

*The National Broadcasting Company Presents*



# MEET THE PRESS

*America's Press Conference of the Air*

*Produced by* LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

*Guest:* SENATOR EVERETT MCKINLEY DIRKSEN  
Republican of Illinois  
Senate Minority Leader

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get a disability bill out of this subcommittee last year, in the 88th Congress. It went no further, and I think it will be one of the first orders of business. And let me make it abundantly clear that that isn't for a moment any reflection upon the health and vigor and vitality of President Johnson, because I know him and I know what a vigorous person he really is.

**MR. SCHERER:** How should it work? What should the provisions be? Who should judge when a President is disabled?

**SENATOR DIRKSEN:** There are three or four different approaches to it, and we have had that problem in committee. Senator Bayh of Indiana, who is the Chairman of the subcommittee had one. His approach had, I think, the approval of the American Bar Association. Senator Hruska of Nebraska had one, and Senator Keating of New York had still another approach. But by the time we get it on the Committee table for discussion, I am sure that we can probably work out something that will be palatable and practical.

**MR. SCHERER:** You mentioned Vietnam a moment ago. You were at the White House Thursday when the President briefed you on the situation there. What do you think the United States should do about Vietnam? We can't seem to win it, yet we can't pull out. What do we do?

**SENATOR DIRKSEN:** Well, there are three things you could do—and there again I don't propose to make policy for the Administration. You can strike north into the Viet Cong territory. You can get out, as Senator Morse would have us do, or we can muddle as we have been muddling in the hope that we can get that political situation reasonably stabilized and then we can move forward toward a military victory. But let me remind you if we pull out of Vietnam—and I am not one of those who counsels that course—it will mean that the southernmost flank of the line that runs from Korea to Vietnam and which is our outside defense perimeter will suddenly have that flank turned and then all the trusted islands in the Pacific as well as the Philippines are in danger, and I will not counsel that kind of a course.

**MR. SCHERER:** You favor more muddling, then, as you put it, present policy?

**SENATOR DIRKSEN:** Well, what can you do but muddle until you can get the political situation stabilized. First, you are dealing with one government, then, you are dealing with another, and when stability is lacking, how can you very well go forward with a vigorous military effort?

**MR. SPIVAK:** Senator Dirksen, there are some political cynics who say that your Coordinating Committee is a plot rather than