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This Week In Congress Radio Address: American Atomic Testing Accident in Japan, 1954
March 31

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear
Transcribed by: David Cardillo

[00:00]

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on March 26th, 1954, and played on WDOV on March 31st, 1954.

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. Some days ago, following what was described as a monstrous explosion in the far Pacific, word reached the United States that a group of Japanese fishermen had been showered with radioactive material emanating from the detonation of an atomic device at the Bikini Testing Grounds. We do not know, as yet, how serious the effects will be on those Japanese fishermen who received doses of radiation, and we hope that no permanent injuries or deaths will occur. But as a result of this incident, a wave of apprehension and indignation has apparently risen in the Orient. Anti-American elements are using this unfortunate accident to whip up sentiment against any future atomic tests in that area. We can gather from information in the press and from the comments of the President that the effect of the explosion was more widespread than anticipated. We understand that the fishermen were many miles from the blast scene, and still, the harmful radioactive particles reached them. This situation has, I am sure, prompted a great deal of thought on the part of people all over the world, for it must be clearly apparent that the overwhelming power of atomic energy, when violently set loose, is sufficient to literally tear apart anything or everything within immediate range of its explosive force. Added to that, of course, is the secondary effect of damaging radiation. We wonder what all of this will mean to the future of civilization. Many people are thinking that sooner or later, international control of atomic energy will have to become a reality if the human race is to survive. While efforts are being put forth to promote defensive tactics against atomic explosions, the grim fact remains that we simply cannot remove ourselves safely from the violent upheaval which is possible through the detonation of those huge bombs. All of us have heard through civil defense leaders of the damage which can be caused in various American cities should an atomic blast occur in or over one of them. When we read and hear of such terrible effects, our first impulse, perhaps, is to leap to our defenses in order to ward off any possible attacker before he reaches

us. Of themselves, national defense and internal security are absolute essentials. But it seems to me that the question of controlling atomic weapons transcends the boundaries of any single nation, for it is a responsibility that involves the preservation of life itself. We are all acutely aware of the continuing friction between the Soviet Union and the United States. It has been impossible to secure any reasonable understanding with the Communist leaders who are seemingly bent on world domination. However, I am sure that the most recent explosion in the Far Pacific has given the leaders in the Kremlin a great deal of food for thought. They must realize now, if they had not before, that our development of atomic weapons has reached the stage where its destructive powers are almost beyond comprehension. Control of atomic weapons and world disarmament should therefore be encouraged by our government and by people everywhere if, for no other reason, than to preserve civilization. I hope that the United States, acting on its own, and through the United Nations when possible, will continue to exert its influence toward bringing about an understanding among all nations regarding the future use of atomic explosives. **[05:10]** Many problems are involved in this undertaking. It will be difficult to satisfy everyone, but should we fail to achieve our objective, the alternative may be an atomic war. If such a terrible catastrophe is visited upon this planet, this civilization may be crumbled amid swirls of nuclear dust. Surely, mankind, with all of its imperfections, should have sufficient wisdom to prevent its self-destruction through a force, which if controlled and wisely used, could raise our standards of life to a higher degree than ever before contemplated.

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation's capital, you have been listening to 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, speaking again from the Capital Building in Washington.

[End 06:20]