Dear:

Our objective in Vietnam was established in 1954 when pledges were made and we have not retreated from those pledges. How they shall be consummated is a matter of method in performance which is in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief.

Whether we agree or disagree with the course of action he pursues, it has been our position that we want to be heard and to make what suggestions and alternatives we may have in mind; but the ultimate decision is his and when it is made we expect to support it in the interest of our security, our country and our responsibility to the cause of freedom.

I do appreciate receiving your views and assure you that no other issue is receiving more constant attention.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear:

We have gotten into such a welter of confusion over adjectives, adverbs, and other descriptive words concerning what should or should not be done in the Viet Nam situation and I believe both sides have made crystal clear just how they feel.

I do not believe there is any responsible official in public life who is not agitated and distressed over the situation and over the sacrifice which young Americans are called upon to make.

Long ago however -- in fact as far back as 1954 -- we made some commitments to the people of Viet Nam and pledged our aid if it was requested in order to turn back communist aggression and preserve the freedom and independence of that small country.

It is disheartening indeed that at different times in our history these pledges had to be carried out in terms of young blood and great expenditures of money. When such occasions arise there is no choice save to call on the young men of the country able to perform military service to carry out those pledges, and that is precisely what is happening in Viet Nam. If it were not there, it would probably be in some other place unless we choose to sit on freedom's sideline and permit the communist force to take over all of Southeast Asia.

I do appreciate receiving your comments.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen