

## Transcription

### "Will you make a declaration of war?"

I beg the indulgence of the Convention while I depart from a resolution I formed the moment you elected me to that chair—to take no part in your deliberations. But the moment has come when I feel myself impelled, by a sense of duty, to state, with all the brevity I can, the reason why I cannot vote for this ordinance of secession. . . .

What I demand of you is this: will you make a declaration of war—for that is what this ordinance of secession will amount to—without preparing to defend our people who live upon the frontier, who are exposed to the assaults of the enemy, and upon whom they will come thick and heavy? I see before me now my venerable friend from Charles City [Ex-President TYLER]. I demand to know of him, if he were President of the United States, whether he would ever have recommended to Congress to declare a war under such circumstances as now press upon us, with a force against him of eighteen to one, with a powerful navy upon the other side, and he without a gun boat; with armies drilled and disciplined, and with a command of 800,000 militia, would he have recommended to Congress to pass a declaration of war without waiting sixty days to make some preparation for it? I imagine not, sir.

We have been told here that the power of these Confederate States once organized into a regular government, with a regular army, would be sufficient to meet the emergency of a war such as is now threatened. Gentlemen, that is a tried failure. I tell you that the Confederate army never will and never can march to our assistance. Not that they are not as brave and gallant men as any in the world; but they will use all their means and power to protect themselves at home....

My belief is, that if this ordinance passes here to day, and more, if it passes by the unanimous vote of this body, that it will be regarded as an act of war, and so treated by the General Government.

I shall vote against this ordinance of secession, for the reason, among others, that if there be not a unanimous vote upon it, there may be a pause on the part of the General Government until our people vote upon it. In the mean time we will have an opportunity to make some necessary preparation to meet an emergency of war, if such should result.

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