The frustration still comes through when U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry talks about something he saw on Capitol Hill several years ago.

Fortenberry, who represents Nebraska's 1st District, is a recognized expert in Congress on nuclear security issues. One afternoon, he was rushing between two committee hearings — one on the nuclear weapons threat from North Korea, the other on a potential nuclear threat from Iran. Only a handful of people attended those hearings, but as he hurried down a hallway, he saw another committee hearing that was jam-packed.

What was that hearing's topic, he asked. It was about satellite radio policy, he was told.

The anecdote, Fortenberry told The World-Herald, illustrates one of the big challenges in trying to deal with nuclear security overseas. Countless issues of immediate interest demand the attention of Congress and push aside a focus on confronting what could be a catastrophic threat to our country and others.

"What are the consequences of a nuclear attack on Tel Aviv or Berlin or New York or London?" he asks. "We're talking about the future of civilization."

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