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

Excerpts of remarks prepared for delivery by John A. Volpe, Secretary of Transportation, before the Transportation Association of America, at the Hotel America, Washington, D. C., April 14, 1969, 12:00 Noon.

Since accepting this post, I have been reminded repeatedly by events and constant study that transportation in this country is one heck of a complex operation when seen from a national perspective. The sheer dimensions of the American transport structure are hard to grasp.

We have to talk in terms of hundreds of millions of passengers, billions of ton-miles, and tens of billions of dollars. There is nothing to compare with it in any other country; it is a triumph of technology so successful that it has also generated new problems the likes of which have never been seen before on the face of the earth.

I think we realize now that though we have a transportation network which for the most part works pretty well, it does not work as well as it should, particularly in and around the larger cities. We do not really have a transport system in the scientific sense of the word.

Each of the modes is really a creature unto itself, delivering its freight and passengers without much troubling over how well it links up with the others. In fact, if there were such a direct linkage and transport officials tried to implement it, chances are they would soon run afoul of long-standing regulations and laws which, when you examine them, can often be condemned as obsolete.

One of the leading goals of this Administration is to make intermodal planning and cooperation fully respectable and practical. The role of the Department of Transportation, as President Nixon has defined it, is to develop and coordinate an effective transport system - - that serves the needs of all the people all the time.

Our objectives range over improvements in the overall efficiency of transportation, ensuring that the unemployed have access to employment . . . that there be joint planning of transport corridors in the hearts of our cities, that we upgrade the safety of all modes, and most important for those who will come after us -- that we safeguard our priceless heritage of natural wonders, historic sites and places of recreation.

I sense in this country -- as I suspect you do -- a new upwelling concern about transportation, its methods and objectives. I sense a national feeling that transportation is not just something that should develop at random without regard for its consequences and implications. Transportation is something that should be used consciously and deliberately as a tool of long-range environmental planning to make our country a more secure, liveable place for our children and their children after them.

This is a marked change in national attitudes. It demands a new response from government and from you leaders in the field. It means, of course, that we must invest more money in making transportation work more effectively for all of us. We need careful planning and research and we need creative foresight of the kind we came up with twelve years ago when we started the Federal Highway program. with its tremendously successful trust fund financing.

That program has worked well. Now we must solve similar funding challenges concerning the development of mass transit and airport/airways facilities, just to mention two major areas.

As you know, we expect to be in the news within a matter of weeks, as we submit to the President new programs in these two fields.

One thing I can promise you is what I would call responsible audacity. We have put our crew of development experts to work with instructions to come up with fresh ideas that show reasonable promise -- no matter how far-out they seem now. A nation that can send three men around the moon and back in seven days can certainly find a way to solve its inner-city and intercity transit problems.

Anybody who says flatly that we can't do that just hasn't taken a careful, historical look at the wonders we have achieved so far with our rails, roads, airways, barges and pipelines. And anyone who claims we should not do it just isn't aware of social realities. One of the nation's leading population experts has said recently that within 70 years, at present rates of growth, every American will live in a city of a million or more people. We have to prepare for that time now, or we will reach a condition of complete paralysis.

Your cooperation and leadership over the next few years will be vital if we are to achieve the safe, clean, comfortable and socially responsive transportation system that President Nixon has promised the American people and that we can and must build. We intend to move forward and we do not have the slightest doubt of your response as one of the most influential trade associations in America.

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