

ABSTRACT

Alexander H. Stephens was the Vice President of the Confederacy and he sought to negotiate peace with the Union during the Civil War. Stephens clashed with President Jefferson Davis over war policy, most prominently peace negotiation, because Davis desired a policy of independence by military victory and Stephens sought independence by peace negotiation. This thesis is an analysis of Stephens's efforts to negotiate peace by focusing on a letter he wrote to Davis on January 25th, 1865, as well as other letters to and from Stephens. In the January 25th letter, Stephens gives a record of his struggle to negotiate peace with the Union. By examining three key incidents Stephens references in the January 25th letter, I will illustrate that Stephens pursued peace because of his states' rights principles and a desire for a statesman approach to end the war, but Davis undermined his effort. First, I will address the initial failed peace mission of Stephens in 1863. Second, I explore Stephens's failed meeting with a prisoner named David F. Cable, who claimed to be a liaison for Peace Democrats. Finally, Stephens's accusation that Davis preferred President Abraham Lincoln over George B. McClellan in the Presidential election of 1864 will be examined to prove Davis's preference for military strategy over Stephens's statesman approach. Through showing Stephens's statesman approach to ending the war, this research highlights the importance of reexamining his war time activities and Confederate career.

INDEX WORDS: Alexander H. Stephens, Civil War, Confederacy, Peace during the Civil War, Confederate War Policy