

Union strategy. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, veteran of the 1812 and Mexican wars, devised a three-part strategy for winning a long war:

- Use the U.S. navy to blockade southern ports (the Anaconda Plan, as it was called) and thereby cut off essential supplies from reaching the South.

- Divide the Confederacy in two by taking control of the Mississippi River

- Raise and train an army 500,000 strong to take Richmond

As it happened, the first two parts of the strategy were easier to achieve than the third, but ultimately all three aspects of Scott's plan were important in achieving northern victory.

After the Union's defeat at Bull Run, federal armies experienced a succession of crushing defeats as they attempted various campaigns in Virginia, each less successful than the one before.

politicians with a strong popular base. The ultimate hope of the South was that the people of the North would turn against Lincoln and the Republicans and quit the war because it was too costly.

The Confederate States of America

The constitution of the Confederacy was modeled after the U.S. Constitution, but it provided a nonrenewable six-year term for the president and vice president and presidential term veto. Its constitution denied the Confederate congress the powers to levy a protective tariff and to appropriate funds for internal improvements, but it did prohibit the foreign slave trade. President Jefferson Davis tried to increase his executive powers during the war, but southern governors resisted attempts at centralization, some holding back men and resources to protect their own states. At one point, Vice President Alexander H. Stephens, in defense of states' rights, even urged the secession of Georgia in response to the "despotic" actions of the Confederate government.

The Confederacy always faced a serious shortage of money. It tried loans, income taxes (including a 10 percent tax in-kind on farm produce), and even impressment of private property, but these revenues paid for only a small percentage of the war's costs. The government was forced to issue more than \$1 billion in inflationary paper money, which reduced the value of a Confederate dollar to less than two cents by the closing days of the war. The Confederate congress nationalized the railroads and encouraged industrial development. The Confederacy sustained nearly 1 million troops at its peak, but a war of attrition doomed its efforts. The real surprise is that the South was able to persist for four years.

The Civil War, 1861-1865

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later, a Confederate army under Albert Johnston surprised Grant at Shiloh, Tennessee, but the Union army held its ground and finally forced the Confederates to retreat after terrible losses on both sides (over 23,000 dead and wounded). Grant's drive down the Mississippi was complemented in April 1862 by the capture of New Orleans by the Union navy under David Farragut.

Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy

The South's hopes for securing its independence hinged as much on its diplomats as on its soldiers. Confederate leaders fully expected that cotton would indeed prove to be "King" and induce Britain or France, or both, to give direct aid to the South's war effort. Besides depending on southern cotton for their textile mills, wealthy British industrialists and members of the British aristocracy looked forward with pleasure to the breaking of the American economic experiment. From the North's point of view, it was critically important to prevent the Confederacy from gaining the foreign support and recognition that it so desperately needed.

attacked Union troops and threatened the railroad to Washington. The Union army resorted to martial law to keep the state under federal control. In Missouri, the presence of U.S. troops prevented the pro-South elections in the state from gaining control, although guerrilla forces sympathetic to the Confederacy were active throughout the war. In Kentucky, the state legislature voted to remain neutral in the conflict. Lincoln initially respected its neutrality and waited for the South to violate it before moving in federal troops.

Keeping the border states in the Union was a primary military as well as political goal for Lincoln. Their loss would have increased the Confederate population by more than 50 percent and also would have severely weakened the North's strategic position for conducting the war. Not wanting to alienate Unionists in the border states, Lincoln was reluctant to push for early emancipation of slaves.

Warfare Advantages

Military. The South entered the war with the advantage of having to fight only a defensive war to win, while the North had to conquer an area as large as Western Europe. The South had to move troops and supplies shorter distances than the North. It had a long, inland coastline that was difficult to blockade and, most importantly, experienced military leaders and high troop morale. The North's hope was that its population of 22 million against the South's free population of only 5.4 million free whites would work to its favor in a war of attrition. The North's advantage was enhanced during the war by 800,000 immigrants who in large numbers enlisted in the Union cause. Emancipation also brought over 180,000 African Americans into the Union army in the critical final years of the war. The North could also count on a loyal U.S. Navy, which ultimately gave it command of the rivers and territorial waters.

Economic. The North's great strength was an economy that controlled most of the banking and capital of the country, over 85 percent of the factories and manufactured goods, over 70 percent of the railroads, and even 65 percent of the farmlands. The skills of northern clerks and bookkeepers also proved valuable in the logistical support of large military operations. The hope of the southern economy was that overseas demand for its cotton would bring recognition and financial aid. History supports the belief that outside help is essential if wars for independence are to be successful.

Political. Its struggle for independence may seem to have given the South more motivation than the North's task of preserving the Union. However, the South's ideology of states' rights proved a serious liability for the new Confederate government. The irony was that in order to win the war, the South needed a strong central government with strong public support. The South had neither, while the North had a well-established central government and its Abraham Lincoln and the Republican and Democratic parties it had experienced

the right to break up the Union. Lincoln concluded by appealing for restraint: In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assault you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors.

Fort Sumter

Despite the president's message of both conciliation and warning, the danger of a war breaking out was acute. Most critical was the status of two forts in the South that were held by federal troops but claimed by a seceded state. One of these, Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, was cut off from vital supplies and reinforcements by southern control of the harbor. Rather than either giving up Fort Sumter or attempting to defend it, Lincoln announced that he was sending provisions of food to the small federal garrison. He thus gave South Carolina the choice of either permitting the fort to hold out or opening fire with its shore batteries. Southern guns thundered their reply and thus, on April 12, 1861, the war began. The attack on Fort Sumter and its capture after two days of incessant pounding united most northerners behind a patriotic fight to save the Union.

Use of executive power. More than any previous president, Lincoln acted in unprecedented ways, drawing upon his powers as both chief executive and commander in chief, often without the authorization or approval of Congress. He did so for the first time in the Fort Sumter crisis by (1) calling for 75,000 volunteers to put down the "insurrection" in the South, (2) authorizing spending for the war, and (3) suspending the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. Since Congress was not in session, the president acted completely on his own authority. Lincoln later explained that he had to take strong measures without congressional approval "as indispensable to the public safety."

Secession of the Upper South

Before the attack on Fort Sumter, only seven states of the Deep South had seceded. After it had become clear that Lincoln would use troops in the crisis, four states of the Upper South—Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Arkansas—also seceded and joined the Confederacy. The capital of the Confederacy was then moved to Richmond, Virginia. The people of western Virginia remained loyal to the Union, and the region became a separate state in 1863.

Keeping the Border States in the Union

Four other slaveholding states might have seceded, but instead remained in the Union. The decision of Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky not to join the Confederacy was partly due to Union sentiment in those states and partly the result of astute federal politics. In Maryland, pro-secessionists

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