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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.

Thank you, Mr. Kelly. I had intended this week to discuss the various subcommittees to which I anticipate assignment as a member of the Senate Finance Committee and the Committee on Banking and Currency. However, I am deferring that subject until a little later in order to comment briefly on a phase of the President’s budget recommendations and matters which relate to them. As you already know, Mr. Eisenhower has asked Congress to approve about sixty-two billion dollars for the next fiscal year. Of this amount, sixty-five percent, or forty and one-half billion dollars, is allocated for national security. This covers, in addition to activities of the defense department, such things as atomic energy, stockpiling of strategic materials, and foreign military aid. Following the receipt of the President’s message, it was noted that proposed military spending will be approximately one hundred and eighty-six million dollars less than for the previous year. I am sure all of us welcome any reduction in expenditures which can be safely carried out. That is, without jeopardizing national defense. We all know that lower Federal appropriations will help eventually to lessen the tax burden on every wage earner. At the same time, in the light of existing international tension, some members of Congress have expressed a desire to examine the new military program very closely so as to make certain, if possible, that we will not be reducing our ability to defend this country against possible aggression. The biggest savings in military spending under the new budget would be brought about by a contemplated reduction in military personnel. It is believed that technical advances in the development of weapons, including those of an atomic nature, may lessen the demand for manpower in some branches of our armed forces. We must, of course, rely on the judgment of the President and his military advisors to a great extent, for it is they who follow minutely the day-by-day events throughout the world as they pertain to our national security. But within the past few days, uneasy and perhaps alarming incidents have occurred both in Asia and here in the Western Hemisphere. In the Far East, the
Chinese Communists have apparently stepped up their assaults against islands which lie off the Chinese mainland. These small landmarks, though perhaps not of great strategic importance in themselves, are certainly stepping stones to Formosa, which is the stronghold of the Chinese nationalists. It is conceivable that the Chinese Reds are planning more concentrated and determined efforts to eventually attack Formosa itself once they have removed the obstacles which stand between them and the nationalist armies. At present, we are not directly involved in this struggle. But the months ahead will, at best, be uncertain and filled with much tension. Meanwhile, a dispute involving Costa Rica and presumably Nicaragua has disturbed the peace of Latin America in an area which is dangerously close to the vital Panama Canal. Indeed, Panama itself is now going through a violent and tragic upheaval following the assassination of its president a few days ago. In the light of these circumstances, it seems prudent for us to weigh most carefully the wisdom of cutting back our armed forces. It should be proven beyond all reasonable doubt that we will not suffer any unfortunate consequences in the future by doing so. In no sense do I wish to appear as an alarmist. Like most Americans, I have great respect for the President’s proven ability as a military leader. I do, however, believe it essential that the Congress look into this whole situation from every conceivable point of view, and in this connection, I trust, we shall be able to have the views of many important military and civilian authorities, both in and out of the government, who are in a position to shed light on the problems. [05:21] I know that many Delawareans are anxious, as am I, to bring about a balanced budget and an end to deficit spending. Such objectives are consistent with the operation of our free enterprise system. But despite these worthy goals, we cannot, even momentarily, compromise our military strength, either actually or potentially. I believe most of us would rather bear the high tax rates if it will better ensure the maximum possible security for the free world, and especially the United States. As discussions on the defense budget develop, I hope to have the occasion of commenting further in forthcoming weeks. Meanwhile, as usual, I will welcome and appreciate the benefit of your comments and suggestions.

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. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time.