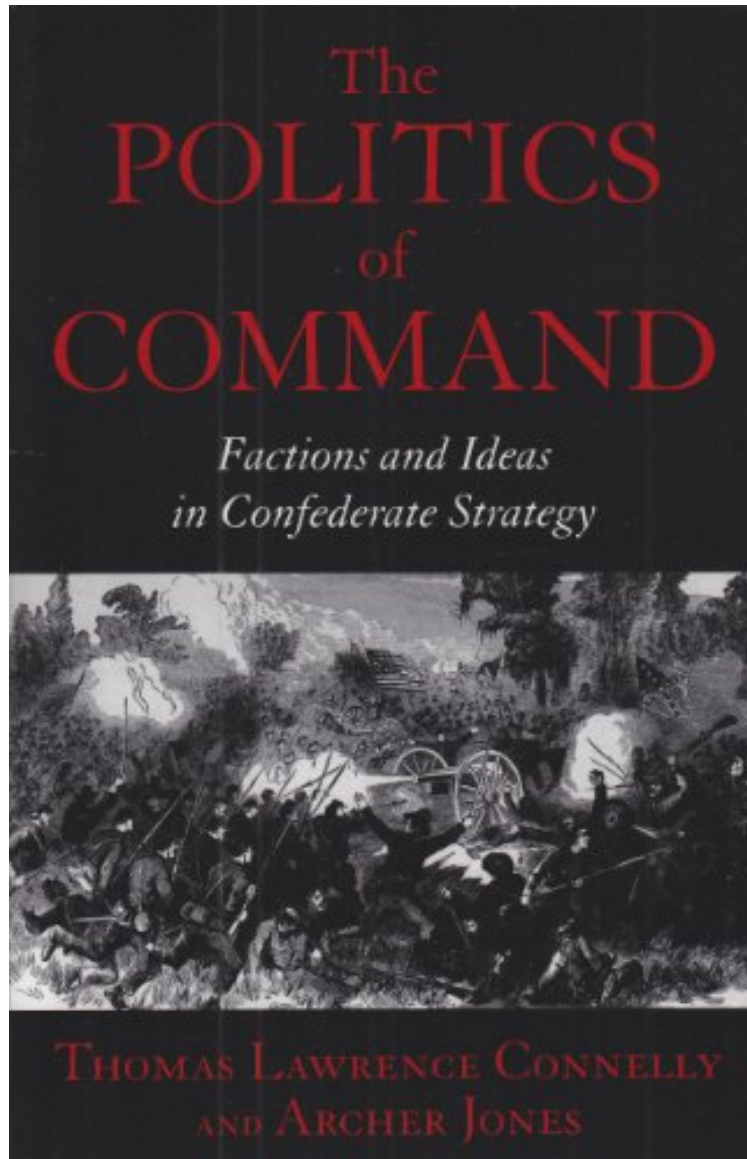


# The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy

*Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Archer Jones*  
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**Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Archer Jones : The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting, if a little dry By Kevin Brown An interesting and well-

researched book on the personalities and people behind Confederate strategy (and often the lack thereof) during the Civil War. My biggest complaint is the general dismissal of James Longstreet as being primarily interested in his own self-promotion and desire to obtain an independent command. Longstreet was certainly no more interested in his own self-promotion than any other Confederate general officer and his portrayal as being overly "ambitious" smacks of leftover "Lost Cause" propaganda. Otherwise, the book presents a very compelling and interesting look at the Confederate high command.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fractured command structure

By Steven Peterson  
This book outlines the divided decision making structure of the Confederate States of America in terms of development of a coherent military strategy. The authors observe that it was not simply a matter of personal conflicts and anti-Jefferson Davis sentiments. As they say (Page x): "[The infighting] involved a continuing debate over basic war policy, particularly the Confederacy's proper strategic course." Who were the key actors and their perspectives? President Jefferson Davis, from his experience in the Mexican War and from his tour as Secretary of War, felt that he had relevant insights. There was also Robert E. Lee, who had a vision--but whose vision tended to be limited to the east and--specifically--Virginia. While Davis did not automatically accept Lee's views, he did respect his judgment greatly. Then, the generals. . . . Beauregard was a key figure in the view that a Western strategy was important. Allied with him? Braxton Bragg, Joseph Johnston, and James Longstreet. Of course, there were also disagreements among these figures (witness Bragg versus Longstreet at Chattanooga). A guiding vision here was Beauregard's understanding of Jomini/Napoleon views of strategy. Then, the political leaders, such as Wigfall, Miles, Pickens, Harris, and so on. The bottom line? There were various perspectives on grand strategy and little coherence. President Davis, needless to say, had a difficult task. This book does a nice job of outlining the competing perspectives and the difficulty of developing a final, coherent policy.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fabulous Book on the Inside Details of Politics and Command

By Daniel Hurley  
This a truly great work on the political behind the scenes aspects of how the Confederate command structure worked under Davis and the military and political opposition groups that festered within. Davis has incredulous feuds with Johnson and particularly Beauregard to the point of destruction while maintaining an unbending loyalty to Braxton Bragg even when he loses the support of all the generals in the Army of the Tennessee. What develops is a political block of generals that maintain a loose alliance such as Johnson, Beauregard, Longstreet and Senator Wigfall from Texas. Certainly astonishing about the effect personal dislikes and favoritism had on military assignments and strategy. It is interesting that Johnson had significant support from many fields except Davis. One of the great failings of the Confederacy is that they did not have a competent Secretary of the War that was strong enough to work with Davis until Breckenridge took the job too late.

The Politics of Command reevaluates the continual controversy over strategy that occurred between Jefferson Davis and his high command, and within the command itself. Thomas Lawrence Connelly and Archer Jones illustrate how Davis' decisions were affected by officers in the field, politicians, the considerable clout of the western bloc and its network of informal associations, the input of Robert E. Lee, the pressure brought to bear by P.G.T. Beauregard, and Davis' own changing concept of the departmental command system. Connelly and Jones were the first to realize that any significant assessment of Davis' strategy must examine those who influenced him, for his key decisions were products of the politics of command.

About the Author  
Thomas Lawrence Connelly was professor of history at the University of South Carolina and the author of, among other books, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861--1862* and *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862--1865*. Archer Jones is professor emeritus of history at North Dakota State University and author or coauthor of many books, including *Confederate Strategy from Shiloh to Vicksburg* and *Why the South Lost the Civil War*. He lives in Richmond, Virginia. Thomas Lawrence Connelly was professor of history at the University of South Carolina and the author of, among other books, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861--1862* and *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862--1865*. Archer Jones is professor emeritus of history at North Dakota State University and author or coauthor of many books, including *Confederate Strategy from Shiloh to Vicksburg* and *Why the South Lost the Civil War*. He lives in Richmond, Virginia.