

Calley and the Law

Remarks by Kingman Brewster Jr., president of Yale

I have an intuitive feeling that right at this moment our country stands at a crucial fork in the road of its history.

We might descend into a crudeness, a viciousness which glorifies mindless, soulless power.

On the other hand the ferment of the current puzzled outrage might lead us to restore morality to its proper place, even in a power-political world.

Law has its part to play in deciding which way we turn.

But the punishment of a single defendant is nowhere near as important as the potential awakening of the country's conscience.

Let lawyers honor those who have the fortitude to vindicate the laws of war without fear of the public or favor to their own profession. But let us as lawyers remind the whole society that no matter how many criminal verdicts are brought in, only the renewal of moral sensitivity, only the confession of the error of ten years of callous war will restore the dignity, the humanity, the self-respect of the United States of America.

Calley in Perspective

Remarks by Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York

As a moral problem, the incidents at My Lai command that we as a people preserve and reaffirm the principles of justice which must govern our actions in the community of man. The use of force in that world community is never a problem only for generals or Presidents or Senators or diplomats; the responsibility is with all the people.

I am profoundly disappointed that this duty in social morality is being overlooked by many in our country today.

Medals, marches and honors for Lieutenant Calley, rather than sadness over what a young American was brought to in a brutal and misguided Vietnam war, is not patriotism, but anti-patriotism.

It is in times of crisis that our most profound beliefs and commitments are tested. The crucible of Vietnam is such a crisis for the United States. We are being tested as a people. By the degree to which we decline to admit our mistakes and reaffirm our commitment to universal principles of justice, we shall have failed to grasp the meaning of our own tradition, and shall have been truant to its promise.