

**SPEAKER 1:** My dear friends, some 12 years ago, Dean Sayer and I participated in a public discussion on the issue of the obligation of the citizen to serve the state. And in the course of that, he said and I concurred that there comes a time in which the man of conscience must stand against the dictates of the state. And we went on to talk about some of the men in the history of our civilization who had accepted that challenge.

And we mentioned the obvious ones Socrates and Thomas Becket and Thomas More, one of philosopher and one a clergyman and one a politician and made the point that each of these had tested the laws and the rules of his society before he submitted. And in their time, it was to death. And there have been no political execution of clergymen in cathedrals since the 12th century at least. And it's somewhat safe to speak out in the cathedral.

But Frank Sayer has gone into the streets on the issue of the war in Vietnam and on some of the other great injustices that do exist in our nation. And so, I think, all of us here over a seven-year period at least have exhausted all of the means open to us to try to change the policy of this nation. We've tried persuasion and appeals.

We've tried petition and argument. We've tried protest, some silent and some vocal, some people by marching and some simply by lying down in the streets in the buildings of this capital city. Some have tried prayer and even fasting. And some tried politics and 1968 and again in 1972, and yet the war has gone on.

Clemenceau once said that the country should not be run by philosophers and artists and scholars and theologians, but he said that anyone who governs the country and ignores what they have to say puts the nation in peril. Evidently, the president has not read Clemenceau. Or if he did, he ignored the message for in October of last year, he was quoted as saying, "It is often said-- he did not say how often or by whom-- "that when a president makes a hard decision"-- he was referring to the renewed and intensified and extended bombing of that time-- "the so-called opinion leaders of this country can be counted upon to stand beside him regardless of party." And he went on to say that the so-called opinion leaders whom he cataloged were not standing behind him as it is often said they should.

For seven years, this nation has endured ignorance in high places. It has ignored deceit and broken promises and accepted assassinations and executions and always bombing and more bombing. Under the Johnson administration, we were supposedly assured when the president said that he personally picked the bombing targets sometimes with Republican leaders either participating or at least observing the practice.

And so we came into the autumn of the year of 1972, the time of the most intensive bombing in the history of the world. And that, of course, means in the history of our nation. And everywhere the question went up as to why, the president remained silent. The Secretary of State, as we know, does not talk.

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

Until we received an answer or an explanation from the chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the House who after a hearing came out and said, "We're not concerned about why the bombing, but we're concerned about what." And he said, "We bombed them to the negotiating table once, and we bombed them back." And he said, "If bombing is necessary, then we bomb."

And Admiral Mauer explaining his part in this when he said he had not been consulted when the bombing was intensified in October and not consulted when it was stopped shortly before Christmas said he really shouldn't have been consulted because in effect he said, he had approved a contingency plan to bomb North of the 20th Parallel. And in effect once the contingency plan is approved, it's in effect. But there's a hold on it. And the president simply had removed the hold.

So no positive order. The general state of the nation's preparedness is to bomb. And the president says, you do not bomb. It's not very different from the orders that prepared for what happened at My Lai, one order saying that was a free fire zone and another saying, don't generate any prisoners.

And while this decision was made or while it was in operation, almost operating by itself in the pre-Christmas period of intensive bombing, President Nixon was at Key Biscayne. In the post-Christmas period, Henry Kissinger was at Palm Springs and Secretary Rogers in the Bahamas and Melvin Laird spending five days saying farewell in Hawaii to the Pacific fleet.

Someone has said that, I think it was with reference to the Congress of Vienna, that it's much easier to make decisions about the disposition of nations and the death of people if you do it while looking at calm blue water, preferably from a balcony. The consideration of this war has gone beyond facts, beyond evidence, beyond logic, almost beyond reason for the very edge of language. And I would read to you here tonight first, a selection from a poem by Robert Lowell which was written in the early months of this war.

And in that poem, he said, "No weekend for the gods now wars flicker Earth licks its open sores fresh breakage fresh promotions chance assassinations no advance only man thinning out his kind sound through the Sabbath noon the blind swipe of the pruner and his knife busy about the tree of life." And another poem written in the late years of this same war, which I think reflects something of the spirit of the country called "This is No Country for the Young." "This is no country for the young, vultures prey on living flesh and eat the skins off kettle drums because the old refuse to die.

Eyes turn inward chicken like or stare unlighted vague as fish within a deep and pressuring sea. Greek lotion turns gray hair to sorrel and transplants cross-checked like corn in Iowa grow on bald pates. At the Saint Regis ice cube smell of mammoth flesh and all the clocks have stopped. A three-fingered pianist plays only on Black keys until the dancers fall. Now shadows dare to stand against the sun veiled by the ash of Hiroshima.

The time is tired of you and me. It now runs out like dust of Carthage from a broken hourglass. The young begin too soon to wait to be the last. They cover stains of salt and blood with antimacassars and watch old curtains disintegrate from the bottom up."

Tonight, the burden of our concern, of our sorrow, and also of our hopes is not to be carried by words, but beyond the limits of language in the music of the mass in time of war conducted by a man who in recent years could have taken the way of some artists of saying art serves any master or art simply serves art in itself, but who rather has chosen to commit his talents and his person to the cause of justice and of peace, Leonard Bernstein. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]