

Henry Ain't No Elsa, But I Think He Wants a Swan; Or, Bye, Bye, Not Blue

Missed the announced broadcast by NBC of Le Duc Tho's press conference 10 a., EST, but was home in time for Henry's (monitored by Ron Ziegler). Right off the bat that dry slight cough, so I figured maybe he isn't comfortable again. Instead of trying to decide the unique U.S. meaning of each word, phrase, clause and sentence as he spoke - and having to wonder if he was faithful to text and spirit, whether he spoke for himself or GL, etc - I decided to look at him and seek small signs. The cough is one and the immediate first.

In more than an hour and a half he never once mentioned GL by name and in all made but three references to him. That is worse than subversion.

Right off the bat he made clear that the 1953 Geneva agreement stands, which means that any subsequent interpretation is in this light and definitely does not mean the recognition of SVN as a separate, recognized entity. It means rather the opposite and later phrasing represents the vagueness required for signature by the U.S. and Thieu. 1954 is explicit: there is but one VN and division is temporary.

Then he said this is a civil war. This means, again, one VN and no invasion.

He paid unusual credit to his negotiating ~~adversaries~~ adversaries throughout, implicitly and explicitly. On ~~that~~ that motive, he said, "I have too much trouble analyzing our own" to analyze theirs. And GL was listening, too, and HK knew. Brave man!

Inherent in all he said, I think, is that he was against the bombing and can't say it.

The little he could say of what changes were agreed to after the bombing seems to say it didn't accomplish anything worthwhile, certainly nothing like its immediate and in perpetuo cost. He was asked several times and he refused to say the bombing accomplished anything.

He came up with no real justification for not going ahead with the October agreement. He went through the motions with some polish, but no more.

He showed no joy. During his main presentation he indulged slight, dry humor only twice. but with respect to technicalities in wording where he was laughing at the position into which he ~~was~~ was forced or the NVN took, not clear which. The fact that he left it unclear is not an argument against my farout suggestions of what now seems more possible to me than it did when I suggested it several months ago,

If Henry stays with Nixon, he can only go downward because there is no up to climb. He will get credit for what anyone else could have done with USSR, China, and any experienced ~~xx~~ diplomat with backbone could have done in these negotiations, where I fear his own were his greatest trouble. The Nixons alone prevented what he has negotiated in the past, so there was no significant opposition to worry about when Nixon finally saw what was inevitable and ~~selfishly~~ selfishly necessary. Here I am saying that Henry became a great man by pulling off a snap job, really. The other side wanted each deal, so what's so great about dealing? There is no equivalent of any one of these three things for him to tackle, easy or hard. There is nothing for him to do except hang around, take what must not be easy for him to take, be handy to get things blamed on him, become the butt of all the nasties and anti-intellectuals around the anti-intellectual GL and to be convenient for GL to blame for GL's inevitable stupidities. Why should he do that?

I'll not be surprised if, when everything is neatly signed and packaged, Henry says he has worked hard, is tired, needs a rest and some personal life, and GL, who has labored so mightily, needs a fresh horse. So noble is GL's character he'd never think of asking Henry to quit, but in fairness to GL, Henry wants him to have access to new and different ideas and ways of thinking. After all, Henry will never be far away should GL call. And two heads, one new and untired, will be better for GL than Henry's one weary one.

As I thought about this while whacking away at a tall locust that hung in other trees after starting to fall, perhaps not the best way to think, it seemed to me that only what I do not think applies, the tightest personal bond to GL could persuade Henry to take any other course. He can't be seen and understand the authoritarian direction GL is taking, and I think he is probably still smarting from the criticism of his academic peers. (If he does as I think he has answered them to his own satisfaction and self-respect.) He can be accepted again in the academic and intellectual communities with these three accomplishments and no losses. He is justified. And can he write a book! HW 1/24/73