


## Chapter 320 – Davis’ Envoys To Washington Remain Confused By Back Channel Messages

	<b>Dates:</b> April 1, 1860	<b>Sections:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diplomatic Negotiations Drift Along</li></ul>
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Date: April 1, 1861

### Diplomatic Negotiations Drift Along



Martin Crawford (1820-1883)

Uncertainty about Lincoln’s actual plans for the forts, especially Sumter, continues to plague all Southerners, from Charleston to Montgomery, and even to the delegates at the Virginia convention in Richmond.

Three “southern commissioners” led by Martin Crawford, an ex-US Congressman from Georgia, remain in DC to keep up to date on the latest. Their “back channel” source for most information is Associate Supreme Court Justice John Campbell of Alabama who is in constant contact with Henry Seward – whom they believe “speaks for Lincoln.”

Seward has assured Campbell that Sumter will be evacuated, but that was two weeks ago, on March 15. So the Judge now contacts the Secretary for an update. The message this time is less comforting.

Seward tells Campbell that Lincoln’s “ears are open to everyone” at the moment – but that it seems unlikely he will try to reinforce Sumter, and certainly not without signaling Governor Pickens in advance.

Hearing this news, CSA President Jefferson Davis asks his cabinet for their thoughts.

Attorney General Judah Benjamin declares that war is inevitable, while Secretary of State Robert Toombs argues that Lincoln will evacuate Sumter in the end.

Davis still wants to believe Seward and Toombs and opts for no change in policy yet. He orders Crawford and the others to remain in Washington with their eyes and ears open.