To the Home Folks:

In a few days, I expect to depart for the Orient as the first step in the world journey which your generosity and kindness have made possible. I feel so grateful for this rare opportunity to see a larger portion of this gradually shrinking world, that I want you to know about my departure and some of the highlights of the trip.

Present plans call for an air transport trip to London and from there across Africa with the first extended stop at Bombay, India. While there, I shall visit New Delhi and Calcutta. From there the trip proceeds to Chungking, China and back to Bombay via the Burma Road. From that point, it will move to Baghdad in Iraq, Cairo in Egypt, Palestine, and Teheran. From there I hope to go to Istanbul in Turkey, then to Moscow and back to Rome. After Rome comes Paris, London, Lisbon, Madrid and then back home.

Perhaps you may wonder why the journey is being undertaken at this time. There are several reasons. One is that from the standpoint of weather and the least loss of flying time, this is the best season of the year for the Orient and the Middle East. But the second and more compelling reason is that one might achieve a maximum amount of good by going at a time when the social, economic and political forces that are operative throughout the world and with which we as a nation must surely deal in the near future are still so fluid and intense and there could be no better time than now to observe what is taking place.

I have wondered how I can in some measure express my appreciation for all this in terms that will redound to your good and to the welfare of our country. In time of war, when young men give their all on distant battle fields, and when folks at home are called upon for every sacrifice, there would be no moral basis for a journey to distant lands unless it is closely related to one's field of public service and serves a useful and necessary public service. On this basis, I believe there is an especial justification for the proposed trip at this time.

For years, it has been my privilege to serve on the Appropriations Committee of the Congress. That Committee has prepared and presented to Congress, legislation providing for the spending of hundreds of BILLIONS of dollars. Those appropriations—all of which are derived from you and the other people of the nation in the form of taxes or borrowed by pledging your credit—have been spent in all sections of the world. We have appropriated billions for lend-lease aid to a score of nations. We have appropriated hundreds of millions for relief and rehabilitation in liberated
countries We have spent billions in building docks and camps, railroads and garrisons, warehouses and supply stations in every corner of the earth. Oddly enough and insofar as I know, not a single member of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives has ever journeyed to far distant lands to observe how and where your money is being spent and what is being accomplished.

This then will be in the nature of an inspection trip. I expect to make a full report to the Congress and the Appropriations Committee. I hope also to report to the various departments and agencies of government that administer these affairs in far off nations. I want to make a report to you, and to the country To that end, let me say that my first public report will be made to you - the folks at home - who have made all this possible. I have discussed this matter with some of my colleagues in Congress and especially those who serve on the Appropriations Committee and they share the belief that the observations which one might make on an inspection tour of this kind would not only be a useful service but of inestimable value to the Congress in dealing with legislation and appropriations which relate to functions carried on in other countries.

Let me assure you now that whatever I may encounter and whatever recommendations I may make, the report will be on a middle-of-the road basis. It will not be captious or carping. It will not be partisan or political. It will have one and only one purpose and that is to suggest and recommend those things that will speed the day of victory, enhance the prestige and well-being of our own beloved country, and indicate what in my very humble judgment seems to be the the road upon which we shall find the grace and joy of a peace that will live.

I do hope that on this journey, I may meet some of your sons and kinsmen who are serving so valiantly in distant places. If so, I shall take your greetings and good wishes to them and give a report in every case. So with a song of thanks in my heart, let me say good-by for the moment until I can return and enjoy your fellowship.

Sincerely,

Everett M. Dirksen