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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, JOHN A. VOLPE TO THE AMERICAN BUSINESS PRESS, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AUDITORIUM, WASHINGTON, D.C., MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1970, 4:30 P.M.

The problems we face today -- in housing, in welfare, in equal opportunity, in the schools, and in transportation -- stem not from national failure, but from success. Our standards of performance are a lot higher than they were a generation ago. They have to be, considering the enormous social and technological dynamism of this changing country.

Take the field of transportation, for instance. In spite of what is correctly identified as a temporary downturn in airline activity, the long-term trend is upward. We fully expect a 300 percent increase in air passenger miles over the next 10 years, and 400 percent by 1985. Projections show automotive traffic rising 50 percent by 1980. They clearly indicate that trucks will be hauling 50 percent more freight 10 years hence.

Even the railroads, in spite of their troubles, have been averaging about 38 million more ton-miles every day over the last 30 years -- and that could mean 25 or 30 percent growth if continued over the next decade. Overall, the trend lines tell us that we will have to double our total transport capacity within the next 15 years -- this, at a time when the public is demanding environmental accountability.

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When I first came to Washington nearly two years ago President Nixon and I had a long talk about these matters. We are both well aware that the nation cannot possibly meet such extraordinary demands upon its mobility resources just by doubling and tripling the kinds of capacity we have today. Down that road lies a disaster of pollution, congestion and urban decay far beyond anything we have seen so far.

What the President said to me was, "Assemble a panel of the best experts in the field and draw up a national transportation policy that will guide us through the next 20 years." I am happy to tell you that our statement of national transportation policy is about to be published. I can't reveal any details at the moment, but I can tell you it will present some very far-reaching historical proposals for a system -- not just a network -- of highly integrated freight and passenger modes.

I think we will have to admit that until recently we paid little or no attention to the consequences of the kind of transportation network -- or "non-system" -- we had allowed to develop as this nation grew. Don't misunderstand me. Transportation has, indeed, been marked by some spectacular triumphs. We expanded our airports and airways during the 50's and 60's, accomodating increases in passenger miles on the order of several hundreds of percent. We are nearing completion of the great interstate highway system -- thanks to the foresight of that great American, the late, beloved Ike Eisenhower. This network of splendid arterial roads is already saving 5000 lives and \$37-billion for motorists and truckers every year -- though it is less than 3/4 complete. I have seen the system grow and become a vital link for all America.

However, at the same time we let our merchant marine run down. We let our public transportation systems decline to the point of collapse. We watched, while freight train derailments soared 100 percent in 8 years. We looked on as deaths in car crashes mounted to the sickening figure of 56,000 a year, with injuries to almost 2-million.

We stood aside and allowed one passenger train after another to be taken from service. We let our overseas trade strangle in red tape.

And compounding these oversights, we allowed ourselves to become inordinately dependent upon the automobile.

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Every day the people of America buy enough cars to stretch bumper to bumper for miles. We have almost one car per person. We have one car for every 50 yards of highway, and one mile of highway for every square mile of land. We drive our vehicles one trillion miles per year. And the result is not surprising. The congestion and smog are so bad that cities of over a half-million population are generally unpleasant and often unhealthy to live and work in.

As we saw our mission two years ago, then, we had not only to provide an overall transportation policy for the nation, but we had to act fast to prevent the deterioration of what had already been built up -- rather haphazardly -- during the previous 200 years in all the modes.

In aviation the problem of congestion was critical. Our air navigation and control systems, our airports, and our men at the radar screens and in the towers were hard-pressed to handle the volume of traffic generated by an expanding economy and a burgeoning population -- let alone get ready for future growth. So President Nixon submitted to Congress a 10-year, \$10-billion program to underwrite modernization of the entire system. Our bill passed almost unanimously in both Houses and went into effect last July.

At the same time, we were confronted by a disastrous decline in public transportation in the cities. Transit patronage is only one-fourth what it was right after the war and you don't have to look far for the reason: increasing costs, rising fares, declining ridership, shrinking profits and plummeting service.

No wonder people turned to their cars. They may have been able to average only five to ten miles an hour in rush-hour traffic, but at least they didn't have to stand in the rain waiting for a bus that was old, crowded, often dirty, and usually late.

However, reliance upon cars spread cities out and forced suburbanites to waste many unnecessary hours driving back and forth to work. And highways, parking lots and interchanges disrupted neighborhoods and pre-empted valuable, taxable land. Meanwhile, the ghetto resident too poor to own a car couldn't get out to the suburbs where the new factory jobs were concentrating. The tide had to be turned. We were becoming victims of our own sprawling prosperity.

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It was obvious to the President, to me, and to my staff that unless this trend was reversed our cities would degenerate into perpetual traffic jams, decay and chaos. So we drafted -- and the President submitted -- a public transportation bill. It provides for \$10-billion, with more than \$3-billion available for immediate obligation, to build new bus and subway systems -- to restore and upgrade transit service in cities large and small throughout the country.

The bill obviously answered a great national need, because it sailed through Congress with substantial majorities. As President Nixon said when he signed the bill in October, this is "landmark" legislation that will turn the tide toward more habitable cities where people can work productively and live at peace.

Our third major concern during this period of foundation laying has been for the railroads. That spectacular rise in derailments I mentioned earlier was especially undesirable at a time when the shipment of hazardous cargoes was increasing markedly. One accident in a large urban area might have forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people or even endangered their lives.

We went right to work and drew up a Federal Railroad Safety Bill that would give us the authority to set standards for the design, construction and maintenance of track, roadbeds, signals, rolling stock and employee qualifications. The Act provides the Secretary of Transportation with control over the shipment of hazardous materials and regulation of grade crossings and rights-of-way. This is no small matter because grade crossing accidents took 15,000 lives in 1969 alone. This bill, too, passed the Congress by nearly unanimous votes.

Finally, a word about our Rail Passenger Legislation which has been so much in the news these past few days. I am sure you know that the railroads have been losing over \$200-million a year on passenger trains. Without federal intervention these trains would have undoubtedly disappeared completely in the very near future.

Our program permits the railroad companies to lease track rights to the National Rail Passenger Corporation, which will operate passenger service in corridors designated by the Secretary of Transportation. It thus avoids the pitfall of merely subsidizing regular railroad operating losses. Last Monday we announced that the system would initially link 14 major cities with 16 routes, thus assuring regular service for 85 percent of metropolitan areas over 50,000 population.

Critics have said that nothing would appear to be more surely doomed than passenger trains. We don't think so. By cleaning up these trains and providing convenient, reliable, courteous service, our market studies show -- and experience with the Metroliner proves -- that rail passenger operations will succeed. In time, they will cut pollution and congestion in major metro corridors by providing an alternative to planes, cars and buses.

The restoration of rail passenger service and the pioneer transit and airways legislation are just a beginning. I believe the face of transportation in this country will change dramatically over the coming decade. Our Department is fully committed to development of the Tracked Air Cushion Vehicle. We are testing ways to lower auto and bus exhaust emissions. We are drafting tough new safety standards for automobiles. We are determined to reduce noise caused by trucks and planes. We are studying the controversial matter of deregulation. We are exploring ways to modernize insurance coverage for private motorists. We will encourage intermodality of freight movements.

To sum up, we think we are beginning to get a handle on the nation's urgent transportation problems. We have taken the initial steps to create the first national plan for transportation in our history. We have pushed through timely legislation so that we can hold our own during the interim. We are confidently exploring the possibilities of new technology.

You gentlemen can thus play an essential role in the transition from the 19th century style in transportation to one more appropriate for our times. I hope most fervently that your influence and persuasiveness will help us gain support for the new climate of innovation which the transportation industry so sorely needs.

Thank you.

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