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ABC'S

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

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 1961

GUEST: Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen
Republican from Illinois
Senate Minority Leader

PANEL: Peter Clapper, ABC Capitol Hill Reporter
Robert Lodge, ABC Washington Correspondent

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THE ANNOUNCER: From Washington, D. C., the American Broadcasting Company brings you ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

Senator Everett M. Dirksen, what are the issues?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I could answer with a statement or a question. Are the issues substantially different from what they were a quarter of a century ago and in that interim period? Or I could make that as a blank statement,

I recall in that first Congress in which I served that here were war clouds on the horizon, here are questions of housing, relief, recovery, reform, security, the budget, the legitimate needs, the preservation of

freedom as the essence of our enterprise system and when you evaluate it today, they are not substantially different and it indicates that history actually runs in parallels.

THE ANNOUNCER: You have heard the issues, and now for the answers.

Here to explore the issues are Robert Lodge, ABC Washington Commentator, and Peter Clapper, ABC Capitol Hill news correspondent.

To give us the answers is Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen, Republican of Illinois, the Senate Minority Leader.

Now with the first question for Senator Dirksen, Mr. Clapper.

MR. CLAPPER: Well, Senator Dirksen, President Kennedy has said that the release of those two RB-47 airman indicates that the Soviet Union is removing a serious obstacle to the improvement of Soviet-American relations. Do you think this indicates a summit meeting soon?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I do not know, as a matter of fact, but I do have a comment to make on your question. There are unresolved questions besides the two fliers. Delighted as we are that they have been released, what about the other 11 and what about Mr. Powers?

And then I should add, what about Ambassador Menshikov's statement here only within the last few days, as to what we were going to do for the Soviet Union now that they

released these two fliers. An amazing statement, to say the least.

MR. CLAPPER: Well, Senator, both Secretary of State Dean Rusk and U. N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson have indicated that an early Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting is not out of the question. Do you have any comment on this? Do you think one is out of the question or is not?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have no way of knowing. I presume an effort will be made to bring about another summit conference of some kind.

MR. CLAPPER: Would you favor such a meeting, sir?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you never can leave the lines of negotiation closed because after all these problems are not going to be resolved in a vacuum. They are dictated by personalities and only as personalities come together in a fairly decent atmosphere can they be talked out in the hope that you can contrive a rather durable result.

MR. LODGE: Senator, do you think any concessions have been made to the Soviet Union in return for the release of the fliers?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That I do not know, but I hope not because it was an illegal act to begin with and I don't believe we should make concessions or to appease the Soviet Union because if we do, under these circumstances, next time around they will ask for even more.

MR. CLAPPER: Does the return of these airmen, Senator Dirksen, indicate that Khrushchev might be trying to make the Republicans look bad because it didn't happen when President Eisenhower was President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, it could well be, but I think there is a more basic reason than that. Mr. Khrushchev as you know advances and retreats. There is a strategy, there is a technique about it, and everything they do has an implication and all you have to do is to wait for the next move. And I do not believe that he will concern himself particularly with merely trying to embarrass the Republicans.

MR. CLAPPER: You said that he advances and retreats and all we have to do is wait.

Now is this an indication of the type of policy you would propose, sir, or would you propose something more --

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, we can invite him, but I do not believe it is our business to invite him after the fracture of the last summit. The move is his and if in good grace he wants to sit down and discuss these basic questions obviously we are ready and should keep ourselves ready.

MR. LODGE: You don't think then this timing of the Soviet moves -- the good grace after the Kennedy inaugura. will inhibit a bipartisan foreign policy then

in Congress?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, who is to say how much spade work have we done by Ambassador Thompson before the result was achieved. We will have to wait and see what Khrushchev has in mind, but when it comes to bipartisan foreign policy in so far as that is possible obviously we would like to go along, but we have some firm notions about it, namely that we do not want to get our country in a position of appeasement which for all the world will look like weakness and that we are dealing from weakness rather than from strength.

MR. CLAPPER: Senator, the Administration has not allowed interviews with those two American airmen who have been returned or with their wives for that matter.

The Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, Senator Bridges, has said that this looks like an Administration gag policy.

Now can you comment on that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes. Because when Admiral Burke made his speech to a dinner meeting here I understand it had to be cleared by the State Department and others because the thought was or there were some truculent sentiments that it might offend the Soviet Union.

Now I see our diplomacy is going to follow the normal

secret channels. The word is not mine. It was in every headline that I saw. So the question is, notwithstanding the fact that there was so much emphasis on this question of secrecy in government, are we now going to have more rather than less secrecy. It is going to be a very interesting question.

MR. LODGE: Well, where do you draw the line between protecting the best interests of the United States, as the White House put it, and government secrecy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, frankly I have never quarreled with the President on many of these things, where national security is involved. President Eisenhower had that problem and I suppose President Kennedy will have that problem also. And I doubt whether you can just lay down a hard and fast rule, because there are times when it is in the best interests of the country not to disclose everything. And that is a matter that you have to determine as you go along.

MR. CLAPPER: What about the possibility of censuring, the so-called censuring of Admiral Burke's speech as being a possible appeasement toward Russia?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have not examined the speech, I haven't heard it. I haven't read it. So I can't say whether the language in question might have been offensive. I haven't seen it. There have been modifications in the

speech, of course, and knowing Admiral Burke, knowing the straightforward and steadfast kind of a leader he really is, I think it would be in the national interest if he were permitted to say some rather firm things because he speaks from a vantage point of a lifetime of military endeavor and leadership that is quite different from the position from which a politician or one in the Congress might speak.

MR. CLAPPER: On this matter of executive privilege, when you and Representative Halleck used to visit former President Eisenhower at the White House, you would come out and there would be the television as and you would make some usually informative and often loquacious statements before them, but it appears that perhaps the Kennedy Administration will not follow this policy.

Do you feel this is good or bad?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I do not know. I must speak for myself, but in the press conferences and on TV and in the White House I used to say in advance "Look, if you ask me of something that really occurred, I am going to give you an answer and you may hang my hide to dry." And I did that in a press conferences up on the Hill, but I felt it deserved a candid and a proper answer and I try to be candid, and if for any reason I had to pull a punch, I left it up

to the press and the TV and said "Look, you will get me in trouble, but I will answer you anyway if that is the way you want it."

MR. CLAPPER: But you felt your arrangement at that time was entirely satisfactory?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes, and never did the President inhibit Mr. Halleck and myself. Never did he put any answers in our mouths. Never did he say "You can't talk about this," or "You can talk about that."

We were absolutely free and uninhibited agents and we could discuss anything that happened in the White House conference.

MR. LODGE: From what has happened then since the inauguration, from what the new Administration has done, do you think you have grounds for charging them with excessive secrecy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am content to let the record speak for itself and as it unfolds, there will be a better opportunity to evaluate it because certainly I would not want to be unfair with the President of the United States because he is in possession of information no doubt particularly in the international field that I do not always have.

MR. LODGE: One more question on the Admiral Burke speech that was suppressed. Do you think the Naval Chief

of Staff should speak out on foreign policy matters, should be able to criticize the Soviet Union?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Let's get the record correct. The speech was not suppressed. He made the speech, but I understand it was examined by the State Department and it could be others, and some modifications were made. But he is a very careful person with words. I have known Admiral Burk intimately for years, and there have been things that probably could have been imparted to our people that they ought to know.

MR. CLAPPER: Senator Dirksen, we were mentioning that the Democratic leaders emerged from the White House the other day and didn't have anything to say. Now one of those who did not was the new Vice President, Mr. Johnson. He, of course, had a great deal to say when he was the Majority Leader.

Do you suspect that he will have a less influential role now in this higher position?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That I do not know. Now this was the very first leadership meeting and you may recall on the Senate floor I said "Does it now look as if you 'clear with Pierre," meaning Pierre Salinger. That I do not know but it did seem strange that one so lovable and so loquacious as Hubert Humphrey couldn't think of anything to say -- something architectural about not

being able to get the floor plan of the White House.

It is so unlike them.

MR. LODGE: Well, the Senate Democrats have invited Vice President Johnson to preside over their caucuses. Why didn't the Republicans do this with Vice President Nixon?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't know that there was any particular reason for it. We felt that was a legislative meeting that we had and while he is a part of the national legislature in the sense that he does preside and he does break a tie and he is a part of the Administration, we felt beyond that however it was really our show and we should conduct it, and we did.

MR. LODGE: Then you don't approve of the Vice President intervening in matters of the legislative branch?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: There I must be very forbearing and never try to tell them how to run their show. That is their business, and we have to run ours.

MR. CLAPPER: Turning now to the question of Republican leadership, Senator Dirksen, Republican Congressional leaders are quoted as saying that the former Vice President Nixon now out of office will lose his influence in the Party:

Do you think he is all washed up?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I do not think so. You do

not wash up a man who came so close to victory and who has been in public service for more than 14 years, served in the House, served in the Senate, and served for eight years as Vice President. So he will be going around the country, his influence will be felt in the party and his influence will be felt here. And as a matter of fact when he has something constructive and vital and worthwhile to contribute it should be contributed.

MR. CLAPPER: Do you plan to ask him to appear before your party caucuses here?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: We hope from time to time to have former members of the Administration, the Cabinet and even the President to come before the legislative leaders' meetings, which we have already --

MR. LODGE: You mean President Eisenhower.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes, which we have already formalized.

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MR. CLAPPER: And former Vice President Nixon?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Indeed he so. And anybody else.

Anybody who can help contribute to help convey the Republican image to the country and to making known to people the traditional party and the policy of the party will be welcome and I am sure they will be available for invitation when the time comes.

MR. LODGE: Well Senator, to compare Mr. Nixon's role with that of Adlai Stevenson after his defeats by President Eisenhower, there he was stuck out in Illinois as a private citizen as Mr. Nixon will be out in California and he didn't have too much influence other than being titular leader over the congressional Democrats, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Rayburn.

Now how can Mr. Nixon have any more of an influential role in the Republican Party during the next four years?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Mr. Nixon is a Republican. He is our Mr. Nixon.

MR. LODGE: Is he Mr. Goldwater's Mr. Nixon, though?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: He is our Mr. Nixon. He was our candidate. He was the Party's candidate and I do not duck the question of whether he was the titular leader of the party, because he is. There is nothing else to be said about it. And I recognize that fact. So if he can contribute something -- and he can -- obviously we will want to invite him back, according to his convenience.

MR. CLAPPER: It has been reported that the power in Republican circles is going to gravitate to you and Representative Halleck. Can you comment on this -- rather than Mr. Nixon.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Definitely so. Our problem is a legislative one. We do not run the executive branch of the government but we do have a very vital and aggressive in both branches of the government and they must make themselves felt. Whereas at the national level that is where you have to build and reestablish yourself. It is a legislative problem to begin with.

MR. CLAPPER: There has been some criticism by Congressional leaders, Senator Dirksen, that Vice President Nixon, former Vice President Nixon, wasn't tough enough in his campaign, that he lost the campaign himself. Can you comment on that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It is like all the post mortems in every campaign. How did we lose? Then comes out every idea, every aspect of the campaign and you live it over and over again. But who is to say who is right and who is wrong, because it is after all a body of opinion. You try to analyze it scientifically, I do not know that that comes up with the question or the answer.

Was it due to the fact that they had the TV debates? Did Mr. Nixon score or did Mr. Kennedy score in the debates?

Did he strike hard enough at certain times? Did he fail to emphasize certain issues as I would emphasize them?

You can take your choice and you can get as many opinions as there are people with affirmative ideas in the whole political medium.

MR. LODGE: Well, we would like to get your opinion today, Senator. Do you feel he was tough enough in his campaign?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, there are areas in which I would have been infinitely tougher and would have made it a personal campaign in the sense that there is a combative instinct in all people and it manifests itself in a political campaign. And so you've got to have a little gore in a campaign to make it exciting and interesting, but it is more than that. It is a good way to get your story over. And I have tried it out and I am rather happy to report, and I have never had this opportunity before, that in the states where I campaigned, all of the members of the Senate came back, and I stick a little feather in my hat for that one.

MR. LODGE: And you conducted a tough campaign?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I laid it on the line as emphatically as a feeble vocabulary could do so.

MR. LODGE: What are Mr. Nixon's chances for 1964, if he doesn't give indications that he will conduct a tougher

campaign?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, that is always speculative. Who shall say? There is an acceleration to the age, there is a tempo, there is a swift change in issues or aspects of issues, and who shall say what the picture will be by 1964.

The first problem for the party is 1962, because all the House members will be on the ballot and one-third of the Senate.

MR. LODGE: Aren't you ready to predict that Mr. Nixon will be the candidate for the Republicans in 1964?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I am no hand at predicting that far down the road.

MR. CLAPPER: How about a little less far? How about the Governorship of California in '62?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I do not know. That is a matter wholly within the decision of Mr. Nixon, and he, frankly, has not indicated to me, and no one else in so far as I know, what his precise plans are with respect to '62, so I would be guessing.

MR. LODGE: In your opinion do you think he would be able to play a stronger role in the Republican Party without holding some sort of office?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, he intends, according to reports, to be campaigning in all sections of the country. That

means he will continue to reestablish his contacts with the party, with the leadership, in all sections of the nation.

MR. LODGE: It seems that the National Chairman is playing a very prominent role -- Senator Morton got a lot of attention with his pep talk to the Republicans in Chicago the other day. Do you think when Mr. Morton steps down from the National Chairmanship to run for reelection to the Senate that Mr. Nixon would be a good successor?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I do not know whether he would be interested in becoming National Chairman, but as for Mr. Morton, he is a vigorous, intelligent, understandable person and it is his duty to be dynamic and to go to the various meetings and keep steam in the party boiler and that is what he has been doing and has been doing a good job.

MR. LODGE: Would you want to see Mr. Nixon the National Chairman yourself?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have no bias in the matter, as the witness said. I am not prejudiced one way or the other and those are matters not for me to determine but for the National Committeemen and Committeewomen who deal with the problem of the National Chairmanship.

MR. LODGE: Well, just who will unify the Republican Party and hold it together during the next four years

to provide responsible opposition and therefore have a better chance in 1964?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: In considerable measure that will be our job on Capitol Hill. I thought and I say this with the utmost of modesty, that we did a creditable job in the 86th Congress. There was a cohesion, there was a unity, there was a force.

MR. LODGE: But you had a leader in the White House.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, we did it right up there in the Congress because we had no more members in the Senate than we have now. We had 35 then, we have 35 now. And while there was something cohesive about those White House leadership meetings, those now we will carry on on our own. But they will not impair our fighting instincts and they will not impair our aggressive efforts to get over the Republican image, the Republican program, and what we propose to do.

MR. LODGE: Well, will the Congressional leaders be able to keep the Goldwaters on the one hand and the Rockefeller on the other hand to keep from tearing the party apart?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I must give you almost a static answer. I have said time and time again, the Republican umbrella is a big umbrella. It admits of all shades of opinion, and don't forget, the party was born out of five

or six different parties. Back in 1956 and 1860. They didn't submerge their little differences, but they did unite on the big issue. Lincoln said "I hope the minor issues will not separate us," and they didn't and that is why we elected a President in 1860, Abraham Lincoln. And we try to do the same thing. That is largely the Republican tradition.

MR. CLAPPER: Senator Dirksen, you have mentioned the 86th Congress. Now how about the 87th, do you think there is going to be a 100-day honeymoon with the Kennedy Administration? What is coming.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, we will have to hurry because pretty soon a month will have gone by which has been devoted mainly to organization work and I say with all charity, because I know, it takes time to set up your committees, your Senate officers, your subcommittees, get them money for the subcommittees to work and do all the necessary chores, plus, of course, the inevitable fight you have on rules, both in the House and in the Senate.

MR. CLAPPER: Excuse me, sir. Let's forget about the possibility of a hundred days. Let's talk about the honeymoon.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: All right. I don't know whether you are thinking about 100 days which was the case in

1933 -- my first session, incidentally. I was there for the 100 days. But whether there will be a 100 days or a honeymoon, I do not know. I do know this, that when these bills are introduced -- Administration bills -- they will go to committee and we shall have our say. That is within our province and our jurisdiction. We are entitled to it and we are going to make the best of it, even though they have had hearings on most of these bills before.

I think that we owe it to the country to analyze them carefully, their impact upon the economy, and then when they come to the Senate floor or the House floor, to make the kind of a fight that the bill reported calls for.

MR. LODGE: Senator, you indicated that you are going to present a substitute measure for all the top five priority items on the Kennedy calendar except possibly for Medicare.

Now do you expect these substitute measures to get through the Congress, the Democratic Congress with a Democrat in the White House, besides?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I never let my expectations be set so high that the result will be some frustration and embarrassment. But these measures that I have introduced in the main are the last look that the Eisenhower

Administration had at that field. So in the case of distressed areas, the substitute bill I have introduced is the last one which came along with the President's message and it is presently before the Banking Committee of the Senate and I shall offer it as a substitute on the floor of the Senate, because when we passed an area development bill before it only got through the Senate by two votes.

MR. LODGE: Well, if the Eisenhower depressed areas bill or area redevelopment bill wasn't able to get through the Congress when he was in the White House -- a Republican in the White House -- how will it get through now with Mr. Kennedy in the White House?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, who knows how much new information has come to the attention of the members? Who knows to what extent they may have been sobered by the thinking of the citizenry back home and who knows how much importance they will attach to budget considerations? Because if you are going to express these programs you do it with money, and money and budget becomes a powerful consideration and will be one of those overriding factors all through the present session.

MR. CLAPPER: Now some GOP House leaders have said that this factor of money in the Kennedy economic programs in this country is going to limit our defense capability. They are very worried that our defenses may suffer because

of the Kennedy social programs. Do you have any comment on this, sir?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I could make you a long comment, but it would be infinitely better and more edifying for the people of the country if there was a reasoned military answer to that and since I rose to the exalted rank of second lieutenant on the front in World War I, I do not put myself in the class with Arleigh Burke or the very celebrated tacticians and strategists that we have in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force, so my answer might not be all too good.

MR. CLAPPER: Now you said that the Kennedy task force proposals would cost the country initially I believe about \$5.3 billion a year.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That was only on a basis of four task force reports.

MR. CLAPPER: So at least that amount would be spent?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, there are 15 other task forces still to report.

MR. CLAPPER: So with this in mind, where do you think the money is going to come from?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, first Mr. Nixon's estimate of the campaign was not too wide of the mark when he said something around \$15 or \$16 billion "if you antedulate this program into action."

Do not forget there are 226 pledges in the Administration's program and of course we wouldn't have time on this program to go into 226 pledges. But I say you express it in terms of money. The Peace Corps, the Youth Conservation Corps, stepups for the Air Force, for the Army, for the Navy. Area development. Aid for school construction.

Name me one and tell me how you express them in action without money and the money has got to come out of the common purse. You are either going to borrow it or you are going to get it in the form of taxes, but you get back to the primal source, you hock the people's credit or you have to get it in the form of taxes, and when you spell it out, if they are going to do it in this session, or in this and other sessions, there will be a heavy fiscal impact upon the taxpayers of the country.

MR. LODGE: Of course President Kennedy hasn't committed himself on any of these task force reports as yet so we really don't know exactly what he is going to propose.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Exactly so, and that is why my answers are always on the guarded side.

MR. LODGE: Well now in depressed areas, or area redevelopment, do you think there will be some sort of compromise between the \$120 million outlay that your bill calls for and the \$320 million that the Douglas

Administration bill calls for?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I will work at it with vigor. Mine calls for \$190 million. That includes \$100 million of facilities loans. The Administration bill calls for \$389 million. We may resolve at some inbetween figure.

MR. CLAPPER: Do you oppose medical aid for the aged through Social Security, Senator?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have opposed it.

MR. CLAPPER: Why?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I thought the program that the Eisenhower Administration offered was infinitely better.

MR. LODGE: Excuse me, Senator. Thank you for your interesting comments. Our time is up. Now if you would in the next 30 seconds, would you summarize your answers to these issues?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, perhaps a historical summary is as good as any. I think back to the continuity of government from the days that I first landed here. It is a continuous pattern. Government has to go on, and you discover that that when the durable bases for legislation in every field have been laid, succeeding Congresses come along and add a plaster here and a plaster there. So when I said that the basic issues are not different from what they were long ago, I think that can be pretty well supported if one only wants to dip into the history.

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