Counterfactual Essay

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After decades of strains and conflicts over slavery, westward expansion and states’ rights between the states of north and south America, the Civil War started in 1861.When in 1860, the presidential elections were conducted and Abraham Lincoln was elected, seven states of North America separated and formed the Confederate States of America. Soon enough, another four states joined them. The bloodiest conflict between the states at last ended in 1865 after in Confederate surrender. Out of 2.4 million soldiers sent on the deadliest war, 620,000 were killed while millions of them were injured. The states of south were almost demolished. There is no single reason for the war, as many factors contributed to it or intensified it. People mostly argue that the reason of civil war was either Slavery or preservation of the Union. Union constituted of many states which practiced slavery. All the events and circumstances which led to Civil war are either caused or influenced by Slavery (Gunderson, 1974). Radical abolitionists including John Brown were in favor of war to emancipate the victims of slavery and initiate insurgence. Numerous abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Frederick Douglass, made several efforts to demonstrate that the slavery was destructive. Thus, it can be comprehended that the main cause of Civil war was Slavery and had it be prevented there would be no war. Slavery involved multiple other factors and events which led to Civil war. Most of the credible historians asserted that slavery and status of African Americans were the core factors for plunging America into civil war (National Park Service, n.d.). During mid of 1800s, there was an economical shift in northern states from framing to industries. They no longer required the slaves for their earning. People in north enjoyed the urban life. They mostly lived in the big cities like Boston, Philadelphia and New York. On the other hand, the population of Southern states was dependent on the farming economy, due to which they still required the slave labor for making a living. This difference in economies influenced the views of people living in both the states. The people of North State were of the opinion that slavery should be abolished from the system. They supported that emancipation of slaves and their rights. However, the people in South America wants the slavery trend to continue so that they could be able to maintain economy. The elections for American President were held on November 6, 1860. As a result, to this election, in an electoral college landslide, Abraham Lincoln managed to secure 180 electoral votes. The population of northern states was more than the population of Southern states which gave the northern states a control over the electoral college. He won the election despite the fact that his votes were not even forty percent of the popular vote. He managed to dominate majority of northern states, however, he was not favored by a single state of South America. Another contestant, Douglas gained support from northern states in form of twelve electoral votes, but they were not adequate to pose a challenge to Lincoln’s strong standing. In southern states, the votes were divided between Bell who received thirty-nine votes and Breckenridge who earned seventy-two votes. Due to this division pf votes, none of them was able to secure enough votes to win the election.

This presential election in1860 decisively established the obvious fact that Republican and Democratic parties were the lead parties in America. More importantly, it demonstrated the conflict on views of slavery between the north and South states.

Abraham Lincoln’s election as the President of the United States served as the last blow for the South American American’s states. He supported the anti-slavery views and was a member of a contemporary anti-slavery Republican Party. He was not even in the ballots of ten southern states, yet he won the elections countrywide and was elected as president. In these circumstances the population of Southern states realized that Lincoln was against the concept of slavery. They deduced that he was also against the people of South and they could become victim of biasness. So, after the elections majority of Southern states decided that it was better to separate from United states as they did not want to be part of United Sates anymore. They believed that that it was their right to leave and live separately according to their own rules. In this regard, they planned that first of all, South Carolina would be first state to leave and then eleven other states would follow. They decided that these twelve states would form a new country, which would be named ‘The Confederate States of America’.

However, Abraham Lincoln was strongly of the view that they did not have any right to leave the United states. Lincoln sent in the troops and armies to Sumter to prevent the separation. With armies being involved, the threat of war started lurking as the situation intensified by every moment. For Lincoln, Civil war was not a war technically, instead it was a way to settle down the unconstitutional rebellion. The war begun with the Confederate forces firing on Fort Sumter, which is an island of South Carolina. The factors leading to initialization of attack were significantly influenced by the attitude of newly elected president. He completely rejected the idea of secession and acted rigidly.

The atmosphere became intense as The Confederate States of America declared they have every right to secede and moreover they claimed federal assets located within seceded Southern states borders. These claims were explicitly rejected by Lincoln and he declined to vacate Sumter.

Lincoln attempted to force the Confederacy to attack first by resupplying Sumter, so that he could carry out the military operation on the Confederate states. In this way, he succeeded in forcing the people, he considered rebels, to start shooting. After they attacked, Lincoln directed the military to take down the rebellions as now he thought it was now justified. Almost every personnel of Lincoln’s cabinet specially including Simon Cameron, his Secretary of War, believed that this mission against assumed rebellions would be imprudent and would be a reason to war. All of them provided him with solution of evacuating. The reigning officer in Fort Sumter, Major Robert Anderson himself was of opinion that only through evacuation, the Civil war could be stopped. Some people try to justify the decisions and conduct of Lincoln by saying that otherwise the states of United States would have lost the unity and America wouldn’t be a strong nation as it is today. But the question arises that whether any other could have been adopted other than taking military operation. Abraham Lincoln could have chosen to evacuate Sumter under suitable and peaceful conditions. People argue that Lincoln’s decision was not that main cause and even without it the war would have started sooner or later. However, his decision to send ary and attack the southern was the one main event that led to start f Civil War. It is evident for any war, the economic, ethical, political and religious conflict are the perfect blend. It is understandable that the intense conflict and rigid behavior of president was the major reason and the war could have been prevented only if this conflict of slavery was resolved. If the events like succession of South were prevented in some other way than the military action, the civil war could have been prevented.

# References

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