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Guest: SENATOR EVERETT McKINLEY DIRKSEN
(R. Ill.)
Senate Minority Leader

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amass such a penalty on otherwise legitimate people that maybe you pay too big a price.

MR. HARKNESS: Senator, you said a moment ago that you are concerned about the wage-price spiral.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes.

MR. HARKNESS: What you think that the administration and Congress should do (1) raise taxes or (b) perhaps vote standby controls, as proposed by Mr. Johnson?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You missed on both scores, Dick.

MR. HARKNESS: At least I am consistent.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: You sure are.

The first place, is to put the axe at some of these "Great Society" programs. Look at the waste there has been in the anti-poverty program and elsewhere. Here we are going to consider the HEW appropriation bill. They have marked it up \$491 million over the budget estimate. If I were the President, I would scold about it. He's got two for every one of ours in both branches of the Congress. That is one on which they are going to get a record vote, if I can get enough hands to boom up in the Senate chamber when the time comes.

MR. HARKNESS: Jerry Ford has been getting a count of hands in the House. Congress consistently tops Mr. Johnson's recommendation.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes. We don't have the votes, and yet we made quite a fetish out of economy. I am going to try in the Senate.

MR. HARKNESS: Let me change the subject, if I may, Senator: When was the last time that you were at the White House for a bipartisan briefing on Viet Nam?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have forgotten. It is a little while back, now.

MR. HARKNESS: And how long before that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It was quite a period of time before that.

MR. HARKNESS: Based on that, are you satisfied that the President is keeping Congress and the people informed on the progress of the war?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I scolded and fussed about it, and I remember when he called me he said, "I thought I brought you up to date."

I said, "You have, but you haven't brought the Leadership up to date."

So out of a clear sky that night we had the call for a Leadership meeting, and we went up—well, it was Saturday that we had it as a matter of fact.

MR. HARKNESS: Maybe you better make another call.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, I think so. As a matter of fact I expect I will probably see the President tomorrow.

MR. BELL: Senator, Dick Nixon in Saigon said that the war was not going to be lost there but it could be lost here, and he blamed criticism of the war policies at home for the possibility of its loss, here. Do you agree with that analysis of the situation?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't quite know what he had in mind. I think we have been rather circumspect in our comment and general criticism of the war. I think we should be. After all when you pick a man like General Westmoreland, the cream of the crop, and then take the next two in line and make them his deputies, you can't find anything better. We sent them the best of weapons, and according to the last reports we have got 290,000 over there, combatant and non-combatant troops. If he can't win this war, certainly we can't win it here sitting up on Capitol Hill in the nation's capital.

MR. BELL: Senator, Mr. Nixon also said in a subsequent news conference that we need substantially more troops in Viet Nam—he mentioned the 290,000 figure and indicated more than 400,000, even—that we couldn't win the war out there. Do you agree with that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't know. Not being an expert in that field. But I do know this, a very substantial percentage of the troops you send over have obviously to be used in the non-combatant service. That means unloading ships and doing a variety of thing that are housekeeping in nature in order to keep others up there on the front lines.

How many you have to have I can't say, but Westmoreland would probably have the best estimate of what he needs.

MR. BELL: You would give them everything Westmoreland wants?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Indeed I will.

MR. KENWORTHY: Senator, on this matter of 290,000 troops now in Viet Nam, last December 13, you joined in the statement of the Republican Coordinating Committee warning that the Johnson administration seemed to be heading into "an endless Korean-type jungle war in Viet Nam."

Would you still agree with that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I can't tell what the end is going to be. We kept on sending troops to Korea until finally we beat out some kind of a truce out there. We haven't done that in Viet Nam, and if we need more troops, all right. How many, I don't know.

If it runs on for a year, would you say that is endless—somebody might say it—does it run 18 months, does it run two years? I just know that we can't retreat, and we can't surrender. We wouldn't dare to surrender.

MR. KENWORTHY: You mentioned Korea, Senator Dirksen. Before the Republican convention in 1952, you said, "The Democrats have given us an undeclared, unconstitutional, one-man war in Korea, now in its third year. It has become an inferno for holy blood of American youth who say, 'we can't win, we can't lose, we can't quit, we can only die'."

Do you see this as a comparable situation?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No.

MR. KENWORTHY: Why?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't know where you got that. Was that in the Record?

MR. KENWORTHY: No, it was in the record of the Republican Convention, yes.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: But it wasn't in one of my speeches?

MR. KENWORTHY: Yes, it was.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, was it?

MR. KENWORTHY: A nominating speech for Mr. Taft.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, don't tell me!

MR. KENWORTHY: Yes.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am glad somebody follows me around and refreshes me.

No, it is not analagous, because we were projected in there on a Sunday afternoon in June of 1950, weren't we?

MR. KENWORTHY: That is right.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: And nobody in Congress, not even Tom Connally, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, was consulted about it.

This is a different dish. In the first place, we have an obligation under the SEATO Treaty, the Southeast Asia Treaty

Organization. In the second place we made our promises, and we assumed obligations. We thought it was going to take only a little bit, and it did take a little bit. I guess, the first contingent in there was about 6,000. Now it has ballooned and ballooned, and it may balloon some more before we get through. But the fact of the matter is that we have an obligation, and we have got to fulfill it.

MR. KENWORTHY: You won't make an issue out of it in the campaign?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I haven't. The people make an issue out of it. And if you will remember, I have cautioned my party associates. I have said "Don't make an issue out of the war. The people make an issue. They are way ahead of you on this."

MR. KRASLOW: Senator, the Republican Party turned sharply to the right in 1964 when it nominated Barry Goldwater. Does Ronald Reagan's victory in California and Governor Smylie's defeat in Idaho mean that the Party is setting out to travel the same path in 1966 and 1968?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Oh, I doubt it very much. There are a lot of us good moderates around—or are there?

MR. KRASLOW: We are asking you, sir.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am telling you.

MR. KRASLOW: Don't you think that Mr. Reagan and the gentleman who defeated Governor Smylie have been quite firmly established as conservatives?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have little background on the man who defeated Governor Smylie. I tried to ascertain from some people from Idaho exactly what that background was, and I don't know that he has too much political background, as a matter of fact, although I qualify that simply because I don't know.

With respect to Ron Reagan, I don't know that you can say that you are going to suddenly do a right-about and go in an extreme direction. I have some doubts about it.

MR. KRASLOW: Senator Goldwater and many of his supporters have hailed Reagan's victory as a resurgence of conservatism. Do you see it differently?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well, is it actually, or do they just hold it so?

MR. KRASLOW: That is what they are saying. I am asking you.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I applauded his victory, and I don't