

Query

On February 28, Major Anderson sought his officers' assessments on the required personnel and ships to reinforce Fort Sumter for submission to the War Department and President Lincoln. He instructed each officer to provide their estimates autonomously, hoping that the daunting realities of reinforcement would dissuade the government from pursuing aggressive action.

Captain Foster, the chief engineer, reported the highest estimate: landing and securing the batteries at Cummings Point and Morris Island would necessitate 3,000 regulars or 10,000 volunteers, with an additional 3,000 regulars required for Sullivan's Island. To maintain control over these positions afterward, a force of 10,000 regulars or 30,000 volunteers would be essential. The anticipated resistance would come from South Carolinians, bolstered by troops from neighboring states.

Artillery Captain Truman Seymour presented an even graver evaluation. He asserted that resupply missions via deceit were no longer feasible due to heightened vigilance, stating that open attempts would fail unless vessels were impervious to gunfire. Such efforts would draw immediate attention, and any sizable Union troop movement toward Fort Sumter would provoke a swift Confederate response, consolidating substantial local resources against an invading force. Seymour warned of the possibility of twenty thousand trained marksmen assembling to defend Charleston Harbor, which he likened to the siege of Sevastopol, predicting catastrophic losses.

Other officers contributed estimates for a necessary invading force varying between three thousand and ten thousand men, all requiring maritime protection. Quartermaster Hall suggested deploying seven warships, although he cautioned that success would hinge on improbable circumstances and a likely failure was more probable.

Anderson relayed these assessments to Washington, careful to express his concurring view that an effective attempt to reinforce the fort would need at least twenty thousand well-trained troops. This recommendation implied the need for a force larger than the entire U.S. Army at that time, demonstrating the immense challenge posed by reinforcing Fort Sumter amidst the looming conflict.