



*Youth Wants  
to Know*

Produced by  
THE WESTINGHOUSE BROADCASTING COMPANY  
in association with  
THEODORE GRANIK

*Vol. VII*

*TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 1959*

*No. 4*

**Youth Wants to Know Presents**

*SENATOR EVERETT DIRKSEN*

*(Republican, Illinois)*

*THEODORE GRANIK*

*Moderator*

*Question: Senator Dirksen, doesn't the rejection of Admiral Strauss represent a personal rebuff to President Eisenhower?*

*Mr. Granik: Our guest is the distinguished minority leader of the United States Senate, Everett McKinley Dirksen, Republican of Illinois.*

*He is undoubtedly one of the most influential Republicans in Congress today, and the success or failure of President Eisenhower's program rests upon his shoulders.*

*Senator Dirksen, it is indeed a great pleasure to have you with us and I would like you to meet our panel of young students, who are here under the auspices of the National Education Association. They represent, as you know, the Washington, D. C., area high schools and they have many questions for you.*

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen, doesn't the rejection of Admiral Strauss represent a personal rebuff to President Eisenhower?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It might be considered as such. After all, a Cabinet nominee is a very personal nominee of the President and under the Constitution where the Senate has power of consent and fails to give it, it can be considered, I think, as something of a rebuff.

QUESTION: Well, then, doesn't this weaken President Eisenhower's position in relation to the rest of his program?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, not necessarily. I think these things happen and this would be one of a great many nominees, as a matter of fact, so it can hardly be said that it weakens the President's position.

QUESTION: Senator, why didn't Republicans support Sherman Adams as they did Admiral Strauss?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I haven't tried to relate the two, as a matter of fact. I think they are in a different category. The one has statutory duties and the other actually does not.

QUESTION: Isn't the failure to confirm Strauss the result of a personal feud between certain members of the Senate and Admiral Strauss?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It has been so alleged, but probably it is better that I make no personal comment as to whether a member of the Senate would go in for feuding.

QUESTION: Well, if it is the result of a feud, so to speak, between these Senators and Mr. Strauss, isn't that going to look pretty bad to the voters back home?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I doubt it very much.

QUESTION: Would you recommend censure for a Senator who let personal convictions enter into such a topic?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: How can you ever divorce an individual from personal convictions even though they take that form?

QUESTION: Well, it shouldn't be in a nomination, confirmation; if you think somebody is not capable that is okay, but just because he is not a friend of yours, that shouldn't enter into it.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I know, but I think the basic answer is, they are still all human beings in the Senate and the House of Repre-

sentatives, and subject to all the weaknesses and foibles that beset every other human being in the world.

QUESTION: Senator, how can the public have confidence in the Congress as a legislative body when it can become bogged down and involved in such quibbling as happened in the Strauss issue?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I must say, of course, it only happens once in a blue moon. This is the first time in 35 years I suppose that a Cabinet member has been rejected.

QUESTION: Well, this has been a personality issue, hasn't it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: To a considerable extent I would think so.

QUESTION: Well, isn't this sort of spiteful on the Congress' part and aren't there bigger issues that should be taken care of?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you see, my young friend, I must never quarrel with the motivations of my colleagues in the House or Senate.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen, do you think the Democrats were playing politics on this issue?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I like to think always that when a person approaches an issue or a problem like this, he does so from solid motives and that the political factor does not enter into the picture.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen, who is the Democrats' strongest candidate for 1960?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Of course, that question addressed to a life-long Republican offers him some great difficulty.

QUESTION: Certainly you must have some opinion though.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You see, if I were going to express a political opinion, I might center on what I thought might be the weakest candidate in the hope that we could defeat him.

*Mr. Granik: You mean the best one to lose?*

QUESTION: Then who would the weakest candidate be?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't believe I can give you comment on that, as a matter of fact, and particularly so because so many of them are members of the United States Senate. Senator Humphrey of Minnesota, Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts, Senator Symington of Missouri, Senator Johnson of Texas, and perhaps I ought to be wholly neutral and impartial since that struggle is on the other side of the political fence.

QUESTION: Sir, with so many Democratic candidates, why do you think the Republican party is faced with such a dearth of good presidential candidates who have a chance of winning in 1960?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I do not believe you can call it a dearth of candidates by any means. I think it is a rather healthy sign for a party, if it can center its attention on, let us say, two candidates, and let the strength be dealt there, and from there on give vitality to your party as it approaches a presidential election.

QUESTION: Well, Senator Mundt and Senator Scott both support Mr. Nixon. Would you say Mr. Nixon is the best man for the job?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I can only say that Mr. Nixon is a very top-flight citizen, and a very able public servant in my book.

*Mr. Granik: Would you join your colleagues in supporting Mr. Nixon?*

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I said yesterday on a radio panel, Ted, where this question came up, it is a little anticipatory, particularly in my position, and we still have a convention to go through before the candidate is finally selected.

QUESTION: Well, Senator, can any significance be placed upon the Administration's asking Dr. Milton Eisenhower to accompany Nixon to Russia?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: My understanding is actually that Mr. Nixon asked that Dr. Eisenhower accompany him.

QUESTION: Well, why didn't he ask someone who would be in the State Department who would have some good knowledge of the internal affairs of Russia, an expert?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Dr. Eisenhower has been in government in many capacities and has pursued many activities. He has a capacity also for being a great observer when he goes abroad, and I think if the selection were given to me, I might conceivably have selected him as against anybody else.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen, do you think that Vice President Nixon's trip to Moscow will just about cinch the Republican nomination?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I wouldn't know, as a matter of fact. Everybody goes abroad. Governor Stevenson went abroad.

*Mr. Granik: They won't vote for him over there, will they?*

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That is right.

I was going to complete that answer and say you will remember that whimsical statement Governor Stevenson made—and he comes from my own state—that he had carried every precinct out in Burma, I think, or Asia or somewhere, but it didn't do him very much good at home.

QUESTION: Would you support Rockefeller as the vice presidential nominee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am quite uncommitted on that whole subject at the moment.

QUESTION: Would you, yourself, be considering running for the vice presidency?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have not considered it and I am not a candidate.

*Mr. Granik: There will be another McKinley on the ticket sometime, Senator?*

QUESTION: Do you think the solid South will be broken by the Republicans in the '60 elections?

*Mr. Granik: I may add for a moment, he represents the National 4-H Clubs and so does the young lady there. They have just concluded their national convention in Washington, as you know, Senator. We will come back to your question.*

QUESTION: Do you think the Republicans will break the solid South in the '60 elections, Senator?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: My young friend comes from the Tarheel State of North Carolina, I believe, and I am delighted to see him. He is a 4-H'er.

Now, breaking the solid South would certainly be a tremendous undertaking. Whether it can be done, I do not know. Usually, of course, those things have to develop over a period of time and you don't encompass it either in a day or a week or in a year or in a four-year period as a matter of fact.

QUESTION: Well, Senator, do you think Eisenhower's success in '56 was along party lines or due to his popularity?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, let us say both as a matter of fact, and he is tremendously popular and, of course, that popularity has carried right through, as you well know, even in the most recent polls.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen, what are the Republicans' chances for winning both the Congress and the presidency in 1960?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, now, if by chance as you mean, I ought to tell how many Senators and Congressmen are going to win, I am afraid you would have me in difficulties, but I will say that in my judgment our party chances are going to be excellent in 1960 because we are going to have some splendid issues to present to the country.

QUESTION: Senator, hasn't the two-term limitation of the presidential term put a had light on the Republicans' leadership and that it has held President Eisenhower back seriously in his power?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I doubt it very much. I could argue, I think, on both sides of the constitutional amendment which placed a two-term limit upon an individual.

QUESTION: Do you favor it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think I voted for it when it came around and I think I half-way supported the proposal that came out of the Judiciary Committee to delete it from the Constitution. That, of course, is for the people and usually when a Constitutional proposal comes along, and there is considerable interest on a nation-wide basis, I do believe that since that is the way the Constitution is amended, that the people have a right to pass on it. And so, when we pass a Constitutional amendment in the House and Senate, it is nothing more than sending it to the country to give the people who are really the fountainhead of power in this country an opportunity to determine whether the Constitution shall be amended again.

QUESTION: Senator Dirksen, a moment ago you mentioned that the Republicans would have splendid issues in 1960. What are some of these issues?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I think inflation, economy, holding the line, those are matters of great appeal to the people today.

QUESTION: Well, how about defensive weakness, then? Isn't the effort to balance the budget sacrificing America's defense?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Not one bit. I think the President's estimates, as transmitted by him to the Congress take into account all that is necessary for an adequate defense of this country, both here on the home front and with respect to our bases and our collective security efforts abroad.

QUESTION: Senator, do you think that surplus spending would remedy the inflationary trend we are now in?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Surplus spending, my dear, I am afraid would enhance it and probably stimulate those fevers rather than dampen them.

QUESTION: When Republicans call Democratic policies budget-busting, aren't they more or less supporting a half truth which just clouds over the issue and prevents intelligent discussion of the problem?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I think you get the whole answer, of course, when action has been completed on all appropriation bills, and you ascertain what the effect will be so far as the budget is concerned and so far as the Treasury is concerned. It is a little difficult to do it before that action has been consummated for a number of reasons.

First, you can't tell what the total of appropriations will be compared with the budget, nor the authorizations for spending, nor what I call the back-door approaches to the Treasury which is circumvention of the appropriation technique.

QUESTION: But, Senator, when Congressman Halleck just lumps everything that the Democrats want to do under budget-busting, isn't he preventing any real compromise?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I doubt it very much, but having been a member of the Appropriations Committee of the House and Senate so long, I always approach it in restrained and realistic fashion without ever reflecting upon the approaches of any other person.

QUESTION: Senator, how can the public be encouraged to invest in government securities when such things as bonds continue at such low interest rates?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, actually as a matter of fact, the government today is in a position of having to compete in the capital markets with every other person, every other institution or corporation that uses capital funds. For instance, countries have to go into the market, states, counties, even the municipalities, many of whom, of course, can issue tax-free bonds, and then in addition you have subordinate agencies in government that operate in the market for capital funds.

Now, you see the only thing government can do under those circumstances, when there are so many people bidding for the dollars that represent the frugality of the people, is to do it by means of interest rates, and that calls so often on an increase in the interest rate and that is precisely what is happening at the present time.

*Mr. Granik: Another 4-H'er, Senator.*

QUESTION: Senator, do you think that an increase on the rate of government bonds contributes to inflation?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, only to this extent, of course, that if more is paid, obviously more spending money is put in the hands of those who hold federal securities and it becomes a part of the whole disposable income that is available to people. In that sense it could make some contribution.

QUESTION: Senator, do you feel that the recent attack on a Navy patrol bomber in the Far East could be considered an act of war?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am not sure. As a matter of fact, that

question was asked me by the press. I have been engaged with so many other things that I didn't get a chance to familiarize myself with the details.

We have had a number of incidents and they have never been regarded exactly as an act of war.

QUESTION: What compensation do you think the government will seek for this act?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, that is a matter always of negotiation.

QUESTION: Senator, why isn't this an act of war? They shot at one of our planes.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, they may come up with the answer or with the excuse that it was patrolling off its beat or beyond its proper jurisdiction. A lot of things can be advanced, and I do not have enough familiarity with the facts to give you a good reasoned answer.

QUESTION: What should our government do about it, Senator?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I suppose they are ascertaining all the facts at the present time. And then from that base their negotiations will have to be undertaken.

QUESTION: Well, isn't a plane that isn't equipped to fire a let-down of our nation's defense?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, one isolated thing by itself can hardly be regarded as having a great impact upon our defense.

Now, with respect to the fact that the plane wasn't in a position perhaps to use weapons with which to defend itself, it was supposedly on a peaceful reconnaissance mission and if it were a peaceful mission, perhaps Secretary McElroy, insofar as I saw his statement this morning, is probably correct.

QUESTION: Well, Senator, if this attack on the plane was not an act of war, what do you consider an act of war?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I am afraid it would require an answer that would go beyond the compass of the time here this morning but an act of war, of course, is a deliberate act of such dimensions I think that it can be considered as open and aggressive hostility involving the broad interests of the country.

QUESTION: Would you feel that if the talks on the Berlin crisis fail, that there is no hope for a summit conference?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Not necessarily. They could fail and we could still have a summit conference, depending on where these discussions are left when the present ministerial conference is over.

QUESTION: Well, Eisenhower has stated that he probably will not go if the Berlin talks fail. Do you think this is a wise policy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, of course, the President's hope was that the talks would not fail and that out of it all there would come some few things of substantial and durable importance that would be the nucleus for a summit conference.

Now, of course, if all of that were thrown overboard, then there may not be a reason for a summit conference.

QUESTION: Well, Senator, President Eisenhower said that he would not go to a summit conference if there was no constructive work done by the foreign ministers. He has now left the door open. Do you think he should go to a conference if there is one?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, he is still hoping, of course, in your own language, that it will be durable and will be constructive and that the real issues that are involved here will still be put on the agenda for a summit conference.

QUESTION: Well, sir, if there is nothing constructive done and he goes, wouldn't he be losing face in the opinion of the world because he is backing down on what he was previously said?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, in fact he might gain faith, in your terms, by taking a firm position and simply saying, "They did not resolve the issues that were involved, and the issues that involved the welfare of Europe particularly and Germany very particularly, and Berlin very especially, shall I say so if those things are not before the summit conference then what would be the purpose in holding this high level undertaking?"

QUESTION: Well, surely a summit conference couldn't do any harm. If nothing is accomplished at Berlin, shouldn't he go anyway to a summit conference and try to accomplish something?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: What would be its psychological impact if actually there were no durable issues before it to be disposed of by those who are at the highest level of the governments that are involved?

QUESTION: Well, there are always durable issues to be brought up. Berlin would still need to be brought up and others.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: But if at the second level they backed off and said, "This cannot go on the agenda," then of course you would have almost a moot undertaking.

*Mr. Granik: Well, where do we go from there, Senator?*

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you simply nurse your hopes constantly that finally these issues will be isolated, put in a package and say, "Here it is. On this we have to contrive some understanding."

Now, if you just consider it in the light of how long this effort has been going on, and that is the reason, of course, that such phrases as "the cold war" become very popular everywhere in the world—it has been going on for a long time—and you cannot permit it to decimate your hopes because if you did then the future would be bleak indeed.

QUESTION: Senator, lately France and the United States have been having differences of opinion concerning NATO defense policies and President Eisenhower has stated that if he should be in Europe he would be willing to discuss these with Premier de Gaulle.

Well, don't you think this needs more positive, immediate action?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It is difficult to say.

I remember the first steps taken by France and I think you are probably referring to the *detachment of armaments and tanks and planes and also manpower for the campaign in North Africa, and to that extent weakening the contribution that France was to make to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That was a two-stage proceeding, and I recall the last time I was in Europe I discussed it with our Supreme Commander, General Norstad.*

*Now, it has happened before and obviously it will happen again.*

I think you can understand when a nation is confronted with an acute and monetary problem, the lures and temptations of diverting those things to the thing that is immediately on its doorstep in the form of a hostile difficulty in North Africa—it is a matter that is going to have to be considered all over again.

QUESTION: Sir, what happens if the Russians sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, anybody can speculate on that and obviously you say what happens, I don't know.

QUESTION: What is the Congress going to do about it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, it is in the hands of the President for the moment and the Congress takes no action in that field, unless they were asked to confer some additional authority upon the President who conducts our foreign policy.

QUESTION: Senator, how much is NATO weakened by French refusal to permit the United States to base atomic weapons on French soil?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Up to now, I doubt whether they have been weakened. Whether it would be weakened in the future is quite another question, and I think, of course, it is a military problem on which I could speculate and say in my judgment I think we would be weakened, of course, but let's not go on the assumption that that is the final answer from France. That is a momentary answer. It might be beset and moved by political considerations, but is it the final answer, and so I have to be rather circumspect about any speculation that I make in that field.

QUESTION: Sir, returning to a domestic issue, isn't President Eisenhower continuing to show a failure in leadership by declining to call a conference at the White House on the upcoming steel strike?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Definitely not. Now that you mention it, of course, suppose he permitted Senators and others to talk him into intervention? Where does the intervention stop? Does he intervene if there were a strike in the motor industry? Should he intervene if there is a strike in the mining industry?

And there is legislation on the books today, there is a provision in the Taft-Hartley Act so that if you get a condition of this kind which has a tremendous national impact, there is authority for the President to move in, but I think the President of the United States is doing the right thing by showing restraint because this is still in a bargaining state.

*Mr. Granik: You wouldn't happen to adhere to Senator Symington's suggestion, would you, Senator?*

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I am very glad that the President would not embrace that suggestion.

QUESTION: I don't think you could call this intervention though. He is not using authority; he is using leadership.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: But you can't divorce it entirely from the psychologies that are involved and it might be regarded as intervention rather than leadership.

QUESTION: In the light of the Strauss issue and the steel issue,

doesn't it look as though President Eisenhower is not going to be able to get his program through at all before Congress ends?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I think he has gained in his program only within the last few days. Now, you will have to give me a chance to round out this answer a bit.

You see, the Congress, after going in for bold, new ideas in aid to airports and housing and agricultural programs and so forth, have suddenly had to slenderize what they did and come back almost to the recommendations that the President made. And in that respect, I think the President's program, as it was advanced to the Congress, has gained immensely.

QUESTION: They haven't gotten around to civil rights, which is one of our most important issues.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Now, of course, civil rights is still in the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate and in the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives.

The President has to advance those programs to the Congress and then, of course, utter the hope and depend upon the Legislative Branch to give them proper consideration.

QUESTION: But, Senator, with the Republicans in the minority in Congress, how can they expect to get the administrative program through?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you would be surprised how well we have done by simply putting out best foot forward and fighting for the program that the President has advanced.

I must say to you, there are only 34 Republican Senators out of 98 and yet I just direct your attention to some of these issues and how well we have done because we have received strength from the other side as well, on the theory that our position was correct.

QUESTION: Is this being done by a coalition with southern Democrats?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, definitely not. This is being done only because there are that many people in the House and Senate who take a, shall I say, conservative estimate of the matter.

QUESTION: The recent energy spent to clean up the labor situation, is the same thing going to happen to that that has happened to the civil rights issue; is it going to be lost in committee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That I cannot tell you. I do express my regret that a far better and stronger labor-management reform bill did not come out of the Senate and go to the House.

QUESTION: If the civil rights bill doesn't get through this Congress, is there any hope at all of getting it through next Congress?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I must say to you that a civil rights bill got through the last Congress, so we must not presume or assume that a civil rights bill will not go through this Congress.

*Mr. Granik: Thank you, Senator Dirksen, for being our guest on YOUTH WANTS TO KNOW.*

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*This is Theodore Granik bidding you goodbye.*

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*as broadcast over television facilities of the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, Inc., are printed, and a limited number are distributed free to further the public interest in important discussions of questions affecting the public welfare.*

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810 Rhode Island Avenue, N. E. WASHINGTON 18, D. C.

*(When requesting copies by mail, enclose ten cents to cover mailing)*

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The proceedings of the "Youth Wants to Know" are presented monthly on the Westinghouse Broadcasting Company's television stations from coast to coast. Consult your local paper for time and station.



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