

State of Maryland
 Executive Chamber
 Annapolis, January 8 1861

Sir,

I regret that my absence from Annapolis, at the time of your visit, deprived me of the pleasure of an interview with you in relation to the matter which you have laid before me in your letter of the 28th December.

You inform me that you come a Commissioner from the Sovereign State of Alabama "to consult and advise with the Governor and Legislature of Maryland as to what is best to be done, to promote the honor, rights and interests of the Slave holding States, menaced and endangered by recent political events."

You say that Alabama has called a State Convention because of the result of the recent election for President of the United States; has affirmed her reserved and undelimited right of secession from the Confederacy; intimated that continued and increasingly violent assaults upon her rights and equality might constrain her to a reluctant but early exercise of that invaluable right; and that the object of your mission is to secure concert and effective cooperation between Maryland and Alabama."

The People of Maryland in my opinion, regard any such measures of co-operation among any states of this Union, especially with any view to secession therefrom, as a violation of the very terms of that Constitution under which this Union was formed and is preserved. You have reminded me that within the Union (and both Alabama and Maryland are assuredly within the Union) "the States have absolutely prohibited themselves by the terms of the Constitution, from entering into treaties, alliances or Confederations; and have made the assent of the Congress of the United States a condition precedent to their entering into any compact or agreement with other States." To enter into any such Compact or agreement, though it should take the shape of "only an informal understanding for prospective concert and federation," without such indispensable assent, would, in my judgment, be undeniably a violation of that Constitution which, on assuming their duties the Governor and Legislature of Maryland solemnly swore to observe and support. I agree entirely with you that it especially becomes Southern States, which have in no legislation or action, violated their Constitutional obligations, and which are now asking from their sister States of the North an acknowledgment of these, a correction of mistakes, and protection for their own equal rights, not to part with their own distinguished glory of having never,