

History 225

Re: Notes on Scott's Anaconda Plan

Commander-in-Chief of the Union Army general Winfield Scott (a native Virginian) proposed a plan to defeat the Confederacy that was vintage conciliation.

His plan was an alternative to a massive invasion of the South. He believed that this would only alienate those large numbers of southerners who were Unionists at heart by bringing on a war that would be bloody and devastating and serve only to incur the bitterest Southern opposition.

How to avoid all this?

Scott proposed (1) blockade the Southern coastline with Union naval picket and war ships.

(2) Send a strong column of troops from Cairo, Illinois, down the Mississippi to control the river.

(3) Concentrate large military forces in Virginia and the border states to discourage any Confederate invasion.

(4) Wait. This squeezing pressure on the South would cut off the Confederacy's resources, increase over time mounting dissatisfaction, cause desertions, and ultimately demoralize the rebel forces. He expected in time that those border states that went with the Confederacy would grow desperate and quit the insurrection. This would be followed by a weaning away of enthusiasm by the deep southern states and eventual fragmentation of the whole misconceived idea of secession and the quest for Southern independence.

Economic impoverishment and denied any chance to strike any meaningful offensive blow at their tormentors the experiment in Southern independence would implode upon itself.

*Anaconda Plan -*

*Key factor has time.*