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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION BROCK ADAMS,
TO THE NORTH AUGUSTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH AUGUSTA, SOUTH CAROLINA,
FEBRUARY 10, 1978.

It's a real pleasure to be here. My last two out-of-town speaking engagements were in Chicago and Pittsburgh. I was in Chicago in late January when the temperature was somewhere on the minus scale and the chill factor, I think, off the scale altogether. I had a commitment in Pittsburgh a few days later and the FAA flew me in there when the wind was about 50 knots, the visibility close to the minimums and the airlines had suspended operations.

So it's good to be in warmer climes. I'm delighted by your brand of southern hospitality, which must be the best there is because you certainly have made me feel welcome.

I'm grateful but not surprised. Your very personable Representative, Butler Derrick, assured me that whatever good things I had heard about Augusta, North Augusta was better. In fact, he refers to that little community over there across the Savannah as South Augusta.

When I left Congress for the executive branch I missed the constituent contact I had enjoyed during my 12 years in the House. So for the first few months in my new job I tried to get out to the cities and communities to talk to people. Through a few old-fashioned town meetings we held, and in news conferences and in just plain talking with people in all aspects of transportation, I said, 'tell us what's on your mind - let us know where transportation is failing you, where it's disappointing you, and where it's not measuring up to your real needs.'

We did all of that, and we brought back what we learned, and we're putting it into the legislative process, into transportation policy and into our planning for the future.

Last week's snowstorms, which crippled most of the Northeast, reminded us that transportation is our lifestream. When it stops, we stop.

That's why the decisions we make at the Department of Transportation and elsewhere in the Carter Administration are so important. These decisions will be felt through the 1980's. They will affect our lifestyles and our mobility -- whether it's getting to work or being able to afford a vacation flight to Europe.

There is another reason to talk today about policy. Over the next decade, my Department alone will be spending billions of dollars of the taxpayers' money. The people have a right to know what motivates us when we spend that kind of money. They have a right to know what our priorities are.

When we talk about priorities in 1978, we have to start with energy. A nation with a 26 billion dollar deficit in its balance of payments doesn't have to look very far to find its problems. And that problem is the 44 billion dollars worth of foreign oil we imported last year.

I. OIL

I think the American people know where that oil is going. A lot of it - about 32 percent of all the petroleum we use, for all purposes - is going into the gasoline tanks of our cars. Still, UPI reported that Congressmen returning to Washington from Christmas recess said their constituents didn't believe there is an energy crisis.

Now I'm going to repeat what has been said many times before. The crisis is real. We are at the mercy of imported fuel. And it could become believable some day in the 1980's when someone in the Mideast decides -- for one reason or another -- to turn off the pump for a week or a month or a year.

Even if the oil continues to flow we have little control over its price. John O'Leary, Deputy Energy Secretary, said last week that foreign oil will probably cost \$25 a barrel by 1985.

In our democratic society, logic precedes necessity, which is followed in turn by action. We're at the logic stage now. And we can do one of two things.

We can start right now to conserve fuel and create some alternatives to the automobile. Or we can wait for the tidal wave of necessity to hit us -- and swim like hell.

I believe we can meet President Carter's goal of reducing gasoline consumption by 12 billion gallons a year by 1985. We can reach it by:

- (1) Giving more and more Americans alternatives to the automobile -- whether it's a bus or a light rail system, a vanpool or jitney service -- at least for part of their daily business and pleasure travel;
- (2) By beefing up our ability to move coal and other alternate fuels to factories, utilities and businesses;
- (3) By building smaller and lighter cars that meet tough fuel economy standards;
- (4) By conservation measures such as strict enforcement of the 55-mile per hour national speed limit.

President Carter described our dilemma very well at his news conference last month. 'As those dollars go overseas' to buy foreign oil, he said, 'we are in effect exporting American jobs.' I think we have to reverse that flow and maintain a healthy economy.

II. 'PEOPLE' DECISIONS

When we talk about the policy of this Administration, the obvious question is, 'Has anything changed?' The answer is yes.

The change is toward 'people decisions,' rather than technology decisions or the protection of corporations that want to maintain the status quo. Transportation today is the fourth necessity of life. It affects how people live and where they live - their work, their leisure and the quality of life.

Our policy translates into a series of program decisions -- those made in 1977 and the ones to follow.

The Environmental Highway

The decision on I-66 in Northern Virginia, the Westway in New York, the refusal to build through Overton Park in Memphis or the Valleys of Oahu, all represent a conscious policy to require new highways to fit into the environment of the area both esthetically and economically. This will continue.

The Public Transportation Alternative

Metro in Washington, MARTA in Atlanta, the new plans in Baltimore-Buffalo-Miami and other rail-oriented cities represent an attempt to build alternatives to the automobile. There is no argument about these projects. The new systems need to be de-bugged and the costs and construction times brought under control.

The Socially Responsible Motor Vehicle

The automobile fuel economy standards set last July, the additional economy standards for light trucks, the emission controls, and the airbag decision are all part of a policy to make the mobility of the motor vehicle available for everyone - as long as possible, with as little harm as possible.

Simplifying the Regulation of the Marketplace

The government of the United States has always regulated the transportation market, beginning with the first rules on imports and the prohibition against interstate tariffs. Our decision in 1977 to support airline regulatory reform and other programs to allow more competition in the marketplace are part of a policy to simplify government regulation and increase competition.

Completing the Organization of the Department

The reorganization of the superstructure of the Department of Transportation is the first step in simplifying the whole structure and moving toward direct line authority to the managers of programs.

The second step is the bill before Congress now to make highway and transit programs compatible so they can be administered together in the future. The third step will be to present to Congress in 1979 a proposal for the whole Department. It is a step-by-step policy of completing the original plan for the Department of Transportation.

III. THE FUTURE

Having polished off the nagging decisions -- some of which had been kicking around this Department or this government for 10 or 15 years -- we are moving on to our vision of the future.

The trail-blazing days in this country are over. The great Interstate highway system is 90 percent completed. We have to concentrate now on finishing the essential gaps, especially in the urban areas, and finding a way to help the states maintain what we've built.

Under the legislation we sent to Congress a few days ago, the go or no-go decisions on the remaining Interstate segments will have to be made by 1982 and construction started by October 1986. Since the unfinished segments of the Bobby Jones expressway are either under way or due to start soon, there should be no problem here in meeting those dates. The Interstate construction pace in South Carolina matches the national average - with 91 percent of the system open to traffic. In Georgia 90 percent of the system is finished. I had the pleasure of being in Marietta last month when the last piece of I-75 was opened, marking the first Interstate to be completed from border to border.

With perhaps one exception, there won't be any major hub airports built in this country in the next decade. Our policy has to shift to making sure that the system is competitive, that people in small towns can get some service and that the growing number of passengers get where they're going in safety.

For America's decaying inner cities, transportation is the key to pumping in new business and commerce. We can help in several ways:

- (1) Public transit can be the cornerstone of the new downtown when it is planned in concert with office buildings and shopping malls, as cities such as Minneapolis have done and cities such as Baltimore have on the drawing board. Our proposed legislation makes transit decisions easier and puts Federal transit dollars on a par with Federal highway dollars.
- (2) We all know that the automobile is choking our cities. When New York City sends up a cloud of exhaust fumes, people cough in Connecticut. This is a national problem, and we have to turn to experiments such as the driverless downtown people mover. These systems may be the answer in crowded streets where the automobile can no longer be tolerated.
- (3) A free ride. I would like to see one of our major cities experiment with a fare-free system of public transit as a means of luring people away from their cars -- at least for part of their trip.

That's where we're headed. We have a good transportation network in this country. DOT is shifting from an agency that builds those systems into one that is concerned about how the systems serve people.

That means fighting downtown congestion, noisy airplanes or unsafe cars. It means making things work for people -- and not propping up out-moded systems with endless government subsidy.

And it means making decisions. Finally settling a problem, as Judge Brandeis once remarked, is much more important than worrying for years that it be settled perfectly.

In closing, I want to thank you for inviting me and giving me this opportunity to share with you my views on the future of transportation in our society. Transportation always has been a predominantly private sector function in the United States. I think the more successful we are in keeping transportation a private sector responsibility, with a minimum of government intervention and regulation, the more effective its services to the business community will be.