Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Use of materials from this collection beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law. Permission to publish or reproduce is required from the copyright holder. Please contact Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library, http://www.lib.udel.edu/cgi-bin/askspec.cgi
Senator Frear: Thank you. Throughout the length and breadth of our great country, millions of Americans are turning their thoughts briefly to the memory of one of the greatest and most respected personalities in our history. It is entirely fitting that we should do this because no better example exists upon which to plan our future than that found in the storied events in the early life of this great republic. And so, on each February 22nd, from the highest circles of government to the most humble (unintelligible [01:05]), we give voices of praise to the memory of George Washington. In the chamber of the United States Senate here in the nation’s capital, members of the Senate gather together each year and listen to the inspiring and significant words of Washington’s Farewell Address. At perhaps no other time during the session of congress is closer attention given to the reading of any message. For the members of the Senate, pride expressed in the text of this great historical document a philosophy of government which is explicitly American. It would be worth the time of every citizen on this occasion to obtain and read Washington’s farewell message. When we stop to realize how fruitful were his tireless and unending labors on behalf of our country, we can, perhaps, better appraise the scope of his tremendous understanding and vision. Washington was not only real, but he is also legendary. The stories and anecdotes which have sprung up over these many years, and the various episodes in his life, which are depicted so often by our schoolchildren on his birthday, all combine in adding stature to his immortal place in the annals of the world’s great men. In listening to the carefully written words which Washington put into his Farewell Address, one is impressed with the prophetic nature of his keen intellect and judgment. For instance, Washington admonished his countrymen to observe good faith and justice toward all nations. At the same time, he cautioned that in our commercial relations with foreign countries, we have as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, he added, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here, let us stop. Thus, General Washington in 1796
set the pattern that advocated friendly understanding with our overseas neighbors, but the maintenance of a strictly independent position on our part, so as to avoid undue and undesirable entanglements. This is in no sense an effort to encourage isolationism, but rather it is one of the bedrock principles upon which the whole new idea of the republic was predicated upon its foundation. Namely, that in the new world, we would shake loose from the prejudice of Europe which existed at that time, and carve out of America a new, bright, and hopeful future. This was the spirit of the pioneers, and it was translated into words by Washington for us to follow in the succeeding generations. I wish the time permitted me to make a detailed analysis of all of Washington’s farewell message, for there is much worth commending to your country. Permit me at least to refer you to one final paragraph which General Washington set down towards the close of his message. I quote, “In offering to you my countrymen these councils of an old and affectionate man, I dare not hope they will make a strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course of nations. But, if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.”

Mr. Kelly: Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation’s capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in a special message in observance of the memory of General George Washington. Senator Frear will continue his comments on current congressional affairs next week at this same time.