

## Kentucky's Influence Upon Indiana in the Crisis of 1861

BY KENNETH M. STAMPP

When Kentucky gave her electoral votes to the Bell-  
Everett ticket in the critical election of 1860, her action was  
unmistakably a repudiation of the extremists in both sections.  
That a majority of her Hoosier neighbors across the Ohio  
River had no contrary intentions when voting for Lincoln  
was perhaps less apparent but equally true.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it open  
to doubt that the people of Indiana, keenly sensitive to the  
ties of blood, trade, and mutual dependence upon the river  
outlet, had a wary eye upon Kentucky when they cast their  
ballots that year.<sup>2</sup> And in the critical months that followed,  
the position of Kentucky was a decisive factor in shaping the  
attitude of Indiana toward secession and civil war.

During the secession crisis which swiftly followed the  
news of Lincoln's election, an overwhelming majority of the  
people in both Kentucky and Indiana pinned their hopes for  
saving the Union upon the time-tested palliative of com-  
promise. Had the decision rested in their hands alone, co-  
ercion would have remained an unthinkable remedy. Even  
among Republicans, many conservative businessmen and most  
of the party followers in southern Indiana blanched at the

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<sup>1</sup> With few exceptions the Republican press and party orators took pains to assure Indiana voters that Lincoln's election would be a triumph for conservative principles. Thus the *Indianapolis Indiana American*, June 20, 1860, denied that the Republicans contemplated an attack upon slavery anywhere. The *Indianapolis Daily Journal* of September 7, 1860, predicted that Lincoln's policy would be one calculated to "restore and strengthen kind and fraternal feelings between all the patriotic citizens of the several states." A Spencer County Republican convention condemned the "fanaticism of abolitionists"; the Republicans of Vanderburgh County recognized the right of any new state to be admitted to the Union with or without slavery as it might elect; and a meeting of the party faithful in Dearborn County solemnly resolved that the principle of popular sovereignty was "as old as our government and that the Republican party, now, as ever, is ready to stand and abide by it." *Ibid.*, January 19, February 15, 21, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the interdependence and common interests of Kentucky, Indiana, and other portions of the "Borderland," see Edward C. Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York, 1927), 1-8, 23-25. During the campaign Henry S. Lane, Republican candidate for governor of Indiana, frequently referred to his Kentucky origins and insisted that the name of Henry Clay had been inscribed upon his banner ever since he had entered Indiana politics. In a speech at Rockport his tribute to Clay "was truly sublime, causing tears to start in the eyes of many an old Whig." *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, May 5, 1860.

very thought of coercing the South. The effects of such a policy upon the river towns, whose prosperity hinged upon continued friendly relations with Kentucky, and upon the down-state farmers who produced for the southern market were all too apparent. The *Indianapolis Journal*, long a spokesman for the conservative wing of the Republican party, was the earliest and most influential mouthpiece of the anti-coercion group. Almost daily its editorial columns dwelt upon the frightful implications of an internecine war and dismissed it as "suicidal and senseless."<sup>3</sup>

In southern Indiana, even among those who had voted for Lincoln, a strong political reaction set in as soon as it became clear that the Ohio River might mark the boundary between two hostile nations. Few believed that compromise could hold the deep South in the Union, but many still hoped to placate the border states and thus preserve the unity of the Ohio Valley.<sup>4</sup> The future course of Kentucky was a matter of special solicitude. Governor-elect Henry S. Lane, among others, wrote urgently to his many friends there and assured them that the Republican administration had no intention of interfering with slavery.<sup>5</sup> During a visit to Kentucky in January, he expressed the belief that the North would be willing to accept the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to California.<sup>6</sup> His public utterances in the weeks that followed were uniformly conciliatory and filled with references to the ties binding Indiana to Kentucky.<sup>7</sup> Other moderates pursued a similar course. Speaking before a public meeting at Brandenburg, Kentucky, Walter Q. Gresham, a Republican member of the Indiana legislature, promised that the rights of individual states would be sacredly respected. At the same time Gresham assured his party friends that he would never fight in a servile or domestic war.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, August 17, October 31, November 10, 19, 28, December 21, 22, 1860, January 9, 1861. Among other Republican papers originally opposed to coercion were the *Marshall, Indiana, Republican*; *Attica, Indiana, Ledger*; and the *Richmond, Indiana, Broad Axe*.

<sup>4</sup> *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, December 5, 7, 8, 1860.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, December 18, 1860.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, January 11, 1861.

<sup>7</sup> See Lane's speech delivered at Indianapolis on November 20, 1860, *ibid.*, November 27, 1860.

<sup>8</sup> Matilda Gresham, *Life of Walter Q. Gresham* (2 vols., Chicago, 1919), I, 125, 136.

With the exhortations of a united Democracy ringing in their ears, some few Republicans were even ready to support the proposition of Senator John J. Crittenden—not only to extend the Missouri Compromise line, but also to provide a congressional slave code to protect slavery south of that line.<sup>9</sup> With near unanimity border newspapers endorsed Crittenden's proposals and challenged Republicans in Congress to submit them to a vote of the people. Scores of Union meetings, in which a considerable number of Republicans participated, specifically approved this proposed compromise.<sup>10</sup> The same demand was couched in countless resolutions introduced in the Indiana legislature, which assembled in January.<sup>11</sup>

Every consideration of self-interest urged southern Indiana toward some course of common action with Kentucky and the rest of the Union-conscious Borderland to stave off the crisis. The New Albany *Ledger* warned the Border States that, in the event of civil war, "it would be *their* soil that would be drenched in blood; . . . it would be *their* towns and villages that would be laid in ashes." Are you ready, it asked, to make "war on the people of Kentucky, your friends, neighbors, and brethren. Are you ready for *this*?"<sup>12</sup> "Why not meet the issue promptly," urged the Indianapolis *Sentinel*, "and yield whatever is reasonable to satisfy the Union conservative men of the South, and thereby build up a National Union party which will neutralize and destroy the extremists, the disunionists of both sections."<sup>13</sup> On February 16, citizens from Boone County, Kentucky, and Dearborn County, Indiana, assembled to hear pleas that Kentucky remain in the Union and not "abandon the opponents to Lincoln in the North."<sup>14</sup> At the same time the Republican Madi-

<sup>9</sup> Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, January 31, 1861.

<sup>10</sup> Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, January 28, 1861; New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, January 23, 1861. A competent observer in southern Indiana affirmed that a majority of Republicans from his district favored the Crittenden proposals. James A. Cravens to William H. English, January 20, 1861, William H. English MSS (Indiana State Library, Indianapolis).

<sup>11</sup> W. H. and Ariel Drapier (comps.), *Brevier Legislative Reports of Indiana, 1858-1887* (22 vols. in 20, Indianapolis, 1858-1888), Regular Session, 1861, IV, 7-8, 9-12, 44-45, 47-48, 56.

<sup>12</sup> New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, November 21, 1860, February 6, 1861.

<sup>13</sup> Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, March 30, 1861.

<sup>14</sup> Aurora, Indiana, *Commercial*, February 21, 1861.

son *Courier* proposed a joint meeting of the Kentucky and Indiana legislatures to discuss grievances and to search for a possible basis of settlement.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, some men in southern Indiana had begun at an early date to perceive the dour possibility that all efforts to save the Union by peaceful methods might fail. The serious implications in that circumstance caused them to ponder their future course in the event of permanent division. Again there was a general agreement that Kentucky, Indiana, and other border states should act as a unit in such a contingency. "There is a great and fertile and prosperous region of country," explained the New Albany *Ledger*,

embracing Kentucky, Missouri, and a large portion of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, whose people are not to any considerable extent affected by the ultraism of either of the extremes, who would in the event of the convulsion of the Republic, be drawn together by the ties of commerce, neighborhood, and general coincidence of views and interests.<sup>16</sup>

Should war result from the failure of compromise, many in Indiana's border counties hoped that their people might declare their neutrality and pursue an independent course. "We who have no cause of quarrel," urged the *Ledger*, "should hold ourselves in a position where we can act, if need be, as arbiters and peacemakers between the contending factions. . . . And no two states are better prepared to assume this important office than Indiana and Kentucky."<sup>17</sup> As early as November 29 a Union meeting at New Albany resolved that, if civil war came, "we as citizens of Indiana, . . . knowing that we have no cause of quarrel with our immediate neighbors, should . . . so act as to prevent our soil becoming the theater of bloody strife . . ."<sup>18</sup> Again in January a Democratic state convention proclaimed it "the duty of Indiana . . . to act with other conservative States, as a mediator between contending factions."<sup>19</sup>

Other men, however, dreading the prospect of seeing their Kentucky neighbors in another nation, were prepared for more drastic action. As a last resort they would have joined their Southern friends in a reconstructed Union or

<sup>15</sup> Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, January 28, 1861.

<sup>16</sup> New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, November 28, 1860.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, November 21, 1860.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, December 5, 1860.

<sup>19</sup> Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, January 9, 1861.

formed a Northwest Confederacy in alliance with the South. More than once the Indianapolis *Sentinel* gave veiled hints at such an outcome,<sup>20</sup> but other papers in southern Indiana spoke more boldly. The Paoli *Eagle*, for example, blandly asserted that the interests of the southern portion of the state "point to the South, as the natural place for her to go."<sup>21</sup> In the privacy of a personal letter James A. Cravens, congressman-elect from the second district, proposed a division of Illinois and Indiana to create from the southern portion of each a new state to be named "Jackson." "I cannot obliterate the fact that our interest is with the South," he explained, "and I cannot reconcile the separation . . . ."<sup>22</sup>

Similar views found endorsement at public meetings in several of the river counties. One such gathering at Paoli urged the legislature to call a state convention to determine the future course of Indiana in the event of a final dissolution of the Union.<sup>23</sup> Other meetings at Rockport, Cannelton, and Salem resolved that, if the North and South divided, the line of division would have to run north of them.<sup>24</sup> The men who framed these resolutions, however, always insisted that they wanted no lines drawn at all, and that such action was contemplated only as a last resort.

In April, however, when the batteries of Charleston transferred the issue from the forum to the field of battle, southern Indiana favored a vigorous prosecution of the war as strongly as any other part of the state. Democratic congressmen Cravens and William S. Holman gave the Administration's war measures their firm support; and the New Albany *Ledger* became a war paper. Indeed, Governor Oliver

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, December 12, 22, 1860.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, January 21, 1861; New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, March 3, 1861.

<sup>22</sup> James A. Cravens to William H. English, April 9, 1861, William H. English MSS.

<sup>23</sup> New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, January 23, 1861.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, January 9, February 27, 1861; Gresham, *Life of Walter Q. Gresham*, I, 122. A correspondent of the Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, January 9, 1861, declared that the men behind this movement in Cannelton were those who were interested in its coal mines and cotton mills, and who believed that such action would build the prosperity of Cannelton and southern Indiana generally. Simultaneously wild rumors found circulation to the effect that Perry County would be out of the Union within thirty days, that the line of separation was already being drawn, and that commissioners had been appointed to visit South Carolina to arrange for its admission to the Confederacy. *Ibid.*, January 15, 1861.

P. Morton insisted that the river counties were the most loyal in Indiana.<sup>25</sup> This remarkable shift in the policy of the border implied no inconsistency in objectives, for the waging of war was simply another method of making certain that the Ohio River did not divide the nation.

With the launching of the Civil War, Indiana's ardent state officials turned their attention immediately to the anomalous position of their Kentucky neighbors. To no small degree their concern about conditions in that state was the predominant influence in shaping their ideas regarding the proper conduct of the war. That national policy did not always conform with the plans of these local strategists was not due to any failure on their part to acquaint Lincoln and the War Department with their opinions. After a sweeping survey of the potential battle lines, Governor Morton, from his sanctum in the West, expounded his war views to the President, the secretary of war, and the generals in the field and defended them with characteristic vigor. In Kentucky he and his political associates found fertile ground for the cultivation of numerous political and military imbroglios.

When Lincoln issued his first call for troops in April, Kentucky's Governor Beriah Magoffin, whose Southern sympathies were thinly disguised, refused to respond. Kentucky secessionists worked assiduously, and most Hoosiers seemed to expect that their neighbors would soon join the Confederacy. In May Magoffin and the legislature announced a policy of neutrality which was designed to exclude both Union and Confederate troops from their borders.<sup>26</sup> The President cautiously acquiesced in Kentucky's neutrality and hoped thus to strengthen the position of the local Unionists, which was none too secure. With Lincoln's approval General George B. McClellan agreed to hold off the Union forces as long as the Kentucky militia could bar the Confederates.<sup>27</sup>

The neutrality policy was not without sympathy in Indiana. The Indianapolis *Sentinel* gave it complete endorse-

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<sup>25</sup> Morton to General Rosecrans, February 28, 1863, Morton Dispatch Books (Indiana State Library, Indianapolis).

<sup>26</sup> *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880-1901), Series III, Vol. I, 70; Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, April 20, May 21, 23, 1861; Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, May 2, 1861; Smith, *Borderland in the Civil War*, 263 et seq.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Borderland in the Civil War*, 273, 277, 281.

ment, and the *Journal* doubted that more could be expected from Kentucky Unionists than to keep their state out of the Confederacy.<sup>28</sup> The Indiana legislature, convened in special session, debated the question thoroughly. Some members made severe strictures against Kentucky's course, but others gave it a greater or less degree of approval. Several delegates proposed the creation of a committee to visit the Kentucky legislature or the invitation of that body to visit Indianapolis. John A. Polk, despite harsh criticism, prayed that Kentucky might remain neutral and thus be ready to act as an arbiter when the people awoke "to the dread consequences of embruing our hands in brother's blood."<sup>29</sup>

To the warlike Morton who envisioned a swift and terrible retribution upon Southern traitors, however, Lincoln's "timid" policy in Kentucky was anathema. Moreover, the governor's concept of war strategy was bolstered by reports of frenzied panic along the Indiana border. The river counties were terrified at the prospect of Kentucky secession which would bring the war to their doors, expose them to recurrent rebel raids, and threaten the destruction of lives and property. To stave off such a situation, groups from both sides of the river held joint meetings where they reaffirmed their friendship and agreed to protect each other's rights and property. The fighting, they avowed, should be left to the rival armies.<sup>30</sup> To these border communities, the Ohio River "front" was clearly the most vital battle line of the war. Petitioning for arms and advice regarding the disposal of Kentucky, their committees and delegations descended upon Morton in an endless stream.<sup>31</sup>

With the full weight of this border trepidation upon him, the governor looked to the War Department for im-

<sup>28</sup> Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, May 6, 1861; Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, May 21, 1861.

<sup>29</sup> *Brevier Legislative Reports*, Extra Session, 1861, V, 46-49, 62-67, 105-06.

<sup>30</sup> New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, May 8, 1861.

<sup>31</sup> J. H. Barkam to Morton, April 18, 1861, Civil War Telegrams (Indiana State Library, Indianapolis); Morton to Simon Cameron, April 23, 24, 1861; Morton to Caleb Smith, May 13, 1861, Morton Letter Books (Indiana State Library, Indianapolis); Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, May 10, 1861. Other men from the border, however, took the opposite position and protested that sending arms to their section would aggravate the situation and invite retaliation from Kentucky. *Brevier Legislative Reports*, Extra Session, 1861, V, 36-37; New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, May 29, June 5, 1861.

mediate aid. He demanded twenty-four—later fifty—cannon to protect the river towns, 20,000 stands of arms, and equipment for one thousand cavalrymen to patrol the shores of the Ohio.<sup>32</sup> When he failed to arouse the federal government to the danger, he made private contracts for cannon and encouraged the border people to organize “home guards” armed with squirrel rifles and fowling-pieces.<sup>33</sup> Displaying his own alarm, Morton wrote urgently to General McClellan at Cincinnati and explained the defenselessness of the river towns in the face of the alleged rampant disloyalty in Kentucky. Among other proposals, he urged the placing of strong batteries around Louisville to hold her as hostage for the good behavior of the rest of the state. McClellan was not impressed, however, and rejected the suggestion as incompatible with his established Kentucky policy.<sup>34</sup>

Undismayed, Morton went ahead with the development and pursuit of his own Kentucky policy which was designed primarily to ensure the security of Indiana’s border. Believing that the best defense was to keep the war as far as possible from the Ohio River, he would have occupied Kentucky at once, repudiated her neutrality, and ignored the cautious advice of Kentucky Unionists in whose loyalty he had little confidence. If the dissemination of such opinions embarrassed the President, Morton apparently gave it little thought.

On April 25, Governor Magoffin invited the executives of Ohio and Indiana to cooperate with him in securing a truce to enable the border states to mediate for peace. Morton had no sympathy for the proposal but agreed to meet Magoffin and discuss any plan which was “constitutional and honorable to Indiana and the Federal Government.” Governor William Dennison of Ohio was equally hostile to the project, but Morton suggested to him that at least Magoffin “cannot fail to develope [*sic*] his policy.”

<sup>32</sup> The Morton Letter Books and Dispatch Books contain much correspondence on this subject. See also *Official Records*, Series III, Vol. I, 93, 102-03, 116, 125-26, 149; W. H. H. Terrell, *Report of the Adjutant General of Indiana* (8 vols., Indianapolis, 1866-1869), I, 429-31.

<sup>33</sup> Morton to A. E. Vinton, May 5, 1861, Morton Letter Books; *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, May 6, 1861; Terrell, *Report*, I, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Morton to General McClellan, May 9, 1861, Morton Letter Books; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. LI, Part 1, pp. 374-75; Terrell, *Report*, I, 432-33.



After some delay the two governors went to Cincinnati where they met Colonel T. L. Crittenden who had been sent to represent the Kentucky executive. Indignantly, Morton and Dennison demanded to see Magoffin; and after waiting a few hours, they returned to their homes. Subsequently, Magoffin appeared in Cincinnati and protested that the governors had not waited for him. Morton, however, had already expounded his position to Magoffin in a letter which declined further cooperation. He denied the legality of Kentucky's neutrality or the right of a state to act as mediator during a rebellion and invoked her people to take their stand promptly on the side of the Union. Morton had clearly outmaneuvered Magoffin and seized at the same time an opportunity to express his antipathy for the policy of neutrality.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the spring and summer the Indiana executive and his subordinates continued to criticize Lincoln's border-state policy and to meddle in Kentucky affairs. The governor's secret agents crossed the Ohio to ferret out the plans of the secessionists; he aided in the distribution of arms to Kentucky Unionists; and he encouraged efforts to recruit for the Union army at "Camp Dick Robinson" near Danville, Kentucky, and at Cincinnati, Jeffersonville, and other points north of the river.<sup>36</sup>

On May 24, Morton, Dennison, and Governor Richard Yates of Illinois prepared at Indianapolis a memorial to General Winfield Scott which urged the immediate occupation of various strategic points in Kentucky. They suggested that loyal Kentucky troops might be used for that purpose, but, that failing, troops from other states should be employed. The loyalty of Kentucky would have to be secured, they insisted, before the Union armies could be moved further south. Scott's report to Secretary of War Simon Cameron concerning the memorial of "these high functionaries" was exceedingly cold and critical. He noted that Kentucky Unionists had advised against such a course and suggested that "probably the danger can be

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<sup>35</sup> The correspondence between Morton, Dennison, and Magoffin is recorded in the Morton Letter Books and Dispatch Books. See also *Indianapolis Daily Journal* and *Indiana State Sentinel*, May 2, 1861; Terrell, *Report*, I, 215-17; Smith, *Borderland in the Civil War*, 269-70.

<sup>36</sup> Terrell, *Report*, I, 213-15, 221, 223-24; William D. Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1899), I, 140, 147-48; Smith, *Borderland in the Civil War*, 268, 278.

better estimated at home than by friends abroad." McClellan also voiced his disapproval, and the petition was ignored.<sup>37</sup>

Undaunted, Governor Morton still pressed his own policy and won for it the support of some Unionists across the Ohio.<sup>38</sup> While the border people railed at the conspiracy "to place Kentucky and Indiana in different nations" and to bring the war to their doors,<sup>39</sup> the governor continued to advise the Administration to prepare for the inevitable crisis and to take a stronger stand. He reminded federal authorities that the border still remained undefended and forwarded the reports of his Kentucky agents which disclosed numerous plots among the secessionists. Morton rebuked the War Department for ignoring the imminent danger and warned that affairs must not be left to drift until it was too late. "If we lose Kentucky now, God help us," was his plea.<sup>40</sup>

Kentucky's neutrality terminated abruptly in September, 1861, when the Confederates seized Columbus and Bowling Green. General Ulysses S. Grant countered at once with the occupation of Paducah. The Kentucky legislature demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Southern troops and prepared to employ the state militia to drive them out.

The success of Lincoln's strategy in forcing the Confederates to make the first move apparently escaped Governor Morton completely. Instead, he saw in the southern invasion of Kentucky a complete vindication of his own position and a manifestation of Administration stupidity for allowing the Confederates to take the initiative. The Indianapolis *Journal* exploded with anger at the government's lack of circumspection and at the nation's humiliation in Kentucky. Had Morton's admonitions "so uselessly given to the Administration" been heeded, it wailed, the rebel invasion

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<sup>37</sup> The memorial is in the Morton Letter Books. See also *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, pp. 146-48, 160-61.

<sup>38</sup> David McDonald to Morton, July 13, 1861; J. T. Boyle and J. J. Speed to Morton, September 2, 1861; General Scott to Morton, September 3, 1861, Morton Letter Books; Leslie Coombs to Allen Hamilton, May 14, 1861, Allen Hamilton MSS (Indiana State Library, Indianapolis); Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, May 22, 1861.

<sup>39</sup> Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, September 4, 1861; New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, August 21, 1861.

<sup>40</sup> Morton to Lincoln, August 3, 1861; Morton to Asst. Sec. of War Scott, August 29, 30, September 2, 7, 1861, Morton Letter Books; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. IV, 255-56; Vol. LII, Part 1, p. 187; Series III, Vol. I, 473-75, 489-90.

of Kentucky could have been averted.<sup>41</sup> Subsequently the President and governor exchanged icy letters of mutual criticism. Neither could comprehend the other's position, for the perspectives attained at Washington and Indianapolis were hopelessly at variance. "As to Kentucky," wrote Lincoln, "you do not estimate that state as more important than I do, but I am compelled to watch all points."<sup>42</sup> Morton coldly responded with a defense of his own state's interests:

Indiana from geographical position is more deeply interested in Kentucky than any other State, and you cannot understand without being here, the anxiety felt and expressed in regard to Kentucky affairs. . . . In this contest the Government is compelled to lean upon the States for its armies, and in my opinion the hands of the men who labor without ceasing to sustain the Government should be held up and not deposed by indifference to their recommendations and demands.<sup>43</sup>

With the movement of Confederate forces into Kentucky, however small, that sector became for Indiana at once the main theater of the war. More agitated than ever, the border counties redoubled their demands for adequate defense, and Morton joined in the general hue and cry.<sup>44</sup> For a time the governor, fearing to weaken the state's defenses, refused to send additional troops to General John C. Fremont in Missouri despite the latter's protests.<sup>45</sup> He issued an emergency appeal for volunteers,<sup>46</sup> and new regiments were quickly formed and forwarded to Kentucky. "Remember, the defense of Kentucky is your own surest defense," was the border's anxious plea to the interior. Presumably the fate of the West hung in the balance, for, should Kentucky be lost, "the war is indefinitely postponed, and converted from one for

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<sup>41</sup> Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, September 24, 26, 28, 1861.

<sup>42</sup> John G. Nicolay and John Hay (eds.), *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works* (2 vols., New York, 1894), II, 82-83.

<sup>43</sup> Morton to Lincoln, October 7, 1861, Morton Letter Books.

<sup>44</sup> Morton to Simon Cameron, September 12, 1861; Morton to William H. Seward, September 12, 1861; Morton to Lincoln, September 21, 1861, Morton Letter Books; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. IV, 257, 276; Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, September 20, October 8, 1861; Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 3, 1861; Vincennes, Indiana, *Gazette*, quoted in *ibid.*, October 7, 1861.

<sup>45</sup> D. G. Rose to Morton, September 22, 1861; Morton to General Fremont, September 23, 1861, Morton Dispatch Books; *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. IV, 258-61, 266.

<sup>46</sup> Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, October 2, 1861.

suppressing the rebellion to one of defense of our own territory."<sup>47</sup>

The details of the ensuing Kentucky campaigns came no less under the critical scrutiny of the Hoosiers. A thousand conflicting rumors poured in upon Governor Morton from the interior of Kentucky, from Louisville, and from the river border. Morton passed them on to federal authorities in daily reports of rebel movements, to which he attached pertinent advice regarding Union strategy. Late in September he nervously advised Lincoln that the Confederates were forty miles from Louisville and also at Bowling Green, eighty miles from Evansville on the navigable Green River. He warned that General Sherman's position was extremely dangerous and proposed that Fremont make a strong diversion toward Nashville and Memphis.<sup>48</sup> A few days later the governor reported frantically to the President that enemy pickets were in sight of Muldrough's Hill where they would be able to communicate by rail with all points in the Confederacy. If they seized that position, he cautioned, "it will be a second Manassas, and will require 100,000 men to dislodge them." General Robert Anderson would have to be reinforced quickly or Kentucky would be lost "as completely as South Carolina."<sup>49</sup>

Lincoln's facetious and patronizing replies to these admonishments were well calculated to drive the unhumored Morton to fury. On September 26 Lincoln telegraphed to Morton:

I think there is no concentration of railroads at Muldrough's Hill. A week ago we heard that the enemy was encamped on Muldrough's Hill, and now our friends are encamped upon it and the enemies [*sic*] pickets are in sight. That is an improvement.<sup>50</sup>

The governor replied:

From the spirit of your despatch and from other information I am satisfied my despatches in regard to Kentucky are not highly honored. I have said what I thought it my duty to say. A few days will tell the story in Kentucky.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> New Albany, Indiana, *Weekly Ledger*, September 18, October 9, 1861.

<sup>48</sup> On September 21, Lincoln replied comfortingly: "Bowling Green is 93 miles from Evansville and Green River is not now navigable I should think." Morton Dispatch Books.

<sup>49</sup> Morton to Lincoln, September 25, 1861, *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Lincoln to Morton, September 26, 1861, *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Morton to Lincoln, September 26, 1861, *ibid.*

Meanwhile the Indiana press was demanding a vigorous campaign to drive the Confederates out of Kentucky, a move which was regarded as far more vital than the military operations on the Potomac. The Indianapolis *Journal* urged the diversion of 50,000 troops from the East for a drive through Kentucky to Nashville and complained that Washington thought of nothing but its own defense.<sup>52</sup> In December the *Journal* still fretted at the failure to utilize the troops that had been provided and at the generals who were afraid to move. Appalled by this "most contemptible weakness" and "hopeless stupidity," it longed for "Napoleon's old boots to lead our army."<sup>53</sup>

As soon as the Union armies entered Kentucky, Governor Morton determined to secure the transfer of the Indiana regiments in western Virginia to the new sphere of military operations. Criticizing their alleged neglect in the East, the *Journal* suggested that the generals there be left "to paddle their own canoe," while Washington "may go to the only place its swindling selfish society is fit for." Now, it asserted, there was work for the state troops nearer home "where everyone will lend a helping hand instead of attempting to steal the clothing off their backs."<sup>54</sup> Morton addressed a strong memorial to the President and journeyed to Washington to press his demand. Complications arose when Ohio made a similar effort to transfer her troops, but Morton ultimately obtained the removal of several Indiana regiments to Kentucky.<sup>55</sup>

Indiana's solicitude about Kentucky affairs and the security of the border never abated. Every rumor of rebel movements brought a flurry of excited reports to the governor from the river counties. Morton's continued anxiety over

<sup>52</sup> Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, October 2, 15, 31, 1861.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, December 16, 1861.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, October 8, 15, November 4, 1861. The Indianapolis *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 14, 1861, reported that state officials had threatened to march the Indiana troops out of western Virginia, and asked where Morton obtained authority over United States troops. It professed to see in such action something akin to Southern secessionism. "Is it not setting up State authority higher than that of the General Government?"

<sup>55</sup> Morton to General Reynolds, October 9, 22, November 8, 1861; W. R. Holloway to General Milroy, November 2, 1861; Morton to Lincoln, November 14, 15, 1861; Morton to Caleb Smith, November 14, 1861; Morton to David Kilgore, November 15, 1861; David Kilgore to Morton, November 18, 1861, Morton Letter Books.

border defense was manifested in his strenuous attempts to strengthen the Indiana Legion, to secure a gunboat flotilla for the Ohio, and to organize cavalry to patrol the three hundred mile river front.<sup>56</sup> His self-assumed guardianship over Kentucky was the source of no little flattering comment. Indeed, wrote a Kentucky admirer, "as the expression goes, you are the governor of both Indiana and Kentucky; . . . the Indianians . . . [are] the protectors and defenders of Kentucky."<sup>57</sup>

Despite the general concern, however, military operations in Kentucky were on a small scale until the brief invasion by Kirby Smith and Braxton Bragg in the late summer of 1862. Nevertheless, the reaction of the Hoosiers to the crisis of 1861 finds no adequate explanation without weighing the influence upon them of their Kentucky neighbors. And the clash of state and federal interests in the Kentucky arena throws revealing light upon the intransigent obstacles which deterred the formulation of a synchronous national war policy. That the needs of the nation were so often confused with local interests bore striking testimony to the fact that, in Indiana at least, none waged the war to obliterate the states.

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<sup>56</sup> The Morton Letter Books and Dispatch Books contain numerous communications upon this subject. See also *Official Records*, Series III, Vol. II, 110, 234, 240; Indianapolis *Daily Journal*, August 5, 1862.

<sup>57</sup> J. V. Anderson to Morton, October 7, 1862, Morton MSS.