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This Week In Congress Radio Address: Congressional Appropriations to Defense Department for National Security, 1956 May 14
Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear
Transcribed by: David Cardillo

[00:00]

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on May 14th, 1956.

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, Mr. Kelly. The biggest, single appropriation for the new fiscal year has passed the House of Representatives and is now under consideration by the members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations. I refer, of course, to the legislation of grant funds to the Department of Defense for the operation of its many vast and complex agencies related to national security. When approved by the House late last week by a vote of three hundred and seventy-seven to nothing, this bill included the sum of about thirty-three and one-half billion dollars. This figure is about one and three-quarter billion dollars more than what was appropriated last year, and about one-half billion dollars less than the budget estimate for the current year. It is readily apparent that the defense appropriation accounts for the largest part of the government’s fiscal obligation, not only this year, but for many years in the past. A controversy attended consideration of this bill in the House, but perhaps even greater discussion and argument will be forthcoming in the Senate, now that this legislation has moved to this side of Capitol Hill. Presently, the Senate Committee on Appropriations, which is giving initial attention to this huge money bill, is listening to the highest-ranking officials of our Defense Department and is receiving from them their views and explanation on the need and use of the proposed funds for the next twelve years. Most of the testimony is being heard publicly. That is, the committee room is open, and anyone who cares to do so, may attend these sessions. Periodically, however, when some matters involving classified data is involved, the committee hears that testimony in private. As we have all observed from reading the press in the past few days, some differences of opinion exist over the relative striking power and the strategic ability of the Navy and the Air Force to carry out long-range bombing attacks on an enemy in time of war. This discussion recalls the serious conflict of views that came about a few years ago between the top-ranking leaders of the Air Force and Navy. At that time, the unification of the armed services was somewhat new, and difficulty was being experienced in bringing together various states of opinion among the three principle armed services. The present
situation has overtones of the past in that it reflects some rather deep-seated views of the respective Air Force and Navy leaders over the ability and capacity of their particular service. Quite naturally in a democracy such as ours, the nation has every right to expect its ranking military spokesmen to express themselves forthrightly to the members of Congress. Under no circumstances do we desire individuals in high places who will merely follow along with established policy for the sake of being agreeable. There’s no doubt in my mind that the present divergent views between the Air Force and the Navy represent in the name a most conscientious viewpoint. The members of the Appropriations Committee and the Senate in general are watching carefully the progress of these views because they are of the greatest importance to the nation’s welfare. If a national emergency should come, we all have the right to expect that our armed forces will work together in a completely harmonious pattern so that our military effort can be expended in an efficient and productive manner. There is no room anywhere among our military leaders for narrow or selfish opinion which might benefit one particular arm of our national defense at the expense of the other. [05:08] I am most anxious that our military leaders express themselves and that they are to be given careful and detailed attention. However, when they are completed, and decisions are reached over how defense appropriations will be shared among the armed forces, our various military authorities to reconcile themselves to carrying out these decisions for the good of all. Most assuredly, there is a place and a need for all of our existing branches of the Armed Forces, but the integration and the use of the Army, Navy, and Air Force must proceed in a mutually accessible and agreeable manner. The people of the United States whose tax dollars will make it possible for the Armed Forces to have the thirty-three or thirty-four billion dollars necessary for the next fiscal year have every right to expect the best and wisest use of these funds to protect our national security.

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, speaking from the Senate Office Building in Washington.

[End 06:38]