

PLEASE CREDIT ANY QUOTES OR EXCERPTS FROM THIS ABC TELEVISION
AND RADIO PROGRAM TO "ABC'S ISSUES AND ANSWERS."

I S S U E S A N D A N S W E R S

SUNDAY, JULY 3, 1966

GUEST: SENATOR EVERETT MCKINLEY DIRKSEN (R. Ill.)

INTERVIEWED BY: Edward P. Morgan, ABC News Commentator
and
Wally Franer, ABC News Correspondent

MR. MORGAN: Senator Dirksen, even on this Fourth of
July Holiday week-end, what has must be in everybody's mind.
It is said that the President's bombing order has escalated
the war. What do you think of his action and where do you think
it will lead?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Probably the best answer I can give is
the action that was taken by the Republican National Coordin-
ating Committee consisting of a half-dozen members of our
national committee, a half-dozen Republican governors, joint
leadership of Republican leadership of the Senate and House,
those who have been candidates for the Presidency and the Vice-
Presidency and then, of course, President Eisenhower. And
we meet about every quarter.

Now it was on the 13th of December of last year that we met
and we issued a one-page paper on this very subject and I need
only recite what the essence of it was.

MR. MORGAN: Do.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Because we shared the objective -- and

HOLD FOR RELEASE
AT 1:30 PM SUNDAY

1 there is no difference about objectives, but we recommended
2 that there be a Kennedy-type quarantine so far as the Port of
3 Hyphong is concerned, and then specifically recommended that we
4 use conventional naval and air power to bomb strategic
5 targets in critical target areas.

6 MR. BRUNER: You are pleased, then, with the latest --

7 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Indeed I am pleased and I support it.
8 I thought it should have been done long ago. Because that was
9 seven months ago that we made that statement and we are getting
10 around to this bombing only now."

11 Now I am not critical of that delay. I only say that
12 that represented the best concensus thinking of Republican
13 leaders from all over the country.

14 MR. MORGAN: The port of Hyphong has not yet been quaran-
15 tined, mined or bombed. Do you think it must be?

16 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, let's wait and see what the net
17 result of the two bombing strikes will be.

18 Now we have reason to believe that morale is diminishing
19 rather rapidly in North Viet Nam. In fact that was disclosed
20 to us at that last briefing session which was three weeks ago
21 tomorrow at the White House. You may remember that I had to
22 harrass the President a little in order to get the joint
23 leadership back there but we did. Among other things we dis-
24 covered that in the interviews of these Viet Cong prisoners
25 almost uniformly, now, they were talking about what was

1 happening to the morale in North Viet Nam.

2 MR. BRUNER : Well, then, you think the credibility gap
3 that you have described is no longer a problem? You think now
4 you are getting the information you need?

5 SENATOR DIRKSEN: We are getting the information we need.
6 I have so stated. You see it took a long time to get that
7 joint meeting so that we were fully advised of what the exact
8 impact of our action was.

9 MR. MORGAN: In other words, you think the President is
10 now leveling with the people and probably doing so because of
11 your prior criticism?

12 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I won't say that he has not leveled
13 with the people before. There is such a thing as not quite
14 disclosing all the things that we think we ought to know. He
15 may have quite other ideas. That still doesn't open him to
16 the charge of leveling. It is only that it gives us ammuni-
17 tion and it fortifies us because we are not only accessible to
18 the public but infinitely more accessible than he and of course
19 when you go back home there are people -- and this is the No. 1
20 topic in their minds, and you have got to have something more
21 than a superficial answer.

22 MR. MORGAN: Senator, the President said that this bombing
23 was necessary because we had to raise the price of aggression
24 at the source. At every prior time that we have increased our
25 strength, the enemy has met the price. What if the enemy

1 continues the price and we run out of targets in North Viet
2 Nam?

3 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, now, we will know whether or not
4 the enemy will meet the price. The easiest way to determine
5 it is whether or not there is a sudden cessation in that
6 steady march of vehicles and Viet Cong soldiers down the Ho Chi
7 Minh Trail, part of which goes through Cambodia.

8 Now the last figure we had was that the infiltration was
9 about 4500 a month, and that has been rather constant. Now
10 we will watch and see what the effect is going to be. When
11 you find a diminution in that effort then you know that the
12 strikes have been exceedingly effective. The only way you will
13 get fuel down there then will be on the backs of coolies in
14 the form of heavy drums of gasoline and that will be equally
15 true when you try to fuel your airplanes.

16 MR. BRUNER: But Senator, one of the biggest concerns,
17 before, last January, when the doves in the House and the
18 Senate sent their letter to the President asking a continua-
19 tion of the bombing pause, one of their concerns was whether
20 or not Red China might come into the war on the side of the
21 North Vietnamese. Now if we continue the heavy bombing
22 raids in North Vietnam, does that not bring Red China closer to
23 having to make a decision?

24 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I see no reason why. I have never been
25 too seriously disposed over the allegations that have been

1

2 constantly made that it is an open invitation to bring Red China
3 into this conflict. After all, Red China is vulnerable in
4 her own right. Here she has set up these nuclear installations
5 and obviously we know where they are because of the effective-
6 ness of our reconnaissance.

7

8 Now suppose it should happen and you had to go in and
9 bomb out all these installations, the fruit of a long-time
10 labor? Red China doesn't have anything much that is disposable
11 except manpower, and millions of it. But when all is said and
12 done without weapons, what is it like?

13

14 MR. MORGAN: Tomorrow is the Fourth of July and Indepen-
15 dence Day would hardly be Independence Day without a Dirksen
16 speech somewhere. Have you got one booked for the Fourth?

17

18 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, let me say I had one booked and
19 strangely enough I had it booked for the Fourth of July, 1965.
20 The same place, the same speech, perhaps, for 1966. But a
21 year ago, two days or a day before the Fourth of July, I was
22 in an ambulance on the way to Walter Reed Hospital because of
23 recurrence of those intestinal spasms. This year I was so
24 unfortunate as to tumble out of that high-gear bed in the
25 same hospital and came up with a fractured hip and I am as full
of hardware as a country hardware store -- thinking of all the
nails and other gadgetry they put in, because they nailed me
together.

1 MR. MORGAN: So you are not going to make a Fourth of
2 July Speech. This will be the second time in how many years
3 that you haven't?

4 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I suppose since eternity. But you saw
5 me hobble in here on crutches, in a wheelchair, and the surgeons
6 don't like the idea of me getting very far from a medical base
7 for one thing, or clamoring around on airplanes for another, so
8 I have got to be content. But I will be thinking, I will be
9 ruminating about that great day, which is the greatest day in
10 our civil calendar.

11 MR. BRUNER: Is this going to also affect your campaigning
12 this fall, Senator?

13 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Wally, I am afraid so because there
14 comes a time when this hardware has to come out and I rather
15 dread the thought because then there will be another conval-
16 escence period. How long, I can't say, but it will be a good
17 many weeks before commencement for me.

18 Now if you ask me what "Commencement" is, it is when I
19 graduate from crutches to a cane.

20 MR. MORGAN: Continuing on the political business for
21 just a minute before we have to interrupt, Senator Dirksen,
22 since you can take somewhat of a detached view of the campaign
23 in Illinois, how do you judge the Percy Douglas race at this
24 point?

25 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I shouldn't mention this because

1 it is my own estimate before I even knew it, but somebody only
2 this morning, within the last half-hour, gave me a little
3 fill-in. I am of the opinion that our Republican candidate
4 is going to win. And now to fill in, I understand these
5 early polls show our candidate in a preferred position.

6 * * *

7 MR. MORGAN: Senator Dirksen, you have been a Taft Re-
8 publican, an Eisenhower Republican, a Goldwater Republican,
9 and some people even call you a Lyndon Johnson Republican.
10 What is your definition of a Dirksen Republican?

11 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, a garden variety of Republican
12 who takes seriously the traditions of his party, the precepts
13 of Abraham Lincoln and very notably, of course, his constant
14 and unremitting dedication to the principles of the Declara-
15 tion of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States.
16 And incidentally, I think that is a good note to strike, be-
17 cause we are on the threshold of Independence Day.

18 Wasn't it Lincoln, when he stood in Independence Hall in
19 Philadelphia who said if he had to give up those principles
20 he'd rather die on the spot? And mind you, he was on the way
21 to this man's town to take the oath as President of the United
22 States, but he dedicated himself to it, nor did he ever depart,
23 as a matter of fact.

24 MR. BRUNER: Senator, though, I think you will concede,
25 and I will say it in a complimentary way, that a few years

1 back -- I don't know just how many; perhaps you can tell us --
2 you suddenly seemed to rise above the partisan political pic-
3 ture and now you are in this rarified atmosphere of statesman-
4 ship. When did this come about and what brought it about?

5 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, Wally, I don't know. Maybe it is
6 introspective.

7 You know, I have a favorite quotation, oft times. When
8 I am thoroughly frustrated I can say as Solomon said, "Lord, give
9 Thy servant an understanding heart," and when you get an
10 understanding heart and you get perception and some wisdom
11 after the manner of Aristotle, of course the road is infinitely
12 easier than it otherwise would be. But I think another thing
13 happens. You see age gives perspective, too. You look back
14 and you think about the people who were here before we were
15 here, who built themselves into the roads, the bridges, the
16 fields, the factories, everything that constitutes America,
17 and they made their sacrifice and then they moved off into
18 infinity, and then came another generation. So just think,
19 we are the legacies of all those who have been in this country
20 before, so we have an obligation to the past that we so readily
21 forget, today. And with it goes a concomitant duty to the
22 future and that we are likely to forget. But when we remember
23 it, I think it begins to stabilize your views and begins to
24 set you up on higher ground. Whether you like it or not, it
25 becomes almost a very fixed thing and you are bound to take

1 those views.

2 MR.MORGAN: I think you are going to have to retract that
3 statement that you weren't going to make an Independence Day
4 address. You just made a capsuled one which fits in very well.

5 I hope you don't consider this question impertinent, but
6 I am afraid that we in the journalistic trade may have to plead
7 Guilty, a little, to having made sly remarks from time to time
8 about the organ quality of your voice and your histrionics as
9 a politician.

10 Has this ever angered you? What has been your reaction?

11 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, no. In public life there is no
12 such thing as impertinences. After all it is give and take.
13 You throw and you are thrown at, and as Brother Truman said,
14 if you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen. And all
15 things go. And you have got to accept it in good grace.

16 Look at the lawyers who go into a court room and they
17 fight like dogs, almost to the name-calling stage. But in
18 the evening they walk out of the court room almost arm in arm,
19 even though they are on opposite sides of the case. So you
20 have something of that same attribute in public service and
21 you ought to demean yourself accordingly.

22 MR. MORGAN: Speaking of the kitchen, sir, we are sitting,
23 as it were, right in front of it. This building has been
24 your workshop some thirty years.

25 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am glad you used the word "workshop."
It is so frequently forgotten with respect to the Capitol.

1 MR. MORGAN: First you were over on the House side for
2 sixteen years and you have been here on the Senate side for
3 more than fourteen. What do you consider your most important
4 accomplishment, legislative or otherwise?

5 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, if I had to put it in the large,
6 probably it would be my endeavors to stop legislation that
7 was not in the public interest. Because I have followed the
8 old precept of Gibbon, the great historian, who said "Progress
9 is made not so much by what goes on the statute book but rather
10 by what is kept off and what is not put on."

11 MR. BRUNER: Can you give us the one bill that you stopped
12 that you are happiest about?

13 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think I have had a part in stopping
14 a good many. As, for instance, the efforts to repeal Section
15 14(b) in the Taft-Hartley Act. There, of course, there was a
16 determination to do exactly that at the expense of the freedom
17 of the American worker, and I took almost a solemn, reverent
18 vow that it would be over my dead body. As a result we
19 organized and we were organized on both sides of the aisle so
20 that it was not a partisan endeavor, it was a bipartisan en-
21 deavor and I was very candid with the President about it.

22 I said, "You shouldn't have sent it but," I said, "since
23 you did, you are going to get a fight, and it will be fighting
24 all the way."

25 MR. MORGAN: The Congress has stopped you upon occasion

1 as well. They stopped you on your effort to make a Consti-
2 tutional Amendment effective repealing the Supreme Court's
3 one-man, one-vote. Where do you think you will get with your
4 amendment regarding prayers in the public schools?

5 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I am going to win. I am going to win
6 in a great big way, I am sure.

7 Now on apportionment, we had a different problem. It is
8 a little abstruse for the average citizen to explain to him
9 and develop the kind of background that you should have. Be-
10 cause as Lincoln once said, "Without the people, little can be
11 accomplished. With the people, nothing will fail."

12 But try to explain what you mean by the reapportioning of
13 your state legislatures and then you are in something of a
14 difficulty in making the case out in the hinterland. Here we
15 can make it because we have a familiarity with the language
16 and with those techniques. But with the Prayer Amendment,
17 this is just as simple as it can be. I have had the benefit
18 of advice of those attorneys who were in the New York Board of
19 Regents case before the U. S. Supreme Court, and also the
20 attorneys in the Stein v. Oshinsky case, where they recited
21 this little prayer:

22 "God is great, God is good, and we thank him
23 for this food,"

24 and they said, "It will not do," and as a result while the
25 U. S. District Judge upheld the parents who insisted on having

1 their children say that prayer, the Circuit Judge said No, and
2 it didn't go on appeal to the U. S. Court but the Board of
3 Regents case did.

4 MR. BRUNER: Well, why do you feel so strongly about this?

5 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Because, Wally, I think prayer is a
6 pipeline to God Almighty, and we recognize God in everything
7 we do.

8 Go into that House chamber and see it chizzled in that
9 new paneling, there: "In God we trust." We have done it on
10 our coins.

11 MR. MORGAN: Is that a governmental function, sir, to
12 provide the channel?

13 SENATOR DIRKSEN: We are not trying to make it a govern-
14 mental function. We just say, if the parents want their children
15 to pray in the public school, voluntarily, they ought to be
16 permitted to do so.

17 You specifically in the amendment provide that no school
18 board, no school authority, shall prescribe the form of the
19 prayer or the text of the prayer. But if their parents want
20 them to utter a little prayer, let there be a little
21 corner, a little space, a little vestibule, a little room, I
22 don't care what it is. Take them up on top of the roof of the
23 school building if they like or down in the deepest basement
24 of the school, but wherever it is, let them, of course, keep
25 that connection and never cut that pipeline.

1 MR. BRUNER: Well, Senator, you sound like someone who
2 has first-hand knowledge that prayer helps.

3 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I do, Wally. I told you once
4 before when my eyesight was in the balance and I quit that
5 branch on that end of the Congress, I was on my knees on a
6 Pennsylvania train and I said, "Lord, is this it, or isn't it?"

7 He said, "No." Just as emphatic as it could be. And
8 when the surgeons got the old knife out to cut this eye out --
9 that's my good eye -- I said, "No."

10 You see, you don't fly in the face of the advice of a
11 good many surgeons -- and there were seven on the staff --
12 without at least having something more than a slender reed to
13 fall back on, and that reed had to be an almost consuming
14 faith that there was work for me to do in this world and they
15 wanted to keep me around for awhile.

16 MR. MORGAN: Senator, do you think all of your Republican
17 colleagues have a pipeline to the precepts of Lincoln? I am
18 thinking particularly of the stand politically that some of
19 them take in the South regarding racial matters.

20 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I can only hope that they can see
21 the distilled wisdom of Lincoln at all times, as these problems
22 come up. There are actually no new problems. They have a
23 different form, a different context, but essentially and
24 basically, problems not unlike those that have been here before.
25 And Lincoln knew what they were. And what was the last word

1 he said in the last of the seven debates? He said, "Though
2 the tongues of Douglas and myself will be stilled --" and
3 he meant Stephen A. Douglas, with whom he was debating -- he
4 said, "I hope I have put down some blows for civil liberty
5 that will count and be remembered."

6 That was the substance of the last sentence in the last
7 of those seven debates. And I try to follow exactly that.

8 MR. BRUNER: Senator, looking ahead, now, what are you
9 looking forward to most in the years ahead? What do you see
10 as your goal, today?

11 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, a stable country. A country
12 that has stable money, a country
13 that goes steadily forward. And over and above everything else,
14 a country where the morale climate of freedom will not fail.

15 We are, today, what we are, because there is an atmosphere,
16 here, where you can go out and you have an opportunity to do
17 it for yourselves. There are no barricades. No impediments
18 standing in the way if you can do it. So you can enrich your-
19 self and while you are doing it you enrich your fellow men
20 also.

21 Show me any country in the world where there are no such
22 barricades. Here they are the exception. But now we are
23 moving in that direction and that disturbs me.

24 MR. BRUNER: A country that has a future has to have a
25 past. You certainly are a man of history. Why, then, are
you supporting the change in the West front of the Capitol,

1 which some people say will destroy all the vestages of his-
2 tory remaining in this Capitol building?

3 SENATOR DIRKSEN: For three or four reasons. No. 1,
4 there is a safety factor involved, here. You must have looked
5 at that wall and seen the bulges and the cracks. Secondly,
6 there are five volumes over in the Architect's Office by a
7 skilled engineering company from Brookline, Massachusetts, to
8 show that that wall is dangerous. And if we could go over
9 there we could see these wooden supports that they think are
10 going to hold up that wall.

11 Now about two weeks ago they had a little seismic tremor
12 down around Alexandria. Suppose we got one here? Who could
13 give any assurance that that wall couldn't fail, and with it
14 everything that hangs on it?

15 Now think of it. That is for safety. But think of it
16 in terms of the people who go through here. Thirty Thousand
17 a day.

18 * * * *

19 MR. MORGAN: Senator, the opponents to the change in the
20 West wall of the Capitol argue that it can be shored up and
21 made safe without the enormous expense of alteration. What
22 about it?

23 SENATOR DIRKSEN: You can put new soles on an old pair of
24 shoes but they are still old. And that is still going to be
25 an old sandstone wall, and what have you got for the expenditure,

1 and is it safe? And think of the tourists who go through there.
2 Project it now on the basis that there will be 50,000 a day
3 in 1955.

4 MR. BRUNER: Senator, one final question before you get
5 away from us, today: Is Lyndon Baines Johnson a good President?
6 How do you evaluate him?

7 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, he is a skilled president. He
8 is a president who is founded in history. And when he was a
9 majority leader and we were opposite numbers, we went on a
10 theory that this was a two-way street and government had to
11 be made to work, and he still undertakes that, and his door
12 is open any time I want to see him. My door is open any time
13 he wants to see me. My telephone line is open any time he
14 wants to call. And so from the standpoint of a cooperative
15 endeavor between that part of the legislative branch that I
16 have the privilege to represent, and the executive branch, I
17 must say he has done quite well.

18 MR. BRUNER: Thank you very much, Senator Dirksen, for
19 being with us on ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

20 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Thank you.

21 MR. MORGAN: Thank you, Senator.

22 * * *

23 NEXT WEEK, W. Averell Harriman, United States Ambassador At
24 Large.

25