

Battle Strategies

The Union had several natural advantages over the Confederacy. At the start of the Civil War, the Union already had a well-trained military and a competent navy. The North also had a higher population, and the North's industrialized economy gave the Union access to materials and war supplies. The South's economy, by comparison, was primarily agricultural. The South's economy relied on exporting cotton and other cash crops to Europe while lacking the materials and supplies usually provided by the North. In addition, the Confederacy had no navy and was forced to quickly recruit, train, and supply the soldiers for the Confederate army.

Union General Winfield Scott advised Lincoln to use the South's disadvantages against them. Scott suggested the Union isolate the Confederacy by blockading all Southern seaports to cripple the South's economy. Scott also suggested controlling the Mississippi River to further constrict the Confederacy. General Scott's plan was heavily criticized because it did not involve an aggressive attack strategy. It was called the "anaconda plan" because it planned to "squeeze" the South into surrendering.

Instead, Lincoln ordered a direct attack on the Confederacy. However, in 1864, Union General Ulysses S. Grant used General Scott's strategy to help win the Civil War. General Grant won control of the Mississippi River and used blockades to cut off all shipments to the Confederacy. By then, the Confederacy was lacking most supplies needed to continue fighting.

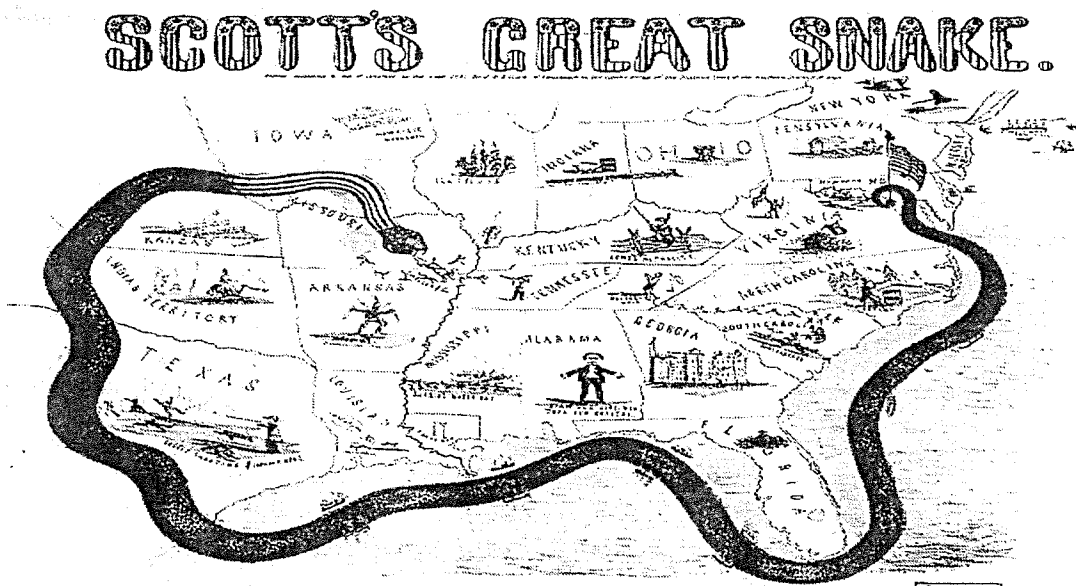
The primary goal of the Confederate strategy was to defend the new nation from the Union attack. Confederate President Jefferson Davis was aware of the Confederacy's disadvantages. He thought it best to protect the Confederate states by concentrating his forces against tactical advancements of the invading Union army.

Many Southerners, however, were not content waiting for the enemy to attack. They made the argument that "the best defense is a good offense." Thus, when opportunity presented itself, Jefferson Davis allowed his generals to attack on offensive campaigns, at several points even invading the North. Jefferson Davis called his battle strategy an "offensive-defensive" strategy. However, the South did not have enough soldiers or supplies to defend against the Union forever.

PART A: Use the text to answer these questions.

- A. What type of economy existed in the North?
B. How did the North's economy affect the Union?
- A. What type of economy existed in the South?
B. How did the South's economy affect the Confederacy?

PART B: Interpret the cartoon and the text to answer these questions.



3. What types of information are shown in this cartoon?
4. What does "Scott's Great Snake" represent in this cartoon?
5. A. What is represented by the part of the snake in the water?
B. What is represented by the part of the snake on land?
6. What was the purpose of "Scott's Great Snake"?
7. How did General Winfield Scott plan to use the South's disadvantages against the Confederacy?
8. How did "Scott's Great Snake" impact the Civil War?

PART C: Use the text to answer these questions.

9. What was the purpose of Jefferson Davis' strategy?
10. Use the text to explain the phrase "offensive-defensive."
11. Do you agree or disagree that "the best defense is a good offense"? Use logical reasoning and evidence from the text to support your opinion.
12. In your opinion, which strategy was more effective—Union or Confederate? Cite evidence from the text to support your opinion.