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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE  
TO THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION  
SEPTEMBER 20, 1985  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

I'm delighted to join you in Minneapolis today to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Newspaper Association, the oldest newspaper organization in the country, and surely one of our most distinguished.

As members of this organization -- publishers of more than 4,300 weekly and 700 daily newspapers -- you do it again and again, a society dedicated to the welfare of the community newspaper industry and the millions of citizens you serve.

Since the birth of American journalism in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1690, the history of the newspaper industry has been a rich blend of grit, dedication and commitment to its readership. Benjamin Franklin, one of the first, most versatile and certainly most inventive journalists ever, published his popular Gazette for almost 20 years. And in addition to the paper, his print shop produced everything from hand bills to money -- legal, of course. Although Ben Franklin retired from journalism at the age of 42 to begin a career in public service, Americans will always remember him for the power of his pen.

Your founder -- Ben Herbert -- deeply believed, as he said: "that the united influence of the country press is equal to that of the great dailies. The country newspaper is the record of home history and the storehouse from which the true history -- the everyday life of the people -- must be drawn." When Ben Herbert sought to bring the newspaper business together, the nation was becoming closer through new communications -- the telephone -- and populations were shifting to the cities (5 million immigrants scattered about the country between 1880 and 1890) and new intercity rail lines were being established. The editors saw themselves as more than isolated country editors -- they saw themselves as part of the world.

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It is in this spirit that I have come to talk with you today about aviation safety and security. Largely as a result of recent accidents and the terrorist acts of the early summer, aviation safety and security have become an object of public concern. Paramount among the questions raised are (1) whether airline deregulation and increased competition have been accompanied by diminished attention to safety, (2) whether the air traffic control system has fully recovered from the firing of more than 12,000 illegally striking air traffic controllers in 1981, (3) whether the FAA is adapting quickly enough to the needs of a rapidly growing and changing airline industry, and (4) whether civil aviation is adequately protected against the threat of terrorism.

The answers to those questions, developed on the basis of detailed examinations of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and of air safety in general, are reassuring.

Today, I want to emphasize my complete and total commitment to aviation safety. The fact is that flying continues to be one of the safest forms of transportation, far safer than driving an automobile. Each day in the U.S., some 14,000 scheduled airline flights carry an average of one million passengers, and 99.999 percent of these flights reach their destinations without incident. Even taking the recent tragic airline accidents into account, the accident rate for airline travel has declined steadily over the past decade. This decline has occurred despite the fact that air travel has grown by some 20 percent.

However, even one accident is one too many and I am determined to making a safe national airspace system even safer.

Yesterday afternoon I briefed President Reagan and the Cabinet on the issue of air safety. It was because of this that I was unable to be here as planned yesterday. I want to provide a status report to you now the very definite measures I have taken to further increase aviation safety and security.

Air safety, of course, is the product of an essential industry/government partnership. While the aircraft manufacturers and the airlines are on the "front line" in providing safe transportation to the public, the government provides the critical regulatory foundation for a safe air transportation system. We establish and enforce aviation safety standards, certify the safety of aircraft, and manage the nation's air corridors. Given these responsibilities, the federal government should be as open and informative as possible regarding the safety of flight, and should be as aggressive as possible in ensuring that the resources available remain equal to the challenges that lie ahead.

In fact, this Administration's accomplishments in the field of air safety and security are second to none. The steps that have been taken -- most importantly during the past two years -- support a high level of confidence in the integrity of civil aviation. I'd like to take this opportunity to review these actions with you today.

The rapid expansion of the airline industry, the stimulus of deregulation, and the air traffic controller strike have provided a period of unprecedented challenge to the air traffic control system. Since 1978, the commercial aviation industry has provided 50 percent more service to as many additional passengers and doing so with substantially changed service patterns. During this period of change, a strike by a



majority of controllers dealt a further shock to a system already in need of modernization.

The 1981 PATCO action resulted in the firing of 11,301 illegally striking controllers. In the aftermath of the firing, nonstriking controllers, supervisors and military controllers kept the nation's air system functioning. The air traffic control workforce has been rebuilt steadily. Air traffic restrictions were lifted as new controllers gained experience and system capacity expanded.

The air traffic control work force has been rebuilt to the level projected immediately following the strike. In this process of rebuilding the controller work force, safety has not been compromised. Indeed, over the greater part of this period accident rates have been down, and the differing causes of the recent crashes do not point to a problem with the air traffic control system.

The essential task now is to ensure that the controller work force is maintained at a level that will be fully responsive to present challenges: an industry flourishing in the freedom afforded by deregulation; increasing use by airlines of "hub-and-spoke" operating patterns; and passenger demand that is expanding on the strength of economic recovery.

In fiscal year 1986 we expect to add approximately 480 more people to the existing controller work force, and fiscal year 1987 will see a further increase. These increases will not be entirely new and additional burdens on the budget. As much as is possible, they will come from within the existing FAA structure -- from enhanced productivity reallocations made possible by technology improvements, consolidation of functions and facilities, organizational changes, and contracting with private sector firms when it is economical to do so.

A crucial part of our aviation program relies on the National Airspace System (NAS) Plan, an \$11.7 billion, long-range capital program to modernize and expand the Nation's air traffic control system. The NAS Plan envisions increased safety, capacity, productivity and economy as a result of higher levels of automation, facility consolidations and use of new telecommunications technology. This plan will ultimately double the capacity of the system and is funded entirely from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. Savings from the Plan are estimated to be \$18 billion to the government and approximately \$10 billion for system users during 1981 to the year 2000.

As we review issues of capacity, one problem area we have sought to resolve is airport delays. These delays, which were a major problem in the summer of 1984, have been reduced by 30 percent this year and the actual delays are far less. This is despite the fact that traffic has increased over last summer's levels. Actions by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to make its procedures more efficient, cooperation by the airlines in smoothing schedules at the airports where delays were a problem, and the increasing training and experience levels of the controllers have been important steps in the delay reductions.

Last year, I called for an unprecedented, comprehensive "white glove" inspection of all the nation's airlines. The first phase covered 325 air carriers, involved more than 14,000 separate inspections and was followed by a more in-depth look at some 40 air



carriers. During this 90-day inspection, we uncovered a number of safety violations among airlines. All such violations were remedied and enforcement actions were taken. Overall, however, we found a high level of compliance and a safe system. And we continue monitoring the system through unannounced checks as well.

As a follow-up to the air carrier safety program, I initiated a comprehensive plan to examine and enhance the safety of the rest of the aviation industry -- known as "general aviation." Since this facet of aviation is far more diverse than the airline industry, the General Aviation Safety Audit was designed as a five-phase, 18-month review of the 210,000 aircraft in the general aviation fleet, flight schools, repair station mechanics, and on-demand air taxis. Meanwhile, the second phase of our General Aviation Safety Audit, which has just been completed, found a better than 90 percent rate of compliance with safety standards. The aircraft involved are 29 older large jet aircraft, such as the BAC-11, B-707, and DC-8 operated by corporations in support of their businesses. The results are important because while the number of aircraft involved in the second-phase inspections is small, they are significant from a safety point of view. The results further reinforce the conviction that general aviation flying is being conducted safely.

Last month, a report prepared by my Safety Review Task Force on the FAA's flight standards safety programs was made public. Created in December 1983 to examine the Department's safety programs across all modes, the Task Force identified four areas where problems were found and improvements should be made. These four areas in FAA are: (1) difficulty in formulating and carrying out actions in a timely manner; (2) lack of uniformity in the interpretation and implementation of FAA regulations and policies; (3) sometimes ineffective communication within the FAA and with the aviation community and the general public; and (4) expanded autonomy at FAA regional offices and some headquarters offices that has inhibited the accomplishment of program objectives. FAA Administrator Don Engen regards the recommendations as "on the mark" and has already developed a schedule to implement the necessary reforms.

In addition, I have initiated "Project SAFE" (Safety Activity Functional Evaluation). The project is a comprehensive review of the agency's own safety inspection system including inspector tasks and work functions, and the overall management of the field inspector work force. I understand the final report will be sent to me shortly, however all indications are that the report supports the need for additional inspectors.

Last year, I increased the air carrier inspector work force by 25 percent. As a result of these safety audits and reviews, the increasing number of air carriers and passengers in the system, I expect to add an additional 500 air carrier and general aviation inspectors to the Department's work force over the next three years.

In keeping with our commitment to aviation safety, the Department has completed action on a number of important safety regulations this fiscal year. These include: restrictions on drug and alcohol use by flight crew members; flammability requirements for airplane seat cushions; improved cabin escape path marking and lighting; installation of smoke detectors in aircraft lavatories and galleys; and installation of automatic fire extinguishers in lavatories and hand held fire



extinguishers in aircraft cabins. The Department also recently proposed legislation that would increase civil penalties for safety violations from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

And last week we proposed a regulation requiring that all new transponders -- these are electronic devices which respond to radar -- installed in aircraft after January 1, 1992, be compatible with the new-technology radar beacon system that will be installed in the future. The new system will give controllers more accurate aircraft position and identification information.

Several additional regulations are in various stages of the rulemaking process. Among the most important of these are cabin flammability standards, improved medical kits, shoulder harnesses for smaller aircraft, and passenger seat strength requirements. Our system of aviation safety regulations continues to serve as a model for nations throughout the world and the resulting safety record is one in which we can take great pride.

We have also been working -- in conjunction with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Defense and other government agencies -- on improved windshear detection for pilots. "Windshear" is a sudden shift in wind velocity or direction. "Microbursts" are severe wind shears which can instantly change wind direction -- for example, when a headwind becomes a tailwind. Air speed loss of 50 knots from microbursts are common and 100 knot changes can occur. Air speed losses of these magnitudes are especially critical during low altitude takeoff and landing operations.

Current windshear detection is provided by a Low-level Windshear Alert System which has been installed at 59 airports and will soon be expanded to an additional 51 airports. These systems are effective at or near ground levels near the monitoring sites.

Improved windshear detection will be available in the future when research and development on Doppler radar-based systems is completed. Two new systems will be installed: NEXRAD, which will provide altitude windshear detection in FAA enroute centers; and terminal Doppler radar, which will detect microbursts and gust fronts around airports. Terminal Doppler radar will provide both broader area and higher altitude coverage than the current low level systems.

Off-the-shelf technology is not adequate for windshear detection purposes. Currently, two vendors are preparing prototypes which will be factory-tested in January and field-tested next spring. Subsequent to these tests, a single contractor will be chosen. Full production models will be built by 1987. NEXRAD implementation is scheduled between 1988 and 1993 and terminal Doppler radar implementation between 1988 and 1990.

The hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in Athens last June, followed by the probable sabotage of two aircraft operating out of Canada, has called into question the vulnerability of international civil aviation to terrorist acts, and has contributed to the public's growing uneasiness about aviation safety in general.



In direct response to the President's requests of June 18 on this very issue, the Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Departments of State, Treasury and Justice, has undertaken a number of actions to enhance aviation security.

First, a travel advisory regarding the security at Athens Airport was issued by the Secretary of State. It was later rescinded after an FAA team found that the Greek Government had taken positive action to improve airport security. The FAA continues to work with Greek authorities to assure that security standards are maintained.

In response to the President's determination to isolate Beirut Airport and to suspend authority of Middle East Airlines in the United States and of U.S. carriers to serve Beirut, the Department prohibited the sale in the United States of any air service to Lebanon by either United States or foreign carriers. We have increased security by requiring additional checks of carry-on baggage, elimination of curbside check-in for international flights, holding of cargo moving on passenger flights, special security for aircraft, closer surveillance of all persons who have access to aircraft -- such as fueling and catering -- and a positive match of passengers and checked baggage.

In response to the President's request for an immediate expansion of our federal Air Marshal program, an interim force of FAA air marshals, utilizing officers from the Departments of Justice and Treasury, has been deployed. Training for a permanently expanded air marshal force is already underway. We have also issued regulations requiring the designation of ground and inflight security coordinators for all foreign and domestic flights. Training requirements for all members of flight crews have also been stiffened. And FAA teams have now completed security assessment visits to 50 foreign airports. In general, they found security to be quite good; in certain instances they have worked cooperatively with foreign agencies to correct problems found. Based on recommendations by the U.S. Government and other governments, the International Civil Aviation Organization is expected to recommend tighter security standards for the 156 member nations at its session this week in Montreal. By working together we can comprehensively address the issue of aviation safety and security and thus ensure all citizens of the integrity of our national airspace system.

On this -- your centennial celebration -- I challenge you to join me in my effort to promote, enhance and protect aviation safety in America. I ask you to help me reach the millions of Americans who read your papers national and international developments. To these Americans I want to say -- I assure you that we will continually strive to make the safest system in the world ever safer.

Your industry has changed dramatically over the past 100 years since this organization was founded. Over time, you have gone from flat-bed presses to four-color, offset presses and to receiving news of the nation and the world at the rate of 1,000 words a minute on some circuits. But one thing that hasn't changed, I know, is your newspapers' dedication to reporting truthfully and accurately all of the news important to your communities. One hundred years from now, publishers will distribute their products in a way undreamed of today. Yet they will still know the truth -- if I may borrow a few lines from a poem familiar to some of you -- that:

"A drop of ink on an editors pen  
Will reach the hearts of his fellow men."

Thank you very much.

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