Cuba
September 18, 1962

Dear:

I am quite certain from various conversations I have had with intelligence and defense officials that nothing is being left undone to make our country secure against any possible action emanating from Cuba.

Probably the real problem is what we propose to do about the continuance of this infectious spot in our hemisphere. There is little doubt from intelligence reports which we have received that technicians and equipment in large quantities are going into Cuba and these will obviously be used for propaganda and for building up the Communist element in Caribbean and Central American countries.

I appreciate your abiding interest in this all important matter and will give it good attention.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Petition on Cuba

October 9, 1962

Dear:

In response to the petition you signed, let me advise that I share your concern over the critical situation which has developed in Cuba and believe you may be interested in examining the statement which the Joint Republican Leadership issued on September 7th on this subject. I am also enclosing a copy of an editorial from the Washington Daily News of September 24 which outlines rather carefully my efforts in seeking to meet this challenging problem.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen

Enclosures (2)
The Cuba Resolution

ENDORSEMENT of the U.S. Congressional Joint Resolution on Cuba policy by the Latin-American foreign ministers invited to meet here with Secretary of State Dean Rusk Oct. 23 is now considered most unlikely.

But the official hope here in Washington is that this Cuba resolution will be as successful a communist deterrent as the Formosa resolution passed by Congress in 1955. Seven years later the Nationalist China government on Formosa is still free and has not been attacked by Red China.

The Cuba resolution was passed by the Senate, 86 to 1, with every assurance that the House would approve it without change and that President Kennedy would sign it. But it may lock the barn after the horse has been stolen.

Events in Cuba and the political maneuverings here in Washington leading up to the passage of this resolution make a sorry record. Republican Senate Leader Everett M. Dirksen performed a useful service in reciting this record just before the resolution was adopted. He omitted what was allowed to happen in Cuba during the Eisenhower Administration, which is politically understandable even if it is not historically excusable.

Sen. Dirksen's record begins with the State Department White Paper on Cuba of April 3, 1961. It reported that 30,000 tons of arms worth $50 million had been poured into Cuba from communist countries since the middle of 1960. So it began in Ike's time.

The State Department issued a second report a year later listing communist bloc arms supplied to Cuba as 50-75 Mig aircraft, 150-250 tanks, a minimum of 2000 pieces of artillery, 200,000 small arms and several small naval craft.

President Kennedy gave a third inventory of new communist arms shipments to Cuba, including 25-mile slant missiles, radar equipment, more small craft and 3500 military technicians.

This was last Sept. 4 and it was only then that the Government really began to get excited, three years too late.

The President briefed congressional leaders of both parties a few hours before he made public his statement on arms shipments. He told a few of the congressmen privately that he intended to ask for a call-up of 150,000 reserves a week later.

Three days after that, on Sept. 7, Sen. Dirksen announced in a press conference with House Minority Leader Charles A. Halleck of Indiana that the Republican leadership in Congress favored passage of a Formosa-type resolution on Cuba.

An hour and a half later the President announced he would ask Congress for authority to call up the reserves. The partisan rivalry to show non-partisan leadership was beginning.

Just after Sen. Dirksen issued his statement, Senate Democratic Whip Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota had praised it and welcomed it as "a reasonable approach."

But a few hours later Democratic Senate Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana attacked the Cuba resolution proposal, saying that the President had all the authority he needed to deal with the situation in an emergency.

Sen. Dirksen had cleared his resolution idea with Gen. Eisenhower and received his endorsement before announcing it. On Sept. 10, President Kennedy had Gen. Eisenhower at the White House for lunch. The President said they had discussed Cuba.

The next day there was a Democratic caucus at which a number of senators demanded a stronger policy on Cuba.

That afternoon Sen. Jack Miller (R., Ia.) proposed a resolution combining the Formosa-type declaration with the reserve call-up which the President had requested.

Here Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Richard B. Russell laid down a flat refusal to consider any resolution that combined the Cuba situation with the reserve call-up. His reason was that the reserve call-up might be necessitated by a new Berlin crisis and he didn't want the Russians to think otherwise.

Next day, Thursday the 13th, the Kennedy Administration changed its signals. At 5 p.m. Sen. Mansfield introduced the resolution which was finally adopted. And at his 6 p.m. press conference the President said such a resolution would be helpful.

The language of the Cuba resolution adopted a week later was drafted by the Administration. But the idea was Sen. Dirksen's.