

MEET THE PRESS

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NBC Television

GUEST: Senator Everett Dirksen (R.-Ill.)

PANEL: Irving Pflaum, Chicago Sun-Times
George Tagge, Chicago Tribune
May Craig, Portland (me.) Press Herald
Lawrence Spivak, Regular Panel Member
Martha Rountree, Moderator

MISS ROUNTREE: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, members of the press panel, and our guest, Senator Dirksen. Senator, if you're ready, we'll start in with the questioning. We'll let Mrs. Craig have the first question.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, the Gallup Poll said this morning the voters would like to have some new faces as Presidential candidates. Are you a candidate for President?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am not and may I add that I remember what the Gallup Poll said in 1948.

MRS. CRAIG: Wouldn't you like to be if it came your way?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: All I can say at the moment is that I'm not a candidate.

MRS. CRAIG: Between General Eisenhower and Taft, who seem to be the leading Republicans, which would you be for?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Let me qualify the answer by saying I am for a Republican, and you know to whom that tag definitely applies without any equivocation or doubt.

MRS. CRAIG: Won't you name it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes, Bob Taft.

MRS. CRAIG: Why do you think the Republicans are worthy to win? Is it enough just to criticize the administration and to want to win? What do you have to offer? Could you say briefly?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I could say if the answer is not too long, that we'll advance a program both on the domestic and on the foreign front, and I'm confident that out of the deliberations of the Republican Party and Convention Assembly in this very town in July of 1952, there will be a candidate that will have great appeal I think to the American people, and I think of course that we'll join the issue and at long last give them a choice as between what they've got today and what I regard as a fundamental and unequivocal Americanism.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, the people have not thought so for a good many elections. Why do you think they'll be different this time?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: There are reasons perhaps. The reason may be partly the candidate, partly the fact that the Republican Party did not with that degree of militancy and vigor that I think they ought to put into a campaign, assert their cause.

MISS ROUNTREE: Did I understand from your answer to Mrs. Craig's question that you weren't sure that General Eisenhower is a Republican?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think there is some doubt because I see people speculating on the subject and some going over on special trips to ascertain whether the General would accept a nomination on the Democratic ticket or the Republican ticket.

MR. SPIVAK: How do you explain the fact that Republicans like Dewey and Duff and Lodge and Stassen and Seltonstall, all men who know their politics, have all come out for Eisenhower in '52?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't explain it. That's the long and the short of it.

MR. SPIVAK: Do you think it's either good or wise policy this early in the game to come out for Eisenhower?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have some doubts about it but on the other hand, Mr. Republican, namely Senator Taft of Ohio, has presented himself to the country over a period of time, and he has rare appeal for me.

MR. SPIVAK: Do you think General Eisenhower could be stopped if he really wants the nomination if he came out for it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I wouldn't know as a matter of fact. I think it's rather early to make a determination of that. But they had a poll here not so long ago of delegates who attended the '44 and '48 Convention and it seems to me it showed up rather well for the very distinguished Republican from Ohio.

MR. SPIVAK: It's being suggested the ticket may very well be General Eisenhower and Everett Dirksen. Would you consider running with General Eisenhower if lightning struck?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Suppose we wait until we get to that bridge.

MR. SPIVAK: Does that mean yes, Senator?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: If you don't mind, let me amplify just a little. You remember on one other occasion I said since the party entrusted me with the responsibility of serving as Chairman of the

Senatorial Campaign Committee, I do have a very distinct job of trying to bring about the election of a Republican Senate in 1952. And manifestly I've been rather reticent about discussion of candidates so far as the Presidency and the Vice-Presidency are concerned and I simply want to add that the junior Senator from Illinois is not a candidate.

MR. SPIVAK: But didn't you just come out for Senator Taft though?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I was speaking about myself.

MR. SPIVAK: But I mean you did come out for a candidate.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes indeed.

MR. PFLAUM: It's about that candidate that I'd like to question you because I looked up your voting record and I looked up the record on five important recent votes in the Senate of Mr. Republican. And I found that he was voting against you or you were voting against him on all five of these issues. My question is are you a Republican if he is a Republican?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: There can be differences between people in a party. I found myself campaigning all over the country in '44 and '48 for Governor Dewey and I took rare issue with him on a good many of the challenging issues at the time. This was true of Willkie in 1940. I campaigned for Willkie but certainly didn't see eye to eye with him.

MR. PFLAUM: These aren't small issues. They are international and national questions. You refer to Senator Taft as Mr. Republican and your candidate, and yet you disagree with him on these issues.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: But I don't disagree with him on the one great challenging fundamental issue that has got to be resolved in America, and that is the preservation of our free economic system within the framework of a free government. On that there is no difference of opinion whatsoever.

MR. PFLAUM: That issue very seldom comes up in a specific vote. That comes up involved in other bills. But on these bills involving to the extension of the draft act or the resolution approving the four divisions for General Eisenhower, or the amendment limiting men 21 years or older to go to Europe for Eisenhower's troops, or the Malone amendment taking the tariff bargaining power away from the State Department, or grants and aid to local health units. Now on all these votes, these involve domestic and international issues, Taft was on one side and you were on the opposite side.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That's right.

MR. PFLAUM: So what party are you in or what party is he in?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: We are both in the Republican Party and are both still well aligned on the transcendent and fundamental issues.

MR. TAGGE: Senator, you're from Illinois of course and I know you've seen some figures taken in an Illinois poll which is one of the key states in a national convention. What do you think would happen if Taft and Eisenhower both ran in the Illinois Presidential preference primary next spring?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: If the poll was any indicator and if my own observations in the state, and for that matter in other states, was

any indication, I rather fancy that Bob Taft would have the major appeal for the people.

MR. TAGGE: Is that why you're for him, Senator?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I'm for him because first of all he is a colleague, secondly he is a friend, and third we sort of speak the same language when it comes to the fundamental things.

MR. TAGGE: But you vote differently.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Yes. And I think as a matter of fact, the issue in Ohio in 1950 and the issue in Illinois in 1950 was nearly on all fours as it was presented to the voters.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, it has been said in the past that the Republican Party is the party of property and privilege. The Democrats always claim to be the party of the people and for social advances. I notice you pick out as the overriding issue money and finance and so forth. Do you not also have any strong feeling on the social conditions in this country?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't know that I picked out finance as the overriding issue, although I will say this with respect to the fiscal issue, that if the fiscal solvency and the fiscal structure of the country goes, then nothing else will make a great deal of difference. Then we'll probably be in the same fix they are in in Great Britain where they became almost mendicant and became perpetual pensioners for some other country. And that's true of France likewise.

MRS. CRAIG: May I ask you in regard to that phrase "perpetual pensioners", you also spoke of the fact that the people of Great

Britain were not willing to make sacrifices. Have you been there recently to see how they live, how poorly they live with hardly any meat or eggs or milk?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Did I say they don't make any sacrifices? I don't know that I ever made that statement. I do say this, however, where the primary interest is theirs, the major sacrifice should be theirs also.

MRS. CRAIG: Do you not think they are making sacrifices?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have no doubt they are because their standards of living are such, according to a report at the present time and were when I was in Britain in 1945 and again in 1947, that there can be no doubt that they made some sacrifice and still are.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator, your critics call you an isolationist. Are you an isolationist?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: If you tell me what an isolationist is, I'll give you an answer.

MR. SPIVAK: I'm only permitted to ask questions, Senator, not to answer them. You know what I mean when I say an isolationist.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: No, frankly I don't, Mr. Spivak, because frankly the gentry and the ladies of the press have such facilities for developing terms like interventionist and isolationist where the meanings are not simply precise and I simply do not recognize the terms. I've always thought of myself as a moderationist rather than one who embraces either extreme.

MR. SPIVAK: Do you think we've gone too far in giving military aid or proposing military aid to Europe?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: The best answer is that the Senate supported my position last week when I offered an amendment to cut 250 million dollars out of economic aid for Europe, and it was sustained.

MR. SPIVAK: Maybe this may clarify the question of isolationism and interventionism. You were one of the five Senators who voted against the extension of the draft act last March. Why did you do that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I did that because I think first of all that the strength of America is at home and not in a few symbolic divisions upon the Rhine. I think the only thing for which Stalin has any real respect is the robustness, the vitality, the resiliency of the American system, and if it were not for that, the chances are that he and his millions would have moved infinitely further than they have up to this moment.

MR. SPIVAK: What does that have to do with voting against the draft act?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That was only part of it as a matter of fact, because it involved also the shipment of troops to Europe. And you discover now of course that where they thought by definition that they were going to send a hundred thousand troops, General Marshall comes before a committee of the House of Representatives and indicates that by the end of fiscal 1952 or calendar '52, we'll probably have up to 300,000 troops in Europe.

MR. SPIVAK: Do you think we could have gotten enough men if we hadn't had a draft act, to defend ourselves, never mind sending troops to Europe.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: My friend, you have forgotten of course that UMT was sending troops to Europe and the powers of the President were all rolled in one in that act.

MR. SPIVAK: You voted against the draft act because you didn't want these troops to go to Europe.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I was not willing first of all to go along with the kind of UMT that they serve because it simply entrusted to a security training commission the whole power to run that show. I was not willing at that time certainly to send troops to Europe until I could see more clearly the need for it and whether or not it would diminish the vitality of America and be a tax upon our capacity here. Obviously if you're going to have soldiers, you've got to have an extension of the draft act, but that was only one of four or five legal components in the act.

MR. PFLAUM: I was interested in the Senator's reasons for that vote. He was one of five against the draft act. That was one of the votes I mentioned where Senator Bob Taft was on the other side. You told us earlier Senator, he is a good friend of yours, you share his fundamental views and so on. What were his reasons for voting the other way?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't know. As a matter of fact, I suppose they were advanced but I can't say I'm too familiar with his views at the moment.

MR. PFLAUM: Would you say, knowing just what you do know, that you disagree with his reasons for approving of this act?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I remember so very well of course that he did quarrel with the authority that the President arrogated to himself but had an idea that there certainly was no harm in sending four divisions of troops to Europe.

MR. PFLAUM: And you disagree with him?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well I don't know that there's any harm particularly in sending four divisions but I wonder how much good might be accomplished.

MR. PFLAUM: Then you really disagree with him on this issue.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That's right. And I fancy we will disagree upon other things as a matter of fact. For instance, and this may be of interest, we disagree on aid to education. I think under certain circumstances it might go along. But certainly I will not agree to laying out of 300 million dollars of federal funds every year at a time when we're confronted with the possibility of an unbalanced budget that will show a 5 billion deficit in '52 and it might show a 20 billion deficit in fiscal 1953.

MR. PFLAUM: You are also opposed to Pitt's views on public housing.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: To some extent, that's right.

MR. PFLAUM: Are you suggesting to us if the Republicans win in '52 somehow or other we'll save money, the budget will go down, taxes will go down?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: My first interest of course is to bring expenditures and revenues in line so that we have a balanced budget.

MR. PFLAUM: We're all interested in that. Do you think it will be done in '52?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: In fiscal '52?

MR. PFLAUM: No, if the Republicans win in the election campaign.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Certainly they'll make an effort at it and if I were charged with the responsibility, I would leave nothing undone to be moving in that direction so that within a year or two at least you would have a balanced budget because I think it's fundamental to the very destiny of America.

MR. PFLAUM: Why is it your colleague from Illinois, Senator Douglas, ^{who} is attempting I think in a rather decent way to cut down the budget and bring things in balance, why is it that more Republicans do not support him? Why do they wait until 1952?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I can say as a matter of fact he's gotten a good deal of support from the Republican side, for the amendments would not have prevailed unless he did.

MR. PFLAUM: Some of them have not prevailed.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I presume there are some for reasons best known to themselves. But speaking for the junior Senator from Illinois, I think if you'll examine it you'll find that uniformly I have supported Senator Douglas and in many connections he has supported me, except that I got no support for the 250 million cut in the economic aid for Europe nor for the 500 million proposal which was defeated by six votes in the Senate last week.

MRS. CRAIG: Senator, you have predicted that the Republicans will win in the next election. You have only named one point for your program which is fiscal solvency or balancing the budget. What else would you say were among the American principles worthy of winning the election?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well shall I secondly recite of course what I regard as the great moral issue that confronts the country. It is best expressed in certain times and periods with the phrase "drive the rascals out." It seems to me that a degree of corrosion and corruption that is developed in the federal structure to the point that those in power have developed a proprietary sense and they think they own the government as a matter of fact. And all you have to do is read the front pages of the Washington papers every day to see first one moral crisis and scandal and then another. I think it has developed in the country a hostility that is going to be rather sustained and will carry on till 1952 because this is essentially a moral country when it comes to public service.

MRS. CRAIG: That is two now - balance the budget and throw the rascals out. What else would you name as Republican principles?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Third of course, there will be a revision I think of some of these social programs that we have at the present time. I have said on occasion that one of the important things that we need is a truly expert investigation of some of the social programs, notably the Social Security program. I am for it, but if they continue as they do now with more people going to public assistance, even though you're inscribing more people under the insurance

provisions of the Social Security, you are finally going to destroy the whole actuarial base of the security program. And of all the things that need some expert attention, that would be one to which I would give my attention.

MRS. CRAIG: You didn't say anything on the foreign program.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well there is so little time of course in a program of this kind to discuss all aspects of foreign aid. But let me say that contrary to all the implications of this term, a bi-partisan foreign policy, I still believe that a party worthy of the name can develop a program of its own and stand by it and carry it through without depending upon the party on the other side.

MR. SPIVAK: Why hasn't the Republican Party done that?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I don't know. Maybe that's one reason why the Republicans were not restored to power. I believe in developing some simple issues that are readily understandable to the people and then asserting them with vigor and let the chips fall where they may.

MR. SPIVAK: Let's take one simple issue. How do you reconcile your vote against the draft act and your constant denunciation of the Truman administration for neglecting our defenses?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have denounced them only in this respect. From 1945 to 1950 is five years. And in that time if you'll bother to look at the record, the Congress appropriated over 90,000 million dollars - 90 billion - for defense, and let me ask you now where is the defense? We have on the Senate floor this very afternoon a bill for '52 and '53 which aggregates 61 billion dollars for defense. That's not the whole story, because we had a special bill for 5½ billion last week. What's happened to the money?

MR. SPIVAK: Where is the logic though in a critical period like this in voting against an act to build up the military machine with manpower? Why do you vote against an act like that even if you criticize the Truman Administration for doing what it has done?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: If you will bring a draft act to the floor of the House or Senate where I have a chance to vote and don't encumber it with all the periphery that was in the bill that was before us, I certainly will vote for it.

MR. SPIVAK: Does that mean you're sorry for your vote against it?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Indeed I am not, because you forget UMT was in that bill. You forget that four divisions for Europe was in that bill. You forget there were a lot of refinements of existing law in that bill with which I didn't go along.

MR. SPIVAK: You said four divisions for Europe was in the draft act.

SENATOR DIRKSEN: That was a separate bill. But you had UMT which was first of all a combination of an emergent condition, if it was an emergent condition, and a future policy where the draft act or the UMT was not to come into effect until a declaration by the President based upon what may have developed in Korea. Now is it good legislative sense to combine that kind of legislation in one bill? In the judgment of the junior Senator from Illinois, it wasn't. That's one of the reasons I voted against it.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator, don't you think if war comes it's going to be a world war and we ought to do everything we can to

build up allies who might fight before the war comes to our shores?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I am willing to build up allies if I am sure that in the pinch these allies are going to be in our corner. But how strange that all those who go to Europe, Senators and Congressmen and people from the Executive branch, come back and say there is no sense of urgency in England and France. They see no people who talk about war in Turkey and Greece, in Italy and elsewhere, that the only place they seem to talk about war and have a sense of urgency about it is in the United States of America.

MR. SPIVAK: Senator, have you had any reports on the progress General Eisenhower has been making in Europe?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I have seen the reports that have come along from time to time.

MR. SPIVAK: Don't you think he has made great progress?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I think he has made some progress but there is one field in which there is so much progress still wanted, and that is the will and the spirit on the part of the people over there to become full partners in this enterprise. I certainly am not satisfied on that score yet.

MR. SPIVAK: Are we going to build that will and that spirit by withdrawing entirely, or do we have to help and hope that the spirit will be built up?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: It could be that a firm approach such as suggested by former President Hoover might be more provocative and more effective in developing that will than the course that we pursue at the present time. You don't buy it by opening up the federal

treasury. It hasn't worked thus far in so far as I can see.

MR. TAGGE: Who do you think would make a good Secretary of State?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: I had occasion to name a number before. I mentioned on one occasion John J. McCloy, our present High Commissioner in Germany. I mentioned on one occasion Robert Lovett, who is now Assistant Secretary for Defense, and I suppose there are others as a matter of fact.

MR. TAGGE: How about General MacArthur?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well he would probably be a very good Secretary of State.

MR. TAGGE: How about Governor Dewey?

SENATOR DIRKSEN: Well I'm afraid the junior Senator has no comment on that subject.

MISS ROUNTREE: I'm sorry, our time is up. This concludes the latest edition of Meet the Press. Thank you Senator Dirksen for being with us.

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