

I have received and will transmit, various communications from many of our sister States, for each of which I ask your respectful and early consideration. I cannot conclude this communication without adverting to the present critical position of the relations of our Country with Great Britain, resulting from the claims of the two Countries to the Oregon Territory.

I do not believe that a war between the two Countries can properly, or in accordance with the public sentiment of either Country, arise in the adjustment of this question. I have every confidence that the President of the United States is sincerely desirous to preserve peace, if peace can be maintained consistently with the honor and rights of the Country. In my judgement, it would be inconsistent with the wisdom and prudence manifested by our Government, in the precautionary measures taken against Mexico, whereby the peace of the Country was preserved in the settlement of the Texas question, and repugnant to the opinion we should entertain of the capacity of our Government, to believe that war can immediately result from the conflicting opinions or actions of the two Governments upon this question.

No administration which has ever had the control of the Government, could stand against the general indignation which would follow the loss of life and property, consequent upon a war with Great Britain, entered upon without warning, and without any, the slightest preparations for defence.

No part of the Union would, in the event of war, be more exposed than Maryland; and if you should have less confidence than I have in the wisdom of the Federal Executive, it will be your paramount duty to make some provision for placing our State in a posture of defence.

If you should entertain upon this momentous subject, an opinion different from mine, the thorough re-organization of the Militia system will be imperatively required. But may not this question be settled without injury to the rights of this, and consistently with the honor of both Countries?

If, contrary to our expectations, Great Britain should finally reject the very liberal compromise offered by our Government, would it in your judgement be injurious to the rights, or inconsistent with the honor of this Country, to agree that this question of title should be settled by arbitration?

The diplomatic correspondence upon this question, between Mr. Pakenham and Mr. Buchanan, has made so powerful impressions upon the public sentiment of the Country, and I believe that now the almost universal opinion is entertained in this Country, that ours is the better title to the whole Territory. What objection then, can exist, on the part of the Government, or people of this Country (who concur in the opinion that our title is well founded) to the submission of this question to the arbitrament of well informed men, the citizens of some other Country, who would have no interest in the controversy, and who would be guided solely by the desire to decide the question according to right and justice. Would not the portions of territory already offered by our Government as a compromise, be more than could be assigned to Great Britain by any arbitrators who would be selected?