

...make another appeal to the authorities at Washington. Accordingly I sent a special messenger to Washington, with a despatch to the administration advising that no more troops be sent through Maryland, that the people of Annapolis be sent elsewhere, and urging that a truce be offered, with a view of a peaceful settlement of existing difficulties by mediation. I suggested that Lord Lyons, the British Minister, be requested to act as mediator between the contending parties. The result of the mission will be seen from the correspondence herewith submitted.

These events have satisfied me that the War Department has concluded to make Annapolis the point for landing troops, and has resolved to open and maintain communication between this place and Washington.

In the brief time allowed it is impossible for me to go more into detail. The documents accompanying this message please before you all the information possessed by me. I shall promptly communicate such other information as may reach me.

Notwithstanding the fact that our most honored and intelligent citizens admit the right of the Government to transport its troops across our soil, it is evident that a portion of the people of Maryland are opposed to the exercise of the right. I have done all in my power to protect the citizens of Maryland, and to preserve peace within our borders. Lawless occurrences will be repeated I fear, unless prompt action be taken by you.

It is my duty to advise you of my own convictions of the proper course to be pursued by Maryland in the emergency which is upon us. It is of no consequence now to discuss the causes which have induced our troubles. Let us look to our distressing present, and to our portentous future. The State of Maryland, and perhaps of her sister border slave States will undoubtedly be seriously affected by the action of your honorable body. Therefore should every good citizen bend all his energies to the task before us; and, therefore, should the animosities and bickerings of the past be forgotten, and all strike hands in the holy cause of preserving peace to our beloved State and to our common country. I honestly and most earnestly entertain the conviction that the only safety of Maryland lies in preserving a neutral position between our brethren of the North and of the South. We have violated no rights of either section. We have been loyal to the Union. The necessary content between the two sections has not been fomented or encouraged by us, although we have suffered from it in the past. The impending war has not come by any act or any wish of ours. We have done all we could to avert it. We have hoped that Maryland and the other border slave States, by their conservative position and love for the Union, might have acted as mediators between the extremes of both sections, and thus have prevented the terrible evils of a prolonged civil war. Entertaining these views, I cannot counsel Maryland to take sides against the General Government, or to do small constant outrages upon us which would justify us in asserting the authority. As a consequence, I can give no other counsel than that we shall array ourselves for Union and Peace, and thus preserve our soil from being polluted with the blood of brethren.

If war must be between the North and the South, we may force the contending parties to transfer the field of battle from our soil, so that our lives and property may be spared. It seems to me that, independently of all other considerations, our geographical position forces us to this, unless we are willing to see our State the theatre of a long and bloody civil war, and the consequent utter destruction of every material interest of our people. The meeting of the brave men and honorable States and citizens which will cry out from the soil for vengeance upon us if we fail to do all that in us lies to avert the impending calamity. The course I suggest lies all the while before the sole greatest work of my policy. But for the excitement prevailing among our people during the past few days, I should have been able to do more for the Union.

...the harassing and painful incumbency of the Presidential Chair, I have labored constantly and faithfully for the peace, the safety and the interests of Maryland and of our common country. This consciousness has fully sustained me in all my troubles, and has enabled me to endure patiently all the cruel, unprovoked and heartless attacks that have been made upon my integrity. I have also comfort in the conviction that my policy has been sustained by a large majority of the people, and nothing that has transpired since the recent lamentable occurrences within our State has shaken that conviction. A momentary frantic excitement took the place of reason and good judgment, and men for the time threw aside all prudent thoughts of the future in the burning desire to avenge what they considered wrong.

I submit my suggestions to your wisdom; and I appeal to you not only as devoted citizens of Maryland, but as husbands and fathers, to allow that prudence and christianlike temper, so honorable to all men, to guide your counsels; and I implore you not to be swayed by the passions which seem to be so fully aroused in our midst, to do what the generations to come after us shall ever deplore.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I ask your indulgence if I have omitted to present to you any other matter of interest in connection with the important subject which you are summoned to consider. The short time I have had in which to prepare this communication, and the turmoil and excitement around me may have caused omissions; if so, they will be promptly supplied when indicated by you.