



# **FACING THE POST-WAR WORLD: EVERETT M. DIRKSEN ABROAD, 1945**

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## Abbreviations

EMD Everett McKinley Dirksen

EMDC Everett McKinley Dirksen Congressional Leadership Research Center

EMDP Everett McKinley Dirksen Papers

[49]

Mileage

Lv. Wash. 4:10 p. 2-21-45

Date	From	To	Mode	Miles
2-21-45	Wash.	Montreal	Tr.	10681
2-23-45	Montreal	Preswick	PI	32749(10)
2-24-45	Preswick	London	ATC	500(3)
3-2-45	London	Paris	ATC	350(2)
3-3-45	Paris	Algiers	MATS	700(6)
3-3-45	Algiers	Tunis	So. At.	650(3)
3-4-45	Tunis	Cairo	ATC	1600(10)
3-6-45	Cairo	Abidan	ATC	1100(6)
3-7-45	Abidan	Karachi	ATC	1200(8)
3-8-45	Karachi	Bombay	ATC	600(4)
3-10-45	Bombay	Delhi	ATC	750(5)
3-14-45	Delhi	Agra	ATC	110(1)
"	Agra	Gayo	ATC	800(3)
"	Gayo	Calcutta	ATC	900(2)
3-16-45	Calcutta	Bangalore	Statk	900(6)
3-17-45	Bangalore	Colombo	"	450(3)
3-19-45	Colombo	Bombay	"	900(6)
3-20-45	Bombay	Karachi	"	600(4)
3-17-45	Colombo	Kandy	Car	70(2)
3-19-45	Kandy	Colombo	"	70(2)
3-21-45	Karachi	Abidan	ATC	1300(7)
3-23-45	Khorramshahr	Teheran	Tram	600(20)
3-26-45	Teheran	Abadan	ATC	600(3)
	Abadan	Baghdad	ATC	400(2)
3-28-45	Baghdad	Habbony	Car.	60(2)
	Habbony	Jerusalem	Plane	600(4)
4-5-45	Jerusalem	Haifa	Car.	150
4-6-45	Haifa	Beirut	Car	150

First page of Everett Dirksen's trip log. Source: EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 49



## INTRODUCTION

**May 25, 1945.** “You were a wagon soldier in the last war, Mr. President. So was I. We don’t have much conception of how modern warfare operates. But we do know something of what our boys have gone thru, and we’ve got to make sure that those who have taken it on the chin have not done it in vain.”

“You speak my language,” replied Harry Truman.

For the next 30 minutes, Illinois Congressman Everett M. Dirksen, just returned from an overseas trip to twenty-one nations, reported to President Harry Truman on the post-war challenges facing the United States.<sup>1</sup> Their face-to-face conversation in the Oval Office ranged over such topics as troop morale; State Department facilities; and the effectiveness of the Office of War Information (OWI), the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA), and the Office of Strategic Services, among other topics. Dirksen concluded by suggesting a seven-point framework for foreign policy in the years ahead.<sup>2</sup> His recommendations reflected deeply felt worries about post-war instability, international rivalries, and looming challenges to western hegemony.

The circumstances which placed Dirksen in the Oval Office with President Truman at Noon on that Friday morning in May are as remarkable as they are revealing. Fortunately, Dirksen acutely sensed the importance of his journey. He recorded his movements and observations almost daily, supplementing this rich contemporaneous record with letters to his wife and daughter. Upon his return, the congressman completed the historical record with detailed reports to Congress and to his constituents.

Dirksen left Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, February 21, 1945, and returned to the capital city on Sunday, May 20. In the span of those 89 days, Dirksen, traveling alone, usually in cramped, unheated military aircraft, visited such far-flung places as London, Algiers, Tunis, Cairo, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi, Teheran, Baghdad, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Palestine, Beirut, Damascus, Ankara, Istanbul, Athens, Rome, Florence, Paris, Rheims, Augsburg, Dachau, Wiesbaden, and Leipzig, among many others. As Dirksen logged over 32,000 miles, history witnessed the deaths of Franklin Roosevelt, Benito Mussolini, and Adolph Hitler.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Washington Marry-Go-Round,” *Pekin Times*, June 20, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> EMDC, Collection 3, Truman, Harry S. (1884-1972), Correspondence with Everett M. Dirksen (1896-1969), 1945-1969; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 56.

Dirksen landed in Paris on V-E Day. He was the first member of the House of Representatives to visit the Dachau concentration camp twelve days after its liberation.

In addition to meetings with thousands of GIs and dozens of American ambassadors and consul generals, Dirksen held face-to-face sessions with scores of U.S. generals, prime ministers, members of various parliaments, and other foreign leaders. Those whom Dirksen counted as the most impressive were Lord Archibald Wavell, the British Viceroy in India; Lord Louis Mountbatten, appointed by Winston Churchill as Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Theatre; Major General Mark Clark, Commander of Allied Forces in Italy; the eventual King of Jordan; and Pope Pius XII.

This is the story of his extraordinary journey.



## PLANNING FOR THE TRIP

In roundabout fashion, Dirksen's hometown of Pekin made his trip possible. But it takes some explanation. In December 1943, Dirksen announced his bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 1944. By the time of the party's convention in June, however, Thomas Dewey had clinched the nomination, and Dirksen had lost the vice-presidential slot to John Bricker.<sup>3</sup> Yet Dirksen's abortive effort paid an unexpected dividend. Led by *Pekin Daily Times* publisher F.F. McNaughton, local supporters had amassed nearly \$5,000 to support their congressman's bid for national office. Dirksen returned the funds to McNaughton after the convention so the publisher could repay the donors, but McNaughton had other ideas. He and campaign treasurer I.M. Weimer prepared what they called a "Report of Tazewell County Dirksen-for-President Committee" and sent it to each contributor. After reporting a balance of \$3,933, they offered to return 80 percent of any donation. But their letter suggested a better use of the funds:

It has also been suggested that the fund be left intact and made available to Congressman Dirksen for a journey around the world (or as far as the fund would go) to acquaint him through personal observation with the conditions which now exist and will prevail in the post-war period and increase his first-hand knowledge of the problems with which we must cope when the war is over. Manifestly, such an experience would broaden his perspective and increase his stature in the difficult days which lie ahead.<sup>4</sup>

Donors were given ten days to respond—only three or four did so. As McNaughton later explained: "No strings are attached and Congressman Dirksen is to use the money as he pleases. And if more is needed, there are several in Pekin who are ready to furnish it. We want him to get around and see China and India and lend-lease<sup>5</sup> in operation and where the United States stands in world affairs. Mr. Dirksen is an influential member of the House and we believe that what he learns will help him to lend wise counsel."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frank H. Mackaman, *Campaign 1944: Everett M. Dirksen's Bid for the White House* (Dirksen Congressional Center, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> "Report of Tazewell County Dirksen-for-President Committee," EMDP, Politics, f. 531.

<sup>5</sup> Lend-lease was the program under which the United States government supplied the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, China, France, and other Allied nations with materiel to fight World War II. The aid totaled over \$50 billion (about \$540 billion in 2019 dollars) by war's end.

<sup>6</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 30. Dirksen recounted these circumstances to the Washington

The unspent campaign funds raised by his friends and neighbors removed the financial barrier to Dirksen's overseas travel. But planning the trip, particularly during war time, posed several other problems. Some were mundane: what clothes to take, the impact of the weather, and the mode of transportation. Others proved more consequential. The congressman, for example, needed to secure "official" credentials to gain access to restricted areas and to ease unanticipated difficulties. As a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, Dirksen had an inside track. He wrote to Clarence Cannon, chairman of the committee, and ranking member John Taber about his plans. With only two days to spare, they gave Dirksen what he needed, a letter dated February 19, 1945:

My dear Dirksen:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and with the approval of the ranking Minority Member, the Honorable John Taber of New York, I hereby designate you as a Subcommittee of one during your journey abroad in Europe, the Middle East, the Orient and elsewhere for the purpose of inspecting and reporting on Federal activities and functions which properly come within the jurisdiction of the Committee.

You are authorized to make full inquiry concerning personnel, administrative expenditures, travel items, the efficacy and economy with which Federal functions including those of the national war agencies are discharged and to make a full report thereof to the Committee.<sup>7</sup>

This letter, and the diplomatic passport which Dirksen secured, "commanded every special consideration from all our diplomatic representatives in every part of the world," Dirksen later recalled.<sup>8</sup> Mindful of the mid-term congressional elections of 1946 when he would be a candidate for reelection to his eighth term in the House, Dirksen timed the trip "so as to score maximum benefit from whatever observations I might make."<sup>9</sup> Not that there weren't political dangers for Dirksen. As one editorial put it:

The constituents are entitled to congratulations for both the ends and the means. They must know, of course, that risks are involved. If Mr. Dirksen visits Russia, he will look like a Communist to

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DC Better Business Bureau on June 19; see the *Congressional Record*, 1945, A3205.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Everett M. Dirksen, *The Education of a Senator: Everett McKinley Dirksen*, (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1998), 179-180. Although Dirksen promised to make a full report to the Appropriations Committee upon his return, there is no evidence in the legislative archives maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration that he did so.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Dirksen, *Education*, 180.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Dirksen, *Education*, 180.

some Republicans. If he sojourns in England, he may come under the same suspicion as Rhodes Scholars and others who have found themselves denounced as foreign agents by reason of time spent abroad. Mr. Dirksen must even expect to hear fierce demands that he be fingerprinted.

But the citizens of Pekin, Ill. refused to boggle at these terrors. They quite simply and frankly decided that a congressman with knowledge of the world outside our borders would be a good thing. If isolationism is dead, the people of Pekin can claim to have signaled its passing in a homely way.”<sup>10</sup>

Dirksen prepared himself for the adventure by vigorous study, his work habits a legend among his colleagues. He read *One World* by Wendell Willkie; *Road to Serfdom* by Friedrich August von Hayek; *Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler; the Atlantic Charter; and the Dumbarton Oaks proposal for a United Nations charter.<sup>11</sup> Of Willkie’s book, for example, Dirksen said the author “gives the opinion that peoples are on the march and that nothing can stop the forward thrust to a new and larger freedom.”<sup>12</sup> As a result of his trip, however, Dirksen would come to doubt Willkie’s optimism.

As a veteran of World War I, Dirksen had on-the-ground experience with war in Europe. Part of his trip in 1945 retraced Dirksen’s travels as a soldier. Inducted into the service on January 4, 1917, his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, he shipped out to France in May the next year.

He spent his combat years in the 19<sup>th</sup> Balloon Company as a forward observer. He did not return to the United States immediately following the war’s end. Instead he toured Italy, which he called “one of the most rewarding periods of my life,” before joining the Advance Expeditionary Headquarters in Germany. His responsibilities in the occupied zone concerned the movement of German civilians within the country and across international lines. Dirksen returned to the states as a second lieutenant and was discharged from duty on October 2, 1919, more than eight months after the first soldiers had begun returning from Europe.<sup>13</sup>

According to his memoir, Dirksen pondered the meaning of the war in the weeks that followed his homecoming. He ventured the opinion that “War is but a form of political action resorted to when all other methods to settle the differences of nations have failed.” He continued: “But how often false pride and a highly nationalistic spirit stand in the way of successful negotiation of settlements of these international differences.” In fact, he attributed his growing interest in

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<sup>10</sup> Unsourced editorial, EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Decatur Sunday Herald*, n.d., EMDP, Scrapbooks, v.6, 17; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 36.

<sup>12</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 17-78.

<sup>13</sup> Collection 142, Dirksen, Everett M., Military Service Record, 1917-1918, EMDC; Dirksen, *Education*, 23-46.



politics to his belief that such problems could be resolved “with proper humility and a realization of the ghastliness of conflict.”<sup>14</sup> Dirksen’s trip in 1945 recalled for him many of the lessons of his war.

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<sup>14</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 46.



## **THE JOURNEY BEGINS, FEBRUARY 21, 1945<sup>15</sup>**

Dirksen prepared two special documents on his day of departure. The first, a personal letter to McNaughton:

Dear Mac:

At long last, the day has arrived for my departure on a semi-world journey to inspect some of our operations abroad and make a factual and realistic report on the forces that are gradually shaping the post-war world.

I am looking forward to this trip with real delight because it will afford a rare opportunity to supplement my work on the Appropriations Committee and make a detailed report to the Appropriations Committee, to the Congress, and to the country.

I shall be away for several months and when I return, I hope there will be early opportunity for a visit that I may recite some of the interesting things which have engaged my attention.

Let me say “thanks a million” for your every kindness in making this high adventure possible.

With every good wish,

Sincerely,<sup>16</sup>

To his constituents, Dirksen provided more details in his newsletter, *Congressional Front*.<sup>17</sup> After expressing his gratitude for their “generosity and

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<sup>15</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 49-50. In his own hand, Dirksen recorded each leg of his trip with dates, destinations, mode of transportation, and mileage. EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 58.

<sup>16</sup> Dirksen to McNaughton, February 21, 1945, Collection 64, McNaughton, F.F., Collection, 1938-1968, EMDC.

<sup>17</sup> EMDP, Remarks and Releases, February 21, 1945; EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 42-43.

kindness” which made the trip possible, the congressman outlined his travel plans. He expected to reach Africa, India, China, the Middle East, Russia, France, and Spain—an uncommonly ambitious itinerary that eventually proved too daunting even for the indefatigable Dirksen.

“Perhaps you may wonder why the journey is being undertaken at this time,” Dirksen suggested. He noted that from the standpoint of weather and the least loss of flying time, early Spring offered the best opportunity for travel to the Orient and the Middle East. But the second and more compelling reason “is that one might achieve a maximum amount of good by going at a time when the social, economic and political forces that are operative throughout the world and with which we as a nation must surely deal in the near future are still so fluid and intense and there could be not [a] better time than now to observe what is taking place.”<sup>18</sup>

Dirksen elaborated, calling the journey an “inspection trip”:

I have wondered how I can in some measure express my appreciation for all this in terms that will redound to our good and to the welfare of our country. In time of war, when young men give their all on distant battle fields, and when folks at home are called upon for every sacrifice, there would be no moral basis for a journey to distant lands unless it is closely related to one’s field of public service and serves a useful and necessary public service. On this basis, I believe there is an especial justification for the proposed trip at this time.

For years, it has been my privilege to serve on the Appropriations Committee of the Congress. That Committee has prepared and presented to Congress legislation providing for the spending of hundreds of BILLIONS of dollars. Those appropriations—all of which are derived from you and the other people of this nation in the form of taxes or borrowed by pledging your credit—have been spent in all sections of the world. We have appropriated billions for lend-lease aid to a score of nations. We have appropriated hundreds of millions for relief and rehabilitation in liberated countries. We have spent billions in building docks and camps, railroads and garrisons, warehouse and supply stations in every corner of the earth. Oddly enough and insofar as I know, not a single member of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives has ever journeyed to far distant lands to observe how and where your money is being spent and what is being accomplished.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> EMDP, Remarks and Releases, February 21, 1945; EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 42-43.

<sup>19</sup> EMDP, Remarks and Releases, February 21, 1945; EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 42-43.

Dirksen revealed a political sensitivity when he promised that his recommendations “will be on a middle-of-the-road basis,” not “captious or carping.” Nor would they be “partisan or political.” His report, he said, “will have one and only one purpose and that is to suggest and recommend those things that will speed the day of victory, enhance the prestige and well-being of our own beloved country, and indicate what in my very humble judgment seems to be the the [sic] road upon which we shall find the grace and joy of a peace that will live.”<sup>20</sup>

Having taken care of business, Dirksen departed Washington at 4:10 Wednesday afternoon, bound by train for Montreal and the Hotel Windsor, a trip of 681 miles.

Trip Log  
Feb. 21 - Lv. Wash 4:00 Montreal - Rain -  
Feb. 22 - Am. Montreal - Hotel Windsor. Lined with  
Consul Gen. Winship, Johnson, Weller, Callahan  
City of 1,200,000 - Conscription issue - Rice and  
rain - Shoes - Quality rubber - Shoes without  
coupons - No shortages - watches - jewelry -  
fine woolens - Lots of meat and canned  
goods - seen butter and sugar.  
Feb. 23 - Lv. Montreal for Dorval Airport - by  
R.F.T.C. - Briefing - flight suits - Cons. Fleming  
Lv. 4:56 p.m. - Liberator - 10 pass. aboard - ice  
snow - overcast - oxygen at 10,000 feet -  
outside temp 30° below - Captain's food -  
21,000 feet altitude - sunrise - arrive at

Dirksen's trip log, day one  
Source: EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 58

On Thursday, he met with the U.S. General Consul North Winship and his staff for lunch. As would be his custom, Dirksen asked Winship to explain his operation and to evaluate its effectiveness. From the consul general the congressman learned, for example, that congressionally authorized allowances for diplomatic and consular representatives did not cover the consulate's expenses.<sup>21</sup> Dirksen would hear that lament frequently over the next three months.

That evening Dirksen wrote home to his “Honey Kids” that “Except for the uniforms one would hardly know in Montreal that a war is on. Plenty of meat (all varieties), canned goods, clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc. Even butter and sugar seem plentiful ... .” He continued: “This is the province [Quebec] which has resisted conscription. It is quite an issue and the Northwest Mounted Police have been around arresting some of the young men of draft age ... . Had a lovely luncheon yesterday with the Consul and his staff. All of them are career men and fine folks.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> EMDP, Remarks and Releases, February 21, 1945; EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 42-43.

<sup>21</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 58.

<sup>22</sup> EMD to “Honey Kids,” February 22, 1945, in Louella Dirksen with Norma Lee Browning, *The Honorable Mr. Marigold: My Life with Everett Dirksen* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1972), 100. Everett and Louella exchanged letters throughout his trip. Many are reprinted in Louella's memoir. Others are located in EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters. This

The next day Dirksen boarded a British Lancaster bomber for the flight to Newfoundland and then ten-and-a-half hours to Prestwick, Scotland, for a brief stop before landing in London. Ten passengers joined him for a trip he described as “surreal.” The travelers donned oxygen masks at 10,000 feet as the plane climbed to its cruising altitude of 21,000 feet—the outside temperature registered 30 degrees below zero.<sup>23</sup>

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account emphasizes Everett’s letters; Louella’s typically described household matters, their daughter’s activities, events Louella attended, and, occasionally, information about goings-on in the House of Representatives.

<sup>23</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 58.



## TO LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1945

Dirksen's eight days in London, a comparatively long stretch in any one location as it turned out, set the tone for the tour. He spent hours in meetings with top foreign government officials and with U.S. military and civilian personnel. Dirksen also took time to see the sights; visit with GIs from Illinois; record observations in his log on such far-ranging topics as the food he ate, the weather, and horticulture; and compose letters to his family. Much of his scribbling dwelled on the mundane. He did not prepare detailed notes of his meetings, and it was not until later in the tour that he began to analyze his experience or reflect on larger themes.

By any standard, Dirksen maintained a break-neck pace. While in London he met with OSS officers, the chairman of the Anglo-American Patriotic Committee, the British Secretary of State for India, various officials of the Foreign Office, members of Parliament, officials in the Office of War Information, the secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, among others—he even “ran into” Sam Goldwyn, the movie magnate.<sup>24</sup>

During his meeting with Malcolm MacDonald, the secretary of colonial affairs, Dirksen pressed the point of Irish independence, which Dirksen favored. He left with the impression that Britain expected to deal with India's freedom and membership in the Commonwealth and the Palestinian question first. As Dirksen noted, “it was so evident that, in the secretary's opinion, the Irish question was the most difficult of all to solve.”<sup>25</sup>

During an hour-long courtesy call on U.S. Ambassador John Winant, the Soviet ambassador, Feodor Gusev, joined them. Dirksen mentioned that he would be visiting Teheran later in the trip and hoped that Gusev would help him secure a visa to enter the Soviet Union. Once Dirksen reached Teheran, however, he learned that he could get a visa only after an investigation—a six-month process which made the visit impossible.<sup>26</sup> With typical brevity, Dirksen described Winant in these words: “A strange mystical austere man. Like Lincoln.”<sup>27</sup> Perhaps that Winant was suffering from influenza at the time had something to do with Dirksen's impression.

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<sup>24</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 101; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 66.

<sup>25</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 182.

<sup>26</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 30-31.

<sup>27</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 101; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 66.

Dirksen spent Sunday, February 25, touring with the head of the visitor's bureau, a Women's Army Corps (WAC) chauffeur, and Lt. Robert Little of the Royal Navy. They surveyed the "vast damage" inflicted by German rockets, though Dirksen expressed amazement at how quickly the rubble was cleared and how "tidy" the environs appeared generally.<sup>28</sup>

More meetings on Monday, followed by a highlight on Tuesday as Dirksen sat in Parliament to listen to Winston Churchill address the body for nearly an hour. As he wrote Louella, "Age and fatigue [are] beginning to show. He halts and repeats a good deal. Still sparkles, however, and has a sense of humor ... ." <sup>29</sup>

Dirksen was awakened at 5:00 a.m. by a bomb blast the next day, although he did not record his reaction. Instead, Dirksen focused on his inspection of the Bicester supply base 60 miles distant from London where he witnessed the "amazing repair of Sherman tank engines from junk to power units." He took the occasion to visit Ash Church, as well as the 91<sup>st</sup> General Hospital in Oxford, a facility built with funds provided by Friends of Britain in the United States. There he saw about "twenty lads from Illinois. None from our area. It's something. You realize there's a war on." <sup>30</sup>

Friday, March 2, marked Dirksen's last day in London on the first leg of his trip. His log indicates that, after a breakfast of bacon, mushrooms, coffee, and rolls, he made several calls and booked several future flights. The hotel bill amounted to 22.5 pounds for six nights, not including meals. The Dorchester Hotel located in the North End did not impress Dirksen. He complained about the poor food, the high cost, waiters who spoke French, and "too much shuffling of the dishes for fewness of vittles." He also cashed \$800 in travelers' checks.<sup>31</sup>

A *New York Times* reporter in London cornered Dirksen as he was about to depart and asked if the insight he expected to gain about world problems on this journey "might make him a more formidable candidate for a place on the 1948 Republican national ticket." Dirksen replied that he was not thinking that far ahead politically "at present."<sup>32</sup> The *Washington Post* also took note of the trip.<sup>33</sup> Back in Pekin, *Pekin Daily Times* publisher F.F. McNaughton reported to his readers that their congressman was off to a great start. It's a trip, McNaughton said, that "can mean much for America." He even lobbied Dirksen to stay twice as long as he had planned: "DON'T SKIMP ON THIS TRIP." If he needed more funds, folks have offered. "We mean that. We want you to get to the bottom of things." The publisher began planning "for a big crowd to hear your report when you return."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 59-60.

<sup>29</sup> EMD to "Sweetie Pie," February 27, 1945, in Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 100; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 62-63.

<sup>30</sup> EMD to "Darling Kids," March 1, 1945, in Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 101; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 64-67.

<sup>31</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 67-69.

<sup>32</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 20.

<sup>33</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 3.

Dirksen summed up his stay in London with a long-delayed report to constituents in his newsletter, *Congressional Front*, one of only two such reports composed during the trip. Entitled “SO THIS IS LONDON,” he said the city had changed little from his last visit in June 1919. “The amazing thing is not the physical damage but the resilient courage of a people who took it day after day—sleeping fitfully in stuffy brick or concrete shelters at night—working day after day—and keeping the vigil of Victory with a steady faith. It proves the truth of Confucius’ observation that nothing is so enduring as human will power.” After remarking that London had suffered more than 1,800 days with blackouts, Dirksen attempted some humor. Londoners, he claimed, resembled the “hotel maid who, when she heard a bomb whistle in its flight, opened a window. The occupant of the room was alarmed. ‘Good Heavens,’ she said, ‘close the window, quickly. Aren’t you afraid?’ The maid looked at the guest in a most casual way and said, ‘No indeed, since we’re payin’ for this war, I likes to see at we’re getting’ fer it.’ That’s a fair illustration of the serenity and calm with which this city has come through,” Dirksen submitted.<sup>35</sup>

To wife Louella and daughter Joy, Dirksen wrote “Traveling in war time is not too pleasant but then I did not expect it to be. The British have been very gracious and kind.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 37. Dirksen provided a preliminary report on his trip to McNaughton in a censored letter of February 28. See EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 22.

<sup>35</sup> EMDP, Remarks and Releases, March 31, 1945.

<sup>36</sup> EMD to “Darling Toots-Poots,” March 2, 1945, in Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 101.





## TO PARIS, FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 1945

Dirksen took one of four spaces on the plane that left London for Paris at 2:30, Friday afternoon. He arrived two hours later. From the air, “France looks peaceful & productive,” although the airfield was pitted with bomb craters. The American Embassy furnished the congressman with a car and driver, and the entourage headed for the Ritz. Dirksen saw the wrecks of tanks on the way but observed little in the way of damage in the city itself. According to his notes, “Paris looks austere, cold, unhappy.”<sup>37</sup>

His impressions of war-time operations in France tended to the positive. He took note of soldiers’ high morale, which he deduced from their clean-shaven appearance, good food, and plentiful cigarettes. He noted the “remarkable coordination” of combat, supply, finance, and travel operations. Looking to the future, he had faith that France would rebound relatively quickly, given its capacity to produce food. Dirksen admitted that motor and rail transport had suffered, with only 6,000 of 30,000 locomotives left. He also saw that “France needs efficient, well enforced price controls” and raw materials for factories. And he did not ignore the urban poor, whom he called the “real economic casualties” of war. He called for French labor to “settle down” and for “politicians to settle down to work & economic recovery.”<sup>38</sup> Little did he know in early March that his next visit to Paris would come on VE Day.

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<sup>37</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 67-69; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 101.

<sup>38</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 70-74.



## TO TUNIS, CAIRO, AND ABADAN, MARCH 3, 1945

Awakened at 6:15 on Saturday morning, Dirksen departed for Marseilles two and a half hours later, arriving at 11:30 a.m. After a brief stop, he continued to Algiers, landing at 4:15 only to board another plane, this one to Tunis. He arrived at 5:30 p.m. chilled and saddled with a cold. Vice Consul O'Neal and his wife met him, but Dirksen retired early, for him, at 11:00 p.m.<sup>39</sup> Dirksen later recalled in his memoir the trip's harrowing ordeal:

I did not expect to stop in Algiers because I had a plane connection to take me on to Tunisia. It was a night flight. By that I mean it took place in the early hours of the night and, as I recall, we expected to land in Tunisia around midnight. I never realized until then how frightfully cold it can get in the desert. I was the only passenger aboard and most of the cabin space was occupied by sacks filled with mail. The flight encompassed mountainous country, and it became evident that the pilot was either off the beam or he was lost. In the course of that uneasy flight, the sergeant who served as a steward on the plane came to tell me that we had lost contact with Tunis and could only hope that somehow it might be reestablished. Meanwhile I should prepare for any eventuality.

He deposited a quantity of softer mailbags on the floor of the plane, had me lie down, and then proceeded to cover me with a great many other bags to cushion the shock if there should be one. There are occasions when there is nothing to do but review one's life and utter fervent prayers. Fortunately, contact was established and when we flew into the capital of Tunisia, I was about as completely frozen as I have ever been in my entire lifetime.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the trial, Dirksen arose at 4:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 4, downed a breakfast of eggs, oatmeal, and condensed milk before venturing out to the "native quarter." His log recorded observations about population statistics,

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<sup>39</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 70-74.

<sup>40</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 183-184.

refugees, horticulture, the prevalence of beggars, commodity prices, “the religious cleavage,” and the burgeoning black market. While in Tunisia, he also visited a cemetery, Carthage, an air terminal, and a clothing and commodities distribution center. At this last stop he observed that the packages of relief supplies did not identify the United States as the benefactor—no evidence “that all this was made possible through the generosity of the United States and its taxpayers,” a finding that annoyed and perplexed Dirksen.<sup>41</sup>

From Tunis the trip continued to Cairo. While there only briefly, Dirksen met with officials in the military, the Office of War Information, and State Department in addition to reporters from the New York *Daily News* and the *New York Times*. After sitting for a haircut, Dirksen dined with the Aga Khan and his “stately wife with [a] new French hat” at the Club Mohammed Ali.<sup>42</sup>



Dirksen tours ruins and cemetery at unknown location.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/00/0-7

On his visit to Cairo’s Payne Field, Dirksen learned that he, as the ranking U.S. official, would have to host a lunch for a Soviet major general and his staff. Based on conversations with American officials, Dirksen believed the Soviets operated a major intelligence operation in Egypt. Through an interpreter, the Illinois congressman not so innocently asked why the Soviets had 350 people in the embassy in Cairo. The offended general and his staff arose from the table as one, the general bowed from the waist, the entourage walked out the door, “and that was the last I ever saw of the Russian general.”<sup>43</sup>

Tuesday, March 6, was a travel day as Dirksen headed for Abadan, an oil refining center employing 25,000 natives and an equal number of British in the southeast corner of Iran. He arrived there at 6:00 p.m. and decided to spend the night. “The installation at Abadan is very efficient in every respect,” Dirksen recorded. “Quarters are good (brick), water clean and tasty, food is ample, kitchen

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<sup>41</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 184.

<sup>42</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 75.

<sup>43</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 185.

equipment excellent, morale high. A strategic field because of proven oil reserves in this area.” Dirksen learned that the refineries produced 250,000 barrels of oil per day. Impressed, he declared the area “needs attention since [the] site of greatest reserves is shifting from US-Caribbean area to the Middle East. We need equal treatment & facilities.” Of the 1,500 Americans in Abadan, Dirksen registered these observations: “Discipline excellent. Men are clean, neat, shaved, alert; no dysentery; scarcely any VD.”<sup>44</sup>

In a letter home, Dirksen thought back to a meeting with Lt. General Donald Booth, commanding general of the Persian Gulf Command. He noted how the soldiers resented the labor strikes in the United States—“it nettles them a good deal”—and judged that “All seem anxious to bring the war to an end that they might go home. They are no different from the men in the last war in that respect ... .”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 79-82.

<sup>45</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 102; EMD to “Darling Kids, March 6, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.



## TO PAKISTAN AND INDIA, MARCH 6, 1945

The next leg of the trip consumed about six hours and 1,170 miles on a C-46 Commando aircraft, the largest and heaviest twin-engine plane in the Air Corps. Dirksen was accompanied by lots of baggage, eighteen officers, two chaplains, and a reporter from the *Cincinnati Inquirer*. Destination: Karachi, Pakistan. As he flew over the landscape en route to Karachi, Dirksen described “the country we are now over is so extremely bleak and non-productive. The desert alternates with rugged hills entirely devoid of vegetation. Along the water courses which take the seasonal rains from the mountains are scattered trees. It’s amazing that so much waste land could be concentrated in one area of the earth.”<sup>46</sup> His log does not include an entry for Karachi. Dirksen left for Bombay the next morning, Thursday. Dirksen spent almost two weeks on the Indian subcontinent traveling to Delhi, Calcutta, Colombo, Bangalore, Kandy, and points in between.

As was his custom, the congressman combined his official inspection tours with social and cultural outings, meetings with foreign political figures, and visits with soldiers and officers. He often worked fourteen to sixteen hours daily despite his lingering cold.



Dirksen with soldiers from Illinois at Kandy, Ceylon, March 18, 1945.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/3/18-3

<sup>46</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” March 7, 1945, EMD Personal, f. Family Letters.

He inspected the consulate offices, harbor and dock facilities, clinics, and the Red Cross operation in Bombay. He had appointments with the military headquarters staff and the associated PX, infirmary, and kitchens on base in Delhi. In that city he also inspected the operations of the Foreign Economic Administration (FEA) and the Office of War Information (OWI). Calcutta saw him quiz officers in the India-Burma Theater and officials in the consul's office, Britain's Warship Support Agency, the American Red Cross, FEA, OWI, and those running lend-lease. He visited an airplane repair facility and the port in Bangalore. In Kandy, Ceylon, he toured a hospital, a "war room," the Office of Strategic Services, and a tea and rubber plantation.

Points of cultural interest included a fly-over to view the Taj Mahal and visits to Bombay's Old Quarter and sacred pool, several temples, and an agricultural show. One of the trip's highlights took place on Monday, March 12, when Dirksen dined as the guest of the British viceroy, Lord Wavell. "I was frankly overwhelmed. I had never seen anything like it in my life. It was a huge palace, beautifully decorated, and it seemed as if the personnel to maintain it ran into the hundreds, all of them in resplendent and colorful uniforms."<sup>47</sup>

A second high point was Dirksen's visit to a session of the Indian assembly. "A delightful adventure," Dirksen termed the visit in his memoir. "So many of the members were dressed in colorful uniforms, but the amazing aspect of this was that virtually all of them, including the Speaker of the House of Parliament, were in bare feet. It was true of nearly all the members of Congress."<sup>48</sup>

Dirksen followed his visit to the assembly with a tea hosted by the leader of India's 70 million untouchables, India's most depressed caste. Despite graduating from Columbia University and receiving an advanced degree from the London School of Economics, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar remained an untouchable. Observed Dirksen, "I never cease wondering about the caste system and how it could so envelope an entire country and all its people, placing them in rigid categories from which there simply was no escape."<sup>49</sup> The contrast with the previous evening at the viceroy's palace must have been stark.<sup>50</sup>

What did the Illinois congressman learn from all this activity? Unfortunately, neither Dirksen's log nor his letters home at this juncture of the trip contain much in the way of reflection or analysis. Among the problems he foresaw for India were poor education ("illiteracy high; why talk of grand schemes without a

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<sup>47</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 189; EMD to "Darling Kids," March 13, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>48</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 190.

<sup>49</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 190.

<sup>50</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 102-03. Dirksen remarked that members of the assembly were barefoot. See also EMD to "Darling Kids," March 13, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

foundation”), the caste system, “bare subsistence” wages, and an exchange rate in chaos.<sup>51</sup>

But with only an exception or two, Dirksen thought the U.S. agencies operated effectively. Here are samples of his commentary:

Of the consul general’s operations in Bombay, “good quarters, air conditioning, fine staff” and “excellent group of alert young men & women.”<sup>52</sup>

Of the Office of War Information, “place filled—excellent undertaking.”<sup>53</sup>

After a meeting with military leaders in Calcutta, “tremendous business here and things are going good. Our troops are in fine spirits, look good, and are well provided.”<sup>54</sup>

Of a tour of an airplane repair facility, “Precision work on radios, instruments, etc. quite astonishing.”<sup>55</sup>

Following a hospital inspection, “excellent; old girl’s school; clean; fine equipment (Lady Mountbatten’s testimony).<sup>56</sup>

After meeting with Lord Mountbatten and touring parts of Ceylon, “all of it was exceedingly informative and I feel truly enriched.”<sup>57</sup>

A few deficiencies caught Dirksen’s attention, however. The ineffective management of war-time materiel distressed him. In Assam, a northeastern state in India, for example, he discovered that agencies had ordered 30,000 new tires while sitting on a surplus of 9,000. In his inspection of dock and port facilities, he came across broken boxes holding 12,000 tons of supplies. He learned that nearly 750,000 pounds of goods had been mis-directed to Gaya, that 6,000 bicycles intended for China’s postal service languished in Assam, and that the supply operation was over-staffed by a factor of five.<sup>58</sup> In addition to the supply issue, Dirksen came to question the use of promotions to boost morale in civilian agencies.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 87-91, 105-107; EMD to “Darling Kids,” March 11, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>52</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 90-91.

<sup>53</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 90.

<sup>54</sup> EMD to “Darling Kids,” March 14, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>55</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 110-111.

<sup>56</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 114.

<sup>57</sup> Dirksen to “Honey Kids,” March 19, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>58</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 105-107.

<sup>59</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 102-104.

Four weeks into the trip, he characterized the experience as “hard work” but “a great adventure.”<sup>60</sup> He told his family that “I’m still fascinated by all that I see.”<sup>61</sup> He believed that his trip helped improve morale, too, especially among enlisted men: “I’m immodest enough to say that my visit is helping morale. They think it great that a M.C. should come way down here often [sic] the beaten path.”<sup>62</sup>

Still battling the effects of a cold and having taken two shots as prevention against an outbreak of smallpox in Calcutta, Dirksen decided against extending the trip to China.<sup>63</sup> At this point, the congressman had traveled nearly 15,000 miles since February 21<sup>st</sup>. In correspondence home, he admitted for the first time that he was homesick, that he intended to return home by May 15<sup>th</sup>, “if not sooner.”<sup>64</sup> He purchased a sapphire ring in Ceylon, where they were plentiful, as a gift for Louella.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> EMD to “Sugar Puddin’s,” March 10, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>61</sup> EMD to “Darling Kids, March 11, 1945, in Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 102.

<sup>62</sup> EMD to “Honey Kids,” March 17, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>63</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” March 11, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters: “For one thing Chung King [sic] is the only place one can go. Secondly high winds would delay me. Finally, it’s a trip that taxes the energy & would require some rest both before and after the flight.”

<sup>64</sup> EMD to “Darling Kids,” March 14, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>65</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 113.





## TO TEHERAN AND BAGHDAD, MARCH 20, 1945

Dirksen arose at 5:30 a.m. on his last day in Bombay and headed for the airport. After commiserating with American GIs, he boarded a flight back to Karachi, landing four hours later. Met by the consul and a military aide, Dirksen resumed his hectic pace by going immediately to the Naval Liaison Office and then to inspect an Indian Naval School for boys and a dock and warehouse facility. The constant travel exacted a toll, however, and Dirksen begged out of a cocktail and dinner party, retiring to bed because of an “infernal cold.” He asked a physician to check him over—both his temperature and pulse were, Dirksen recorded, normal.<sup>66</sup>

Up at 5:00 the next morning, Dirksen headed to Abadan. As Dirksen wrote his family, “The trip from Karachi to Abadan was rather tiring. It was about an eight-hour trip at 8500 feet on the so-called bucket seats which are nothing more than deep scallops in a long seat made out of metal. Since we did not have blankets, there was nothing to use as a cushion and those seats got quite hard.”<sup>67</sup>

Over the next couple of days, he visited Khorramshahr, a port city a few miles north of Abadan that extends to the right bank of the Shatt-al-Arab near its confluence with the Karun River. He toured the city and inspected the docks, a stockade holding prisoners of war, a hospital, a PX theater, and a coca cola plant. He found time to take a boat ride to Basra, the largest of Iraq’s port cities with a population over 90,000. Conditions there appalled Dirksen—locals washed their dishes and defecated in the same canal. The port, through which much of the equipment and supplies were sent to the Soviet Union by the other Allies, was a lifesaver, thought Dirksen, although he wondered why the “Russians [were] getting gripy.” Americans faced tough conditions—one aspirin tablet cost fifteen cents on the black market, a tire, \$1,000. All in all, morale “needs bucking with creature comforts since all the towns are out of bounds.”<sup>68</sup>

A letter from his wife alerted Dirksen that Joe Martin, his colleague in Congress who would become Speaker in 1947, “has really been concerned and has been working to see that you get everything coming to you” by way of permits to visit countries. Louella wrote that she had fielded many calls from mothers who hoped the congressman would see their sons. She intended to spend another five days in

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<sup>66</sup> EMD to “Honey Darlings,” March 21, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>67</sup> EMD to “Honey Kids,” March 24, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 103.

<sup>68</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 122-124; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 103.

Pekin before returning to Washington—this time by train “cause there is no use taking undo risk [by flying] when I’m the head of the family.”<sup>69</sup>

From Abadan, Everett prepared to take the 1,000-mile train ride to Teheran, Iran. As the congressman later revealed in his memoir, the railroad was an engineering marvel built by Germans; a thousand workers perished in the bargain. The train Dirksen traveled on consisted of two diesel engines, one dining car, and a sleeping car that was the private possession of the shah of Iran. The passenger list named four U.S. colonels and Dirksen. It was “a spectacular trip,” he recalled. “Word went through the Persian Gulf command that I was aboard and that all troops from Illinois at the various stations in Iran would be supplied with the necessary transportation to get them to the railroad station when the train arrived.” As a result, Dirksen was greeted at every stop by “hometown” troops, more than 150 of them: “I never felt so honored in my life.”<sup>70</sup>



Dirksen visits Persian Gulf Command, Khorramshahr, Iran.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/3/0-3

On Saturday, March 24, the congressman conducted an early inspection of the hospital, the cemetery, the University of Teheran, the Shah’s palace, the site of the Teheran Conference,<sup>71</sup> several mosques, and the old quarter of the city. He lunched with General Donald P. Booth, commanding general of the Persian Gulf Command; met at length with Herman B. Wells, deputy director and special adviser on liberated areas, Office of Foreign Economic Administration, Department of State; called on the consulate; and visited with Ambassador Leland Morris.<sup>72</sup> From Wells he learned of FEA’s effort to break the British stranglehold on pharmaceutical imports “only to get licked after nine months.”<sup>73</sup> Dirksen complained to an Iranian minister about Iran’s failure to purchase American

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<sup>69</sup> Louella to EMD, March 22, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>70</sup> EMD to “Honey Kids,” March 24, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters. Dirksen, *Education*, 191.

<sup>71</sup> Referring to the Teheran Conference, November 28-December 1, 1943, which took place in the hall of the Soviet Embassy.

<sup>72</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 126-127; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 103.

<sup>73</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 126-127.

drugs, but to no avail. He later learned that government ministers were not salaried and derived their compensation from the deals they struck.<sup>74</sup> The dissonance between common business practices in the United States and those in the Middle East surfaced as a theme in Dirksen's notes.

In his memoir, Dirksen recorded a mysterious aside to the visit to Teheran. While at a party at the officers' club, General Booth's secretary, "an extremely attractive Iranian girl," danced with Dirksen and asked for his help in securing a visa to join Booth in the United States. Dirksen told her that would be difficult. She was so attractive, he advised, that she ought simply to marry a U.S. serviceman—it would be easier to get in the country that way. "She stamped her foot with some vexation and said, 'I do not want to go that way. I want to be free when I go, and I am sorry if you cannot help me.'" Quite some time later and to Dirksen's amazement, she walked into his office in Washington. They spoke briefly. She was mysterious about how she had gotten to the United States, and Dirksen never saw her again.<sup>75</sup>

The Illinois congressman expressed amazement that Teheran, a city of 750,000, lacked a municipal water system. Water for washing came from the Elbers Mountains just behind the city and ran in gutters. Water was delivered from barrels mounted on a cart hitched to a horse or burro and came out of a spigot "just like a gasoline truck."<sup>76</sup> Further, "inflation is awful and everything costs three or four hundred per cent more than it should. Hence my shopping thus far has been quite on the ultra-conservative side."<sup>77</sup> Yet he reported to Louella that "Teheran has proved a most delightful interlude in the trip."<sup>78</sup>

The approach to trade and commerce in the Middle East, captured by the term "baksheesh" which describes certain forms of political corruption, troubled the congressman. He cited the effectiveness of the pharmaceutical cartel as an "amazing story of baksheesh."<sup>79</sup> Dirksen also used the example of the Sultan who parceled out offices "and the holders expected to reward themselves as best they might—small pay and hence must utilize the perquisites—has grown into the morals of the East."<sup>80</sup> This corruption extended to foreign contracts, political elections, and government operations. There "are no morals of trade—this is the land of baksheesk [sic]."<sup>81</sup>

Dirksen's most striking impression related to the "meager facilities" for American diplomats in Teheran. "We had acquired a building next to the embassy to be

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<sup>74</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 191.

<sup>75</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 192.

<sup>76</sup> EMD to "Honey Kids," March 24, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 103.

<sup>77</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 104.

<sup>78</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 104.

<sup>79</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 126.

<sup>80</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 54.

<sup>81</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 126-127.

renovated and used as a chancery building. Immediately before the time set to hold the three-power meetings, between Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union<sup>82</sup>, it appears that a heavy rain caused the ceiling in the chancery to collapse, and virtually all of the ceiling plaster fell to the floor. Along with it, the entire electrical system became inoperative, and the problem of finding a plasterer and an electrician to remedy the damage in time was difficult indeed. I felt that the United States of America should certainly do better by its diplomats than it was doing in Iran.”<sup>83</sup>

Dirksen also altered his itinerary for a second time, the first his decision not to proceed to China. This time he removed Russia from his schedule: “The Russian thing didn’t work out and it doesn’t bother me either. First of all the clearances didn’t come and the Consulate tells me it is quite common for people to wait five or six weeks for clearance. Well, [I] wouldn’t wait that long on anybody except you,” he wrote Louella. “Secondly, there are but three planes a week. Third, the weather is bad, and the flight course is over high mountains. Finally, if I did get clearance, it would probably take at least two or three weeks to make that part of the trip. The Russians are still quite finicky and I don’t propose to bother myself too much about it.”<sup>84</sup>

Before Dirksen left Iran for neighboring Iraq, “General Booth bestowed upon me the official insignia of the Persian Gulf Command. It is a shield with a red scimitar representing Iran and a silver sun representing Iraq with a green background. Quite nice and I appreciate it.”<sup>85</sup>

Dirksen’s first day in Baghdad, Monday, March 26, followed his typical plan. He arrived from Teheran via Abadan at 1:30 p.m. He proceeded to inspect the consulate and legation, which he found to be crowded, understaffed, and poorly furnished. Dirksen continued with visits to the Office of War Information, the military attaché, and a mosque.<sup>86</sup> The next day, he spent time at the offices of the Foreign Economic Administration discussing economic controls, oil reserves, and the exchange rate. The congressman capped off the day with visits to both the former and current prime minister and to the American Boys School.

His notes from Baghdad suggest that Dirksen viewed the apparent sympathy for Germany among Iraqis as “really British hostility.” Britain had assumed control of Iraq in 1921, granting it independence only in 1932. The congressman also noted that the Russians had “made an impressive start.” Counterbalancing that effect, though, was the Iraqi desire for American goods and the potential to use

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<sup>82</sup> Teheran Conference, November 28-December 1, 1943.

<sup>83</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 192; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 126-127.

<sup>84</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 103.

<sup>85</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Puddin,” March 25, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 104.

<sup>86</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 130-131.

American movies as convincing propaganda.<sup>87</sup> Dirksen would return to both themes in reports to Congress in May and June.

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<sup>87</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 132-134.



## TO JERUSALEM, MARCH 28, 1945

Dirksen left Baghdad at 4:30 a.m. to drive the sixty miles to the airport at Habbonny, from there to Lyyda, landing at Noon. He then drove to Tel Aviv, this time accompanied by Commander John Young. Up to this point in the trip, Dirksen had traveled alone, not completely by design. Before he left Washington, Dirksen selected Young, a commander in the Naval Reserve and an assistant administrator of the Foreign Economic Administration, to accompany him. But complications soon arose. Young first intended to meet up with the congressman in India, but, as Dirksen wrote home in mid-March, Young did not join him then: “Perhaps that is for the best since it permits greater flexibility of action and movement in getting around.”<sup>88</sup> They missed connecting again when Young landed in Bombay as Dirksen flew to Calcutta; the rendezvous planned for Karachi fell through, too. The situation took on a humorous flavor, as Dirksen recounted in a letter to Louella on March 21:

Commander Young left a message with the Consulate that I must not leave India until I contacted him. Tried to reach him by phone at Delhi but the long distance phone service is very uncertain. . . . [After trying to reach Young the next morning by phone] Meanwhile a telegram came—and believe it or not—he is in Delhi and has an attack of dysentery. Said he would meet me in Jerusalem on Saturday. Sort of funny about my “staff” don’t you think. Maybe they’ll meet me in Washington—ho! ho!<sup>89</sup>

Dirksen seemed pleased to have Young’s company, though, writing Louella that “Commander Young is exceedingly well informed and splendid company.”<sup>90</sup>

Among the people he met in late March were Musa Al-Alami, who led the movement to propagandize the Arab cause as part of the effort to create a Pan Arab charter. A law graduate from Cambridge University, Al-Alami had been a member of the Palestinian delegation to the London Conference in 1939 and represented Palestinian political parties at the Preparatory Conference for the

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<sup>88</sup> EMD to “Darling Kids,” March 13, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>89</sup> EMD to “Honey Kids, March 21, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>90</sup> EMD to “Hi Kids,” March 29, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

Establishment of the Arab League in the Fall of 1944. Dirksen found him “Friendly—keen—candid—discusses the traditions and history of Arabs.”<sup>91</sup>

In addition to Americans at the embassy and consulate, he also met with Jewish Agency officials; a Mr. Altman, leader of what Dirksen called “the Revisionist group”; and the Amir of Trans-Jordan.<sup>92</sup> These meetings proved fruitful enough that Dirksen, undoubtedly mindful of the politics of his own re-election, wrote his wife, “Knowing the interest of the Jewish people in this problem, I am spending more time here than I otherwise would. It may pay dividends in many directions.”<sup>93</sup>



Dirksen tours a collective farm.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/4/2-1

He conducted his usual inspections and took in the local culture, too. Dirksen penned a letter to his “Sweetie Gals” back home on March 31, for example, describing “such a big day.” He recounted his visit with Jewish leaders, lunch with the British High Commissioner, a two-hour trip to the Wailing Wall (“The Wailing Wall is a poor substitute for action in a realistic world. It is not unlike Gandhi’s philosophy.”<sup>94</sup>), the Via Dolorosa, Calvary, and the Tomb. He also attended the Good Friday procession at the Sepulcher. “It’s all a bit bewildering. There is so much ceremony and pomp about everything. Simplicity has been destroyed. It’s why I liked the Garden of Gethsemane best. I picked the violets there for you. I know how you like them.”<sup>95</sup>

Dirksen also visited the embassy, the YWCA, Hadassah Hospital, Jericho, the ruins of Bethany, the tomb of Lazarus, the Jordan Valley, Bethlehem, Nazareth—“Can’t quite describe the impression it makes,” he wrote home.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 139.

<sup>92</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 141-144; EMD to “Darling Kids,” April 1, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>93</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 2, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>94</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 148-149.

<sup>95</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Gals, March 31, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; EMD to “Hi Kids,” March 29, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

The congressman woke up at 5:45 on Easter Sunday to attend an NBC program. The lack of an elevator meant that Dirksen had to climb 182 stairs, so he missed all but the last two minutes. Later, he attended a Latin service: “Such noise and confusion. As I saw the pomp and ceremony, it left me in bewilderment. It’s so astounding that at the very tomb where he was buried, simplicity is a lost art.”<sup>97</sup>

Dirksen spent Tuesday, April 3, touring rural Palestine. His first stop was a collective farm populated by 350 people from fifty families, mostly refugees. The farm produced fruit, almonds, grapes, dairy products, and meat. But the operation failed to impress Dirksen—it earned no money, the profits went only for expansion, the workers labored at least twelve hours a day, and the farm lacked a church. He was put off, too, by the proclamations of “free love.” It was, Dirksen thought, a hard and meager existence. Parents could not choose their jobs, and children spent most of their time in a nursery separated from their families. The whole operation struck Dirksen as “communist inspired.”<sup>98</sup>



The tour continues of the Givath Brenner communal farm.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/4/2-24

Of his visit to the communal farm, he wrote to Louella and Joy: “All in all it was a most informative trip and leads me to the conclusion that the American laboring man does not appreciate how well off he really is. If this kind of business is what

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<sup>96</sup> EMD to “Hi Kids,” March 29, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>97</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 147-148; EMD to “Darling Kids,” April 1, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>98</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 150-151; EMD to “Sweetie Pies, April 3, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters. Dirksen’s growing concern about communist influence was reinforced in a conversation with Bayard Dodge of the American University in Beirut who worried about a Soviet takeover of the Suez.



Sidney Hillman<sup>99</sup> has in mind, I want no part of it. One thing however cannot be denied. These folks work under real handicaps and have constantly accomplished a good deal. But it's a completely regimented life."<sup>100</sup>

While in Palestine, the congressman saw the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the place where Samson brought down the pillars of the Temple, the village of Nazareth where Christ lived and moved and worked in the carpenter shop, the village of Bethlehem where he was born, and the Garden of the Agony at Gethsemane.<sup>101</sup>

During one of his motor trips with an interpreter, Dirksen persuaded a sentry on the bridge that crossed the Jordan River to let him into Jordan without the necessary visa. After about 20 miles, his interpreter called the congressman's attention to the summer home of the emir of Jordan. In a breach of protocol and over his driver's objection, Dirksen appealed to one of the emir's security people to let him see the emir. The two enjoyed an hour-long, wide-ranging conversation about Dirksen's impressions of the area. The emir eventually became King Abdullah of Jordan.<sup>102</sup>

The congressman also inspected an industrial exhibit in Tel Aviv at the Chamber of Commerce, lunched at the Allied Forces Hospitality Center, inspected the U.S. camp and factory and leave center at Telit Vinsky, and inspected a communal farm at Givat Brenner on the Gaza Road.<sup>103</sup> He took pains to note the presence of the hammer and sickle symbols on the walls of Jerusalem. Of Palestine he wrote: "(1) Belongs to Arabs (2) Dangerous to set up Jewish state (3) Frustrated by the Balfour Declaration."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Hillman founded the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, serving as president from 1914 to 1946. A close friend and influential adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt, Hillman was instrumental in shaping landmark labor legislation protecting workers' rights and living standards. He was a favorite target of conservative Republicans who opposed the New Deal.

<sup>100</sup> EMD to "Sweetie Pies," April 3, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters;

<sup>101</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 193; EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>102</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 194.

<sup>103</sup> EMD to "Sweetie Pies," April 3, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>104</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 146. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 stated British support for Zionist plans for a national home for the Jewish people within Palestine.



Dirksen inspecting dock facilities.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/4/15-10

Dirksen visited the port city of Haifa, too. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Haifa had emerged as an industrial port city and a growing population center. At that time, the Haifa District was home to about 175,000 people, with one-third Muslim, one-fifth Christian, and the balance Jewish. “[O]n the general account of fear,” the district liaison for the Settlement Policy accompanied Dirksen, who observed the plethora of weapons and complained of the “failure of Britain to act on outrages” and of Britain’s refusal to permit oil drilling.<sup>105</sup> But the city impressed Dirksen favorably with its excellent port facilities and the “spirit of enterprise everywhere.”

The conduct of business and commerce in the Middle East felt alien to Dirksen. He had complained about government corruption in Iran and Iraq, how government officials earned their pay in commissions rather than salary. In Jerusalem, the system of taxation confounded Dirksen. “You paid your full measure of taxes only if you were caught,” Dirksen surmised, “and if the officials could prove how much you really owed.”<sup>106</sup> How post-war economic reconstruction could progress under such circumstances baffled the congressman.

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<sup>105</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 153-154.

<sup>106</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 193; EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.



## TO LEBANON AND SYRIA, APRIL 6, 1945

On this Friday, Dirksen left Haifa for Beirut (or “Beyrouth” as Dirksen sometimes spelled it), the capital, largest city, and chief seaport of Lebanon. The next day, he met with the president and several members of the Chamber of Deputies of the Lebanon parliament before watching the parliament debate the Pan Arab Charter.

He then toured the Office of War Information, which he characterized as a “good operation—very effective use of newsletters, films, radio.” Likewise, the American mission was doing “a great job.” After meeting with the military attaché, the head of mission, and the president of the university, Dirksen added these entries to his log: “Don’t overdo cultural relations” and “Britain will remain in the Arab countries including Lebanon.” As for his home country, the congressman noted, the “U.S. should move into Lebanon—key spot from standpoint of oil, refineries, oil routes, business, etc.” The congressman also observed hamper and sickle postings, favoritism toward the British in import controls, “oil potential,” and the lack of democracy in Lebanon where “25 families run the show.”<sup>107</sup>

Here is how Dirksen summarized this portion of his trip to his family:

As I listen to the various discussions about Russia, Britain, France, post-war plans, oil, and what not, it all seems a bit vain and bewildering. Even here, there is a very tight censorship and you get to wondering about this thing called Freedom.

You may recall that Mr. Jordan of Boston (the astrology man) indicated that the problems after the war would be more baffling and of greater magnitude than the war itself. I’m inclined to agree.

As soon as I finish this, I thought I might brush up a bit on the journeys of the Apostle Paul. All of this is interesting and historic land.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 159-161.

<sup>108</sup> EMD to “Honey Guys,” April 9, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 104.

Dirksen was eager to move on to Syria “if for no other reason than to see the little prison where the Apostle Paul had been incarcerated.” After sitting in on a session of the parliament, he dined with Lt. Colonel W.F. Stirling who had been chief of staff to Lawrence of Arabia. Stirling explained that 9<sup>th</sup> Army remained in Syria “in anticipation of trouble if they left. Druses and Syrians would take care of the French and probably stage a real uprising in the middle of the present war.”<sup>109</sup> Later Dirksen took in a movie at the American mission depicting Iwo Jima and the landing on New Britain—“What an awful thing that Iwo Jima action was and what a frightful cost. Such is war. You lose all stomach for a victory celebration when you see it.”<sup>110</sup>

On Tuesday, April 10, now in Damascus, Dirksen met with the Syrian prime minister. The subjects of their conversation ranged widely and included talks about a possible treaty with the United States, the issue of Bedouin sheiks who wanted to go to San Francisco for the United Nations negotiations, the prime minister’s challenge of picking Moslems and Christians for the delegation and “still getting competent people,” and of Russian pressure on Turkey respecting a treaty with Syria. Dirksen also met with the president of Syria for lunch.

Dirksen, who was now more inclined to analyze the meaning of his trip than earlier in his adventure, listed twelve observations following his meetings in Damascus. Among them were these:

3. Officials—free, happy, America No. 1.
4. All think of future—of industry, exchange and of building up—of schools (Minister’s plan for 1,000 schools).
6. We must devote more time to exchange problem and international monetary matters.
7. Hatred of the French—springs from harsh rule and impoverishing the country—also the exchange deal—country full of francs.
8. President’s son sees conflict between the British and Russians.
10. Damascus Deputy: “If we are free, why does France negotiate a monetary treaty with Switzerland which shall apply to Syria?”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 164; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 105; Dirksen to “Honey Kids,” April 10, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>110</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 164; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 105; Dirksen to “Honey Kids,” April 10, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>111</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 164-167.

He made a brief note, too, that the Foreign Economic Administration, with two men, needed only one, and that American diplomats should focus less on cultural matters and more on business. He heard, not for the first time, that the British “are taking us for a ride” on economic matters. Dirksen was more impressed, however, by the productivity of the Office of War Information.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 168-169.



## TO TURKEY, APRIL 12, 1945

By way of Damascus, Baalbek, and Beirut, Dirksen traveled to Ankara, Turkey, on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Dirksen would spend eight days in Turkey, chiefly in Ankara and Istanbul. “Just learned from our consul here [Damascus] that even the best hotels in Turkey have bed bugs. Ain’t that something? I fool ‘em by sleeping in a chair.”<sup>113</sup>

Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, brought a special jolt. As Dirksen recounted in his memoir, there was “a loud knock on the door of my hotel room one morning about seven. I couldn’t imagine what it could be until I opened the door and a maid in fairly good English advised that Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died and they wanted me to know without delay.”<sup>114</sup>

Later that evening, Dirksen wrote to Louella about the day’s events (in this contemporaneous account, he said the notice came by phone rather than by a knock on the door):

Darling Kids,

It’s me again.

First shock of the day of course was the phone call announcing the President’s death. It is in every sense a shock and most untimely. There is a strange irony about the fact that he should be called away when the end of the war was in sight and on the eve of the San Francisco conference. The American Mission here declared a formal 30-day period of mourning, provided arm bands and black ties. During that time, there will be abstinence from all formal affairs such as dinners, luncheons, dancing, etc.<sup>115</sup>

President Roosevelt’s death did not stop Dirksen from pursuing his usual daily activities, however. He inspected the Office of War Information, the Foreign Economic Administration, and the American Mission, meeting with all 35 staff members.

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<sup>113</sup> EMD to “Darling Kids,” April 11, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>114</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 196.

<sup>115</sup> EMD to “Darling Kids,” April 13, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 106-107.

His notes about his inspection of the U.S. legation in Ankara impart a sense of his thoroughness. He observed that “ours is terribly crowded,” that smaller countries had better quarters. Although he characterized morale as “decent,” he noted a problem with internal theft. He jotted down these recommendations: “Must develop face here with better facilities”; “Automatic promotions—not fair to men in service”; “Filing archaic—should be mechanized”; employees on leave should have free air transport as the military does; the State Department should consider a PX program; and the department should request funds for home leaves.<sup>116</sup> Dirksen’s post-trip recommendations to President Truman and to Congress would reflect these findings.

Of his meeting with the FEA, he noted the difficulty caused by irregular bidding practices, by apparently arbitrary decisions about allocating economic aid, and by Britain’s problematic administration of lend-lease.<sup>117</sup> The congressman also took special note of the Office of War Information. The OWI, he recorded, placed about 25 percent of the news material and 80 percent of the photos used by the Turkish press. What a splendid way to get the American message across, he thought. Dirksen would later urge a much more vigorous use of OWI tactics to improve the United States’s standing in the post-war world.<sup>118</sup>

Dirksen’s letters home generally dealt with the weather, his meals, and the local culture. Excerpts from his letter of April 13<sup>th</sup> are typical:

Ankara is divided into old Ankara which is just an old Oriental town and new Ankara where the Government buildings, legations etc. are located. The town was built by Kemal Ataturk, dynamic Turk who died some years ago.<sup>119</sup> The buildings were all built by German engineers and are quite “boxy”—if you know what I mean.

Tomorrow we go to Istanbul by train and will then return here and charter the plane for Cairo on Friday. First thing I shall do is to go into hiding and read all your letters. What a day that will be for me!

The weather is quite agreeable—like spring. Had my first bath this morning in about six days. Bath water is really at a premium.

Prices here are terrific. A drink of Scotch costs \$2.50. A bar of soap costs \$1.00. A very short jaunt in a taxi costs \$2.00. Such are the evils of inflation and you can imagine what a hard time the

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<sup>116</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 170-172.

<sup>117</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 177-179.

<sup>118</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 170-172.

<sup>119</sup> Ataturk was the founder of the independent Republic of Turkey and its first president.

legation clerks have in making both ends meet when they have to shop locally for items ... .

Made some inquiries about silk stockings and learned that they are of reasonably good quality and about \$2.00 a pair. Bought a few pairs in Damascus but thought I better purchase a few extra pairs. Rather odd that everything is so outrageously high but that silk hose should be reasonably priced.

It's about bedtime. I should take a walk around the block and stretch my legs and then turn in. So here's a good night kiss and a great big hug and all my love."<sup>120</sup>

On Saturday, Dirksen attended the memorial service for President Roosevelt in Ankara. Strangely, to Dirksen's way of thinking, an official of the YMCA delivered the eulogy.<sup>121</sup> After building to the climax, the eulogist said, "We honor the great humanitarian beloved by people throughout the world; that great speaker whose voice brought such singular comfort to all who heard him; that great chief of a great land, Theodore." The place fell silent. The speaker flushed with embarrassment before correcting himself. As Dirksen recalled more than forty years later: "I have encountered a great many incidents that might be called life's most embarrassing moment but this is still at the top of my list."<sup>122</sup>



Dirksen leaves the Crimean Memorial Church after services for Franklin Roosevelt, April 16, 1945.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/4/16-1

At 6:00 p.m., Saturday evening, Dirksen embarked on a 16-hour train trip to Istanbul, a distance of only 250 miles. He checked in at the Park Hotel, relishing

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<sup>120</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 106-107; EMD to "Darling Kids," April 13, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters. A dollar in 1945 was worth \$18.30 in 2019 using the Consumer Price Index as the measure.

<sup>121</sup> There were no Protestant churches or clergy in Ankara.

<sup>122</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 196.



the “chance to meditate and catch up.”<sup>123</sup> As he wrote to Louella, “If I have any fault to find, it is that people do not understand that every so often, I must be alone. There is such a thing as seeing too much of people but very few seem to understand it. Nor do I want to be rude and so I have [a] bit of a time being away from everybody. It’s the one way that I can be with you today and to know how precious we considered the Sundays.” Not one to shirk his work, however, Dirksen promised to “start blocking out the kind of report I want to make when I get home. Seeing other people and particularly the conditions in other countries does enlarge the horizon and give one a sense of responsibility which we really carry in this world.”<sup>124</sup>

In that letter, he also reflected on the new administration in Washington: “Wonder what changes Truman will make if any. After all, he has a mind of his own and his circle of friends are [sic] somewhat different from that of the President. Presume Pa. Avenue was jam-packed for the ceremony when the body was returned to Washington. Say what they will, it’s amazing how highly the ordinary person in this section of the world thought about him.”<sup>125</sup>

Upon his arrival in Istanbul, Dirksen and Commander Young were met by “quite a delegation” from the Consulate, the Office of War Information, the Office of Strategic Services, the Foreign Economic Administration, and the military attaché. Monday saw a repeat of the familiar pattern—meetings and inspections with the myriad war-time civilian and military agencies. From these conversations Dirksen gleaned a need to strengthen State Department representation in light of the civil turmoil in Turkey. Dirksen came to believe, too, based largely on advice from the Office of War Information, rapidly becoming Dirksen’s favorite agency, that the British and Americans needed to counterbalance the Russians in the region. But in the bargain, he cautioned the U.S. must be careful not to allow the Brits to monopolize the oil industry.<sup>126</sup>

Here is a sampling of Dirksen’s impressions of the Turkish situation:

This is one of the key spots of the world and as time goes on, it will loom larger and larger in the international picture.<sup>127</sup>

Here as elsewhere prices are outrageous. Yesterday I saw a shop where glassware is sold and went in to price an ordinary water glass. It was \$1.65. Such are the ravages of war ...<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 177-179.

<sup>124</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 15, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 107.

<sup>125</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 15, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>126</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 182-184.

<sup>127</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 107; EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 15, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>128</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 107; EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 15, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

[It is] time to be firm and to impose ourselves on world picture—believe real Soviet fear is from Britain and that we must give both a push to get the world picture hung straight.<sup>129</sup>

Hostility to outside cap[ital] because of earlier exploit[ation] by Br[itish] and Fr[ench].<sup>130</sup>

Inhibition on exporting profits kills business and deters enterprise.<sup>131</sup>

The congressman related a troubling conversation with sixteen American prisoners of war who recounted the rape of a twelve-year-old girl and the pillaging of a farm by Soviet soldiers. They refused to share food captured from the Germans with the Americans who “had to be content with sour and black bread.” The POWs said that twelve Russians had committed suicide rather than return to the Soviet Union.<sup>132</sup>

Dirksen took time to reflect more philosophically, too. After visiting Jericho and the Dead Sea, he wrote the following:

Asked guide about Mt. Nebo. Looked long time and meditated—place where Moses looked down on the promised land after leading children of Israel for 40 years. He saw Jordan Valley, Judea and lush places. Lord speaks—I have caused thee to see it with thine own eyes but thou shalt not go over thither.

FDR—saw victory with own eyes but was not to taste it; saw a secure world but was not to experience it.

Irony of destiny—Ataturk failed to finish his task of bldg. [building] a new Turkey. Wilson saw a better world but was not to experience it.<sup>133</sup>

More mundane episodes made their mark on the Illinois congressman as well. In his memoir, Dirksen wrote about a cocktail party in his honor hosted by the Turkish cabinet and parliament. “When I was advised of the fact, I was quite astonished because I had never realized that the cocktail hour had caught up with Turkish society or that Turks by and large were given to the use of alcohol.” Dirksen noticed the presence of three or four cartoonists and asked why they were so busy sketching him. He learned that there were eight daily newspapers in Ankara, and that cartoonists provided the art for them. In a bit of foreshadowing,

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<sup>129</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 177-179.

<sup>130</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 185.

<sup>131</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 185.

<sup>132</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 181-182.

<sup>133</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 177-179.

Dirksen wrote, “I did not appreciate at the moment what a useful service those cartoonists were going to render ... .”<sup>134</sup>

Now, as the trip neared its end, Dirksen puzzled more frequently over post-war challenges—his trip log reflected the change in emphasis. In the case of Turkey, he saw threats from internal economic instability, the prevalence of graft and corruption, and the nation’s reluctance to accept capitalism and reasonable trade practices. Turkish leaders’ suspicions about the intentions of the European nations and the rivalry between Great Britain and the Soviet Union compounded the problem of post-war planning. Unless those two nations cooperated, Dirksen feared the “Arab world might be communized.”<sup>135</sup> The stakes would be high, he thought, because of Turkey’s strategic location and oil reserves. And the Turkish government seemed ill-equipped for the challenge—“That Parliament is a mere farce.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 196-196.

<sup>135</sup> EMDP, *Notebooks*, f. 68, 188-189.

<sup>136</sup> EMDP, *Notebooks*, f. 68, 188-189.



## TO CAIRO, APRIL 20, 1945

En route to Cairo from Ankara, Dirksen jotted a number, 18,860—the mileage of his 61-day trip thus far.<sup>137</sup> He admitted to homesickness. This leg of the journey had begun on a sour note when Turkish customs officials insisted on searching the congressman's luggage:

Finally I turned to the consul general and said, "Tell them to stop. I'm on a diplomatic passport."

His answer was, "I can't. I've only been here a little while and I know only a few words in Turkish." My ire was rising, and then I happened to think of the newspapers in my pocket. I took one out in which the cartoon appeared on the front page and spread it out where the customs officials could see it and could also read the text. They looked at each other and without more ado closed my bags, bowed from the waist, and muttered something which could have been an apology. It all helped me to realize the value of visual aid in communication when no common language is found.<sup>138</sup>

In Cairo, Dirksen visited the usual agencies: the Office of War Information ("excellent operations"), the Office of Strategic Services, the canteen, the commissary, and the legation—"Saw everything they had."<sup>139</sup> This time, however, he discovered an agency that would become a target of his criticism in his post-trip speeches and reports: the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).<sup>140</sup> More than four hundred staffed UNRRA's Cairo office "doing nothing" in Dirksen's account except creating trouble for the Army.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 190-191.

<sup>138</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 198. See also EMD to "Honey Puddin'," April 23, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>139</sup> EMD to "Honey Puddin's," April 22, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 192.

<sup>140</sup> The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) was created at a 44-nation conference at the White House on November 9, 1943. Its mission was to provide economic assistance to European nations after World War II and to repatriate and assist the refugees who would come under Allied control. The U.S. government funded close to half of UNRRA's budget. The organization was subject to the authority of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) in Europe and was directed by three Americans during the four years of its existence. Its first director-general was Herbert Lehman, former governor of New

He visited all the sights: the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and the Nile.<sup>142</sup> He also met the prime minister and had tea “with a couple of Princes.”<sup>143</sup> Dirksen left Cairo concerned about the gap between rich and poor (“The squalled sections—such wretchedness”), the population pressure, the lack of productivity in the economy, the lack of education, the strategic importance of the Suez Canal, and that “children [are] treated like donkeys.”<sup>144</sup>



Dirksen meets with the U.S. minister to Egypt and the Egyptian prime minister. Dirksen aide John Young is at upper right. Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/4/25-5

A conversation with Abdul Rahman Azzam Bey, former minister of social affairs, made a particularly strong impression. The minister stressed Egypt’s desire for freedom and openly criticized British influence, complaining that Egypt lost half its freedom by the 1936 treaty governing the Suez Canal. The two discussed Egypt’s neutrality during the war and the formation of the Arab League, which the minister hoped would become an instrument of freedom. Egypt’s fragile economy came under review, too. Among Dirksen’s conclusions were these: huge British pound balances had piled up while living scales deteriorated; efforts to start a textile industry had been stopped by the refusal to purchase the necessary machinery; and despite the desire to trade with the United States, Egypt only had \$30,000,000 available. Dirksen anticipated a battle between Egypt’s desire for freedom and European-sponsored imperialism—he wondered how the United States would react.<sup>145</sup>

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York. See <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?ModuleId=10005685>, accessed March 31, 2008.

<sup>141</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 192-193; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 201.

<sup>142</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 194-195.

<sup>143</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 196-199.

<sup>144</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 194-195.

It was in Egypt that Dirksen first learned of Germany's genocide against the Jews. As he wrote his "Honey Puddin's" from Cairo's Shepherd's Hotel, "just read about those [sic] atrocious killing of slave laborers in German. It's an awful thing. Hope this butchery will end soon."<sup>146</sup> Although not part of his original itinerary, Dirksen would see with his own eyes the horror of the Holocaust soon enough.

Mindful of the political benefits of his trip for local politics, Dirksen asked his wife to contact George Chiamas, a prominent Greek in central Illinois, to let him know that his congressman was bound for Greece. He also asked her to alert a community leader of Lebanese descent that Dirksen had traveled extensively in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>147</sup> But of Cairo he wrote, "it's not nearly as fascinating as the movies, the romantic fiction and the imaginative authors would have one believe. I'll take Chicago, St. Louis or some other city in the same population class."<sup>148</sup>

Dirksen's was about to leave the Middle East after weeks of arduous travel and seemingly endless meetings. What did he make of the region after this education by immersion?

A few of his observations seem quaint. He admitted to Louella, for example, that "I have developed some pretty fixed notions about the marriage of U.S. men to foreign girls, especially when they're in a service which means a good deal to our own country." He provided no details: "Shall tell you more about that later."<sup>149</sup>

Fortunately, we have his cryptic notes that yield clues into his thinking and illustrate the broader themes he would pursue years after the trip's conclusion.

At the foundation, Dirksen wondered how the region would accept "western political ideas" in light of its "culture or lack of it." He worried about the absence of a middle class, about civil "ferment" and "undercurrents of feelings." He heard from scores of foreign leaders who questioned U.S. intentions after the war. He understood that peoples in the Far and Middle East held "different aspirations from ours," aspirations "grounded in [the] deep past." He appreciated that "They think our units of value are distorted. They do not want what we crave." Lacking any concept of a capitalistic economy, "these people have no sense of credit or [the] obligations of cr[edit]." His notes also conveyed this simple sentiment: "WHAT WE MUST DO—stop manipulating the forces in other countries and give free expression a chance."<sup>150</sup> Or as he put it more succinctly under the heading "Observations," "You have to 'Make Freedom Ring.'"<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 194-195.

<sup>146</sup> EMD to "Honey Puddin's," April 22, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>147</sup> EMD to "Honey Puddin's," April 22, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>148</sup> EMD to "Honey Kids," April 26, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>149</sup> EMD to "Honey Kids," April 26, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>150</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 3 and 26-27.

<sup>151</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 68, 196.

With only limited time to mull over these thoughts, Dirksen prepared for the second-to-last leg of his overseas marathon.



## TO GREECE AND ITALY, APRIL 26, 1945

On Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, Dirksen flew from Cairo to Athens, a five-hour trip that put Dirksen on the ground at 11:00 a.m. He was met by a Major McPherson and a lieutenant colonel who took him to the Grand Betague, a hotel once used as the Nazi headquarters in Greece.<sup>152</sup>

To illustrate the hyper-inflation that plagued virtually all the countries Dirksen had visited, he recounted this story:

When I arrived at the airport in Athens, a colonel in the Greek army, representing the prime minister, came to meet me and as we prepared to load the bags and start for the hotel, he tendered a package which was done up in multicolored ribbon. As he handed it to me he said, “accept this with the compliments of the prime minister.” I felt the package and could not guess what was in it. He noticed the puzzled look on my face and then said, “it’s a million drachma for spending money.” I could scarcely believe my ears. I said, “I’m rich.”

The colonel smiled and to put me at ease said, “You might be able to buy one good shirt in an Athens department store with that million drachma.” My dream of riches was quickly dissipated.<sup>153</sup>

Friday’s schedule looked like this:

10:00 UNRRA  
11:00 U.S. Embassy  
11:30 His Beatitude Arch. Damaskmos—quite a discussion of need for moral values in finding solutions—kind face and eyes  
1:00 Lunch at the Yacht Club  
3:00 Tour of historic sites—“amazing what force can move a revolution.”  
7:00 Dinner with Col. McPherson (steak)

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<sup>152</sup> EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 202-203.

<sup>153</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 198.



9:30 USO—good troupe and good entertainment—hard work—  
circumspect conduct.<sup>154</sup>

In his stroll through the city, Dirksen characterized the people as “cheerful, poorly dressed, diligent, no emaciation, seem well nourished.”<sup>155</sup> But Dirksen quickly noticed the potential for civil unrest. His discussions with the OSS staff, for example, centered on the actions of the Greek People’s Liberation Army (ELAS), the military arm of the left-wing National Liberation Front (EAM) during the period of the Greek Resistance. As Dirksen saw it, the civil war which had broken out in December 1944 was far worse than most people appreciated: “The loss of life and the destruction of property was [sic] enormous. It was so obviously a Communist effort, to sieze [sic] Greece. Nor is it at an end. Probably the presence of British troops is the only deterrent to another outbreak.”<sup>156</sup>

That Greece had been occupied first by the Nazis, then by the Italians and Bulgars, and now by British troops had resulted in what Dirksen called “a sort of Occupation Complex; nor is that very strange considering how many years they’ve been under heel.”<sup>157</sup>

Further, the government, which had fallen before its delegates even reached the United Nations meeting in San Francisco, lacked any authority. The country had held no elections in ten years. Dirksen thought there were simply too many politicians to boot.<sup>158</sup>

The congressman noted in his log that 20,000 hammer and sickle badges had been discovered in the building housing the Greek Communist Party and that the “hammer and sickle [are] painted everywhere.” Soviet money backed the ELAS, he believed. He noted, too, that ELAS had committed atrocities on par with the way Poles in Katyn Forest were executed.<sup>159</sup> Economic dislocation, monetary instability, and the lack of respect for the central government could provide a fertile ground for a communist insurgency, he believed.<sup>160</sup> As he wrote Louella, “People have no confidence in banks or in paper money and the result is that industry is at a standstill. Idle people are a potential danger in the face of the effort being made to communize Greece.”<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 206; EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 28, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>155</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 204-206.

<sup>156</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 30, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 205-207.

<sup>157</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 30, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>158</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 205.

<sup>159</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 207-208. Katyn Forest is a wooded area near Gneizdovo village, a short distance from Smolensk in Russia where, in 1940 on Josef Stalin's orders, the Soviet secret police shot and buried over 4,000 Polish service personnel that had been taken prisoner when the Soviet Union invaded Poland in September 1939. See <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/1791/>, accessed March 31, 2008.

<sup>160</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 204-206.

<sup>161</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 30, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

He also asked Louella to contact his colleague in the House, Les Arends, to ask him to set up an off-the-record briefing for the 228 Republicans in the House and Senate in early June—"I have a story to tell and they must hear it."<sup>162</sup>

On Saturday, April 28, 1945, Benito Mussolini, Italy's Fascist dictator, and his mistress, Clara Petacci, as well as other Fascist leaders, were caught by partisans near Lake Como as they attempted to escape to Switzerland. The fleeing leaders were shot, and their bodies transported to Milan and hung up by the heels in the main square.

Dirksen was scheduled to fly to Rome on the 29<sup>th</sup>, but he contracted dysentery along with a 100-degree fever. A doctor advised bed rest, plenty of water, and no food.<sup>163</sup> On Sunday, the 29<sup>th</sup>, the concentration camp at Dachau was liberated, along with 30,000 surviving inmates, by troops from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. A day later, Adolph Hitler committed suicide.

[34]

ITALY

Col. Ralph C. Tilley at Caserta  
about 20 miles from Naples.  
in A.G. section.

Col. Lynn Ostler, A. G. Section  
near the front.

Col. Bud Porter, In General  
Gruenther's staff office.

Col. Ray Novotny, of 5th Army  
headquarters.

Rome (FEA) Mr. A. G. Antolini,  
Palazzo delle Corporazioni  
Lt.Col. John A. Ricca  
Telephone: 3-96003 or 396091

Casserta. Col. Edward J. F. Glavin,  
Address: The Little Palace  
San Leucio  
Telephone: FREedom, ask for  
FOREcast, which is OSS  
Hq.

Rome Count Sforza--Cuneo  
John A. Linen, III--OWI  
Italy. Robert Herget Lt.AC.

Italy - Gen. Clark (Wheeler)  
Alex. K. (Wheeler)

Typical list of contacts compiled by Dirksen.  
Source: EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 34

<sup>162</sup> EMD to "Sweetie Kids," April 30, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>163</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 209.

On Monday, April 30, Dirksen, sufficiently recovered from his intestinal malady, departed for Italy. The press had reported Mussolini's execution. Dirksen sensed "Peace is in the air. May break any time."<sup>164</sup> After touching down in Naples, Dirksen traveled on to Florence, arriving on May Day 1945. He met with the vice consul, General Mark Clark, and Field Marshal Harold Alexander. Dirksen was encouraged by the military situation but expressed alarm at the "commie processions—hammer & sickle everywhere—red flags."<sup>165</sup> News from the San Francisco negotiations over the formation of the United Nations was of little comfort: "I note that Molotov resisted the admission of the Argentine to the Assembly at San Francisco. We shall have trouble from that quarter."<sup>166</sup>

He also visited the 334<sup>th</sup> POW station where he found "clean efficient operations of the most major kind" using captured German surgeons in the camp's medical facility.<sup>167</sup> A visit to a "disciplinary center where bad soldiers are rehabilitated" made a strong impression on Dirksen. "One of the most interesting operations that I've seen," he wrote home, "and so different from the old theory that a soldier who had fallen from grace was just so much dregs and not worth another chance."<sup>168</sup>



Dirksen at ruins, location unknown.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/0/0-13

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<sup>164</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 210-212.

<sup>165</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 214.

<sup>166</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 108-09; EMD to "Honey Gals," May 2, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>167</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 213-216.

<sup>168</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 108-109; EMD to "Honey Gals," May 2, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

He next visited the military front and Pisa. “Morning paper reports Hitler Dead,” Dirksen exclaimed in his log, although “boys disposed to doubt it. More interested in (1) war’s end (2) Home (3) Exchange (4) Drink of good whiskey.”<sup>169</sup> He saw more evidence of communist influence during his tour, but news of the German surrender in Italy and Austria brightened his mood: “Last night the big news was the complete surrender of the German armies in the Italian theater. Thank God, that much of it is over and no more lives must be sacrificed. I’m satisfied that already the set-up is being made for surrender in Europe. Talked to hundreds of GI’s. They want to come home, not that it’s over in this theater. Don’t blame them.”<sup>170</sup>

On Thursday, May 3, Dirksen left Pisa for Verona, exclaiming about the “GLOW OF VICTORY EVERYWHERE.”<sup>171</sup> As his attention shifted to the post-war situation, Dirksen continued to formulate ideas about the shape of things to come. Under what he termed “IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS,” he wrote three items. Displaced persons headed the list. Dirksen described the number and the nature of the relocation camps with their inadequate food and rampant pillage—all of which gave rise, in his view, to a “feeling of revenge.” The challenge of dealing with prisoners-of-war, many of whom did not want to return to their homes, posed a second set of problems. Finally, the political challenge of dividing Germany worried the congressman. He jotted down a brief list of ideas under the heading, “TIME FOR A POLICY: Fixity of purpose, fairness, firmness, freedom, force.”<sup>172</sup> He would later convert this shorthand into a more rounded proposal dealing with post-war diplomacy for President Truman’s consideration.

From Verona, Dirksen’s itinerary took him to Florence and Caserta where he visited the 5<sup>th</sup> Army headquarters.<sup>173</sup> He then drove to Rome by way of Anzio Beach, Cassino, and Naples.

His log from Caserta carried these notes of a conversation with U.S. Ambassador Alexander Kirk:

1. Make State Department facilities functional.
2. Menace of Russia is in the approach to Russia.
3. Time for firmness with Tito at Trieste or all is lost.<sup>174</sup>

In notes of meetings with other officials, the congressman signaled the importance of combating war profiteers, of getting the troops out quickly, and of supplying raw materials rather than finished goods to jump-start the post-war economy in Italy.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 217-218.

<sup>170</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 108-109; EMD to “Honey Gals,” May 2, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 218.

<sup>171</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 219-221.

<sup>172</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 8-9.

<sup>173</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 34.

<sup>174</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 222-224.

In Rome, which he described as “cold and cheerless,”<sup>176</sup> Dirksen met with the staffs of the embassy, the consulate, the Foreign Economic Administration, the Office of War Information, UNRRA, and the Allied Control Commission. He also visited with the U.S. Ambassador; General Mark Clark and 17 other officers; a hometown boy (Robert Herget<sup>177</sup>); Prince Umberto, the defacto head of the Italian government (“truly a sweet character ... anxious only for healing, peace, contentment for his people”<sup>178</sup>); Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi (“big problems with many [political] parties”<sup>179</sup>); and Foreign Minister Aleide di Gasparis.<sup>180</sup>

And now—hold your breath—a private audience with the Pope at noon. What a saintly, gracious person! It is high adventure and an enriching experience to have met and visited with him. He speaks English quite well. Has lots of questions to ask. It was a 20 minute session and then he gave me 4 rosaries and 3 medals. Also had some photos taken at the Vatican.<sup>181</sup>



Dirksen greeted at the entrance to the Vatican.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/4/30-1

To his log, Dirksen confided that the Pope was a “gracious holy character” who believed there were too many political parties in Italy. His Holiness also “shows

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<sup>175</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 222-224.

<sup>176</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Guys,” May 5, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>177</sup> Daughter Joy had sent EMD Herget’s contact information in a letter dated February 26. See EMDP, Personal Series, f. Family Letters.

<sup>178</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 228.

<sup>179</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 228.

<sup>180</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 34-35; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 227-229; Dirksen, *Education*, 198-199.

<sup>181</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 109; EMD to “Sweetie Guys,” May 5, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters. Curiously, Dirksen did not mention his audience with the Pope in his memoir.

signs of wear and tear.”<sup>182</sup> Dirksen was beginning to show signs of wear and tear, too, as he wrote Louella and Joy, “I’m getting a little too much of people and not enough of solitude. That is to say there are only two guys who I want to see. Guess who?”<sup>183</sup>

Dirksen took from these meetings a heightened concern about the threat posed by the communists. Control of Trieste, a city and port in northeastern Italy that had been occupied by the Germans, but which seemed on the verge of falling into communist hands, loomed as the most immediate challenge. It was, Dirksen wrote, “time for plain talk to Stalin.” He agreed with the Allied Control Commission which favored withholding further economic credits until “we have an understanding” with the Soviet leader. Dirksen noted in his log a “unanimity of feeling on this issue to stop sweep of commies—Danger of Soviet is not Soviet but our approach to the Soviet.”<sup>184</sup> As he confirmed in a letter home, “There have been several demonstrations here in the last day or two over the efforts to [sic] Tito and the Jugo Slavs to take over Trieste. That infuriates the Italians. The Communist picture is not too encouraging either.”<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 226.

<sup>183</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 109; EMD to “Sweetie Guys,” May 5, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>184</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 225-226.

<sup>185</sup> Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 109; EMD to “Sweetie Guys,” May 5, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.



## TO PARIS, MAY 7, 1945

At 3:30 p. m., Monday, May 7, the pilot of Dirksen's flight from Rome to Paris "brought the message that in 2 or 3 hours the war would be over." Dirksen's log entry at 4:00 read "flash—Germans have unconditionally surrendered, (Thank God)."<sup>186</sup>

On Tuesday, Dirksen penned the following letter:

As this is written, I'm sitting in a sitting room on the second floor of the Hotel Ritz. It looks out upon the Place de la Concorde. In the center of this square is the statue of Napoleon, made of captured cannon. People are streaming through the place. Most of them are moving down to the Champs Elysees. It's the wide boulevard where the Arc de Triomphe is located.

Ever since last evening when we arrived from Rome, people young and old, have been seeking to cast off restraint. They want to slough off the fatigue and weariness of nearly 5 years of conflict. They've wanted to go on an emotional binge. One could discern the fever rise. Today it burst the bounds as news was officially proclaimed over the radio.

Planes zoomed over the Arc de Triomphe. Flags are everywhere. Youngsters are parading. The bells proclaimed the glad fact of an armistice in this theater. Trucks and jeeps filled with youngsters traveled everywhere. The city is filled with soldiers. Traffic is in a snarl. The spirit has been unleashed.

I presume it was much the same at home, and rightly so.

I had an experience of my own. At 2:30 we drove to Versailles where the treaty of 1919 was signed. The celebrated hall was closed. I talked to the guard and told him who I was. He had but one arm. He lost the other in the battle of the Somme in the last war. We shook hands and I pointed to my Legion button. So he

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<sup>186</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 231.



escorted us to the Hall of Mirrors where Wilson, Orlando, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and the German representatives signed the treaty which officially concluded the last war.

The Hall is magnificent. The murals depicting the triumph of French arms over the centuries are superb. Rotten as the Bourbons were, they had imagination and left a legacy to other generations.

At 3:00 o'clock [10:00 a.m. Eastern time] I stood where Wilson stood. Outside a gun on a Yank tank began a salute to victory. The bells tolled noisily. Joyfully, a crowd of people several blocks distant sang the Marseillaise. The spirit of victory was in the air; it was everywhere—in hearts, and minds and faces of people. It was over, in part, a load had been lifted ... .

How ironical it all seems. I saw our troops in the stinking heat of India and the mud of Italy. I've seen them in the bleak stretches of North Africa and in the desert wastes of Iraq. I've visited with 5000 of them if I've talked to one. Magnificent soldiers they are, asking little and giving much. I've seen them in the hospitals—legless, armless, sightless—the grim human wreckage [sic], washed up by the waves of conflict. They conjure up a vision of the millions upon millions of men, women, and children—civilian and military who are the casualties of this struggle, and as I see them marching along in grim, ghostly columns, I think of where I stood this day and what a miserable job this generation has made of a peace that all hoped would endure.

After Dirksen recounted the devastation he had seen, he continued:

And as I meditated upon this indescribable destruction and misery, I saw Wilson again at Versailles, in company with Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando and the rest. What a failure it has been; here are the bells and guns of another victory to prove the failure of a generation ago when I was in uniform and served in this very same land against the same enemy.

Will we succeed this time in building a structure of peace that shall have full and fair opportunity to endure? I wonder. I've seen some things, Mumsie, that are disturbing. Already I see Freedom being mocked and leached away in certain places. I see the vigorous propagation of certain ideologies which imperil the very thing for which young Yanks have died. I see the selfish grasping for power, the economic advantage which can only weaken and then destroy that sense of fairness and that faith which is so requisite to a well-ordered and contented world.



In any event, I believe I see more clearly than ever before what is needed—and needed now—if we are to sterilize the seed of World War III.

Will go to Germany while I'm here and then come home. I'm getting closer and closer. It won't be too long now and then we shall have a celebration of our own—that of sweet reunion. Love.<sup>187</sup>

Dirksen decided to attend the victory service held at the cathedral in Rheims. At 1:41 p.m., German military representatives General Alfred Jodl and Hans-Georg von Friedeburg signed the unconditional surrender to General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Dirksen was able to meet with General Bedell Smith after the ceremony. Smith offered to give Dirksen a German pistol as a memento, something other congressmen had requested. Dirksen didn't want the Luger but asked for the short ceremonial sword taken from a German officer that lay on Smith's desk. He got it.<sup>188</sup>

Dirksen's log for the next day, Wednesday, May 9, read as follows:

Seven o'clock. Have quiet now. The spirit is spent. There is a sound of exploding shells. Excess ammunition perhaps. C-47s roar overhead. Generals, no doubt about the business of coping with new problems. Napoleon looks so lonely atop the column made from captured canon. Pigeons and birds flutter. Sky is over-cast. Soldiers and officers, WACs & civilians amble across the place, a few jeeps are parked. Two GI's sleep in an open car, spent by the celebration. After 5 years, 8 months and 8 days the carnage of the ETO [European Theater of Operations] has ended. It's a puzzled world. Now what and for how long?"<sup>189</sup>

At 10:00 that morning, Dirksen continued his round of meetings. They focused on military supply issues caused by the French, displaced persons, "Prisoners of Victory" (so-called because they might be killed if they returned to their home nations), and UNRRA's deficiencies. The day ended with a drink in Harry's Bar and dinner at 8:00 at the Ritz.<sup>190</sup>

As his time in Paris neared an end, Dirksen was beginning to grasp the challenge of rebuilding Europe. His log mentioned the problem of feeding prisoners-of-war, of screening POWs for work, and of housing in Germany. During the VE parade,

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<sup>187</sup> EMD to "Honey Kids," May 8, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 109-11; Dirksen, *Education*, 199-200; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 232-234.

<sup>188</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 199-200.

<sup>189</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 235.

<sup>190</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 236.

he noticed that French civilians used the communist salute when they passed the reviewing stand. Of the nation itself, Dirksen proclaimed, “There is no France—merely political parties struggling for power.” He resented both what he called the “whispering campaign” against the United States and the radio broadcasts that gave credit for saving France to “the left-wing Patriots” instead of the U.S.<sup>191</sup>

Desperately tired of traveling, Dirksen consulted with his aide, Commander Young, and told him they would make a brief stop in London and then board the *Queen Mary* to return to the States. Curiously, Dirksen, in his memoir, wrote that this was what happened.<sup>192</sup> Yet his trip logs tell a different tale.

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<sup>191</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 237-240.

<sup>192</sup> Dirksen, *Education*, 200.



## TO GERMANY, MAY 11, 1945

At 9:00 a.m. on Friday, May 11, Dirksen left Paris for Germany, not London. The route took him to the cemeteries at Verdun; to Mannheim, “not a building untouched”; to Ludwigshafen, site of Farben Industries; and to Heidelberg, “untouched and lovely.” In Heidelberg, Dirksen met at G-5 military headquarters to discuss food supplies (generally good), the health of the people (“no emaciation”), transport (“real problem” though barges were saved), manpower (badly needed for farms and rebuilding), coal (“mines in good shape but need labor”), hydro (“fair—US trading stock”), and housing (“real problem”). The area controlled by the 6<sup>th</sup> Army contained more than 600,000 displaced persons, and many, especially the Polish Jews who feared the Soviets, did not want to go home. The 115,000 French were already on their way home, at the rate of 3,000 per day.<sup>193</sup>



Dirksen in front of the Munich beer hall where Adolph Hitler made his first political speech.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/5/12-18

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<sup>193</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 241-243.

Saturday morning, Lt. General Alexander M. Patch, Commander of the U.S. Seventh Army, escorted Dirksen to Munich. "It's a ghost town," Dirksen wrote in a letter home. "It's impossible to describe a city of 800,000, completely destroyed."<sup>194</sup> The post-war challenges appeared clear to Dirksen. The Munich area contained 80,000 displaced persons, 10,000 Russian POWS, a 25-day food supply, tension between Poles and Russians, "mass rape by French in Stuttgart", and the immediate need for manpower on the land. "Seed of WWII is being sown," Dirksen wrote.<sup>195</sup>

Then to Dachau. "It's indescribable," Dirksen wrote. "At a cross road is a fancy sign reading 'Konzentrationslager' and shortly you are there. First, a typhus shot and louse powder. At first, the place desirous. It looks not unlike a stone barracks. Then for a tour." His notes continue:

The crematory which burns coal. While looking, 5 bodies came. What pitiable wrecks. Death rate is still 80 per day.

The charnal [sic] house where they showered and where gas was turned on. Peephole.

The delousing chamber where in one minute all vermin were killed. It was a preliminary. For those who were suspected, there were the dogs.

The hospital—what wrecks—cannot take food.

The barracks—the Soc. Democrat from Austria—the Polish Priest who is now a guide—we visit—30,000 here—15,000 in a sub-camp where Typhus has broken out—788 Polish priests died in camp.

The sign—"The Way To Freedom is Thru Obedience, Honor, Cleanliness, Sobriety and Diligence"

The stockade—striped suits—numbers—designation as to type (P for political)—the bunks—horrible overcrowding—indescribable

The cars of dead—were being transferred from Buchenwald to Dachau—3 day trip—3 day rations—bombers destroyed rails—train had to be re-routed—took 20 days—arrived dead—many in gondolas but too weak to get out."<sup>196</sup>

Dirksen was equally graphic in his letter to Louella later that evening:

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<sup>194</sup> EMD to "Darling Kids," May 12, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>195</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 244-245.

<sup>196</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 246-247.

It's quite impossible to describe—the charnal [sic] house where these human wrecks were first gassed to death; the crematory where they were burned and the rest of it. While inspecting the crematory, a truck arrived with more dead, broken bodies. It was a revolting thing.



Dirksen in front of the Munich beer hall where Adolph Hitler made his first political speech.  
Source: EMDP, Photographs, 45/5/12-18

There are still 32,000 persons in the camp. They are slave laborers from everywhere—Poland, Russia, Austria, the Balkans. They cannot be released until some disposition can be made of them. The hospital wards are filled with wrecks of people. One marvels how long the spark of life continues to flicker in such wasted bodies. The whole thing recalls Ingersoll's expression of "man's inhumanity to man."

As I contemplate the destruction of these great cities—the utter desolation of bridges, railroads, homes, business buildings and what not, I have a feeling that European civilization is done. The whole condition is now ideal for the engulfment by Asiatic communism.

Not a happy thing to write on Mother's Day. Wish I could send you a cable today but it's difficult from here. But if I could, I would say "I love you."<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters; Dirksen, *Mr. Marigold*, 111-112. This is the last letter

He included in this last letter home from his long sojourn abroad a copy of Carl Sandburg's poem:

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo,  
Shovel them under and let me work—  
    I am grass; I cover all.  
And pile them high at Gettysburg  
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.  
Shovel them under and let me work.  
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:  
    What place is this?  
    Where are we now?  
I am the grass.  
Let me work.<sup>198</sup>

From May 13 until his departure for the United States on May 19, Dirksen traveled on a whirlwind tour of war-torn western Europe. The list of towns visited is staggering: Augsburg-Wurzburg-Kassel-Gottingen-Bad Wildungen-Weisbadeneisbaden-Mainz-Frankfurt-Nuremberg-Regensburg-Linz (Austria)-Erlangen-Regensburg-Weimar-Leipzig-Leipzig-Nordhausen-Brunswick-Hanover-Hanover-Munster-Ruhr Cities-Aachen. Although his log lacks the detail of his earlier entries, Dirksen's inspections focused on displaced persons, V-2 rocket factories, and housing. He briefly visited the Russian front and, in contrast to earlier impressions, came away with a relatively positive view. Russia "operates as an effective society—our ally—must work with Russia after the war," he noted, saluting the Russian people who "are devoted to their cause" and singling out a local communist leader as one who "gets results."<sup>199</sup>

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included in Louella's book. Everett Dirksen's personal correspondence files include no additional letters related to the trip.

<sup>198</sup> EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

<sup>199</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 6-7. This is the last entry in the trip log.



## RETURN TO THE STATES, MAY 19, 1945

On Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, Dirksen left Paris for the long trip home, landing in Preswick, Newfoundland, and New York before reaching Washington, D.C. on May 21<sup>st</sup>. He made no entries in his log during these few days, nor did he travel on the *Queen Mary* as his memoir states. His return was well covered by the national press,<sup>200</sup> but Dirksen was uncharacteristically mum about his findings—he preferred to collect his thoughts and deliver them in orchestrated fashion.

Dirksen immediately set to work preparing his reports to Congress, the president, and his constituents. He compiled a set of recommendations regarding trade issues, for example, and a second set dealing with State Department facilities. The congressman also listed more than a dozen ideas for possible articles in the press.<sup>201</sup>

What he called “Trade Notes” ranged widely over such topics as the sterling bloc to business communications to the exchange rate. Dirksen recognized the pent-up demand for goods of all kinds and believed that foreign nations “have a definite preference for U.S. goods and are willing to pay premium prices.” It was obvious to Dirksen “that Britain cannot produce and deliver the goods they want,” but U.S. trade was hampered by the exchange problem: “Here is the rock on which we founder.” Exchange required the trading of goods and services, but what would we buy from the war-torn nations, Dirksen wondered. His notes indicate how much he puzzled over the exchange issue.<sup>202</sup>

Other factors stood in the way of trade, as well. For example, applications by U.S. businesses to do projects in the Mediterranean took four months to complete because of delivery issues. The British were able to complete such transactions in three weeks. Dirksen proposed two recommendations: the U.S. develop “something comparable to air graph” to speed the process and that businessmen be able to use the government’s “commercial pouch” to streamline communications. Finally, Dirksen believed the U.S. would benefit by establishing what he called an Economic OSS, or Economic Office of Strategic Services, that “combined military and economic functions.”<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 22-24.

<sup>201</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 250-258.

<sup>202</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 250-253.

<sup>203</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 250-253.

Dirksen also prepared extensive notes on State Department facilities abroad. The common thread: how poorly the U.S. was represented by the disrepair of its buildings. Much less powerful nations presented a better face. Of the facilities in Karachi, for example, Dirksen wrote: “antiquated place—plumbing bad—water supply bad.” Of Calcutta: “Myers has no home ... Offices dark, scattered, badly arranged.” Of Teheran: “consulate in old stable—rain made roof cave in—pathetic—British have immense place—Soviet a thing of splendor.” Of Baghdad: “too far out—crowded—understaffed—kitchen equipment bad—needs air conditioning—lease expires in 1947—rooms unfurnished.” And the list went on to include more than a dozen cities.<sup>204</sup>

The congressman took note of personnel issues, too. Of the station in Calcutta, he wrote, “Myers has no home—wife in states—difficulty of getting housing for staff.” After visiting Beirut, Dirksen penned this entry: “Seems to be a \$100 rule with respect to expenditure on rented property. Impossible in countries with so much inflation.” Other entries dealt with inadequate home leave, lack of purchasing power, high prices on the black market, insufficient merit pay adjustments, and nonsensical automatic promotions.<sup>205</sup>

In Dirksen’s fertile imagination, he planned to write human interest stories about the Congress at Delhi, the Hindustan Aircraft Corporation at Bangalore, his lunch in a stockade, the ice cream and Coca Cola factory he had discovered in the middle of the desert, his visit to Mount Nebo, and “The Dance at Teheran—chases away nostalgia,” among other topics.<sup>206</sup>

Of more substance were his conclusions about the “geography of peace” in the Middle East. “[W]hoever controls rimland rules Eurasia, and whoever rules Eurasia rules the world,” he surmised. The rimland embraced European coastal lands, the Arabian and Middle East desert, and the Asiatic monsoon lands. All were “Accessible to sea power—power equilibrium necessary to security and security is necessary to peace. Who controls the rimlands is important to US security. That was the Q[uestion] in World War I and also WWII.”<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 256-258.

<sup>205</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 256-258.

<sup>206</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 254-255.

<sup>207</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 254-255.





## MEETING WITH PRESIDENT TRUMAN

At Noon on Friday, May 25, 1945, Congressman Everett Dirksen met with President Harry Truman for thirty minutes in the Oval Office of the White House. According to an outline in Dirksen's papers,<sup>208</sup> the congressman inquired about the transition following Roosevelt's death, conveyed the highlights of the trip, and addressed several specific topics. Truman asked Dirksen to follow up with a written report.<sup>209</sup>

Drew Pearson, writing for his column, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round," nearly a month later recreated some of the Oval Office exchanges. "Why don't you get a \$100,000,000 appropriation for the state department," Pearson attributed to Dirksen, "and build up a system of American diplomacy strong enough to represent this country? That's the first step in winning the peace after the war. We've got to hire good diplomats and give them the means of support. I am for economy," Dirksen went on. "In fact, I have opposed a lot of spending on the part of the Roosevelt administration. But I consider a strong state department to be one of the best investments this nation can make." According to the columnist, Truman replied that he would give these ideas a great deal of thought.<sup>210</sup>

For his part, Dirksen followed up his conversation with the president on June 4<sup>th</sup>, submitting a six-page, single-spaced memorandum containing both his observations and recommendations.<sup>211</sup> The congressman organized the report into one section each on military matters and on civilian functions before concluding with a total of ten recommendations.

In the section on military affairs, Dirksen wrote of the GI, "his conduct, good humor, and achievements have been superb." He was equally complimentary of the officer corps: "From the standpoint of the good will and cordial relationships which they have maintained with other peoples, they have achieved splendid results." He sang the praises of salvage operations, of the medical corps, of hospital services, of the WACs, of the rehabilitation of "wayward soldiers," and of the canteens and PXs. The air transport command, which ferried Dirksen throughout the trip, "has girdled the earth and maintains an operation which

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<sup>208</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 14-15.

<sup>209</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>210</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, p. 7, *Pekin Times*, June 20, 1945.

<sup>211</sup> Schapsmeier and Schapsmeier, 42-43.

compares with that of the most efficient civilian air transport line.” Dirksen even commented on the food, which he told the president “has been in good supply and well prepared. Complaints and gripes are usually like those of the GI who wrote his mother saying, ‘Dear Mom, the food is lousy and besides there ain’t enough of it.’”<sup>212</sup>

Dirksen’s recommendations for military operations dealt with fixing an exchange rate that “is all out of proportion to the purchase value of foreign money.” He told the president that mail service “should be expedited if possible in the interest of morale.” The orientation program designed to ease the transition to civilian life ought to end: “Officers and men alike regard the idea as a grand laugh. American officers and American GI’s have not forgotten their responsibility and sense of decorum in a free society and require no indoctrination from the ideological experts who have been sent abroad to study this matter.”<sup>213</sup>

With one exception, Dirksen delivered positive evaluations of the nation’s civilian agencies abroad. The Office of War Information “has capable personnel in the foreign field and has performed an excellent service,” Dirksen concluded. The Foreign Economic Administration “is well administered and is served by trained, capable personnel.” The Office of Strategic Services “seems to have carried out its mission to the satisfaction of the military commanders with whom I discussed the functions and accomplishments of this agency.”<sup>214</sup>

State Department personnel, he reported, “appeared capable and intelligent, however, they lack proficiency in foreign languages.” The department’s facilities, on the other hand, “are generally inadequate and do not comport with the prestige, dignity and importance of the United States in world affairs.” He urged the president to improve housing, increase the representation allowance, and restore funding for the home leave program.<sup>215</sup>

As Drew Pearson reported, Dirksen recommended a long-range building program of \$100,000,000 to construct “facilities which are commensurate with the dignity and prestige of this country.” In addition, he believed the government should own and provide housing and furnishings. Further, “Foreign service personnel MUST be brought back at reasonable intervals for reacquaintance with the traditions and policies of their own country.” Dirksen supported a language bonus of \$500 for proficiency and the adjustment of salary scales in light of impaired foreign exchange rates. He would enlarge the State Department’s portfolio, too, by transferring to it the functions of the Office of War Information after the war: “The time has arrived for us to know other nations better and for other nations to know us better.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>213</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>214</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>215</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>216</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

To the contrary, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration “has been generally disappointing” based on Dirksen’s examination of personnel and operations in Egypt, Greece, and Italy. Among the agency’s specific faults, Dirksen identified poor personnel selection, subpar performance in the field, “hit and miss” training, faulty food distribution, an undue emphasis on publicity of its own efforts, lapses in relations with the U.S. military and with native authorities, overstaffing, and a “deplorable” accounting system. Suffice it to say that Dirksen urged a top-to-bottom re-examination of UNRRA.<sup>217</sup>

The president and the congressman had discussed lend-lease in their Oval Office meeting, too. “Even as Lend-Lease was a weapon of victory,” Dirksen wrote, “so it must be made a weapon of Freedom.” If continued in post-war world, “it should be judiciously used on a quid-pro-quo basis as an instrument for the establishment of real freedom in those areas where freedom does not in fact exist.”<sup>218</sup>

Dirksen continued with recommendations related to what he called “Raw Materials and Services.” Observations in Greece, Italy, France, and Germany inspired his conviction that the real problem in those areas was the lack of transport, fuel, electrical energy, and raw material. He repeated a familiar theme: “Idle hands and idle minds can be dangerous in the post-war period.”<sup>219</sup>

Near the end of the memo, Dirksen included a couple of miscellaneous suggestions. First, he favored standardizing immigration policies and practices with an international agreement. More interestingly, he made the case for American movies as a propaganda tool:

American motion pictures are preferred in every part of the world. Their effect on public thinking is unbelievable. Naïve and untutored minds are apt to believe that they truly represent America and its people. Gangster pictures, pictures on juvenile delinquency, etc. leave the impression that America is like that. Incalculable harm can be done. An effort should be made to portray to the people of other countries the real America and this matter should be brought to the attention of motion picture producers without delay.<sup>220</sup>

At long last, Dirksen neared the end of his memo to Truman. “At the risk of being presumptuous,” he wrote, “but based on observations and conversations everywhere, with especial emphasis on British and Soviet operations in the Middle East and Far East, the time is at hand for a 6-F foreign policy.” Here is

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<sup>217</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>218</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>219</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>220</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

what Dirksen recommended as a framework for the conduct of post-war diplomacy:

1. It must be FIXED and definite.
2. It must be FAIR.
3. It must be FIRM.
4. It must be keyed to FREEDOM without reservation.
5. It must preserve FACE at all times.
6. It must be backed by adequate FORCE.<sup>221</sup>

Notations on the report indicate that President Truman saw the memo after it was reviewed by Samuel Rosenman, Special Counsel to the President. Rosenman thought that “some of his [Dirksen’s] recommendations are very good” and marked several for Truman “about which you might wish to do something.” Rosenman had checked the State Department building program, housing, furnishings, home leave, and salary scale, along with Dirksen’s suggestions about immigration and use of American movies.<sup>222</sup>

The president acknowledged the congressman’s report in two letters dated June 5<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. “It is very refreshing to receive a memorandum of this sort from a real observer,” the president wrote. “I am very happy to have it because it will be most helpful.”<sup>223</sup> Although the Illinois congressman believed a second meeting would follow his memorandum, the invitation never came.

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<sup>221</sup> EMD to The President, June 4, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>222</sup> S.I.R. to Truman, June 13, 1945, Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>223</sup> EDMP, Alpha File, 1945, Truman.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

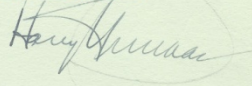
June 5, 1945

Dear Congressman Dirksen:

I certainly did appreciate most highly your memorandum of June fourth.

It is very refreshing to receive a memorandum of this sort from a real observer. I am very happy to have it because it will be most helpful.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harry Truman", written over a faint circular stamp.

Honorable Everett M. Dirksen  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

Source: EMDP, Alpha, 1945



## REPORTING TO CONGRESS

Four days after meeting with Truman, Dirksen took to the floor of the House of Representatives to address his colleagues. He launched into a florid overview of his trip. Here is an example, which illustrates that Dirksen could say in forty words what a normal person could say in five:

I remember flying over that fringe of mountains and going into Palestine and I built up in my mind a picture of Moses standing up there after his 40-year quest for the Promised Land. Then looking out into the distance over these green and beautiful lands I thought of what the scripture said about Moses. His heart filled with exhilaration because he had come to the end of his quest, the Lord spoke out from the heavens and said: "I have caused thee to see it with thine own eyes but thou shall not go over thither." And so I was privileged to enjoy in Palestine what the Lord had denied Moses after his long 40-years quest for the Promised Land.<sup>224</sup>

The 13,000-word peroration continued with descriptions of the physical aspects of the trip and characterizations of the nations and regions he had visited and of the people he had met. Perhaps of more interest to his fellow Congress members, he offered these comments about the American soldier: "I cannot say too much for the American GI. I was a GI myself for a time in the last World War. What a tremendous lot of progress has been made. The sons of the fathers who fought in the last war are in uniform today. Their poise, their flexibility, their adaptability is one of the most amazing things that you can ever observe in a foreign land." He applauded the officers, too, commending them for the "sweet liaison and fellowship" they had developed with peoples of other countries.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases. See also EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 19-28.

<sup>225</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.



And there is one chap to whom I want to pay a special testimony. I do not know where he comes from, and perhaps I may never see him again; I do not even know his first name, but I do know that he is Colonel Younger, who was in the Persian Gulf Command at Abadan and Bandar Shahpur. He fussed until he was able to get a huge Coca-Cola machine, and that operates 24 hours a day, scrubbing bottles and sterilizing them, and filling those bottles so the GI's can have all the Coca-Cola they want. He fussed until he got an ice-cream machine and all the necessary powdered ice cream mix so that there would be ice cream every day. I took my hat off to him. I thought, here is an officer who has an interest in the physical welfare of the men who were soldiering under great difficulty; and so he fussed until he got that equipment, and it is adding somewhat to the creature comfort of those people.<sup>228</sup>

He paid homage to the Medical Corps, then to the Air Transport Command ("Is it not remarkable that in 32,000 miles of travel not a single bag was mislaid, lost, or delayed at any time?"). He remarked on the "reclamation of those soldiers who because of some strange mental quirk seem to go over the deep end in time of war."<sup>229</sup> Then to the WACs:

I say to you on my own responsibility now that they have not lost the freshness, the charm, the loveliness, the grace which is part of the American tradition, and if there is anybody in this country so lacking in grace that they would put the finger upon a contingent like that and say, "Put them in uniform and send them overseas," something goes out. The same winsomeness is still there, and now I pay public tribute to the Wacs for a great job that they have done overseas and for the grace with which they have done it."<sup>230</sup>

He spoke about military cemeteries, the OSS, the OWI, the War Shipping Administration, the Foreign Economic Administration, and lend-lease operations. He criticized the UNRRA. He called for more support for the State Department: "For a country that has expended \$400,000,000 on war, on a conflict for freedom, should have the finest State Department facilities of any country in the world."<sup>231</sup>

Finally, after requesting unanimous consent to continue his remarks, Dirksen got to what he called "the matter of world appraisal." War is global, he said, "So, of course, the transition from war to peace is going to be one of those global things, because you are going to have a tremendous lot of dislocation not only in your own country but in countries everywhere."<sup>232</sup> His appraisal continued with the

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<sup>228</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>229</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>230</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>231</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.



“tremendous job of feeding” the world population: “You know what starving and freezing will do to people’s ideals. That is the real danger. If you will go into Athens today you will see 300,000 people sitting around little tables in coffee shops. They have no work because there are no raw materials and the factories have not begun. Idle hands and idle minds in a postwar period is [sic] a dangerous combination.”<sup>233</sup>

Of the challenge of rebuilding, Dirksen stated: “That is a problem for more than the individuals whose homes have been destroyed. That is a problem for nations and it is a problem for the world today. So I say to you out of all humility of spirit some of our real problems are just about to begin.”<sup>234</sup>

He closed by addressing “a subject which is dear to my heart,” namely freedom. There is no freedom for the peoples of Europe, he said, using occupied Greece as his example:

What will happen when the troops are taken away? Will there be that same effervescence of spirit which finds political outlet and which will fruit in rioting and violence again? What about this thing called freedom? It disturbs me no end, because you cannot stand at these little cemeteries around the world and see the last resting place of so many American GIs without asking yourselves the question: Why were they taken from a lush, peaceful living and transported 10,000 to 15,000 miles away from home to die? It has got to be something more than ecclesiastical vanity. We want something more than military victory out of this war. That is the thing that has to register in the soul of everybody. If we miss on this freedom business this time, we ought to be kicked. So before us there is the necessity of establishing a program, of following that course of action which will never depart from what I regard as the greatest political fundamental of all generations, and that is a field for everybody.”<sup>235</sup>

By “the greatest political fundamental of all generations,” Dirksen meant “freedom.” He recalled his visit to Versailles on May 8 and to the Hall of Mirrors where statesmen had tried to establish a durable peace after WWI. Then Dirksen closed:

If this trip serves no purpose except to strengthen my whole thinking and to implement my own soul, perhaps out of these little reports that I bring back and make to you from time to time there will come a clear conception of our relationship to the world and a

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<sup>232</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>233</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>234</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>235</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

determination that those who lie sleeping in all these little cemeteries from one end of the earth to the other, that incomparable American GI, will not have died in vain—a grand thought for tomorrow, because it is Memorial Day.”<sup>236</sup>

None of his colleagues responded from the floor.

Newspapers gave Dirksen’s speech good coverage, although the reports tended to ignore the more impassioned of the congressman’s arguments. The *Washington Star* headline on May 30<sup>th</sup> read: “Dirksen Criticizes UNRRA for ‘Poor Job’.” The paper quoted Dirksen’s critique of the agency as “slow moving and cumbersome. There has been undue emphasis on publicity. Its distribution facilities are extremely faulty and it has failed to maintain in proper order the trucks which were made available for this purpose.” The story also pointed out Dirksen’s praise for State Department officials and his criticism of the facilities and housing afforded them. “Even the small nations of the world maintain buildings and facilities which are infinitely superior to those of this country,” he said.<sup>237</sup>

The *Times Herald* focused on Dirksen’s charge that UNRRA had created “suspicion” among friendly nations instead of receiving the “wholehearted and enthusiastic co-operation one might ordinarily expect from those who are recipients of this relief.” His litany of complaints included the agency’s inability to furnish the raw materials necessary for rebuilding, its concentration “on direct relief that does not put idle persons to work,” and a corps of “top administrators abroad [who] are not equal to the task.” Dirksen called for a congressional investigation, the paper reported.<sup>238</sup>

In addition to his public comments on the House floor, Dirksen followed through with his idea to meet in a closed session with his Republican colleagues, a meeting he had asked his wife to help set up while Dirksen traveled.<sup>239</sup> No notes of this meeting survive, but Drew Pearson reported on the session after the fact. As he described it, “Hardboiled Republican Congressman Everett Dirksen of Illinois had a secret meeting with his GOP colleagues in a House lobby the other day following his 30,000-mile trip around the world. He gave them plenty of food for thought.” Pearson continued by recreating one of Dirksen’s exchanges:

Here’s something you fellows may not agree with, but I want to tell you that the OWI is doing a great job for us abroad. I went to Turkey, where 83 percent of the pictures in the Turkish newspapers and 40 per cent of the lineage is supplied them by the OWI. In other words, they are telling the Turks what this country is like—selling the United States to Turkey. They’re doing a great

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<sup>236</sup> *Congressional Record*, May 29, 1945, 5254-5261, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>237</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 23.

<sup>238</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 34.

<sup>239</sup> EMD to “Sweetie Kids,” April 30, 1945, EMDP, Personal, f. Family Letters.

job and if it wasn't for OWI, American prestige wouldn't be half as high as it is today. In India, for instance, I met with a group of political leaders who began asking me about the Tennessee Valley Authority. I was surprised that they would know anything about it, and asked them how it happened. They replied that they had seen an OWI film showing TVA. I came to the conclusion that OWI is something we've got to keep after the war.<sup>240</sup>

Dirksen's briefing is the clearest example that he intended to act upon his findings and was laying the groundwork for future legislative proposals.

The congressman also appeared as the featured speaker for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Washington [D.C.] Better Business Bureau in June. Astute to the interests of his audience, Dirksen supposed that the "development of a sweet relationship between consumer and businessman ... is after all the thing that is so necessary to preserve one of the greatest things on the face of this earth and that is freedom and free enterprise."<sup>241</sup> Both were under attack, from within and without. "I say you do get disillusioned when you see what is going on in the world and more and more you wonder," Dirksen claimed, "whether or not your own country, with all its sweet traditions and loveliness, can finally endure under the forces that are operating in the world today."<sup>242</sup> American business practices lay at the foundation of a prosperous, peaceful post-war world. Free enterprise, he believed, represented the greatest hope for raising the standard of living in the U.S. and throughout the world. It was, he said, "the fundamental issue on the horizon of the world today."<sup>243</sup> He continued:

As we relate it to our own problems how apparent it becomes that in proportion as we crusade for these practices in our business life which preserve confidence and faith, one in another, so we serve the cause of freedom and free enterprise and thereby serve the larger cause of perpetuating the finest civilization that has thus far graced this earth.<sup>244</sup>

Dirksen seemed on the horns of a dilemma, however. At the same time, he recognized the powerful force of free enterprise and commerce to promote and protect freedom, he acknowledged the economic imperative behind European imperialism. In words that echo today, here is what he said about two nations in the Middle East:

It is not difficult to understand the interest of outside nations in these little countries. A pipe line runs across Syria to a modern

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<sup>240</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 13, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3.

<sup>241</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1945, A3205.

<sup>242</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1945, A3205.

<sup>243</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1945, A3205.

<sup>244</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1945, A3207.

refinery in the city of Tripoli in Lebanon. This pipe line begins in the Mosul oil fields of northern Iraq and takes its way across the desert to provide the stuff that is the source of power in war and in peace. The long eyes of outside nations are again upon this resource and, in addition, they are not insensible to the strategic geography of Syria and Lebanon. The question then arises all over again: “Is it freedom for which men fight and die or is it the perpetuation of an economic interest to a larger nation or group of nations which has the force and power to impose its will upon a humble people?”<sup>245</sup>

Only the United States could stand up to the unrestrained self-interest of its allies. But only if the United States preserved its own freedom and free enterprise. “These are the indispensable ingredients and accounts for the fact that this Nation has forged so far ahead of any other nation in the world in producing things for peace and war.” The atmosphere of incentive gave every man, in Dirksen’s view, the chance to improve his condition in life. But more than that, a man’s ability “to secure a hearing in the commercial markets of this country for the product of his mind and his labor”—that “will raise of standards of living and enrich all life.”<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1945, A3207.

<sup>246</sup> *Congressional Record*, June 19, 1945, A3208.



## REPORTING TO HIS CONSTITUENTS

On June 2, Dirksen issued his first written report to the constituents who had funded his trip. Using the familiar format of his newsletter, which he wrote himself, he entitled this issue of *Congressional Front*, “WHAT OF FREEDOM.” He saluted the war dead and exclaimed that their sacrifice had purpose: “We told them it was for Freedom. For this they died. For this we taxed ourselves. For this we dislocated our economy. For this the world sweated and labored. For this the world hoped.” But Dirksen found freedom wanting. He named country after country where freedom seemed to be in retreat. This example captures the tone and cadence of his report: “Is it in Syria and Lebanon, land of ancient culture that know Tamerlane and Alexander the Great, the Apostle Paul and the Crusaders—that same Syria and Lebanon where blood runs red today and where French and British troops are quartered? Is it Iraq, cradle of civilization between the Tigris and Euphrates where precious oil abounds and where by treaty, an outside power occupied strategic spots?” He ended with, “Where is Freedom? It is still the World’s Number One business.”<sup>247</sup>

As Dirksen prepared for a series of speeches about his trip, the congressman refined his thinking about the pillars of post-war foreign policy. He took as his point of departure the six “F’s” he had proposed to President Truman (fixed, fair, firm, freedom, face, and force<sup>248</sup>). But, as his private notebooks document, Dirksen massaged and refined them, yielding seven “F’s.”

Dirksen’s plan for diplomacy required what he called a “fixed foreign policy,” by which he meant the United States could not afford to fumble or vacillate. Not surprisingly “freedom” constituted the second pillar—Dirksen thought that freedom was the purpose of the war, but that freedom was endangered, “being whacked up,” as he put it. To the list he gave the president, Dirksen now added “faith.” Without it, Dirksen believed the world was “sunk,” yet faith was “rather choky and tenuous already.”<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> EMDP, Remarks and Releases, June 2, 1945. The *Congressional Front* of June 9 dealt with appropriations for national war agencies; of June 16 with the living costs in other lands; of July 7 with the impact of American movies on foreign audiences; of July 21 with the Atlantic Charter and instability in Europe.

<sup>248</sup> Collection 3, EMDC.

<sup>249</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 56. See also EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 30-31, 35-39.

The congressman called for “fairness” as a principle, too, suggesting that “small nations are key to big wars” and, citing the example of Trieste and Bucharest, that “fairness is truth in action.” His fifth principle was “firmness.” Only through American resolve could the world avoid another war. His sixth fundamental was also an addition to the original five, “fraternity.” Dirksen explained that the “world likes us” and “let’s reciprocate.” Force capped the list: “Let’s pool power to keep the line.”<sup>250</sup> This new list of foreign policy principles omitted “face” from the original list, the idea that the United States should present its best face to the world.

On Friday, June 8, Dirksen returned to his hometown to meet with an audience eager to hear first-hand about their congressman’s adventure. Pekin prided itself on its unity, its lack of sharp social or economic divisions, and the absence of political divisions. As its centenary history put it in 1949, “Pekin ... is principally distinguished by the quality of moderation ... . There is constant progress, but the progressivism is marked with a skeptical, both-feet-on-the-ground attitude.”<sup>251</sup>

The press estimated that 3,500 residents packed the Pekin High School auditorium.<sup>252</sup> What they heard was vintage Dirksen, part travelogue, part exhortation. His theme that evening, in remarks that lasted beyond an hour, was that there could be no enduring peace if people, great or small, were held in subjugation. He admitted that the United States “dare not throw stones” at Britain or France “as long as we hold back the black race in partial subjection here.” But it was up to the Americans to meet the challenge. “These are **our** [emphasis in the original] boys—these are the boys from Pekin, Brooklyn, Morton, Seattle, Delavan, Dallas. These boys died for something, and we the living must highly resolve that they get something for that supreme price which they paid.” He recounted how peoples yearned for freedom in country after country. “From Cave Man to the Atlantic Charter, freedom has been in challenge,” Dirksen said. “Shall we, the living, in the name of the holy dead, fail in this? If freedom fails here, what shall one say of those young Americans whose youthful and pulsing bodies dotted Anzio Beach and the ruins of Cassino; whose lives ebbed out at Normandy or in the Bastogne bulge?”<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, p. 56. See also EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 30-31, 35-39.

<sup>251</sup> *The Pekin Centenary, 1849-1949*, 93-95.

<sup>252</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 27.

<sup>253</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 9, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 1.

SO WE'RE IN THE POST WAR PERIOD.

I. POST WAR - reams spoken and written- plans galore-expensive -  
 thought and labor- years in preparation- given an elusive  
 character- a nebulous era -as if it will be definitely  
 known at a given moment and that there will be an amazing  
 change. Yet it's INSTANTANEOUS - moment terms accepted we  
 slide from war to post-war

IA. Three Divisions - before - during - after.

II. REACTIONS.

Jubilant - Waffenstillstand - Last war  
Soldiers - Quizzical - Gas in hand at an end,  
Mothers and fathers - Quiet agony - Tears  
Radio - what difference- washer and jeep- back to home- Draft  
Bd - a trip- no difference  
Life will not change materially - business as usual-  
Controls life - materials- gas- tires -gas- houses-  
Scars - I AM THE GRASS - Shellholes in Italy  
Problems of course.  
Undramatic entry into another era.

Typical outline of Dirksen's remarks reporting on his strip. Source: EMDP, Notebooks, f. 71, 60

The next night, Dirksen repeated his performance for a crowd of 1,000 in nearby Morton. As a local newspaper reported, "It was felt that a meeting at Morton will give opportunity for Dirksen to report to many people out Morton, Deer Creek and Washington way who might not have gas or tires enough to get as far as Pekin."<sup>254</sup>

On Sunday, June 10, he spoke at the All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Peoria where he tailored his largely off-the-record message to the predominantly Greek-American audience. His listeners, enraged at the British occupation of their home country, heard Dirksen proclaim, "Big countries have no business to pressure little countries. Not Britain, nor Russia, nor the United States, for that matter."<sup>255</sup>

Peoria's Advertising and Selling Club hosted a sold-out lunch crowd of five hundred the next day. There Dirksen tied together the need for better overseas facilities to the one "F" he had omitted from his new formulation of foreign policy, "face." As he said in the process of describing substandard buildings for American diplomats abroad, "Face is so vital in foreign countries, and that is the one weakness we have displayed." Naturally, he could not avoid the topic of freedom, this time saying, "I found a great clutching for the thing for which GI's are fighting and dying also among the peoples of these countries—but freedom is not theirs." He urged a crusade for freedom as the best way to ward off future conflicts.<sup>256</sup>

Dirksen addressed Peoria's Creve Coeur Club on June 12<sup>th</sup>, his fifth speech about his trip in less than two weeks. His presentation varied only in emphasis. He spoke of conditions in liberated countries, their possible futures, and the effect on

<sup>254</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, 1941-1945, 27, 30.

<sup>255</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 11, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 2.

<sup>256</sup> Unsourced clipping, no date, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 5.

the U.S. “People, after all, are all that really matter. And the way people think is usually the way they will act,” Dirksen opined. “Their actions in turn govern world conditions. In many countries people are hungry, restless without work, and face a cold starving winter within a few months. How will these conditions affect their thinking?” He forecasted trends toward socialism and communism. In England, for example, “the cradle-to-grave plan is all but assured.” France, he predicted, “is going to nationalize, which is only another word for socialism.” Of speculation on prospects for a World War III, Dirksen allowed that “People should begin thinking now of the forces that bring on war and control them, not wonder when and how a third world war will begin.”<sup>257</sup>

Congressman Dirksen continued speaking to enthusiastic audiences throughout the summer. To the Peoria Association of Life Underwriters, he said the election in Britain might be the most significant development in the next twenty-five years. The result would indicate whether or not that country “will succumb to a program of nationalization.”<sup>258</sup> To Peoria’s Rotary Club, Dirksen urged action to assure the United States “some consideration for the service, relief and rehabilitation we may offer the people of foreign countries.” He also stressed the importance of “selling America to the world—[they] don’t know us.”<sup>259</sup>

One of his most well-covered speeches took place at Peoria’s Shrine Mosque on Friday, July 6<sup>th</sup>. He opened to a capacity crowd with three overarching observations. One, the world was rapidly shrinking; two, human life was worth so little all over the world except in the United States; and three, warfare was so amazingly global. Within this context, the area’s congressman extolled the GI (“The chin is up, the morale is high, he’s the greatest soldier who ever set foot in shoe leather”<sup>260</sup>) and talked about how he had inspected the beneficiaries of the \$234 billion appropriated by the House Appropriations Committee during the war. He described one of his inspection tactics:

I examined the canteens and the PX units. I remembered when I was a soldier, and when an officer in India asked me where I was going after mess, I told him I was going to stand by the garbage can and see how much was thrown out. That’s the test for rations. And friends, they’re getting meat, they’re getting fruit juices, they’re getting the things they need.<sup>261</sup>

As he had on the House floor, Dirksen paid tribute to the colonel in the Persian Gulf Command who fought to get a Coke machine for his men. “And I say Pabst

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<sup>257</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 3, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 4.

<sup>258</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 5, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 8.

<sup>259</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 6, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 8; EMDP, Notebooks, f. 72, 71-75.

<sup>260</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 7, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3 and 9; *Journal-Transcript*, July 6, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 10.

<sup>261</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 7, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3 and 9; *Journal-Transcript*, July 6, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 10.



Blue Ribbon beer, enough for 24 cans a week per man. To a woman who told me in the States that she thought serving beer to our boys an ‘unconscionable disgrace,’ I said that if you had to unload supplies in 150-degree heat, you might want 48 cans. It has food value, that’s why the Army gives it to the men.”<sup>262</sup> Dirksen did not bother to say that his congressional district included the brewery that produced Pabst.

He reassured his audience about the medical care the troops received. “It makes me feel good down to my toes to think of the work being done by nurses and doctors,” Dirksen offered. He provided examples of how Americans were misunderstood, citing the need for “some agency to tell the other folks correctly what we are.” He stated the need for better State Department quarters. And he forewarned of the fragile European economy, cautioning that a political explosion might be touched off by the outcome of the British elections if the Laborites won. To sum it up, Dirksen said, “I don’t think I’ve ever been a better American than I am after that trip. And what a responsibility for you and me to keep our country the way it is.”<sup>263</sup>

In Princeton, Illinois, speaking to an American Legion Post 125, Dirksen took a different approach, speaking more generally, offering six conclusions from his trip, his most basic impressions. What follows comes from the press coverage of his remarks:

1. That with planes and transportation as it is, the war has become so speeded up and by this token, history itself, has become accelerated.
2. That this is a global war reaching from pole to pole and from one point of the equator clear around, and that he had obtained a clear conception of the meaning of “global war.”
3. That this is a small world and it is growing smaller and he was overwhelmed by the lack of appreciation for the value of human lives in almost every country but the United States. He told of the horror of the concentration camps.
4. That there isn’t as much freedom in the world today as he would like to see, and he pointed out the mandated countries in which unrest is constantly fomenting because of the lack of freedom.
5. That communism is on the march and that it is stifling freedom in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and seeping into Greece.

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<sup>262</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 7, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3 and 9; *Journal-Transcript*, July 6, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 10.

<sup>263</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 7, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3 and 9; *Journal-Transcript*, July 6, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 10.

6. That oil is the seed of the next war and here he traced the route of the war, showing that it had traveled to the great oil centers of the world.<sup>264</sup>

“We’ve got to take more than a casual interest in the Middle East,” Dirksen advised. “We must make precious sure that we aren’t so casual about our relations with the world.” He accused Europe’s big powers of reneging on their promise to grant freedom to all peoples and predicted that “the ferment of freedom will continue until it fractures the security of the world once more.”<sup>265</sup>

Dirksen ventured beyond central Illinois, too. He spoke to combined service clubs in Decatur on July 24<sup>th</sup> and, two days later, to twelve Livingston County service clubs which combined to produce an audience of 2,000. “Communism is on the march in the world today, moving rapidly, and make no mistake about it,” Dirksen warned. “There will never be any peace in the world until freedom has been established in all corners of the universe.” According to one reporter present, “He paints a picture of the American, as seen by other peoples, as a country where ‘people pay no taxes,’ where ‘lend lease goods grow on gooseberry bushes,’ ‘where Tarzans swing from tree to tree,’ and ‘where all girls are delinquent.’”<sup>266</sup>

The Council Bluffs, Iowa, *Nonpareil*, reported on what had become Dirksen’s stock speech. “Mr. Dirksen is one of the ablest members of the House, a keen observer, gifted with unusual facility of expression and a man of great sympathy and understanding,” according to the report.<sup>267</sup>

Because Dirksen did not typically write his speeches word-for-word (he spoke extemporaneously or from very brief outlines), the *Nonpareil*’s extensive coverage provides the most detailed look into Dirksen’s well-honed message and phrasing. For that reason, the paper’s quotes let Dirksen speak for himself—his subject, the American GI:

I cannot say too much for the American GI. I was a GI myself for a time in the last world war. What a tremendous lot of progress he has made. The sons of the fathers who fought in the last war are in uniform today. Their poise, flexibility, adaptability, are the most amazing things you can ever observe in any foreign land ... . Whether you see the GI on the hot sands of the desert, whether you see him in Europe or Italy, whether you see him in the cold or the warm climate does not make any difference.

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<sup>264</sup> *Walnut Leader*, July 27, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 11.

<sup>265</sup> *Walnut Leader*, July 27, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 11.

<sup>266</sup> Unsourced clipping, 7/27/45, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 12. The clubs represented were the Dwight Rotary, Fairbury Rotary, Forrest Lions, Chatsworth Lions, Flanagan Community Club, Fairbury Businessman’s Club, Chatsworth Community Club, Cullom Community Club, Saunemin Community Club, Pontiac Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions.

<sup>267</sup> No date, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3.

What an amazing creature he is, and by all odds the greatest soldier on the face of the earth. I say it not in derogation of the soldiers of other countries, but I have seen them together and it is no wonder that from the lips of Gen. Bradley, Gen. Patton, Gen. Patch and all the rest, you hear these encomiums on the greatest soldier on the face of the earth.

He has a great sense of humor that is positively remarkable. He never quite loses his wonderment and his interest. The American GI never stops wondering.

I saw him on the campus of Oxford ... I saw him look at the glories of St. Paul's Cathedral ... I saw him wander around Westminster Abbey. I saw him looking at the tombs of the ancient kings and men who had contributed so much to the progress of civilization. I saw him in the moonlight wandering around the coliseum.

I heard a sergeant say to a corporal: "That is what two or three thousand years of weathering have done to a structure built of granite and marble. But we could have done better than that with a B-29 in just about 15 minutes."<sup>268</sup> He somehow has a way, you know, of relating the ancient to the modern. I saw him look at the Parthenon and the ancient acropolis in Greece, seeking to orient this history and identify himself with the great forces of democracy that developed there more than 2,500 years ago.

I have encountered the GI everywhere. He is still thinking about a chocolate milkshake at the corner drug store. He still thinks of his family. Go into any store in Paris when they open in the morning. There you will find a long queue of privates, corporals, sergeants, WACS and officers. They are there to buy a little trinket, a little memento, a little remembrance for some beloved person back home.

That kind of fellow doesn't need ideological reorientation before they bring him back. Just put his feet on the main street of the old town and turn him loose. He will know how to live with his people.

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<sup>268</sup> The Boise, Idaho, *Daily Statesmen*, took Dirksen to task for reciting this story: "Wonderful, Mr. Dirksen! After exploring to the bottom of your profound statement, we come up with the remarkable fact that one of the world's greatest pieces of art is disintegrating under the weather much more slowly than it would under a covey of bombs; but precisely in what way that ties up Greek civilization with the ruins of Cologne you'll have to explain to us when you come to Boise again." July 25, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 7.

We have some people overseas at the present time who are over there by special dispensation for the purpose of determining what must be done to reorient the GI when he comes back home. I want to say with all finality at my command that the GI does not need any reorientation, and the long-haired men and the short-haired women who go overseas for the purpose of developing a program to teach the GI not to bayonet somebody on Main Street when he comes back, are engaged in a program which, in my judgment, is the sheerest kind of nonsense.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> No date, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3.



## CONVERTING IDEAS INTO LEGISLATION: THE OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION

In late June, Dirksen began a campaign to pass laws to implement his ideas about shaping the post-war world. Over the next several weeks, the congressman spoke on the House floor or introduced legislation to support appropriations for the Office of War Information and to investigate the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

The Office of War Information, created in 1942, formulated and executed information programs to promote understanding of the status and progress of the war effort and of war policies, activities, and aims of the U.S. government. Besides coordinating the release of war news for domestic use, the office established an overseas branch to manage the information and propaganda campaign abroad. Congressional opposition to the domestic operations of the OWI resulted in increasingly curtailed funds, and by 1944 the OWI operated mostly in the foreign field. At virtually every stop, Dirksen made a point of visiting the OWI outpost.

Funding for the OWI topped Dirksen's legislative agenda upon his return. He committed eight pages of typed notes to prepare for a speech on the House floor on July 13<sup>th</sup>. His remarks reflected his thinking about the role of information, or propaganda, in securing the peace.

OWI.

Mr. Speaker: For the fiscal year 1946, the Budget Bureau presented an estimate of 42 million for OWI. The Deficiency sub-committee reduced that to 35 million. The House further reduced it to 18 million. The Senate raised it to 39 million. Before us is the question of whether it shall have 18 million, 39 million or a compromise between these two. I urge adoption of the Senate figure or at least an amount not less than 35 million.

OWI In committee I voted for 35 million. I was absent when the House reduced the amount. When I returned, I appeared before the Senate sub-committee and urged that it restore the funds deleted by House action.

You will agree that I am not a freehanded person. The record will bear that out. It requires good reason before I would approve a larger expenditure for any agency. Moreover I had some bias against OWI. Like many others I felt that it was

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Draft of remarks on the House floor about the Office of War Information.  
Source: EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26

The congressman began by reviewing the appropriations history of OWI in committee, in both congressional chambers, and in the Bureau of the Budget. Collective action had resulted in substantial cuts in the agency's funding. Dirksen wanted to restore at least some of the cuts. "You will agree that I am not a freehanded person," he declared. "The record will bear that out. It requires good reason before I could approve a larger expenditure for any agency. Moreover, I had some bias against OWI. Like many others I felt that it was propagating a leftist philosophy."<sup>270</sup>

But the trip had changed Dirksen's mind. His inspections uncovered no foundation for the charges against the agency, i.e., that it was overstaffed, overpaid, "staffed with reds," or "leftist":

It has been said that they are pursuing the Red line, that they are slanting their stuff, that it is oblique, and that they follow a leftist ideology. If I looked at one I looked at thousands of photographs. I looked at material that had the OWI byline in newspapers in all these countries. I went there with bias in my heart because on this floor I have attacked OWI time and time again, but in all good conscience when a man is in error or if he is mistaken he should publicly confess his sin and retrieve that error.<sup>271</sup>

To remove any suspicion that his recommendation was tainted by self-interest, Dirksen assured his colleagues that "Insofar as I know I have no friends, relatives or even good acquaintances on the OWI rolls. It is wholly a case of reporting what I saw and acting upon the facts."<sup>272</sup>

He proceeded to justify the need for an information service both in war and peace. First, he stated that a nation could not move an army with all its equipment "into a neutral land without telling the people why we are there and what our objectives are." His experience with inspections and meetings with foreign leaders convinced him that those native peoples in sovereign lands "have a right to know why we're there and what we're doing. They must be informed."<sup>273</sup>

Second, Dirksen appreciated the value of information in conducting war-time operations. "Psychological warfare is esteemed an essential part of modern warfare," he said. "If by leaflets, pamphlets, and information dropped on the enemy a single life is saved or the war shortened a single day, how important that is. Who shall judge how effective OWI has been in that respect? Russia and Britain spend many times what we spend on informational activities. If we are

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<sup>270</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7523-7526.

<sup>271</sup> *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7525.

<sup>272</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7523-7526.

<sup>273</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7523-7526.

wrong, they are wrong. And this information must be prepared, directed, dropped in effective places.”<sup>274</sup>

Mr. Speaker, I got some estimate of the amount of money being spent by the British and by the Russians in propaganda services and what we spend is a drop in the bucket compared with these other countries. I saw a confidential report in Turkey as to the number of professors who came in, the libraries that had been established, the books that were sold in the country, and for that one country the British expenditure will be probably \$5,000,000. If we expended funds for informational purposes on a proportional basis it would be many times the amount that is here proposed for the Office of War Information.<sup>275</sup>

But the clincher for Dirksen involved a more ambitious requirement. During his journey, Dirksen was astonished by the almost complete lack of understanding on the part of foreign nationals of the United States. His trip log made frequent mention of this paucity of knowledge. “They do not know us. They do not understand us. Somebody must do this informational job, call it OWI or by some other name.” In Tunis, he was angered to learn of the assumption there that Americans paid no taxes. In Ceylon, he saw a garage named for the movie star Tarzan and a Tarzan taxi line—there was a general impression that a large number of Americans were Johnny Weismullers “flitting from limb to limb in the jungle.” At a Bagdad dinner, Dirksen’s dinner partner, the first secretary of the legation, asked whether movies accurately reflected American life. In London, a British girl who drove for the Visitors Bureau asked whether all the girls in America were delinquent because she had seen the “March of Time on Juvenile Delinquency among Girls” the night before. In Bombay, several youngsters begged Dirksen for a coin with the appealing supplication, “Me poor boy. You rich American rajah. All Americans rich rajahs.” From all this, Dirksen concluded that “some of our difficulties today spring from the fact that the world has a strange concept of us and our country and it’s time we tell them who we are and what we’re like in our native lair.”<sup>276</sup>

Dirksen attributed a commercial and economic advantage to a reinvigorated information function, too. “There is a competitive aspect to this,” he said. “People in India are interested in TVA. They have many rivers that could be harnessed. If they do, it will mean supplies, equipment, generators as well as a higher standard for them. They should be told. Only an information service can do it.” “So I look into the future,” Dirksen remarked, “in the hope that in proportion as we sell American, the real America, it will be productive of business in the future.”<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7523-7526.

<sup>275</sup> *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7524.

<sup>276</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7523-7526.

<sup>277</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7524.

To conclude Dirksen observed, “The Senate will soon approve the United Nations Charter. Over the years it has but one hope of enduring. Not the power of arms but the power of understanding is the great moral force which will make it succeed or fail. And understanding comes from knowledge; and knowledge springs from information.”<sup>278</sup>

He sounded similar themes in his newsletter, *Congressional Front*, which his constituents received in early July. Entitled “Movies and the United Nations Charter,” Dirksen admitted that the two did not seem to go together. “When all is said and done,” Dirksen wrote, “the United Nations Charter which looks toward peace and security must rest upon the great moral force of understanding. In proportion as we understand other countries and peoples and they understand us, the frictions and problems which are bound to arise in the period ahead are more likely of amicable settlement than if understanding is lacking.” That understanding comes from information, Dirksen observed. “We cannot understand other peoples unless we know them, know their countries and the things in which they are interested; nor can they understand us unless they know what and who we are, how we live and what are interests are.”<sup>279</sup>

The key? American movies. “Manifestly, when our movies can command such a world audience, it is fair to believe that what people see on the screen makes a deep impression,” Dirksen asserted. “We, of course, know that movies are make-believe but elsewhere in the world, they get the idea that what they see is really America.” The moral, said Dirksen, “is that American movie producers could do a good job of selling America abroad by means of pictures that reflect American life and traditions and objectives. If the world gets the idea that characters like Al Capone and Tarzan and gangsters are typically American, we have an even bigger job of portraying to them the real America. It must be done by information and every means of disseminating that information must be utilized.”<sup>280</sup>

For his efforts, Dirksen emerged as a contentious figure in the legislative controversy over the OWI, particularly among the many Republicans who questioned the value of the agency. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Dirksen voted for \$35,000,000 for OWI to continue its work into 1946, a figure subsequently reduced by the House to \$18,000,000.<sup>281</sup> Despite the congressman’s efforts, the agency ceased operations in September 1945, and its foreign functions were transferred to the Department of State.

Although Dirksen failed to prevail in achieving full funding for the agency, he garnered generally favorable press for his efforts. The *Daily News* recognized

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<sup>278</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 70, 26-33; *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7523-7526. Dirksen received support from a colleague who introduced into the record a letter from General Dwight Eisenhower recommending funding for the agency.

<sup>279</sup> July 7, 1945, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>280</sup> July 7, 1945, EMDP, Remarks and Releases.

<sup>281</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 22, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3.



Dirksen “as a thoro [sic] student of government. He has been diligent to expand his knowledge by the favorable circumstance of being on the Appropriations committee, and is counted among the Republican leaders in the House.” Regarding the controversy, the paper called him a “good investigator” and reporter, “as anybody on Capitol Hill will tell you, as well as people in Administration agencies which he has checked up from time to time.” He had watched operations in the foreign OWI offices, gone over the material they put out, and even returned at night to see whether personnel were at their jobs. His support of the agency, the paper concluded, was based on first-hand, considered, and thoughtful consideration.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 22, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3.



## **CONVERTING IDEAS INTO LEGISLATION: THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION AGENCY**

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency attracted more negative scrutiny than did OWI. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, United Press reported that Dirksen had introduced a resolution in the House calling for a five-man House committee to investigate UNRRA. The story reviewed the congressman's criticisms of the agency, quoting him:

People don't want a "world's projects administration" where hundreds of millions would be "frittered away on excessive salaries, incompetent personnel and misguided activities. There seems to be too many people who consider UNRRA a chance for an extended overseas adventure at the expense of the taxpayers ... . UNRRA has developed an odor and the time is at hand to carefully audit its personnel, its accounts and its activities."<sup>283</sup>

Dirksen had command of the specifics. In a speech on the House floor, he posed fourteen questions about UNRRA activities. He wondered why the agency needed two hundred people headquartered in Washington with salaries ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 a year. He wondered why the employees were bonded in Britain rather than the United States. He wondered why the director of UNRRA in Greece continued in the position despite his "complicity" in a failed business transaction that had cost the government \$70,000. He wondered why the agency's accounts were "so messy they cannot be audited," why British intelligence services invested in UNRRA, why agency food supplies showed up on the black market, and why the lack of coordination with the military left 1,500 employees stranded in France.<sup>284</sup> He enumerated even more "whys" in an issue of *Congressional Front*. Why did UNRRA pay \$400 per typewriter in Cairo? Why were there so many UNRRA staff in "far-off Ethiopia"? Why did 200 tractors sit on the docks so long in Athens? Why were tractors shipped by air instead of rail to the Balkans?<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Unsourced clipping, June 30, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 7.

<sup>284</sup> Unsourced clipping, July 11, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 3.

<sup>285</sup> July 28, 1945, EMDP, Remarks and Releases. See also EMDP, Notebooks, f. 67, 106.

In addition to his personal observations, Dirksen relied on the testimony of current and former UNRAA staff expressed in letters to the congressman. He read excerpts from four of them into the *Congressional Record*.

[From a former UNRRA officer]

A large part of the personnel frankly stated that they were on a world tour and “to hell with the taxpayer.”

I have no desire to enter into any personalities, but my experience in the business world, and as a young office in France in the last war, convinced me I did not belong with UNRRA. It simply went against the grain and those at the top, who should have truly represented our country, could not, or would not, do so.

[From someone recently retired from the agency]

From that date [September 6] until November 19 I did little except read a stack of proposed distribution, transportation, and warehousing plans, very complicated and very impractical. These plans had taken months to formulate by people who sat behind a desk and had no idea what the working conditions would be. After I found out what the actual conditions are, I named these plans the UNRRA 5-year plan because it would take at least 5 years before existing conditions might be improved to a degree where these plans were feasible.<sup>286</sup>

The local paper lauded Dirksen’s efforts. As one editorial writer put it after reporting on Dirksen’s questions of UNRRA, “The stature of Congressman Everett M. Dirksen, as guardian of the people’s liberties and the public purse, both prodigally dissipated by the New Deal and its innumerable alphabetical agencies, grows with every passing day.” His latest action, the paper opined, “and the vigorous manner of that action, proves him a champion of the people, and makes many deem him capable of bigger service ... . The Star says more power to Mr. Dirksen—more strength to his good right arm. He is performing the kind of public service that may yet save this country for true Americans.”<sup>287</sup>

The legislative battle over UNRRA funding continued into the Fall. George Rothwell Brown reported in his newsletter, “The Political Parade,” that the House Rules Committee had blocked consideration of the resolution to investigate UNRRA introduced by Dirksen, refusing to let him testify before the committee. At the administration’s urging, UNRRA had taken the position that since it was an international organization it was not subject to a congressional investigation. “I have a way to beat that argument,” said Dirksen when he heard this. “UNRRA will have to appear before the Deficiency Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee when it comes to Congress for the money it wants. It is my intention,

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<sup>286</sup> *Congressional Record*, July 17, 1945, 7654-7655.

<sup>287</sup> July 19, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 10.

when Mr. Lehman [former New York governor Herbert H. Lehman and Director General of UNRRA] appears, to leave my place at the committee table, to be sworn in as a witness, and to tell the committee just what I know.”<sup>288</sup>

After Dirksen issued this statement, UNRRA “began to draw in its horns” and said it would reduce its request for funds from \$2,000,000,000 to \$200,000,000. As Dirksen explained to columnist Brown:

I told UNRRA plainly that in justice to the memory of our American kids who gave their lives for the principles of the Atlantic Charter I did not propose to permit that organization to get away with the policies it is pursuing in the Balkans under a group of Communist-dominated governments. UNRRA has a force of 700 in Athens alone. They go around calling each other “Comrade!” They are engaged in all sorts of propaganda to sell their set-up to the American people—at the people’s expense. In one city in France there are 1,500 employes [sic] of UNRRA on full pay, doing nothing. The financial affairs of UNRRA are in such a hopeless mess that they cannot be audited. The time has come when UNRRA must ask Congress for more money. I’ll be waiting for ‘em.<sup>289</sup>

Dirksen’s efforts to reign in UNRRA met with mixed results. In November, the House passed a \$550,000,000 appropriation for UNRRA with an amendment introduced by Dirksen to ensure free reporting by U.S. radio and press in any country in which the funds were used. This was viewed as permitting some oversight of UNRRA activities. The Senate rejected the amendment, however, as did the conference committee. To complete funding of the \$1,350,000,000 U. S. contribution to UNRRA authorized in 1945, Congress first approved a transfer of \$135,000,000 from lend-lease funds in a supplemental appropriation signed May 27. The remaining \$465 million was provided in a Third Deficiency Appropriation, to which House again attached Dirksen’s amendment barring use of funds in countries restricting freedom of U.S. correspondents, by vote of 228-85 on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Opposed by the Truman administration, the amendment was watered down by Senate before action was completed July 19<sup>th</sup>.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 15. In November, the House passed an appropriation for \$550,000,000 for UNRRA with an amendment introduced by Dirksen to ensure free reporting by US radio and press in any country in which the funds are used. This was viewed as permitting some oversight of UNRRA activities. *Daily Beacon-News*, November 12, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 16.

<sup>289</sup> EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 15.

<sup>290</sup> See <http://library.cqpress.com/catsn/document.php?id=catsn45-4-3662-184321&type=hitlist&num=7>. Accessed November 6, 2007 and *Daily Beacon-News*, November 12, 1945, EMDP, Scrapbooks, v. 6, 16.



## THE TRIP'S IMPACT

Eighty-nine days. Thirty-two thousand miles. Almost two dozen countries. What to make of the impact on Congressman Everett M. Dirksen? Despite Dirksen's tenacity, one would be hard put to point to legislative accomplishments stemming from his overseas sojourn. But it would be equally hard to underestimate the impact on his thinking.<sup>291</sup>

Three months on the road convinced him that America's future was in jeopardy. His concerns were rooted in his readings in philosophy and history and his personal experiences abroad. As part of his preparation for the trip, Dirksen had read *The Decline of the West* by Oswald Arnold Gottfried Spengler, a German historian and philosopher. Spengler articulated a cyclical theory of the rise and fall of civilizations, with which Dirksen largely agreed. According to the German, the forces at work in western civilization bore close resemblance to those at the fall of older civilizations. Dirksen worried that, because Spengler's book dealt in long periods of time, it would give a false sense of comfort "to those who think of life and history as a short-range project. Why be concerned," Dirksen thought, "about what will happen after one is dead and forgotten."<sup>292</sup>

Dirksen couldn't wait that long. What he had seen in Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Europe troubled him deeply. It was possible, he thought, that "the forces of which Spengler speaks can take on acceleration and shorten the time in which he prophesies our demise as a culture." Who could contemplate the last dozen years "without wondering just what will happen. Who can lift his eyes and take note of the plans for Europe by the major nations without wondering whether this is the rise of the new Imperialism which constitutes the winter of our civilization."<sup>293</sup>

Imperialism paired with communism threatened postwar stability, in Dirksen's view. His notes mention a litany of imperialistic actions from the agreement to restore the Curzon line marking Poland's borders, to the British occupation of Greece, to the failure of the Allies to invite small nations to the conference at

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<sup>291</sup> Curiously, Dirksen did not draw lessons from his trip when composing his memoir nearly 25 years later.

<sup>292</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 16.

<sup>293</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 16.

Teheran—these and more suggested to the congressman “that maybe this is the winter of our freedom [sic] and that we stand on the threshold of decline.”<sup>294</sup>

This thought recalled for Dirksen Wendell Willkie’s *One World*, a travelogue first published in 1943. Highly popular, the book sold millions and spent four months on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Willkie, of course, was the Republican presidential candidate in 1940. According to Dirksen, Willkie held a positive view of the future believing that “peoples are on the march and that nothing can stop the forward thrust to a new and larger freedom.” *One World* prescribed how to get there, proposing a strong United Nations and an active United States in world affairs.<sup>295</sup>

Dirksen saw evidence of nations moving toward “one world” but not the version Willkie imagined. Instead, the future looked like “One Total World” to Dirksen’s way of thinking. “How can one earnestly ponder the present forces without getting that uneasy feeling that maybe after all it is One Total World toward which we move—a world in which the total ideology [sic] of Russia, Germany and others is gaining the upper hand and that our palaver about freedom and the sacrifices of pulsing young lives is just another sham and mockery.”<sup>296</sup>

To make sense of what he had seen of the world situation, Dirksen consulted a book published late in 1944 by Frederick Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*. Hayek’s central thesis: that all forms of collectivism led logically and inevitably to tyranny. Central planning begat the dismantling of the free market system which begat a frustrated populace who voted even more power to the rulers which begat outright totalitarianism and the destruction of individual economic and personal freedom.<sup>297</sup>

What Dirksen had seen in the Middle East particularly seemed to confirm part of Hayek’s theory, namely that the absence of free market capitalism coupled with rampant corruption, flawed taxation, and the lack of understanding on the part of native populations of the rudiments of a market economy—all this foreshadowed civil unrest and heightened the appeal of the ‘isms’: imperialism, totalitarianism, collectivism, socialism, and communism.

The congressman took almost as dim a view of post-war economics in the United States. According to him, Hayek undertook “to establish that despite our mouthings, we are moving toward the same position occupied by Germany 25 years ago and that unless we do a sharp about face and forsake this doctrine of pallning [sic], we are headed for the very serfdom that has taken millions of young men from their homes to die in the fevered infested marshes of the tropics and on the icy fields of the western front.”<sup>298</sup> The result: “Tragedy. That’s

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<sup>294</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 17.

<sup>295</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 17.

<sup>296</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 15-19.

<sup>297</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Road\\_to\\_Serfdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Road_to_Serfdom), accessed January 30, 2008.

scarcely the word. It would be the greatest catastrophe yet visited upon mankind because it would mean frustration and the death of the most promising civilization that has ever sprung up on earth.”<sup>299</sup> Dirksen feared “we are headed for one total world, where planning and regimentation and imperialism are on the march and we are all headed for a glossed by nonetheless real serfdom.”<sup>300</sup>

The congressman felt strongly enough about these threats to the United States’s political and economic future that he drafted an outline for a book. “We were primarily interested in appraising [sic] the forces that will shape the world after it’s over,” Dirksen explained. The purpose of the war “was more than peace”—it was a battle for freedom from totalitarianism. But, Dirksen wondered, “Did we swap a Red H[at] for a Black One. Did [the] world fight so hard it got from an overcoat of Freedom into [an] overcoat of collectivism?”<sup>301</sup> His intended book, never completed or published, would have included a chapter entitled “WHAT WE MUST DO.” Dirksen’s brief note contained this answer: “stop manipulating the forces in other countries and give free expression a chance.”<sup>302</sup>

In speaking, writing, and thinking, Dirksen reduced his prescription for the future to a single word, “freedom.” There are dozens of pages in the congressman’s notebooks expounding on the theme. “FREEDOM IS OUR GOAL” reads one in which Dirksen explained the larger purposes of the war: “order & decent living,” “permanent peace,” “organized justice in a free world,” “sovereign equality of nations,” and “international organization open to equality and sovereignty.” Under the heading “THE FRUIT OF ALL MUST BE FREEDOM,” Dirksen quoted Churchill: “There would be little use in punishing the Hitlerites ... if totalitarian or police governments were to take the place of the German invaders.”<sup>303</sup>

The threat to freedom of western imperialism was clear enough, and Dirksen could recount example after example of imperialism’s deleterious effects. The challenge of Soviet communism posed some complications, however. On one hand, Dirksen, as a result of personal observation on the trip, held a somewhat positive view of Russia. For example, he observed that Russia “operates as an effective society.” Consequently, Dirksen believed the U.S. “must learn to work with Russia,” a theme he repeated throughout his notes.<sup>304</sup>

The Soviet problem was not a Russian problem at all, according to Dirksen. It was an American problem. “Stalin knows what he wants and sets his sails according to

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<sup>298</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 18.

<sup>299</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 18-19.

<sup>300</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 19.

<sup>301</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 1.

<sup>302</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 3.

<sup>303</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 71, 40-57. See also Dirksen’s speech on the House floor in the *Congressional Record*, July 13, 1945, 7541-7542.

<sup>304</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 6. At one point in the trip, Dirksen committed the following to his notes: “*Danger of Soviet is not Soviet but our approach to the Soviet.*” Emphasis in the original: EMDP, Notebooks, f. 69, 225-226.

that purpose,” Dirksen wrote. But he doubted that the United States had “the same fixity of purpose ... . When we do, Russia will be no problem. Stupid to talk of war with Russia. When we advance our cause, she will understand.”<sup>305</sup>

If the U.S. pursued a purely adversarial relationship with the Soviet Union, it could cripple post-war economic prospects. Dirksen explained that in the United States, “We labor with the rigidities of high wages and living standards, group pressures, high debt and need for high prices.” In contrast, “Russia may produced [sic] surpluses at prices at which she can sell to [the] world. At [the] expense of sweat and tears, she is laying [the] foundation for great industrial efficiency.”<sup>306</sup> Some of Russia’s efforts, he believed, “are fundamentally sounder tho less pleasant than ours.”<sup>307</sup>

How did Dirksen reconcile his tolerant view of the Soviet Union with his palpable distaste for communism as a form of totalitarianism and a threat to freedom? According to the congressman, “Communism in Russia and [the] US [is] entirely different; in Russia it is the common good and all must work; in [the] US it is that everyone is entitled to a living and social advantages which must be supplied by [the] state at pub[lic] exp[ense].”<sup>308</sup> With that, Dirksen felt comfortable attacking what he called the collectivist tendencies of the Roosevelt administration on the home front while arguing for a pragmatic approach to the Soviet Union in diplomacy.

As World War II drew to a close, Congressman Dirksen, like so many of his compatriots, absorbed the doctrine of American exceptionalism, the belief that the United States and its people held a special place in the world by offering opportunity and hope for humanity. He called upon his country to assume this “moral obligation after this baptism of blood,” to see the world “in perspective rather than thro [sic] a keyhole,” to take from the “long grim experience” of war a “sharper moral sense and sense of obligation.”<sup>309</sup>

Dirksen believed the United States should defend freedom across the globe, that Americans would never be secure if freedom were in peril anywhere. “Freedom is ‘indivisible,’ he said, recalling that Abraham Lincoln, Dirksen’s personal hero, knew that the country could not survive half free and half slave. The same held

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<sup>305</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 71, 65-75.

<sup>306</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 24.

<sup>307</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 25.

<sup>308</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 66, 24.

<sup>309</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 71, 60-64.



true for the world—“let freedom fail after this awful sacrifice and how long can it last in US ... . What a vanity if we fail in this.”<sup>310</sup>

In Dirksen’s words:

As we dedicated ourselves to war and victory so we must now dedicate selves to peace, prosperity, readjustment, unity—this is a sacred obligation—the very early meaning of the word was to dedicate or consecrate to a sacred purpose—our efforts must be in remembrance of them ... . There must be a sustained pursuit of what is right—and the principle which sent me to death and brought dislocations and destruction is freedom. We must be firm for freedom.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 71, 60-75.

<sup>311</sup> EMDP, Notebooks, f. 71, 65-75.



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