

28 December 1973

Dear Harold:

The various enclosures, I hope, are all self-explanatory. As I said recently, we've been our kind of busy, which means occupied without getting too much done.

It has rained fairly steadily for more than a month, but without undue hardship and with no big flooding of any kind. Nothing like the very cold weather we had last year and which you've had far worse of this year.

With no really cold weather, we've had no trouble yet with the energy shortage. The house is heated by natural gas furnace which of course they can't control as they now propose to control fuel oil. In time perhaps, but it's not yet a problem. We did some weather stripping last fall, so the house is a bit tighter and less wasteful than it was, but beyond that these houses simply are not built for cold weather and when the real energy shortage comes we'll have to bundle up more, that's all.

Gasoline is no problem yet. We averaged only about 10 ~~20~~ gallons or less all year per month, so if rationing comes we'll be okay as long as there's any gasoline at all. Our '71 VW Superbug is not particularly good when it comes to MPG, but it's so much better than most of the behemoths most people are stuck with that we feel lucky to have it. Detroit always snazes me. What they should do now is concentrate on bringing out a basic automobile, something of minimum size and weight and which could get up to 35 or 40 MPG as our first, 1955, VW used to. If the best performer they produce gets more than 25 MPG I'll be surprised.

One of the intrusions we've had to deal with concerned a development you should know ~~xxxx~~ about and which I might as well fill you in on now. The week before Christmas Lilly Mattos called from a relative's house in this area, saying they had broken up their house at the University of Washington in Seattle and that she was en route to Washington, D.C., to join Gil. He had finished his doctoral dissertation, defended it, and got his Ph. D. all in a grand flurry of furious activity and then gone ahead to WX to take his new job with the government and find a new house for Lilly and the two kids. She came out one afternoon and told us all about it. Gil had canvassed the field ~~through~~ thoroughly while working for his doctorate and could find nothing in the academic world. The schools simply are not yet putting their money into his still-marginal field of Chinese studies. So he was on the point of going to a bartending school to learn bartending and follow his father in that line as soon as he got his degree, when the CIA hired him to head its Chinese translation team. We had a letter from him later, telling us how he had told them he'd have nothing to do with any other activity and how they assured him he wouldn't have to. His is an "open" job, meaning he can say where and for whom he works. We wrote back assuring him that such promises would mean exactly nothing if they needed him for something else and that this is the kind of world he's in and his cue is to go on from that point and do the best he can. Lilly says he hopes to find something else as soon as possible, but we filled her in on a few details and think she understands at least some of them. We told both her and Gil that the problem is the system, and that in one way or another everyone has

to live with it, but that one can try to keep a step or two ahead of the game and maintain the highest priority with regard to one's own destiny. That's expensive, of course, but not as expensive as letting it get out of control.

We're concerned, of course, and while being careful not to get excited about it make no effort to conceal our concern. Gil is naturally impressed with the high quality of the people he has met and dealt with thus far -- who would expect anything else?-- and his reaction has been about what we would expect: relief that the CIA is not all Hunt types but includes a lot of serious and reasonable people. However, he seems not to have realized how much difficulty they have had recently in recruiting young people -- at least not to the extent we are very conscious of -- and our main concern is that he may do too well, in other words present them with a personable character who could be shifted subtly to other assignments before he realized it in time to put a stop to it. We'll see. He and Lilly both are bright and personable, the two kids are cute and the little girl quite spectacularly so -- 24 pounds and already talking a blue streak. They've taken a house in Falls Church. They know about you, but since they've apparently made no move to get in touch with you or Lil in regard to the blanket or the sweater, I have to assume they are not likely to now. Anyway, we thought you should be filled in, and that you'll join us in hopeful hoping.

Best to you both,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'John' or similar, written in a cursive style.

jdw