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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE BEFORE THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, STATLER HILTON, WASHINGTON, D.C., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1970, NOON.

I respect ASPA's contribution to good government and I admire the sense of duty and public service reflected by this organization.

I first encountered that spirit when I came to Washington to be President Eisenhower's first Federal Highway Administrator. And I rediscovered it when I returned for the second time in January 1969.

During the course of the last 10 or 12 years in government I've noted a distinct change in the climate of public administration. I think it's a little hotter! I don't know whether government people ever enjoyed the quiet backwaters depicted in popular legend, but they certainly are on the firing line today.

Our society is confronted by unprecedented challenges to the status quo - suburbanization, population growth, environmental decay, civil disorder, poor housing, problem schools, congested traffic.

Naturally government must respond to these challenges and that means increased responsibilities for public administrators. New programs, new concepts, new demands -- all pose a heavy burden and require that public servants be generalists able to adapt rapidly to changing priorities.

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The priority that I am most familiar with, of course, is transportation. I think we will have to admit that until recently we did not think through carefully the consequences of the kind of transportation system -- or non-system -- we had allowed to develop over the past 20 years.

Now, that system was indeed marked by some spectacular triumphs. We expanded our airports and airways more than anyone thought possible during the 50's and 60's, accommodating increases in passenger miles on the order of several hundreds of percent. We are building a fabulous interstate highway system which is saving \$37-billion and 5,000 lives each and every year. It will save 8,000 lives every year when completed.

However, at the same time we let our Merchant Marine run down and we let our mass transit 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 per year, and injuries to almost two million every 12 months.

We stood aside and allowed one passenger train after another to be taken from service. We let out overseas trade get caught up in red tape.

And above all else, and compounding all else, we allowed ourselves to become tremendously dependent upon the automobile for the vast bulk of personal travel in and between cities. We have paid a heavy price for convenience in terms of congestion, pollution, ugliness and urban decay.

But we turned a corner when the Department of Transportation was established four years ago by a farsighted act of Congress. This was the first attempt in this Nation to do what every advanced nation had found it necessary to do -- unify and integrate transportation planning and construction in all modes.

We were faced from the start with a series of extremely urgent problems. Take aviation for example. The public generally doesn't realize that air passenger miles will almost certainly shoot upward by another 300 percent in the next decade.

Obviously our air navigation and control system, airports, and terminals could not handle such loads. So we asked Congress to provide \$7.5 billion in user charges to finance modernization of the whole air system. Our bill passed with near-unanimous majorities in each House, and took effect on July 1 of this year.

At the same time, we were grappling with the challenge of public transportation in our cities. Nearly 80 percent of all Americans live in cities, and public transportation is far from perfect. Transit patronage today is one-fourth what it was 25 years ago, and the transit lines -- both publicly and privately owned -- have been caught in a classic cycle of increasing costs, rising fares, declining ridership, shrinking profits, and plummeting service.

Because of their dependence on private cars, suburbanites have been forced to live further and further away from their jobs, and too often many inner-city residents -- who don't have cars -- have been excluded from the growing job market in suburban industry.

We saw clearly that unless this trend were reversed, cities would soon be choking in congestion and air pollution, and much of their taxable property would be taken for parking lots, expressways and interchanges. The urban crisis can -- all too easily -- be intensified if we rely on highway transportation alone.

So the President submitted our Mass Transportation Assistance Bill to Congress, which provides for an immediate \$3.1 billion to build new systems, restore service, upgrade quality and permit experiments with low-pollution vehicles and new kinds of flexible service in cities large and small. This bill obviously had wide appeal, because it passed with enormous majorities in both the Senate and the House. It was signed into law two weeks ago yesterday, and is -- as the President said -- "landmark" legislation.

For the first time in history, there is now Federal funding available on an assured, long-range basis. Through the use of so-called "contract authority", we can assure grant applicants that matching Federal funds will be available over more than just one session of the Congress. This kind of financing gives our cities the latitude they need in floating their own bond issues, and will certainly mean great progress for urban America.

The other area of major concern during these last 20 months has been the railroads. We were particularly disturbed by the 100 percent rise in derailments during the last 8 years. Such a trend would never be desirable, but in a time when the shipment of explosive and highly toxic chemicals was rising markedly, it was clearly intolerable. One derailment in a big city and an entire urban region might have to be evacuated.

The President submitted a Federal Railroad Safety Bill which gives us extensive powers over the design, construction and maintenance of track, rolling stock, roadbeds, and employee qualifications. It empowers the Secretary of Transportation to control shipments of hazardous materials, and gives him authority over grade-crossings and rights of way. Grade-crossing accidents alone took 1500 lives last year.

This bill too sailed through the Congress with almost zero opposition.

Finally, I'm sure you gentlemen know from personal experience the poor state of rail passenger service in this country. However you look at it -- quantity or quality -- it's almost non-competitive. Yet it is an alternate mode that is sorely needed. Rail passenger service has received little if any Federal assistance, and the Nation's rail carriers incurred a loss of over \$200 million in operating their passenger trains in 1969 alone.

We felt that defraying the roads operating costs -- through direct subsidies -- would not solve the problem. So we sent up a bill to establish a semi-public National Rail Passenger Corporation -- similar in concept to COMSAT. The Secretary of Transportation is to designate which lines will survive and what kind of service will be provided. The railroads will operate the lines under contract with the corporation.

The successful upgrading of passenger service will in time substantially relieve highway and airway congestion, cut pollution, and provide a real alternative for those who need it. We think passenger trains have a definite future -- especially in the crowded urban corridors of this Nation. Our demonstration with the Metroliner, for instance, proves that there is a vast untapped market for such service when it is fast, reliable, clean, comfortable and stylish.

These four measures are essentially interim devices to ensure mobility and flexibility in our transportation system while we prepare for the new systems that will be coming on line later this decade. We are solidly committed to the Tracked Air Cushion Vehicle. (TACV) We are experimenting with various kinds of low-emission engines for buses. We especially are interested in exclusive bus ways -- such as the current Shirley Highway experiment. We are determined to get a handle on transportation noise -- especially trucks and jet planes. We know we can vastly improve the safety factor in all modes, notably in cars, where we are spending over \$10-million in developing experimental safety vehicles.

And yet new technology is not enough.

What transportation needs more than anything else is intermodal planning, better link-ups between the modes, and a conscientious effort to fit all subordinate transport networks into a balanced system that complements the environment rather than destroys or damages it.

No doubt many of you will be coming into personal contact with this new philosophy of transportation because it runs parallel to the goals of many different Federal Departments. Indeed, I foresee a day when transportation in this country will be a major element of urban design along with land-use planning, schools, hospitals, housing, shopping centers, industrial parks, and recreation facilities.

ASPA members will play a major role in the design of new administrative and social systems for the U.S. You and your colleagues in the field at all levels of government will find yourselves managing complex tasks of great urgency. You will be much more accustomed to grass-roots participation in your work, especially at the planning stage.

Thus your opportunities for creative management will be greater than ever. You can use your influence to end the obsolete "colonial" pattern in government operations and help define the parameters of a truly workable participatory society. That is the best way to divert revolutionary sentiments into evolutionary channels.

Together, you and I and the people can recreate both the forms and the substance of democracy in America. This is a noble task. The future of representative government may well depend upon your wisdom, your courage, and your flexibility.

Thank you.

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