

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Illinois

United States Senate
Minority Leader

CUBA BLOCKADE

, 1961

Dear :

I have noted your comments regarding a blockade of Cuba.

First, I point out that a blockade is an act of war. If we shall impose an arms embargo we must find logic to support our view and also be sure that we have some Latin American allies in our corner when we do it. I share your objective, but the situation is not nearly so simple as it appears.

One thing we can never forget is that in any action with respect to Cuba at what point do the Soviets move on Iran where we have commitments and on Berlin and probably worsen the situation in Asia, which is already bad enough. One thing heartens me and that is that people everywhere are alert to the problem and are offering their suggestions.

With every good wish,

Everett McKinley Dirksen

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Illinois

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United States Senate
Minority Leader

Tractors For Cuba

May 31, 1961

Dear :

At first it appeared that the proposal to exchange tractors for prisoners would be undertaken as a completely non-governmental affair.

Since then it has become evident that the President named the Committee to undertake this project, gave assurances that export licenses would be issued which of course, is a governmental account, and also gave assurances that contributions would be deductible for income tax purposes which is also a governmental intrusion in the matter. Under the circumstances this whole venture takes on a public character and on that ground I certainly cannot approve the undertaking.

It is bound to cost us prestige and influence throughout the world and appear as an act of appeasement. More than that it is passing strange that long before now an exchange of something desired by the Red Chinese has not been offered in return for our own soldiers who are still behind the bamboo and iron curtains.

I can readily appreciate the feelings of people everywhere.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen