Dear ...:

I appreciate your candid views on the problem of foreign aid. Your observations provide added incentive for a reexamination of the whole program and also of the President's message of March 22 on this subject.

There is need for an aid program -- preferably on a loan basis with a genuine hope of repayment -- and with greater emphasis upon the use of goods and surplus commodities rather than cash, because these would definitely benefit our own economy.

I am, however, persuaded that we cannot redress all the ills and problems of the world without endangering our own solvency and, therefore, any aid program must be at once efficient and selective. This conclusion is implemented by our distressing experiences in Laos where we have already spent $342 million in the last several years only to reap a difficult and delicate crisis. Let me assure you that this program will be carefully surveyed and scrutinized.

With every good wish,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
ROBO

Foreign Aid Program

August 28, 1961

Dear :  

The foreign aid bill passed both the House and Senate and is presently before a conference committee to iron out differences between the two Houses.

Generally speaking I have supported an aid program but I have been wholly dissatisfied with its administration and with the waste which has developed in so many areas. Moreover, I do not approve of the so-called backdoor spending procedure contained in the Senate bill but inasmuch as our efforts to eliminate this were unsuccessful, it was necessary to secure a majority vote for the bill so that it might go to conference for further consideration.

I am hopeful that the conference version will provide long range authorization but only annually appropriated funds to preserve Congressional scrutiny over the program. The conference version will, therefore, be the important thing in determining the fate of this program.

Sincerely,  

Everett McKinley Dirksen