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

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1963

GUEST: The Honorable Everett M. Dirksen (R. Ill.)
Senate Minority Leader

INTERVIEWED BY: Howark K. Smith, ABC Commentator

THE ANNOUNCER: Senator Minority Leader, Everett McKinley
Dirksen, here are the issues:

Are Republicans and Southern Democrats forming a coalition
in the Senate to stop the President's tax bill?

What looks to you now as the main election issue..

In '64.

Jackie Robinson calls the GOP "The White Man's Party," true or false.

(Announcement)

THE ANNOUNCER: You have heard the issues. Now for the answers from the Senate Minority Leader, the Honorable Everett McKinley Dirksen, Republican of Illinois.

Here to interview Senator Dirksen is ABC Commentator, Howard K. Smith.

MR. SMITH: Senator Dirksen, you are widely acknowledged to be the Number One Republican in the nation until your party chooses a Presidential nominee.

Now what do you think about the statements that are being made repeatedly now that Senator Goldwater is so far ahead that he is virtually the Republican nominee?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, first may I say thanks for the compliment and secondly, as a candidate it would appear from all the polls that I have seen that he is probably the front-runner in the Presidential primary contest for the Republican nomination.

MR. SMITH: Now when Governor Rockefeller went to Illinois, there were no Illinois Republican leaders to meet him. Do you think this indicates that the statement you also hear repeatedly that Governor Rockefeller has no chance, is true?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, no. You have to qualify that. You see we had a \$100 dinner last winter in Chicago and I was there to introduce Nelson Rockefeller. I don't think it is incumbent on me always to be at every function -- every dinner, every activity, but I was there and I gave him what I thought was a pretty good send-off.

Now you are probably referring to the meeting they had in the neighborhood of Rockford, Illinois, and in so far as I can recall from the news accounts, there were some Republican leaders present, some Republicans not present, but as for myself at that time I had a few chores to perform in Washington.

As you know I become something of a captive here, as a result of this very unpredictable legislative, and particular Senatorial schedule.

MR. SMITH: Senator, then you wouldn't cross Rockefeller off yet as some people are doing?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I never cross anyone off, because I had my comeuppance in 1952. You see I nominated Bob Taft at the Convention, and I thought he was a sure nominee, and a sure winner, but destiny had other things in store.

MR. SMITH: Well, now some Goldwater supporters say that the only thing they think can stop Goldwater is if there is a "Dump Nixon" movement to get Nixon as the one man

around whom a majority might unite.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Howard, I think we always ought to remember that the Republican National Convention is still ten months in the offing. So many things can happen. Politics is fluid, as you know, and particularly on a national scale. And as a result there can be many developments between now and Convention time that can completely reverse or change or modify or alter the course of political destiny for the Republican Party.

MR. SMITH: Now let me ask you, in view of the traditional difficulty of unhorsing an incumbent President who wants a second term -- it generally takes a great depression or something -- in view of the voting record of the Republican Party in the off-year election when you failed to get the usual gain that the opposition gets, is it possible that the Republican candidacy in '64 will be a throw-away candidacy?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, indeed not. Perhaps I can best illustrate out of my own experience. In 1950 I ran against the then Majority Leader of the United States Senate. The delegations who came to entreat me to become a candidate, and my friends, and those who had political know-how said "Of course you can't win. Of course there isn't a show."

But I said "How foolish I would be to break my body

virtually in a 13 months' campaign among ten million people if I embraced the spirit of defeat, and said of course, you haven't got a chance."

But I had a chance. I thought I had a chance, and I think we do have a chance, even though the task is never an easy one.

MR. SMITH: Excuse me, Senator Dirkson. In just a moment we will be back with ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

(Announcement)

MR. SMITH: Senator, you have watched the first three years of the Kennedy Administration from your special vantage point of Minority Leader in the Senate. What do you think is the Administration's weak point on a major issue that you may make the main election issue in 1964?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Frankly, it is a little difficult to give priority to any one issue at this time, and mainly so because there are so many. If I had to peg the issue, I think it would be fiscal, and that embraces the budget, that embraces a public debt, which we probably will have to push up to a \$320 billion ceiling before this Congress comes to an end.

It includes a recurring deficit which will certainly go to \$9 billion and more for the instant fiscal year, and the next fiscal year. So fiscal affairs are getting very close to people.

But you've got an agricultural issue as well. You have a foreign assistance issue, because the Foreign Aid Program is now 19 years old and as I have said often, it is in long pants, it is almost ready to vote. And we have expended \$100 billion under that program, and believe me when I say that people are extremely articulate about that issue, so you have a farm issue, you have a fiscal issue. you have a foreign assistance issue and there may be still others before we get through.

MR. SMITH: Well, let me ask you about the fiscal issue. Now the President's tax cut bill goes to a Senate Committee now and there is a report in a national newspaper this week that Republicans in the Senate, led by you and Southern Democrats, are forming an informal coalition to delay the passage of that bill until next year.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You know I never cease to be amazed at the fact that we come so lightly by this talk of coalitions. I told a group of 50 or 70 students in my office only this week, when they raised the question, I said, "I have been to no coalition meeting ever since I have been in the Senate," and so that is just one of those mythical buildups, somewhat chimerical, I should say, and it is only because they see through the same pair of specs that we do.

If you wanted to hear a very redoubtable speech against

the tax bill, you should have heard Senator Gore in the Senate this week, because when he was queried as to whether he was trying to delay the tax bill, he said "Delay! I am trying to kill it."

Well, that didn't come from a Republican, that came from a Democrat. He is on the Finance Committee. So am I. But we all see according to our lights and our endowments and there is a lot of difference of opinion, and sharp differences with respect to a tax bill, unless it is accompanied by not necessarily an equivalent cut in spending, but at least a show in that direction.

MR. SMITH: Well, wouldn't it be better to get the bill to the floor and kill it, or pass it -- but the British introduced a tax bill in April, they had a full debate in both houses and they voted on it, they decided to pass it. We are in our second year of considering it, and it really never had gotten to the floor of the Senate yet.

Doesn't that discredit the Senate, the continual delays rather than passage or killing of the bill?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It depends on how deep your conviction is. If you have a decided conviction with respect to a bill and think its approach is wrong because it is not accompanied by a spending cut, and then you go out there on that field and there are 12 fellows on the other team and 6 on yours, what do you do? Obviously you employ what you think is very

good strategy and justified strategy, if you think it is in the interests of the country. And there is deep feeling about this tax bill, as to whether it should come now, because it might be better to have it next year, after the 1965 budget has been submitted, because we have every reason to believe that the '65 budget is going to be sharply larger than the budget with which we now deal.

MR. SMITH: Let me ask you something about that. Now when the tax bill came out of Committee in the House, you made a statement saying that the President must stop runaway spending. Now isn't it a fact that in fact Congress appropriates the money and only Congress can stop runaway spending? Aren't you asking the President to do what you have to do?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, you use the President as a symbol of his party and you should more properly say the Administration. But it is so easy to say "the President," for after all that budget can never come to Congress unless it first goes from the Budget Bureau to his desk and it has his approval. So that is the first stamp of approval on the budget. And then of course comes the effort to trim it if you can. But when you've got 67 soldiers on this side and 33 on the other, you can see the difficulty that you encounter in trying to

articulate your own program and platform.

MR. SMITH: Now in the course of the talk about this tax bill, Republicans have mounted a major offensive against deficit spending. Now Mr. Neillan, the new Chairman of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, has made the point the other day that there may be a kind of a bipartisanship, there may be some necessity behind deficit spending that affects both parties.

President Eisenhower came to office with a promise to balance the budget. In fact, five times out of eight I think he failed, and created the biggest deficits in history. Is that not a possibility?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes. First you look at the inheritance of the Eisenhower Administration. Had we not used the pruning knife and used it effectively, those deficits would have been infinitely larger. But what is often forgotten is this, that these commitments are made in advance Administrations. Once they go on the statute book, you are committed, unless you want to throw the program overboard. Trying to get programs repealed is not an easy thing. And if you are committed, then of course the money up to a point at least becomes almost automatic. That is why I have fussed all this year about the new items in the President's budget. Like the Domestic Peace Corps. Why do we do it? Well, you will remember when

the bill was on the Senate floor we had three tie votes in the same afternoon. Notwithstanding this disparity of membership. But there you had an example of a new function that we could do without, and there were about \$9 billion of new functions in the 1964 budget, if they are all finally approved.

MR. SMITH: Now some people argue that you can't do without them, that the national unemployment rate is up 5.6 percent, but the juvenile employment rate among whites is three times that and the Negroes' rate six times that. Wouldn't that give a kind of priority to a bill like that, to spend money on it?

SENATOR DIRSKEN: I don't think so. Do you want to know why?

MR. SMITH: Yes.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: There are two employers in this country. One generically is government, whether it is local, county, state or national. The other necessarily has to be our whole private enterprise system, whether it is General Motors with 645,000 people, or a corner grocery store operated by the proprietor himself. But that is the whole enterprise picture.

Now is there any hope of solving this problem, unless you are going to put them all on the federal, local, or state payroll? Unless you are going to the enterprise system.

How are they going to expand? How are they going to energize business and so begin to absorb and take up the slack? It has always been done, and I see no other hope.

I was here under Franklyn Roosevelt when after all the years, getting up almost to the time when the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor, and we had in the area of 10 million still unemployed after seven or eight years of effort. Hadn't energized the system, and that is what it takes.

MR. SMITH: Now in your statement about the tax bill that you made at the time the House Committee passed it, you said President Kennedy is passing the buck to the next generation to hold the bag, I think -- something like that. Is that not the course of all economic growth, that you increase your debt, but your assets with your debt? AT&T has increased its debt from one billion to eight billion dollars, and private individuals do too. Isn't that normal?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes, I think up to a point there is some justification for it. It is like a youngster who wants to go to college and doesn't have any money. He indebts himself for books and tuition and that sort of thing in the belief that out of larger earning power he can pay it off at a later time.

I don't say you necessarily have to have a budget that is

absolutely balanced; but there is a point beyond which I do not believe that you can safely go. First because in the case of our own country, as your debt goes up, your interest goes up. The interest on the public debt every 365 days, is now over \$10 billion and that is three and a half times the whole cost of government since I came here as a freshman Congressman.

Now then, can you continue to put that load in your appropriation every year and every year and not suddenly discover you have fallen in a well, and you can't get out.

MR. SMITH: Now Secretary of Labor Wirtz said something the other day which had a certain logic to many -- I am not quoting him exactly, so don't hold this against him, but he said the deficits we ought to be worrying about are the deficits in education, the deficits for training for jobs in the automated world, the deficits in health and so on, all the things there require spending. We should worry about those, he said, and not so much about the bookkeeping deficits. What about that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I agree. The trouble is the approach to those deficits. We passed the Kerr-Mills Act in order to take care of the health of our aged under the Eisenhower Administration. Now there is a new approach. The difference is this: Under Kerr-Mills the state

shares roughly half, the Federal government half, but the operation is in the hands of the states. It is close to the people.

Under the so-called Medicare program sponsored by this Administration, you would build up an ever larger bureaucracy and enhance the powers of the central government. There is an essential and basic issue between the two parties. So you can apply that pretty nearly anywhere. You can do it with Aid to Education. We think they have overstated the case. And we just look at the number of school buildings that have been built, the number of bond issues that have been issued, where people, of course, take it to their hearts to see that their youngsters are educated.

The other school of thought says "Look at the big white dome down in Washington. It is for free. Let's go down there." But they don't appreciate that there is a tag connected with it and that is a degree of federal regulation and direction and control.

MR. SMITH: Senator, I would like to ask you now, and shift to some other issues -- civil rights. Now at one point you stated your opposition to the Public Accommodations Clause of the civil rights bill and ever since they Negro leaders have been saying -- in fact there was a letter to the editor of the New York Times last Sunday saying you are

placing commercial interests above human rights of Negroes to have shelter and food, regardless of race. What is your answer to that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: My answer is simply this: Here you are taking roughly 20 million people in our country and equating rights against the other 170 million, because the Census clock announced yesterday or last night that our population was not 170 million.

MR. SMITH: 190 million.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: 190 million. My job as legislator is to think not about one segment or one section or one group, it is to think about the interests of all of the people of this bountry. Now I have to have some regard for my oath as a legislator. I have held up that hand 11 times and took an oath to support and defend the Constitution. The decision of 1883 which said Congress had no such power is still the law of the land and has been reaffirmed in court decisions from that day to this.

Now I have heard no one in authority yet say it isn't the law and if it is the law, and it was a constitutional interpretation, I do not propose to violate my oath. I propose to accept it as such. Now that is one aspect of it.

Secondly, do you help the situation, or do you

worsen and aggravate it when you come along with a proposal like Title II, on accommodations and facilities? You are dealing with the whole property structure, and don't forget the framers of the Constitution made it abundantly clear that neither life nor liberty nor property shall be taken without due process of law.

The Supreme Court knows that. Do you think you can do it by legislative fiat until it has been tested out in the high tribunal? There are other aspects of it, but you can make a case on that side.

MR. SMITH: Senator, Jackie Robinson, who was the former baseball player who is now a business executive, wrote a little article for the Saturday Evening Post recently in which he said -- he supported Nixon in the last Presidential campaign -- said the GOP is becoming a "White Man's Party." What do you say to that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Let's just put that down as Jackie Robinson's opinion. Now I had an equally fine gentleman in my office this week. None other than Dick Gregory. I spent a half hour with Dick Gregory and we discussed it across the table, because he is a splendid gentleman, but in every case I said "Give me and those who share my views at least the benefit of conscience and conviction in approaching this matter, and you approach it

in the same fashion."

And differences of opinion in this country, of course, are not at all singular. As a matter of fact it is one of the attributes of a great free system where everybody can freely speak his piece.

MR. SMITH: I am covering a lot of issues fast. I want to ask you about foreign aid. Now when the cuts were made in the House, you made a statement seeming to favor the cuts. President Kennedy pointed out the other day that according to those cuts we will help all Latin America with a sum equal to what the Russians are putting into Cuba alone, and he call that irresponsible. What is your comment on that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Howard, I said to the press the other day, in my book there is nothing like an absolute, because things are just too fluid. Now I said this foreign aid rprogram has cost us in excess of \$100 billion and the people are becoming thoroughly and fervently vocal about it. It is our business to take a good, hard look to see what we are getting for our money, and I think the question is mainly one of how much can you cut and still maintain an effective program. In dollars and cents, if you were to ask me, I wouldn't know.

The people in the House of Representatives felt that this cut was justified and warranted. The Senators have a

habit, as you, know, of restoring funds and taking a little additional testimony. / We shall see. / But I would venture to say that the estimates submitted by the Administration and then reduced as a result of the Clay Committee report will be cut further than that and the Appropriations Committee in the House of Representatives, if I am correctly informed, really has the axe sharp this time.

MR. SMITH: Well, isn't it dangerous for our position in Latin America? Milton Eisenhower has written a book indicating explosions are imminent there.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes, but supposing much of your money is wasted? Supposing you are servicing defaulted bonds in the hands of speculators as is the case of Bolivia. Do you think you are justified in spending good money of the taxpayers of this country for a purpose like that? Frankly, I don't.

MR. SMITH: Excuse me just one more moment, please, Senator Dirksen.

In just a moment we will be back with more issues.

(Announcement)

MR. SMITH: Senator, can you give me a quick prophesy on when you expect the tax bill to be voted on, and the civil rights bill?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, if it must be quick, first the briefing period -- maybe two weeks -- the hearing period, three

weeks, four weeks. Digesting the testimony, two weeks. Marking up the bill, considering the amendments, three weeks.

Now you equate it and in my book for any calculation, that would add up to Christmas. Christmas is only a good two weeks from the time when the second session of the 88th Congress begins. So you see you have a calendar and a clock staring you in the face.

MR. SMITH: Let me ask you a question of political philosophy: In 30 years, the Republicans have won Congress only twice. Does that suggest there is something that ought to be changed in the Republican Party?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Not necessarily. I know what the trends are in the country, the desire for spending and that sort of thing. But let me put it in this light: I am a politician. I readily admit it. I want to win. I like patronage like anybody else. But there is something that goes ahead of all that and that is to articulate the expressed conviction and pledges that you have made to your country and if you can redeem them as a minority party you have served just the same.

MR. SMITH: Well, I hesitate to interrupt you, but I must, unfortunately. Our time has run out and we can't appropriate a change in that.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Thank you.

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

THE ANNOUNCER: Today's guest has been Senate Minority
Leader, Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen, Republican of
Illinois.

Senator Dirksen was interviewed by ABC Commentator
Howard K. Smith. We hope you will join us next week at this
time for ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

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