

Tiger note 8/26/72

Last night NBC had a two-hour update of an earlier NBC White Paper on Vietnam. 8:30. I had gotten up at 4, so sitting back and sipping a drink I relaxed into a very sound sleep from which Lil couldn't awaken be, beginning after the beginning of the last half of the show. Because Lil got sleepy looking at me, she dozed off for the last 15 minutes so, if the comment is wrong, it can be for that 15-minute period only and I think that would not invalidate it. Lil and I reached the same opinion separately about a subtlety in the show.

"Do you think the Committee to Re-elect the President" sponsored this", she asked me.

There are two justifications for this crack. First, according to this White Paper there was no Republican responsibility for Vietnam. It did, at one point mention that Ike had been under pressure to drop the atom bomb, but there no mention of Nixon's vice-presidential history there, is cooping with the Dulle line, which would have started the rotten business that much earlier and, in fact, began it. It was all JFK, Lil says up to the point where she fell asleep. No LBJ, no Goldwater, I presume no Wallace and LeMay either. It was clear enough that JFK didn't want to get involved, with quotes from a number of those under him. And there were such nice touches as selective kindnesses to Rusj. But the whole think was JFK's fault, even if unwillingly, unhappily.

This line began with the misuse of The Pentagon Papers and those whose knowledge of VN comes from them will find this a valid line. To a degree it is true, which makes the line more evil, in exaggerating that part which is true. But even the truthful part was handled unfaithfully, as in pinning the entire Bay of Pigs on him.

As I think I noted at the time of The Pentagon Papers, this is the new revisionism on VN. It permeated everything, if delicately and subtly, usually by omission. The sequence which goes into Rostow (WW) giving JFK a memo in the early moment of his administration has the same omission as the sequence on the Bay of Pigs: no connection with Ike's administration even hinted at. The almost 100% exoneration of GOP responsibility became clear so early that Lil asked her question early in the show, which pretendedly handled the thing chronologically. To expose the truth insofar as it was exposed at this late date is not courageous and is repetitious. To tell the inherent lies, those inevitably taken from such a show is to launch a new series of lies. In the part I saw there was an almost complete exoneration of the military and even those who bear so heavy a responsibility, like Rostow, were handled kindly and sympathetically. The sympathy for JFK was synthetic and with the emphasis on his inauguration speech, a long sequence, the handling was not intended as sympathetic but ^{solitarily} incriminating.