

**John Tyler reports on the failed Peace Conference**

An effort was to be made to restore the Union; not to enter into a sort of bargain, embracing only the border States; not merely to enter into a covenant with those who have brought about this state of things through misleading the public mind of the North; nor yet to consult the interests of Virginia exclusively in any arrangement which might be made to restore the Constitution and the Union of the States; but to bring back, if possible, the cotton States, thereby to restore the Union to what it was; to have the glorious old flag floating over one and all; to make the name of an American citizen, which had won respect in every part of the world, again a word of passport and of honor as it has been before.

What could have carried me to Washington, but the debt of gratitude which I felt I owed my State and my fellow-countrymen, and the deep solicitude which I experienced in this hour of the nation's peril? I confess to an additional motive of a personal character. If ever there lived a man ambitious of winning that true glory which can alone arise from the fulfillment of the whole duty of a patriot—that man now addresses you. I aspire to the glory of aiding to settle this controversy. I had worn the honors of office through each grade to the highest. I had been surrounded by the echoes of applause in the course of my journey through life; but to encircle my brow, Mr. President, with the wreath to be won by the restoration of this Union in all its plenitude, perfect as it was before the severance, would have been to me the proud crowning act of my life. That was the feeling that inspired my heart. . . .

I had hoped, in the manner of consultation, and from the spirit evinced at the opening of the Conference, that we were likely to accomplish the great object that Virginia had in view. Massachusetts came up, and her daughter, Maine, along with her. We had all New England, and all the border States, until we reached Michigan. A voice could not be heard on the Pacific coast; it was uttered too late to reach California and Oregon in time—I wish, with all my heart, they had been there. New York soon joined us. But I found that many had come with no olive branch in their hands—nay, more—that with them the feeling of fraternity seemed to be gone. They had nothing to give—nothing to yield. The Constitution was enough for them. New York, with her potent voice, would not yield one iota—not an "I" dotted nor a "T" crossed. "The Constitution must be maintained—we have nothing more to grant." Such was, in substance, her language.



## Transcription

Notwithstanding all these discouragements, we went to work; and no man had more faithful colleagues than myself. We worked together, and we tried every possible expedient to overrule this state of things. It was soon perfectly obvious that without a close approach to unanimity on the part of the Convention, no measures originated by us would be of any avail.

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