



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION JOHN A. VOLPE AT
UNVEILING OF SST MOCK UP -- BOEING PLANT, SEATTLE - FRIDAY, JUNE 5,
1970, 10:00 A.M.

Our ceremony today has many meanings. To me, it represents continued progress in a cooperative industry-government investment in America's future. We are promoting here a venture that will give American workmen of the future an opportunity to earn a living in a trade in which they are best skilled.

We take it for granted that this Country now builds good airplanes and sells them to the world. Aircraft -- and aircraft parts -- are one of our leading export items. We instinctively assume this happy situation will continue indefinitely.

But will it?

Let's look back a little. Twenty or thirty years ago, the American automobile industry led those of all other nations. Detroit was the automobile capital of the world.

Everything that was important in automotive development took place in that city. Had anyone seriously suggested in those days that a time would come when American dominance in automobile manufacturing would be challenged, he would have been quietly dismissed as a lunatic.

Yet I ask you to glance down any line of cars in the parking lot outside. A whale of a lot of those cars were not built in Detroit and Detroit is hurting.

This could happen to our aircraft industry.

There are those who -- with ostrich logic -- reason that if we don't build an supersonic transport there won't be any supersonic transport's. But I have already seen the Concorde in flight. And I have on my desk in Washington, reports of the success of last weeks Soviet supersonic flight.

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Others have suggested that our government should never have entered into this venture -- that it should be a matter for private industry alone. They say, in effect, let Boeing and General Electric take care of the competition. They overlook, however, the nature of the competition. One form of that competition is a joint effort which can -- without recourse to stockholders or interest rates - draw on the resources, talents and funds of two nations -- not two companies -- but two rich and highly industrialized European nations. As for the Soviet supersonic aircraft -- that is a one hundred percent government effort, pure and simple.

One fact stand out, there is a market for supersonic aircraft and other nations are building planes to meet that market. What we are doing in our American supersonic transport program, is insuring that american industry and American workmen have a chance to compete -- and compete effectively -- in that market, and derive earnings and wages from the sale of a successful product.

From what I have seen here today, I think we have made a good start toward that goal.

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