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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ALAN S. BOYD,  
AT THE DEDICATION OF THE HUNTSVILLE-MADISON COUNTY AIRPORT, HUNTSVILLE,  
ALABAMA, ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1968, 1:00 P.M.

It's good to be here to join with you in dedicating your new airport.

I like Huntsville, I find rockets exciting. And I want to make it clear that I am here to dedicate the airport not to scout for rockets we can feed into our transportation system.

I don't think there are any engineering barriers to rocket travel. We probably can handle that. It's the question of the stewardess that's holding things up.

As we see it, with the kinds of speeds that these rockets would generate, the stewardess would just about have time to say: coffee, tea or -- watch your step getting off.

We in the Department of Transportation are quite close to the space program. In fact, the NASA headquarters is next door to our transportation building in Washington and NASA officials share our dining room. They're easy to spot -- they spend their lunch hours writing equations on the table cloth.

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I think you can best appreciate the significance of your new airport by studying the daily paper. At a time when some cities are having to reexamine their air carrier schedules because of an insufficiency of airport capacity, Huntsville comes forward to dedicate a new airport. I congratulate your officials for their imagination and foresight.

And I am happy that we in the Federal Government could assist you in building this new airport. We supplied our Federal funds at the -- if you'll excuse the word -- invitation of Bob Jones and Senator John Sparkman. They sure know how to persuade a fellow.

I've known and worked with Senator Sparkman for many years and I've learned that I have to do my homework before I meet him. I have to have, ready and waiting to go, the answers to two questions. They are: "How does this project better the United States? How does this project better Alabama?"

And as far as we people in the Government agencies are concerned, that's the best kind of a Senator there is.

I wish all our aviation responsibilities were as pleasant as dedicating a new airport. They are not. Our major aviation problem is a tough one. We are now proposing that flights at five of the nation's heavily congested airports be rationed. We take the action with regret. But there is no alternative.

Our proposed regulation is the result of a series of events. For the past seven years, the American people have enjoyed unprecedented gains in business activity, personal income and leisure. With this prosperity has come a spectacular increase in travel -- particularly air travel. This growth has exceeded all expectations with the result there is, in some few areas, a shortage of supporting elements -- airport runways, ramp space, terminal accommodations and air traffic controllers. Hence our proposed regulation.

We in the Department of Transportation regard this regulation as a temporary measure -- a necessary expedient. We share with the aviation industry the conviction that the only proper answer to our dilemma is the expansion of airport capacity and the expansion of air traffic control support. We are urging this expansion. We think it is a necessity. There is no other suitable answer.

We are at the same time proposing that aviation help in financing this expansion. The system of user charges that we are requesting represent no new departure. Aviation, through various taxes, is at present helping to bear the costs of the special Government services it receives. We are asking it to pay a larger share to meet the growing expenses needed to expand the supporting system.

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The taxes we are proposing to Congress are just and equitable. But we have an open mind to other proposals and suggestions. We are not concerned with form. We are interested in substance -- in the principle that aviation bears the costs of the services it receives. The acceptance of this fact is what we seek.

These recommendations of ours -- the rationing of flights at five congested airports and the user charges -- have provoked every variety of reaction. There are alarms. Some industry groups have announced "the sky is falling." Others have warned their members that the end of the world is at hand.

Two things must be said. Our proposals are not designed to discriminate against any segment of aviation. They are not designed to penalize aviation. They are, rather, formulated to fulfill our double obligation of promoting air commerce and serving the broad public interest. And this they will do.

I am further convinced, that in the five over-congested areas, the rationing of flights will prove beneficial. The passenger will be better served and the airlines will save some of the millions of dollars now being wasted in idle labor and fuel charges as their airplanes wait on the ramps or circle in the stacking patterns overhead.

It's important to understand that some of these planes that now have to wait in the stacking patterns could be from Huntsville. That's the meaning of our action. You are growing here with your new airport. We want the system to grow with you. That's our function.

I congratulate you, consequently, on your new airport. Both your city and aviation are the better for it. I wish you well.

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