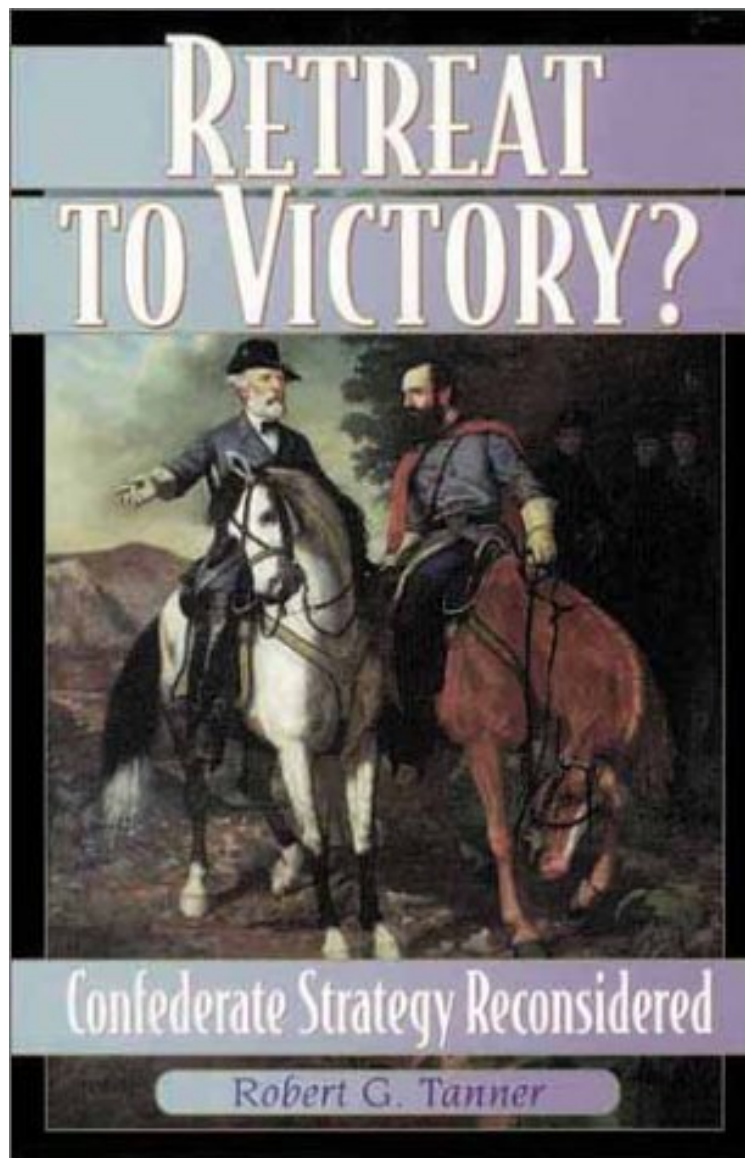


[E-BOOK] Retreat to Victory?: Confederate Strategy Reconsidered (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

Retreat to Victory?: Confederate Strategy Reconsidered (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

Robert G. Tanner

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Robert G. Tanner : Retreat to Victory?: Confederate Strategy Reconsidered (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Retreat to Victory?: Confederate Strategy Reconsidered (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era):

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. PerfectBy Danielle PayneThe book is in excellent condition with with no markings, highlighting, or page bends. It only shows a little bit of wear on the front, but otherwise looks better than what I could have bought in my school's bookstore.0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. AvoidBy HistorianThe writing style is dull; too many sentences should have been made less complex. The author seems to be spending a lot of time arguing about the rebels' Fabian strategy, but I simply don't see this as a major issue in Confederate historiography.10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Clear, Concise Explanation of What the Confederacy Couldn't DoBy Rea Andrew ReddRetreat to Victory: Confederate Strategy Reconsidered, Tanner, Robert G., Scholarly Resources, paperback, 161pp, 3 maps., \$20.00, 2001Could the Confederacy won the Civil War by retreating and nipping at the flanks of the invaders? Would four years of Fabian military strategy have saved the South and defeated Lincoln in the presidential election of 1864?No. Robert G. Tanner describes a Fabian war plan that may have been available to President Davis and his generals and his presentation leaves little doubt that a such a policy would not achieved the military or political goals necessary for the survival of the Confederacy. Fabius--the Delayer--led the Roman armies on the Italian peninsula during the 2nd Punic War. Opposing Fabius was Hannibal of Carthage. Tanner states that while Fabian was resisting but not attacking Hannibal, the Republic of Rome was invading Spain and Sicily, both Carthaginian strongholds, and building the fleet that would eventually carry the Roman army to northern Africa.Giving up Southern territory would have undermined that moral of those soldiers whose homes lay behind Federal lines and created losses of industrial facilities, railroads and ports that could not be replaced. Tanner, describes the inadvertent Fabian policy of the Confederacy from April 1861 through January 1862 as a successful one. The Federal advances of February through May in Tennessee, March through June in Virginia, and April through June in Louisiana, made the concentration of Confederate forces necessary. The beginning of the end of the Fabian policy was heralded by the fall of the Pamlico Sound and Roanoke in North Carolina, Jacksonville in Florida, Fort Pulaski in Georgia throughout the late summer and fall on 1861.Criticism of the Confederate selection of Richmond, Virginia as the fledgling nation's capital is noted; but the defensive line of the Rapidan and Rappahannock River, from the Wilderness to the heights of Fredericksburg, is not replicated until the Roanoke River, 100 miles south of Richmond. Also, the industrial strength of Richmond was equal to 50% of the Confederacy. It's loss through a Fabian policy would be cataclysmic.The geography of the American South does not lend itself to a `retreat to victory' policy. If only Texas was east of the Mississippi River! The region where the Union armies, supported by railroads and navies, was actually very large; the area to where the rebel forces could retreat, so as to isolate a Federal army from its supplies was to far from the border states, was very small. The Mississippi, the Tennessee, the Cumberland, the Rappahannock, the Red rivers, along with the seacoast provided opportunities for supplying advancing Union armies that limited the region where Confederate armies could demolish a Federal army entirely and away from a ready path of retreat.Also, the existence of slavery and its position as a primary policy of the South eliminated a planned withdrawal of Confederate forces. If the South brought forth the Confederacy to protect slavery from Federal interference then retreating to win the war is a contradiction. Additionally, the provisional Confederacy of December 1860-April 1861 could not realistically proclaim and achieve independence without having the Upper South join the Confederacy. This is true in the eyes of many Southerners and Europeans.Tanner additional presents a cogent and concise discussion of Carl Clausewitz's discussion of the Fabian strategy in On War. The author's description of the beginning of Clausewitz's military career as a lance corporal in the Prussian army, his extended service in the armies of the Czar and then his return to the Prussian army before Waterloo, is informative and shows the life experience that Clausewitz's had in order to produce his masterwork. Retreat to Victory?, like with Ethan Rafuse's A Single Grand Victory, is an excellent, short volume that explains the Civil War strategy as the civilian and military leaders understood it during the Civil War. Both Tanner's and Rafuse's are volumes among Scholarly Resources' American Crisis Series distributed by Rowan and Littlefield Inc. Retreat to Victory? is recommended to those who have several one volume Civil War books under their belt or have taken a college level course in the subject.

Did Confederate armies attack too often for their own good? Was the relentless, sometimes costly effort to preserve territory a blunder? Why great battles in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Tennessee rather than well-laid ambushes in Alabama's sandhills or the pine forests of the Carolinas? These questions about Confederate strategy have dogged historians since Appomattox. Many have come to believe that the South might have won the Civil War if it had only avoided head-on battles, conducted an aggressive guerrilla campaign, and maneuvered across wide swaths of territory to exhaust the Union's willingness to continue the war. Retreat to Victory? Confederate Strategy Reconsidered challenges this widely held theory. Robert G. Tanner argues that deep retreats and battle avoidance (the strategy of maneuver rather than combat) were not available to Southern leaders in planning their wartime strategy. The South fought as it did for valid reasons, according to Tanner, and this book examines these reasons in detail, including the South's need to protect its slave-based economy, to establish a state's rights-oriented government, and to win independence from the Union. Tanner uses Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz's classic On War as a means for evaluating Confederate actions. On War provides a single measure for testing claims that the South could have prevailed by avoiding battles and forcing the Union to hold large tracts of land. Provocative and carefully

researched, *Retreat to Victory* offers a fresh perspective on Confederate strategy and makes an important contribution to the field that no serious student of American history will want to miss.