

THE JOINT SENATE-HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

SENATOR DIRKSEN - REPRESENTATIVE HALLECK

November 21, 1963

STATEMENT BY SENATOR DIRKSEN: There is a faltering effort now underway by apologists for the White House to blame the Congress because President Kennedy's legislative program is in a mess. This effort will fail because the blame lies squarely on the White House doorstep and any reasonable examination of the facts will show it.

Mr. Kennedy has been guilty of two major blunders.

First, he proposed that taxes be cut while he increased Federal deficit spending. This unprecedented proposal not only met heavy opposition in the Congress, but reliable samples of public opinion showed the American people were also opposed to a tax cut without a cut in spending.

Second, the President, who had promised major civil rights legislation in 1961, failed to live up to his promise. It was not until June 19, 1963 that he submitted a civil rights program, only after the crisis of demonstrations and violence forced his hand. Then he expected Congress to act in a few months on a program he had delayed for two and one half years.

Historically, the passage of the civil rights legislation is a long, drawn-out affair. This is because many members of Mr. Kennedy's own political party are opposed to civil rights legislation. Had the

President kept his campaign pledge and sent his program to Congress in 1961, new civil rights statutes would have been on the books before demonstrations and violence were ever precipitated.

As for a tax cut, Mr. Kennedy could have had it this year but he cut spending... HAD he cut spending. But he did the opposite: He asked for a \$4.5 billion -dollar increase in spending and \$7.8 billion dollars in future authorizations. The opposition by the Congress and the American people has not been to a tax cut but to increased spending AND a tax cut. As the matters now stand, Congress has decided to delay action on tax legislation until it has had a look at Mr. Kennedy's January budget for next year.

In the final analysis, it is President Kennedy's own mismanagement of his legislative program that has kept Congress in session since last January and everybody in Washington knows it.

In all the welter of criticism the meat of the coconut is overlooked, namely, it is the basic divergence of opinion between the President on the one hand and the American people and the Congress on the other.

STATEMENT BY REPRESENTATIVE HALLECK: Along the same line I have this statement for the Joint Senate-House Republican Leadership.

During the 1960 Presidential campaign, Mr. Kennedy filled the airwaves with what he called "the need for strong leadership," the need to go forward with vigor." If we examine President Kennedy's handling of his legislative programs for his first three years, his 1960 campaign cries are more applicable today than three years ago.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for an Alliance for Progress authorization for Latin America, and Congress gave it to him. The program has never even gotten off the ground.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for a Trade Expansion Act to facilitate his "Grand Design" for Europe, and Congress gave it to him. The "Grand Design" collapsed over a year ago and has not been heard of since.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for depressed areas and retraining legislation to solve unemployment, and Congress gave it to him. Not even a dent has been made in unemployment.

Mr. Kennedy asked Congress for an Urban Affairs Department, social security medical care, massive Federal aid to education and similar proposals. These the Congress has NOT given to him. Why? For a number of reasons, but mainly because there has been no wide public support for them either in the Congress or in the country.

Together with the delayed tax cut and civil rights measures these legislative items and enactments have been the backbone of Mr. Kennedy's program. The list adds up to almost total failure for what undoubtedly will be known as the Three Empty Years.

With the Democrats in control of the White House and every government agency and with a two to one majority in the Senate and a three to two majority in the House of Representatives of the Congress, Mr. Kennedy can have no alibi. Any censure of Congress is a censure of the Democrat Party and of the lack of Presidential leadership.

QUESTION: Mr. Halleck, do you think it possible that if he had set up the civil rights earlier, he might not have gotten some of these things like Trade Expansion which Congress gave him?

REP. HALLECK: I don't think that would have stood in the way at all. And may I say in connection with those things to which I have referred, I voted for the Trade Expansion Act, I voted for the Alliance for Progress, I voted for a substitute on Area Redevelopment. That was an Eisenhower proposal to begin with. After we Republicans rewrote the retraining legislation, I voted for that.

I don't think - to answer your question specifically - that the sending up of a civil rights program message earlier would have interfered at all with the accomplishment of these other projects and legislative proposals.

QUESTION: You don't think that's gumming up the works this year.

REP. HALLECK: Well, I suppose it has in some measure. Yes, I think probably it has.

QUESTION: What's the best information you can give us now on the civil rights bill?

REP. HALLECK: Well, my best guess would be that it cannot be acted upon before the Christmas Recess on the Floor of the House of Representatives. You understand there was considerable complaint that the bill as reported had been submitted to the members of the committee just a few hours before it was acted upon. The report, as I understand it, was just filed last night and certainly the members of the Congress, and I think the people of the country, have a right to take a look at the reports

that were filed and have a better chance to understand just what is proposed in the bill.

Now, of course, the matter of getting a rule... will be before the Rules Committee... how soon it will be before the Rules Committee, I don't know. But next week is Thanks giving and I remember one time we had to meet here on Thanksgiving Day but I think that isn't proposed for this year.

QUESTION: Charlie, do you agree that Senator Russell and you have put on a New Frontier jacket by supporting that bill?

REP. HALLECK: No, I do not agree with that.

QUESTION: ... misunderstanding about the bi-partisan agreement. Do you feel that you are committed to ^{help} get the bill through the House without an amendment?

REP. HALLECK: No, I do not. And I know that some impression in that regard has been created in certain places, but you see the only thing that really has been ... that was an issue up to date was whether or not the motion to report out the very far-reaching bill, I mean that's to use a very, very... I'd say an understatement... as against the bill that was worked out over the weekend by certain people and who, as a matter of fact, had been collaborating in the drafting of such a bill for a considerable time prior to the time this situation arose.

So the only thing that was an issue at the time was whether or not the more moderate bill, the substitute bill, was to be reported from the committee, or the rough, the much rougher bill that the sub-committee had finally drafted.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

REP. HALLECK: I have said right along and I say it again... the record of the Republican Party on civil rights for a hundred years has been good. As Majority Leader in Republican Congresses, I have put on civil rights bills, such as anti-poll tax and anti-lynching. I had a considerable part in the passage of legislation in - what was it - '58... '57, '58, '59... somewhere... under President Eisenhower.

Now in this present situation I have said all along that I am for a meaningful but civil rights legis.... meaningful but reasonable civil rights bill. And on that I stand.

QUESTION: Does that include public accommodations, Mr. Halleck?

REP. HALLECK: Well, we've got a public accommodations section in the substitute bill, the bill that was reported out of the committee, and I must say that I've serious misgivings about it, but on the other hand my personal view is that some action in that direction is indicated.

Now you understand this bill is going to come onto the Floor under an Open Rule, I suppose, and I think it's understood and should be understood that nothing has been done to foreclose adequate and complete consideration by the House of Representatives when the bill gets on the floor.

QUESTION: You don't think the bill will reach the floor before the Christmas holidays? When do you think it will...

REP. HALLECK: Well, I don't know how soon we're going to be back... we're supposed to meet January 3. Now as far as I'm concerned, I would postpone that a little bit, that reconvening date, that's my own

personal view, and I'm not very much impressed with the idea of coming back here January 2 just to adopt a sine die adjournment. Whenever we quit before the Christmas holidays - if we have a Christmas holiday, and I certainly think we ought to have one - why, then we ought to have a sine die adjournment at that time.

I must say that the way we're operating now in the House of Representatives - and I'm not undertaking to blame any of the Democrat leadership for it - but it's one of the most frustrating experiences I was ever in. We just put on a little bill or two a week which nails everybody down here... and I guess maybe we're supposed to be here all the time but a few people back home think we ought to get home once in a while.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

REP. HALLIECK: Well, of course, the failure to enact the appropriation bills, in my opinion, is one of the worst things that I've seen around here. We're operating under continuing resolutions. I'm not so sure but what maybe next Monday we get up another continuing resolution through December... maybe it ought to be less than thirty days... or maybe we ought to make it to June 30, 1964 and go on from there.

QUESTION: Can we assume you might support this idea of letting the Senate originate half the appropriation bills to save time?

REP. HALLIECK: No, no, no... because, you see, we've been originating the appropriation bills and we've been cuttin' them real good. You remember when we set up Task Force... a lot of people scoffed. They said, why you can't cut the money out... in the first place we wouldn't have courage enough to do it, in the second place you can't cut this budget.

We've cut it to the tune of some 5 or 6 billion dollars already. Now we've kind of set the pace, and I'm very happy to see that on yesterday, as I understand it, on the Space Program the Senate finally adopted the House figures. That's all to the good.

QUESTION: Charlie, are you considering.... (part of question inaudible)... to make it until June 30th?

REP. HALLECK: No, no, just a little levity in that, Jerry.

QUESTION: (Everybody talks at once... then someone asks something about "reconvenes.")

REP. HALLECK: Oh, I don't know. But I think the third is on Friday, and you couldn't... you'd just come here Friday and then adjourn over 'til I suppose Monday... and so I don't know...

QUESTION: You're talking about a couple of days -

REP. HALLECK: Oh, a week or ten days.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

REP. HALLECK: What's that?

QUESTION: Have you talked to the Speaker about this?

REP. HALLECK: No, I haven't. No, I haven't... well, I've been talking to him generally about getting a little time off. And I can't see any reason in the world why it can't be accomplished.

QUESTION: (Asks something about dealing with the appropriation bills.)

REP. HALLECK: Well, I don't know... the appropriation-committee boys say that it's a failure to get the authorization bills passed, and I must say a lot of that slow-down is because the requests from the departments

don't come up here in time. And so it's going to take a real effort - in the Executive Branch and in the Congress... now I don't say the government's too big. On the contrary, I think there's just been a failure to measure up to what I think is a fundamental responsibility of the Congress if we are to maintain our position as an equal and coordinate branch of our great tripartite system.

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You mean on the question whether government has gotten too big? Well, government is -

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Let's divide the question. In the first place, government has gotten too big too fast. This expansion of activity and the number of new functions that are called for for authorization running into the billions... I think I made that statement there that it involved a good many billions. So it's proliferation and escalation of government that comes too fast for one thing. You can't always quarrel with the merit of some of these proposals, but there's a time and a season, I think, for every purpose.

Now you say, why can't we deal with them? We CAN deal with them, but I think if we hold down some of these new ones so that we don't have too many sub-committees operating at one and the same time, then you can get around to your work.

Now I've shuttled between two or three committees this morning in addition to the early Leadership Meeting and now this rather interesting and happy weekly fellowship that we have with you. So all

of it takes time and we have a responsibility and a duty to you, because after all you are not only newspapermen and TV and radio people, you're taxpayers and you're citizens. Of course, if you're domiciled in Washington, you may have some difficulty voting on occasions, but other than that you have all the attributes of citizenship. So we have a duty to you as well as to anybody.

QUESTION: Senator, will most of the Republicans in the Senate support the wheat bill?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Frankly, Jerry, I cannot tell you, but it would appear to me that an affirmative attitude on it is making some progress, as I understand, in the Banking Committee. It has rather a great appeal and my first disposition was of course to go along with Mundt Amendment.

QUESTION: How do you feel about it now?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, the testimony is not all in. They will have the Export-Import Bank people, they'll have some commercial bank people, they have the Secretary of the Treasury, and we'll have a better notion and a better idea when the whole evaluation has been completed.

QUESTION: If the tax-cut bill and the civil-rights bill get through next year, do you think the fact that there have been delays in them will be... (rest of sentence inaudible).

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I don't know about the credit, as a matter of fact. But I think everybody knows what our stance was, namely, and I can speak only for the Senate side. First, a thorough evaluation

of a bill where you modify your rate and where you've got 27 structural changes in the code.

Now the second thing is... you can do a better job when you measure it against the background of the 1965 budget and that obviously comes early in January. But HAD there been some effort to acquaint us with what they were going to ask for in the first incidence, the chances are that we could have expedited this matter.

MODERATOR: Thank you.