



The Geopolitical impact today of Lincoln's 1862 Template for Indian Dispossession

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(with additional material by Robin Ashby)

Introduction

In the annals of history, the American Civil War is often remembered for its seismic confrontation over slavery – but its lesser-examined social template for Indigenous policy has left a long shadow on global governance norms.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln and his administration sanctioned a pattern of territorial coercion, legal dispossession, and forced relocation of Native American populations in the Minnesota and elsewhere. Though couched in the language of "civilisation" and "security," the policies established a precedent of state power to redraw human boundaries in pursuit of strategic aims. The furore over Greenland raises similar concerns.

Today, as pressure groups from within and around the Russian Federation invoke historical analogies – sometimes citing Lincoln's methods either as justification or as cautionary case studies – Lincoln's 1862 template is resurfacing in geopolitical discourse. From aspirant separatist movements in the North Caucasus and Siberia to exiled civic networks advocating for the dissolution of the Russian Federation, the spectre of forced reconfiguration of territorial sovereignty has galvanized debates about the legitimacy of nationhood, the ethics of self-determination, and the risks of external intervention.

This article examines how the echoes of Lincoln's Indian disposition continue to inform contemporary strategy and risk perception. What began as a policy response to internal conflict and frontier expansion in the United States has mutated into a touchstone for modern pressure groups seeking to recalibrate state boundaries – and for great powers determining whether to support, oppose, or merely assess those ambitions.

If Lincoln's logic of territorial restructuring were to be invoked today, the potential for geopolitical blowback – not only on Russia's cohesion, but on global security architecture and on the credibility of external actors like the United States – is profound.

As we explore this legacy, we must ask: Can a 19th-century template for internal dispossession be repurposed for 21st-century geopolitical designs without destabilising the very international order that successive generations fought to build?

To answer, we must trace Lincoln's policies, understand their rationales and consequences, and map how analogous frameworks are being wielded "rhetorically and operationally" in current strategic pressures shaping Eurasia and beyond.

Russia and the West

The United States and the member states of NATO are at a geopolitical crossroads. Former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said

"We are at a crossroads for transatlantic security; unity and strength will determine the future of peace and deterrence."

Lincoln's 1862 template for Indian dispossession is being used from within the Alliance to justify political aspirations which would horrify most, if aware of it and its potential for use against us by those who wish to undermine our unity and strength. Its corollary would destroy the United States and splinter many European nations.

For the past decade, some publications, organisations and their connections to power in the West will have been seen in Moscow as provocative, to say the least. One in particular, the Free Nations of Post Russia Forum (see below) has been branded by the Russian Federation as a terrorist organisation.

In 2014, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a U.S. government funded media organization, posted an article entitled "In anticipation of World War III. How the world will change." The author, Dmytro Sinchenko, called on the West to launch proxy wars against Moscow from inside Russia. Adding such wars will split Russia into a number of "independent" states and also so exhaust the United States and EU that the world order will collapse enabling Ukraine to "play a significant role in world transformation."

In 2022, Jamestown Foundation released *FAILED STATE: A Guide to Russia's Rupture*. It states the aim of the United States is to work "with allies and partners to manage and benefit from Russia's rupture." Author Janusz Bugajski writes "this could involve purging ethnic Russians from significant political positions, confiscating Russian-owned businesses, and even expelling Russian populations viewed as a potential fifth column for Muscovite subversion... in order to ensure ethnic homogeneity or to seize territory and create larger states." What was condemned in Yugoslavia is advocated for Russia.

On June 23, 2022, the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe held a videoconference on "Decolonizing Russia: A Moral and Strategic Imperative." In the words of the Commission's Senior Policy Advisor, Bakhti Nishanov: "And that brings us to the subject of today's discussion, the issue of decolonizing Russia...I want to make it clear: These conversations are not new...But it is after the start of Russia's war in Ukraine that serious discussions are now underway about reckoning with Russia's imperialism and the need to colonize Russia [Freudian slip?] for it to become a viable stakeholder in European security and stability."

The significance of this Commission is its membership. There are "nine members from the U.S. House of Representatives, nine members from the United States Senate, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce. The positions of chairman and co-chairman are shared by the House and Senate and rotate every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work."

That same year, the Free Nations of Post Russia Forum (FNPRF), registered in Poland and founded by Ukrainian activist and businessman Oleg Magaletsky, began holding conferences in NATO member states calling for a third world war, the fragmentation of the Russian Federation, and the dispossession of Russians of their country.

Janusz Bugajski played a crucial role in the Free Nations of Post-Russia Forum, acting as a key analyst, publisher, and prophetic voice, arguing for Russia's inevitable collapse into independent states, co-editing the book *Free Nations, New States: The End Stage of Russian Colonialism*, and participating in forums to promote decolonization, advocating for the rights of subjugated nations within the Russian Federation. He brought his deep knowledge of post-Soviet space, honed at the Jamestown Foundation (cited above) and CSIS, to encourage this movement, framing the Russian invasion of Ukraine as an accelerator for this historical process. Their calls are described more fully below.

Then there is Europe. The Organization for World Peace reported footage from the May 16-18, 2024 Lennart Meri Conference "seems to reveal a new goalpost for the E.U. in regards to the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The former Estonian Prime Minister and incoming E.U. foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas spoke before the conference asserting that 'Russia's defeat is not a bad thing, because...there are many different nations a part of Russia,' concluding that 'if you have small nations it's not a bad thing if the big power is much smaller.'" There is a corollary unacknowledged by Ms. Kallas. It's equally not a bad thing if the small power, i.e., Estonia, becomes much smaller. Play with fire and get burned. Newton's Third law of Motion, there is an equal but opposite reaction.

As was described in Part 1, Lincoln's 1862 template for the dispossession of American Indian tribes of their lands is a historic illustration of the policy proposed by FNPRF and Ms. Kallas. Indian lands reduced to Indian reservations. Big powers made into small powers. It is a warning for the West of the possible repercussions should they pursue such a strategy.

These include the indigenous peoples of Northern Europe, the Sami. With a historical experience similar to the American Indians of North America, "...so widely scattered and so weakly united that they never managed to mobilize any major opposition to the loss of their indigenous lands and water sources" the Sami have been described as "The 'White Indians' of Scandinavia." (Harold Gaski 1993) In 2021, the United Nations noted "Sweden, Norway, and Finland have been criticized for policies against their indigenous populations historically and their lack of action and recognition of the Sami people's rights today."

The Maya of Central America and the Baluchis "already campaigning for a nation separate from India and Pakistan" may take heart.

Newton's Third law of motion, "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction," applies to geopolitics as much as to physics. Should NATO states promote the breakup of the Russian Federation, the Russian Federation or others could/will promote the breakup of NATO states. Indeed when Iran shut down the internet during repression in January 2026, several prominent sites promoting Scottish independence went "dark" To the question "which of Russia or NATO the more susceptible to political fragmentation", the Russian Federation is not necessarily the correct answer.

Free Nations of Post Russia Forum (FNPRF), established May 8, 2022, calls for splitting Russia into 41 separate states and aims to "'create an armed army' and, together with 'trained Western specialists, enter Russian territory and achieve its complete liquidation.'"

Registered in Poland, FNPRF was organized by Polish, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian NGOs. Its current funding is opaque. It is not uncommon for an NGO to be a front for a foreign intelligence service. American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty were CIA front organizations as was the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (with similar aims) during the Cold War .

Over the next three years, FNPRF was able to finance 15 conferences in NATO member states,

Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the U.K., and the U.S., as well as in Austria, Japan and Taiwan.

At its April 16, 2024 conference held in Washington, DC, the FNPRF declared "Given that non-violent civilian methods of resistance have become obsolete, coercive actions to overthrow the regime remain as the only option. We therefore call on supporters of freedom and independence to coordinate with each other, in particular with regards to guerilla activities and acts of sabotage, by setting in motion the Rebel and Liberation Armies in the territories of captive nations and colonial regions still occupied by the Kremlin..."

The call at its third conference that "Europe (the EU, including Ukraine as a full-fledged member) together with the United Kingdom should take responsibility for the liberation and decolonization of the indigenous peoples and eastern Slavic regions of the present Russian Federation" constitutes an "act of aggression" as defined by Article 8 in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Article 8 reads: "For the purpose of this Statute, 'crime of aggression' means the planning, preparation, initiation or execution, by a person in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of a State, of an act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations."

Article 1 of United Nations Charter reads: "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace..."

No explanation was provided by the FNPRF on how Brussels and London are to finance war and reconstruction only that the Russian Federation must be abolished. The reason given for erasing Russia from the map is its borders are illegitimate; the result of wars of expansion and suppression of ethnic minorities. That argument, however, applies equally to NATO countries, most prominently France, Germany, Poland, and Spain as well as to Ukraine, itself.

Russia could (potentially is already) respond to the FNPRF and its NATO supporters by championing secessionist movements within NATO countries.

The United Kingdom is most vulnerable. An independent Scotland would deprive London of its oil revenues from the North Sea. It is the declared policy of the Scottish Nationalist Party to be a non nuclear country, which would result in the expulsion of Remainder UK's nuclear facilities as well as depriving it of northerly RAF bases from which maritime patrol and air interdiction missions are launched. These are potential constraints on Russian military activities from its Northern Military District. While minor administrative errors regarding small impermissible/illegal donations under UK law have been noted, there is no evidence to suggest that the Scottish National Party is systematically or significantly funded by foreign powers or entities.

The position of France in Africa and Europe would crumble if Corsica, Occitanie and Provence became independent states. Spain is the Yugoslavia of the West. If Catalonia seceded, it would have a domino effect encouraging other ethnic groups to seek independence from Madrid. Regionalism " already strong and with historic roots - could splinter Italy into a northeast, northwest, and south. With the Flemish and Walloons independent, Belgium ceases to exist. Without Moravia, the Czech Republic is Bohemia. Since 1946, there have been calls for Bavaria to secede from Germany. It is not the only German state where there are factions wanting independence from Berlin.

One speaker at the FNPRF conference at the European Parliament, January 31, 2023, Brian Williams, U.S. specialist on the Crimean Tatars, while speaking of Moscow's history of expansionism since the 16th Century "acknowledged that Americans seized territory of the future United States in a similar manner."

Should Washington support actions to unravel Russia, its actions might instead result in the unraveling of the United States.

On July 16, 2025, Defense News reported General Christopher Donahue, commander of U.S. Army Europe and Africa, spoke at the first "LandEuro" Conference on NATO's new "Eastern Flank Deterrence Line." In Orwellian logic, where "war is peace" aggression is deterrence.

"Donahue noted, Kaliningrad, Russia, is roughly 47 miles wide and surrounded by NATO on all sides and the Army and its allies now have the capability to 'take that down from the ground in a timeframe that is unheard of and faster than we've ever been able to do. We've already planned that and we've already developed it.'"

This would conform to the objective of the Free Nations of Post-Russia Forum which calls for the West to unleash a war on Russia and fragment Russia into 41 separate states; one of which is to be Kaliningrad.

U.S. military actions in Kaliningrad and Washinton's support for the independence of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation could result in "blowback." A CIA term that the Agency officially defines as "unintended consequences, side-effects, or repercussions that result from an activity that has a negative effect on U.S. national security interests."

The unintended consequence for Washington would be calls from American Indian tribes, backed by domestic and international supporters, for their comparable liberation from the United States.

In this scenario, borders for these states might reflect the borders of the Indian land areas, which were judicially established on January 1, 1978, by the U.S. Geological Survey of Land Management. These borders are "the results of cases before the U.S. Indian Claims Commission or U.S. Court of Claims in which an American Indian tribe proved its original tribal occupancy of a tract within the continental United States." The Indian land areas constitute nearly half the territory of "the lower 48" United States.

Therefore, if "blowback" occurred, Lincoln's template for dispossessing American Indian tribes of their lands would be undone but so would be the borders of the United States. In other words, as Russia goes, so goes the United States. In 1988, no one in Washington imagined the Soviet Union, a nuclear superpower, would, or even could, collapse in three years. Nothing is impossible.

For that reason, the United States must reject involvement with FNPRF and its supporters in a war on Russia. This is not isolationism. This is pursuit of a rational foreign policy based upon international law and national self-interest.

The ancient Sanskrit proverb about my enemy's enemy is not always right.

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