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This Week In Congress Radio Address: The Berlin Crisis, 1959 March 2
Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear
Transcribed by: David Cardillo

[00:00]


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

Senator Frear: Congress and the nation have just passed through an uneasy and disquieting week in international affairs. In spite of its preoccupation with many domestic matters of major importance, leading members of both the Senate and House made no effort to minimize the present uncertainty and inherent danger that exists over the status of Berlin. After a week in which the Russian Premier rudely embarrassed the visiting Prime Minister of Great Britain by his rash statements while the latter was in the Soviet Union, the Western allies moved obviously and quickly to strengthen their plans of preparation for whatever might happen when the Kremlin turns over control of East Germany to the Red puppet regime. The anxiety over the possibility of conflict as a means of settling the Berlin crisis also produced a series of strong and determined statements by representatives of both major political parties here in the United States. The result has been a clear indication to the Kremlin that on this vital question of foreign policy, Americans stand together and united. The resolute reaction of the Western government against Moscow’s attitude toward a settlement of the Berlin question may have caused some second thoughts among the Russian hierarchy, for as this week begins, there is evidence that the proposed Foreign Ministers Conference, which earlier was discounted by Mr. Khrushchev, may be revived. Obviously, the Russians want a summit conference on the German question, but unless an earlier foreign ministers meeting produces some basis on which the heads of the great powers can meet and intelligently discuss the German question, there seems little point in arranging such an assembly, except for propaganda purposes. In the present unsettled state of negotiation between East and West over the status of Berlin, a number of suggestions have been made for the United States to mobilize additional armed forces to meet any possible emergency. It seems to me that such a decision is primarily one for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the President as Commander-in-Chief to make. It is to be hoped that the German issue will be decided by peaceful discussion, but we must certainly be fully prepared and completely ready for whatever the future may bring. Meantime here in Washington, the Senate Finance Committee opened hearings on its first major tax bill of
the Eighty-Sixth Congress. This is the proposed Life Insurance Company Tax Act of 1959. Many representatives of insurance companies all over the United States are gathering here either to testify or to discuss the provisions of the pending bill with the Senators from their respective home states. In other legislative matters of last week, the Banking and Currency Committee heard witnesses in public testimony on the so-called Area Redevelopment Bill. While the Senate Sub-Committee on Roads examined the status of the Federal Aid Highway Program, one aspect of the Highway Program of much controversy is a pending suggestion to increase the Federal gasoline tax in order to meet financial obligations of our expanding public roads system. Many people are saying, and rightly so, I believe, that the hard-pressed American motorist is already taxed to a very substantial degree for his use of the nation’s highways.

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 04:59]