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## Source Based Essay

Many historians argue that slavery was one of the main causes of the Civil War and the ultimate and underlying reason for the split of the States into Union and Confederacy. Southerners often tried to defend slavery and convince all that it was in fact a good practice. However, our question forces us to decide, were arguments put forward in defense of slavery unreasonable, even by the standards of the time. Sources B and A, ranked by importance, say that the arguments of this time were in fact unreasonable. Sources E, D, and C (also ranked in order of critical importance) answer the question with a firm no. These sources provide an answer justifying slavery and are the opposite side of the argument. (2)

Source B is the most important and reliable source of the entire group, and thus the most important source of the agreeing side of the argument, which also contains source A. The source is from an address of one former slave, Frederick Douglass. While he has no great standing or government office like some of the other source, and possesses a definite bias from the fact he was a slave, his opinion on the matter is extremely valid since his case is a historical moment. Douglass' address is critical to the argument as the outcome of his case affected all slaves and black persons alike. This is why his first words are highly ironic. He address the people as 'fellow citizens' when the Supreme Court had ruled all blacks to not be citizens. At this point in time, the war has not begun, but the time that is most important is the date. Douglass is talking to these people on the Fourth of July, which again carries a bit of irony as the day is known as Independence Day. Douglass attends to how the American people celebrate liberty and equality when this is the exact opposite. Americans enslave Africans and there is no freedom for them. Douglass even goes as far to call the people worse than a nation of savages, even though the nation was very well developed at this point in its history. Douglass' personal experience make the speech that much more harsh and heartfelt, forcing on the understanding that despite what sources C, D, and E say in refutation, no argument- be it economic, God's word, or right of race- put forth to defend slavery is reasonable and it never will be. SE  
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-1 Source A

Source A is the next on the list and also join source B in agreement of the question, presenting an opposite view of source C on God's word. Seward, a Northern Senator, carries some bias from his side, as most Northerners were for the abolishment of slavery. However, his education and rank as a senator validate him to be a well-respected man qualified to approach the subject as it has been constantly debated for many years in the Senate and Congress at this point in time. While Seward initially addresses the fact that slavery is technically legal by the SE-1

Constitution, he puts forth a different argument to combat this statement and turn his speech in a different direction. His final statements note as well that slavery will eventually end and that the South gains nothing by resisting its end, but the most crucial point to his argument is the similarities it shares with source C. While Stephens argues that it is the Creator's will for the blacks to be enslaved, Seward takes the opposite standpoint. He argues that while slavery is in place now, God is the deciding factor and is ultimately against slavery. No matter what actions have led to it at this point, slavery is wrong in God's terms and must be stopped. He reminds them that God created them equally, and thus Africans that were also created by God, are equal thus to the Americans that enslave them. This also implies that those for the practice of slavery are thus sinning. Seward address that slavery will not be continued on, even if a war is fought which notes to the fact the war and secession have not yet begun. Source A is similar to B in the fact that both deny the practice of slavery, but both also provide reason for why it must be stop, and agree that it is wrong, no matter who says so. It negates heavily on C's argument as well as D's, being that it goes against the entirety of C and also against the white supremacy argument of D. In the end, Seward's argument of God's will and way proves that any justification of slavery is unreasonable, no matter what the period of the time.

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E not done

Source E is our first source on the side that slavery was not unreasonable and arguments for it thus were not, joined along by sources D and C, however E is the most reliable of the three. The source is a modern one which creates some of a problem. While the historian clearly is reputable and intelligent, he is also out of his time period. However, this is beneficial in this case as it allows for him to for an argument without bias of the time period. The historian can take into account the standards of the time that the question asks for and relate them back. He tries to create an unbiased opinion, but is still discussing the justification of slavery, which is a touchy and difficult subject to approach without some sort of opinion already formed on the matter. Source E initially goes for an economic argument, saying that slavery was justified in Southerners' minds due to the fact it brought in revenue for them. Many Southerners only participated in slavery because it was beneficial and profitable to their lives. While source E does touch on the fact that the system behind slavery was flawed, it ultimately justifies slavery due to its economic benefit. While slavery did not have full governmental backing that it required, like source E states, the system flourished in the South due to its ability to create revenue. Even during the Civil War, the South maintained an economy based on its slave labor and the ability to export cotton and make a profit. The source ultimately justifies the arguments in defense of slavery and provides economics as its answer.

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Source D matches the same side as E, along with C, defending slavery as a reasonable, and is the next in line of reliability. Here, like source E, Jefferson Davis argues with the idea of economic benefits of slavery. Davis, the President of the Confederacy, is clearly biased in his ways as he is fighting for slavery to remain intact. However, his bias does not remove his standing as a respected man and high ranking politician and official president as well. His opinion may be very clear in his speech, but he is a justified man no less, who believes he is

fighting for the good of his people. His argument can be seen as such. While he bases his argument on economics, he is also speaking for his people. Davis truly believes that the economic behind slavery benefit the South and without it, they would be a completely different society. He states plain and simple that slavery is necessary for the South to fulfill the lifestyle they currently live. However, Davis also mentions many falsehoods and shows a very bigoted side of him as a man. Davis argues that slaves are given bodily comforts and taught religion which is ultimately untrue. Slaves were not allowed to be educated and often were not provided with the most basic of human necessities. While this is disgusting in itself, Davis backs it with the fact that, at this point in time, whites are a 'superior race'. He also mentions that slavery has cultivated land that would not have been that way without slavery. His argument is simply that without slavery, the Union would have lost many things. The Southern economy would not be as prosperous which would ultimately have affected the Union, and that whites had a right to enslave blacks. He justifies slavery with the idea that without it much would be lost.

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Source C is the final part of the defense of slavery and this time presents another common argument of those in justification of slavery. Stephens here argues the side of white supremacy through God's will. Stephens' rank of Vice-President validates his authority and knowledge about the topic at hand, however, as a Southerner, he is also extremely <sup>likely</sup> biased. At this point in time as well, the War has begun and Georgia has seceded. Source C is on the same side as D and E, but ties in a bit with D as it also discusses how 'the negro is not equal to the white man, that slavery and subordination to the superior race is his natural condition'. White supremacy at its finest that goes hand in hand with Davis' argument from source D. However, that is not Stephens' entire argument. His ultimate point is God's will. Stephen, like many other Southerners, believes that God has given the South the right to enslave blacks. That it is not even right for them to argue about this because it is God's will and should not be argued. This whole idea can be connected to the final sentence of source E. Stephens defends slavery in the fact that God has allowed this to be and that had he not, slavery would not be in practice. Again, the source backs claims made in source D and is the ultimate example of source E. Stephens speech defends slavery in what he and the Southern people of the Confederacy believed was a reasonable way.

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Sources E, D, and C have all made arguments trying to justify slavery, through the word of God, white supremacy, and the value of slavery to the economy of the south. However, sources A and B are ultimately more powerful than the three of the contention with an opposite God argument and the view of a slave. These sources agree that any argument made in the defense of slavery was unreasonable, no matter the standards of the time and what people were willing to accept.

①  
yes