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SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1959

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GUEST: SENATOR EVERETT MC KINLEY DIRKSEN  
REPUBLICAN FROM ILLINOIS

PANEL:

PEGGY WHEDON, Moderator  
HOLLY O'CONNOR, American University  
NANCY NYSTROM, Rollins College, Florida  
DARLENE SINATRE, American Legion Auxiliary's 1959  
Girls Nation  
JERRY WILLIAMS, Georgetown University  
LEWIS GAWTHROP, Johns Hopkins Univerisity

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THE ANNOUNCER: Here comes the future! From Washington, D. C., we present COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE. Our guest today is the Honorable Everett McKinley Dirksen, Republican Senator from Illinois, who will meet our college reporters in their unrehearsed news conference. Now here substituting for Ruth Hagy is our Moderator, Peggy Whedon.

MISS WHEDON: Hello, and welcome to COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE. I am Peggy Whedon, substituting for Ruth Hagy who is on vacation.

Our guest today is Senate Republican leader Everett M. Dirksen of Illinois. Senator Dirksen, it is a great please to have you with us again.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Delighted to be back on COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE.

MISS WHEDON: Now I would like you to meet our panel of university reporters. From Rollins College, Nancy Nystrom. From Johns Hopkins University, Lewis Gawthrop. From Loves Park, Illinois, representing the American Legion Auxiliary's 1959 Girls Nation, Darlene Senatré.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Peggy, you have to pause there while I give a special salute to Darlene. I have been in her home town just north of Rockford, Illinois, and I am delighted to see her here.

MISS WHEDON: She was selected because she came from your state, Senator.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That is right.

MISS WHEDON: From Georgetown University, Jerry Williams, and from American University, Holly O'Connor.

As the Minority Leader, Senator Dirksen is responsible for the Republican program in the Senate, a program that may decide the political future of the Republican Party in 1960. So let's begin the questioning with Holly O'Connor.

MISS O'CONNOR: Senator Dirksen, you and Mr. Halleck have spent a good deal of news reel time attacking Democratic spenders for feeding inflationary fevers.

However despite your efforts the Gallop Poll today shows the voters picked Democrats as the party more interested in keeping prices down. Now do you concede that your anti-spending, anti-inflationary issue is a failure?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, I would just say that I would lose all faith and confidence in the Gallop Poll, on the basis of the efforts that we have made and the measures that we have contrived in serving the cause of anti-inflation and economy.

MISS O'CONNOR: Well, if you face the fearsome facts, haven't the Democratic leaders, Senator Johnson and Speaker Rayburn, with their promises to cut the President's budget by a billion dollars, actually snatched your issue away from you?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I doubt it very much. I think if you look at the record you will discover that after we made the

initial fight they fell back from one position to another and finally we got down to manageable proportions in these budget items so I refer to it on occasions as "Operation Retreat" or "Operation Fall-Back."

MISS O'CONNOR: What was your own role in bringing the Democrats around?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Constantly standing by the President's budget.

MR. GAWTHROP: Senator, Senator Javits has recently stated that as far as the Republican Party is concerned "I don't think as yet it is clearly identified in the American mind with an affirmative program of its own."

Do you agree with that statement, Senator?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Definitely not. I think we are identified with a program. Our program goes back to the policy in the Convention of 1956. It is the same fundamental program that it has always been and I think it is suitably identified in the public mind with those basic and fundamental things.

MR. GAWTHROP: Well, Senator, isn't it a fact that the Democrats and Republicans are so close together on issues that the 1960 Presidential race is just going to reduce itself to one of personalities?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You would not have thought so if you had taken good account of the initial statements made in January when the 86th Congress began, because there were so

many things that were proposed that have not eventuated as yet and are not likely to eventuate, meaning of course the program from the other side of the aisle.

As for ourselves, we stand exactly where we stood last year and the year before, and that gives implementation to the fact that our program, I think, is well identified in the public mind.

MR. WILLIAMS: Senator, another Gallop Poll made public last week said that if elections were held today, a Democratic group composed of Adlai Stevenson for President and Senator Jack Kennedy for Vice President would win over a combination of Nixon for President and Rockefeller for Vice President.

Now in view of this seeming lead, how can the Republicans hope to offset this?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, Jerry, about the best answer I can give you is that it is still 16 or 17 months until election day, and oh how things can change from month to month in this country!

MISS WHEDON: Senator, this brings us to our prize winning letter which has to do with election day. It comes to us from Mrs. R. K. Bush, of 117 Anderson Street, Columbia, Missouri. For this letter Mrs. Bush will receive a complete 30-volume set of Encyclopedia Americana. She asks:

"Back at the 1952 Republican Convention, you, along with other backers of Senator Taft, lashed out at Thomas E. Dewey

for his activities in securing the Presidential nomination for General Eisenhower. Now it is widely reported that Mr. Dewey may be the king maker behind Governor Rockefeller at next year's convention. Is history repeating itself? How do you explain Mr. Dewey's considerable influence in the Republican Party, and do you think it is good for the party?"

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, the answer to the first part probably is that it would be strange that a man who has served with distinction, as Governor of his state, wouldn't continue to be interested in politics. Now when it comes to influence, or behind the scenes activity, that is a matter on which I can't very well comment because I do not know. I know, however, over a long experience in Washington that influence is assigned to or arrogated to this individual or that, and too often the case is highly overstated and the influence is overrated. But it would be strange if Mr. Dewey as an American citizen didn't continue his interest in political life. And obviously he is free to stand behind or to endorse or to select for himself any candidate that he desires. That is in the good American tradition.

MISS WHEDON: Will you challenge him in 1960 should he propose Governor Rockefeller?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, that is a long ways off and there are so many decisions to be made, and maybe there would be no occasion to challenge. Who knows? That is entirely in the

speculative realm.

MISS WHEDON: Darlene --

MISS SINATRE: You have been a friend of Governor Nelson Rockefeller for quite a long time and I would like to know, do you think he would accept second place, or Vice President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Darlene, I haven't the slightest idea. Those are individual decisions that the individual in question must make and what he would do under given circumstances, only time can disclose.

MISS NYSTROM: Senator Dirksen, do you think Vice President Nixon's trip to Moscow has rallied political support behind him and advanced his political and Presidential prospects?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think he has done himself significant good. First, because he has exhibited a tough-minded attitude, he spoke up to Khrushchev, he accepted every challenge, he showed no timidity, even though he was a guest in that country. And I think he has helped our cause. I think he has helped himself, and frankly I am quite proud of his performance in the Soviet Union.

MR. GAWTHROP: Granted, Senator, that he may have helped himself, do you think the Vice President's talks with Khrushchev have furthered our foreign policy with Russia in any respects?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes, I frankly do, because I believe our position is best enhanced when we indicate our strength

and do it courageously and in forthright style. And so there was no weasling, there was no timidity whatsoever on the part of the Vice President and that in my judgment served our cause best.

MISS O'CONNOR: Senator, you made headlines this week when you told a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee that if one of your constituents was interested in a quasi-judicial hearing before one of the federal regulatory commissions, the natural thing to do would be for you to make an off-the-record contact with a commissioner, or a hearing examiner, whom you had met perhaps at a cocktail party. The question was, would you make the same sort of off-the-record approach to a federal judge about a case pending in his court?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Holly, my first comment is, I never cease to marvel over the fact that plain truth and plain candor can earn editorials and get headlines. I alluded to a practice that has been going on every since I came to this town more than 26 years ago. But the answer is in the case of a federal judge, definitely not. You see we serve here in a representative capacity. We serve so many people. And the emphasis that I placed on my comment was that when a proceeding is pending somewhere and your constituents want to get some idea of what its status is, you make inquiry without any endeavor to influence anybody. I never felt that I could influence them in the first place because if I felt by a



telephone call that I could influence someone who is in an adjudicatory position in government, probably he ought not to be in government, as a matter of fact.

MISS O'CONNOR: Since these regulatory commissioners have to come to Congress for appropriations and for reconfirmation, when you make inquiry don't you in fact put considerable pressure on them to decide in favor of your constituent?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You say do we in fact?

MISS O'CONNOR: Yes. Don't you in fact?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, the answer is very definitely No, because so often, and more often than not, these adversary situations that they speak of involve more than one of your own constituents, and obviously you wouldn't want to be partial or take one side or the other under those circumstances. And those calls in the main are calls of inquiry, because this is a big and baffling and bewildering government and it is not at all strange that the citizenry should get a little lost because even Congressmen and Senators oftentimes get lost, to ascertain where to go and learn who speaks with authority on these things.

So you try to inquire and you help them to the extent that you can impart to them what the status is.

But if there is any belief that a mere telephone call of inquiry influences a hearing officer, or an examiner, or a commissioner on one of the regulatory agencies, well nothing

in my judgment could be further from the fact.

MR. GAWTHROP: Well, Senator, I think you are being unduly modest here. Certainly a telephone call from the Senator Minority Leader -- the right hand man to the President -- must carry a certain amount of influence with it, just as it did with the President's aide, Mr. Sherman Adams. And it seems to me that that is what the whole case was about as far as Mr. Adams was concerned.

My point is, won't you concede that there certainly is a lot of pressure behind a phone call -- even if it is implied -- not explicit?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, Lewis, I wouldn't concede -- and let's make it very personal. Suppose you were a commissioner on one of the regulatory agencies like the Federal Trade Commission and I should call up and make inquiry about a pending case. What would be your attitude?

MR. GAWTHROP: Well, I would prefer you to make the inquiry in an official capacity rather than --

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You tell me what would you do under the circumstances?

MR. GAWTHROP: Under the circumstances knowing that I had to appear before you possibly for appropriations for my agency and also possibly for Senate confirmation for my reappointment, I think I would give it serious consideration.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, then, depending on how much

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consideration you gave, I think at once you would confess the fact that you shouldn't be in government if you were influenced so easily.

MR. GAWTHROP: I still don't think, Senator, that unofficial inquiries by public servants, or public officials in life -- I mean they should be done in a more official capacity, wouldn't you say that? I mean would you object to any of these inquiries being inserted officially into a public record?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't think I would, as a matter of fact.

MR. WILLIAMS: The U. S. Court of appeals in the recent Sangaman (?) TV case held that adversary proceedings by the regulatory agencies are of a judicial nature and all the judicial process procedures apply, including a prohibition against off-the-record communications with the judge.

Would you make the same kind of off-the-record approach to a federal judge about a case in the court on which he is sitting in judgment?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: If it is a case between one or two people or even more people, on an adversary proceeding before a federal judge, very definitely not. Here, however, you are dealing with a public license issued by the government to a TV station. That is public business. Somebody calls and wants to make inquiry. I could never see there was

anything wrong in making an inquiry because all you try to do is get the facts and convey those facts. You become nothing more than a transmission belt.

MISS WHEDON: I don't quite understand then why you would object to having these inquiries put in a public record for all the public to see.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have never gone in for concealment of anything that I do. Your life here is like a goldfish and consequently I never mind disclosure.

MR. GAWTHROP: Well, Senator, in connection with this you stated that you feel that your usefulness in public life will end in the event that Congress should happen to pass a law which would prevent you from making these unofficial approaches to officials on behalf of your constituents.

Would you say that this is an example of modern Republicanism, sir, and may we also assume that the President shares your beliefs on this?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Number one, I haven't the slightest idea what the President's belief is on this score. Number two, it has precisely nothing to do with modern Republicanism, or any other kind of Republicanism, and third perhaps my statement should have been modified to the extent that I might say some of the usefulness goes out for the very good reason that in a representative capacity you are just trying to serve your people back home, and when you do it without any intent

to influence, particularly in an adversary proceeding -- that has been going on so long, and comes within the framework of representative government.

MISS O'CONNOR: The House Labor Committee has just reported out a labor reform bill which is considerably watered down from the Senate-approved version. I wondered, if the House passes this Committee bill, what will be your attitude in Conference Committee? Do you feel that the House bill is better than no bill?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: My attitude would be about the same that I have expressed privately and publicly, even before the Senate finally concluded its actions on the bill that we sent to the House. I thought the Senate bill was weak. I thought it was inadequate. I felt that it did not meet the challenges on the labor-management reform horizon today, and so in proportion as the House waters down the Senate version, we get even further from the goal we hope to realize.

MISS O'CONNOR: Is it so bad you would advise the President to veto it if the bill is watered down --

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Holly, I cannot tell you because at the moment my best information is a little statistical. I understood the House Labor Committee wrote 104 amendments into the bill. I cannot imagine, of course, that most of those or even a good share of them were designed to strengthen the bill. I am quite certain they did very little if anything with secondary boycotts, with the so-called nomansland cases and the so-called blackmail picketing issue and those are the things that have crowded upon the attention and ingratiated themselves into the interests of the people and unless Congress does something about it, I think it fails in that field.

MR. WILLIAMS: Senator, on the other hand if the House passes a more stringent labor bill, what do you think will happen in the conference?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you never know until you have gone into conference, you have been there for awhile and everybody has had an opportunity to express at least a preliminary opinion and estimate, and the thing begins to bottom down and then you can tell better.

MR. GAWTHROP: Senator, since you will be one of the conferees -- probably will be one of the conferees -- could you tell us what your position would be?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I will be for the strongest bill that we could get.

MISS NYSTROM: Senator Dirksen, do you personally feel that

the Congress should pass a bill that is capable of controlling labor leaders such as Jimmie Hoffa, even if it is over the decision of organized labor?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Very definitely so. And that is one of the things we had in mind by the various amendments that were offered, when the bill was under consideration in the Senate. Unfortunately we failed. We could not get enough votes to write those amendments into the Senate version, but we must deal with it, even as we had to deal with the monopoly power of big business a great many years ago. Today we have big government, we have big business and we have big labor. There must be that degree of decent regulation without infringing upon the rights of the average worker, but at the same time protecting those rights against leaders, when there is trespass on those rights.

MISS SINATRE: Since the administration favors neither the Senate bill or the House version, does this mean that the President will veto either one?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Darlene, this gives me a good chance to say what I have said on other occasions; but it didn't reach out far enough. I am never advised whether the President is going to veto a bill or not. I do not ask him. He does not volunteer the information until it is on his desk and he has had a chance to examine and analyze it, along with his advisors and associates so I wouldn't know what the President would do but

I can say this by way of affirmative response to your question that the Administration bill which was sent up to the Hill early in the session had provisions relating to blackmail, picketing and secondary boycotts and so forth, and was infinitely stronger, and my deepest regret is that we did not get that bill through the Senate and over to the House.

MR. WILLIAMS: Senator, do you think either of the present bills -- that is, the one before the House and the Senate -- is adequate to deal with labor leaders such as Mr. Hoffa, and the abuses revealed by the Committee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: In my judgment and in so far as I am familiar with what the House has done to the bill, the answer would be No.

MISS O'CONNOR: Do you think it will cramp Mr. Hoffa's style even a little bit?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Holly, that is one of those personal questions to which I couldn't give you a really good answer. I wouldn't know, as a matter of fact.

MR. GAWTHROP: Senator, this morning's news states that Hoffa is going to organize a political action committee in the Teamsters to prepare for the Congressional elections in 1960. How effective do you think such action would be? Does this disturb you personally?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It has never disturbed me. I have seen it happen before in other fields, but I want to make



this general comment: When we get to that day, that each large economic group in the United States has a political actionist group, then it becomes only a question of time of who has the largest group, who will control government, and when that day comes, we are going to be in a sorry state.

MR. GAWTHROP: Then I infer then that you are opposed to such groups as labor groups having their own political action committee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I would never deny to a group, never deny to an individual a right to take political action because it is a free representative country, where representatives at all levels, local state and national, are selected, and who have their functions in government -- Congress as an example has the exclusive law-making function in the federal government. But when it carries itself to the point where it will dominate, and the answer is "You will either give us this, or else," then of course we begin to throw our economy into the straitjacket of what a single group wants and then the fighting will really start, Lewis.

MR. GAWTHROP: And Senator, you would also apply these remarks that you just made to such groups as the American Farm Bureau and the National Association of Manufacturers?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I would say any large economic group.

MISS O'CONNOR: Is there any basis to the report that several leading Republican Senators are planning to run

for reelection next year on right-to-work platforms?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: In so far as I know, Holly, I do not think so.

MISS O'CONNOR: And considering the way the issue boomeranged last year, would you advise against reviving it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you would have to refine your question a little. When you say on a right-to-work platform, you didn't indicate whether you mean at the state level or at the federal level.

MISS O'CONNOR: At the state level.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: At the state level.

That I could not tell you. There hasn't been too much sentiment certainly in the Senate or in the House about a federal right-to-work statute, because I think everybody is pretty well aware of the fact that you just build up another bureaucracy. Trying to enforce it and implement it from Washington through the country would be beset with great difficulties, and besides, it is dubious whether it would be advisable as such.

MR. WILLIAMS: This week GOP Senators Javits and Capehart blasted President Eisenhower's housing veto message. Were you consulted in the drafting of this message?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Do you mean the message of Senator Capehart or the veto message?

MR. WILLIAMS: The veto message.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, definitely not. We have had a lot of discussions about housing at the leadership conferences at the White House, but I have not been consulted on that or any other veto message.

MR. WILLIAMS: Senator Capehart said he was not consulted. Why was he not consulted?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I do not know.

MR. WILLIAMS: He is the housing expert.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am not sure it is the custom for the President to consult a legislative branch about a veto message because they were responsible for the legislation in the first instance.

MISS WHEDON: Senator, do you anticipate the Democrats may be able to line up enough votes to override the President's veto on the housing bill?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That you can not tell for the moment. I think their chances in the House would be somewhat less than they are in the Senate, but you never know how many switches and changes there will be until it is time to vote on the veto message.

MISS NYSTROM: Senator Dirksen, on July 9 Secretary Herter announced that he would like the able career man and expert on Russian affairs, Ambassador Charles Bohlen, as his special assistant. Why did you oppose Ambassador Bohlen's appointment, and wasn't that a slap at Secretary Herter and

our supposedly bipartisan foreign policy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Nancy, I am afraid you are wrong on two counts. In the first place I didn't oppose it as such because there was nothing before us. If he was going to be an advisor, that was something for Mr. Herter to determine, but if somebody wants to know what the general sentiment is in a good many quarters on Capitol Hill, I feel rather duty-bound to so indicate it. So it was not a slap at Mr. Herter and as for Mr. Bohlen, I can only say that if and when his name should be submitted, I might have some comment to make, but up to this good hour, I think it has been mainly conversation in so far as I know.

MR. GAWTHROP: Senator, do you feel that the Republicans will have to make a deal, so to speak, with the Southern Democrats on the civil rights issue in order to sustain the President's veto on housing?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, Lewis, I must be as emphatic as I can, that never are there any deals of any kind. We do not deal. It is everybody for himself. We know pretty well what we want to do, and I utter the hope that perhaps we can get a civil rights bill out of the Senate Judiciary Committee to the Senate floor, and that we can enact it before this session terminates.

MISS O'CONNOR: Well, Senator Johnson seems to see some dealing ahead in the civil rights issue in that he announced

today that Republicans and Democrats will agree on a bill before the end of this session. I wonder on what kind of grounds can you Republicans come together with the Southern Democratic leadership?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, Holly, I wouldn't say for a moment that that kind of language would constitute dealing, or a desire to deal by the very distinguished Majority Leader. I think I can say for him, he would like to have a civil rights bill. For myself I think I can say I would like to see a civil rights bill. The question is, what can you contrive in every case, or what can you pass through the Senate or through the House.

MISS O'CONNOR: That was my question.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It becomes an exercise in what they call "The art of the possible."

MISS O'CONNOR: Well, what do you think will be possible this session?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I am hopeful that there will be a civil rights bill. How much will go into it is another question, because I am certainly not insensible of the varieties and of the emotionalism that goes along with that issue.

MR. WILLIAMS: Senator, you recently said that a summit conference still remained a glowing hope. In view of the fact that the Big Four foreign ministers conference seems to be proceeding from crisis to crisis, do you still have this

glowing hope?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, definitely. Jerry, what would you do without hope? And the conference will not have failed until they have packed their bags and started home. So we must wait. And who knows what the impact of the Nixon visit will be upon the thinking of Mr. Khrushchev.

MISS WHEDON: On that optimistic note, I am afraid we have to bring this to a close.

Senator Dirksen, thank you so much for a very interesting interview and thank you panel for your interesting questions.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Thank you Peggy, and thanks to the panel.

MISS WHEDON: For you at home who would like to participate in COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE, please send your questions on national and international affairs to Encyclopedia Americana, Box 83, Washington 4, D. C.

The prize-winning question will receive a complete, handsomely bound 30-volume set of Encyclopedia Americana.

We hope you will all be with us again next week when Ruth Hagy will be back to moderate and our guest will be Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York. Until then good bye and a good week from Ruth Hagy, Peggy Whedon and all the college correspondents of COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE.

THE ANNOUNCER: You have just seen COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE, where the leaders of tomorrow meet the leaders of today.

COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE is created and produced by Ruth Haby. Assistant producer, Peggy Whedon. Assistant to the producer, Holly O'Connor.

COLLEGE NEWS CONFERENCE is directed by Richard Armstrong and originates in Washington.

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