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AICE US History

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*Paper 1 Practice- Reconstruction*

Letter from Edwin Stanton to Andrew Johnson (c. December 1866)- Source A

President Johnson-

I'm not sure where your intentions lie, but your leniency with the former confederate territories has me concerned. You have provided little to no federal intervention in their proper readmission to the Union as well as you have failed to enforce their abidance to the newly ratified 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendments. Your ignorance to provide equal rights to the newly freed Black individuals exemplifies incompetence and idiocy, as you refrain from creating any real progress in the reunification of our Nation. We may be one body lawfully, but we are far from being a true joint democracy as we were before the war. Your actions are contributing to and extending the strife that has plagued our nation for the last half decade; I cannot help but ponder what this era would look like if our former President Lincoln had not been lost so tragically. I urge you to rethink the injustice you are submitting and respect the fixation of our broken nation. We need a leader who represents every constituent of the country, rather than presents ulterior motivations.

Best,

*Edwin Stanton*

Secretary of War

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**How far do sources A-D support the notion that Andrew Johnson had a negative impact on the Reconstructive Era?**

Source A is the strongest material to support the notion that President Johnson had a negative impact on the Reconstructive Era. The document comes directly from Stanton who has worked under both Lincoln and Johnson and exemplifies his disapproval in line such as "but your leniency with the former confederate territories has me concerned". Stanton clearly expresses his condemnation with Johnson's undertaking of the presidency and the way in which he is managing the newly reformed country. Stanton discusses the President's failure to enforce the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, likely alluding to Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which was overridden by a two-thirds majority in congress and explains that Johnson is neglecting to

acknowledge any newly freed slaves. The letter was written a few months after the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified and before Johnson begins his attempt to replace Stanton in 1867, indicating that Johnson saw Stanton as a nuisance and as someone who was interfering with his agenda. The letter touches on all the ways that Johnson is failing to act as an efficient leader for the nation and is not contributing to the overall reunification of the states. This material supports the notion that Johnson was having a negative impact on the efforts being made through reconstruction. Additionally, this source can be trusted as it is a private letter between the two individuals, and so it can be assumed that Stanton is voicing his true opinion, rather than attempting to sway constituents one way or another as he would in a public setting such as a speech. Stanton spied on Johnson for the Radicals in Congress so the intent to get Johnson to their side was always on Stanton's agenda. Overall, source A is the strongest source presented to support the notion that Johnson left a negative impact on the reconstructive efforts due to the letter being a personal account in the midst of the time period, a private communication between Stanton and Johnson, and the important governmental roles of each man.