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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION BROCK ADAMS TO TRANSPORTATION WEEK LUNCHEON, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, MAY 18, 1978

For me, Transportation Week is old home week.

During the 12 years I was in Congress I divided my time pretty evenly between Washington on the Pacific and Washington on the Potomac. And, while I have been Secretary of Transportation for the past 16 months, I find that when you're in charge of transportation you really don't get to travel much.

The beauty of the Northwest is that the feel of the American frontier is still alive here. When George Vancouver first explored Puget Sound nearly 200 years ago he was taken with the "pleasing landscapes" of this region -- as we still are, visitors and residents alike. He commented further that the area needed only "the industry of man" to make it "the most lovely country to be imagined."

Well, we have industry, and we still have a pleasant environment, and the big task challenging us is how to continue to accommodate both in the face of growing urban and marine traffic.

Those are the issues I want to talk about today.

MARINE COMMERCE

1. THE PUGET SOUND TANKER ISSUE

The flow of Alaskan oil is relieving some of our transportation problems, but it is causing others. Last March 15 I issued a temporary order banning tankers of more than 125,000 deadweight tons from Puget Sound for six months. That order followed the Supreme Court decision which ruled that the Federal Ports and Waterways Safety Act of 1972 pre-empted state regulations governing the size of tankers permitted in the Sound.

My order was intended not as a final word on the issue but as a means of preserving the present level of protection against possible environmental damage until the situation could be fully assessed and the best possible solution proposed.

I scheduled public hearings because I believed the issue was not one to be debated only by the protagonists directly involved. The oil companies understandably want to move the petroleum to their refineries at Cherry Point the most direct and economical way possible. Those who fear that a major accident would do irreparable damage to the ecology feel that the best way to guard against a massive oil spill is to outlaw certain tankers entirely.

Both interests were well represented at the hearings held here late last month. We also heard from the general public, and since Puget Sound belongs to all the people of this area I was particularly pleased by the views of so many people who have no direct personal interest in the controversy.

Protection of the environment will be our primary consideration. Through the Coast Guard and others in the Department of Transportation we are working on the entire scope of tanker operations from Puget Sound to Texas to the oceans of the world through IMCO. The Computer Aided Operations Research Facility in New York is doing a mathematical analysis of tanker vessel maneuverability in Puget Sound as a part of the regulation development process. We appreciate the cooperation of the oil tanker operators in not scheduling the large vessels in the Sound before my temporary order and during completion of the regulatory process.

2. INTERNATIONAL TANKER STANDARDS

As recent events have demonstrated, tanker safety is a matter of growing concern, not only here in the Pacific Northwest but around the world. You will recall that shortly after taking office, President Carter established a task force to develop recommendations aimed at greater tanker safety. The urgency of the problem was underlined by the grounding of the Argo Merchant and a number of other tanker accidents which occurred that winter. Departmental officials from all parts of the Department have traveled throughout the world on the negotiations.

Last May -- just a year ago -- I went to London to address the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) on the U.S. initiatives and to urge prompt action in dealing with the oil tanker problem on a global basis.

We asked for and got early international action because tanker safety is not an issue that can tolerate indecision or undue delay. Recognizing this, the maritime nations scheduled a February 1978 conference on oil tanker construction and equipment standards, and agreed to hold a conference on crew standards -- originally set for the fall of 1978 -- in late June.

In February the world negotiations on tanker construction were successful. The following new standards were adopted:

1. New crude carriers will be constructed with segregated ballast tanks, a crude oil washing system and an inert gas system. The segregated ballast tanks are really interior double bottoms, without the risk of explosive gases forming between the hulls. Crude oil washing reduces cargo loss during off-loading and oil discharge during tank cleaning and protects the environment from discharge.

2. Existing crude carriers will be required to meet clean ballast tank and inert gas system standards according to scheduled dates for the various tonnage categories.
3. Existing product carriers of 40,000 deadweight tons and above will have to meet the same standards set for crude carriers.
4. All tankers will be required to meet improved steering standards and have back-up radar equipment.

Governments have been invited to implement the standards as quickly as possible. The United States is taking that course and we urge other nations to follow suit. The Coast Guard already has announced plans to implement the standards adopted by the Conference. Some will be effective by June 1979, others by June 1981 and all will be in effect by June 1983.

Additionally, the Conference modified two prior international conventions to authorized unscheduled inspections of all ships, require annual equipment surveys for tankers 10 years old or older, and to limit safety construction certificates to five years. The obligation to maintain ships in a satisfactory condition was stressed in no uncertain terms at the Conference.

I consider the February Conference a success because the conclusions reached here mark the transition from international negotiations to national actions -- a positive step toward the control of oil spills. This constitutes a significant foreign policy achievement by this administration -- because in the long term the agreements reached in London will have far-reaching benefits for the tanker industry and for the marine environment.

We are now looking forward to similarly productive results from the Conference on the training and certification of seafarers coming up next month. Again, we will take the lead and, through the excellent technical people of the Coast Guard, urge speedy action by the international maritime community in the adoption and implementation of new crew standards.

3. DEEPWATER PORTS

The first of the deepwater ports is being established off Louisiana and we are now investigating other applications.

Because of the growing importance of marine transportation, I am creating a new Office of Maritime Affairs in the Office of the Secretary to deal with policy issues related to water transportation. This will begin to pull together the many maritime transportation matters we are addressing in the Department.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Now let us talk for a few minutes about another kind of transportation problem -- the growing tide of traffic on our streets and highways.

I was in Los Angeles yesterday, and while I hope that Seattle's traffic will never reach those epidemic proportions, the fact is we must move to meet the urban corridor problems of this community.

The population of the King County metropolitan area is projected to grow 28 percent by 1990. Unless we plan and proceed carefully, automobile travel will increase by half, saturating arteries already carrying more vehicles than they were designed for.

One part of the solution for Seattle, and for other cities -- as I told the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce -- is to make better use of highway capacity by developing and operating exclusive high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

Earlier this month we moved to increase the I-5 North Corridor high occupancy vehicle lanes as proposed by the Washington State Department of Transportation and METRO. The project involves the construction of additional median lanes, north and south, for the exclusive use of buses, carpools and vanpools; and bypass lanes at metered entry ramps. The use of dedicated lanes is almost certain to be a requirement for any urban highway approved from now on.

A second part of the urban traffic solution is to go back to the days of my childhood here -- and many of yours -- when public transit carried a larger share of the travel load. Seattle has been a pacesetter in the resurgence of mass transit and we were good before. Dick Page and I come here to renew our strength not to lecture. I specifically wanted this when I asked Dick Page to be Urban Mass Transportation Administrator. Dick is doing all that I expected and more. We believe in public transportation and I think we're finally getting the message across that heavy rail systems are fine for New York City and other high density areas, but you do not use these expensive rail installations where they do not fit. We're experimenting with people-mover demonstrations to develop alternatives and off-peak fare-free systems in various areas. So we have a full range of choices.

Last month I requested an additional \$200 million in transit assistance funds to supplement our existing budget for capital and operating grants for urban systems.

I think it's essential that we do more, nationwide, to demolish the image of public transit as second-class transportation. Seattle has proved people will return to good public transportation; ridership has increased 40 percent here over the past five years -- nearly five percent last year alone. Your monorail, as an experiment, after 16 years, is still in use. Two-and-a-half million people rode it last year, and it produced \$400,000 in revenue.

Your bus improvement program is continuing. The 200 new 40-foot buses now in service will be augmented this summer by the first of the 150 articulated buses on order, and next January your new trolley-coaches will begin arriving. I wish we had never let the old ones go.

A third part of the urban traffic solution is to improve the policies and patterns of the federal assistance programs. The funds available for transit equipment -- such as the \$90 million in UMTA grants committed thus far for your bus program -- and the funds available to help communities pay operating costs are still small compared to our highway expenditures.

The money doesn't have to be equally divided. The states' continuing highway commitments are extensive, and there are costly portions of the Interstate yet to be completed. And we must mesh highway and other alternatives more closely together.

We want to finish the essential parts of the Interstate -- close the remaining gaps -- as quickly as possible, and the Surface Transportation Bill President Carter and I have sent to Congress sets October 1982 as a go or no-go cut-off date for Interstate or transit construction decisions. Our proposal also provides more federal help for the resurfacing and reconstruction of highways, and all the funding for bridge repair and replacement that the states and local governments can design and match from local funds.

The main thrust of our Bill is to coordinate planning of highway and transit and reduce the many categories now cluttering federal highway and transit assistance programs; and to plan existing, sometimes haphazard, systems into an efficient system. The existing system is too cumbersome, prevents good planning, and keeps money from going where it is most needed.

We propose:

1. To simplify funding categories, so the states can use the money where it's most needed;
2. To consolidate highway and transit planning;
3. To set federal "match" at one level -- 80 percent -- for all transit and highway programs except Interstate.
4. To make it easier for states to transfer funds between highway and transit projects.

We believe that our national energy conservation, urban renewal and environmental preservation goals will be better served by a surface transportation policy that erases the artificial distinctions between highways and public transportation; and the public desire to reduce taxes requires careful budgeting.

CONCLUSION

It's been a real pleasure to be with you today. I want to say that after a year-and-a-half in this job -- and after many years of dealing with the transportation affairs of our nation -- we enjoy an excellent system of transportation services in the United States but we must move to meet the future problems together -- federal, state, local and private.

So we have our problems, but we have no intention of being discouraged by them, dismayed by them, or defeated by them. As President Carter said in his statement proclaiming National Transportation Week: "We are dependent on mobility. Transportation helps maintain our prosperity, ensure our national defense, and bind us together as a people. An efficient transportation system is important to our quality of life."

Thank you for your sincere interests in the transportation needs of our nation and this region. I share your interests and concerns and I hope I will have your help and support as we seek to bring about a better way of life for us all.

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