

The Honorable John Marshall Butler  
United States Senate  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Butler:

I have your recent letter inquiring whether there has been any evidence of "Red merchant marine subversion" at American ports in recent years.

We are naturally most concerned with any subversive activities directed at the United States from outside the country, and work very closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this regard. This would of course include any attempts to use merchant ships to gain access to United States ports. As you correctly assume, much of this material is of a classified nature. I would therefore suggest that one of our experts call on you personally and brief you on the details.

As you probably are aware, our work is almost exclusively overseas. Any information obtained by us regarding the use of merchant ships for subversion against the United States would be passed to the appropriate agencies. In addition to the overall interest of the FBI in the internal security of the country, principal responsibility for port security rests with the Coast Guard. Mr. A. Gilmore Flues, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, is responsible for Coast Guard matters.

Our Legislative Counsel will ascertain your desires in regard to being further briefed on this subject.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles  
Director

Rewritten-LBKirkpatrick:rm (13 Dec 58)

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