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Mr. Kelly: From Washington, DC, transcribed, United States Senator J. Allen Frear reports again to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, Senator Frear.

Senator Frear: Thank you. During the past week in the course of several addresses for various groups, I had occasion to comment on the situation in distant Indochina, where the French and Communist forces are presently engaged in a savage struggle for possession of a strategic fortress of Dien Bien Phu. If the Indochinese War was an isolated conflict and not related to the whole international problem of Communism, we might, perhaps, be somewhat less disturbed over its implications. The fact is, however, that the fighting in Indochina appears to be definitely the latest sustained effort on the part of the Reds to win over Southeast Asia. It is known, of course, that the French government is weary of this endless struggle which has been terribly costly in men and materials. The French people as well as the government are anxious for a settlement. This hope on their part is shared by the United States. But many in this country are wary, lest the French agree to end the fighting on conditions which will, in the long run, prove beneficial to the Communists. Here in Washington, it is said in some quarters that a clear-cut military victory by the French is absolutely necessary to halt Communism in Southeast Asia. But a military victory will certainly mean prolonging the fighting, with all its attendant sacrifices, until a battlefield victory is obtained. Knowing this, the French are naturally hopeful that a negotiated peace on the best terms may be possible instead. And yet, knowing the history of Red diplomacy, the French can hardly expect the Communists in Indochina to be any more trustworthy now than they have ever been in the past. Many people fear that a cessation of hostilities in Indochina, on any terms less than a Communist surrender, will merely set the stage for another Red onslaught later on. Then, too, the effect of such an agreement on other nations in Southeast Asia, especially Thailand and Burma, cannot be minimized. These countries know that they are the logical follow-ups on the Red timetable once Indochina has successfully been disposed of. There is no question that our government is greatly concerned about the turn of events in recent days. It has been suggested that General MacArthur and the
President discussed this situation late last week during their conference at the White House. Naturally, the presence of American personnel, even on a limited scale, raises very serious questions as to the future role of the United States. We understand that American servicemen in the area are there technically as non-combatants, but do service and handle equipment which is used directly against the enemy. The possibility of involvement on the part of these men is an eventuality that cannot be overlooked. Having waged a bitter struggle against aggression in Korea, the question again arises as to whether similar tactics by the Communists in Indochina are any less a threat to our way of life than Korea was when the Reds first struck across the 38th Parallel in the summer of 1950. Indochina is what we might call a little war right now, but if the sparks fly far enough, it could spread like a hungry forest fire. At the present moment, both this nation, as well as the French, face a perplexing dilemma. If on the one hand a decision is made to carry on the struggle in the hope of accomplishing a military victory, the French must face many more months and perhaps years of bitter fighting at an ever-mounting cost in men and materials. If, on the other hand, the French move for a negotiated peace, they must do so with the realization that the terms, even if seemingly adequate on the surface, will probably offer the Reds a future opportunity to re-open the struggle at a time and under conditions most favorable to themselves. All in all, the picture in the Far East today is not encouraging. Perhaps the Geneva conference in April will bring about fruitful discussions on Indochina as well as Korea and other sensitive areas in that part of the world. [05:05] But knowing the Communists as we do, and with the knowledge that Red China will be attending this conference, we are liable to face the demand on the part of Russia that the Communist China government be given appropriate recognition, both in the United Nations and as the governing body of China itself, before any other settlement is agreed to. This whole problem, then, ought to have careful and considerable attention of every thoughtful citizen, for it is one, if not settled correctly, may grow to haunt us more and more in the days ahead.

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation’s capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Mr. Frear will be heard again next week at this same time.