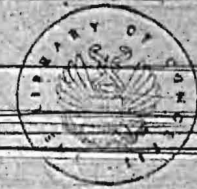


1863 G. L. B.



Genl. Smith  
Richmond  
Va.

Wm. M. Dept of So. Cal. Ia. & Fla.  
Charleston, So. Car.

December 5<sup>th</sup> 1863

My Dear Sir,

In compliance with your request made on the eve of your departure for Richmond, I have prepared for you a sketch of certain operations by which we may yet retrieve our late losses, & possibly baffle the immense resources of men & available material of our enemy.

I. The system hitherto followed of keeping in the field separate armies, acting without concert on distant & diverging lines of operations, & thus enabling our adversary to concentrate at convenience his masses against our fractions, must be discontinued & replaced by a system wholly contrary to the principles of the Art of War, & attended with inevitable results such as our disasters in Mississippi, Tennessee & Northern Georgia.

II. We must arrange for a sudden & rapid concentration, upon some selected, decisive strategic point of the theatre of War, of enough troops to crush the forces of the enemy embodied in that quarter. This must necessarily be done at the expense or hazard, for the time, of other points less important, or of losing less advantages for striking the enemy. A blow thus struck, will necessarily disorganize his combinations & give us the choice of the field of operations.

I am sensibly aware of our limited means, our want of men, the material appliances of war & of transportation, & hence the difficulties which will embarrass us, in the execution of this plan of concentration, but I see no way to success except through & by it. A different course may

more & more unequal; we may fight stoutly  
as hitherto, many more bloody & indecisive battles,  
but will never win a single, conclusive victory,  
until we can manage to throw a heavy & suc-  
cessful mass of our forces upon the flanks  
of the enemy & at the same time successfully  
strike at his communications, without ex-  
posing our own.

I believe this may yet be done. Not  
knowing, however, our present available forces &  
their locations, I am unable to make a definite  
or detailed plan of operations. But I believe it  
is warranted, in a general way, that we have  
under arms two hundred & ten thousand effective men,  
distributed nearly as follows:

In the Trans-Mississippi Department	40,000
Department of Alabama & Mississippi	15,000
Trans-Atlantic (including Longstreet)	60,000
Dept of So. Cal. Tex. & Fla.	25,000
Dept of North Carolina	7,000
Dept of Virginia	6,000
Total	210,000

Looking at a map of the Confederacy, it will be  
seen that the most injurious blow which the enemy  
could strike at present would be to take possession  
of Atlanta, thus isolating still more completely  
the Trans-Mississippi States, & detaching, in a  
great measure, the States of Mississippi &  
Alabama from the Eastern portion of the  
Confederacy. It would also be a deplorable injury  
to the energetic, populous State of Georgia, & cripple  
the resources of that people. We should there-  
fore regard Atlanta as the actual objective point  
of the large force which the enemy has con-  
centrated about Chattanooga, & the one which  
we must, at all cost, prevent him from obtaining.  
In this state of affairs, throwing aside all  
other considerations, subordinating all other ope-  
rations to this one vital campaign, at a critical  
moment we must withdraw from other points a

batron of their forces - all indeed not absolutely essential for keeping up a shadow of defence or to safety against a "coup de main," & concentrated in this way every available soldier possible for operations against Genl Grant.

Such strategic points as Richmond, Wetson, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile & New Orleans or Jackson Miss. at the same time, should be fortified, garrisoned & provisioned, according to their present relative value to the Confederate States, sufficiently to prolong their defence, if attacked or besieged, until troops for their relief could be detached as required, from the Army in Northern Georgia. I will now state approximately, what troops may, in my belief, be drawn from the following, quarters, & added to the Army at or about Dalton, namely:

From Alabama & Mississippi	10,000
" So. Ga. Fla. & Florida	5,000
" North Carolina	2,000
" Virginia	2,000
Total	<u>40,000</u>

These forty thousand men, added with ability to the force now under Hardee (including that under Longstreet & other detachments) would make an Army of one hundred thousand men. Let this Army take the offensive at once, & properly handled, it should crush any force that Grant could assemble in time & appear, scattered as heretofore it is, & unprepared as he would yet, for such an event. To insure the success of <sup>such</sup> a plan of operations, the press must be led to preserve complete silence touching all military movements. Depots of subsistence, munitions of War, ambulances, wagons, horses &c. should be established at certain points, not too far from Atlanta, for rapid concentration at the proper time. Mean while time whatsoever troops that could safely be withdrawn from the Departments already indicated, should be quickly, quietly concentrated at suitable central points, thence to be

throughout with <sup>all</sup> possible despatch to Dutton  
with all the means of transportation available  
of all sorts. At the same time, the officer  
appointed to command this large Army  
should make all his preparations for such  
at least & the sudden accumulation of troops of  
all arms, so that he may be able to mould  
it into a homogeneous mass as <sup>soon</sup> as prac-  
ticable, & to inaugurate offensive operations  
without loss of one moment of time that  
may be obtained; & further, he must be im-  
vested with an unrestricted, unembarrassed  
selection of Staff Officers, & thoroughly eman-  
cipated from the least interferences to the  
view & control of the heads of bureaus at

Richmond - a reproduction, in this war, of  
that fatal Austrian system with which no  
eminently successful Commander ever had to  
contend - a pernicious plan of administration  
which will clog & hamper the highest mi-  
litary genius, whether of a Napoleon or Caesar.

I believe the success of the plan of  
Campaign thus sketched, & the utter defeat of  
the Army, would be almost certain.

The <sup>next</sup> question would next be, whether to  
pursue the routed enemy with vigor to the  
banks of the Ohio & Mississippi, or to return  
to the several sources, whence the Army had  
been gathered, ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> respective detachments  
~~quarters~~ for the campaign. This should be left,  
however, to be determined by the nature of  
the enemy's operations at that time.

I must simply remark, that, were it possible  
to concentrate with sufficient expedition, at or  
about Knoxville, such an Army, as I have  
indicated, ~~that~~ <sup>it</sup> would be the better point <sup>than Dalton</sup> <sup>where</sup>  
to take the offensive into Middle Tennessee, ~~than~~  
~~any other~~ that is according to the principles of the  
Art, <sup>it</sup> would promise more decisive results, for  
it is evident <sup>that</sup> we should thus "threaten the enemy's  
communications without exposing our own" (Caesar)

(Art of War) "Le secret de la guerre est dans le secret  
des communications." Napoleon. By a movement  
from Knoxville, we should be doing what is taught  
in connection with the Great Maxim (Art of War),  
to wit: "But part of the base of operations is  
the most advantageous to break out from into  
the theatre of war which conducts the most  
directly to the enemy's flank or rear."

There may be however, such practical difficulties  
in the way of the execution of such a movement  
in that line as may not make it advisable to  
adopt it. The whole ~~of~~ science of war, it has  
been well said, "may be briefly defined as the  
art of placing, in the right position, at the  
right time, a mass of troops greater than your  
enemy can then oppose to you." Of course my  
views must be subject to such modifications as  
my want of precise information relative to the  
number & location of our troops may render  
necessary.

The hour is critical & grave!

"His enemy increaseth every day;

"We at the height, are ready to decline."

I am filled with intense anxiety that <sup>the</sup> golden oppor-  
tunities show ~~the~~ lost, lost forever. In no theatre of  
human actions is it so true as in war!

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows & in miseries.  
Who <sup>we</sup>, must take the current when it serves  
or lose our ventures."

It is concentration & immediate mobility that  
are indispensable to save us.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sgd) G. J. Deane

