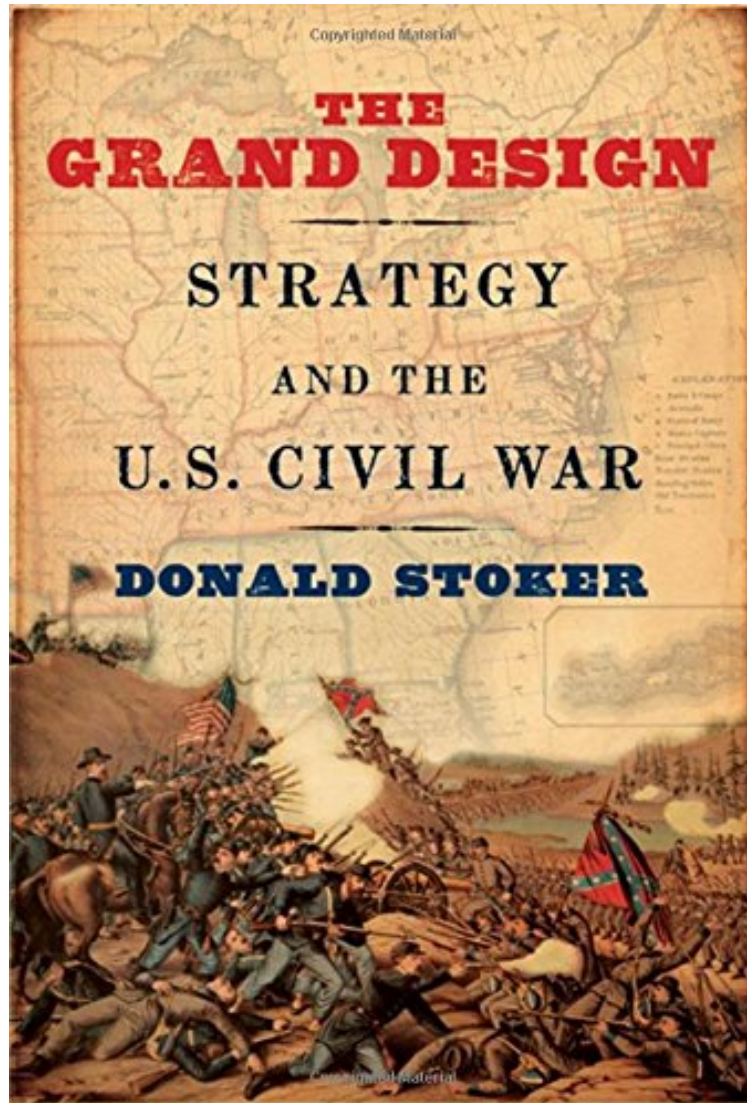


[Library ebook] The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War

The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War

Donald Stoker

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Donald Stoker : The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War:

5 of 10 people found the following review helpful. The Grand Design: Strategy The US Civil War By James N. Werlein This is a "must read" for the seasoned Civil War History student and our current president. Don Stoker takes you above all the battle and smoke and into the inner logic and strategy of Abraham Lincoln's planning and subsequent execution of the plan of war against the rebel states. This is not a "battle book", but rather a deep examination of the total war perspective and the actual plan to win it. President Obama would benefit from studying Dr. Stoker's book! 1

of 6 people found the following review helpful. The Grand Design By Kindle Customer A very different angle to look at the Civil War from the way some of us were taught in High School, but the way Lincoln and Grant saw it, in my opinion. Great! 31 of 45 people found the following review helpful. Why the Cause was Lost By Christian Schlect This book is strongest when the author gives his informed opinions on the North and South's military and political linkages, those involved with how to win what became the bloody and protracted U.S. Civil War. While it bogs down at times with detailed descriptions of some of the minor movements of competing generals and forces, this account ends with providing the reader a good summary of the strategic forces at work that led to Union victory. This is not a book for those interested in the individual soldier in battle, in the military equipment used in this war, or in the general economics of supporting such large armies. Instead, it is a book that properly evaluates the critical roles in planning and conducting the actual war as played by President Lincoln (effective) and the Confederacy's Jefferson Davis (ineffective), as well as their respective top military staff and field generals. General Sherman had the keenest insight as to how to win: relentlessly destroy what supports the enemy's army and then kill that army. I do think Professor Stoker's understandable focus on grand military strategy gives short shrift to a significant reason why the North ultimately won: its people were fighting for the better political and moral principles. Note for future edition: p.410, "It is very [unlikely instead of likely] that if he had indeed taken the field..."

Despite the abundance of books on the Civil War, not one has focused exclusively on what was in fact the determining factor in the outcome of the conflict: differences in Union and Southern strategy. In *The Grand Design*, Donald Stoker provides for the first time a comprehensive and often surprising account of strategy as it evolved between Fort Sumter and Appomattox. Reminding us that strategy is different from tactics (battlefield deployments) and operations (campaigns conducted in pursuit of a strategy), Stoker examines how Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis identified their political goals and worked with their generals to craft the military means to achieve them--or how they often failed to do so. Stoker shows that Davis, despite a West Point education and experience as Secretary of War, ultimately failed as a strategist by losing control of the political side of the war. Lincoln, in contrast, evolved a clear strategic vision, but he failed for years to make his generals implement it. And while Robert E. Lee was unerring in his ability to determine the Union's strategic heart--its center of gravity--he proved mistaken in his assessment of how to destroy it. Historians have often argued that the North's advantages in population and industry ensured certain victory. In *The Grand Design*, Stoker reasserts the centrality of the overarching plan on each side, arguing convincingly that it was strategy that determined the result of America's great national conflict.

Winner of the 2010 Fletcher Pratt Award "The Grand Design provides readers with a handy guide to Civil War strategies and strategists. It makes a convincing case that the North won the war in large part because Lincoln and the best of his generals were better strategists than their counterparts in Dixie."--James M. McPherson, *North and South Magazine* "Finally, a Civil War study that reveals why strategy mattered to Union victory. Clearly and forcefully, *The Grand Design* shows how the Union learned to use its military force in pursuit of its political objectives."--William L. Barney, author of *The Making of a Confederate* "A superbly written, well-researched, and detailed analysis.... Stoker's first-rate study revives the role of strategy in the conversation on why the Union won the Civil War." --Howard Jones, University of Alabama, author of *Mutiny on the Amistad* "Donald Stoker breaks with a generation's worth of clichés in this stimulating and persuasive demonstration that the Civil War's crucial contrast was not between ideas or resource bases. It involved strategy.... As good a book on the Civil War as I've read for a decade."--Dennis Showalter, author of *Patton and Rommel: Men of War in the 20th Century* "Stoker's grand overview of strategy is a welcome introduction to the big picture of the Civil War. Too often, the American Civil War is read as an ill-fitting string of tactical incidents, determined almost entirely by the personalities of successful generals. Looked at in Stoker's bird's-eye fashion, the large-scale strategic picture, as well as the large-scale strategic mistakes, finally begin to become clear."--Allen C. Guelzo, Director, Civil War Era Studies at Gettysburg College, author of *Lincoln and Douglas* "Donald Stoker's book offers a new way of looking at both the military and political history of the Civil War, and does so from a strategic vantage point far above that to which we have been accustomed. *The Grand Design* represents an important advance in our understanding of this momentous event."--Steven E. Woodworth, author of *Nothing but Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861-1865* "A signal contribution to understanding the dynamics of the war." --Library Journal "Mr. Stoker has written a fascinating study of why strategy mattered in the American Civil War. With excellent maps at important points in his narrative, he clearly leads the reader through the conflict. He also makes it evident that Lincoln masterfully managed the resources at his disposal; and his counterpart did not. Mr. Stoker's work should be on the shelf of anyone interested in the American Civil War."--NY Journal of Books "The Grand Design examines how Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis identified their political goals and worked with their generals to craft the military means to achieve them--or how they often failed to do so. This is not a book for the causal history reader. For those who wish to drill down, this is an excellent book and worth reading."--The Order of Civil War Obsessively Compulsed -- Informed Amateurs Blog the American Civil War "Stoker examines all aspects of the war, blending political and military details very successfully, to assert his belief that the war's outcome boiled down,

primarily, to President Lincoln's superior strategic plan."--Confederate Book "Despite some doubts over the book's fundamental perspective, one cannot praise too highly the depth and acuity of the analysis that Stoker deploys in a trenchant and refreshingly well-written book, mercifully free of dreary jargon. Stoker touches upon most of the debates among Civil War historians. He downplays the overall significance of technology, arguing that it mainly affected tactics, not strategy, though such an assertion underestimates the strategic significance of railroads.... Yet there can be no denying that henceforth no historian of the subject can afford to ignore Stoker's views, and the legions of Civil War readers must be prepared to have their horizons stretched."--Brian Holden Reid, Civil War Book

"Military-minded Civil War aficionados will find much appeal in the treatment of strategy emphasized in this book."--St. Louis Post-Dispatch "Stoker's book on the changing strategies of the military and civilian leaders in the North and South during the conflict casts a fresh light on what remains the most decisive and harrowing war in U.S. history. Stoker presents us with a picture of what Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis and their respective generals thought they should be doing, and with the advantage of hindsight, he evaluates the strategic concepts on both sides of the divide. Students of the Confederacy will find it interesting that he criticizes both Davis and General Joseph Johnston. The study of grand strategy is undergoing a much-needed revival at American universities; this clear and incisive book is a useful addition to the syllabus."--Foreign Affairs "Superb examination of Civil War strategy. Of the numerous books on the American Civil War, few have explored in depth the critical role of strategy in determining the outcome of this nation's bloodiest conflict. On the eve of the sesquicentennial of that war, Donald Stoker fills that gap with a superb examination of the larger employment of military power beyond the battlefield."ARMY Magazine "For the Civil War buff: As we head into the 150th anniversary of the War Between the States, armchair historians will want to keep up with the sesquicentennial. There is no shortage of excellent guides to the conflict. A recent one that I've enjoyed dipping into is *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War*, by Donald Stoker. Rather than a blow-by-blow account of battles and operations, it describes the strategic objectives of North and South and how civilian and military leaders tried to realize them."--National Online "The *Grand Design* is not for your basic Civil War buff, but it is an intense read on tactics, operations, and strategies that lead you to a deeper understanding of what we were really fighting for and how chance, vision, and perseverance actually led to the restoration of our country."--Sacramento Book "This book will most likely generate controversy. The author has written a study that merits attention. He crafts the work with extensive use of correspondence between the governments and their generals as the civilians and military officers wrestled with the difficulties of implementing strategy. While not everyone will agree with the author's judgments and conclusions, Stoker's book is well worth reading."--Civil War News "The *Grand Design* is an excellent look at Civil War strategy with lessons that can be applied today."--Military "Stoker takes his readers on a fascinating tour of the big picture that offers lessons on military theory that are accessible to the layperson. Within this book are surprising, but well argued, assessments of the successes and mistakes of familiar Civil War figures." - The Civil War Monitor

About the Author Donald Stoker is Professor of Strategy and Policy for the U.S. Naval War College's program at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.