Dr. Jeremy Black, professor of history at Exeter University, has a thought provoking article on the Foreign Policy Research Institute website entitled "Abraham Lincoln and American Destiny in a Divided World". https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/02/american-destiny-divided-world/

With the greatest respect, I would like to comment on three points he made, writes Joseph E Fallon, U K Defence Forum Research Associate

1. "The possible relationship between international aspirations and the crisis within the U.S. was a key question for American policymakers. Such a relationship had been triggered for Mexico when Napoleon III of France intervened against the Liberals. The usual pattern of civil wars included such covert or overt interventions, as when France sent an army into Spain in 1823 and Russia another into Hungary in 1849.The U.S. had been subject to the possibility of such interactions in its early years, notably in Vermont, with the Burr conspiracy in Louisiana, and with the Hartford Convention in 1814-15. Thereafter, that had not been the case."

Threats "of such interactions" in North America did not come from abroad, but from Washington and its "international aspirations". Since the birth of the American Republic, U.S. foreign policy was aggressively anti-British. The United States declared war on the United Kingdom in 1812 not because London was impressing American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy, but as Thomas Jefferson wrote to conquer the British North American colonies. "The acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching; & will give us experience for the attack of Halifax the next, & the final expulsion of England from the American continent."

For Jefferson and U.S. President James Madison annexing the British North American colonies would be a cakewalk. The United Kingdom was weak and distracted. London was fighting for its survival in a decade long war against Napoleon. It had few troops in its North American colonies and could not spare any to reinforce those garrisons. Despite limitations, British troops repulsed the American invasion.

Washington, however, remained committed to achieving Jefferson's goal of "the final expulsion of England from the American continent", and to that end repeatedly threatened London with war in 1839, 1844-1848, 1849-1850, 1852, 1854, 1856, 1859, and 1894.

These threats of war centered on the boundaries of Britain's North American colonies, and the existence of the British colony of British Honduras (Belize) and the British protectorate of the Miskito Kingdom both in Central America. While Washington failed to abolish British Honduras, it was successful in destroying the larger country, the independent, indigenous Miskito Kingdom, through the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. London agreed to this treaty, dealing with a proposed inter-oceanic canal through Nicaragua, to avoid war with the United States. "London's abandonment of its traditional ally was due in large part to its weak military position in North America and the Caribbean and fear the U.S. would take advantage of its defenselessness to declare war and seize Canada and the Miskito Kingdom."

This treaty would lead to Nicaragua supported by Washington annexing the Miskito Kingdom and the indigenous population thereof being subjected to campaigns of ethnocide and genocide at the hands of Nicaraguans from that time to the present.

Prior to the Civil War, despite failing to conquer the British North American colonies, the U.S. did win territorial concessions over the boundaries of Maine and the Oregon territory. London's military presence in North America was limited at a time she was preoccupied with problems at home and abroad. Washington exploited these weaknesses for maximum gain.

In 1842, London signed the Webster-Ashburton Treaty over the boundary of Maine while engaged in wars in Afghanistan, South Africa, and China, and confronting both a general strike and riots over the Corn Laws at home.

In 1846, London agreed to the partition of the Oregon Territory while dealing with the First Anglo-Sikh War, the Great Famine in Ireland and a famine in Scotland's Highlands.

2. "British caution certainly reflected a long-term trend in policy seen for decades, but it was crucially assisted by a comparable degree of caution and restraint on the part of Lincoln's government."

"British caution" reflected the military facts on the ground. "...none of Great Britain's North American and West Indian possessions was adequately garrisoned...At the end of March 1861

there were rather less than 4,300 regulars in British North America, 2,200 of them in Canada and the rest in Nova Scotia, together with a few weak and scattered garrisons in British Columbia, Bermuda and the West Indies."

The British were outgunned by the Americans. In April 1861, the U.S. Army, which number 16,000, was four times the size of British forces. The disparity increased exponentially thereafter. On April 15, 1861, Lincoln called for an additional 75,000 volunteers to invade the Southern States. In July 1861, Congress added 500,000 more. By 1865, Lincoln's army numbered 2.7 million nearly the size of the combined population of British North America, which was slightly over 3 million.

Neither Lincoln nor his Administration exercised a "degree of caution and restraint". William Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, had been calling for the annexation of "Canada" since 1850. Many in London and Washington feared he would provoke a war with the United Kingdom over "Canada" in the hope a "conflict with foreign nations could bring the South back into the national fold."

The words to one marching song of Lincoln's army went: "Secession first he would put down, Wholly and forever, And afterwards from Britain's crown, He Canada would sever."

On July 2, 1866, the U.S. Congress introduced H.R. 754 calling for the annexation of Britain's North American colonies. Officially the legislation was entitled: "A Bill for the admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, and Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan, and Columbia".

Washington's desire to annex Canada continued into the 20th Century. Developed in the 1920s and 1930s, and retained during and after World War II, Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan Crimson prepared for the invasion of Canada. The plan was declassified in 1974.

Lincoln, himself, violated diplomatic protocol writing directly to the British people to lobby Parliament to support him and his war. In a January 19, 1863 letter to the "Workingmen of Manchester", Lincoln declared: "I have understood well that the duty of self-preservation rests solely with the American people. But I have at the same time been aware that favor or disfavor of foreign nations might have a material influence in enlarging and prolonging the struggle with

disloyal men in which the country is engaged."

In a February 2, 1863 letter to the "Workingmen of London", Lincoln added: "The resources, advantages, and powers of the American people are very great, and they have, consequently, succeeded to equally great responsibilities. It seems to have devolved upon them to test whether a government, established on the principals of human freedom, can be maintained against an effort to build one upon the exclusive foundation of human bondage. They rejoice with me in the new evidences which your proceedings furnish, that in the magnanimity they are exhibiting is justly estimated by the true friends of freedom and humanity in foreign countries."

Lincoln even wrote a Proposed "British" Resolution on Slavery dated April 15, 1863 to be passed by Parliament.

According to a letter dated April 17, 1863, U.S. Senator Charles Sumner wrote: 'Two days ago the President sent for me to come to him at once. When I arrived, he said that he had been thinking of a matter on which we had often spoken, the way in which English opinion should be directed, & that he had drawn up a resolution embodying the ideas which he should hope to see adopted by public meetings in England. I enclose the resolution, in his autograph, as he gave it to me. He thought it might serve to suggest the point which he regarded as important.'

"Whereas, while heretofore, States, and Nations, have tolerated slavery, recently, for the first time in the world, an attempt has been made to construct a new nation, upon the basis of, and with the primary, and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate human slavery, therefore,
Resolved, That no such embryo State should ever be recognized by, or admitted into, the family of Christian and civilized nations; and that all ch[r]istian and civilized men everywhere should, by all lawful means, resist to the utmost, such recognition or admission."

The proposal comes dangerously close to seeking to incite a civil war in England. No record has been found of the adoption of Lincoln's resolution in England.

As to Lincoln's caution in his dealings with London over the Trent crisis, he was biding his time. Lincoln told Seward "after ending our war successfully we would be so powerful that we could call upon [Great Britain] to account for all the embarrassments she had inflicted upon us."

3. "Lincoln set an important pattern in ensuring that the embattled republic responded very differently in its treatment of dissidence to that seen with other embattled republics, such as England in 1649-60 and, even more, France in 1792-99."

This is inaccurate. In many ways, Lincoln emulated the French Terror. As I document in Lincoln Uncensored (Laissez Faire, 2012), he "suspended habeas corpus; issued an arrest warrant for Roger Taney, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for having ruled his suspension of habeas corpus unconstitutional; initiated steps to arrest former President Franklin Pierce; ignored the courts; obstructed free and fair elections; criminalized speech; outlawed dissent; curtailed freedom of the press -- censoring telegraphic communications and closing 300 newspapers; established a secret police, arrested people on the words of anonymous informants, legalized arbitrary arrests, denied suspects legal counsel, replaced jury trials with military tribunals; jailed between 13,000 and 38,000 political prisoners; allowed prisoners to be routinely tortured, imposed forced labor; pronounced the military a law unto itself; refused to honor existing treaties with Indian nations; repudiated international law governing warfare; authorized the assassination of a head of state, Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his entire cabinet, declared food and medicine contraband; proclaimed women and children, the sick and the elderly legitimate military targets."

These act reflected paranoia as was exhibited by Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton in justifying Lincoln's "Executive Order No. I, Relating to Political Prisoners", February 14, 1862. "Every department of the Government was paralyzed by treason. Defection appeared in the Senate, in the House of Representatives, in the Cabinet, in the Federal courts; ministers and consuls returned from foreign countries. Treason was flagrant in the revenue and in the post-office service, as well as in the Territorial governments and in the judicial reserves."

Many who opposed Lincoln's actions were Abolitionists. In his December 1861 lectures in Boston and New York City, famed Abolitionist Wendell Phillips declared: "We live today, every one of us, under martial law. The Secretary of State puts into his bastile, with a warrant as irresponsible as that of Louis XIV, any man whom he pleases. And you know that neither press nor lips may venture to arraign the Government without being silenced. At this very moment one thousand men at least are "bastiled" by an authority as despotic as that of Louis...For the first time in our history government spies frequent our great cities."

Confirming Phillips fears, Secretary of State Seward William Seward wrote Lord Lyons, British Ambassador to the U.S. "My Lord, I can touch a bell on my right hand, and order the arrest of a

citizen of Ohio; I can touch a bell again, and order the imprisonment of a citizen of New York; and no power on earth, except that of the President, can release them. Can the Queen of England do so much?"

In "The Lincoln Administration and Arbitrary Arrests: A Reconsideration", Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, Vol 5, Issue 1, 1983, Mark E. Neely, Jr. noted "the remarkable extent of the arrests â€" nearly one person in every 1,500"

Lincoln would brag "... the time [is] not unlikely to come when I shall be blamed for having made too few arrests rather than too many."

In 1864, Abolitionist Wendell Phillips would call for the defeat of Lincoln's reelection writing "...while we are saturating Southern soil with the best blood of the country in the name of liberty, we have really parted with it at home."

Inseparable from all of this was the unprecedented corruption of the Lincoln Administration.

In March 1864, Edward Bates, Lincoln's Attorney General, lamented: "The demoralizing effect of this civil war is plainly visible in every department of life. The abuse of official powers and thirst for dishonest gain are now so common that they cease to shock."

In 1878 in "The War's Carnival of Fraud", Henry S. Olcott, special investigator for the U.S. War and Navy Departments, estimated "at least twenty, if not twenty-five, percent of the entire expenditures of the government during the Rebellion, were tainted with fraud."

The "terror" unleashed in the south, however, was greater. First, Lincoln refused to abide by the international law on the conduct of warfare established by Swiss jurist, Emmerich de Vattel in his Law of Nations (1758). Vattel stated:

"Women, children, feeble old men, and sick persons, come under the description of enemies;

and we have certain rights over them, inasmuch as they belong to the nation with whom we are at war . . . But these are enemies who make no resistance; and consequently we have no right to maltreat their persons or use any violence against them, much less to take away their lives. This is so plain maxim of justice and humanity, that at present every nation in the least degree civilized, acquiesces in it..."

Instead, Lincoln issued General Orders No. 100, known as the Leiber Code after its author, Francis Leiber, former advisor to Otto von Bismarck.

General Orders No. 100 declares: "Military necessity admits of all direct destruction of life or limb of armed enemies, and of other persons whose destruction is incidentally unavoidable in the armed contests of the war; it allows of the capturing of every armed enemy, and every enemy of importance to the hostile government, or of peculiar danger to the captor; it allows of all destruction of property, and obstruction of the ways and channels of traffic, travel, or communication, and of all withholding of sustenance or means of life from the enemy; of the appropriation of whatever an enemy's country affords necessary for the subsistence and safety of the army..."

Letters from Lincoln's Generals Sherman and Sheridan bear witness to the "terror" of General Order No. 100. Sherman ordered a subordinate to "burn ten or twelve houses" and "kill a few at random," and "let them know that it will be repeated every time a train is fired upon." Sheridan wrote Grant that his troops, whom he labeled as "barn burners" and "destroyers of homes," had already "destroyed over 2200 barns . . . over 70 mills . . . have driven in front of the army over 4000 head of stock, and have killed . . . not less than 3000 sheep. . . Tomorrow I will continue the destruction."

Second, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which did not free any slaves in the United States. The text reads: "That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.."

Lincoln, whose army had been unable to defeat the South, said issuing the proclamation was a military necessity. How was it to contribute to a Northern victory? Lincoln answered that in his September 13, 1862 reply to an Emancipation Memorial Presented by Chicago Christians of All Denominations. It was to provoke a race war in the South.

"Nor do I urge objections [to an Emancipation Proclamation] of a moral nature, in view of possible consequences of insurrection and massacre at the South."

"Lincoln's legacy" as "a work in progress" was placed in proper context by Lord Acton and General Robert E. Lee in their 1866 correspondence.

Lord Acton wrote: "I saw in State Rights the only availing check upon the absolutism of the sovereign will, and secession filled me with hope, not as the destruction but as the redemption of Democracy...Therefore I deemed that you were fighting the battles of our liberty, our progress, and our civilization; and I mourn for the stake which was lost at Richmond more deeply than I rejoice over that which was saved at Waterloo."

General Lee's reply was prescient. "I yet believe that the maintenance of the rights and authority reserved to the states and to the people, not only essential to the adjustment and balance of the general system, but the safeguard to the continuance of a free government. I consider it as the chief source of stability to our political system, whereas the consolidation of the states into one vast republic, sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home, will be the certain precursor of that ruin which has overwhelmed all those that have preceded it."

Lincoln's lasting legacy is American Exceptionalism is not exceptional after all.