

PLEASE CREDIT ANY EXCERPTS OR QUOTES FROM THIS NBC RADIO AND
TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "MEET THE PRESS."

M E E T T H E P R E S S
Produced by Lawrence E. Spivak

- - -

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 1965

- - - - -
:This is a rush transcript :
:provided for the information :
:and convenience of the press. :
:Accuracy is not guaranteed. :
:In case of doubt, please :
:check with MEET THE PRESS. :
- - - - -

GUEST: Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen
 Republican of Illinois
 Senate Minority Leader

PANEL: Ray Scherer, NBC News
 May Craig, Portland (Me.) Press Herald
 Jack Bell, Associated Press
 Lawrence E. Spivak, Permanent Panel Member

MODERATOR: Ned Brooks

- - -

MR. BROOKS: This is Ned Brooks, inviting you to MEET
THE PRESS.

(Announcement)

MR. BROOKS: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is the
Republican Leader of the Senate, Everett M. Dirksen of
Illinois. Senator Dirksen is beginning his 31st year in
Congress. He served 15 years in the House of Representatives

before coming to the Senate and he has been the Republican Leader of the Senate since 1959. Senator Dirksen played a leading part in the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Some political observers say that he may well be the most effective single man in the new Senate.

Now we will have the first question from Lawrence E. Spivak, Permanent Member of the MEET THE PRESS Panel.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator Dirksen, there has been a good deal of debate over a long period of time over what the role of the minority party in Congress should be. How do you see the role of the Republican Party in Congress today?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, the role of the Republican Party, or any minority for that matter would be one of constructive opposition, not blind opposition, and by "constructive opposition" I mean you accept the things that are good for the country, you try to amend or modify proposals that in your judgment and in the judgment of the Party are not good and if they contain more of evil, shall I say, than of good, then you reject them. But always you try to follow a constructive line.

MR. SPIVAK: Congressman Ford recently suggested that the Party ought to have a program of its own, an alternate program. Will the Republican Party have a program of its own in this coming session of Congress?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, they have been content, other

than the adoption of their national platform in a convention year, to adopt a set of principles as they go along. But I don't know that it is particularly necessary to have alternatives for everything that the Administration offers. If something is offered that is not good, why should you have an alternative for it?

MR. SPIVAK: Well, aren't the principles that the Party usually espouses so general that the Democrats, the left, the right, almost everybody, can accept them? Don't you have to have alternate proposals if you are going to get your image across to the country?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Not necessarily. I think in the case of those where there is constructive good by the Administration, we can take a good look at it. We may want to modify it, as I have said, and we want to be heard on the subject.

Now you can come up with a substitute or an alternative or you could come up with a whole series of amendments in order to modify it.

MR. SPIVAK: But as of now you don't see any special program of your own?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No. Let's nail it down and have something specific. The Administration among other things has come up with a new immigration proposal. I think there is much good in it. It will have to be modified somewhat in my judgment, but we don't necessarily have to have a substitute

for it in order to make it palatable and make it good for the country.

MR. SPIVAK: Now the President thinks that education is the number one problem in this country today, and that it needs federal aid. Now in the past I believe you have been opposed to federal aid to education. Do you plan to oppose federal aid to education in this Congress?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I can tell you better when I see what kind of a bill comes out of the Committee on Labor and Education.

MR. SPIVAK: I am talking now about the general principle of federal aid.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, the real difficulty with federal aid to education has been this question of control, for one thing, and secondly the question of need. We had Dr. Roger Freeman of Stanford University before the Committee when I was still a member of that Committee and his testimony as an expert in the field in my judgment nailed down the fact that if you are thinking in terms of classrooms that schools districts and states can not construct, or if you are thinking in terms of teachers' pay, then certainly Dr. Freeman demolished the case for the Administration, and unless there is something different in the new bill, I would still go back to his testimony and see whether or not it applies to the bill that will come before us this year.

1

MR. BROOKS: We will continue the questions, now, with Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Senator, you and Representative Ford and National Chairman Burch set up a Policy Coordinating Committee which seems designed to keep Republicans from riding off in different directions. At Chicago yesterday at the National Committee meeting, some of the ladies seemed rather wrathful at you and Congressman Ford and Mr. Burch because there is no woman on this committee. How come?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Mr. Bell, I am always distressed when the ladies are wrathful and that is the last thing I would want to achieve. But when you set up a coordinating committee you have to have regard for size, for mobility, for acceleration of the job, because things will not wait if you have an unwieldy body.

Now it ought to be remembered that this is a beginning. We are trying to constitute and reconstitute this committee, if necessary, to give adequate and proper representation to all components in the Republican Party, and I suppose as time goes a along we will probably reach that objective. You won't reach it just over night, I am sure. And so as the different things fit into their respective slots, there certainly will be some modifications, I am sure.

MR. BELL: Do you mean modifications in the way of a woman member or two woman members?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: There are women members on the Republican National Committee --

MR. BELL: Yes, but they are not represented, they say.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: And as a matter of fact there is a rule to the effect there must be a woman for every committeeman. So it would not be so difficult to work out, I am sure, in setting up the coordinating committee in its final form. But mind you, we started from a very fresh start on the matter and so in due time I am sure this thing will develop and become an effective instrumentality.

MR. BELL: Well, will this committee make policy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have always said that your policy actually is made by your elected representatives. They come from the people and they speak and they are the only ones who have a vote in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Now certainly, in an advisory capacity --

MR. BELL:

SENATOR DIRKSEN: --and in a consultative capacity, things will be thrown out on the table for discussion and there could well be modifications of Republican policy before you get through.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, we seem to be putting our principal defense dependence on nuclear missiles and nuclear submarines. Are we working on biologicals and chemicals which would confuse and disable the enemy but not kill and blast cities?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Work has been done, in fact a great deal of work has been done, in that field, but, frankly, it hasn't been ventilated and it hasn't been discussed in any detail so far as the joint leadership is concerned. On those occasions when we have had the Director of CIA, or the Secretary of Defense and others discussing our defenses, always they discuss manned bombers, missiles, Polaris submarines and that sort of thing, but nothing in the chemical field has actually been discussed. I presume the reason is that it is a rather delicate subject and you don't want the thing noised about too much unless the facts are clearly known and clearly expressed. And so I have taken no particular interest in it because it doubtless would be your last resort, it seems to me. Having been under gas attack in World War I, I can speak, I think, as of knowledge as to how hideous and ghastly it can be.

MRS. CRAIG: Well Senator, I did not understand that these proposed chemicals and biologicals would be poison gas, in that they would kill.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, they are supposed to immobilize the enemy.

MRS. CRAIG: Yes.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: But frankly it has not been discussed to a point that I could give you any kind of an answer that would be truly responsive.

MRS. CRAIG: Would that not be more humane?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, it might be. I still confess that I am not an expert in the field where you gas an enemy army, an enemy instrumentality and try to immobilize him. Let me round that out: It is probably a good deal like this gas they had out in Vietnam, so I understand, that defoliated the trees and the shrubs and everything in the countryside. We heard very little about it and we hear nothing about it now.

MRS. CRAIG: Do you know whether Red Russia and Red China are working in this field?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I haven't the slightest idea.

MR. SCHERER: Senator, the last time you were on this program you went immediately off into the hospital and poor Larry Spivak got blamed. You had a slight disability. Now President Johnson is in the hospital. Congress has been dilly-dallying for years over some sort of disability arrangement to put into effect when a President is out of action. Isn't it time that Congress acted on this? Doesn't this give it new urgency?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: The fact of the matter is that we did get a disability bill out of this subcommittee last year, in the 88th Congress. It went no further and I think it will be one of the first orders of business. And let me make it abundantly clear that that isn't for a moment any reflection upon the health and vigor and vitality of

President Johnson, because I know him and I know what a vigorous person he really is.

MR. SCHERER: How should it work? What should the provisions be? Who should judge when a President is disabled?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: There are three or four different approaches to it and we have had that problem in committee. Senator Bayh of Indiana, who is the Chairman of the subcommittee had one. His approach had, I think, the approval of the American Bar Association. Senator Muska of Nebraska had one and Senator Keating of New York had still another approach. But by the time we get it on the Committee table for discussion, I am sure that we can probably work out something that will be palatable and practical.

MR. SCHERER: You mentioned Vietnam a moment ago. You were at the White House Thursday when the President briefed you on the situation there. What do you think the United States should do about Vietnam? We can't seem to win it, yet we can't pull out. What do we do?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, there are three things you could do -- and there again I don't propose to make policy for the Administration. You can strike north into the Viet Cong territory. You can get out, as Senator Morse would have us do, or we can muddle as we have been muddling in the hope that we can get that political situation reasonably pacified and then we can go for an eventual military

victory. But let me remind you if we pull out of Vietnam -- and I am not one of those who counsels that course -- it will mean that the southernmost flank of the line that runs from Korea to Vietnam and which is our outside defense perimeter will suddenly have that flank turned and then all the trustee islands in the Pacific as well as the Philippines are in danger, and I will not counsel that kind of a course.

MR. SCHERER: You favor more muddling, then, as you put it, which is present policy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, what can you do but muddle until you can get the political situation stabilized. First you are dealing with one government, then you are dealing with another, and when stability is lacking, how can you very well go forward with a vigorous military effort?

MR. SPIVAK: Senator Dirksen, there are some political cynics who say that your Coordinating Committee is a plot rather than a plan, a plot to keep the rising power of the Governors in check. What is your answer to that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have never heard it characterized as a plot. There are, after all, 17 Republican Governors. There are 172 Congressmen and Senators on the Republican side, all of whom have been elected. Now the Governors have their proper place but we have been dealing so much at the national

2 level here since this centers upon the Republican National Committee, that you think first in terms of the national frame. Now the Governors will certainly have a part in this undertaking, and I think Governor Smylie of Idaho understands that fully because for an hour or more last week we discussed the whole matter in my office.

MR. SPIVAK: But Senator, you Republicans keep saying all the time that the more power ought to go back to the states, that there is too much federal power. Now with 17 Republican Governors who have been elected, why don't you give them more than just five little seats in your Coordinating Committee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, what ratio would you suggest? Five out of 17, and then you look at the joint leadership which consists of only nine out of 172.

MR. SPIVAK: Now what is the status today of your Coordinating Committee? Who has accepted your invitation? Has President Eisenhower accepted your invitation?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: The invitations have gone out only recently and I presume the responses are coming back.

MR. SPIVAK: So far nobody has accepted?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, that I can't say because the responses would go to the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, and I have not seen him to talk to, I have not called him and he has not called me. Therefore I wouldn't be

3 able to tell you who has responded and who will attend.

MR. BELL: Senator Morton said at the Chicago meeting of the National Committee that this Coordinating Committee was in business. It didn't make any difference whether the National Committee liked it or not. Is that your view of it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, it is in business in the sense that the Senators and the House members who constitute the joint leadership are here. Now the rest of it is more or less advisory and it is targeted on the Republican National Committee. So you can go ahead and do business, if you are going to deal in the field of policy, for the minute the first Administration bill comes to the Floor of the House or Senate you are going to have to be in business whether you like it or not.

MR. BELL: Well, Chairman Burch estimated it cost \$150,000 to operate this Committee for one year. Where are you going to get that money?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, as a matter of fact the estimate that was first bandied about was not \$150,000, it was \$250,000, and they felt there would be no difficulty in securing that money.

MR. BELL: From where?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, well you know how political funds are raised.

MR. BELL: Well, I don't, Senator, but you do and I thought

4 maybe you could tell me.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I will just tell you. You go out and pass the hat among people who can contribute substantial sums to get this under way.

MR. BELL: You will go to Texas, first, and then New York, do you, is that the --

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You can make allotments of states, or you can just get up a list of individuals and you assign so many to this person, so many to that person, but the new Chairman of the Republican National Committee, I can assure you is no amateur in the field of raising money and in the field of party organization.

MR. BELL: You feel quite confident then that you can get the \$150,000 without any trouble?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, he has had no difficulty ever getting money to put Ohio on the right side of the ledger, and I anticipate, on the basis of long experience, that he can do so at the national level.

MR. BELL: Well, Senator, I didn't think Ohio was on the right side of the Republican ledger in the last election.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Not the last election, but what about all the elections before that?

MR. BELL: Well, there were some of those where the Democrats won, too.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you just try to pick out one and

mm5 try to make a case on that.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, it has always seemed to me that anyone who succeeded to the Presidency ought to be elected by all the people if possible, not the Cabinet officer or even the Speaker. What would be your idea of amending the Constitution to have two Vice Presidents, one executive to help the President and one legislative to be there giving us another chance at the succession.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Mrs. Craig, if you are going down that road why not have three or four Vice Presidents? A bill was introduced in the House of Representatives some years ago by a Pennsylvania Congressman. I think he provided for three Vice Presidents, and laid out the duties that each one should perform. I don't see how you can quite do it. You either have the Vice President or you don't have the Vice President. You don't operate the government of the United States like to do a commercial corporation. You have one who would succeed the President in case of death, resignation, retirement or disability, and no more than that. For the rest of it their of course duties can be assigned to people who can be employed at any level, any salary level, any title level in government.

MRS. CRAIG: Well, Senator, the way the Presidents are now using the one Vice President, don't you think we need two?

mm6

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, I do not.

MR. SCHERER: Senator, the Goldwater forces averted a fight in Chicago by having Mr. Burch step down, but haven't the Republicans really only papered over the split by electing Ray Bliss Chairman? Doesn't the old question still exist, who controls the Party, the Goldwaterites or the moderates who oppose him?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I think those things finally cure themselves. Time is the great healer. And really the major factor to be kept in mind constantly in the party are the people who compose the Party, the millions who have an interest in the success of the Party. So that at the top level, perforce, it is not a case of papering over. I think it will find its own level and then you will have a unified Party, a cohesive Party, and you will go on to a victory.

MR. SCHERER: This will happen by 1968?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well certainly in the bi-elections I anticipate that we ought to do right well.

MR. SCHERER: Who is going to lead the Party in '68, who do you see as the top names, the top contenders?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Far be it from me to name anybody so far in advance because if I did, who knows, it might stick, and there might be others who would take exception to me advancing the cause of some particular individual.

MR. SCHERER: We have about two and a half minutes

remaining.. Mr. Spivak --

MR. SPIVAK: The UN is in a hassle today over the Russian refusal to pay about \$52 million in the debt they owe the UN. In the past you have been for a tough United States stand in the UN. Have you any proposals for us as to what ought to be done about that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well I have this much of a proposal: Unless we show our teeth and insist that these funds be paid, and if they go off in some other direction, it would be tantamount to amending that charter and once you do it you may have others besides Sukarno who is beginning to move out of the UN family. So I think the United States through its Ambassador ought to insist that the charter be followed with respect to Section 19 and the law to vote in the General Assembly if they fail to pay up.

MR. BELL: Senator, Republicans are talking about unity at this point. It seems to me you have a special problem in the Senate, however. How do you unify a party there that embraces Senator Javits of New York and Senator Thurmond of South Carolina?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, if out of 32 you can get say 27 or 28 to track on the major issues, isn't that a high degree of unity in anybody's coin?

MR. BELL: How often do you think you can get 27 or 28?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: We have done it on occasions and we

did it on the cloture bill in anticipation of Civil Rights, and we did it on Civil Rights, because we got 27 Republican votes.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, Senator Javits wants the Republicans to write a whole new platform. Do you think you need a whole new platform?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: They have no authority to write a new platform. That is a prerogative of the National Committee. That is why I indicated a moment ago, you do betide and betimes write a statement of principle for guidance as conditions change, but you have no authority to write a new platform.

MRS. CRAIG: But should you write one?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I see no particular reason for it because we can meet the changes as we go along.

MR. SCHERER: Why are you so upset about closing the surplus Veterans Administration hospitals?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, they never even consulted with the national commanders of these various organizations.

Secondly why didn't they give the states a chance to take these over if they wanted them? In our own case in Dwight, Illinois, we could use that for retarded children in the state and we had no chance to get it.

MR. BROOKS: Senator, that is a long story and I am afraid we have no time to explore it thoroughly. I am sorry to have to interrupt but I see that our time is up. Thank you

very much, Senator Dirksen, for being with us. We will be back with an announcement for you in just a minute. First, this message.

(Announcement)

THE ANNOUNCER: For a printed copy of today's interview send ten cents in coin and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Merkle Press, 809 Channing Street, Northeast, Washington, D. C., 20018.

MR. BROOKS: Next week our guest on MEET THE PRESS will be another headline figure in the news. Now this is Ned Brooks saying goodbye for Senator Everett Dirksen and MEET THE PRESS.

- - - - -