

TRANSCRIPT

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20th ANNIVERSARY BROADCAST

"CAPITOL CLOAKROOM"

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GUESTS: Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Mont.)

Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen (R., Ill.)

Representative Carl Albert (D., Okla.)

Representative Gerald Ford (R., Mich.)

Interviewed by CBS News National Correspondent Eric Sevareid

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ANNOUNCER: From the nation's capitol, CBS Radio presents the 20th Anniversary broadcast and the 1004th presentation of Capitol Cloakroom.

For this special occasion, our guests are the leaders of the two houses of Congress.

Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana; Senate Republican Leader Everett Dirksen of Illinois; House Democratic Leader Carl Albert of Oklahoma; and House Republican Leader Gerald Ford of Michigan.

They meet with CBS News National Correspondent Eric Sevareid.

ERIC SEVAREID: Gentlemen, thank you all for joining us for this 20th Anniversary program.

You've all - all of you been in the Congress now at least 20 years. Your accumulative years in Congress total, in fact, something over a century now. That's a lot of accumulated experience.

And I wish you would reflect a bit about the role of the Congress over the many years and its present status. Is it any longer possible - this is a big, generalized question, I'm afraid - any longer possible for the Congress to set the country's course, either in domestic or foreign matters anymore? Can it lead?

Senator Dirksen, what do you think?

SENATOR EVERETT MC KENLEY DIRKSEN: Well the Congress, first of all, has a primary role in another field, best expressed by P. V. Salish, associate professor at the University of Chicago.

SEVAREND: I remember him.

DIRKSEN: Who served one term in the Congress. And when that term ran out - we had redistricted the state. He was a member at large and therefore that was the end of his congressional tour.

And I said to him, "P.V., you've been a professor of political science, what is your estimate now?"

Well, he said, "I've been truly astonished. Congress is, first of all, the great harmonizer. Nobody ever quite gets all that he wants. No individual, no group, no institution. Everybody usually gets a little something. And Congress always keeps it on an even keel."

And that's one of its great roles, I think, in public service.

But now more responsive to your question - whether or not the Congress can lead - why certainly the Congress can lead. And, in fact, that's one of its functions - is to lead. It takes recommendations, of course, from the President. But in every other respect, it's expected to strike out in all these fields of activity.

You must never forget that the language of the Constitution speaking of the State of the Union, says the President shall from time to time give Congress information of the State of the Union and recommendations. But from that point on, it's up to Congress. And that means leadership.

SEVAREND: Mr. Albert.

REPRESENTATIVE CARL ALBERT: May I add to - in seconding what Senator Dirksen has said, some specifics.

In the first place, the Senate has just passed and sent to the House a major civil rights proposal. I suppose, in a sense, every item in that bill has been recommended, at one time or another, by the President.

But I looked over my list this morning of Presidential recommendations in that field. It certainly wasn't anything like as broad as the bill which the Senate has sent to the House.

Now that has been true of many things. Some things the Administration has sent to Congress and Congress has accepted. Sometimes the Congress changes them. In some areas the Congress completely initiates them.

I don't recall, for instance, the ARA program, which was very controversial, ever coming from an Administration until it had been batted around on the Hill for a long time.

SEVAREID: The ARA?

ALBERT: I mean the Area Redevelopment program.

And I think that's true of many things. I think there's a lot - a lot of things that we overlook.

Presidential recommendations are not born in the mind of a specific President at a - on a specific day. They've been kicked around in the country, in the colleges, in organizations, among individuals, sometimes for a generation before they ever come up here.

SEVAREID: And in the Congress too, often.

ALBERT: And in the Congress often. For instance - let me give you a little specific.

One of - one of the great accomplishments - the President

himself told me this -- of the first session of the 89th -- of the 89th Congress -- the Great Society Congress -- was the elimination of the national origins quota system in immigration.

Now the President rightfully gets credit for helping put that proposal into effect. But if you go back to 1928 and find the first speech that John McCormack, now Speaker, made in the House of Representatives, it was on the national origins quota system and criticizing it -- made before Lyndon Johnson was old enough to vote. So did that originate with John McCormack or did it originate with President Johnson? It probably originated somewhere else.

Legislation is the result of national growth, of discussion among all sorts of people for a long period of time. It's the result of co-effort on the part of the President, the Congress, and many, many people across the country.

SEWARD: Senator Mansfield, do you think the role of the Congress is chiefly to harmonize or to concilliate, as Senator Dirksen has emphasized...

SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD: Well this is what the role of Congress has turned out to be. And I agree with the remarks made by Senator Dirksen and Congressman Albert.

But, unfortunately, over the past four or five decades, I think that the Congress has been giving up its leadership role. And that role has been taken over by the President of the United States, whether he happened to be a Republican or a Democrat is immaterial.

And I blame the Congress for what it has done in that respect. Because we have acquiesced in giving up the powers which should be rightly ours, under the Constitution. We have come to depend more and more upon the Executive. And I think it's a most serious mistake.

It is my hope that at long last, the Senate at least, will wake up to its responsibilities, recognize that leadership should come from the Congress as a whole on many questions. And that that initiative will once again be undertaken by us.

REPRESENTATIVE GERALD R. FORD: Mr. Seavareid, I think some interesting developments are transpiring right now.

We're seeing, certainly in the Senate and to some degree in the House, a greater desire on the part of the legislative branch to participate in foreign policy and military decisions. This, I think, is wholesome.

Many people have felt that the House of Representatives, particularly, should not participate in the execution or the implementation of foreign policy. But since the advent of the foreign aid program - about 20 years ago - the House of Representatives, I think properly so, has participated to a greater degree in foreign policy determination. Primarily because the foreign aid program involves substantial amounts of dollars. And whenever money gets involved in how you execute or how you implement foreign policy, the House of Representatives, because of its constitutional control over the funds in the first instance, must have a role in what we do or how we do it.

And so with anywhere from three to seven billion dollars being spent annually under the foreign aid program, and with the presidents - whether they're Democrat or Republican saying that a foreign aid program is an integral part of our policy-making overseas, the House of Representatives has, and I think will continue to be a factor in what we do overseas.

SEVAREID: Well is this power of the purse really effective, once a thing like a war starts, Senator Dirksen? Can you really deny the President what he asks in such a crisis?

DIRKSEN: When you have a war on your hands, then, of course, it becomes difficult indeed. And there are some reasons for it.

In the first place, the President is Commander in Chief by virtue of the Constitution. And under his jurisdiction are the Joint Chiefs, who are responsible for strategy and tactics, the pace of our establishment in making war. And there's so much information at the hands and fingertips of the President that we would otherwise not get, except in an extractive way by quizzing those in uniform as to their objectives and purposes.

But, essentially, as Commander in Chief, he is responsible for conduct of our Army, our Navy, our Air Force. And as such, that leadership very naturally gravitates into his hands.

SEVAREID: You know there was a letter from Jefferson to Madison way back in 1789, in which Jefferson said, "The tyranny of the legislature is the most formidable dread at present and will be for many years. That the executive will come in its turn, but it will be at a remote period."

Have we come to that remote period, do any of you think? Is there anything tyrannical in this power of the executive, Senator Mansfield?

MANFIELD: Not tyrannical, Eric. But I think that we have come to that impasse - again I go back to what I said previously - I think it's the Congress' fault that the power which has accumulated to the Office of the Presidency is now incorporated in that institution.

And I would hope that we would bring about a better cooperation between the two, rather than a continuing widening of the gulf, which seems to be evident at the present time.

SEWARD: Well you gentlemen have all watched the Congress for a long time now - a couple of you in both houses - both chambers. My own impressions over the years, and I've been around here quite a while too. From the outside - in regard to the quality of the men in the Congress - their education, their training - my impression is that this increases. Whether the power of the Congress decreases or not. Am I wrong in this? It seems to me they're better educated on a whole.

ALBERT: I think, Eric, that we have, on the average, younger men. I think it's shown up in my service.

SEWARD: You do?

ALBERT: And we have better-educated men. We have more college men.

But may I make one comment? And on what my fine friend Senator Mansfield has said. Because I have, I think, a slight area of disagreement with him. And I want to throw it out for what it's worth.

He thinks the Senate and the House and particularly the Senate should assert itself in leadership in foreign policy more than it is - than they are doing now.

Well I think there's something to be said for that. And I agree with what Gerry Ford said about it.

But let me throw this out. If it becomes known around the world that the Congress or either house of Congress is the policy-making body of the nation in foreign policy - and I don't think either of them can be for reasons that Senator Dirksen stated, particularly in time of war - but if it should happen, then we've all got to drop every parochial notion we've got or we'll destroy the image of America around the world.

We can't be for a liberal foreign policy and a conservative domestic policy or vice versa. We can't be for closing down the war in Vietnam and against civil rights at the same time.

Or if we do and if it is thought around the world that the congress really makes the policy, we're going to have a blurred image of America in other nations.

It seems to me that we need one person who speaks for the nation in major foreign policy. A person who is in a position to make statements in all fields that will give America a good image wherever his voice is heard.

MANSFIELD: Well, I think that you have stretched what I said considerably, Carl.

ALBERT: Not essentially, Mike.

MANSFIELD: I understand that. But if I understand you correctly, you believe in the predominant and paramount power of the Presidency.

What I am saying is that the Congress ought to be taken in on a consultative basis. That we have our responsibilities, too, to our districts and our states.

And as far as I'm concerned, my primary responsibility is as a senator from the State of Montana. That overrides everything else. I recognize the President's responsibility, his final responsibility. But I think also that the Congress ought to be called in, the appropriate committees should be consulted. And in that way bring about this cooperation which I tried to stress previously between the executive and the legislative branches.

ALBERT: Well, if that is your idea, Mike, I agree with you.

FORD: I would say, Eric, that the respective roles of the House and Senate, vis-a-vis the President, ebb and flow with the times. I think in 1965 and 1966, I have said on several occasions that maybe the President was too dominant and the Congress was not exercising its responsibilities.

But if you go back to the Civil War era, you'll find that the Congress, under Andrew Johnson, was allegedly - and I think history probably proves it - much too dominant. And the executive branch of the government was rather supine.

So although we see now, perhaps for reasons related to the war in Vietnam, the executive branch holding the reins perhaps a bit too much, I think in time the American people, through their elected representatives, will insist and demand that the Congress take a more forthright and dominant role.

SEWARD: Well, you know, gentlemen, if - I suppose this matter of executive power goes along with the nature and temper-

ment of the individual in the White House, depending on how strong and forceful he is. We've had a number of those. Though by no means, were all Presidents of such a nature. Is it war that does this?

Take today, for example, Senator Dirksen, is it the personal forcefulness of this President today or is the war? What is it that's caused an extra flow of power down at the other end of town?

DIRKSEN: No, let me make two or three general observations. Going back to your earlier question.

It's no accident that the legislative branch was created. Under Title I of the Constitution, it was set foremost. President Monroe once observed that it is the very seat of power. And if it is the seat of power, of course that power can be and should be exercised.

But as the country grows and more and more functions are taken over the federal government, the power of putting them into effect has to be delegated.

And of course, when you delegate, you put in the hands of the President the power, so to speak, to issue the rules and the regulations and to select the personnel who will articulate those powers and those projects and those functions.

That accounts for the three million civilians who are on the payroll of the federal government today.

However, I don't want to get too far afield without going back to one other item in your other question. And that was are the congressmen better educated today.

I haven't run the educational background of the greats and near-greats in other days. It's fair to assume that Clay, Calhoun,

Webster and all others were well-educated.

That is not quite the problem today. The problem is one of time. The country has grown to such dimensions, and the business of the Congress has multiplied in so many directions, that today there's scarcely time enough in a 24-hour period to cover the waterfront, to get the things done that must be done, to see people, to answer the endless flow of inquiry that comes from the people. And people are articulate today. And they want to know, and they do want responses.

You add that to your committee and your general floor burdens, and there isn't time enough to adequately do the job.

My old congressional neighbor, way back in other days, was Henry T. Rainey of Illinois who became Speaker of the House. I recall he and I were addressing a meeting one day in one city, and at the speaker's table, I said, "Mr. Rainey, how was it when you first came to Congress?" And he'd been there a long time."

"Oh," he said. "you used to get five or six letters a day. Our train service was not too good between Illinois and Chicago. Maybe you'd get one visitor a week."

He said, "We had lots of time to go over to the Congressional Library and do research work on the various matters that came up. Try to do that today."

SHVAREID: When was that exactly now?

DIRKSEN: Well, now, that was back in 1931 and '33. And Rainey had been here about 30 years. So, you see, he came along sometime after the turn of the century.

But he said, "plenty of time. And none of those outside intrusions."

Today they're not intrusions and we don't call them intrusions. They are verities of life. And it is a free country - a representative government. And the bosses back home want an accounting every so often, either by coming down here or by sending you a letter or getting you back home for a meeting or a conversation.

And so there is little time to do the kind of scholarly work that they did in another generation.

SEVAREID: Is all this extra work, from the fast communications and the growth of the population in your districts and states - is it just a proliferation of detail or is something of greater substance?

DIRKSEN: There's general growth...

ALBERT: I'd say it was a combination of all. And I listened with interest to what Everett had to say.

In my opinion, the day of the individualist in either house is gone. We have - we're becoming a set of organization men. We wear the same kind of suit, the same style, we comb our hair the same way. And we're becoming lost in the conglomeration of the institution which used to produce outstanding individuals.

For example, we have no more orators today, unless it's Everett Dickson of Illinois. He is the last of his breed.

We are pressed for time. The complexities of government are increasing with population, rapidity, and communications and transportation. Our mail has increased tremendously. We have to consider so many problems, that we really can't consider any of them well unless we concentrate in one particular area.

And it is a changed situation. It is in line with the

times. Our membership are better educated. But that doesn't mean that they're better congressmen or senators today than they were 50 or 60 years ago when you had giants like Tom Walsh of Montana, let's say; LaFollette of Wisconsin, Barr of California and the like.

FORD: Let me take a specific, if I could, Mr. Sevareid. The consideration of the federal budget; When I came here about 20 years ago, the federal budget was a rather small amount of money compared to what we're spending today. And it was relatively easy for members of the committee on appropriations to go through the detail.

But today, with the greatly expanded expenditures and the involvement of the federal government in many, many areas that were never thought of about 20 years ago, just the mere detail of going through a budget document by the committee on appropriations and its individual members is a monumental task.

I think we've got to find a way - and I'm not sure how it should be done - for the Congress to better and more adequately consider this tremendous involvement of our government in the day-to-day lives of people.

SEVAREID: Gentlemen, we're going to pause now, about ten seconds, for station identification.

SEVAREID: Gentlemen, this country, by most accounts, is in rather severe difficulties - on this war that no one seems quite -

knows quite how to end, public order and justice at home, on the world financial front it is giving some signs of breaking. If Congress is going to help us out of this - all these areas of quicksand, where ought it to concentrate now? What's its first order of business right now? Is it taxes, Mr. Albert, or what?

ALBERT: Well, I should think that taxes is an area in which we shouldn't work immediately. I do not believe that we've had a war in recent years, or in any - at any time, without raising taxes. We cut taxes in 1964, wasn't it, to the tune of about 23 or four billion dollars, based on current incomes.

On top of that we've loaded a two billion dollar a month war, which probably is increasing in cost; we've loaded about eight billion dollars extra for education; about two billion dollars for the anti-poverty program. So we have all kinds of additional expenditures.

And in my judgement, we should enact a tax bill. Whether it's in the form in which the President has recommended or not, I think is immaterial. I think we ought to start paying for things as we buy them. Or we ought to start raising our money as we expend it, as much as we can.

I agree with those who think we should have an austerity program at home. There are certain things you can't do without. Credit is an evil if it's improperly used. It's beneficial if it's needed in business. If we need it anywhere to increase the strength of our country, I'm in favor of it. But I think we should cut everything to the bone. I'm prepared to do my part, if the committees of the Congress are prepared to do theirs.

SEVAREID: Are we going to get a tax bill, Mr. Ford?

FORD: I think it's a little premature, Eric. I suspect with the reevaluation that the President is undertaking at the present time of where we should go and how we should accomplish our objective in Vietnam will be a very determining factor.

If the President recommends to the Congress an increase in military manpower in Vietnam, which means a rather substantial increase in dollars from the Federal treasury, then I think the Congress will have to do one of two things and maybe both.

One, we'll have to make the kind of reductions that Congressman Albert, indicated to get us back to an austerity circumstance at home.

And certainly we'll have to consider more actively than we are at the present time the possibility of a tax increase.

SEVAREID: Well how do you get the country on an austerity basis without some very severe rules like wage and price controls and so on?

DIRKSEN: Well, Eric, there is no austerity without pain. But going back, for a moment, to this whole matter and looking at it from the high ground of one of the primary objectives of government is always to maintain its solvency. For if it fails to do so, it jeopardizes the value of its own money. And it jeopardizes the confidence that not only the citizens but other countries must have in the government of a country. That's what's at stake right now - is the lack of confidence on the part of the central bankers in Europe that we are willing and have the capacity for facing up to the problems that are before us.

What we're confronted with at the moment, is the prospect of continuing deficits. And two in a row that may exceed 20

billion dollars each. Can you manage deficits of that kind?

Well I'm not quite sure how you're going to do it without some real danger. And so to reduce those deficits, either there has to be a sharp reduction in spending or there has to be a tax bill or both. And I think the Congress is presently looking at a package bill, so to speak, that will call for a ceiling on expenditures, a ceiling on new obligational authority, and then of course a tax bill and a reduction in net expenditures, as distinguished from appropriations.

And that is a real challenge today. And particularly so, since Britain has devalued the pound sterling and we are now off gold and there's a fair assumption that what gold we've got left will probably be distributed in payment of our commitments abroad. Because if they demand gold instead of dollars, we have no choice except to pay it in that fashion. And that means our little gold hoard will vanish sooner or later.

And that puts us squarely in front of the gun. And it's got to be met in the interests of the preservation of the stability and the credit of the country. Because when you get to the point where you can't pay your bills, what you're actually saying to the world is, "We repudiate our obligations."

And then watch and see what happens to your markets, your process and everything else. Then you've got to come with the most extreme measures like controls across the board that are phenomena in a free country anytime.

SEWARD: Gentlemen, everybody is reassessing on Vietnam, to best they can, including a number of new candidates for President. In all the criticisms of the present line of the war

policy, have any of you seen any really concrete alternatives proposed to bring a peace a bit closer? Senator Mansfield?

MANSFIELD: Yes, I think I have. There have been many proposals advanced, by General de Gaulle and Prince Norodom Sihanouk over three years ago for a guaranteed neutralization of all of Southeast Asia.

We've had the proposals by U Thant recently which called for a suspension of the bombing as a means of getting to the negotiating table.

We've got the John Sherman Cooper proposal which would stop the bombing in the North, confine it to the 17th parallel and the Ho Chi Minh trails coming down through Laos, thereby concentrating and consolidating our activities in the nation which we are supposed to be defending in the name of integrity and independence.

These alternatives have been brushed aside. Not much in the way of actual consideration has been given to them, except in the private councils of the government.

And I would hope that instead of raising the question, "Well, what alternatives do you have," that some of these alternatives which have been advanced would be taken by the hand and given the serious consideration they deserve.

Frankly, I am in favor of a stopping of the bombing of North Vietnam, whether or not it leads to negotiation. But I'm in favor of it because it is - one of the reasons I am in favor of it is that we have been told by many of our friends, as well as on the basis of reports from Hanoi, that this would be the first step toward the negotiating table.

Secondly, I'm in favor of it because I think we ought to concentrate and consolidate our activities to South Vietnam. And give what men we have there the fullest possible support.

The bombing of the North has failed to achieve practically every objective of the three or four it set out to attain. Instead of the infiltration being reduced from 1500 a month in 1965, it has reached 5500 to 6,000 in '67. And in January of this year, it reached a total of 20,000 in one month.

The second objective was to bring Hanoi to the conference table. I think Hanoi is perhaps further away than ever, because of the bombing.

The third objective was to give stability and raise the morale of both the government and the people of South Vietnam. I don't think that's been done.

The fourth objective was to hurt Vietnam. That's been done, but it's upped the ante and increased the cost of the war.

SEVAREID: Gentlemen, do any of the rest of you feel now that regardless of whether we could have done things differently in terms of getting peace negotiations, so much of which depends on Hanoi's reaction, do any of you feel that the actual conduct of the war - the strategy, the tactics - has been wrong? Mr. Ford, do you feel that?

FORD: I have, of course, been very forthright in saying that I think our national interest is involved in being successful in Vietnam.

On the other hand, I have been critical of thy strategy or

the conduct of the war. I feel that we have approached the matter militarily in a method of gradulism which is contrary to all good military strategy historically. And I think, as a consequence, we haven't gotten the results that we should have achieved over the last three years.

And I hope and trust that when the President submits to the Congress his reevaluation, which I hope will come soon, that he will tell us exactly where we are and how we ought to go about it to be successful in Vietnam. Including a more balanced military policy.

ALBERT: Well, I'd like to add...

SEVAREID: Mr. Albert,

ALBERT: ...to what Gerry Ford has said. I don't agree with every particular of what he said. I certainly find myself more in agreement with him than I do with my good friend and counterpart - one of the finest men in America - Senator Mansfield.

We tried just stopping bombing. Whether bombing has had any effect or not, stopping bombing hasn't had any effect toward bringing Hanoi to the conference table. And we have no assurance from any reliable source, that I've heard anything about, that it will.

So I would not stop anything. Everytime we let up, we let up and the Tet offensive follows. Everytime we let up, something else follows.

I think we're in this war to win it. I think we're in it to try to avoid also World War III either by provoking it or by getting out of the way so that the Communists will be encouraged to start it. I...

SEVAREID: I'm sorry, go ahead.

ALBERT: Yes, sir. I think that I am willing to leave the strategy of the war to the generals and to the President who are - who is the Commander in Chief.

I have read General de Gaulle's proposal. I'm not impressed with it personally. As a matter of fact, I'm very unimpressed with nearly everything he does. I don't understand the man. I think when they elected him President, they moved the sphinx from the Nile to the Seine.

(laughter)

He acts to me like some man who's descended from a long line of maiden aunts.

(laughter)

And as far as I'm concerned, unless he comes up with something better than I have read about him, I'm not willing to take his recommendations.

I agree that the Senator has named a list of people whose views ought to be considered. I hope they are being considered and have been considered. I believe they have been. I may be wrong. I'm not privy to the private meetings of the State Department or the Defense Department. I don't want to be.

SEVAREID: Mr. Albert, you feel the strategy ought to be left to the generals. We're now changing our principal general in Vietnam. General Westmoreland is going to come back soon. Do you take this, Senator Dirksen, as a conclusion here in the Administration that a new strategy is necessary?

DIRKSEN: Not necessarily. It must not be forgotten that Westmoreland has been out there for more than four years. That's a longer duty tour - active duty tour - than is ever assigned to a commanding general. And he must be tired and tired in mind. And should come back. Because you've got other capable generals who can carry on and probably carry out the same type of strategy.

But looking at that whole picture, you just examine some alternatives. Do we retreat? If we do, then you've got to ask the other questions that naturally follow.

What about our prestige? And secondly, what about the uninhibited march of Communism? Because it'll have to move through Vietnam and then into Malaya and then into Indonesia. And ultimately encompass all of Southeast Asia.

I think we're poor geography students, because if we paid more attention to it, we would discover that from the closest tip of Indonesia to the Phillipine Islands is only ten miles by water. And already, this so-called Hux, which is the communist outfit in the Phillipines, are becoming active all over again. They'd thought they'd put an end to end it. But it begins now.

And I don't think that you can divide or separate what is going on in Vietnam from the overriding fact that this embraces also the communist march.

So we can retreat and put our prestige on the line and become paper tigers in the eyes of all Southeast Asia.

Secondly, we can embrace the so-called General Gavin idea of setting up some enclaves. If we do, I think our troops would become the sitting ducks.

So those are two that I sort of rule out.

The third is, of course, to give up bombing and see whether that, for a sustained period, will have any effect in bringing them to the negotiation table. There is the danger, however, to our troops who are out there.

When the word went out long ago, when we were engaged in Korea, that we had settled for the 38th Parallel, we had a brilliant drive going at the time. And that drive began to blunt right at that point, as this rumor became common news. And later on turned out to be something more than a rumor. But the net result was that we added 90,000 to the casualty list and expanded that war by a period of two years before we got through.

Those are the dangers. And I think Congressman Albert puts his finger on it when he says, sitting here 12,000 miles away, it's difficult indeed to plot strategy and tactics and tell precisely what to do under a given circumstance. And the generals out there and people on the ground can probably better evaluate all the conditions and all the factors than we can back here.

SEVAREID: Senator Mansfield, isn't there a way - can't we do some big, simple, dramatic thing to finally answer this question of Hanoi's readiness to negotiate? We are sitting off, 10,000 miles from one another, parsing one another's sentences on these various peace proposals. Isn't it possible to do something like sending the Secretary of State, perhaps with the Secretary General of the United Nations with him and perhaps someone like yourself with him, to Rangoon and to Delhi and in sight of the world and ask them to come.

To wait a week, ten days, to see if they'll come and negotiate. And if they don't, maybe this credibility question here about our willingness to negotiate might be ended. Is there something we can't do of a simple kind?

MANSFIELD: Well, Eric, a proposal of that nature has been advanced from time to time. But suppose it was put into operation and suppose U Thant and Secretary Rusk went to Rangoon and made an announcement ahead of time, waited for the appropriate week or ten days and nothing happened.

Then I think the end result might well be worse. Because I do not believe that the generals are the ones who are -- who should be able to conduct a war in all its entirety. Just the opposite. Because this is a government run by civilians. And civilian control must always be paramount and dominant.

And this situation in Vietnam will not be won, in my opinion, on the basis of a military victory. And I defy anyone to really delineate what victory means. But will be won, I think, on a political settlement, in some way, some fashion, somehow.

Just how, no one can foretell at this time.

But here we're talking about an increase in the size of our troops ranging anywhere from 30,000 to 200,000 above the 525,000 limitation set for mid-1968.

Is anyone unaware of the fact that the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese can match us and more than match us?

Is anyone unaware of the fact that these people are, in effect, fighting in their own country, for their own country, and their own ideals?

Does anyone ever stop to think how much it's going to cost us, not only in additional manpower and treasure, but also that if this war is made more open-ended and expanded, the possibility of a confrontation not only in Southeast Asia with China but under certain circumstances even in Northeast Asia with Korea if a rash or an overt act is undertaken there?

These are all matters we ought to think through. And it's easy to say that, "Either win or get out." No one I know of, and certainly no one around this table is advocating withdrawal or surrender. But it is time to face up to the realities of the situation and take into consideration, as I know we all do, the results of a policy made back here being carried out by young men out there.

FORD: Well, Mr. Sevareid...

SEVAREID: Mr. Ford.

FORD: I think there's considerable merit to the suggestion you made a few moments ago. Because I think it will show our good faith dramatically to the world.

And if it does prove out that they will not come and sit down and negotiate, then I think we're in a position much like former President Eisenhower was at the time of Korea. Where we had negotiated, as I recall, almost two years without any discernable results. And finally, according to the history that I've read, word was spread to the North Koreans and to the Chinese that, "You either sit down and negotiate in a meaningful way or else."

I think this may well be the time where we have to take the dramatic step that you've suggested in order to prove to the world our good faith. And after that, we'll have to take those steps, under the control of the President, where we can be successful in Vietnam.

And one more observation, if I could. We've heard a lot of platitudinous recommendations from various presidential candidates about the problems in Vietnam. I wish they would become more specific. Because I think it would be helpful in this dialogue.

SEVAREID: Well, gentlemen, if - hypothetically speaking here now - we just go on, the war staggering on as it's been going for a long time, the casualties mounting, this country dividing emotionally, intellectually, politically what is going to happen politically in this country? Mr. Albert, do you think it possible that for the first time a President presiding over a major war - the first time in our history - might be dismissed from office?

ALBERT: Well, I don't think it's likely. I think it's possible. It's always possible that any President can - might be defeated at any time. But I don't think a President should measure his responsibilities in terms of his reelection. I think the job is too, too important.

I don't think any President ever has. I don't think Hoover did.

SEVAREID: You don't think Mr. Johnson...

ALBERT: When the Depression was right around the corner. And I don't think President Johnson is.

The wisest way out of this would be to give in to one side or the other. And I admire President Johnson for staying true to his word, what he thinks, based on the best advice he's been able to get, is to be the best interest of the country. And I think a united America, on any policy that is at all within the realm of possibility can do much more than a divided America, even if a half a dozen of them might have a better program. But I agree with Gerry Ford, I haven't heard from any of the prospective candidates who are telling us how to run the war, win the war, or how to get out the war anything like enough to cause me to be very excited about their prospects.

QUESTION: Do any of you gentlemen - are any of you in a position to know the nominees of the two parties are going to be? Senator Dirksen.

ANSWER: Well, he begins to take on some certainty now on the issue with withdrawal - there have been two...

QUESTION: On the Republican side, you mean?

ANSWER: That's right. Of course, you still have the situation in California. And you have one who might be considered under certain circumstances in Illinois. And that might appear to be me.

QUESTION: From the amount of work that has been done, the progress that has been made, it looks as if we're moving on toward the goal of Richard Nixon.

ANSWER: Well, at the moment, it looks like Johnson and

ALBERT: I agree with that. I can't see, on our side, any chance of anybody getting the nomination, despite of how big a fight we might have, except President Johnson.

FORD: Certainly - more certain in the Republican picture at the moment, than it was a few weeks ago. And on the other hand, I think it's a little less certain on the Democratic side.

SEVAREID: Well, gentlemen, according to the polls that I can read, whatever they're worth, Mr. Kennedy is running ahead in popular estimation - a bit ahead of the President at the moment. Mr. Rockefeller is running ahead...

ALBERT: May I comment on the editorial - I mean the article in the Washington Post, which I think commented on the last edition of the Newsweek, which I haven't seen...

SEVAREID: Oh, those are the delegates.

ALBERT: ...and it showed Mr. Johnson running behind. Didn't even mention the State of Oklahoma. The legislature of Oklahoma, by a unanimous vote, Republicans and Democrats, all races who are represented in that legislature voted for the - voted to commend President Johnson. And if there is any state in the union that is more certain to be in the Johnson column at the convention than Texas, it's Oklahoma.

(laughter)

SEVAREID: Well, gentlemen, we've got about 40 seconds here. What I was trying to say was that the polls on general - the nationwide popular estimation put Mr. Kennedy slightly ahead

of the President and put Governor Rockefeller slightly ahead of
- somewhat ahead of Mr. Nixon. Is there something wrong with our
system that people aren't going to get quite that choice at the
conventions. We have about 20 seconds, Senator Mansfield.

MANSFIELD: A lot of people seem to think so. But we have
to recognize the political facts of life. That it's delegates
from the states who nominate a President and not the people,
except in primaries. And there are not enough primaries.

SEVAREID: Of course, it's not necessarily true that the
popular majority at any one time, is essentially right in its
judgment.

Well, our time is up. I want to thank all of you for
joining us on this 20th Anniversary program for Capital Cloakroom.

ANNOUNCER: You have been listening to the 1004th meeting
in Capital Cloakroom.

For this 20th Anniversary broadcast, our guests were: Senate
Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana, Senate Republican
Leader Everett Dirksen of Illinois, House Democratic Leader
Carl Albert of Oklahoma, and House Republican Leader Gerald Ford
of Michigan.

They met with CBS News National Correspondent Eric Sevareid.
Produced by Ellen Wadley, Capital Cloakroom originates in Washington,
D.C. and is a recorded production of CBS News on the CBS Radio
Network.

Sen. Everett M. Dirksen

See Mar 30 '67



Bulk Of Mail To Congressmen From Protestors

Year by year, the population of our country grows, the governmental agencies expand, the literacy and the interest of the citizen increase and the letters to members of Congress multiply. You just wouldn't believe how they have multiplied and you would be astonished at some of the things citizens write about.

In 1935, when Henry T. Rainey of Illinois was the speaker of the House of Representatives, he told me of the days when neither

mail nor callers at his office were great in number and this happy situation gave him frequent opportunity to go to the Congressional Library where he could do needed research on legislative matters.

Times have certainly changed. The mail that comes these days to a Congressman's office from his constituents — and others — is a continuing blizzard that barely allows him enough time to shovel the walks, so to speak. There doesn't seem to have been any letup in the incoming mail since the time when President Truman recalled General MacArthur from Tokyo and when the Government Operations Committee was conducting a kind of trial of Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. My office received letters then at the rate of 16,000 a day for quite a few days. It fairly drove staff members into a tizzy.

Both senators and members of the House have the continuing problem of how to handle such quantities of mail, of taking the time to analyze the content and of sending out replies. What does this mail say that reaches my day?

Some of it — actually, a whole lot of it — contains heavy-handed thoughts and some accusations. And I find in some of the letters welcome dainty thoughts, too.

The flow of letters on Vietnam saddens and roils and frustrates. When a mother writes that her only son is fighting the Viet Cong and "right down the street a neighbor's two sons live at home while they attend college, I don't know what to say to her. Will she be comforted if I say: "It is war and there have always been inequities in war."?

A boy writes from Pennsylvania. He has read that I was an avid baseball fan and he asks if I know how his Little League baseball team can get some new uniforms. Now here is a situation where I can pass the buck. I pass the letter on to Sen. Hugh Scott, of Pennsylvania, saying: "Look, Hugh, this is your constituent." And he takes it glad-

ly. Many citizens write to urge quick approval of more Social Security benefits. Others oppose a new tax bill. There is a constant low of letters dealing with the uneasy situation in the Near East. Some letters deal with school legislation or prayer in public schools.

And every morning there is the mail that criticizes foreign aid, the poverty program, Congressional junkets abroad, internal security, the consular treaty with Russia and election reform. Then there is the mail from men who seek discharge from military service, if possible.

The bulk of the mail comes from protest. If people are satisfied and happy they don't write. Except, perhaps, people like the lady from Park Ridge, Ill., who writes that I am not conservative enough for her. She sends me a postcard nearly every day. But altho she may take me to task, as she often does in firm language, she is never abusive.

I have a special way of handling abusive mail, the mail that is made up all too generously of such epithets as "liar," "cheat," "swine" or "faker," "beast" or "wretch," "crook" or "dirty dog" — and sometimes much worse. I am seldom peremptory, but to writers of abusive mail, I can only reply: "Dear sir (or madam): Thanks."

The dainty touch comes quite often in letters from people everywhere who like marigolds and who believe that I should have some of their marigold seed. You can be sure that in such cases I do not pass the buck. (The Carl Riblet Jr. Syndicate)

COINCIDENCE
CAGNES-SUR-MER, France — A prize donated by President Charles de Gaulle was won by the most beautiful flower in the 7th International Carnation Week show here. Name of the prize-winning bloom: "Madame de Gaulle."