



# **Lincoln in the World: The Making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power**

*Kevin Peraino*

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**Lincoln in the World: The Making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power** Kevin Peraino  
**A captivating look at how Abraham Lincoln evolved into one of our seminal foreign-policy presidents—and helped point the way to America’s rise to world power.**

This is the story of one of the most breathtaking feats in the annals of American foreign policy—performed by one of the most unlikely figures. Abraham Lincoln is not often remembered as a great foreign-policy president. He had never traveled overseas and spoke no foreign languages. And yet, during the Civil War, Lincoln and his team skillfully managed to stare down the Continent’s great powers—deftly avoiding European intervention on the side of the Confederacy. In the process, the United States emerged as a world power in its own right.

Engaging, insightful, and highly original, *Lincoln in the World* is a tale set at the intersection of personal character and national power. The narrative focuses tightly on five distinct, intensely human conflicts that helped define Lincoln’s approach to foreign affairs—from his debate, as a young congressman, with his law partner over the conduct of the Mexican War, to his deadlock with Napoleon III over the French occupation of Mexico. Bursting with colorful characters like Lincoln’s bowie-knife-wielding minister to Russia, Cassius Marcellus Clay; the cunning French empress, Eugénie; and the hapless Mexican monarch Maximilian—*Lincoln in the World* draws a finely wrought portrait of a president and his team at the dawn of American power.

In the Age of Lincoln, we see shadows of our own world. The international arena in the 1860s could be a merciless moral vacuum. Lincoln’s times demanded the cold, realistic pursuit of national interest, and, in important ways, resembled our own increasingly multipolar world. And yet, like ours, Lincoln’s era was also an information age, a period of rapid globalization. Steamships, telegraph wires, and proliferating new media were transforming the world. Global influence required the use of “soft power” as well as hard.

Anchored by meticulous research into overlooked archives, *Lincoln in the World* reveals the sixteenth president to be one of America’s indispensable diplomats—and a key architect of America’s emergence as a global superpower. Much has been written about how Lincoln saved the Union, but *Lincoln in the World* highlights the lesser-known—yet equally vital—role he played on the world stage during those tumultuous years of war and division.

## **Lincoln in the World: The Making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power Details**

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# From Reader Review Lincoln in the World: The Making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power for online ebook

## Michael says

I found this a great window on how Lincoln managed a series of crises that played a significant role in setting America on the path to become a world power. Just when the U.S. was most vulnerable from its Civil War, England and France were at the height of consolidating their empires, and the temptation to intervene was a substantial threat to the independent course of U.S. development. How a country lawyer who had never been outside the U.S. handled international relations makes for an interesting story.

I have gotten great pleasure from assessment of Lincoln as a politician with Goodwin's "Team of Rivals", Lincoln as commander-in-chief with McPherson's "Tried by War", and Lincoln's personality and family life with Vidal's fictional "Lincoln". This excursion rounds out my experience by opening my eyes to Lincoln on the world stage. The structure of the book is organized around conflicting relationships with particular people who had significantly different agenda, an odd but effective approach.

Chapter 1 is "Lincoln vs. Herndon", in which he defies his old law partner's advice as a junior Congressman in speaking out against Polk's crass expansionism in the Mexican War. Lincoln believed in the Whig principles of economic development within existing national boundaries as a pathway to strength and Washington's concept of an ideal foreign policy as pursuit of "our national interest guided by justice." But Lincoln was both "a principled idealist and a pragmatic realist". He was also against adding more states by land grabs because of conflicts aroused over keeping a balance of power between slave and non-slave states.

In the chapter "Lincoln vs. Seward" we get some insight on Lincoln's wisdom of bringing his former rival for the presidency, William Seward, into his cabinet as Secretary of State and on Lincoln's skills in reining in some of Seward's dangerously impulsive ideas. With tensions escalating over Spain's takeover of Santo Domingo and Britain's declaration of neutrality after a blockade of seceded southern states was initiated, Seward pushed for aggressive actions that could trigger a military conflict and serve to unite the nation and head off the wave of succession by southern states.

In the chapter "Lincoln vs. Palmerston" we get a clear picture of how close we came to war with England. The British Prime Minister was motivated to keep cotton imports to the textile industry flowing freely, so the U.S. attempt of a naval blockade early in Lincoln's administration was quite an affront. The declaration of neutrality he proclaimed held out a threat of full diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy and possibly forced international mediation. When a rogue American naval officer took the initiative to nab diplomats from the South on the way to England from a British packet *Trent*, the shit really hit the fan. Palmerston notched up the diplomatic crisis by sending troops to Canada and warmongering in Parliament and the press. Lincoln wisely countered U.S. public opinion and his cabinet by eventually ordering the release of the captives.

The chapter "Lincoln vs. Marx" was fascinating in its coverage of Marx's efforts to cast the Civil War into the framework a worker's revolt. He worked to get the industrial proletariat of Britain to identify with the plight of American slaves and attacked Lincoln for not moving on abolishment of slavery. His life in London as a journalist had an outlet through his employment as a foreign correspondent with Horace Greeley's influential *New York Tribune*. Lincoln eventually learned well the value of harnessing the power of the press as a means to move the common people on behalf of his foreign policy. The delayed timing of his Emancipation Proclamation had a lot to do with keeping slave-owning border states in the fold until a Union

victory looked likely. But when it came it converged with Marx's goal of uniting popular antislavery sentiment in the U.K. against Palmerston's government, undermining their intervention plans.

The chapter "Lincoln vs. Napoleon" finds Lincoln again a voice of restraint in the face of a coalition effort between France and Britain to seek a colonial foothold in Mexico. Ultimately, Napoleon III ended up acting alone in sending troops to defeat the Juarez rebellion and place Maximilian, brother of Austria's Franz Joseph I, as Emperor of Mexico. The export of European monarchy to America's back door stirred up the factions who believed in the Monroe Doctrine. Lincoln acceded to sending a lot of troops to the Texas border, but he had to work hard to make sure the generals didn't push the resulting tensions into a war. Fortunately, Napoleon lost interest in supporting Maximilian militarily. Russia's pro-Union stance and a major visitation in America by its navy appears to have contributed to deflating a French focus in the New World. In the period after Lincoln was assassinated, Maximilian's forces were defeated by the rebels, and he bravely faced the firing squad.

History is often interpreted in the light of contemporary times. Thus, given the close alliance of the U.S. with England and France during two world wars in the 20th century, the idea that the U.S. got close to war with them in the Civil War period is hard to digest. Another historian, Webster Tarpley, provides some validation to Peraino's thesis in a recent essay. U.S. Civil War: The US-Russian Alliance that Saved the Union. As the title suggests, he gives a lot of credit to Russia for providing a check to aggressive intervention by these European powers. Alternative history buffs should take heed from his vision of the close prospect of an early world war "in which the United States, Russia, Prussia and perhaps Italy would have been arrayed against Great Britain, France, Spain, and perhaps the Portuguese and Austrian Empires."

Peraino ends his book with a reflection on paradoxes in the president's character and actions called "Lincoln vs. Lincoln". His conclusion provides a nice summary of his thought-provoking book:

*Lincoln's foreign affairs legacy is marked by one other "peculiar paradox," as the scholar David Donald has labeled it. Lincoln and Seward were both shapers and products of the Whig ethos, which historically had defined itself in opposition to presidential excess. And yet amid the national emergency of the Civil war, Lincoln and his secretary of state firmly—if temporarily-enlarged the powers of the executive to direct global affairs. The president swiftly proclaimed a blockade and expanded the navy by executive order. After his ships clashed with Britain's on the high seas, he confined Congress's role in the Trent affair to private consultations with key members. As the conflict intensified, Lincoln used his bully pulpit to speak directly to the British and French publics. In the war's final days, he resolutely defied hawks in Congress who were eager to invade Mexico. Yet at the same time, the president steadfastly supported congressional measures ... which worked to strengthen the bonds that united the state. These legislative reforms, combined with Lincoln's executive innovations, ultimately helped to boost the country to greater global prominence.*

This book was provided as an e-book loan from the publisher through Netgalley.

The cast of characters.

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## **Sharon Huether says**

I won this book through Goodreads. Lincoln in the World: The making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power By Kevin Peraino A thought came to me while reading this book. Lincoln's presidency was much like managing a three ring circus. The war between the states, his cabinet, congress and the European nations. I have more admiration for President Lincoln than I ever had before. I liked what the author said

about Lincoln's background in the prologue. Kudos to President Lincoln. He wrote his own speeches. Lincoln with his background in law, made many thought provoking statements. He was a gentle persuader. He hated slavery. There is one key word that describes Lincoln's presidency, that is PATIENCE, which he used daily. After his untimely death the US prospered economically and the population doubled. I really liked this book.

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### **Travis Starnes says**

When I heard about this book I was intrigued. There have been a lot of books written about President Lincoln and I feel like I have read most of them. So I was happy to hear about an angle on the president I had not read before. Getting into the book it became clear Peraino certainly did his research. The world of international diplomacy can get pretty convoluted real fast and he manages to steer the reader through that world effectively.

As a straight up history book this Lincoln in the World works. While not the best work of history I have read, it is also not the worst. I did find the book a little dry to read, but that may be a fault of the subject matter rather than a weakness of the writer. There aren't moments of excitement or tension. This may lead to the other issue I had with the book is that it is fairly inaccessible to the general reader. It isn't footnoted to death or one quote after another that you see from poorly written history, but the issues examined are also a little dense. I am not sure that is a big issue since this is the type of book that only really appeals to those interested in the subject matter.

<http://homeofreading.com/lincoln-in-the-world/>

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### **Peter Mcloughlin says**

This book looks at how Lincoln as president dealt with foreign leaders and foreign policy during the Civil war. This was a time where there were multiple great powers vying for control and the balance of power. It resembles the international politics of the post American 21st century with multiple powers as well. It was no mean feat keeping European powers from getting involved in the American Civil war. Lord Palmerston of Britain at this time could make more trouble for Lincoln than anything that was within Jefferson Davis's power. So international politics was the dog that didn't bark during the civil war and Lincoln's handling of foreign policy is largely why it didn't bark. Nice look at a little covered part of the civil war.

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### **Richard Subber says**

It's a surprising pleasure to read Peraino's Lincoln in the World. I fancy myself to be an amateur expert on Lincoln, and, for me, this is a new angle on Old Abe. Of course, Lincoln's role in the Civil War is part of the book, but it's not the main theme. I realize that it's too easy to forget that stuff was going on outside the United States while we were slogging through the Civil War. The US government, under Lincoln, maintained an active foreign policy, and attempted to influence and was influenced by world affairs in the conduct of the war. There is a direct analogy, I believe, with the efforts of fledgling American statesmen to interact successfully with other nations during the Revolutionary War.

Peraino's scope of interest is sufficiently broad. He offers a full context of the competing international interests and concerns that Lincoln's government could not avoid taking into account.

A minor criticism is that the author's nominal structure for this work somewhat ambiguously suggests a simplistically narrow approach that belies the depth of his description and analysis: six chapters are titled "Lincoln vs. Herndon," "Lincoln vs. Seward," and so on, vs. Palmerston, Marx, Napoleon and Lincoln. The text offers much more than this seeming ad hominem concept. Indeed, Peraino rather fully details the roles and motivations of the prime movers in Lincoln's administration, as well as statesmen and opinion leaders in other countries. The dawn of American power, and Lincoln's growth as an international figure, occurred in the dynamic interaction of men, commerce, industry and politics beyond American shores.

Yes, there was a war on in the United States. That wasn't the only thing going on in the world. Lincoln had a lot more than the Civil War on his mind.

More on my website:

<http://richardsubber.com/>

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### **Ken says**

While Lincoln came into the presidency with nothing but some notions about foreign policy. He did himself and the country a great service by bringing Seward into his cabinet. Seward did have some very good sense about dealings with other countries. The two of them, in time, became a great team. They kept the English from joining the south and they kept France from invading the US, with their forces in Mexico. One of the more surprising chapters deals with Karl Marx, the unemployed social commentator living in England who wrote occasional articles for Horace Greely. Marx was all for abolition, the sooner the better. This quite the interesting read about a side of Lincoln most don't hear about

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### **Tiffany says**

I won this book as a goodreads giveaway, which I was super excited about. I pretty much devour anything historical and this book was no exception. The book goes in-depth regarding Lincoln's role as a foreign policy setter and makes the argument that Lincoln may have been one of our country's greatest diplomats. I found this book to be extremely educational and enjoyable to read. I enjoyed Peraino's style of writing and I hope to read more of his work. If you want to learn more about Lincoln, I think this would be a great book to add to your collection.

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### **Aaron Million says**

The rare book about Lincoln that does not focus on the Civil War, but instead on his foreign policy. This is Peraino's first book, although he has written extensively about foreign affairs for several magazines such as *Newsweek*. While I am glad that Peraino chose to explore a neglected part of Lincoln lore, I think he overstates his case that Lincoln was very focused on foreign policy during his tenure in office (and even prior to that).

He titles the chapters "Lincoln vs ..." and divides it up amongst William Herndon (Lincoln's Springfield law partner), William Henry Seward (his very able but equally egotistical Secretary of State), Lord Palmerston (British Prime Minister), Karl Marx, Louis Napoleon III (French Emperor) and finally "Lincoln vs Lincoln" which was essentially about the post-Civil War diplomatic career of Lincoln's young secretary John Hay.

The above chapter titles are deceiving. Lincoln vs Herndon is really more about Lincoln's criticism of President Polk and the Mexican War during his sole term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Lincoln made a distinction between voting to support the troops vs actually supporting the war itself. Herndon seems to be forgotten about at the chapter goes along.

The Seward chapter is better, but still it is not really well-done. Much of the chapter focuses on Seward's background leading up to 1860. While Peraino does talk about Seward's behavior early in the Administration, he really does not delve much into Seward's evolving relationship with Lincoln.

I liked the Palmerston chapter as it did focus on Britain's place and role in the world during that time, and how closely that island followed the progress of the Civil War. Peraino gives a decent background on Palmerston. This chapter is, in my opinion, marred when Peraino writes of Lincoln's close friend Edward Baker being killed in the War. Peraino writes that Lincoln, after the seizing of the British ship *Trent*, felt "redemption." How is this so? The Confederates are the ones who killed Baker, not the British. And, in any event, Lincoln was not a revengeful man. I highly doubt that the two incidents correlated in his mind.

The Marx chapter felt much the same as the Herndon chapter: Marx gets lost amongst geopolitical calculations. There was no direct correspondence between Lincoln and Marx, and who knows if and how much Lincoln actually read Marx. So, this chapter seems like a real stretch.

Napoleon III did present a serious foreign policy challenge to Lincoln. The French Emperor sent troops into Mexico, hoping to overthrow and take control of that country, then ultimately advance north across the Rio Grande and clash with the U.S. As with most adventures undertaken by this man, this backfired badly, resulting in the execution of the Austrian Archduke Maximilian whom Napoleon installed as his puppetmaster in Mexico.

The final chapter is misleading. It is not Lincoln vs Lincoln like it says, but more about John Hay and how he came to embrace American imperialism and militancy in the late 19th century. Peraino tries to tie Hay's foreign policy evolution to his time with Lincoln, and how he ultimately seemed to be at odd's with Lincoln's philosophy about war. Again, I think this is a stretch as, while Lincoln certainly had a marked influence on Hay, world events intervened during this time, and attitudes changed.

Overall, I was disappointed with the result, but happy that someone did attempt to shine a light on Lincoln's foreign policy.

Grade: C

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### **Mitchell says**

First of all, I got this book as part of Goodreads First Reads program. This book comes on the heels (sort of) the Lincoln film that did really well and probably renewed interest in Lincoln and his administration. Now, I have to admit, I've never really studied Lincoln, but, I thought I had a decent grasp on what he did and what his major accomplishments were.

This book is ostensibly about Lincoln's foreign policies, something which the author contends has been only lightly examined in the past. Sure, I'll buy that. Of course, I had no idea that France invaded Mexico during the Civil War, so you have to take my opinion with a grain of salt.

As far as the book in terms of writing and entertainment, I found this book really held my interest. It's divided into several vignettes about what the author considered to be the major points of Lincoln's career that shaped his dealings with other countries. As an example, his first section was about Lincoln's stance on the US-Mexico war. As a member of the US House of Representatives, he had to support the troops while questioning the rationale behind the war itself, something that recent congress members have had to deal with themselves. In fact, a lot of this book seemed to be written with current issues in mind; purposefully or not. Lincoln's time in the House, his expansion of the powers of the Executive Branch, his role as the Commander in Chief; all of these seems particularly poignant.

I learned a lot from this book, so it's definitely not just another Civil War book, though it obviously plays a large role. I always knew that the Union was concerned with England or another European power intervening or recognizing the South, but this book describes just how complex it was.

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### **Utena says**

This book takes a fascinating look at Abraham Lincoln's role in not only changing the presidency but also into his impact on foreign policy-making. It also takes on his earlier life as both a lawyer and a statesman.

I found the book fascinating and interesting. I honestly had not seen any sort of books on his policy making. If there have been, it had been mostly brief. Most books tend to just cover his presidency and the impact his death made upon the Union.

I did not know of the British newspapers making fun of him nor that there was a possibility of the British contemplating joining in the war. I really enjoyed learning a lot more of Lincoln's presidency than just the Civil War. I learned that he had some good policies and some not so good but in all honesty, I suppose that is to be expected. All presidents will have some winning policies and some that should have been just ripped up.

The only thing that did bother me through this book was that "complaining" always kept popping up like "he complained". I would have like to see other variations of the word than just complaining.

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading about Abraham Lincoln.

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### **Dani Shuping says**

ARC provided by NetGalley

This book takes a close look at Lincoln's role as in foreign-policy making, from his early days as a congressman to his work as President of the United States. The author focuses each chapter on a particular person in Lincoln's life, such as the first chapter titled "Lincoln vs. Herndon" (his law partner) and how battles/conversations with each person shaped Lincoln's views and led him to the presidency. Although the author is at times a bit verbose, he does an excellent job of pulling materials from a variety of sources, such as journals, letters, even newspapers from Britain, to examine how Lincoln's policies evolved and how the world viewed him at large.

This book is a must read for anyone interested in Abraham Lincoln or anyone interested in foreign-policy. 4

out of 5 stars.

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## **Robin Friedman says**

Charles Evans Hughes, a Secretary of State, Supreme Court Chief Justice, and presidential candidate, once observed that "we all need a course on Lincoln". For all the attention Lincoln receives, much remains to be learned. Kevin Peraino's new book, "Lincoln in the World: the Making of a Statesman and the Dawn of American Power" (2013) explores a lesser-known aspect of Lincoln's presidency: his approach to foreign policy. Peraino served as senior writer and bureau chief for "Newsweek" and has written as well for the "Wall Street Journal" and other publications.

Peraino observes that Lincoln is not ordinarily considered as "a great foreign policy president." Lincoln had been raised in the rural Kentucky and Indiana, had no European friends, and never travelled abroad. Yet, in his presidency Lincoln confronted serious foreign policy issues and managed to accomplish what Peraino describes as "one of the most breathtaking feats in the annals of American foreign policy" by avoiding European intervention in the Civil War on behalf of the Confederacy. Peraino argues that Lincoln's unique combination of realism and idealism served him well in diplomacy. In strengthening the power of the executive, making use of public opinion, and recognizing the importance of economic power to foreign affairs, Lincoln's foreign policy set the tone and the contours for much of the subsequent foreign policy of the United States.

Peraino does not offer a fully-focused study of foreign policy in Lincoln's administration. Instead he focuses on six distinct episodes each of which, Peraino argues, has something to teach about Lincoln's foreign policy. In discussing each episode, Peraino juxtaposes Lincoln's actions against those of another person, an approach often is insightful but which can also lead to confusion. Thus, the initial chapter compares Lincoln with his law partner and later biographer, William Herndon, for activities which occurred before Lincoln's presidency during his term in Congress. The next four chapters are set in Lincoln's presidency and contrast his activities with Secretary of State William Seward, Britain's Prime Minister Palmerston, Karl Marx, and Napoleon III of France. The final chapter "Lincoln v. Lincoln" examines the career of Lincoln's personal secretary, John Hay, when Hay served as Secretary of State for Presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

Each chapter intersperses discussions of foreign policy with sometimes digressive information. In general, Peraino writes by introducing the issue to be discussed followed by lengthy biographical information about the individual used as a foil to Lincoln. The issue is expanded and explained from the perspective of both Lincoln and his opponent. Peraino draws lessons from the resolution of the issue for Lincoln's foreign policy and for America's subsequent foreign policy.

Thus, in the opening chapter, Peraino contrasts Lincoln's opposition as a Congressman to the Mexican War with Herndon's support for the war and criticism of his law partner. The discussion proceeds with a good deal of digressive material about Herndon, Lincoln's courtship of Mary Todd, the backward condition of Washington D.C. during Lincoln's term in Congress and much more. Through all this material, Peraino offers a nuanced portrayal of Lincoln's attitude towards the Mexican War and towards American expansion and economic growth.

In the chapter dealing with Seward, Peraino covers familiar ground showing how Lincoln and his Secretary of State learned to respect each other's strengths and work together. Peraino emphasizes Lincoln's cautious approach, which reigned Seward in during the early days of Lincoln's presidency. He also stresses the

expansion of presidential power in foreign affairs from the outset of the Civil War.

The chapter about Lincoln and Lord Palmerston focuses on the Trent affair of late 1861 which brought the United States perilously close to war with Great Britain. The book will teach most American readers a great deal about Palmerston. Through the detail, Peraino explains how Lincoln remained collected in the crisis, molded public opinion, and diplomatically avoided a disastrous war.

The chapter contrasting Lincoln and Marx includes much that is insightful about both figures, but it is strained. Most of the chapter tells the story of the Emancipation Proclamation, a subject that has been discussed in more detail in many other books. Again, many Americans may not know about Marx' interest in and writings about the Civil War. They will learn much from Peraino. Peraino argues that both Marx and Lincoln were concerned with forming public opinion. He argues that Lincoln used his Emancipation Proclamation not only with the governments of Europe but, going over the heads of the governments, used the presidency to speak directly to the working people of Europe as well.

The final incident of Lincoln's presidency involves Napoleon III's attempt to take over the government of Mexico during the course of the Civil War. This subject receives comparatively little attention, and Peraino discusses it well and with focus. Many Americans were outraged and frightened by Napoleon III's Mexican operations and sought aggressively for the United States to intervene. Lincoln subtly resisted the pressure which might have drawn the United States into a war with France and probably Great Britain. He monitored and studied the situation with care and maintained good relationships with the French government. It soon became apparent that Napoleon III had badly overextended himself. The situation resolved itself while Lincoln and the Union directed their energy towards the critical task of winning the Civil War.

Peraino has written a digressive but valuable book. It explores some of the competing threads in American foreign policy. Peraino explains Lincoln's foreign policy in its own terms and shows its influence in the power-driven world of the late 19th Century and beyond.

Robin Friedman

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## **Quentin Stewart says**

This book offers a look at the Lincoln presidency and the Civil War that not too many others have looked at. Though tied down to a domestic crisis at home Lincoln also had to deal with foreign issues also. Probably the biggest issue was to keep the European powers from allying themselves with the Confederacy.

Peraino delves into the Lincoln foreign policy in relationship with six different individuals. He discusses Lincoln's developing foreign policy as he and his partner Herndon debate the issues of the day. Then comes Seward, a political rival for the Republican nomination in 1860 who becomes his Secretary of State, who working with Lincoln seems to develop a mutual respect for each other. The interactions with these two men strengthen Lincoln's philosophy of foreign policy.

Then comes Lincoln's dealings with three men he never met in person. Palmerston of England, Marx a philosopher living in England, and Napoleon the leader of France who was interested in set up an empire in Mexico. Communications at the time were not instantaneous as they are today so it is interesting to see how each of these three saw Lincoln and his understanding of what they were trying to do.

Finally Lincoln vs. Lincoln. The inner turmoil of wanting to see the end of slavery but not wanting to do it so that foreign countries would not side with the Confederacy. Also not wanting to drive a bigger wedge between the North and the South. How foreign powers would view his actions and react to them seemed to always be on his mind.

So did Lincoln create the foreign policy that would enable Theodore Roosevelt to step on the world stage and take credit for making the United States a world power? Was Lincoln's presidency the "dawn of American power" because of his foreign policy stands.

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## **Ryan says**

Somehow in all the reading I've done on American Presidents, I've managed to skip over President Lincoln, I've never read anything about him, including one of President Obama's favorite books, *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. I've read more about former First Ladies, than I've read about our 16th president. I'm glad that with reading *Lincoln in the World*, that glaring oversight has been taken care of.

President Lincoln's foreign policy tends to be overshadowed by domestic policy in most school history books, which is understandable given the plethora of issue that gave rise to the Civil War. To be quite frank, I can't remember a thing from either high school or college on the subject., and that's assuming they even taught us anything about it, and that's highly doubtful. With *Lincoln in the World*, I was given a chance to not only learn the history of what took place during his administration, but it's given me some insight into some of the foreign policy issues that are still facing us today.

This could have been a dry, boring book, spouting off dates and names. Instead, while it was meticulously researched and presented, it was engaging. The author took a ton of information, and was able to not only condense it, but explain it in such a way that made me feel like Goldilocks. Nothing was over my head, nothing was being dumbed-down to make me understand the implications of what I was reading, it was just right.

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## **Steven Z. says**

The opening narrative of Kevin Peraino's new book, *LINCOLN IN THE WORLD: THE MAKING OF A STATESMAN AND THE DAWN OF AMERICAN POWER* finds the Lincolns at Ford's theater with Mary Todd Lincoln resting her hand on her husband's knee. The author points out that this type of "tender" behavior was not the norm as Mrs. Lincoln was prone to spells of anger where she exhibited rather obnoxious and nasty behavior toward her husband which at times belittled him verbally for not having the wealth to take her to Europe. She would, at times, further taunt him that her next husband would have the means to allow her to travel abroad. In reality, Lincoln wanted to spend time "moving and traveling" overseas once his term in office was complete. Lincoln had always wanted to visit Britain and fervently believed that the Civil War had tremendous global implications as the "Union effort was to prove to the world that popular government is not an absurdity." Lincoln further believed that the United States was a great empire and stood "at once the wonder and admiration of the whole world."(1-2)

When one contemplates Lincoln's presidency we usually point to his role in leading the North to victory on the battlefield, not any expertise or having a major impact on foreign affairs. Peraino challenges that

perception by arguing that despite the fact that his diplomatic team was frowned upon at best in European circles, Lincoln himself gave credence to that view by saying to a European diplomat at a state dinner that, "I don't know anything about diplomacy....I will be very apt to make blunders." Lincoln's State Department was able to avoid "European intervention on behalf of the Confederacy, which well have led to a Southern victory." (5) For all that has been written about Lincoln little has been put to paper about his conduct of diplomatic affairs. Perhaps the best study appeared in 2010 with Howard Jones' *BLUE AND GRAY DIPLOMACY: A HISTORY OF UNION AND CONFEDERATE DIPLOMACY* which is in depth monograph encompassing most aspects of Civil War diplomacy. Peraino's study focuses almost exclusively on Lincoln's role in world affairs and despite some organizational issues and awkward attempts to connect him to a number of world events and people the book is a useful addition to any Lincoln library.

Peraino conveys a great deal of interesting and informative details concerning Lincoln's diplomatic escapades and sprinkles his narrative with some pointed analysis. The book is thoroughly researched and possesses an impressive bibliography. Further the endnotes that are provided are exceptional resources for materials and information that are not present in the main narrative. However, the author's approach contains a number of drawbacks principally the way the chapters are sectioned. The chapters are divided by pitting Lincoln against a different subject, be it English Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, Secretary of State William Seward, Karl Marx, Louis Napoleon III, and Lincoln himself. The book makes no attempt at presenting itself as a comprehensive history of Civil War diplomacy as it focuses totally on Lincoln, but the detailed mini-biographies of each of the president's "opponents" shifts attention away from the president and the author also has an annoying technique of trying to link each "oppositional" relationship by providing a 'tease' in the last paragraph of each chapter.

I agree with Peraino that the Mexican War was a turning point in Lincoln's maturity as a diplomatic thinker and in a larger sense America's place in the world. Nothing in Lincoln's background prepared him for the "donnybrook" that developed over his war views. The election of 1844 was a referendum on American expansionism and a foreign policy awakening for Lincoln who would later favor the war effort when he later ran for Congress. The major changes in technology preceding this period proved to be the "facilitator of American nationalism and continental ambition" that seemed to dominate the political discourse throughout the 1840s. (35) Lincoln found himself in a quandary as he didn't want to upset the sectional balance that existed between the free and slave states, but he couldn't ignore the war's popularity. Upon his election Lincoln joined the congressional opposition to the war. He believed that the Mexicans had not done anything to provoke war and that President James Polk's actions were unconstitutional as the power to declare war rested with the legislative branch. Lincoln introduced his controversial "Spot Resolution" to determine exactly where the incident that launched the war was located, strongly suggesting that the war was caused by an American provocation. For Lincoln the war resulted in a major problem, the addition of new territory that the south could claim for slavery thus undoing the balance of free and slave states, and the continued heated debate that over slavery that preceded the Civil War. By the time Lincoln left Congress after one term he had learned a series of lessons. He realized he needed a more nuanced approach to foreign affairs because territorial expansion would continue thus fostering the need to constantly rebalance the ratio of free and slave states. Further, Lincoln believed that Polk had overstepped the bounds of executive authority in going to war. It would take the Civil War for Lincoln to realize that in extraordinary circumstances the president must employ a strong hand.

When Lincoln assumed office European foreign ministers held a very low opinion of the new American president. In fact the Russian envoy to the United States, Eduard de Stoeckl's view of Lincoln was quite representative of his colleagues when he said, "Mr. Lincoln does not seem to possess the talent and energy that his party attributed to him when it named him its candidate for the presidency....Even his supporters admit that he is a man of unimpeachable integrity but of a poor capacity." (103) Opinions of Lincoln did not

change his approach to foreign affairs as he was immediately faced with the issue of foreign intervention or recognition once the Confederacy was launched. The southern cotton trade was a delicate issue since Britain was so dependent on southern cotton for its mills. Lincoln chose to blockade the southern coast and do nothing to aggravate any European power as a means of promoting their neutrality.

Lincoln's Secretary of State William Seward agreed with this policy though Lincoln tended to have to reign in his remarks at times. Peraino's depiction of the Lincoln-Seward relationship does not really add anything new to the history of the period. When Lincoln assumed office he needed Seward for the State Department as he viewed the office as critical for his cabinet to have legitimacy. At the outset Seward believed that he should have been elected president and he was superior to Lincoln in experience and that he would make policy through the president. With so many issues to confront almost immediately, i.e., instituting a blockade of the south, pursuing neutrality with Spain over Santo Domingo, reigning in abolitionists in order not to cause the border states to secede, the president and Secretary of State's views began to converge and in a relatively short period of time Seward grew to respect Lincoln, and Lincoln's trust in Seward increased markedly.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book involves Lincoln's relationship with Lord Palmerston. Lincoln believed that swift military success would block any British attempt at interference in American affairs. However, this was not to be and Lincoln's fallback position was to develop a strong navy and institute a firm blockade to send a message to the British Prime Minister. Peraino provides a brief biography of Palmerston and elaborates on his low opinion of Americans and Lincoln in particular. The situation was exacerbated when an American ship stopped the HMS Trent in Caribbean waters and seized two Confederate diplomats, John Slidell and James Mason. Lincoln's approach was to calm the situation by drawing it out and letting the British let off steam. This episode is presented in detail and both sides came to the realization that a war between the two would prove disastrous to both nations. Lincoln had decided to release the two men, but took his time to prepare those in the United States who wanted to stand up to the British no matter the consequences. Peraino's analysis is dead on in quoting Oxford scholar, Jay Sexton in that "the creditor-debtor relationship of Britain and the United States bonded the two nations together and gave them the common interest of avoiding war. Succumbing to momentary passions or old grudges would prove counterproductive."(127)

Peraino correctly credits Lincoln with a number of innovations that contributed to the Union victory. With the North facing bleak finances by the second year of the war and with European banks refusing to grant credit, Lincoln and his cabinet decided to issue a national paper currency, that Congress eventually approved by passing the Legal tender Act. Further a national income tax was implemented easing monetary issues as well as the creation of a new National Bank in 1863. "These sweeping modernizations of the nation's financial system were critical prerequisites to America's rise to world power."(163) The other major innovation was the building of the Monitor, the first iron clad naval vessel that the United States launched causing "the London Times [to worry] that the innovation had made Britain's fleet of 149 'first class warships' obsolete."(165)

The chapter dealing with Karl Marx is really a stretch since the two never interacted directly. Lincoln may have read some of Marx's articles in the New York Herald Tribune for whom he wrote opinion pieces but it was not necessary to bring in a mini-Marx biography and integrate his views on slavery and revolution into the narrative. At the outset of the war Lincoln was concerned with keeping border states neutral. This concern also helped formulate his views on free labor and American commerce. Comparing Marx's views to Lincoln does not enhance the narrative nor do events that lead up to the Emancipation Proclamation. Marx had no influence on Lincoln's decision making leading up to the issuing of the document. The "pseudo" Union success at Antietam as a vehicle to exhibit Northern military prowess for Britain to keep her neutral

was much more important. Lincoln came to view the Emancipation Proclamation as a vehicle to gain the support of British workers who believed that they worked for slave wages. Lincoln went so far as sending funds to help organize British worker rallies in support of the northern cause. Any fears that the proclamation might provoke intervention were really offset by events in Europe as Prussia invaded the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, Austria and Italy were in the midst of a major conflict, and Polish revolutionaries were active with the support of the French against Russian rule, but this does not stop Peraino from insisting that the proclamation led Louis Napoleon III to intervene in Mexico in 1863. Linking the proclamation and the French Emperor's actions is another connection that does not measure up to sound historical analysis.

Peraino's chapter that deals with Louis Napoleon III's unfortunate attempt to revisit French holdings in the new world by placing Austrian Arch Duke Maximilian on a Mexican throne has little if any relationship to Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. The author's discussion of Louis's ego and delusions concerning French power is spot on though there is an over reliance on Jasper Ridley's dual biography of Louis and his wife, Eugenie in cataloguing his life before he seized power.\* Louis never believed that the North could force the South to return to the federal union so he decided to take advantage of the Mexican debt situation to rekindle his long held goal of reestablishing French colonies in the new world. What is most interesting is that Louis' actions fostered a movement to bring the Confederacy back into the fold through a joint expedition to evict the French from Mexico. This actually led to a meeting between Lincoln, Seward, and Alexander Stephens, the Confederate Vice President on February 2, 1865 that came to naught. These types of details make Peraino's narrative exciting, but overall his linkage to Lincoln's emancipation announcement on January 1, 1863 does little to foster historical accuracy. The key for Lincoln and the Union was success on the battlefield, which Sherman's March through Georgia provided, leading to Lincoln's reelection which forced Louis' to reduce his support for his Mexican venture. In fact, by this time Louis had almost totally abandoned Maximilian as he began to withdraw French troops, and ultimately the Austrian Arch Duke was captured and shot by Mexican forces.

Peraino's final chapter is a misnomer, Lincoln v. Lincoln is a summary of Lincoln's legacy through the post Civil War career of John Hay. The chapter examines John Hay's career in some detail and concludes with Hay's belief that the roots of American power lay in a healthy economy and a brisk trade," an idea that was consistently held by Henry Clay, Abraham Lincoln, and of course William McKinley's Secretary of State. My one suggestion for Mr. Peraino would be to consult the latest biography of Hay written by John Taliaferro, *ALL THE GREAT PRIZES: THE LIFE OF JOHN HAY FROM LINCOLN TO ROOSEVELT* for the latest analysis concerning Hay's growth as a diplomat and foreign policy thinker.

Lincoln's handling of the Mexican fiasco reflects his command of the diplomatic game. Peraino's analysis is accurate as he points out that there was a natural tension in "Lincolnian foreign policy. On the one hand, Lincoln's moral vision represented American idealism" as he realized that slavery diminished American prestige abroad. But at the same time he instituted a patient and cautious approach, a middle ground in his pursuit of diplomatic advantages. Lincoln was a diplomat who knew when to threaten and then soften his pronouncements. He knew when to be magnanimous, but at the same time putting his foot down and letting his opponent know what he would not contenance as in his dealing with Louis Napoleon III. Lincoln was the consummate balancer, effectively controlling domestic interference in the conduct of his foreign policy by members of his own party and the copperheads who sought to make peace with the south enabling them to maintain slavery. Lincoln did an excellent job taking the measure of and preparing the American public for changes that were about to take place in administration actions, i.e., dealing with Palmerston over the Trent Affair or dealing with the French incursion into Mexico. Lincoln should be a role model for future presidents to study how to deal with domestic and foreign policy crises and to Peraino's credit he provides a narrative that would allow our politicians to study and learn from.

\*Peraino also relies heavily on Jasper Ridley's LORD PALMERSTON for background on the English Prime Minister.

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