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CONTACT:

Emily Stack Davis

517-803-3745

PR@hillsdale.edu

Hillsdale College Center for Military History and Strategy Hosts Talk on the Civil War in International Context

Historian and author Jeremy Black spoke on “The Civil War in Military History.”

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College’s Center for Military History and Strategy hosted Distinguished Fellow Jeremy Black on March 20 for a lecture titled “The Civil War in Military History.” Black discussed the American Civil War in an international context.

“It is easy for us to miss the international context of the Civil War, because we tend to focus so much on the United States,” said Mark Moyar, director of the Center for Military History and Strategy. “Jeremy Black presented valuable insights into the international geostrategic factors that influenced the war, especially the question of whether other countries might have intervened.”

According to Black, foreign intervention was a real possibility that people at the time took seriously.

“Napoleon III views the Confederacy in a favorable light because it supports Napoleon’s plans in Mexico, whereas the Union is totally against it,” Black said. “Napoleon III comes to the view that it might well be appropriate to act against the Union, but he doesn’t want to act on his own, and he sets out to persuade the British to cooperate with him, and the British cabinet is divided.”

Black said that the Civil War resolved what he called “the North American question” — the problem that America’s founding was precarious and invited foreign intervention.

“What the Founding Fathers were writing about was how best to protect a revolutionary settlement, which was threatened in their eyes by the possibility of attack from outside, and maybe of corruption from inside,” Black said. “Both of these are key elements for the Jeffersonian Republicans and for the Federalists, and they go on affecting the next generation.”

Black is a distinguished fellow at Hillsdale College and the author of more than 100 books, including, most recently, “The Civil War.” Many of his books focus on eighteenth-century British, European, and American political, diplomatic, and military history. After graduating from Cambridge, Black undertook research at Oxford. He has served as professor of history at the universities of Durham and Exeter and founded and edited a number of publications.

For photos from previous events hosted by the Center for Military History and Strategy, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.7 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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