

25 December 1972

Dear Harold:

How kind of you to call today. We did appreciate it, something I'm sure never could be gathered from my bleary responses. And as for those, think nothing of them; we always have had this trouble getting turned around to daytime living, every vacation for many years. There have been days recently when we rose dutifully at 6 a.m., only to get strung out at work that night and wind up not getting to bed until after midnight.

I felt particularly dense today, having awakened too early to get up, then going back into deep sleep. This was because of a rare cold we've both picked up. Usually we are immune, but every third or fourth year we manage to contract a bug of some kind that works on us a couple of days or so until we exorcize it with a good Chinese dinner. Had one last night, and I feel much better today. Haven't blown my nose all day! Jenifer is one day behind me but already is coming out of it.

By way of atoning for my churlishness on the phone today we enclose three recent examples of Hoppe for your holiday season reading pleasure

Well. So our glorious leader, having decreed that the bombing will continue until the North Vietnamese return to the negotiating table, now has halted it in the spirit of Christmas. Just who won that round? And what was its purpose. As I speculated yesterday, this little episode of violence could have been to remind certain militarists of certain realities, but I have a stronger feeling that we are muddling and playing it by ear. Too much reaction? Total miscalculation? More and more he's looking like LBJ in early 1968. Same problem: a morally superior adversary refuses to give up. The NY Times Service paid down a story in today's Chronicle from Telford Taylor in Hanoi about the effects of the bombing. Good stuff. Restrained, but takes you right there. Inside the Chron is full of adverse reaction from coast to coast and around the world. The

Ex is running the same kind of stuff, also inside, and on the front page featuring B52 losses and other hot war angles. Let's hope it's not too late. It may be, of course. Note that Henry, having been kept at arms length all during this glorious yuletide season, has been reduced to attending a pro football game to keep his image alive. After all, he's the only alternative in sight to more insanity, and as I said yesterday they're stuck with each other just at this stage because an open break would be entirely too embarrassing.

Between bouts of filing, been reading a paperback version of Ross Terril's "The 800,000,000." Delightful. He has a proper appreciation of these people, and his Australian perspective is illuminating. Perhaps it takes an Australian to figure out why the Chinese decided to do business with Nixon, preferring him to McGovern or any other Demo hopeful. It wasn't just the usual tropism of one group of authoritarians for another; it was because they considered too many Demos like Ave Harriman were too friendly with Russia, therefore theoretically capable of combining with the Russians against China.

Again, we were so pleased with your call and the kind and generous thought from you both, Best, V.