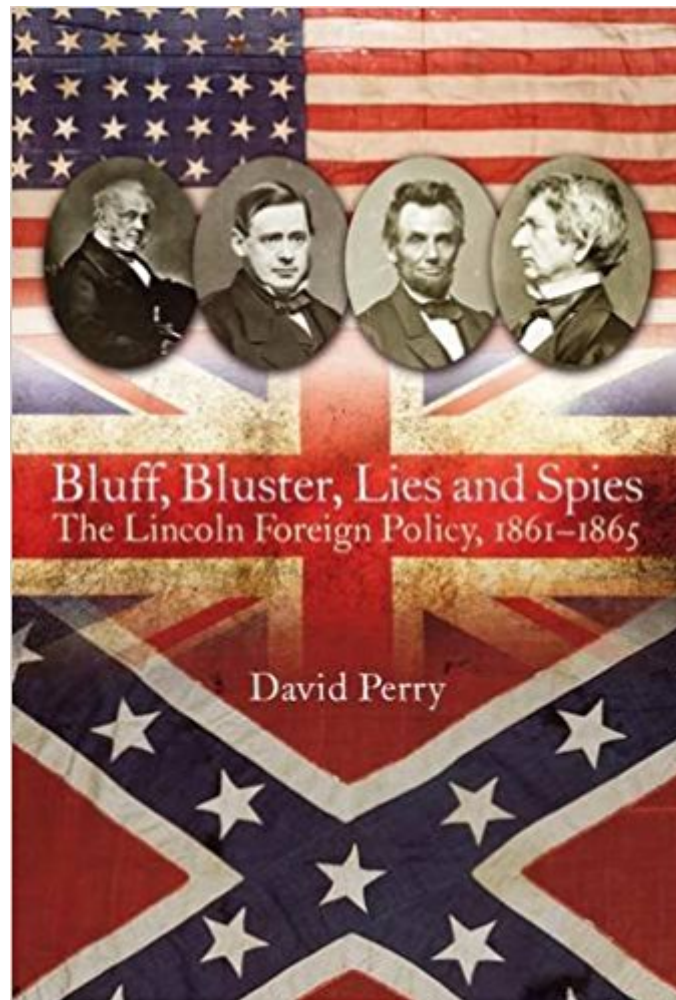




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Bluff, Bluster, Lies And Spies: The Lincoln Foreign Policy, 1861-1865



Synopsis

In the first years of the Civil War, Southern arms won spectacular victories on the battlefield; however, cooler heads in the Confederacy recognized the demographic and industrial weight pitted against them, and counted on British intervention to even those scales in order to deny the United States victory. *Bluff, Bluster Lies and Spies* is a wild ride through the mismanaged State Department of William Henry Seward in Washington, DC, to the more skillful work of Lords Palmerston, Russell and Lyons in the British Foreign Office. Fearful that Great Britain would recognize the Confederacy and provide the help that might have defeated the Union, the Lincoln administration was careful not to upset the greatest naval power on earth. At the same time, however, Great Britain needed to retain influence on American foreign policy, because her very safety and existence as an empire depended upon it. In face of the growth of the Union navy—particularly its new ironclad ships—she turned out to be a paper tiger who relied on bluff and bluster to preserve the illusion of international strength. Britain had its own continental rivals with whom to vie, and the question of whether a truncated United States or a reunited stronger one was most advantageous was a vital question. Ultimately Prime Minister Palmerston decided that Great Britain would be no match for a Union armada that could have seized British possessions throughout the Western Hemisphere, including Canada, and he frustrated any ambitions to break Lincoln's blockade of the Confederacy with Britannia. In addition to the naval arms race between Britain and France, Europe was covered with the spies, arms dealers, detectives and publicists who struggled to buy guns and to influence European opinion about the validity of either the Union or Confederate cause. This book describes in full how the Civil War in the New World was ultimately left to Southern battlefield prowess alone to determine, as the powers of the Old World declined to overtly intervene in the American question.

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Customer Reviews

History's focus during war is on battles and leaders with domestic politics being a distant second. During the Civil War, with few exceptions, international politics is not considered. However, international politics occupied much of the Lincoln administration's time causing more than a few sleepless nights. In 1860, America is an emerging nation, slowly building a manufacturing economy but dependent on exporting raw materials. Militarily, America's small army and navy is not something established nations worry about. Great Britain is the world power. The largest manufacturing economy in existence back by an empire that spans the globe, a small well trained army and a huge navy enforce the Queen's will. France, dreams of Napoleon but lives in England's shadow. Russia, Prussia have internal problems but are powerful nations. This is a colonial world, ruled from Europe and populated with monarchs, some with real power. America is the new kid, somewhat pushy with ideas many older kids don't like. The Civil War presents Europe with some intriguing choices. For Great Britain, having two or more nations in America could be a good thing, more so if one is a semi-dependent client state. France dreams of an empire and seizes a chance establish one in Mexico. All of Europe sells war materials to both sides as quickly as possible. This book looks at how international politics play out during the Civil War as a combination of bluff, bluster, lies and spies. The author takes the time to establish the world as it was because this causes major considerations for all parties. From this foundation, we follow the story year by year, to the extent possible. There are many sideshows some important enough to linger over and these need to be ended prior to moving on. Seward and Lincoln dominate American policy, while Davis and Benjamin shift with the times, trying to establish a recognized government. Charles Adams is an unrecognized hero for his work in London, well detailed in the book. The writing is crisp, the personalities explained and the agendas understandable giving the reader an excellent understandable look at the subject. This is a history with endnotes, glossary, bibliography, appendices and index.

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