



TEF COMMENT



Report on Current Public Policy

February 11, 2013

LINCOLN BRUTALIZED THE COUNTRY AND SHREDED THE CONSTITUTION

Up until Lincoln's war, the states assumed they had the right to leave the Union, and, in fact, they did have that right. Neither the 1777 Articles of Confederation nor the 1789 U.S. Constitution prohibited secession.

Slavery was not the reason for the War Between the States. Lincoln had other motives when he provoked the Confederacy into firing on federal tax collectors at Fort Sumter in South Carolina, which he used as an excuse to launch a full scale, horrific war. No one had been killed or injured at Fort Sumter, incidentally. Lincoln wanted to prevent secession at whatever cost because his primary goal was retaining the tax revenue from the Southern States. This conflicted with the hypocritical political rhetoric he directed at President Polk, when he said to Congress, "Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government...."

If the Southern states had seceded, their low taxes would have siphoned European trade from the North. Lincoln believed in increasing a nation's wealth by government regulation and tax subsidies for the country's commercial interests. He was what economists call a mercantilist.

Slaves were not important to Lincoln except as propaganda. Lincoln considered them intellectually inferior to Caucasians and wanted to relocate them to Central America. When told repeatedly that slaves said they preferred to remain in the South, Lincoln was mystified and put his relocation plan on hold.

He stated, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery." As to why he had Southern ports blocked in 1861, he remarked, "The collection of the revenue cannot be effectually executed" in the states that had seceded.

After numerous federal defeats, federal forces finally had a victory, and only then did Lincoln issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which was both an act of war and propaganda.

The cost of holding the "Union" together by military force was horrendous. Recently, research published in the journal *Civil War History* by SUNY—Binghamton professor J. David Hacker revised the death toll upward from 620,000 to 750,000 or even as high as 850,000.

The damage Lincoln caused to the Constitution was equally harsh. He gutted the Ninth and Tenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, imprisoning thousands of northerners, shutting down dozens of northern newspapers, locking up the Maryland legislature and issuing an arrest warrant for the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. He steamrolled over anyone who opposed his policies, citing his war powers.



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Did Lincoln “save the Union”? His use of military force against the peaceful secession of Southern states destroyed the Union that was a voluntary association of States that delegated limited, enumerated powers to the federal government.

Excerpts taken from Lincoln, by Gore Vidal and Lincoln Unmasked, by Thomas J. DiLorenzo.