

Mr. Chairman, I will go farther. If from the action of this House, or from any other circumstances, war should occur, although there may be southern men who believe that it could have been avoided, yet I take this occasion to say to the West, that when it becomes clearly necessary and presents the only remaining mode of obtaining our rights, they will find the South standing by the country and by them with heart and hand. Yes, when that hour comes—and God grant that there may never be a necessity for it—the maxim of the gallant Deatur will find one universal acceptance amongst the whole American people—"our country, right or wrong." Many may be found deeply deploring, in deed, the mismanagement, or the necessity which has plunged the country into war, but they will not pause to settle the question of responsibility until they have first done all that becomes them to preserve national rights and honor. I must, however, here declare, in a spirit of entire frankness, that if, by giving this notice, we should ultimately either lose Oregon or be led into an unnecessary war to obtain it, those who give this notice will be held responsible, at the proper time, for all its consequences. It is the undoubted duty of every section of this confederacy, North, South, East, and West, to defend the national soil, and protect the national honor. But we owe it to ourselves, to our posterity, and to the great interests of humanity, to exhaust all honorable means of peace before we plunge the nation into war. Wo to the people amongst whom war becomes a familiar and a household word, and wo to the statesman who cultivates a spirit of violence amongst those whom he influences, instead of cherishing a disposition to peace. In this connexion, Mr. Chairman, I must be permitted to express the profound regret with which I have heard some of the remarks made in this debate. There are elements enough of strife abroad in the public mind without enlisting the passions further in the work of havoc and ruin. It was with the deepest regret that I heard members upon this floor taunting the administration, and declaring the belief that it would "back out," and that it could not be "kicked into a war." These sounds fell on my ear like the echoes of something of which I had heard before, and which contributed to the same result upon another occasion—a result for which a necessity then existed, however unfortunate it might be now.

There never was, there never can be, an administration elected by the people of this country, which could refuse a war, if national rights and honor required it. None but a timid administration can be "kicked into a war" by domestic opponents. It requires far more courage to resist a war, every than to yield to it. It sometimes requires more moral firmness and greater and higher qualities of mind to withstand the first outburst of the war feeling, and calmly to appeal to the sober second thought of a reflecting people for ultimate instructions, than to be the hero of a hundred fields.

Mr. Chairman, I will now say, and I desire my words to be noted, that if any gentleman here believes that this notice will lead to war, and yet votes for it under the hope that the President will back out sooner than face the result, he is utterly mistaken. This administration will not back out from any position which it has taken in the face of the