Q8400 THE QUIET AMERICAN (USA, 1957)
(Other titles: American bien tranquille; Americano imposible; Americano tranquillo; Vier Pfeifen Opium)

Credits: director/writer, Joseph L. Mankiewicz; novel, Graham Greene.
Cast: Audie Murphy, Michael Redgrave, Claude Dauphin, Georgia Moll.
Summary: War film set in Vietnam in the early 1950s during the Indochina War. When the body of CIA agent Alden Pyle (Murphy) is found floating in the Saigon River, the French authorities question British journalist Thomas Fowler (Redgrave) and his mistress Phuong (Moll) who were involved with Pyle. In flashback, Fowler recalls his relationship with Pyle from their first meeting. Serving undercover in the charity “Friends for Free Asia,” Pyle is supplying aid to the militarist Cao Dai sect which he hopes will serve as a “third force” (between the French colonialists and the Communist Viet Minh), but his naive, ill-informed actions lead to further bloodshed. Pyle saves Fowler’s life in a Viet Minh ambush, but Pyle is a rival for Phuong’s affections and Fowler also suspects him of involvement in a terrorist bombing. Fowler betrays Pyle to the Viet Minh who murder him, but Fowler ultimately learns from the French police that Pyle was innocent. The film version makes several fundamental changes to the Graham Greene novel which indicts American actions in Vietnam for their ignorance of the country’s history and their propensity to get people killed. The film turns this anti-American tone into an anti-communist one.

___________. Vietnam on film [GB] (p. 31, 170)
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[Translated as “Politics against destiny: Joseph L. Mankiewicz’s The quiet American” in his *The taste for beauty* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989. (p. 156-62)]

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