

future to enlist them also in his confederacy. In 1809, however, rumors of an approaching outbreak began to fill the air, and it was evident that the British were instigating the Indians to mischief in anticipation of a war between England and the United States. Just at this juncture the anger of Tecumtha's party was still further inflamed by the negotiation of treaties with four tribes by which additional large tracts were ceded in Indiana and Illinois. The Indians now refused to buy ammunition from the American traders, saying that they could obtain all they wanted for nothing in another quarter. In view of the signs of increasing hostility, Governor Harrison was authorized to take such steps as might be necessary to protect the frontier. Tecumtha had now gained over the Wyandot, the most influential tribe of the Ohio region, the keepers of the great wampum belt of union and the lighters of the council fire of the allied tribes. Their example was speedily followed by the Miami, whose adhesion made the tribes of the Ohio and the lakes practically unanimous. The prophet now declared that he would follow in the steps of Pontiac, and called on the remote tribes to assist those on the border to roll back the tide which would otherwise overwhelm them all. In return, the Sauk and Fox sent word that they were ready whenever he should say the word.

In the summer of 1810, according to a previous arrangement, Tecumtha, attended by several hundred warriors, descended the river to Vincennes to confer with Governor Harrison on the situation. The conference began on the 15th of August and lasted three days. Tecumtha reiterated his former claims, saying that in uniting the tribes he was endeavoring to dam the mighty water that was ready to overflow his people. The Americans had driven the Indians from the sea and threatened to push them into the lakes; and, although he disclaimed any intention of making war against the United States, he declared his fixed resolution to insist on the old boundary and to oppose the further intrusion of the whites on the lands of the Indians, and to resist the survey of the lands recently ceded. He was followed by chiefs of five different tribes, each of whom in turn declared that he would support the principles of Tecumtha. Harrison replied that the government would never admit that any section belonged to all the Indians in common, and that, having bought the ceded lands from the tribes who were first found in possession of them, it would defend its title by arms. To this Tecumtha said that he preferred to be on the side of the Americans, and that if his terms were conceded he would bring his forces to the aid of the United States in the war which he knew was soon to break out with England, but that otherwise he would be compelled to join the British. The governor replied that he would state the case to the President, but that it was altogether unlikely that he would consent to the conditions. Recognizing the inevitable, Tecumtha expressed the hope that, as the President was to determine the matter, the Great Spirit would put sense into his head to induce him to give up the lands, adding,