side won the war.

This is a familiar story but one told here with greater verve, richer evidence, and more detailed analysis than the longtime standard reference, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy by Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer.[13] As Sainlaude explains, these authors focused on America's policy toward France in the war; his work centers on French policy toward the North and the South in an effort to show why Napoléon III never recognized the Confederacy.

Sainlaude rests his claims primarily on the first thorough examination of the correspondence of French consuls in America—fifteen volumes of 600 to 700 pages each, plus ten volumes of commercial correspondence—in addition to the political correspondence of French diplomats in the United Kingdom and Mexico. The consuls lived among Northerners and Southerners and, in an argument that supported the views of both foreign secretaries, French consul Paul in Richmond warned at the outset of the war that the Confederacy had little

chance to win, an argument bolstered by his first-hand observations of the lack of unity in a slave republic trying to reconcile states' rights principles with its increasingly centralized government and military command. Napoléon insisted that slavery played no major part in the decision on whether or not to intervene; Sainlaude shows that a major consideration working against diplomatic recognition was the French popular distaste for slavery, the result more of the 1852 publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin and the execution of John Brown, according to journalists, than abolition.

Napoléon III repeatedly contradicted himself on policy, confounding his foreign secretaries by wavering back and forth between his objectives in America and the ongoing issues in Europe and Asia. At one time, he sought to extend recognition to the Confederacy as the vital first step toward fulfilling his Grand Design; at another time he attempted to convince the British to support a joint intervention because he did not want to act alone in the event that the South failed to win independence. In refusing to take the lead in intervening, he sought to shift the blame to England by repeatedly assuring Confederate emissary John Slidell that France was waiting for the British to act first. Napoléon also feared that recognition of the Confederacy could turn the North against France and promote Britain's global power.

Thouvenel and Drouyn de Lhuys had problems with Napoléon's erratic and secretive behavior—particularly those actions that threatened to cause trouble with the Union. The emperor underestimated its resilience. He failed to recognize the importance of secession and Southern expansion to the survival of the "slave empire" (185). He did not welcome advice contrary to his goals. He was often misinformed about America, only in

part due to the lack of a transatlantic cable until after the war. Both French foreign secretaries (like Napoléon) feared that the British would gain the most from a divided America.

The author emphasizes that a major obstacle to recognition of the Confederacy was the realization that to do so legitimized an entity that was in revolt against an established government that had no quarrel with either France or England. Palmerston posed a threat to the Union but never lost his grip on reality and control of his impulses. He listened to and followed the recommendations of his advisers, including Secretary for War George Cornewall Lewis, who, in a long memorandum followed by a pivotal cabinet meeting, laid out the scenario of a war with the Union resulting from British intervention.[14] Napoléon III posed a bigger threat to the United States because he often lost his hold on reality and could not always control his impulses. He likewise had perceptive advisers who envisioned a war scenario, but he did not always listen to their warnings. To curb his worst instincts, they often ignored or refused to obey his orders.

The French (like the British) refrained from intervening in the Civil War because the risk of war with the Union (as warned by Secretary of State William H. Seward) outweighed any benefits of intervention. King Cotton diplomacy failed to win French recognition of the Confederacy, even though France was second only to the United Kingdom in importing Southern cotton. But the consuls and the liberal press in France helped to reduce the leverage of Southern cotton by insisting that the Union blockade was porous and that any shortage in the product was attributable to "collusion" (148) between the Richmond government and the Confederate states in mostly burning and destroying the product to force recognition. The French had other sources of cotton, including the option of buying the commodity from what the British had purchased from India. Most important, the so-called

cotton famine did not hurt France as much as had been expected because the textile industry was not as big as that in England. To many French, Northern wheat was a fair exchange for French wine.

By late 1864, however, Napoléon thought the time had come to intervene because he felt certain that the Democrats would defeat the Republicans in the elections of that year. But Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans prevailed in November, the outcome made more momentous by a follow-up string of Union victories in its "March to the Sea" campaign. The French consuls warned their superiors in Paris that intervention would leave France standing alone against a strong U.S. Army and the largest navy in the world. French forces began a phased withdrawal from Mexico that lasted until February 1867, just four months before the victorious Republican forces under the leadership of President Benito Juárez captured Maximilian and put him before a court-martial that sentenced him to death.

Sainlaude concludes that even if the Southern rebellion had succeeded, the result would have been "a perpetual struggle between the Union and the Confederacy" (137). Souchard in Boston argued that the Union's restoration was "the only [outcome] possible, the only one desirable, for Americans and for the foreign powers" (139). The two French foreign secretaries, Sainlaude writes, agreed that the best future for America was "a new union, not a division between the two republics" (139). From a wider perspective, he continues, "The winds of change, fanned by Lincoln, and the distinct lack of prospects for a slave republic demonstrated that the idea of an independent South was illusory" (139).

This well researched, well written, and thought provoking work is indispensable to anyone studying the Civil War. Other writers

have dealt with France's involvement in the North-South conflict, but no one before Sainlaude had mined the rich collection of French consular files in combination with the standard primary and secondary sources to produce such a remarkably clear and convincing story of the fanciful dreams of one of the most conniving opportunists of the nineteenth century—Napoléon III. Perhaps, in retrospect, there was little chance of France intervening in the war on behalf of the South, but no one could have been sure at the time.

My only regret about Sainlaude's book is that I did not have it in my hands when writing my account of Civil War diplomacy.

Review by Robert E. May, Purdue University, Emeritus

For historians of the American South and the Confederacy, the big question about Civil War foreign affairs has always been whether Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his colleagues in Richmond blew it. That is, did Confederate politicos and overseas representatives squander opportunities between 1861 and 1865 to nudge the European powers from their neutral cocoons and into some form of military alliance and substantive aid to offset the Union military and industrial juggernaut? And if so, where did they go wrong? Or, was the Confederate quest for foreign recognition and assistance doomed from the start—a byproduct of delusional optimism based on the prewar South's dominance in the international cotton trade (what Frank Lawrence Owsley dubbed "King Cotton Diplomacy" in his widely-read book of that title)?[15]

Modern scholarship on Civil War diplomacy leans toward contingency. Although one might draw deterministic conclusions from some accounts that Confederate diplomatic aspirations were quixotic from the start, most works concede the South a chance at a history-altering breakthrough in diplomacy.

In his authoritative treatment of the Civil War's international ramifications, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, the accomplished diplomatic historian Howard Jones maintains that it took fully two years before the governments of Great Britain and France categorically determined that supporting Confederate independence and risking war with the Union would be counterproductive. Charles M. Hubbard's 1998 study of Confederate foreign relations argues that more effective Rebel diplomacy would have "provided the best opportunity to secure independence for the Confederacy," and that "[d]iplomatic failure contributed, as much as any other element, to Confederate defeat."[16]

Whether because of language barriers or from assumptions that France's decision-making merely followed Britain's lead and was thus less significant, however, English-language scholars have devoted far more research and analysis to the policies of the latter than to those of the former, leaving much about France's diplomacy regarding the Civil War murky. Several full-length works probe deeply into the connection between France's wartime intervention in Mexico and Union-French and Confederate-French relations,[17] but the standard overview of France's course in Civil War diplomacy remains Lynn Marshall Case and Warren F. Spencer's The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy, which is now some fifty years old.[18]

Remedying this deficiency, French history professor Stève Sainlaude's translated France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History[19] provides an up-to-date, highly informative and impressively researched reassessment of France's wartime course that builds on the scholarship of the last five decades. Most importantly, Sainlaude convincingly rebukes stereotypes that French policy on recognition of and aid to the Confederacy mimicked Britain's lead. Not only had Anglo-

French relations deteriorated by the outbreak of the Civil War, but French leaders, who were convinced that a permanent division of the Union played more to England's commercial and geopolitical interests than their own, shrewdly manipulated Britain's supposed dominance over France's policy as a cover to avoid conflict with the Confederacy due to neutral policies that disadvantaged Southern interests. Indeed, Sainlaude indicates that Confederate hopes for substantive French assistance may have been delusional from the beginning. Concluding that the French never contemplated providing the Confederacy enough assistance to alter the war's outcome, Sainlaude holds that at no time over the course of the war did France contemplate "armed intervention in favor of the South;" and that none of the European powers envisioned involvement "beyond a diplomatic level" (171). Confederate propaganda efforts to sway French public opinion, in his view, were virtually irrelevant. Whereas leading Civil War diplomatic scholars such as Don H. Doyle and Richard J. Blackett have highlighted the centrality of European public opinion in their works on the Civil War's international ramifications,[20] France and the American Civil War argues that the French government barely considered public opinion in the construction of policy, since its subjects were unaccustomed to paying attention to world events.

Not that Sainlaude ignores factors that might have inclined the French towards supporting and helping the Confederacy. He acknowledges French Emperor Napoléon III's and Empress Eugénie's blatant pro-Southern proclivities, and that the former's "Grand Design" for a French puppet régime in Mexico and a French surge elsewhere in Latin America that was protective of monarchical and "Latin and Catholic culture" (5) was threatened by a strong, unified and Protestant United States, which was bound to the Monroe Doctrine and its own expansionist impulses. Further, France's minister

plenipotentiary in Washington for much of the war, Henri Mercier, salivating over potential new export markets in Dixie, expressed approving attitudes in his dispatches home about not only Davis, but also the Southern experiment in self-governance, as did a large share of France's consuls in North America. Pro-Napoléon French newspapers back home, moreover, bought into sympathetic comparisons between the Southern struggle for nationhood and that of Poles against Russian oppression, at a time when French-Russian relations were fraught. And though France had freed its approximately 250,000 colonial slaves in 1848, the South's labor system did little to influence French policymaking negatively, partly because emancipation had not gone smoothly in French possessions. Indeed, French consuls and diplomats rarely alluded to the South's "peculiar institution" in their wartime reports, and Napoléon III's racism inclined towards convictions that blacks were specially suited by nature for hard labor in the tropics.

Still, Sainlaude convincingly demonstrates that countervailing factors, including Napoleón's personal failings, overrode these circumstances. For one thing, Napoleón repeatedly faltered in following through on his policies, many of which lacked "coherence" and "consistency" (5), ceding the upper hand in foreign relations to France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was newly headquartered on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. Both of France's foreign ministers during the war, Edouard Thouvenel and Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys, were more cautious about being drawn into the American war than was Napoleón, and were capable of deviousness in subverting the Emperor's outreach to Confederates. In 1861, for example, Thouvenel steered Napoleón away from challenges to the Union blockade of Confederate coasts. Two years later, when Napoleón was leaning toward joint action with Britain in recognizing Confederate independence, Drouyn claimed misleadingly to

have formally launched the initiative in his diplomatic missives. Drouyn even undermined the Emperor's support for secret French construction of Rebel war vessels and in 1864 outright ignored Napoleón intentions to allow the sailing from Calais and arming off the coast of the Confederate ship Rappahannock. (One senses, here, a dynamic similar to Trump presidency press reports that Department of Defense officials and White House Chief of Staff John Kelly dragged their feet in implementing Trump's national security and foreign policy directives). Additionally, the French were constrained by realizations that any diplomatic decisions driving Union leaders into hostility would threaten their own ambitions in Mexico, a fear exacerbated by logical skepticism about the sincerity of Confederate disavowals of expansionist ambitions in Latin America. Although a friendly Confederacy worked to France's advantage in Mexico, it could not risk active Union retaliation, given the U.S. North's increasingly powerful naval and ground establishment. Compounding these considerations, France's diplomatic establishment considered North American affairs as secondary to French interests elsewhere in the world, and the French and English both gave priority to their competing "concerns in the [extended] European theater," which embraced developments in the Middle East as well as Italy, Poland, and other continental locales (71). Even developments in Indochina and Japan diverted France from North America. Indeed, in perhaps the most striking statement in his whole book, Sainlaude argues that French leaders saw the Union's maintenance over the long run, not its disintegration, as "a means to counterbalance the supremacy of British maritime trade, and, indeed, British political hegemony" throughout the world (75). Rather than being pro-Confederate, as many works imply, French leaders tilted toward Washington!

Sainlaude deserves encomiums for his clarity and specificity on a range of matters that are often brushed over (e.g. French maritime law and the organization and duties of France's consular corps in the US), and most of all, his thorough plumbing of previously slighted French consular reports from North America, which significantly affects his process of reinterpretation. Whereas prior scholars have paid close attention to Henri Mercier, France's minister in Washington from 1860 until December 1863, and accorded scant coverage to the activities of French consuls in North America, Sainlaude brings consular activities and viewpoints into full view, most especially those of Alfred Paul. Paul commanded a bird's-eye view of evolving Confederate policies from his station in the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia. He often played an important role as an intermediary between Paris and Richmond, and he consistently sent shockingly perceptive reports on a host of subjects (even Confederate generalship) homeward. Sainlaude accords Paul so much significance that he devotes an entire section of his narrative to his activities (162-67), in contrast to many accounts that either do not mention Paul at all or take token notice in a sentence or two. Here, Paul emerges a "truly great diplomat" (161) with a "rare ability to take the true measure of events" (161), and time after time his dispatches, which were widely disseminated within France's diplomatic establishment, showed greater comprehension of the North's superiority in resources and its tenacity than those of other French officials and observers on the scene.

As for Confederate diplomacy, Sainlaude emphasizes that Southern propaganda aimed mostly at the French elite and dwelled on Confederate adherence to free trade and commonalities with the French people deriving from Louisiana settlement patterns, but that it fell short for a host of reasons. These included links of French businesses to Northern

commercial interests, France's need for wheat imports from the North, French anger at Confederate acts of destruction of the property of French firms within its borders, and Rebel efforts to compel French nationals into Confederate military service. Following the thread of recent historiography, moreover, Sainlaude contends that Southerners misplayed their cotton hand by embargoing and even destroying stockpiled cotton instead of marketing it in Europe.[21] Why would the French government intervene against the Union blockade of Southern coasts, which Confederates fervently hoped for, when perceptive French diplomats knew where to attribute the blame for European cotton shortages? Ironically, rather than attract European assistance, King Cotton diplomacy convinced French consuls and diplomats that "only the North's successes would enable the large-scale return of white gold to Europe" (149). Additionally, Sainlaude confirms what some prior scholars have argued—that southern diplomats lacked adequate prior diplomatic experience to perform their duties responsibly and that French leaders had trouble swallowing arguments equating the Confederacy with liberty given authoritarian tendencies in Richmond. French diplomatic figures in the South, according to Sainlaude, did not even credit Dixie's aristocratic elite with being genuinely refined and polished, undercutting supposed commonalities between the French and Confederate upper crusts. Liberal French commentators at home, meanwhile, concluded what antislavery Northerners at the time asserted and some recent historians posit[22]—that the Southern rebellion, rather than a legitimate bid for self-determination, amounted simply to "a power grab by slave owners determined to leave the [American] republic rather than lose the leadership of it" (97). Even the two Confederate foreign policy figures most often credited by historians with diplomatic competence, Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin and the never officially received envoy to France John Slidell, come out poorly in Sainlaude's telling. Slidell

never comprehended that "the interests of nations" overshadowed personal relations in the making of foreign policy (92).

France and the American Civil War sparkles with fine illustrations (starting with a cover image of Manet's famous painting of the Kearsage-Alabama naval battle of 1864), and benefits from a foreword by Don Doyle, very thorough documentation, a thorough bibliography, a complex chronology that breaks down events on three geographical criteria, and a helpful index. Sainlaude's topical chapter organization, however, is problematic; it seems strange to wait until nearly the end of the book for his sustained analysis of France's reaction to Southern secession from the Union. And a few of Sainlaude's findings left me hanging. He claims French leaders thought the ultimate result of the American war depended on the outcome of elections in the Northern states (that is, whether Abraham Lincoln and his Republican party would lose power to more peace-inclined Democrats), whereas British decisions rested more on battlefield outcomes between Union and Rebel armies. What explains the divergence? He almost seems to be saying that the Quai d'Orsay believed more in democracy than did Englishmen. And I was surprised that this book has virtually nothing to say about Union wartime initiatives to colonize ex-slaves in the Caribbean basin. It is difficult to believe, given Napoleón III's imperialistic envisioning of Latin America, that French diplomats did not regularly comment on Lincoln administration machinations in places like Haiti, the former French colony of Saint-Domingue.[23]

Given its vast research, fluid and engaging narrative, nuanced argument, and its mastery of complex diplomatic negotiations and policy developments, this book is a must for Civil War and

diplomatic history bookshelves, and should influence historiography for a long time to come.

Review by Tim Roberts, Western Illinois University

Despite new interest in the last decade in the Civil War's Atlantic context, no study has focused on the making of French relations with the Union and Confederacy during America's national struggle.[24] Stève Sainlaude's book, translated by Jessica Edwards, tells this story. The Second Empire's authoritarianism differentiated the formation of French diplomacy from its more democratic American and British counterparts, which accepted that "wars are also won in the minds of the people" (82).[25] Sainlaude emphasizes that the rule of Napoléon III meant that French public opinion, especially writings and lectures by liberal reformers like Agénor de Gasparin and Edouard Laboulaye, and opinions in republican newspapers including Presse and Siecle, did not play an important role in French policy-making.

Emphasizing the insularity of French foreign relations enables Sainlaude to explore surprising disconnections between Napoléon and the French foreign ministry over the issues of French recognition of the Confederacy, and the French intervention in Mexico. Sainlaude confirms recent scholarship that argues that Napoléon, who perhaps had a predisposition to anti-Americanism and was committed to correcting the error of his uncle's sale of Louisiana to the less menacing early American republic, supported the South from nearly the war's outbreak. More surprisingly, Sainlaude also shows that the Confederacy's defense of slavery was less offensive to French statesmen than Union supporters hoped, an arch-conservative linkage that had encouraged antebellum Southerners to anticipate international support for their independence.[26] The Emancipation Proclamation, which initially alarmed both

French and British observers as a precipitant to racial slaughter, thus backfired on the Lincoln administration's gamble that it would eliminate the chances of European intervention. On the other hand, the prospect of Confederate expansion into Mexico and Central America alarmed French policy-makers in the Quai d'Orsay, more so than Confederate representatives recognized. Sainlaude's study thus deserves praise for showing that American statesmen, North and South, as well as historians relying only on English-language archives to interpret French policies, could misinterpret French priorities.

Eschewing a chronological approach to the topic, France and the American Civil War presents nine topical chapters. The first chapter explains the complicated French decision to declare neutrality and to treat the Union and Confederacy both as belligerents. The second chapter describes the tortured negotiations between Confederate envoys and Napoléon to organize the building of Confederate warships in France, and ultimately successful efforts by French foreign ministry officials and Union agents to thwart such construction or prevent the ships from setting sail. The third chapter explores cracks in the alleged wartime Anglo-French 'entente,' which derived from the contrasting consequences that an independent South would have on the two European powers: a fragmentation of the Union would enhance British global power, but, in so doing, would serve to stymie French imperial ambitions. This difference explains, for example, Foreign Minister Edouard Thouvenel's intervening with the Lincoln administration to encourage its admission of error in the Trent affair, in order to defuse a mounting crisis with the Palmerston government.

The middle of the book focuses on what at times was schizophrenic French treatment of the Confederacy. Napoléon - somewhat like the current-day American president—often

undertook intuition-based policies that differed from what bureaucrats counseled and what they were sometimes willing to carry out. Notwithstanding the Confederacy's own probable expansionist tendency, the prospect of its establishment as a sovereign state between the grasping, Anglo-Saxon North and a Francophilic, Catholic Mexico was an important motivation for the French emperor to order the invasion of Americans' "Latin" neighbor (111). But, bizarrely, once in power, and probably at French urging, the pretender Maximilian refused to recognize the Confederacy. Napoléon's influence on French policy was probably strongest in the fall of 1862, when his letter was published calling for France, Britain, and Russia to act as mediators to end the conflict. In preparation for this, the French Foreign Ministry prepared a plan for two self-governing American republics with a common economic market (Sainlaude states that the plan called for Missouri, Kentucky, and possibly West Virginia to return to the North, although these states had not seceded). In a fascinating detail that suggests how study of the American Civil War from the viewpoint of a foreign government can help locate it in the context of other nations' and empires' formations and dissolutions of the era, both well-known and obscure, Sainlaude notes that Thouvenel, as a model for his envisioned two-state solution, was 'inspired' by the 1859 arrangement between Moldavia and Wallachia to form Romania (138).[27]

Nonetheless, in addition to the generally pro-Union posture of the French diplomatic corps, the erratic behavior of the French emperor seems to have been what the Confederacy deserved, given what Sainlaude portrays as its self-defeating cotton policy and diplomatic ingenuousness. While the Richmond government's decision to ban cotton exports may have been a reasonable attempt to induce Britain to intervene in the war by crippling its economy or at least provoking destitute laborers to

protest, the Confederates' blame of the Union blockade for the Atlantic cotton shortage made little sense, given statistics French consuls circulated showing the success of blockade runners. Likewise, France's relatively underdeveloped textile industry was not as vulnerable as that of Britain, and, in any case, the French government's distribution of government relief to help laid off textile workers, while anathema in the United States, could have been predicted by observers knowledgeable of French socialist traditions.

Meanwhile, John Slidell, the Confederate representative to France who was somehow imperceptive of the emperor's 'changeability,' time and again overestimated the chances of French recognition of his government (92). Nor did this most able Southern diplomat appreciate Napoléon's desire to co-opt the support of moderate French liberals in the national legislature, which he could accomplish by evading Slidell's appeals for recognition: support for the North among critics of Napoléon on liberal and/or antislavery grounds, and—contrary to the conclusion of earlier studies - the pro-Union thrust of French policy, were not merely coincidences.[28] In the United States, the Confederacy's conscription of French nationals enraged French consuls. On that basis and, more to the point, Southerners' defense of slavery, these first-hand observers of the Confederacy disputed Southern propagandists' attempts to compare the region to European nationalists seeking self-determination at the time.

Thus, Sainlaude discusses several means by which Confederates might have dislodged France from its official neutrality: an alternative cotton trade policy, or greatly more effective diplomacy. He also observes that French officials paid close attention to the elections of 1862, implying that a resounding loss of Republican seats to antiwar Democrats in Congress could

have triggered intervention, although the Second Empire hardly considered policy by democracy a good idea at home. Most plausibly, he states that European recognition of the Confederacy really depended on the success or failure of the Confederate military forces on the battlefield.

Sainlaude's final chapters investigate the impressions of French statesmen of the Union cause. Whereas Confederate President Jefferson Davis drew French observers' (perhaps unfair) criticism for his resort to suspending civil liberties and favoritism towards certain Confederate generals, Abraham Lincoln drew criticism for his early tentativeness as Union commander-in-chief (even though he, like Davis, declared martial law and instituted a draft). As with the case of Britain, Lincoln apparently did not gain the respect of most French observers until after his death. But again, French wartime policy was hardly consistent. From the beginning of the war, Alfred Paul, the consul in Richmond whom Sainlaude lauds as the most perceptive French diplomat, predicted a Union victory, and in dispatches emphasized the North's overwhelming material advantages. Meanwhile, as reported in American newspapers, Napoléon apparently openly supported Democrat George McClellan for the presidency in 1864, whose defeat of Lincoln could have laid the groundwork for a French organized cease-fire. Around the same time, however, French and American naval forces joined in attacking Japan in order to force Emperor Komei to retract his order to expel foreigners, an imperial collaboration that Napoléon hailed in a speech in early 1865. Thus, France and the American Civil War is valuable for inviting consideration of how, given the complications and confusions of nineteenth-century nation-state bureaucracy, foreign governments, both within and beyond Western Europe, shaped policies towards the Union and Confederacy, and how the war

fitted into or set back various jostling territorial and maritime empires' ambitions and strategies.

Review by Jay Sexton, University of Missouri
France and the American Civil War reveals both the potential and limitations of traditional diplomatic history. But regardless of whether you are a fan or a critic of old-fashioned foreign policy history, this is a book that belongs on your shelf, for Stève Sainlaude's laudable archival research (and what appears to be well-translated prose - shout out here to Jessica Edwards) reveals important things about French foreign policy in the 1860s.

Sainlaude is at his best when he probes the divisions within the French policymaking apparatus. The main point I took from the book is that fissures between Emperor Napoléon III and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the Quai d'Orsay in shorthand) conditioned French diplomacy in this period. Sainlaude is not the first historian to bark up this tree, but he does so with far more bite than his predecessors.[29] Sainlaude's study suggests that it was divisions at home – not just the divisions between broad social groups of liberals and conservatives, but rather more specifically divisions between those within policy-making circles – that best explains France's zig-zagging, but ultimately halting, policy toward the warring Americans.

In one corner was the individual who wanted to matter most: Napoléon III, the emperor of the Second Republic. Having come to power after the revolution of 1848 (and then having seized it three years later), Napoléon III was instinctively attuned to the threats confronting advocates of monarchy, hereditary privilege, the Catholic Church, and conservative social institutions. But he was simultaneously aware of the fact that the earth had shifted underneath these old institutions. The liberalizing mid-nineteenth century was not the world of the ancien regime.

Napoléon III's politics embraced significant dimensions of this world of Victorian liberalism. Hence his support for infrastructure projects (railroads at home, as well as the Suez Canal in Egypt), the expansion of the franchise, initiatives promoting urban development (particularly in Paris), organized labor, and even elements of free-trade. "The country changed more than at any other time. A new France was born with the Second Empire," Sainlaude reminds us (2).

France's foreign policy in this era exemplified both of Napoléon's conflicting impulses. He sought to restore French imperial grandeur and to reinvigorate global Catholicism, most famously in the ill-fated attempt to install a sympathetic, Old World monarch in Mexico in the 1860s – a venture that was possible because the sectional conflict in the United States weakened the Monroe Doctrine. But Napoléon's foreign policy was not simply one of revanchist imperial expansion in the New World. He joined with liberal Britain against czarist Russia in the Crimean War. The 1860 Cobden-Chevalier Treaty took a meaningful step toward a liberal French commercial connection with Britain. Like it or not, France's broader foreign policy was awkwardly tethered to an unstable 'entente cordiale' with the old nemesis.

These conflicting impulses were at the heart of Napoléon's schizophrenic American policy in the 1860s. He instinctively supported the slaveholding, aristocratic, and cotton-exporting South. As early as the summer 1861, Sainlaude tells us, "he had chosen his camp. It was the South" (28). But these sympathies did not immediately produce risky policies of diplomatic intervention. Having raised the stakes by escalating France's venture into Mexico, Napoléon understood that many factors needed to be weighed before lunging into a second American civil war: economic interests (which pointed to Northern

markets as well as Southern cotton), public opinion (which was not clamoring for a pro-slavery policy), and national finances (which pointed away from another major foreign venture). Most of all, Napoléon crafted his American policy in relation to his Mexican intervention and relationship with Britain. Both considerations encouraged caution in America. The upshot of these conflicting impulses was an erratic American policy, one which lurched from opportunistic flirtations with intervention to a wait-and-see approach. When Napoléon tried to push through a pro-Confederate policy, in the autumn of 1862 and the summer of 1863, a combination of Union victories on the battlefield and Britain's decision to remain neutral forced him to fold his hand.

Napoléon's attempted interventions in America were also countered by the foreign policy 'establishment' of his day. This is the second group that Sainlaude explores in his deeply researched book. Both of the chiefs of the Quai d'Orsay, foreign secretaries Edouard Thouvenel (1860-62) and Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys (1862-66), understood that there was more to be lost than to be gained in a move that would entangle France in an American total war. This was a conflict best cartwheeled around. And it was never clear what good would come out of a divided Union which might spawn two expansionist powers that would compete for power and influence in North America, elbowing France off of its tenuous imperial bridgehead in Mexico. "No advantage could be gained from a division Union," Sainlaude concludes of the position of the Quai d'Orsay, "no valid reason could prompt the French Foreign Ministry to side with the states in rebellion" (185). The foreign ministers rebuffed Napoléon III when he bypassed them in establishing a direct line to foreign collaborators, such as the scheming pro-Confederate British MP William Lindsay. "Thouvenel and Drouyn de Lhuys did not merely contradict the emperor;" Sainlaude writes, "they resisted his impulses by not complying with his instructions" (187).

Sainlaude's study suggests that it was not moral objections to slavery that torpedoed the Confederate cause in France, but rather a hard-headed calculation of interests produced by an experienced foreign service. It wasn't only Thouvenel and Drouyn de Lhuys that outlined the case against French intervention in the U.S. Civil War. The book's freshest passages are those in which Sainlaude assesses the dispatches of France's counsel to Richmond, Alfred Paul. Sainlaude shows how "Paul sensed early on that breaking away from the federal framework was an act of madness that could only end in a fiasco" (135). Armed with reports from respected diplomats like Paul, the Quai d'Orsay forced the Emperor to acquiesce to a wait and see policy – a tentative approach that ultimately benefited the Union.

Sainlaude's argument is convincing and well substantiated. This is an important piece of scholarship. But it is also a book with a narrow focus. This is an account of high policymakers operating within the narrow corridors of power. There are many references to France's liberal opposition, but domestic politics and social movements do not coalesce into a defined and signposted line of argument in the book. When broader social forces, such as antislavery, make their way into the argument, they do so in a way that places the policymakers back to front and center. "What is looked upon today as the South's monstrousness was in fact hardly ever mentioned in the reports by French diplomats and consuls," Sainlaude writes of slavery (107). There are references to the press and public opinion, but they do not weigh heavily in the argument. Cultural drivers of policy similarly get little attention, which is a shame given that Napoléon's 'grand design' for the restoration of France's imperial grandeur was as much a cultural project as it was a geopolitical one. A reader of Sainlaude's book can be forgiven for wondering if broader

political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts had any bearing on the foreign policy-making process.

But perhaps this is the point. Maybe diplomats had the space to construct a rational and realist foreign policy because events in America were of less interest and significance than those occurring in Europe, the Near East, and Mexico. "Mexico, the American question and, on top of everything, the Rome business is really too much at once," Thouvenel warned during Napoléon's flirtation with a pro-Confederate move in the autumn 1862 (181).

The Quai d'Orsay appears to have recognized that France's transatlantic connections had withered since the days in which it felt compelled to meddle in an earlier American civil war, that of the 1770s. Back then, old alliances with indigenous peoples, ongoing imperial connections, and strategic interests had sucked France into the conflict. But the pull exerted by North America had diminished greatly since then. By the 1860s France's interest in Southern cotton trade was but a fraction that of Britain; the North was an important market for exports, but it was not vital to the French economy; French investments in the United States were surprisingly low. We discover in the conclusion that the number of French nationals who participated in the Civil War was negligible: "Unlike the 200,000 Germans and 150,000 Irish who fought, French participation remained very modest, at around 15,000 and 20,000 combatants." (185). In the first American civil war, France had been the decisive player; in the second one it never really entered the game, despite the repeated attempts of its opportunistic Emperor.

The project of restoring Gallic imperial grandeur in the New World in the 1860s paradoxically stemmed from the diminution of France's imperial footprint there. France had to resort to a

full-blown invasion in Mexico because its connections and collaborators there were too weak to stand on their own when the liberal Mexican regime defaulted on its foreign debts. The ensuing intervention in Mexico turned out to be a catastrophe. Fortunately, savvy diplomats in the Quai d'Orsay ensured that this mistake was not compounded by what surely would have been an even more disastrous intervention on behalf of the South.

Response by Stève Sainlaude, Paris Sorbonne University

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Don Doyle, who wrote a very nice preface to my book, for his introduction to this forum, and also to the reviewers, who took the time to read my book carefully. I am all the more appreciative of their positive opinions since these historians are recognized as experts in international relations. Anyone interested in the more global dimension of history has at one time or another consulted their writings.[30] In the past, their groundbreaking work has often been indispensable to me in writing my thesis and the books and articles that followed. By validating my hypotheses, they have provided a compass for the researcher who sometimes hesitates when searching uncertainly for the direction to take without. I also thank them for their judicious observations and suggestions. These remarks are very useful because a book is always perfectible. It is a pleasure and an honour to engage in a discussion with these specialists for whom I feel a real admiration. Thanks also to Diane Labrosse and Tom Maddux for organizing this round table.

To avoid repetition in this response I have chosen not to answer each review separately and to synthesize the remarks of my colleagues. I hope they will excuse the length of this text. I want to make a detailed statement and to clarify the objections that I had raise below. I also hope to extend the discussion in order to

raise the issue of the extensibility of the diplomatic field around the development of Napoleon III's foreign policy.

When I started this project, the organization of my book was a dilemma. Should I follow the course of events that Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer undertook in their remarkable book?[31] Was it wiser to deconstruct the chronology in order to highlight only the great questions posed to the French imperial government by the American Civil War? I chose the latter, but, like any choice, it is a debatable one.

The first three chapters analyse the French response to the Civil War. The first part (13-75) examines the government's position and that of its actors and highlights the autonomization of France's American policy from that of the United Kingdom. It does, not, however, discuss the reasons why the regime that was installed in 1852 did not abandon neutrality for four years. Explanation, argument, and interpretation unfold in the following two parts. Three chapters (79-125) give an account of French diplomats' perception of the South, while three others (129-183) identify the reasons why the heads of French diplomacy chose the North.

Robert May is surprised that the reader has to wait until nearly the end of the book to obtain a sustained analysis of France's reaction to Southern secession from the Union. Given the book's structure, it was not possible to explain this option in favor of the Lincoln administration before the third part, on page 130, which considers French reactions to the Union's fracture and the speculative predictions that followed. For diplomats, objective data led them to consider the existence of another republic as an aberration and to reject the partition of the beautiful edifice that Louis XVI had helped to build in the previous century. From

then on, they understood that the only possible solution to the conflict led to maintaining the Union.

Questions on the structure and construction of the book also raise those about the field of diplomatic study itself. Jay Sexton comments that the book is a work of "classical diplomacy." France and the American Civil War, A Diplomatic History is not simply an analysis, commentary, or interpretation of the actions of decision-makers and the means deployed to implement American policy. I readily acknowledge the ambiguity of the subtitle, which may lead one to believe the opposite: this study goes beyond mere diplomatic issues. If that had been the case, the topic would have been confined to the question of diplomatic recognition alone. In the words of Martin Crawford, it presents "a complex web of political, economic, strategic, and personal interests." I refer readers to chapter four, which explores the mental representations of societies in the North and South as seen from France, and to chapter eight, which takes stock of trade data that it would have been inconceivable not to examine since it deals with France's (and England's) dependence on southern cotton. It questions the reality of the cotton crisis, which was triggered by the embargo on the exports of the raw material to Europe, and its consequences on the textile industry and on the proletariat. A new observation quantifies the other part of the exchanges that were essential to French trade, those carried out with the States of the Union.

While my book covers only four years, was there a need to go further and consider a broader approach in taking into account an interdisciplinary approach that would grasp the "forces profondes" (underlying forces), as Pierre Renouvin put it.[32] In his conception, these "forces" could be material (social, economic, geographic, demographic), moral, or spiritual (collective psychologies). But if I had nevertheless yielded to

such a temptation, would there have been enough material to satisfy this ambition? Let's attempt to establish this.

Sexton writes that Napoléon understood that many factors like economic interests (which pointed to Northern markets as well as Southern cotton) had to be weighed before France lunged into a second American civil war. In reality, the preservation of trade or the search for markets with the U.S. played a minimal role in Napoleon III's concerns. His interest in the New World was much more justified by the overwhelming influence of geopolitics on his thinking. The modest position of Second Empire trade policy with regards on the United States offers an explanation of this quasi-monopoly in the minds of decision-makers. At the time, France appeared to be insufficiently present in the North American commercial space. The inattention of French industrialists to distant markets, the prohibitive cost of their products, which focused on the high end of the market, and the unsuitability of the export banking structure explain the low level of French-U.S. commerce. Confronted with the gains from European foreign markets, those deriving from French exports to America, which comprised mostly luxury goods, such as Parisian articles, silks, wines, were not comparable. Although they were of high value, they remained negligible in volume, and because the profits were not redistributed to the majority, this enrichment had no impact on the overall level of the population.[33] Even though Sexton acknowledges that the market of the North was not vital for French economy, I cannot agree with him when he writes that in spite of this "the North was an important market for exports."

In 1863 and 1864 the empire had encouraged the international orientation of credit, but the banks had focused their investments on the Mediterranean (the Ottoman Imperial Bank) or Northern Europe (the Bank of the Netherlands), rather than America.

Under the Second Empire, the merchant navy rose from fourth to second place in the world without, however, contributing to an increase in trade with the New World. In 1860, while 65% of French exports were destined for Europe, only 10% went to North America. The tonnage share of the main fleets in the North Atlantic area in 1860 was 41 per cent for Great Britain and only 8.9 per cent for France.[34]

Conversely, what was the degree of penetration of products from the United States? The imperial economy had long been obstructed by its customs barriers; it thus had been little affected by external crises such as that of 1857, which came from across the Atlantic. Financial and economic circles, especially industry, as well as the parliament, were satisfied with this protectionist framework that kept competitive risk at bay. Napoleon III hoped to expand the export market. In 1860, the treaty with England was a first step. To break down any prohibitionist resistance, the agreement was ratified by a Senate-consultative vote, with French leaders dispensing with a legislative vote. This deviation from the parliamentary process explained why the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty was described by its critics as a "customs coup." This treaty, which constituted a revolution for the French economy, particularly for industry, triggered a whole series of bilateral trade agreements which included the most-favoured nation clause. This opening up of economic strongholds did not benefit trade relations between France and the United States.The United States remained outside this system.[35]

The weight of the social body should not be exaggerated in explaining the policy choices made between 1861 and 1865. Unlike today, at that time only a tiny fraction of the population turned its gaze to the Atlantic world. A composite group of employers attempted to gain a market share in America. This group ranged from a universe of small bosses (half of the active

population in industry) at the head of family businesses to a narrow entrepreneurial elite. This 'aristocracy of money,' which included at most 183 families, exploited the collusion of the business world with the political world, and even with the press. This "haute bourgeoisie," comprising 1/10th of a social group that represented at most 15% of society, had been able to take advantage of capitalism's change of scale, amplified by modern transportation, which provided a backbone for the new economy. However, these considerable fortunes built up in Atlantic trade were still uncommon. Three transatlantic lines had received state subsidies, but only one was headed for North America. Despite this encouragement, few entrepreneurs were looking to this horizon to direct their capital. Capital was directed mainly to continental Europe, especially the Mediterranean.[36] French capitalism remained timid and unconquering when it came to the New World. Moreover, given the protectionism of the northern states, the market breakthrough was still laborious. The examples of Jules Ancel or Jules Le Cesne, who futhermore opposed each other on the question of free trade, were very rare.[37]

During this period the rural sector was experiencing a golden age. The vast majority of the working population was employed in agriculture, outside of the urban setting. In 1861, out of a population of 37 million inhabitants, 71% of the French resided in the rural world when more than half of them were employed in agriculture. Even if road and rail development contributed to the opening up of the country, local considerations took precedence. In this case, the peasantry was necessarily far removed from external events. The same was true of much of the tertiary sector; it included a large domestic sector that was confined to its place, often cut off from active society and external discussions.[38]

Were the industrial workers more attuned to matters the other world? This group represented 27% of the working population. However, the manufacturing sector had not taken off like that of its British neighbour. The dualism was structural, juxtaposing small establishments with little concentration, where artisans still provided more than 70% of total production and there were only a few large factories. If France was one of the leading rich countries, this was only partly due to its industry. The spread and variability of activities served those in power by reducing the voice of a united proletariat, but also preserved the industrial sector from the vagaries of the international economic situation.[39]

If the turmoil across the Atlantic had the opportunity to interject itself into the daily lives of the proletariat, this involved workers in the textile industry, the first industrial sector both by the volume of employment (it employed more than one worker in two, or 1,500,000 people) and by the value of its production. Indeed, all indications were that this sector would be impacted by the rebels' cotton embargo. The aim of these white gold dispensers was to make the European states which were subject to their monopoly bow their heads. They expected the subordinates to give in to this blackmail by changing their policies in their favour. But, in the French case, this dependence has to be put into perspective. Compared to its neighbour, the volume introduced was modest. In 1861 steamers from the Southern States were unloading 400,000 bales of cotton on the French quays, while Great Britain imported six times as many.[40] As we can see, the South's embargo on cotton exports was aimed essentially at winning support from Britain.

The number of workers affected by the disruption of supplies also has to be put into perspective. Although the echo of the American Civil War reached the working-class world, its impact

remained limited in scope and involvement. However, the crisis affected only those regions where cotton work reigned exclusively, as in Normandy. Moreover, this activity concerned only a few workers. At most, 400,000 workers were directly dependent on the raw material, i.e. less than 10% of the total working population. Of these, the crisis only affected a little more than half of the workforce. The maximum number of unemployed (223,336) was reached in April 1863, but this unemployment was reduced without too many complications. All in all, the difficulties were overcome in a short amount of time. The cotton shortage was offset by other suppliers, such as Egypt for long fibres and India for short fibres.[41] Moreover, if the Second Empire had guaranteed order to the bourgeoisie, it did not forget that it had also promised security to the workers. It acted quickly and took hasty measures to assist those who were most exposed to the crisis. Swiftness was not a matter of circumstance. It did not express the fear of seditious poverty. Napoléon III was a “social despot.” He manifested his true convictions as a Saint-Simonian. More generally, during the Second Empire, workers’ incomes rose substantially. The average wage of a Parisian worker rose from 3.81 francs in 1851 to 4.98 francs in 1871. This bonus made it possible to avoid the formation of an opposition bloc that could have joined the "victims" of the cotton crisis.[42] Finally, it should be noted that the origins of the disturbances were not clear to all those who made a living from the cotton industry. American policy took advantage of this lack of clarity. The workers were mistaken in attributing the contraction in sales of cotton textiles to competition from the British fabrics that had been massively introduced following the Treaty of 1860. The free trade agreement had been loudly denounced by many textile manufacturers and many chambers of commerce. Some industrialists had even travelled to Paris to try to get the Emperor to reverse his decision. Eugène Rouher, the very influential trade

minister, had to threaten the industrialists with imprisonment in case of violent outbursts.[43]

Sexton writes that the references to the press and public opinion "do not weigh heavily in the argument" that is developed in the book. Did public opinion usually influence Napoleon III's foreign policy? It is easier today to identify the interactions between the different components of society and their relations with political decision-makers.[44] If not decisively, could one measure the breadth of opinion of the citizens of the Empire in support of the foreign policy options chosen, however imprecisely? Pierre Renouvin himself wondered whether these "profound forces" had any influence on these choices.[45] Here we must recall the conditions under which public opinion was molded during the Second Empire, and the limits of the understanding of conflict by the man in the street.

In terms of whether the subjects of the empire heard the din of the duel which was dividing the territory of the Union, a word must be said about the influence at that time of the press, whose publications exploded, particularly in Paris.[46] Interpreting these publications, which I have studied at length, must be done with caution, because the newspapers were subject to strict government censorship. The republican press was banned. The government acted on public opinion by means of those who wrote under its discretion and those whom it tolerated by carefully scrutinising what they said. It remained under the control of the Ministry of the Interior and, even in the early 1860s, despite this second phase called the "liberal empire," the press was careful not to upset it. A 'sword of Damocles' hung over the heads of journalists. The press was subject to prior authorization and disarmed under the yoke of warnings that could call it to order, suspend it temporarily, or even permanently ban it. Napoleon III was not afraid to declare: "I

never read French newspapers, they print only what I want."[47] However, if the journalists' freedom of action lacked amplitude, most liberals used the conflict across the Atlantic to distil their criticisms of the regime. The Civil War filled their columns, but Napoleon III ignored their comments. For their part, his two foreign ministers based their policy on the reports of their consuls

The other question is how the general public received and perceived information from America. What opinion did the press shape? There is evidence that a cultured elite was well informed about American realities. But for many, reading was still a semiotic activity that too complex to make sense. In 1866, using signatures on marriage certificates as a measure of literacy, statistics showed that 35% of men and 42% of women could not read or write. While this number varied according to social level, it differed according to region, with a Saint-Malo-Geneva line separating two completely or slightly illiterate Frances. It is true that in Paris illiteracy was less widespread than in the rest of the country, but for many their skills were limited to basic reading.[48]

While there was a popular press that benefited from the lower price of issues, it rarely went beyond the basic daily routine and was harmless to the government because the multitude only approached politics through the imagination. The Italian War was one of the few foreign policy subjects discussed in this press, and this too occurred from the point of view of French victories. The regime took advantage of the lack of a critical sense of the popular classes to disseminate its propaganda almanac in an attractive form. The people favoured serial novels, entertainment articles, and information on shows. The creation of the Petit Journal in 1863 was the high point. From then on, it is conceivable that those who mastered reading, even if

imperfectly, abandoned foreign policy. In 1860, the Revue des Deux Mondes made a big deal of “those people who thought about themselves before carrying their wandering curiosity far away.”[49]

In any case, one can ask whether people on the street were capable of of understanding the conflict that divided the United States. In a centralized country like France, which was the country of one city, Paris, in order to guarantee a certain social and political order local life had been abandoned very early on to the direct tutelage of the State. Fear of revolutions led to the establishment of a top-down authority. While the 1787 constitution established the system of shared powers and sovereignty, at the same time the absolute monarchy continued to concentrate all power. The revolution and the empire further consolidated the centralizing structures in order to strengthen national unity in favour of public power. From then on, how could the vast majority of French people have been able to grasp the border drawn by the denied powers to delimit the powers of the states and the federal government?

During the Second Empire, one can discern only hypothetical knowledge of the reactions of public opinion to foreign actions, let alone to the American crisis. One exception is the street demonstration that formed around the United States Legation following the news of President Abraham Lincoln's death.[50] But this involved only a few hundred individuals and was an emotional demonstration that tells us nothing of what this outraged crowd thought of the conflict itself.

Sexton writes that French opinion “was not clamoring for a pro-slavery policy.” Even if a tiny liberal-instructed fraction of the population condemned this practice, however, this is an assertion based on speculation for the majority. In fact,

historians face large obstacles when trying to learn what the informed public was thinking. The roughness of the sources hinder the exercise. The late Lynn Case asserted in his book that it was difficult to capture the thoughts of the many.[51] He relied on the reports of the prefects, which were sent every two weeks to the central authority. They formed a tight network of relations between the decision-making pole and its constituents which enabled the imperial government to constantly take the pulse of the nation. But these documents are in themselves controversial because they were tailored to offer the Emperor and his ministers the words they wanted to hear. The same is true of the publication of parliamentary debates, which could interest only a fraction of public opinion. In the words of Emile Ollivier, the last head of the imperial government before the War of 1870, understanding "That one is never so weak as when one seems to be supported by everyone" from 1860 onwards Bonaparte gently loosened the embrace that was stifling public liberties.[52] The American Civil War thus coincided with the first phase of the liberalization of parliamentary life. With the decree of November 24, 1860, the members of the Legislative Corps and the Senate could now use a right of address to reply to the Speech from the Throne that opened each session. However, although the 1863 elections marked an awakening of political life, only 32 opposition deputies out of 283 entered the lower house. Weakness resulted in aphonia.

Unlike in the United States, where political life was marked by a democratic moment every two or four years, during the Second Empire nothing can be deciphered from the electoral consultations. It is true that Caesarian democracy made the act of voting a part of everyday life, but it was meaningless. Elections were questionable. Official candidates falsified the results, and their meaning depended solely on internal circumstances. The imperial conception of universal suffrage

conceived these votes as a form of plebiscite. They tell us nothing about what the majority of voters thought about the issues that interested diplomats. This shortcoming is all the more evident because between 1852 and 1870 no elections were held on external issues. Nor was foreign policy subject to any real parliamentary control, any more than domestic policy was. This was not the case in the Third Republic, where public opinion, which was more enlightened by systematic instruction, was free to pronounce itself and offers historians the means by which to decipher their reactions in foreign policy matters more easily.[53]

It is easier to understand why the orientation of foreign policy did not depend on public opinion. The French contribution to Italian unity provides a good example. By reducing the temporal power of the Pope, Napoleon III did not hesitate to break the alliance of throne and altar. He alienated Catholics, who responded with addresses, petitions, pamphlets and leaflets of protest. Even so, most of the time the masses detached themselves from external affairs. This indifference was only broken when peace seemed threatened in Europe.[54] Such disaffection gave the decision-makers full latitude for action. François Guizot, the former Foreign Minister of King Louis-Philippe between 1840 and 1848, had already written to his English homologue, George Hamilton-Gordon, the Earl of Aberdeen, some ten years earlier: “Take it for granted that foreign policy does not concern France at all and will not be the cause of any great event. Governments can do as they please...”[55]

Robert May expresses surprise that the empire, which was far from being a model of democracy, could be interested in the results of the votes held in the United States in 1862 and 1864. This was also the case in 1863, when the sovereign tried to get

the British House of Commons, a model of English liberty of expression, to put pressure on his government when at the same time the French corps legislatif was doing nothing more than 'une chambre d'enregistrement,' i.e., a parliamentary chamber emptied of its prerogatives, that Napoleon III had established a plebiscitary monocracy by exhuming the imperial principle from the ashes of the past. Consultation of the citizens did not give them the choice to accept or reject his policies; it only served to reinforce his power. He saw parties as divisive, not democratic. The French position might therefore seem hypocritical. In reality, Napoleon III forced himself to take into account the votes abroad because he was well aware that, in order to influence the course of history, he could not ignore the systems of his foreign rivals.

Tim Roberts is correct when he writes that the Second Empire hardly considered democracy to be an archetype. The Emperor had a different idea of the political system that was suitable for his subjects. The nephew of the founder of the dynasty felt himself to have been carried by the wave of the people to the imperial throne. The political anchoring was twofold: his prestigious ancestry and the support of his subjects. He believed that each people naturally had its own political system that was particularly suited to it. While he felt that democracy, with all its defects, corresponded to the Americans, he felt that this type of regime was not suitable for the French and that they could be satisfied with a strong power based on "directed universal suffrage," as Adolphe Thiers, the leader of republican opposition to Napoléon III, qualified it. Yet the American model was in the air at the time. Edouard Laboulaye, Professor at the Collège de France who launched a fundraising campaign for the erection of the Statue of Liberty a few years later, popularized it in his lectures, historical works, and novels. However, in his last decade the empire was detached from the party of order in

several stages. As envisaged by Napoleon I during the “Hundred Days episode,” in 1815, his nephew waited until the end of his reign to transform it into an intermediate form between despotism and parliamentary regime. This new political edifice, an unusual but no less captivating experience, was to be consumed three months later in the disaster at Sedan.

Robert May is rightly surprised by the disregard of the French for Lincoln's colonization plans, which were based on the American Colonization Society’s ideas of shipping emancipated slaves out of the Union. It may be disconcerting, in fact, that diplomats who were so cautious about mentioning territorial expansionism in North America hardly ever gave their impressions, especially in Haiti, which had been a French territory before 1804. Yet this undertaking was no secret. Lincoln had openly referred to this proposition in his address to Congress. He reiterated these words before a delegation of free black men. For its part, Congress had agreed to grant him the financial means to do so.[56] Several points can be made to explain France’s contradictory position. On the one hand, the project remained a dead letter. This abandonment justified the fact that the proposal was not emphasized in French diplomatic exchanges. Second, there was little concern about this policy. Far from being considered as a capture of territory by the Union, which would have outraged the French, it was thought to be a migration encouraged to solve the management of freed slaves. Finally, rather than being seen as representing a policy of conquest, Lincoln’s suggestion focused on a domestic problem that, contrary to English who were very sensible about this abominable practice, strangely did not appeal to the consciences of the diplomats. It should be noted that for the Tuileries, it was indeed the territorial extension of the United States by force that was feared. The Gadsden Treaty or the purchase of Alaska (not yet Greenland) provoked few hostile reactions. The fear was that

Polk's war would be reissued at the expense of the lands south of the Rio Grande. It was this fear that drove the French expedition to Mexico.

Jay Sexton evokes this intervention, which implemented the monarchical project that the man who held in his hands the destinies of the Empire conceived for Mexico, to regret the little attention devoted in France and the American Civil War to the cultural drivers of French policy towards the disunited states. This criticism is surprising, given that the diplomatic issues differ. In one case the action stems from a circumstantial reaction, in the other it derives from a theoretical process. The first constitutes a retort, while the second gives concrete form to a doctrinal thought. Faced with the breakdown of the federal pact, foreign policy did not conceive a project but rather adopted a position.

It was obviously out of the question to develop in my book the history of this intervention, which lies at the outer edge of my topic. While France and the American Civil War mentions this momentous episode of Napoleon III's grand design, it only addresses it in order to invoke an argument that played to the disadvantage of the states of the South and thus the recognition of the Confederate government: their propensity to expand. Napoleon III was defending to others what he had accomplished by increasing the national territory. This question of expansionism was the junction between American and Mexican politics because the “great thought of the reign” was primarily conceived as a policy of territorial containment and affirmation of French preponderance.[57] Even if these rules had been decided for the Old World, he believed that the limits of his territory could not be pushed back by flouting international law.

During the Second Empire the cultural project was inseparable from the politics of prestige. French and foreign visitors were struck dumb with admiration upon viewing the transformations of the capital by the prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann. This "urbanism propaganda" was ostensible testimony to the Emperor's regained power. However, outside the borders, this ambition was hidden. The old idea of preserving the Catholic and Latin races from the invasion of the Anglo-Saxon and Protestant races was no more than an empty slogan.[58] The invocation of this antagonism only served to flatter chauvinistic convictions. France was seen as the only Latin power capable of defending Mexico against its northern neighbour, and this role strengthened its greatness. For Napoleon III, this was the essential point. France's influence could only result from its political or military preponderance, unlike today, when the foreign policy of large states cannot be conceived without devoting a specific budget to cultural diplomacy. As the former diplomat Albert Salon wrote: "The wars undertaken from 1815 to 1870 were not accompanied by a plan, nor probably by an intention, and even less by a real application of an action or policy of cultural and linguistic dissemination."[59]

If we recapitulate all of these observations, with regard to all the aspects discussed above, we must face the obvious: France's foreign policy towards the United States hardly went beyond the diplomatic field. I noted this when I wrote my Ph.D. thesis,[60] which was based on a period broader than that of the American Civil War. Before the Third Republic, apart from its geopolitical dimension, the great American republic occupied a place that, without being negligible, remained secondary. This preoccupation, which may even have been a monomania, concerned above all the sovereign; the interests, in both senses of the word, of the business and financial world, of intellectuals,

and of a large section of public opinion, were primarily focused on Europe. The reason for this was the lack of vigour in the relations between the two countries, which were out of all proportion to the relations they would subsequently develop. The United States was still a young nation at the dawn of its developement. That explains why, with the exception of political matters, Franco-American relations were still in their infacy Let us not mistake these matters for contemporary realities.

Unlike today, we must be careful not to overestimate the economic, social, and cultural data or collective psychologies to explain the diplomatic choices of the time. Foreign policy was distinct from domestic policy, to which Bonapartism provided an answer. As the political scientist and historian René Rémond rightly wrote: "It is an axiom that hardly suffers any denial in the nineteenth century that … domestic policy was independent from external problems: the partitioning is almost absolute between the two fields."[61] There was no interpenetration between the national area and the one outside the borders. In the absence of the contamination of public affairs, imperial foreign policy evolved within a purged of internal problems. This is why, in Sexton's words, this policy was defined by "the high politicians who operated in the narrow corridors of power." It was an occupation of specialists who made their decisions within restricted circles that were sometimes influenced by lobbies.

The Bonapartist regime, by virtue of its filiation and principle, was destined to pursue an active foreign policy that marked national time. Napoleon III had a good idea of his role in this respect. In his mind, the aim assigned to this policy was to set to music the notes of his audacious thoughts and even his imagination. The American Civil War was a timely opportunity to serve his grand designs and to realize his ambitious plan for

the New World. The Emperor was delighted at the tearing apart of the Union and chose the side of the insurgents. The key to Bonaparte's policy towards the Confederacy is to be found in the Mexico case. Geopolitics governed the “great thought of the reign.”[62] He was eager to protect Mexico from the encroachments of which it had been the victim in the past when, after Polk's war, the United States had taken over more than half of its territory.

The Emperor was absolutely convinced that the success of his enterprise depended on the success of secession and he had no doubt that the Confederates would prevail. Contrary to Sexton’s opinion, his policy was not curbed by a combination of Union victories on the battlefield in the autumn of 1862 and the summer of 1863. He was convinced until the end that the United States would be definitively divided. While Vicksburg, less than Gettysburg, reshuffled the cards in the minds of the diplomats, Napoleon III remained impervious to this turning point in the conflict. At a time when the Confederacy was in agony, and the news in early March 1865 announced the fall of Charleston, he received Slidell and spoke again of the recognition of his government.

Napoléon III believed that the divided Union would have less strength to enforce the Monroe Doctrine and could not oppose the installation of a French vassal state. He was also convinced that the break-up of the United States would sound the death knell for an invasion of Mexico. The new southern state would serve as an intermediate weighting power to stop the southern expansion of the Americans. It adopted the policy formerly carried out by François Guizot with regard to Texas which was then conceived as a barrier to prevent the conquest by the United States of Mexican territories.[63] Finally, he knew that once the country had been conquered, his troops could not remain in

America forever. Then the regime of Maximilian I of Habsburg, the surprising suitor chosen by France to hold Mexico's destiny in his hands, would need to bond with the Confederacy.

If everything contributed to push Napoleon III towards the division of the United States, why did he not act on it that impulse? The agreement between France and the United Kingdom has long been the main, if not exclusive, explanatory factor for historians in interpreting the maintenance of France's neutrality in the conflict. Sexton endorses this 'antiphony' when he writes, "Like it or not, France's broader foreign policy was awkwardly linked to an unstable 'entente cordiale' with the 'former sworn enemy'." This ignores the fact that to the United States the interests of the two countries differed. Contrary to those of France, British worries centered on the increase in U.S. power, the threat it posed to Canada, and U.S. competition in the North American market. It further disregards the divergent diplomatic choices of Paris and London during the American Civil War, as well as the deterioration in the early 1860s of this 'entente cordiale' which had already been eclipsed in the past (63-65).

Admittedly, in the early years of the Second Empire, the Emperor was continuing the policy initiated by the previous monarchy. Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo combined their dreams over the Channel. This 'Entente cordiale' had buried the ancestral struggles before falling apart in 1846. Unlike Napoleon I, his nephew knew Great Britain well.[64] He wanted to renew this special relationship with the kingdom of Queen Victoria. On foreign issues he wanted his policies to be conducted in consultation with the British. In 1854, the active brotherhood pledged to fight together in the Crimea; two years later the Congress of Paris put an end to the hostilities. This episode was

the culmination of this rapprochement in diplomatic and military matters.

But this unity would crack. The Entente Cordiale had been eclipsed in the past. Friendship was not set in stone. The mooring was about to give way once again. Its fragility came from its constituent parts. It depended very much on the ties woven by the men who were in charge of these diplomatic relations, François Guizot-Earl of Aberdeen or Alexandre Colonna Walewski-Georges Villiers.[65] There was also the lack of a legal basis on which to seal the Franco-British relationship with a treaty to create a consultation structure that would coordinate foreign policy, a component somewhat similar to the Franco-German model that Paris and Berlin succeeded in building after the Second World War.

The diplomatic ambitions of Napoleon III were of deep concern to London, and the two governments differed in their treatment of external problems. First, Napoleon III wanted to restore the greatness of France. Such a plan could only frighten the United Kingdom, which interpreted this rebirth as a challenge to its own standing. The relationship induced by the Entente Cordiale was that of dominant to dominated. It was active only as long as France was in demand. In the days of yore, the historian Charles-Hippolyte Pouthas wrote that in reality the "Entente Cordiale was for England a means of neutralising France, of forbidding it any expansion, of keeping her in isolation... By using the words of Entente Cordiale France and England spoke a different language."[66]

Second, the Emperor wanted to bring Europe out of its insomnia by giving France the role of promoter and referee by erasing the memory of Waterloo. If he intended to promote a new practice, a 'European concert' based on international congresses to build

a peaceful Europe, this approach also served his desire for glory. Thus, in 1856 the Congress of Paris did not simply put an end to hostilities; it allowed France to take its revenge on history. It offered the Head of State the prestige of a European peace settlement.[67] This restoration could not be achieved without giving France a powerful army to serve its ambitions. This resurrection fuelled the suspicion across the Channel of a conquering tropism inspired by the imperial nostalgia of the First Empire. In February 1861, Prime Minister Palmerston wrote to Sir John Russell, his Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: "The whole scope of our policy is to prevent France from carrying out its vast expansion projects in a large number of regions."[68] Napoleon III's ambition to provide France with a new territory and a naval military tool was not designed to reassure the United Kingdom. Bellicism could escort supremacy. In 1859, the launch in Toulon of a state-of-the-art battleship, the Glory - the name says it all - triggered panic in the former enemy.[69]

Third, London was also alarmed by Napoleon III's desire to deconstruct the balance established in 1815. After a quarter of a century of wars that had ravaged the Old World, the Congress of Vienna sanctioned the defeat of his uncle. While the conference set the conditions for peace, it also created a new European order which Napoleon III challenged by embracing the cause of nationalities. He, who wanted to liberate all peoples except his own, did not want to bring Europe back to its 1812 state, but to build a new continent. He was trying to unpick the mesh of the Vienna accord so that, here again, foreign policy would satisfy national ambitions. In the wake of his revisionist impulse, France was once again becoming the centrepiece of the European game.[70] Of course this alteration could not please Great Britain. For forty years it had been the vigilant guarantor

of a European organisation and public law to which it had largely contributed by bringing down the invader.

Between 1860 and 1865, whether in Europe, the East, or America, the diplomatic choices of the two nations were going to clash considerably. In Italy, the territorial reshuffle obtained by Napoleon III displeased London, not to mention the annexation of Nice and Savoy, which generated a wave of indignation on the other side of the Channel. This act gave the English a concrete glimpse of the diplomatic revisionism of Napoleon III. The British cabinet was definitively convinced that France represented a danger to the European balance and the Emperor irreversibly distanced himself from his ally in the Crimea.[71] In Eastern Europe, the two countries were in conflict over the settlement of the Polish crisis. In the war between Denmark and Austria, which was allied with Prussia, France did not support the same country as Great Britain. On this occasion Napoleon III hoped to replace the Entente Cordiale with a similar relationship with Berlin, whose sole purpose was to obtain approval for his annexing of Belgium or Luxembourg, two territories to which England had guaranteed sovereignty.[72] In the Middle East, because of Napoleon's plan for a great Arab kingdom from Algeria to Egypt and the completion of the Suez Canal by the French, the two countries were on the verge of rupture.[73] Not to mention the Mexican affair where Napoleon III blamed his allies for giving up his armed missionaries in front of the Cumbres, while at the same time Palmerston mocked this “Don Quixote of the world.” [74] On the other side British hoped never to be involved in this kind of combination again: Queen Victoria wrote: “The conduct of the French is everywhere disgraceful. Let us have nothing to do with them in the future in any proceedings in other countries.”[75] It is easy to understand why London was not saddened by the collapse of the plebeian dynasty in Sedan,

which precipitated the Bonapartist adventure into the abyss. The English were rid of the strong France that they perceived as being both dangerous and uncontrollable. Since their neighbor was no longer a cause for concern, they now viewed it in a more favourable light.[76]

In conclusion, contrary to Sexton's argument, Napoléon did not “craft” his American policy in relationship with Britain. From 1860 onwards, it was no longer possible to speak of the Entente Cordiale to describe the Franco-British relationship. Roberts rightly speaks of an “alleged” agreement. This agreement was meaningless. Nor was it cordial. From then on, as Crawford expresses perfectly, a common approach to the American crisis was difficult to develop.

It is true that this thesis of the conformity of the American policy of France with that of Great Britain is based almost exclusively on the notes left by the delegate from the South, John Slidell. Slidell was clamouring for the admission of his government to the concert of nations. Hoping for the Confederates’ victory, Slidell reported that Napoleon I's nephew repeatedly justified his refusal to recognize the Confederation by citing British stasis. At the end of the interviews granted to him by the Emperor, Slidell wrote down the terms of the conversation. If the past has unexpectedly entrusted us with these essential writings, let us allow ourselves a warning. Valuable as they are, the use of these interviews commands a distrust of principle. Like any monopolistic source, they prompt the historian to be cautious.

This reservation is all the more necessary since Napoleon III never divulged the contents of his conversations; Slidell's writings cannot therefore be cross-checked. Another element urges us to be circumspect: the enigmatic personality of the Emperor. The man Slidell met did not correspond to the usual

portraits of him. One may be surprised at the constancy of his words because his mind was fluttering and chaotic, filled with a jumble of shifting reveries. Alexis de Tocqueville, the laudateur of the United States, who had been Minister of Foreign Affairs, spoke cruelly of a monarch with “an incoherent, confused intelligence, filled with great thoughts that were misguided.”[77] Napoleon wandered thus in his geopolitical mirages. His procrastination was also due to his poor health.[78] The volubility of Slidell's interlocutor was also surprising. The monarch was often portrayed as a “sphinx” who filled his silences with a few scattered words. He was secretive. Even in his most intimate conversations he did not reveal the substance of his thoughts or betray any emotion.[79]

We must not be satisfied with the mere outline of the words. If Napoleon III finally abandoned his policy in favour of the Confederacy, it was not because London decided to maintain its neutrality but, as Howard Jones writes, because it did not want to be isolated from the North. Although it was busy fighting secession, the federal government had not concealed its radical intentions against the powers that would endorse the division of the Union. Bonaparte feared Washington's reaction if he pursued a policy in favour of the South. No one had forgotten the martial vocabulary used by Secretary of State Seward in 1861 on Independence Day - a symbol of the Union's policy - to banish the interference of a European state in American affairs. French interference could lead the federal government to detach a few ships from the blockade to retaliate against the French ships that had handled the logistics of the Mexican expedition. The value of the American units was not underestimated by the French. At the time of the launching of the Glory, the sovereign was closely observing the vanguard ships that the Union Navy could launch. After the battle at Hampton Roads, he had commissioned a report detailing John Ericsson's technology. Although the

French naval forces may have occupied a solid second place in the international hierarchy of maritime powers, the remoteness of the theatre of operations made it unlikely that naval combat in Mexican waters would result. In the event of a skirmish, he was aware that British support would be indispensable (64).[80] He said this to Slidell in June 1863.[81] From then on, England's neutrality prohibited him from any friction with Washington that would compromise his “great Mexican plan.” He did not have the means to carry out his policy. He certainly did not have the character for it. Hesitant by nature, the Emperor lacked the decisiveness necessary for an army chief that his illustrious ancestor had. So much so that the audacity of his thought stumbled over his pusillanimity. As former Secretary of Sate Henry Kissinger wrote of him, he was a man “with revolutionary ideas who shrank back from the consequences.”[82] In distant operations, in China or Mexico, during an expedition in which he would never have ventured alone but was caught up in a whirlwind, he sought naval support from the United Kingdom. This was not diplomatic subordination but military subjugation. It was not allegiance but realism (64).

Citing London’s inertia as a means of evading judement was a double advantage. In the perspicacious words of Jones, by putting England in charge, Napoléon III sought to exonerate himself of his failure to recognize the Richmond government but also to conceal the efforts of his foreign ministers to convince him to maintain neutrality.[83] While Jones rightly emphasizes the role played by Lewis, the Secretary of War, in dissuading Palmerston from diplomatic intervention in favour of Confederation, the essential work done by the two French Foreign Ministers, Edouard Thouvenel and Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys, to keep the Emperor away from Southern tropism must also be emphasized. The latter, although aware of the superiority of the North, which French Consul Alfred Paul in Richmond

tirelessly emphasized, did not define their policy solely on the basis of the military situation but on a cautious approach that disconnected from the vagaries of war[84]. For Thouvenel, as for Drouyn de Lhuys, British abstention was one element among others to be taken into consideration. It reinforced their policy without being the sole factor.

If Napoleon III's attempts in favour of the Confederates failed, the reason was to be found not on the banks of the Thames, but on the left bank of the Seine, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs located in the brand new building on the Quai d'Orsay.[85] The Emperor's project could not be carried out without the support of the heads of French diplomacy, who were hostile to his inclinations, as the spy who was operating within the ministry of Foreign Affairs revealed to Slidell.[86] Apart from the intellectual shortcomings of the monarch mentioned above, the sovereign had no knowledge of law, which explains his ignorance of international rules and the importance he attached to reading the documents that his collaborators gave him to understand the global issues that were at stake.[87] His incompetence made it easier for the two ministers to persuade him to put forward sound arguments and to bring him back to reality. Their diplomatic dialectic restricted the scope of his certainties.Thouvenel as well as Drouyn de Lhuys reminded the Emperor the priority of European affairs. The American dossier was classified under the pile of problems of greater concern. Seen from France, the Civil War was not a diplomatic priority at all. It did not eclipse the current events on the Old Continent, which remained at the heart of the imperial government concerns.

The two ministers confronted him with this contradiction. At a time when the destiny of the United States was being decided, Napoléon III had to choose between two opposite solutions: to

weaken the first power of the moment or that of the next day. He was torn between the realities of Europe and those of the New World. His policy of greatness, where nationalism supplemented any measure, was mingled with geopolitical considerations far removed from the concerns of his uncle, who had neglected America. Napoléon I sold Louisiana because it seemed useless and expensive. Moreover, even though the United Kingdom was his primary enemy, in 1812 the gravedigger of the First Republic ignored the second American-British conflict and threw himself headlong into the invasion of Russia. Conversely, during the Second Empire, his nephew wanted to write the story of international influence by reducing, or, more realistically, at least competing with British supremacy in the world. However, as Jones notes, the desire to weaken the United States contradicted this policy since, by encouraging its division, it also strengthened the hegemony of Great Britain. Certainly, seen from France, the image of the United States had deteriorated since the War of Independence, when, as the playwright Paul Claudel wrote, American democracy "had entered the world on the arm of the nobility of France." The two countries had broken off diplomatic relations several times, especially during the term of Andrew Jackson, an irascible president with little knowledge of diplomatic customs; something that can happen even on Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay's land. Territorial expansion at the expense of Mexico had contributed to the disenchantment. And yet, the Emperor, who ardently wished for a break-up of the Union, contradictorily also took it as a model. In a speech held in 1867 he advocated bringing together the peoples of the Old Continent within the "United States of Europe."[88]

All in all, the displeasure with the English grip on the world was far greater than the possibility of a still hypothetical U.S. hegemony under the Second Empire. Napoleon III's world policy never lost sight of the United Kingdom's international

roots. He was eager to write a decisive page in French overseas history. One cannot agree with Sexton's argument that the restoration of "Gallic imperial greatness" in the New World weakened "the imperial imprint of France." On the contrary, with his Minister of the Navy, Prosper de Chasseloup-Laubat, Napoléon III laid the foundations for an expansion on which the next regime would build its colonial empire. The Second Empire extended its control over strategic regions in Asia, Cochinchina, Africa, Algeria, Senegal, Gabon, Djibouti, Madagascar, and New Caledonia. So much so that, as Jones points out, the French empire of the new Caesar was to surpass that of his uncle.

In conclusion, let us dare to draw a parallel with General Charles de Gaulle. Exploring the rapprochement of politics at a century's distance is always a scabrous intellectual exercise. But, at the time of Brexit, we cannot escape the idea of bringing Gaullism and Bonapartism closer together. Like Napoleon III before him, de Gaulle conceived of France only in terms of grandeur and independence. From England, where he had taken refuge, he had thought of victory. Supported by the allies, he had been carried to Paris in jubilation. Yet the post-war years had changed the outlook. De Gaulle was opposed to the entry of the United Kingdom into the common market and wanted to keep "his eyes open and his hands free" towards the United States, whose foreign policy he ostensibly criticized.[89]

Today the sands of Normandy still remember the assault of the martyrs of freedom. The ebb has not erased their sacrifices. When the brotherhood of arms is consumed by the foam of time, the heart has no memory.

Notes

[1] Stève Sainlaude, La France et La Confédération Sudiste, 1861-1865: La Question de La Reconnaissance Diplomatique Pendant La Guerre de Sécession, Histoire, Textes, Sociétés (Paris: Harmattan, 2011); Stève Sainlaude, Le Gouvernement Impérial et La Guerre de Sécession (1861-1865): L'action Diplomatique, Collection Histoire, Textes, Sociétés (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011); Stève Sainlaude, "Alfred Paul: un diplomate français dans la guerre de Sécession," Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique, 2011, 3-15.

[2] The American Historical Review 119:1 (February 2014): 259-261.

[3] Lynn Marshall Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970); Alfred J. Hanna and Kathryn A. Hanna, Napoleon III and Mexico: American Triumph over Monarchy (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1971).

[4] Serge Gavronsky, The French Liberal Opposition and the American Civil War (New York: Humanities Press, 1968).

[5] Lynn Marshall Case, et al., French Opinion on the United States and Mexico, 1860-1867; Extracts from the Reports of the Procureurs Généraux (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century, 1936).

[6] Nassau William Senior, Conversations with Distinguished Persons during the Second Empire, from 1860 to 1863, vol. 2 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1880), 191-192.

[7] Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine, 1826-1867, vol. 2 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 2:451.

[8] Martin Crawford, ed. William Howard Russell's Civil War: Private Diary and Letters, 1861-1862 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 165.

[9] The principal works are Henry Blumenthal, A Reappraisal of Franco-American Relations, 1830-1871 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959); Lynn M Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970); Daniel B. Carroll, Henri Mercier and the American Civil War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); George M. Blackburn, French Newspaper Opinion on the American Civil War (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997).

[10] Richard Huzzey, Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).

[11] Dexter Perkins, A History of the Monroe Doctrine (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1963. Revision of Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine, 1941), 118.

[12] See Sainlaude's essay, "France's Grand Design and the Confederacy," in Don H. Doyle, ed., American Civil Wars: The United States, Latin America, Europe, and the Crisis of the 1860s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 107-24.

[13] Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.

[14] See Howard Jones, Blue and Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 267-272.

[15] Frank Lawrence Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931).

[16] Howard Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 323; Charles M. Hubbard, The Burden of Confederate Diplomacy (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), xvi.

[17] See for example Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, Napoleon III and Mexico: American Triumph over Monarchy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971) and Thomas David Schoonover, Dollars over Dominion: The Triumph of Liberalism in Mexican-United States Relations, 1861-1867 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

[18] Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

[19] Saintlaude's study was originally published in French in 2011.

[20] Don H. Doyle, The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War (New York: Basic Books, 2015); R. J. M. Blackett, "Pressure From Without: African Americans, British Public Opinion, and Civil War Diplomacy," in The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim, ed. Robert

E. May (1995; rev. ed. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 83-114.

[21] Hubbard, Burden of Confederate Diplomacy, 24-26; Joseph A. Fry, Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789-1973 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 81-83; Doyle, Cause of All Nations, 38-39; Paul D. Escott, The Confederacy: The Slaveholders' Failed Venture (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), 10. Dean B. Mahin and Howard Jones are less critical of Confederate handling of cotton exports: Mahin, One War at a Time: The International Dimensions of the American Civil War (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1999), 83-94; Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy, 13-14.

[22] See, for example, Leonard L. Richards, The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); Matthew Karp, This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[23] Robert E. May, Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 230-234, 242-276.

[24] An earlier study of Franco-American relations during the Civil War, more focused on American diplomacy toward France, is Lynn Case and Warren Spencer, United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

[25] The best recent book on Civil War diplomacy is Howard Jones, Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations (Chapel Hill: University of North

Carolina Press, 2010). A recent study emphasizing the weight of public opinion, particularly pro-Confederate, on British policy is Thomas Sebrell, Persuading John Bull: Union and Confederate Propaganda in Britain, 1860-1865 (New York: Lexington Books, 2014). Valuable studies of the French opposition to Napoléon III are Serge Gavronsky, French Liberal Opposition and the American Civil War (New York: Humanities Press, 1968) and George Blackburn, French Newspaper Opinion on the American Civil War (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997). Don Doyle's Cause of All Nations: an International History of America's Civil War (New York: Basic Books, 2017) models the recent transnational turn in Civil War literature.

[26] See Matthew Karp, This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[27] Recent collections of essays that contextualize the American Civil war by providing other case studies are Don Doyle, ed., American Civil Wars: The United States, Latin America, Europe, and the Crisis of the 1860s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); David Gleeson and Simon Lewis, eds., Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2014); , Don Doyle, ed., Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); and Jorg Nagler, Don Doyle, and Marcus Graser, eds., Transnational Significance of the American Civil War (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[28] See Henry Blumenthal, Reappraisal of Franco-American Relations, 1830–1871 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959).

[29] See, for example, Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970); Don H. Doyle, The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

[30] See, for example, Don Doyle, The Cause of All Nations: an International History of the American Civil War (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Martin Crawford, William Howard Russell's Civil War: Private Diary and Letters, 1861-1862 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992); Howard Jones, Blue and Gray Diplomacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Robert E. May, The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013); Jay Sexton, Debtor Diplomacy: Finance and American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era 1837-1873 (New York: Clarendon Press, 2014); and Timothy Mason Roberts, ed., This Infernal War: The Civil War Letters of William and Jane Standard (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2018).

[31] Lynn M. Case and Warren F. Spencer, The United States and France, Civil War Diplomacy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

[32] Pierre Renouvin (1893-1974) was a forerunner in the history of international relations, as opposed to traditional diplomatic history. He belonged to the Annals school. Without going into historiographical considerations, in France, at the end of the 1920s the Annals school had profitably revolutionized conventional history. Breaking with their predecessors Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, the Annals school wished to give another dimension to the questioning of the past and to draw on

its depths. This had led them to introduce into their work demographic, economic, social, cultural and collective mentalities. See, for example, Pierre Renouvin et Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Introduction à l'histoire des relations Internationales (Paris, Armand Colin, 1964).

[33] The country remained at the forefront of European silk production. Dominique Barjot, Jean-Pierre Chaline, et André Encrevé, La France au XIXe siècle, 1814-1914 (Paris: PUF, 1995), 398; Bruno Marnot, La mondialisation au XIXe siècle, 1850-1914 (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012), 7, 106.

[34] Walter Bruyère-Ostells, Napoléon III et le Second Empire (Paris: Perrin, 2005), 79; Barjot et al., La France au XIXe siècle, 399; Marnot, La mondialisation au XIXe siècle, 35, 213.

[35] Frédéric Barbier, "Libre-échange" in Jean Tulard, ed., Dictionnaire du Second Empire. (Paris: Fayard, 1995), 733-738.

[36] Bruyère-Ostells, Napoléon III et le Second Empire, 79, 87; Alain Plessis, De la fête impériale au mur des Fédérés, 1852-1871 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973), 109; Barjot et al., La France au XIXe siècle, 367; Claude Beaud, "Commerce," in Tulard, ed., Dictionnaire du Second Empire, 317-324, 323; Eric Anceau, Napoléon III : Un Saint-Simon à cheval (Paris: Tallandier, 2008), 373.

[37] Cedric Maurin's thesis on Théophile Roussel is currently being written.

[38] Jean Molinier, "L'évolution de la population agricole du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours," in Economie et Statistique (Paris: INSEE, 1977) : 79-84, here 80. The domestic sector accounted for 21% of the tertiary sector in 1866.

[39] Fabrice Laroulandie, “Ouvriers” Dictionnaire du Second Empire, 945-957; Barjot et al., La France au XIXe siècle, 384; Marnot, La mondialisation au XIXe siècle, 28.

[40] Laroulandie, Dictionnaire du Second Empire, 945-957; 945-946; Beaud, Dictionnaire du Second Empire, 638-645; Stève Sainlaude, La France et la Confédération sudiste (1861-1865). La question de la reconnaissance diplomatique pendant la guerre de Sécession (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2011), 16; Barjot et al., La France au XIXe siècle, 387.

[41] Claude Fohlen, “La guerre de Sécession et le commerce franco-américain,” in Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, VIII, (octobre/décembre 1961): 259-270, here 265-267; Marnot, La mondialisation au XIXe siècle, 110.

[42] During the time of the empire wage growth accelerated 6.7% from 1850 to 1860 and 9.5% from 1860 to 1870. Dominique Barjot, “L’Empereur entrepreneur: Le Second Empire, une première industrialisation de la France” in Napoléon III l'homme, le politique: Actes du colloque de la Fondation Napoléon (Paris: Napoléon III Editions, 2008), 278; Bruyère-Ostells, Napoléon III et le Second Empire, 72.

[43] Anceau, L’Empire libéral : Tome 1 : Genèse, Avènement, Réalisations (Paris: Editions SPM, 2017), 108-109.

[44] Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, Robert Y. “Effects of Public Opinion on Policy,” American Political Science Review77:1 (March 1983): 175-190.

[45] Pierre Renouvin, Histoire des Relations internationales. Tome II 1789–1871 (Paris: Hachette, 1994), 543, 547.

[46] 150,000 dailies per day in 1852, rising to 10,000,000 in 1870.

[47] From 1852 to 1866, 109 warnings were distributed for six titles. Sophie Spandonis. “La presse du Second Empire vue à travers le Journal des Goncourt, ou le Journal comme ‘document humain,’” Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt 9 (2002) : 125-151, here 130. Napoléon III’s statement is quoted by Michèle Ressi, L'Histoire de France en 1000 citations (Paris: Eyrolles, 2011), 359.

[48] François Furet and Wladimir Sachs, “La croissance de l'alphabétisation en France (XVIIIe-XIXe siècle),” in Annales, 29-3, 5/6 (1974): 714-737; Jean-Pierre Pélissier and Danièle Rébaudo, “Histoire de la mesure. Une approche de l’illettrisme en France : la signature des actes de mariage au XIXe siècle dans “L’enquête aux 3 000 familles,” in Histoire et Mesure (Paris: EHESS, 2004) : 161-202, here 1-2.

[49] Charles de Rémusat, “L’opinion publique et la politique extérieure de la France,” in Revue des Deux Mondes (juillet/août 1860) : 5-31, here 30-31; Bruyère-Ostells, Napoléon III et le Second Empire, 63.

[50] Doyle, The Cause of all Nations: An International History of The American Civil War, 294.

[51] Case, French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954).

[52] In December 1869 Émile Ollivier (1825-1913) was commissioned by Napoleon III to form a government. For six

months this government accomplished an important work but this experience was interrupted by the war. By initiating a constitutional revision, he gave birth to a semi-parliamentary system that abandoned the procedures of official candidacy, granted more freedom to the press and amnestied certain republican opponents.

[53] See the thesis of Jacques Portes. Une fascination réticente. Les EU devant l'opinion française, 1870-1914 (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1991).

[54] Anceau, L'Empire libéral, [Tome II, 104, 105; Gabriel Léanca, La politique extérieure de Napoléon III, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011), 191; Case, French opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954). This rejection of the war influenced Napoleon III's decision to reject his proposal for armed mediation following the Austrian defeat at Sadowa.

[55] Guizot to Aberdeen, septembre 16 1849. Quoted by Regis Debray, Que vive la République (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1989), 161.

[56] Claire Bourhis-Mariotti, L'union fait la force: Les Noirs américains et Haïti. 1804-1893 (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017), 113; Kate Masur, "The African American Delegation to Abraham Lincoln: A Reappraisal," in Civil War History 56:2 (June 2010): 117-144.

[57] Sainlaude, "France's Grand Design and the Confederacy"in American Civil Wars, The United States, Latin America, Europe, and the Crisis of the 1860s (Chapell Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 111.In the letter Napoleon III sent in July 1862 to Forey, the new leader of the expedition, the geopolitical statement was clear: "Mistress of Mexico, and

consequently of Central America and the passage between the Two Seas, there would henceforth be no other power in America than that of the United States. If, on the contrary, Mexico conquers its independence and maintains the integrity of its territory, if a stable government is formed there by the arms of France, we shall have laid an impassable dam against the encroachments of the United States." Documents diplomatiques, Affaires étrangères. (Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1863 or 1862), 190-191.

[58] At the time, the concepts of race, people and nation were intertwined. The Latin races were the races that conformed to the Pope's instructions. It would have to be determined, but this is not our purpose here, to what extent France was defending Catholicism in the world. When, after the promulgation by Juarez of decrees against the clergy, the French envoy to Mexico, Dubois de Saligny defended the convents, he was lectured by Thouvenel who reminded him that his mission should be limited to protecting French interests. Gustave Niox, L'expédition du Mexique, (1861-1867). Recit politique et militaire (Paris: J. Dumaine, 1874), 80, 82.

[59] Albert Salon, L'action culturelle de la France dans le monde (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1983), 15-18.

[60] Sainlaude, La politique étrangère de la France à l'égard des Etats-Unis d'Amérique de 1839 à 1867, defended at the University of Creteil, under the Direction of André Encrevé. 2005.

[61] René Rémond, "Compte-rendu du livre de Lynn M. Case, French opinion on War dans Diplomacy during the Second Empire," in Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, 3:2 (1956): 164-168, here 164.

[62] This is Rouher's famous expression, launched in the Legislature on 25 January 1864, to refer to the Mexican expedition.

[63] Stève Sainlaude, "La guerre de Sécession, une aubaine pour la Grande Pensée du règne ?" in L'intervention française au Mexique (1862-1867) (Paris, éditions du Cerf, 2018), 50-51. The Napoleonic project was therefore old, which contradicted the thesis of an Emperor who only at the end of the 1850s took the decision to make Mexico a barrier against the United States, under the influence of Mexican conservatives who gravitated in the Empress' entourage.

[64] The young Bonaparte appreciated the British art of living, and his Spanish wife was an Anglophile. He had lived in Great Britian and had walked in the city of London. It was on this island that he found exile and also death.

[65] Both Guizot and Walewski, the natural son of Napoleon I, had headed the London embassy. Had not Palmerston said a few years earlier: "We have no eternal allies and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and it is our duty to make them prevail?" D'Arjuzon, « Napoléon III et l'Angleterre," in Napoléon III l'homme, le politique: Actes du colloque de la Fondation Napoléon, 407-408.

[66] Charles H. Pouthas, "Chroniques" in Revue d'Histoire Moderne, II:12 (1927): 466-467. He is the author of the book Histoire politique du Second Empire (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1955).

[67] Louis Girard, Napoléon III (Paris: Fayard, 1993), 248.

[68] Wiliam H. C. Smith, Napoléon III (Paris: Hachette, 1982), 266.

[69] Jacques-Olivier Boudon, La marine sous le Premier et le Second Empire (Paris: SPM, 2017), 87; Michel Martin, "La renaissance de la marine militaire française sous Napoléon III, in Paris, Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien, No 303 (janvier 1979): 44-48, here 48.

[70] Georges-Henri Soutou, L'Europe de 1815 à nos jours (Paris, Puf, 2007), 87

[71] Queen Victoria wrote: "We have been completely duped. The return to the English alliance, to universal peace, to respect for treaties, to commercial fraternity [...] was only a mask to hide from Europe a policy of spoliation." Pierre Renouvin, La politique extérieure du Second Empire. Tome 1, unpublished (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, Paris:Turnier et Constans, 1940), 3-4; Jacques-Alain de Sédouy, Le Concert européen. Aux origines de l'Europe, 1814-1914 (Paris: Fayard, 2009), 335; D'Arjuzon, « Napoléon III et l'Angleterre » in Napoléon III l'homme, le politique: Actes du colloque de la Fondation Napoléon, 412; De Sédouy, Le Concert européen, 345, 361; Bruley, La diplomatie du Sphinx, Napoléon III et sa politique internationale, (Paris: CLD, 2015), 163.

[72] D'Arjuzon, "Napoléon III et l'Angleterre, in Napoléon III l'homme, le politique: Actes du colloque de la Fondation Napoléon, 413; De Sédouy, Le Concert européen, 347-348; Nieuwazny, Dictionnaire du Second Empire, 349, 1025-1027; Jacques Droz, Histoire diplomatique de 1648 à 1919 (Paris: Dalloz, 2005), 400; Jean Léo, Napoléon III et la Belgique (Bruxelles: Editions Racine, 2003), 152; Gaspard Pagès, "L'affaire du Luxembourg d'après une publication récente," in

Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine 1:1, 1-6 (1926): 5-23; 401-423.

[73] Victoria had warned Napoleon III: "Sire, we had a close bond of friendship at the time of the Crimean War; but you will destroy all that with the Suez Canal." Jacques Georges-Picot, "Napoléon III et le canal de Suez, » in Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien, No. 300 (juillet 1979): 35-40, here 38; De Sédouy, Le Concert européen, 332-333; Bruley, La diplomatie du Sphinx, 194; Renouvin, Histoire des Relations internationales, 597-598; David Sturdy, "Histoire diplomatique de volontés politiques contraires. Grandeur du canal de Suez," in Bulletin de l'Académie du Second Empire No.17 (2008/2009): 12-15, here 13; Droz, Histoire diplomatique, 387-598.

[74] Jean Avenel, La campagne du Mexique (1862-1867). La fin de l'hégémonie européenne en Amérique du Nord (Paris: Economica, 1996), 42; Alan Knight, "La Perfida Albion, la batalla de puebla y la intervencion francesa en Mexico" in Memorias del Simposio Internacional 5 de Mayo (Puebla: El Colegio de Puebla, 2013), 247-267, here 259.

[75] Kathryn Abbey Hanna, and Alfred Jackson, Napoléon III and Mexico. American Triumph over Monarchy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 44.

[76] Pauline Piettre, "Le regard des Britanniques sur la France en guerre (1870-1871). L'évolution d'une opinion attentive," in Histoire, Economie et Société 3 (2012), 51-66, here 66.

[77] Tocqueville's seminal book is, of course, De la démocratie en Amérique, published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840. Alexis de Tocqueville (Author), Philippe Reynaud (Compiler),

De la démocratie en Amérique (Paris: Flammarion, 2010); Renouvin, Histoire des Relations internationales, 548.

[78] From 1863 he began to suffer from painful bladder stones. In the autumn of 1863 he suffered two illnesses in Biarritz. During a reception given at the Tuileries on December 12, 1863, he was close to being ill. In August 1864 he suffered a heart attack. That year he had a prolonged hematuria. At the beginning of 1865 the Emperor suffered so much that he missed several sessions of the council of ministers. In August 1865 he thought his last hour had come. Anceau, Napoléon III, 408.

[79] Anceau, L'Empire libéral, [Tome 1] 58; Renouvin, Histoire des Relations internationales, 548.

[80] Boudon, La marine sous le Premier et le Second Empire, 110-111.

[81] On 18 June 1863 Napoleon III received Slidell again. He was once again reluctant to act in favour of the recognition of the South. He justified his position by explaining to the Southern envoy that the success of the Mexican expedition would be jeopardized by this diplomatic decision because no power other than England could provide him with effective aid in the event of war on the seas. John Bigelow, France and the Confederate Navy, 1862-1868 (London: Sampson Low: Harper and Brothers, 1888), 136-138.

[82] Quoted by Dominique de Villepin, in de Villepin, ed., Histoire de la diplomatie française (Paris: Perrin, 2005), 25.

[83] Sainlaude, Le gouvernement impérial et la guerre de Sécession (1861-1865). L'action diplomatique. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011), 117.

[84] Sainlaude, “Alfred Paul, un diplomate français dans la guerre de Sécession,” in Revue d’Histoire Diplomatique, No1 (2011): 3-15, here, 4-14.

[85] Stève Sainlaude, “Le poids du Quai d’Orsay Impérial dans le choix diplomatique. L’exemple de la guerre civile américaine,” in Revue d’Histoire Diplomatique, No. 2, (2019): 175-183, here 179-183.

[86] His name was Pierre Cintrat, the director of the diplomatic Archives.

[87] Anceau, L’Empire libéral (Tome 1) 58; André Encrevé, Le Second Empire (Paris: PUF, 2004), 80.

[88] Renouvin, Histoire des Relations internationales, 549.

[89] Jacques Vernant, “Le général de Gaulle et la Politique extérieure,” in Politique Etrangère 6 (1970): 619-629, here 624.