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PRESENTS



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Guest: **THE HONORABLE EVERETT MCKINLEY DIRKSEN**
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PANEL:

JACK BELL, Associated Press

MARQUIS CHILDS, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

EDWIN DALE, JR., New York Times

RICHARD WILSON, Cowles Publications

MODERATOR:

NED BROOKS

ANNOUNCER: Now, MEET THE PRESS, the prize-winning program produced by Lawrence Spivak. Ready for this spontaneous, unrehearsed conference are four of America's top reporters. Please remember, their questions do not necessarily reflect their point of view. It is their way of getting a story for you. Here is the moderator of MEET THE PRESS, Mr. Ned Brooks.

MR. BROOKS: And welcome once again to MEET THE PRESS. Our guest is Senator Everett Dirksen, Republican of Illinois. As Assistant Republican Leader of the Senate and a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee, he is a key figure in the battle of the budget now raging in Washington. Never before has the issue of Government spending aroused so much public attention or caused such a bitter struggle between the President and Congress. The conflict has been sharpened by President Eisenhower's efforts to bring the rebellious Congress into line by direct appeals to the people. His second broadcast is scheduled for Tuesday evening. In the background of the budget controversy is the division inside the Republican Party between the so-called Modern Republicans, led by the President, and those who lean to the more conservative side.

Senator Dirksen has served in Congress for 23 years, sixteen of those years in the House of Representatives and seven in the Senate. He is a member of the Republican Policy Committee. In addition to his work on Appropriations, he serves as a member of the Judiciary Committee, which is handling the controversial civil rights legislation. He is sponsor of the Administration's Civil Rights Bill.

And now seated around the press table ready to interview Senator Dirksen are Richard Wilson of the Cowles Publications, Marquis Childs of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Edwin Dale, of the New York Times, and Jack Bell of the Associated Press. Our regular panel member, Mr. Lawrence E. Spivak, will be back with us next week. Now, Senator Dirksen, if you are ready, we will start the questions with Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Senator, the \$72 billion question before the country now seems to be whether the President or Congress is going to win the battle of the budget. You are on the firing line as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. How do you think this great battle is coming out?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Everybody is going to win.

MR. BELL: How do they do that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Budgets, after all, are functional things, and I think when Congress gets through there will be some substantial reductions. They will not impair the security or essential services of the country; the taxpayers will get a break. That is why I say pretty nearly everybody will win before we get through.

MR. BELL: Senator, what is a substantial reduction, in your estimation?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I never take a figure out of the air to indicate whether it is my figure or a substantial reduction. I just go along as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and seek to evaluate all the items that come before the Committee, particularly on my own Subcommittees, and then let the final score be determined on the basis of that evaluation.

MR. BELL: The President said he is not thinking in any terms of a \$2 billion cut in the budget, but would you be thinking in terms of a \$2 billion cut?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think the President's language in the report he made to the country was that he could see no "great" reductions. Now, "great" is a relative term, of course, and one person may attach one value to it, and one person may attach another.

MR. BELL: Which side are you on here, Senator; are you on the President's

side in favor of the larger spending, or are you on the side of most of your Republican colleagues in favor of smaller spending?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: The best answer I can give you, Mr. Bell, is as a member of the Treasury-Post Office Subcommittee on Appropriations, as a member of the Subcommittee on State and Justice Appropriations. The two bills that went through this week in which we undercut the House figure on State and Justice and held the Treasury-Post Office figure at the House level, are the best indications I can give you as to where I stand.

MR. CHILDS: The President this past week made his first appeals for the full amounts for Defense, State, USIA, etc. He is making another appeal again this coming Tuesday. What does your mail show? Is it for the President or against him?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Very decidedly against him, depending, of course, on what amounts are involved. I think the country wants a budget reduction, and our job is to be reasonable and realistic about it.

MR. CHILDS: Is the President unrealistic, then, Senator Dirksen?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, the President is entirely realistic because he operates from the figures that have been submitted by the agency heads that have cleared the Budget Bureau, that reflect the thinking of his Cabinet and then, of course, are presented to him. But you must not forget, as the President indicated, that the Budget as it was finally submitted to him was scaled down by something in excess of \$10 billion, as I recall. Now, it may be that it can be scaled down more. That, of course, is the function of Congress.

MR. CHILDS: The President said he needed the full \$140 million for the United States Information Agency, and yet the Senate cut that back by more than \$45 million and only 14 Republicans, I think it was, voted against the cut. How do you explain this, Senator, when you've got nearly a majority of Republicans in the Senate?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You explain it on the ground that we sat there day after day and took testimony on the United States Information Agency and came to that conclusion of \$90,200,000, on the basis of the evidence and the kind of case they presented.

MR. CHILDS: But you think the President must have been wrong, then?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: The President was dealing with the Agency's estimate in the first instance, and that, of course, was submitted to the Congress. But it is for us to go through the details and see whether this is an efficient operation and whether we are getting our money's worth.

MR. CHILDS: And yet Vice-President Nixon came back from Africa and said the whole propaganda operation had to be greatly expanded there; now, it cannot be.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: The propaganda operation can be effective without necessarily measuring it in terms of the amount of dollars we are to expend. Consider Ethiopia, for example, where you do not have too much of a function and yet you have something like \$175,000 in the budget for Ethiopia. Would you call that effective spending or not? I have some doubts about it on the basis of the recitals that were made to us.

MR. DALE: Senator, you are one of the top three Republicans in the Senate leadership, and it is essentially a conservative leadership. I don't ask this facetiously. Do you consider the President a good Republican?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Indeed so.

MR. DALE: May I ask, Senator, why doesn't the leadership in the Senate do

perhaps a little more to back his program, for example, his USIA budget? The leadership made no effort to restore those funds, and in some other items of his program the leadership seems to be reluctant, at best, to support the President's program.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Mr. Dale, let me give you this answer: When the USIA was submitted as a budget figure in the first instance, it was \$155 million. It was pared from \$155 million to \$140 million before it ever reached the House and the Senate. It lost \$5 million in its transition from the House to the Senate and the revised figure was finally \$135 million. So, the figure we dealt with was \$20 million below the request of USIA in the first instance, and when we got through examining into press media, movies, radio, staff support, administrative expenses and everything else, we felt that it ought to be substantially reduced on the ground that with that amount of money you could tighten it up and still make it a very effective agency.

MR. DALE: Well, that leads to a rather more broad question. Do you feel that the Congressional Republicans should and can go pretty much their own way, voting their own convictions quite irrespective of how the President feels, or do you think they should follow his lead?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I recite to you the fact that in the Constitution there is a provision that no money can be taken out of the public treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by law. Congress is the exclusive law-making body in our Constitutional Government, and, consequently, they have that responsibility, and they should exercise it, and they do.

MR. BROOKS: Senator, before we leave the Information Service, the director of that agency is Mr. Arthur Larson, the man who is supposed to have coined the term "Modern Republicanism." I wonder whether his connection with the modern wing of the party had anything to do with the big cut that was made in his budget?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: None whatsoever.

MR. WILSON: Senator, a survey made by Congressional Quarterly, which is a research organization here, has shown that so far this year, the Democrats have supported the President more consistently than the Republicans. I think it shows that about 44 per cent of the time, the Republicans supported him, about 67 percent, the Democrats. Do you think that the Republican Party can carry a record like that to the people and elect another President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Mr. Wilson, the Republican Party, as I think of it, is essentially a conservative party, and, I believe, the Members of Congress on our side of the aisle are quite in character when they seek to exercise a rather conservative approach, particularly in the field of the Federal budget. Whether or not you can elect a President on the basis of that record is one of those speculative things, but as I envision, and as I evaluate the responses that you get from the country, today, this country is certainly budget conscious and is quite fearful of undue consequences on our economy unless we hold the budget down.

MR. WILSON: How could you say, Senator, that the Republican Party is essentially a conservative party when the conservative group in the Republican Party has been unable for the last four national conventions to nominate a candidate for President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think our candidates have been conservatives, and the Congress has been conservative.

MR. WILSON: Now, sir, you were a strong advocate of Senator Taft in 1952; he was defeated for the nomination. This was the second time he was defeated

for the nomination. A conservative just hasn't been able to be nominated, isn't that true?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Do you think Eisenhower is a conservative? I do.

MR. WILSON: Do you think his budgetary policies show him to be a conservative?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Mr. Wilson, don't forget a budget is a functional document. All these agency heads make up their estimates, submit them to the Bureau of the Budget. In refined form they finally go to the President, and very honestly, the President examines them, notices the commitments the Congress may have made to the country in the form of service and one thing or another, and then he is dutybound, I think, to submit it in that fashion. But we are dutybound to examine it very carefully and see whether some functions can be dispensed with and whether in the case of others you can make them effective and still cut the money that is requested.

MR. WILSON: Senator, inasmuch as you have stated quite a sharp disagreement with President Eisenhower, I would like to ask you this question: Do you think that a leader of the Republican Party in the Senate should resign if he disagrees as sharply as that with the President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Are you speaking now about Senator Knowland?

MR. WILSON: I am.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Very definitely, I do not believe he should resign. He is expressing his conviction on these matters, and his voting record in the main is a very good record, indeed, insofar as Administration support is concerned. But you will find those differences, and the very fact that he utters his differences very honestly and very bluntly, I think, is a matter of high credit for Bill Knowland.

MR. WILSON: If you happened to be elected leader in the future, you wouldn't resign if you had a sharp difference with the President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I doubt it very much; if it was an honest difference, certainly not.

MR. BELL: Senator, one of your Democrat colleagues on the Judiciary Committee, Senator Hennings, says that at any time the Republicans want to do it they can bring a Civil Rights Bill out of that Committee and bring it before the Senate. If that is true, why don't the Republicans do it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Mr. Bell, it is not quite that easy. First of all, there are eight Democrats and seven Republican members sitting on the Judiciary Committee. The Chairman is a Democrat. He is in a position to recognize one or the other members of the Committee who may be seeking recognition when the committee begins its stated meetings on Monday morning. If someone is recognized who holds the time until 12:00 o'clock, and the point of order is made that the Committee is sitting without authority, then what?

MR. BELL: Senator, isn't it generally agreed that a majority of the Senate would vote in favor of a Civil Rights Bill, if it got to the Senate?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am quite sure they would.

MR. BELL: Why doesn't a majority of the Senate then take the Civil Rights Bill away from the Committee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You can discharge the Committee, and I suppose that before too long some effort will be made to bring the Bill to the floor.

MR. BELL: That will be made by whom? Who will make the effort? Will the Republicans make it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I certainly will make it, if I can.

MR. BELL: You will make an effort to discharge the Committee—at what time?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: At the earliest possible opportunity, and along with it—

MR. BELL: What would be that earliest possible opportunity?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think the earliest effective opportunity would be when the House passes Civil Rights and it comes over and there is a possibility of taking it from the President's desk and having it given immediate consideration on the Senate floor.

MR. BELL: You will vote to do that, will you?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: If that can be done, I certainly will try to do it, believe me.

MR. DALE: Senator, the big money in this budget is the defense and foreign aid money. What do you think about the Foreign Aid Bill? Are you going to support the President for a substantial sum of money? He has asked for \$3.9 billion.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have invariably supported the President on foreign aid. I expect to further support the President on foreign aid because I believe with Admiral Radford and our other military leaders that foreign aid is an integral part of our national security, and as such, it must be considered in that light and its effect upon the security posture of the country.

MR. DALE: Would you expect the big bulk of the Republicans in the Senate to feel that way and vote that way?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: In the main I think they will, although there may be differences as to different items of defense support, economic aid, development aid. That doesn't mean that in the main most of them will not support foreign aid.

MR. DALE: Would you consider, Senator, that your position in enthusiastic support of foreign aid is somewhat different from Senator Knowland's?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Senator Knowland is for foreign aid. To what degree I am not prepared to say, but certainly he has always supported foreign aid, although it ought to be pointed out there were some items in the Bill last year to which he disagreed rather vigorously. That doesn't mean that he doesn't support the principle of foreign aid.

MR. DALE: How about defense, Senator? The President has made it emphatically clear that any cut beyond the one-half billion dollars which he himself recommended would threaten the security of the country. What is your feeling on that subject?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: When the defense budget first went to the Budget Bureau and later to the President, it was far in excess of the budget that was finally submitted to the Congress. That only means that somewhere along the line many items were cut back. They may have been very material in somebody's judgment. We will have to evaluate in the same terms, and there may be cut-backs, although it isn't indicated yet what the House has done, or the House Committee on the Military Appropriations Bill. It will go through that same course when it gets to the Senate Armed Services Committee and finally gets to the floor.

MR. CHILDS: Senator Dirksen, are you in favor of Senate ratification of the International Atomic Energy Agency, based on President Eisenhower's atoms for peace plan?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Mr. Childs, in the form in which it appears, and I must

confess I am not as familiar with it as I should be because it is within the jurisdiction of an entirely different Committee, I'll have to examine it. I know, of course, that there is some proposal to offer some reservations on the Senate floor, and if those are offered and adopted, it might put it in a different light. At the moment I can give you no conclusive answer as to whether I would support it in its present form or not.

MR. CHILDS: President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles have said that this is essential to the stature of America in the world. I believe.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That is right, but I am not forgetting that we have negotiated 29 bilateral treaties with respect to atomic energy, with 29 different countries. Then we have negotiated 5 atomic power treaties, I think, with 5 other countries, so that we really have done a good piece of work in that field, quite aside from the so-called treaty that is pending.

MR. CHILDS: Senator, you were originally an isolationist, I think, and you said once you were proud of it. Then you supported the Marshall Plan, and, then, you reverted at one point to isolationism. How would you describe your position today?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It is the old story of getting a tag when you go in one direction or another, but, Mr. Childs, I ought to remind you that three months before Pearl Harbor I made a speech on the floor of the House—rather short, but it was reproduced in newspapers all over the country, including the editorial page of the *Post-Dispatch* in which I called myself a moderate and supported the President at that time. So tags are tags. It is like "modern Republicanism." I am just an old-fashioned, garden variety of Republican, who believes in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, in Abraham Lincoln, who accepts the challenges as they arise from time to time, and who is not unappreciative of the fact that this is a dynamic economy in which we live, and sometimes you have to change your position.

MR. BROOKS: Senator, do you agree with Senator Goldwater that the term "modern Republicanism" will fade out of the picture within six months?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I wouldn't know. "Interventionism" faded; "isolationism" faded. Terms have a way of fading after the emotionalism that goes with them has sort of spent itself.

MR. WILSON: Senator, then you are not a "modern Republican," is that right?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am a Republican.

MR. WILSON: But you are not a "modern Republican" in the way that Eisenhower classes himself as a "modern Republican"?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have seen no good definition of a "modern Republican." If you will give me a definition that will stand up—

MR. WILSON: I would much rather have you give me one.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I will still revert to the fact that I am a Republican, with a capital "R."

MR. WILSON: Senator, it is obvious, is it not, that President Eisenhower's influence in the Congress is not as great as he might hope for? Would you think that the anti-third term Amendment has any effect on that situation? Does it weaken his authority in Congress?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I doubt it very much, and I have never heard it discussed from that standpoint. But I do not concur with the premise you laid down, that the President's influence in Congress has diminished. We are just dealing with a condition here, not a theory, and obviously every Member of the House and

Senate has a responsibility in the field of the budget and is trying honestly to discharge it.

MR. WILSON: Why, Senator, he has placed the greatest possible emphasis on the full appropriation for the foreign aid program as being absolutely essential to the security of the United States. Would you say that that is just a passing thing, without any importance attached to it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: On his own initiative he has modified the foreign aid pattern, and there are going to be some modifications and changes with respect to grants as distinguished from loans. Who shall say at this moment that the Foreign Aid Bill, substantially in the form in which it is submitted, will not be enacted by the Congress?

MR. WILSON: And furthermore, Senator, the Vice President has openly and publicly supported all the items in the President's budget. Do you think the Vice President is wrong in doing that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, I don't. That represents his viewpoint, and somebody else may have an entirely different viewpoint from the facts and the evidence that he has submitted.

MR. WILSON: Do you think that will weaken him politically if he seeks the Presidential nomination?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Do you mean the Vice President?

MR. WILSON: Yes.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't think so. I see no reason why it should. Can't we have an honest difference of opinion under the party umbrella and within the frame of free government without making it appear that there is a disunity or a cleavage of some kind or another? I have never admitted that fact.

MR. WILSON: Can you carry this principle, which you have just stated, to the point where you don't get any part of the President's program? I mean any of the controversial parts of the President's program?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Do you always get all the things in a Presidential program at one or two sessions? Not necessarily so.

MR. WILSON: Do you think he has gotten enough?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, I don't.

MR. WILSON: Do you think his program has really been a success up to this time?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think there are items in the program that come on from time to time on which there can be an honest difference of opinion because of a change of conditions at the time that the pledge may have been made. You can pursue your own ideas in that field and still not part company with your party, or do an injustice to it, or do an injustice to the President.

MR. BELL: Senator Knowland has announced he is retiring from the Senate. As assistant leader, it seems rather obvious that you are going to be the Republican leader of the Senate in 1959 and 1960. You once were quite a supporter of Robert A. Taft. Do you expect to be the Taft wing's candidate for the Republican nomination for President in 1960?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Jack, indeed not, and I do not recognize these wings.

MR. BELL: Let's let the wings go, then. Do you expect to be a candidate for the Republican nomination for President in 1960?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I do not.

MR. BELL: Would you turn it down?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It has never been offered, and I wouldn't know what I might do.

MR. BELL: Would you not even try for it, as Republican leader of the Senate? All Republican leaders always try to become President, don't they?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, indeed not, and you are looking at one who would certainly not seek it.

MR. BELL: You wouldn't want to be President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That is quite a different matter. If on a silver platter, as they offered the head of John the Baptist, they might—

MR. BELL: Senator, you know nobody ever offers you that on a silver platter. Wouldn't it be worth while going after?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am confident it will never be offered, and I am no seeker.

MR. BELL: You don't even want to try for it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am definitely, Mr. Bell, not a candidate and would make no effort to seek the nomination.

MR. BELL: I think we have set a record, here, Senator. We have found a man who is absolutely not running for the Presidency under any conditions.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That is as honest and honorable a statement as I can possibly make, and it represents my deepest conviction, believe me.

MR. BROOKS: Senator, I think that is probably the place we will have to close, because I see that our time is up.

Thank you very much, Senator Dirksen, for being with us, and now, here is your announcer.

Next Week: Lewis L. STRAUSS, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission.

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