



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

36-S-69

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE,
BEFORE THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS, STATLER HILTON HOTEL,
MONDAY, JULY 21, 1969, 12:15 P.M.

Just as engineers -- by definition -- are men of accomplishment, the whole world looks today toward the heavens as the Apollo 11 mission soars homeward, concluding the most intrepid expedition in the history of man. The events of the past six days truly represent the ultimate in applied engineering, and the members of this profession must certainly take proud pleasure in the fact that such a memorable accomplishment has occurred during this generation.

As one who spent his business career in the construction industry I feel that I am among old friends whenever I have the privilege of talking to civil engineers. Certainly there isn't a professional group in the country that has contributed more to the progress of our people. The moonshot is the most obvious example.

Yet while we are building a new future for mankind in space, we should not forget that we must do better here on earth as well.

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We in Washington tend to think of ourselves as engineers, as builders for a better day. At least I know that that is true in the Department of Transportation, where we have our work cut out for us. I have become very much aware that transportation -- which accounts for about 20 percent of our gross national product -- is a complex activity that critically shapes the life of this country.

The very ease of transportation, in comparison with a century ago, encourages people to keep on the go.

Part of the consequence is that we are faced with degrees of congestion, pollution, urban delay and social decay that could jeopardize not only our fabled prosperity but the stability of this nation as well.

It is to his great and enduring credit that President Nixon recognizes these dangers. He has wisely placed the dilemmas of transportation high on his top ten list for action during his Administration. I am convinced that we can get a grip on these problems and solve them if we will accept the necessity of something of a change in our customary way of doing things. For too long we have responded to crises and not really looked to the future. Well, time has just about run out. The chewing gum and bailing wire approach isn't going to work in an age of revolutionary expectations.

Frankly, I suspect that when we think of national transportation objectives we usually get a mental picture of a machine of some kind. And then we imagine the potential mobility this machine can deliver. Well -- my policy people and I feel that it would be far more productive if we started to think in terms of what kinds of movement of people and goods we want to achieve, and then designed the machines and systems that will make such mobility a reality.

Now I am not recommending that we abandon our present fixed plant transportation network. For one thing, investment in American transportation is currently worth several hundred billion dollars. For another thing, we do have the greatest transportation capacity in the world. We aren't all bad. But we must work to improve what we have, and at the same time make an extra effort to exploit the hidden potential of railroads, buses, cars, highways and airways.

I take it for granted that no one mode of transportation will be able to provide efficiently all of the mobility we require -- especially in and between the cities. Our citizens should be able to choose a mix of modes designed to get them -- or their freight -- where they are going with a minimum of delay and irritation.

There is no law of nature demanding that we use airplanes exclusively on intercity trips of 300 miles. There is no hard and fast rule that requires us to drive downtown or to the airport in our private automobiles. There is no order which decrees that buses and cars have to pollute the air we breathe. We have pledged to find a better way.

We do not accept these preferences and habits as being permanently fixed. They can be changed. We can build a transportation system in which each mode performs the task for which it is inherently best suited. By wise planning we can ensure that each mode performs well and links efficiently with all the others. A clear example of the importance of such planning can be seen in the matter of airport access and air congestion.

As you know we have had to impose flight rationing at some of the bigger airports because of persistent traffic jams in the air. These conditions will only become more intolerable unless we begin now to relieve them. We project an astonishing 300 percent increase in air travel demand by 1979. To meet this demand we have proposed to Congress that this nation invest \$5 billion over a 10 year period to upgrade instrument landing systems, air traffic control facilities and airports. Such a course of action is essential if we are to provide the services expected by the American people. At the same time, however, we must do a better job of providing ground access to airports.

What airports obviously need is better public transportation. In the past, air travel was thought to attract a clientele that wouldn't lower itself to ride on a bus or a train. But now that we have reached the age of mass air travel, public transportation to the airport makes good economic sense. The city of Cleveland has proved that rapid rail lines to the airport will be heavily patronized. As a matter of fact the Department of Transportation has given them a grant to buy the extra cars they need to handle the unexpected volume of traffic.

This newly appreciated connection between congestion in the air and on the ground illustrates my point -- that the transportation system of the future must be fully balanced and integrated between modes. Nowhere is this more true than in our sprawling cities.

In another 10 years more than 75 percent of our projected population of 225 million will live in cities. From 35 to 40 percent will be living in three urban zones -- one along the Atlantic, one in California and another stretching along the Great Lakes from Cleveland to Chicago and on up to Milwaukee.

In the post-war years we have relied heavily upon highways in these urban regions. You civil engineers have helped create a magnificent highway system that is the envy of the world. Our roads have been so successful, however, that we are generating traffic that no highway system could handle -- no matter how splendidly financed and engineered.

Over the next 8 years the volume of traffic on the street could increase by 40 percent. And I raise the question of whether conventional forms of transportation can meet this level of demand. I don't believe they can, for at present rates of growth in demand, within 20 years we will have to double the transport facilities of the nation.

We must have new answers. You will be asked to supply your share of these answers. Your tasks will be more difficult, but your rewards will be even greater. Your opportunities and responsibilities as civil engineers will be virtually unlimited. For this is a society constantly in process of renewal, a nation always under construction.

The public is asking more of us all the time. There is a rising curve of expectations for better service and better conditions -- on the roads, on rails, and in the air. Today's desire is tomorrow's demand. And yet the leadtime for new transport facilities is longer than for any other industry. We may need a "Year 2000" plan for transportation, but we can't wait till then to upgrade what we have. I know one thing for certain -- we had better get started on new systems if we hope to meet future demand through evolution instead of revolution and crisis. Let's not wait for the American transport network to breakdown before we give it the financing it requires and deserves.

Well along about now a lot of you are asking, "Where does this involve me? I can't create highway policy, I just carry out orders." My friends, It's never as simple as that. How many of you went to bed at night as a youngster dreaming of the day when you would be a great engineer and even invent something great? We need this kind of openness and a spirit of innovation. You people have a great creative potential if you use it. Don't accept any traditional answers. Find a new way.

I believe we have a great opportunity to create better conditions for our people by building transportation systems that do more than just move freight and passengers. We are coming to realize that the quality of urban transportation -- just as much as jobs, schools and housing -- determines the quality of urban life.

The better the transportation system, the more opportunity there is to find and keep a job, to attend a college, to shop, to enjoy oneself. Without low cost, convenient, clean (and may I say even fashionable) public transportation, the inner city gradually decays. To put it plainly, better buses and subways can help us to create a secure, orderly, and enjoyable life for the urban millions of tomorrow.

The Europeans recognize this fact, and believe me -- they're ahead of us in this area. I know. I was there last month.

In cities like Rotterdam, Stockholm, Frankfurt, and closer to home Montreal and Toronto, transit is designed to complement the automobile by relieving traffic congestion on city streets and highways. It is not a competitor, but is completely compatible with the automobile and enhances its effectiveness.

Civil engineers can be highly influential in getting these facts across to our urban policymakers. No responsibility you have is more urgent. It transcends all technical questions because it has to do with the shape, the quality, and very destiny of our cities. We must create urban habitats that meet the needs and extend the measure of man, or we will be faced with chaos.

President Nixon's decision to place urban mobility among his top priorities was made only after careful study. It was not a hasty decision. It was based upon the social and economic potential of better transportation. I think this characteristic of deliberation has become a hallmark of this Administration. The presidency of Richard Nixon is going to be known for cool logic, long-range planning, depth studies of basic problems and sober facing of realities.

We are making steady progress in this country. It is not always evident in the headlines. But plans are being laid for a better future. Professional groups such as yours have immense reserves of influence to help us ensure that future. With your help we can literally and figuratively build a better society in this blessed land.

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