16 October 1950

Senator Brien McMahon  
Chairman, Sub-committee on Genocide  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Washington, D.C.

I understand that this afternoon four additional countries will deposit their instruments of ratification of the Genocide pact with the Secretary General of the United Nations. This will automatically bring this historic pact into effect as of January 14 of next year.

Unfortunately, the United States Senate has not as yet acted on this Pact, despite all the arguments in favor of it. I have many times, as you know, urged favorable action. You, as chairman of the subcommittee which considered the Pact all year, have also, I know, done everything possible to get action.

Now it appears that this Pact will become binding on the United States, as a member of the United Nations, even before the Senate acts. It would be shameful, in my judgment, if the record were to show that when the Pact went into effect, the United States Government had not yet officially ratified it. We were, to our credit, among the first nations to urge such a pact, and played a major part in drafting it. We were among the first to sign. We should not be the last to ratify.

I therefore hope that as the Senate reconvenes, you can call your subcommittee together and try to get action on the Genocide Pact. I will do my best with representations to other members of the full Foreign Relations committee so that we may, at the earliest possible date, have a final Senate vote on this United Nations instrument. I hope this may be done before the present Congress expires.

We should certainly let the world know that this nation stands ready to join all the rest of the freedom-loving world in condemnation of the heinous crime of genocide — the crime being practiced today in the Ukraine, in Poland,
in the Baltic States and I am sure in many other parts of the world behind the Iron Curtain. It was a crime when Hitler did it in Germany. It is a crime when the Politburo does it today. It is a crime wherever it is done, by whomever it is done. No consideration can prevail against the necessity of branding this kind of mass murder for what it is in the eyes of all humanity and all the world.

Herbert H. Lehman, U.S. Senator