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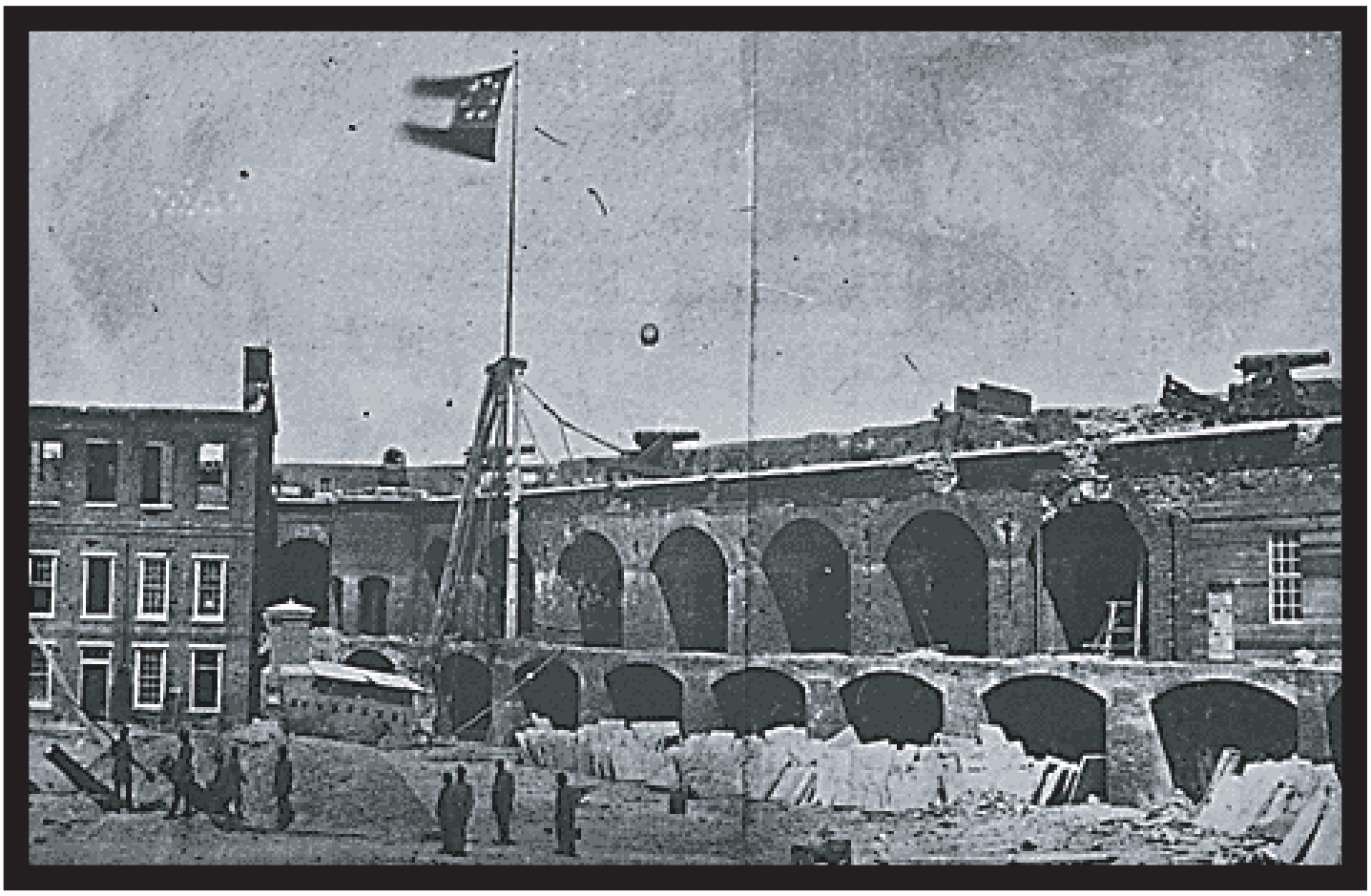
LINCOLN'S CABINET AND THE SUMTER CRISIS: A SIMULATION



Paul Binford

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis

A Simulation for the Classroom

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TEACHER NOTES

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis is a simulation where students assume the role of Lincoln's cabinet and attempt to successfully resolve the crisis over federal property located in South Carolina.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify the people, places, and events that immediately precipitated the Civil War.
- Students will identify the major components of a crisis, i.e., making a vital decision(s), with limited time, and incomplete information.
- Students will describe the various factors that affect political decision-making including conflicting personalities, competing constituencies, time limitations, inadequate or incomplete information, imperfect solutions, and hidden agendas.
- Students will read and interpret historical documents from the Sumter Crisis.
- Students will evaluate various options for resolving the Sumter Crisis.

OVERVIEW:

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis is a simulation for high school students who assume the role of President Lincoln and his cabinet members. The simulation begins with Lincoln's Inauguration (March 4, 1861) and concludes with Lincoln's decision regarding Fort Sumter. The simulation requires four days to complete and assumes a 50 to 55 minute class period. The simulation proceeds as follows:

DAY ONE

Present to your class a background lecture on the people, events, terms, and concepts surrounding the Sumter Crisis (See "**Sample Outline**" and "**Telegram**" on pp. 6--8). This information is *essential* for successful student participation in the simulation. You will find a

- telegram symbol by three different points in your "**Sample Outline**." After you have made that point in the lecture, arrange for a teacher or student to burst into the room saying in a loud voice, "Telegram! Telegram! Telegram!" The more you dramatize it the greater the effect, e.g., act shocked when the delivery person enters the room, have the delivery person require you to sign for the telegram, ask your students if they want to know the contents of the telegram. Read each telegram to the class. An excellent map of Charleston Harbor and a detailed illustration of Fort Sumter can be found at http://www.cpl.org/ccl/sumtertour.html. It is recommended that you use this site to supplement your presentation. Following the presentation divide your class into groups of five students. Each group will represent Lincoln's cabinet with each person in the group assigned a different historical role. The cabinet roles are President Abraham Lincoln, Secretary of State William H. Seward,

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, and Winfield Scott general-in-chief of the Army. Duplicate role cards, found in the back of the simulation, so that you can distribute one role card to each student. Each role card contains background information, as well as, student instructions for each day of the simulation. Instruct students to read the role card, bring it to class each day, and keep its contents confidential. Students assigned the role of Lincoln should also be given a copy of "**A Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address**," which they should read prior to the next class. As you might assume, Lincoln's role is the most demanding and is best suited for students with above average academic ability and leadership skills. *If you have a group with less than five students, please note that the roles of Lincoln, Seward, Blair, and Scott are the most critical.

DAY TWO

Duplicate the documents "**A Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address**" and "**Final Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address Form**" (pp.9 & 10), so that you have copies for each student. At the beginning of class direct your students to move into their assigned Lincoln's Cabinet Group. Introduce the day's activity by reading the following:

Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration

Abraham Lincoln is to be inaugurated on March 4, 1861. On this occasion he will take the Oath of Office and be sworn in as the sixteenth President of the United States. Part of this inauguration ceremony is an inaugural address or speech, where the president-elect outlines his/her plans and goals for his/her administration. Due to the secession crisis, Lincoln has decided to dedicate his entire address/speech to issues relating to the crisis. Remember, the entire country--both North and South--will be closely examining the president's address/speech. Both sections of the country will want to know the president's policy or position on slavery, secession, and on federal property (i.e., forts) that has been seized by the seceded states. If the president's speech lacks firmness on these issues, he will lose support in the North and the South may believe that Lincoln lacks resolve. If the president's address/speech is too forceful or appears to threaten "coercion," this may anger the border states that have yet to secede and/or provoke an attack on one of the federal forts, in the South, not yet seized by the secessionists. President Lincoln has completed a draft of that speech and now would like your suggestions on how this speech can be improved. As his cabinet your task is to advise him on what you believe is in the administration's and the nation's best interest.

Ask students to review the instructions found on their role card under "**Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration**." Distribute the "**Draft**" document and the "**Final Draft Form**." The day two activity for each group is to:

1. Read the draft copy of Lincoln's address.
2. Discuss the policies that the administration should have on slavery, secession, and seized federal property.
3. Write the final draft by recording it on the "**Final Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address Form**" and submit this form to the teacher at the end of the period.

Read each group's final draft form to determine the position they have taken on slavery, secession, and seized federal property. If students have followed the instructions on the role cards, the Inaugural Address will generally reflect the positions actually taken by Lincoln. That is:

1. No interference with slavery where it exists;
2. Acts of secession are void; and
3. The administration will hold, occupy, and possess all federal property.

If a group's Inaugural Address follows these positions or takes a stronger stand against the South, copy at least one editorial from each section of the country as found in "**Reaction Card One**" (pp.11 & 12) and attach it to their address. If a group's Inaugural Address recognizes a state's right to secede, copy at least one editorial from each section of the country as found in "**Reaction Card Two**" (pp.12 & 13) and attach it to their address. The Reaction Cards are newspaper editorial reactions to Lincoln's address. Any group recognizing a state's right to secession will have limited their options when trying to resolve the Sumter Crisis (see below).

DAY THREE

Duplicate the "**Option Documents**" and the "**Sumter Crisis Options Table**" (pp.14--18)--one copy for each student. Return each group's Inaugural Address along with their reaction card. Ask President Lincoln to read each group's reaction card. The reaction cards not only provide public response to the president's address, but the cards also give students insight into the likely sectional reaction to various options for resolving the Sumter Crisis. Introduce the day's activity by reading the following:

Sumter Crisis Point: Options

The day following the inauguration, President Lincoln learned of a report sent by Major Robert Anderson--the commander at Fort Sumter. In this report, the major indicated that he had enough provisions [supplies] remaining to hold out for six weeks. In addition, he estimated that a relief force of 20,000 troops would be needed to get provisions [supplies] through the Confederate defenses in Charleston Harbor and into Fort Sumter. In his Inaugural Address, President Lincoln has just stated his position on federal property seized by the seceding states. Now that policy will be put to the test. Five options are available to the Lincoln Administration--not all of these options are in keeping with your policy. You must identify these options by reading and interpreting the option documents and completing the "Sumter Crisis Options Table." The main purpose of reading each option document is to identify one of the major options for resolving the Sumter Crisis. Read each document with this question in mind: What method does this document suggest for resolving the crisis? Give each cabinet member the opportunity to present the option he/she favors and the advantages of that option.

Ask students to review the instructions found on their role card under "**Sumter Crisis Point: Options**." Distribute the option documents and the option table to each student giving each group an extra copy of the option table for their group response. Students should read the option documents individually and then the group should describe each option from their interpretation of the option documents. President Lincoln should ask each cabinet member to identify the

option he/she favors and the advantages of that option. *Any group that received **Reaction Card Two is limited to choosing option one, two, or five** because their Inaugural Address recognized a state's right to secede. One member of the group should record both the option favored by each cabinet member and the advantages listed for that option. Interpreting the option documents is one of the biggest challenges posed by this simulation. It is important that you closely monitor and gently steer student discussion, so that they successfully interpret the option documents. Student interpretations should be similar to the first column of the table found on page 19. Collect both the individual and group response(s) for your evaluation.

DAY FOUR

Return the individual and group option tables to students. Introduce the day's activity by reading the following:

Sumter Crisis Point: Decision

Some Republican supporters are beginning to fear that the new president is as indecisive as his predecessor. The garrison at Fort Sumter will be out of food in a matter of days. The nation--both North and South--demands a decision. President Lincoln will soon ask each cabinet member to vote on the option that he/she favors. Remember your decision may well decide the fate of the country.

Ask students to review the instructions found on their role card under "**Sumter Crisis Point: Decision**." At this point in the simulation, cabinet members are to **vote their conscience** and not their simulation role. Each cabinet member, including the President (who votes last), should vote for the option that he/she believes is in the best interest of the administration and the country. The vote is to be recorded on the group response "**Sumter Crisis Options Table**." President Lincoln, who is ultimately responsible for the decision, must decide which option will favorably resolve the Sumter Crisis. He/she should circle the option he/she favors. Allow approximately twenty minutes for the voting/decision process to be completed, then collect the group's response table. Using an overhead transparency or an acetate board/chalkboard record the final vote tallied by each cabinet group and the decision made by that group's president.

CONSEQUENCES:

Advise students that in this first major decision of Lincoln's administration, a minimum of three votes, supporting a particular option, were needed to maintain the unity and effectiveness of the cabinet. In the actual crisis, Lincoln's cabinet voted in favor of the option he selected by a margin of five to two. Now read the consequences of each option decision as found in the table on page 19. It is suggested that you read the decision consequences in the following order: **one, two, three, five, and four**.

DEBRIEFING:

Research shows that a skillfully led debriefing is the most important step in helping students learn from their simulation experience. Some suggested debriefing questions are as follows:

1. What were your feelings as you experienced the Sumter Crisis Simulation?
2. What were some of the pressures Lincoln and his cabinet faced?
3. What factors influenced your vote?
4. What made this historical event a crisis?
5. When should a president go against the advice of his cabinet?
6. Can you think of any other option that Lincoln might have chosen in this crisis?
7. Why do you think Lincoln felt it was important that the South be the aggressor in starting the Civil War?
8. Was Lincoln right in attempting to keep the Southern states from leaving the Union?
9. Does a state ever have the right to leave the Union?

EVALUATION:

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis: A Simulation engages your class in experiential learning; therefore, it is strongly recommended that you evaluate students based on their participation in the simulation. This can be assessed by your observations of individual contributions to cabinet group discussion as well as individual responses to the "**Sumter Crisis Options Table**." Individual responses can also be assessed by student comments during debriefing. An individual "**Scoring Rubric**" is located on page 20. Group assessment can be based on the "**Final Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address**" and the group response to the "**Sumter Crisis Options Table**."

HISTORICAL ACCURACY:

Lincoln's Cabinet and the Sumter Crisis: A Simulation is based on extensive research making significant use of primary documents. President Lincoln's cabinet was actually composed of seven members: William H. Seward, Gideon Welles, Montgomery Blair, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates, Caleb Smith, and Simon Cameron. Chase, Bates, and Smith changed their positions during the Sumter Crisis and offered few insights in resolving the crisis. Simon Cameron arrived in Washington after the other cabinet members. When he finally joined the cabinet deliberations, Cameron often echoed the sentiments of his ranking officers in the War Department--Winfield Scott being the most notable. A simulation is a simplified reality, so the cabinet was reduced to a total of five members--a more workable group size for high school students. Also, excerpts, representative of whole documents, and paraphrasing were used to facilitate student learning as in the case of the "Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address," "Reaction Cards," and the "Option Documents." The "Draft" document is based substantially on the Lincoln Lore Bulletins No. 358 and No. 359. The newspaper "Reaction Cards" are primarily based on quotes from the books Northern Editorials on Secession and Southern Editorials on Secession. A historical simulation must often deal with "What if?" scenarios. This certainly poses one of the most significant challenges to the author of a simulation. This was especially true with "Reaction Card Two" and "Option Table Consequences." James Buchanan's response

to the Sumter Crisis, particularly his efforts to placate the South, contrasted sharply with Lincoln's firm handling of the crisis; therefore, the results of Buchanan's decisions were often used in the conciliatory "What if" scenarios of this simulation. "Option Documents" were excerpted from Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies and Abraham Lincoln: A History Vol. II. In addition to these sources, Lincoln and the First Shot is an excellent narrative of the Lincoln cabinet's deliberations during the Sumter Crisis. This concise account could certainly be read by high school students. Two highly recommended Web sites are:

http://www.ccpl.org/ccl/sumtertour.html (National Park Service Web Site on Fort Sumter)
http://www.tulane.edu/~latner/CrisisIntro.html (Crisis at Fort Sumter).

Sample Lecture Outline:

I. Abraham Lincoln was elected president on November 6, 1860
   A. Lincoln belonged to the Republican Party
      1. the Republican Party was newly formed from former Northern Whigs, Northern Democrats, and Free-Soil Party members
      2. First Republican president
      3. Southerners derisively called members of this new party "Black Republicans"
      4. the Republican party opposed the spread of slavery to the territories
   B. Lincoln won the election by a plurality (he won 40% of the popular vote)
      1. Lincoln support came strictly from the Northern states--he did not win a single Southern State
      2. the remaining 60% of the popular vote was split between three Democratic candidates: Stephen Douglas, John C. Breckinridge, and John Bell

II. James Buchanan, the sitting president, was a lame duck.
   A. *Lame Duck*--an elected official who is serving out his/her remaining days in office and whose political power has been weakened because their successor has already been elected.
   B. Buchanan's lame duck period was from Lincoln's Election to Lincoln's Inauguration (November 6, 1860 to March 4,1861)
   C. Buchanan was a Democrat and he blamed the Republicans for the national strife over the slavery issue
      1. sympathetic to the South and to slavery
      2. he had many friends from that section of the country
      3. half of his cabinet was composed of Southerners
   D. During the lame duck period, Buchanan had three goals
      1. finish his term while delaying major decisions until Lincoln took office
      2. avoid war by taking a conciliatory policy toward the South
      3. retire to his home in Pennsylvania and allow Lincoln to solve the conflict brewing between North and South

III. (National Power vs. State Power)--one of the issues that divided North and South was which level of government, according to the Constitution was intended to be the most powerful?
   A. Northerners primarily held that the National or Federal Government was supreme and that the Constitution had created a Union of states

1. *Union*--a group of states closely tied together.
2. *Unionist*--is a person who favors this arrangement.

B. Southerners primarily held that the State was supreme. Each state controlled its own destiny and not the National or Federal Government.

1. *State's Rights*--is the position that the Constitution made the state level of government the most powerful.
2. According to this view not only were states the most powerful unit in government, but a state could choose to remain or leave the Union, i.e., the United States.

3. *Secede*--to withdraw from or leave the Union.

IV. If a state secedes, what happens to the property owned by the Federal or National Government?

A. Federal Property in the South included ships, forts, arsenals, and hospitals.

B. Show a map of Charleston Harbor and an illustration of Fort Sumter (using a transparency and overhead projector or an LCD unit)

C. Can a state secede?

D. Should the federal government use force to keep a state in the Union?

E. Should the federal government use force to maintain control of federal property in the South?

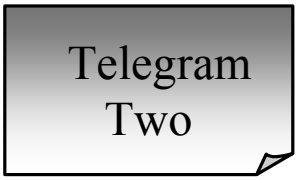
F. *Coercion*--the term, as used during this historical period, refers to any use of force by the Federal government in an effort to prevent secession or to forcibly hold or reclaim its property.

G. Lincoln's inaugural address must deal with slavery, secession, and seized federal property.

To: Washington Constitution
From: Charleston Correspondent
Date and Time: Thursday, December 20, 1860 1:55 p.m.

The South Carolina Convention approved an ordinance of secession this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. by a vote of 169-0. The ordinance reads in part, "that the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States, under the name of the United States of America, is hereby dissolved."

_____



To: Washington Constitution
From: Charleston Correspondent
Date and Time: Thursday, December 27, 1860 11:12 p.m.

Yesterday, Major Robert Anderson secretly moved his garrison from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter. South Carolina Governor Pickens sent word to the major insisting that he return to Moultrie. Anderson has refused. Governor Pickens has seized Castle Pinckney, Fort Moultrie, Fort Johnson, and the Charleston Arsenal.

_____

To: Washington Constitution
From: Austin Correspondent
Date and Time: Friday, February 1, 1861 1:34 p.m.

The Texas convention approved an ordinance of secession by a vote 166-7. This brings to seven the number of states that have passed ordinances of secession. The other states include South Carolina, the first to secede, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana.

A Draft of Lincoln's First Inaugural Address

(To be delivered on March 4, 1861)

I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no desire to do so.

I hold that the Constitution has established that the Union of these States is perpetual. It follows that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully leave the Union; that resolutions and ordinances to that effect are legally void. I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. All the power at my disposal will be used to reclaim the public property and places which have fallen; to hold, occupy, and possess these and all other property and places belonging to the government, but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion of any State.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not strike you unless you first strike it. You have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

You can refrain from assaulting it; I can not shrink from the defense of it. With you, and not with me, is the solemn question of "Shall it be peace, or a sword?

Group Number_____ Period_____

Final Draft of Lincoln's Inaugural Address

Slavery:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Secession:_____

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_____

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Seized Federal Property:_____

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_____

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Conclusion:_____

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REACTION CARD ONE

Northern Reaction to Lincoln's Inaugural Address:

Daily Tribune

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Chicago, Illinois

"quite sure that no document can be found among American state papers embodying sounder wisdom and higher patriotism--breathing kindlier feelings to all sections of the country."

The New York Times

Thursday March 7, 1861 New York, New York

"Before the Inaugural has been read in a single Southern State, it is denounced, through the telegraph, from every Southern point, as a declaration of war."

Transcript

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Boston, Massachusetts

"Right words at the right times, should be the test by which we try the speech of statesmen; and this test Mr. Lincoln's address will bear."

Border State Reaction to Lincoln's Inaugural Address:

American

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Baltimore, Maryland

"The tone of the speech is pacific; that is to say, Mr. Lincoln avows his determination to preserve peace, so far as it may be done, in the performance of his duty as he understands it. . . . It is evident, from the whole tenor of his Address, that he does not intend to be the aggressor, if peace may not be preserved."

Baltimore Sun

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Baltimore, Maryland

"it assumes despotic authority, and intimates the design to exercise that authority to any extent of war and bloodshed. If it means what it says, it is . . . the death of hope."

REACTION CARD ONE CONTINUED

Southern Reaction to Lincoln's Inaugural Address:

The Charleston Mercury

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Charleston, South Carolina

"It is our wisest policy to accept it as a declaration or war."

_____

Richmond Enquirer

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Richmond, Virginia

"Mr. Lincoln's Inaugural Address is before our readers, couched in the cool unimpassioned, deliberate language of the fanatic . . . Civil War must now come. There is left no middle course; there is left no more peace; war must settle the conflict."

REACTION CARD TWO

Northern Reaction to Lincoln's Inaugural Address:

Chicago Tribune

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Chicago, Illinois

"The President's panacea for saving the Union will be received throughout the whole country with derision and contempt."

New York Daily Tribune

Tuesday March 5, 1861 New York, New York

"The president's address was a long lecture wherein Reason was insulted, Humanity outraged, History travestied, and Common Sense defied."

REACTION CARD TWO CONTINUED

Border State Reaction to Lincoln's Inaugural Address:

Constitution

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Washington, D.C.

"The President has increased the displeasure of the Lincoln party by his repudiation of the coercion theory, and his firm refusal to permit a resort to force as a means of preventing the secession of a sovereign State."

Southern Reaction to Lincoln's Inaugural Address:

The New Orleans Bee

Tuesday March 5, 1861 New Orleans, Louisiana

"It would seem impossible for the two sections to live together harmoniously under one Government. Hence the honest conviction of thousands that peaceable separation, effected in good faith, and with due observance of equal justice to both sections, is the best, and indeed the only recourse left."

_____

Richmond Enquirer

Tuesday March 5, 1861 Richmond, Virginia

"The President recognizes the fact that the General Government is powerless to control the existing crisis"

OPTION ONE DOCUMENTS

January 12, 1861

President of the United States

Dear Mr. President:

I have determined to send to you [the Honorable] I. W. Hayne, the attorney-general of the State of South Carolina, and have instructed him to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, to the authorities of the State of Carolina. The demand I now make of you, is suggested because of my earnest desire to avoid bloodshed.

Governor Pickens
South Carolina

January 31, 1861

President of the United States

Dear Mr. President:

I do not come as a military man to demand the surrender of a fortress, but as the legal officer of the State--its attorney-general--to claim for the State its undoubted right of eminent domain. The proposition now is that the Attorney General distinctly pledge[s] the faith of South Carolina to make such compensation in regard to Fort Sumter to the full extent of the money value of the property of the United States delivered over to the authorities of South Carolina by your command.

I. W. Hayne
Attorney General
of the State of South Carolina

OPTION TWO DOCUMENTS

March 9, 1861

Lieutenant General Winfield Scott:

How long, at the most, could the Sumter garrison hold on? Could it be either reinforced or provisioned with the forces already available? If not, what additional forces would be needed?

A. Lincoln

March 12, 1861

Abraham Lincoln

Dear Mr. President:

I should need a fleet of war vessels and transports which, in the scattered disposition of the Navy (as understood), could not be collected in less than four months; 5000 additional regular troops and 20,000 volunteers. To raise, organize, and discipline such an army would require six to eight months. As a practical military question the time for resupplying Fort Sumter with any means at hand had passed away nearly a month ago. Since then a surrender under assault or from starvation has been merely a question of time. It is, therefore, my opinion and advice that Major Anderson be instructed to evacuate the fort.

Winfield Scott

[President Lincoln asked each cabinet member to give a written opinion to the following question: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, under all the circumstances is it wise to attempt it?"]

Department of State,15th March, 1861

If it were possible to peacefully provision Fort Sumter, of course I should answer that it would be both unwise and inhuman not to attempt it. But the facts of the case are known to be that the attempt must be made with the employment of military and marine force, which would provoke combat, and probably initiate a civil war . . .

I have believed firmly that everywhere, even in South Carolina, devotion to the Union is a profound and permanent national sentiment which if encouraged, be ultimately relied upon to rally the people of the seceding States to reverse, upon due deliberations, all the popular acts of legislatures and conventions by which they were hastily and violently committed to disunion.

The policy of the time, therefore, has seemed to me to consist in conciliation, which should deny to disunionists any new provocation or apparent offense . . .

William H. Seward

OPTION THREE DOCUMENTS

[President Lincoln asked each cabinet member to give a written opinion to the following question: "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort Sumter, under all the circumstances is it wise to attempt it?"]

Post-Office Department, Washington, March 15, 1861

Sir: In reply to your questions, whether in my opinion it is wise to provision Fort Sumter under present circumstances, I submit the following considerations in favor of provisioning that fort.

The Rebellion has grown into the form of an organized government in seven States, and up to this moment nothing has been done to check its progress or prevent its being regarded either at home or abroad as a successful revolution. . . .

The rebels for the most part believe that the Northern men are deficient in the courage necessary to maintain the government. Doubting the manhood of Northern men, they discredit their disclaimers of this purpose to humiliate and injure them. The evacuation of Fort Sumter, when it is known that it can be provisioned and manned, will convince the rebels that the administration lacks firmness, and will, therefore, tend more than any event that has happened to embolden them.

I believe Fort Sumter may be provisioned and relieved by Captain Fox with little risk . . . No expense or care should, therefore, be spared to achieve this success. Nor will the result be materially different to the nation if the attempt fails, and its gallant leader and followers lost. It will in any event vindicate the hardy courage of the North, and the determination of the people and their President to maintain the authority of the government; and this is all that is wanting, in my judgment to restore it.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
M. Blair

[A plan to reinforce and resupply Fort Sumter]

New York, February 23, 1861

I simply propose three tugs, convoyed by light-draught men-of-war [ships of battle]. These tugs are sea-boats, six feet draught, speed fourteen knots. The men are below, entirely protected from grape [artillery fire]--provisions [supplies] [are] on deck. The first tug to lead is empty, to open their fire. The other two to follow, with force divided, and towing the large iron boats of the Baltic, which would hold the whole force should every tug be disabled.

G. V. Fox

OPTION FOUR DOCUMENT

March 29, 1861

[An opinion written at the verbal request of President Lincoln]

Mr. Welles, Secretary of Navy, wrote:

I concur in the proposition to send an armed force off Charleston with supplies of provisions and reinforcements for the garrison at Fort Sumter, and of communicating at the proper time the intentions of the government to supply the fort peaceably if not attacked. There is little probability that this will be permitted if the opposing forces can prevent it, but armed resistance to a peaceable attempt to send provisions [supplies] to one of our own forts will justify the government in using all the power at its command.

OPTION FIVE DOCUMENT

April 1, 1861

Brig. Gen G. T. Beauregard,
[Confederate] Commanding, &c., Charleston, S.C.

My opinion is that the President Lincoln has not the courage to execute orders agreed upon in Cabinet for the evacuation of the fort, but that he intends to shift the responsibility upon Major Anderson, by suffering him to be starved out.

Martin J. Crawford
[Confederate Commissioner]

STUDENT NAME_____ CABINET MEMBER NAME_____

Fort Sumter Crisis Options Table

Directions: Read the option documents individually and then as a group briefly describe EACH option, one through five, in the first column. Each cabinet member should choose one option that he/she favors and list the advantages and disadvantages of that option. President Lincoln will ask each cabinet member to identify the option he/she favors and the advantages of that option. One member of the group should record the option favored by each cabinet member and the advantages listed. Leave the "Vote" column blank until you have received instruction from your teacher. Your individual and group response(s) will be collected.

DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	VOTE
OPTION ONE:			
OPTION TWO:			
OPTION THREE:			
OPTION FOUR:			
OPTION FIVE:			

Option	Historical Perspective	Party	Northern States	Southern States	Border States
One **Sell Fort Sumter**	This was an option offered to President Buchanan, by South Carolina, after it had seceded. Even the weak and vacillating Buchanan Administration quickly rejected this option as an offer to buy, backed by a threat of force, if rejected. Although this option would have presumably been available to Lincoln, as well, it was never considered.	The six year old Republican Party will lose many offices in the next general election. Your recognition of the Confederacy has some party members discussing impeachment.	Your decision to sell Fort Sumter to the Confederacy has had a demoralizing effect on the Northern States who now view the division of the nation in two--North and South--as a permanent fact.	By selling Fort Sumter to the Confederate States of America, your administration has unwittingly recognized secession, i.e., the independence of the Southern States. This has increased the Confederacy's prestige around the world.	Your administration has avoided using "coercion," thus encouraging the Border States to remain in the Union. Regrettably, the Confederacy's recent success has made it a more attractive option.
Two **Evacuation of Fort Sumter**	This option was seriously considered throughout the crisis. Early on, evacuation was supported by every cabinet member except Blair. Lincoln's military advisors also supported this option. Initially, Lincoln appears to have been prepared to evacuate the fort as a military necessity, but he found the thought so repugnant that he eventually found a better option.	Republican Party insiders now have confirmation that Seward, not Lincoln, is running the new administration. After all, Seward was the one who wanted to soothe Southern fears by evacuating Fort Sumter.	Your decision to evacuate will generally be accepted as a military necessity, though some will begin to question the resolve of your administration to maintain the Union.	The Southern States will view your decision to evacuate as a military necessity and <u>not</u> as a concession to the South designed to save the Union. By choosing this option you have avoided war, but you also have emboldened the Confederacy to make additional demands.	Your decision to evacuate will likely slow the momentum for secession in the Border States.
Three **Reinforce and Resupply Fort Sumter**	This option was also seriously considered throughout the crisis. It was in keeping with Lincoln's Inaugural Address "to hold, occupy, and possess" the federal forts. The option's most serious drawback was that it would make the administration appear to be the aggressor--something Lincoln had promised to avoid in that same Inaugural Address.	The Republican Party has largely been strengthened by your decision.	Public opinion is largely supportive and rallies in support of the Union. There is still a significant minority that opposes your decision. They believe the administration has acted precipitously, when other peaceful options were still available.	Your decision to attempt to reinforce and resupply Fort Sumter has led to war between the Federal Government and the Confederate States of America.	Your decision to use "coercion" has strengthened secessionist momentum in the Border States. In the coming days, several Border States will likely adopt acts of secession.
Four **Provision Fort Sumter with Notice**	After grappling with the crisis for over a month, Lincoln chose this option. He notified the Governor of South Carolina that he was sending a fleet of ships to provision Fort Sumter. Lincoln promised that no troops would reinforce Fort Sumter, as long as, the ships were not fired upon. Through this decision, Lincoln fulfilled the promises of his Inaugural Address, while shifting the decision to start hostilities (war) over to South Carolina and the Confederacy.	There is an upsurge in support for the Republican Party with strong gains in the next general election likely. Party insiders are beginning to realize that they might have underestimated the ability of President Lincoln.	Your decision to provision the forts, with notice to government officials in South Carolina, has galvanized support for the Union and your administration.	The Confederacy fired on Fort Sumter before the relief ships arrived--in effect firing upon bread for starving soldiers. This fateful decision made the Southern States the aggressors thus beginning a bloody Civil War.	Since the Confederacy fired upon the relief ships, the Border States now await to see if the Lincoln administration will call for troops.
Five **Allow the Fort Sumter Garrison to be starved into surrender**	The option of allowing Major Robert Anderson and his men to be starved into surrendering Fort Sumter was a rumor telegraphed by a Confederate Commissioner to Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy. This wishful thinking was based on Lincoln's supposed cowardice. Lincoln, certainly a man of personal courage, never considered this option.	The Republican Party will suffer huge losses in the next general election. Your lack of moral leadership has surprised even your harshest critics who already viewed you as a backwoods lawyer from Illinois.	Your decision has demoralized the North, a widespread outcry for your impeachment is gaining momentum, and has undermined your future effectiveness in dealing with the South.	Your decision to allow the Fort Sumter garrison to be starved out has increased the prestige of the Confederacy, who has won a symbolic victory over the federal government without firing a shot.	Your decision has demoralized Union supporters in the Border States and has strengthened the secessionist movement.

Name_____ Period_____

SCORING RUBRIC

Cabinet Role	The student's performance was consistent with his/her historical character. (5 Points)	The student's performance was usually consistent with his/her historical character. (4 Points)	The student's performance was usually inconsistent with his/her historical character. (3 Points)	The student's performance was inconsistent with his/her historical character. (2 Points)	The student did <u>not</u> fulfill his/her role by failing to participate. (0 Points)
Sumter Crisis Point: Inauguration	The student made significant contributions to cabinet discussions and the writing of the Inaugural Address. (5 Points)	The student contributed to the cabinet discussions and the writing of the Inaugural Address. (4 Points)	The student occasionally contributed to the cabinet discussions and the writing of the Inaugural Address. (3 Points)	The student rarely contributed to the cabinet discussions and the writing of the Inaugural Address. (2 Points)	The student did <u>not</u> contribute to the cabinet discussions and the writing of the Inaugural Address. (0 Points)
Sumter Crisis Point: Options	The student identified both the option he/she favored and several advantages of that option. (5 Points)	The student identified both the option he/she favored and an advantage of that option. (4 Points)	The student failed to identify the option he/she favored or an advantage of that option. (3 Points)	The student attempted to but failed to identify the option he/she favored and an advantage of that option. (2 Points)	The student did <u>not</u> contribute to the interpretation of the option documents. (0 Points)
Debriefing	The student participated in the debriefing. The student made accurate use of the people, places, events, and/or documents of the Sumter Crisis in his/her response(s). (5 Points)	The student participated in the debriefing. The student's response(s) was/were usually accurate in the use of the people, places, events and/or documents of the Sumter Crisis. (4 Points)	The student participated in the debriefing. The student's response(s) was/were usually inaccurate in the use of the people, places, events, and/or documents of the Sumter Crisis. (3 Points)	The student's participated in the debriefing. The student's response made minimal use of the people, places, events and/or documents of the Sumter Crisis in his/her response(s). (2 Points)	The student did <u>not</u> participate in the debriefing. (0 Points)
Scoring	**/20 =**				

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Role Card

Name: Abraham Lincoln **Position:** President

Background Information: You served in the Illinois State Legislature and one term in Congress. You emerged from obscurity during the Illinois Senate Race. A series of debates with your opponent Stephen Douglas, a Democrat, captured the nation's attention. In 1860 as a dark horse candidate, you won the Republican nomination for the presidency. With the Democrats divided over the slavery issue, you won the election even though you received only forty percent of the popular vote. While you received strong support in the North, you failed to win even one state in the South. The election of a "Black Republican" as president, as the secessionists like to call you, was the final straw in causing seven southern states to secede. You have assembled a talented, but contentious cabinet. The unfolding Surnter Crisis will test your ability to keep the country and the cabinet unified.

Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration

You have drafted your Inaugural Address to be given on March 4, 1861. This speech is an important statement of the new administration's policy on slavery, secession, and the seized federal property. The final draft that you deliver to the American people must make clear your policy on all three of these areas. While you view slavery as a moral evil, you are willing to tolerate it, as long as, slavery does not spread to new territory. **Your primary goal is keeping the country unified, i.e., maintaining the Union—including the Southern States**. This is the most highly anticipated Inaugural Address ever given. The nation eagerly awaits your words. Through the telegraph, your speech will be wired to every part the country. Your speech, as well as, public reaction will be printed in tomorrow's newspaper.

Sumter Crisis Point: Options

Several options are available for solving the Sumter Crisis—not all of these options are in keeping with your policy as stated in the Inaugural Address. You should lead your cabinet in identifying and discussing these options. Each cabinet member should present the option he/she favors and the advantages of that option. You should present the option you favor after all the other cabinet members have presented. Through your comments you should try to persuade the rest of the cabinet. A united cabinet is essential for the success of your administration.

Sumter Crisis Point: Decision

You should ask each cabinet member to vote their conscience on the option that he/she believes is in the best interest of the administration and country. After receiving the input of your cabinet, you, as president, must decide which option will most favorably resolve the Sumter Crisis.

Role Card

Name: William H. Seward **Cabinet Position:** Secretary of State

Background Information: You have served as Governor of New York and in the United States Senate. You are one of the founders of the Republican Party, and you appeared to be the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination in 1860—until Lincoln, a dark horse candidate, beat you at the Chicago nominating convention. Even now you can scarcely believe that you are not the president. As Secretary of State you intend to have a dominant role in the new administration. You are experienced in national affairs and have many connections in Washington something Lincoln—the newly elected president—lacks. In the past you have spoken of an "irrepressible conflict" between the North and South, but in this crisis you have come to believe patience is the best approach. Give the South time and they will come to their senses. You want to avoid any conflict, coercion, or hostility which would permanently drive a wedge between the North and South.

Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration

President Lincoln will ask for suggestions on his Inaugural Address. This speech is an important statement of the new administration's policy. You want the speech to be conciliatory, that is, you want to comfort and soothe the fears of the South. You believe the speech should contain language that will help bring the two sections of the country back together, Any comments about use offeree or fighting should be avoided. Your suggestions to the president should follow these beliefs.

Sumter Crisis Point: Options

Several options are available for solving the crisis at Fort Sumter—not all of these options are in keeping with President Lincoln's policy as stated in the Inaugural Address. You favor option two (You are the author of one of the documents found in option two). You should attempt to persuade the cabinet and the president that this is the best option available.

Sumter Crisis Point: Decision

You should vote for the option you believe is in the best interest of the administration and the country (Vote your conscience and not your role.).

Role Card

Name: Winfield Scott **Cabinet Position:** general-in-chief of the army

Background Information: You were the victorious commander of the army during the Mexican War, where you earned the nickname "Old Fuss and Feathers." In 1852 you were nominated for the presidency by the Whig Party, but you lost the election to Franklin Pierce. You are considered the greatest American military leader, since George Washington, and your military opinions are rarely questioned or second-guessed.

Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration
President Lincoln will ask for your suggestions on his Inaugural Address. This speech is an important statement of the new administration's policy. As the nation's foremost military expert, you are free to make suggestions regarding the president's speech.

Sumter Crisis Point: Options

Several options are available for solving the crisis at Fort Surnter— not all of these options are in keeping with President Lincoln's policy as stated in the Inaugural Address. You favor **option two** (You are the author of one of the documents found in option two.). You should attempt to persuade the cabinet and the president that this is the best option available.

Sumter Crisis Point: Decision

You should vote for the option you believe is in the best interest of the administration and the country (Vote your conscience and not your role.).

Role Card

Name: Montgomery Blair **Cabinet Position:** Postmaster General

Background Information: You come from a distinguished and politically powerful family. Your father was an advisor to President Andrew Jackson. You attended West Point and served in the Florida Indian Wars. You are the only cabinet member, other than Winfield Scott, with military experience. You also served as legal counsel to Dred Scott, but you do not oppose slavery. You reside in Maryland, a strategic border state, and have recently switched from the Democratic to the Republican Party. You are the youngest and lowest ranking member of the cabinet. Your dislike of William H. Seward, the Secretary of State, is equaled only by your strong Unionist views. You believe that Southern arrogance has led to this crisis. You oppose anymore concessions to the South and believe that force is the only thing that the South will respect.

Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration

President Lincoln will ask for you suggestions on his Inaugural Address. This speech is an important statement of the new administration's policy. You find Lincoln's views, expressed in the draft of his Inaugural Address, very similar to your own. You are very supportive and feel changes are needed.

Sumter Crisis Point: Options

Several options are available for solving the crisis at Fort Sumter—not all of these options are in keeping with President Lincoln's policy as stated in the Inaugural Address. You favor **option three** (You are the author of one of the documents found in option three). You should attempt to persuade the cabinet and the president that this is the best option available.

Sumter Crisis Point: Decision

You should vote for the option you believe is in the best interest of the administration and the country (Vote your conscience and not your role.).

Role Card

Name: Gideon Welles **Cabinet Position:** Secretary of the Navy

Background Information: You have worked as a newspaper editor and the president of a life insurance company. You also served in the Navy Department during the Polk administration. You are widely respected throughout the New England states and have a glowing reputation for honesty. You distrust William H. Seward and helped keep him from gaining the Republican nomination in Chicago.

Sumter Crisis Point: The Inauguration

President Lincoln will ask for your suggestions on his Inaugural Address. This speech is an important statement of the new administration's policy. As a cabinet member representing the important region of New England, you are free to make suggestions regarding the president's address.

Sumter Crisis Point: Options

Several options are available for solving the crisis at Fort Sumter—not all of these options are in keeping with President Lincoln's policy as stated in the Inaugural Address. You favor **option four** (You are the author of the document found in option four). You should attempt to persuade the cabinet and the president that this is the best option available.

Sumter Crisis Point: Decision

You should vote for the option you believe is in the best interest of the administration and the country (Vote your conscience and not your role.).