

TRANSCRIPT

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FACE THE NATION

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GUEST: SENATOR EVERETT DIRksen
Republican of Illinois

NEWS CORRESPONDENTS:

Martin Agronsky
CBS News

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Chicago Daily News

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1 exceptional political skill, but there is always a first time."
2 Does that mean you think he has about had it?

3 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I just mean that when you put into a bundle
4 the problems of Viet Nam and the dissidence that is developing
5 in the country, this question of rioting, and certainly there
6 are people who will feel that the Administration may in part be
7 at fault; and then of course the request for a 10 per cent
8 surcharge, and add to it a few other things, you have got
9 yourself quite a package. And it is by the accumulation of
10 those difficulties that parties ultimately defeat themselves.
11 It is like the old ship that gets enough barnacles to put it
12 out of business.

13 MR. AGROSEKY: Well, Senator, where do you stand on those
14 particular issues? Will you support the President on a 10
15 per cent tax increase, for example?

16 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I take them as they come. I think my views
17 on Viet Nam have been pretty well known. I have supported
18 the President. I go on the theory that in his corner he has
19 the Chiefs of Staff, he has the best military talent we have,
20 he has these reports from Viet Nam, probably every hour on the
21 hour. And obviously he is in better position to know about
22 what the situation is than a layman back here 12,000 miles from
23 the scene of operations who has not been to Viet Nam in a long
24 time, and who is in no position to judge.
25 Now, take, for instance, these last rather massive assaults that

1 have been made in the last few days. How telling and how
2 effective will they really be? They may add up to something.
3 I am in no position to tell at the moment, on the basis of the
4 dispatches that come from there. It may be effective.

5 MR. LISAGOR: Your House colleague, Representative Gerald Ford,
6 has said of the Viet Nam war that it has been shockingly
7 mismanaged. He seems to know what is going on there. Do you
8 agree with that, or don't you?

9 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I hope there is somebody who knows.
10 But I think it would be high pretense on my part if I tried to
11 undertake the role of an expert on Viet Nam. I have to take
12 it for what it is. And I try to be a realist about it. Who
13 do we have the Joint Chiefs? Why do we have the best that the
14 Army could offer by way of a staff under the leadership of
15 General Westmoreland out in Viet Nam? And then of course
16 either ignore or brush aside their demands and their advices?

17 MR. AGRONSKY: I find it hard to believe, Senator, that you
18 would abdicate in effect the role of the critic of Viet Nam
19 policy or any other policy because you feel the Administration
20 has the experts and you are not an expert. You certainly
21 do not subscribe to that, sir.

22 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I undertake the role of a critic when I have
23 sufficient information on which to predicate what I think is
24 sound criticism.

25 MR. HART: Well, Senator, are you going to support the

1 President all the way on guns and butter, facing the deficit
2 and the necessity of a tax as we face this year; are you
3 going to support him all the way, or is there a breaking point?

4 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Now, you are asking for a rather anticipatory
5 conclusion.

6 MR. HART: Well, do you anticipate any breaking point?

7 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Wait just a minute, until I finish an answer.
8 That tax surcharge proposal will go to the Senate Finance
9 Committee. I am a member of the Committee. We will probably
10 start with the Secretary of the Treasury. We will have
11 witnesses galore. And I trust I can be at every session of
12 the Committee and hear the testimony.

13 What I want to know is what will be the impact of a ten per cent
14 surcharge upon the economy of the country, and what will be the
15 impact of a possible \$30 billion budget deficit on the economy.
16 One must necessarily outweigh the other.

17 Now, I read the statement by the economist for the Bank of
18 America this morning who thinks that a tax increase would be
19 shocking from the standpoint of what it will do to business.
20 Well, we will have to find out. And I want to find out. Then
21 I am in a far better position to render judgment.

22 I would hate to think of a \$30 billion deficit staring us in
23 the face and what its impact will be on inflation, because we
24 may have to pay more in the grocery store, in the clothing
25 store, in interest rates, in tighter money, in nearly every

1 other phase of activity than you would if you had a tax increase.
2 But I just don't close the door -- why should I -- until
3 we have had that testimony.

4 MR. HART: Well the question is could the strain become such
5 that you would withdraw your full support of the war.

6 SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I have to see what the effect there
7 will be. What are the alternatives? Shall we withdraw?
8 Where does it leave us? Where does it leave our prestige
9 so far as the world is concerned? Will we have to make a
10 stand elsewhere at some other time? Because if we did, there
11 is no defense line between Saigon and Singapore.

12 Now, what do we do with our Pacific defense line -- pull it
13 back to Alaska and Hawaii? Then they are only 2,000 miles
14 from California.

15 There are some strategic and long-range objectives that have
16 to be evaluated before you come to that kind of a conclusion.

17 MR. AGRONSKY: Senator, clearly you support the President's
18 policy in Viet Nam.

19 SENATOR DIRKSEN: I definitely have.

20 MR. AGRONSKY: OK. Now, what we have today everyone agrees
21 is a question of priorities. We must fight the war in Viet Nam.
22 You support that completely. And at the same time we must
23 deal with the problem of the cities and these riots.

24 Now, your junior colleague from Illinois, Senator Percy,
25 has said that if we can spend \$66 million a day to save