

the President has rashly committed himself to a policy not necessary to maintain the rights of the nation, and calculated to endanger the peace of the country, will they, under the blind guidance of party, follow his lead? The wise framers of our Constitution intended to form a system of government in which the Legislature should be independent of the Executive; and they invested the Legislature with power to check and control the Executive, when the public interest demanded the exercise of that power.

I trust that this Congress will sublimely realize the intentions of those illustrious founders of our Government, by interposing its authority to arrest the Executive in that reckless system of measures in relation to our difficulties with England, which, if carried out, must inevitably involve this nation in a most unnecessary and calamitous war. The resolution now before this committee, proposing to give peremptory and unqualified notice to England of the termination, at the end of a year, of the treaty of 1818, may fairly be regarded as the measure of the Administration. I hope that none will attribute my opposition to it to party motives. I opposed the election of the present President of the United States, but I did not come here to make factious opposition to his Administration. Upon all questions relating to our foreign affairs, especially, it would be far more agreeable to me to support than to oppose the Executive. I hold the opinion that all questions relating to our foreign affairs ought, as far as possible, to be placed beyond the scope of party views and party considerations. And I am not without a hope that a majority of Congress, acting upon patriotic motives, will defeat the Administration upon this measure. I feel that I am justified in regarding the resolution now before the committee as the *measure of the Administration*, from the fact that it was reported to this House by a committee composed mainly of the friends of the Administration; from the fact that a resolution precisely analogous has been reported in the other wing of this Capitol by a committee similarly constituted; and from facts and circumstances, known to us all, constantly transpiring in this hall and out of it. Any material change or modification of the resolution is, then, a defeat of the Executive. I have already stated that I believe it to be the wisest policy for Congress to take no affirmative action whatever, at the present time, upon the question of notice. I fear that a majority of this House will not agree with me. Whilst it is probable that a majority of this House is in favor of giving notice in some form, I cannot believe that a majority will sustain the resolution in its *present form*. I admit that the resolution may be so modified as to relieve it of its hostile aspect, and make it powerless for good or evil. But, in my humble judgment, Congress ought not to interpose in matters connected with the foreign affairs of the nation, unless its interposition shall carry with it that dignity which can alone attach to that kind of action which, founded in wisdom, is powerfully effective of good. Nevertheless, if the resolution cannot be defeated entirely, let it be modified so as to relieve it of its hostile aspect. In either event, the Executive will not be sustained in his reckless system of measures, and the peace of the nation will be preserved.

I repeat that, if I believed this measure of the Administration calculated to conserve the peace of the country, and necessary to maintain its rights, it would give me sincere pleasure to support it. But I believe its tendency will be to produce war, and that it is not necessary to maintain the rights of the nation. I have nothing to say in relation to the various propositions which have been made to amend it. I desire all that I say to be understood as applying to the resolution as reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs. On what grounds do its supporters urge its adoption? It is said to be necessary to bring the difficulty between this Government and England, in relation to their conflicting territorial claims on the northwestern coast of this continent, to a speedy and peaceful settlement. It is said to be necessary to induce a resumption of negotiations, and as an auxiliary to our negotiators. How is it to produce these effects? Where are the proofs of these assertions? Has not England already given us sufficient proofs that she desires a peaceful and speedy adjustment of that difficulty? Was not Lord Ashburton charged with its adjustment by England when he was sent by that Government to settle the difficulty in relation to the northeastern boundary? And was

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