

Document B: Frederick Douglass (Modified)

President Lincoln did me the honor to invite me to discuss the best way to [persuade] the slaves in the rebel states to escape. Lincoln was alarmed about the increasing opposition to the war in the North, and the mad cry against it being an abolition war. Lincoln worried that [Northerners who opposed the war would force him to accept an early peace] which would leave all those who had not escaped in slavery.

I was impressed by this kind consideration because before he had said that his goal was to save the Union, with or without slavery. What he said on this day showed a deeper moral conviction against slavery than I had ever seen before in anything spoken or written by him. I listened with the deepest interest and profoundest satisfaction, and, at his suggestion, agreed to organize men who would go into the rebel states, and carry the news of emancipation, and urge the slaves to come within our boundaries....

I refer to this conversation because I think that, on Mr. Lincoln's part, it is evidence that the proclamation, so far at least as he was concerned, was not passed merely as a 'necessity.'

Source: In mid-1863, after the Emancipation Proclamation had been announced, President Lincoln called Frederick Douglass to the White House to speak with him. Douglass wrote about the meeting in 1881 in The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.