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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

Contact: Jennifer Hillings
Tele.: (202) 426-4570

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
TO THE AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION
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MIAMI, FLORIDA

What a privilege it is to be here tonight with the distinguished members of the Air Transport Association and their guests -- leading aerospace manufacturers and suppliers and representatives from almost every major airline in the free world. To our friends from other nations I would like to extend -- on behalf of President Reagan and the American people -- a very special welcome.

ATA, founded in the infancy of the aviation industry, is preparing to mark its 50th anniversary in 1986. You have never lost sight of your mission, for throughout your history, airline safety has been the paramount concern of this organization and its member airlines. You recognized long ago the airline industry has grown -- and continues to grow -- because of the professionalism of its people and their unswerving commitment to safety.

It is in this spirit that I have come to talk with you tonight about aviation safety and security. Largely as a result of recent accidents world wide and the terrorist acts of the early summer, aviation safety and security have become an object of heightened public concern. People are asking whether airline deregulation and increased competition have been accompanied by diminished attention to safety. They are asking whether the air traffic control system is fully prepared for the future, whether the FAA is adapting quickly enough to the needs of a rapidly growing and changing airline industry, and they are asking whether civil aviation is adequately protected against the threat of terrorism.

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Comparing the five years prior to deregulation and the five years after, the fatal accident rate for large carriers dropped 32 percent and for commuter airlines, 56 percent. 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 safely carry an average of one million passengers to their destinations. 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. And, by 1996, we expect U.S. airports will handle 622 million enplanements and 1.25 billion passengers.

The aviation marketplace is filled with a spirit of enterprise and a continual striving for excellence that will not be exhausted. This spirit thrives in an environment of economic growth. Rampant inflation is a part of history. Oil prices are declining and the nation has completed 34 months of sustained economic growth. I represent an Administration strongly committed to less economic regulation and more freedom in the marketplace. I will continue to work to further limit economic regulation and paperwork, but I need your support and I need your continued commitment to safety.

On the international agenda, 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. It has certainly contributed to the public's growing attention to aviation safety.

In direct response to the President's requests, I have undertaken a number of initiatives to enhance aviation security. I have required additional checks of carry-on baggage, elimination of curbside check-in for international flights, holding or inspection 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 personnel -- and a positive match of passengers with checked baggage. Based on recommendations which I made in Montreal along with officials from other nations, the International Civil Aviation Organization recently recommended tighter security standards for its 156 member nations, thereby providing a stronger, more concerted effort by the entire world.

I am urging all of our fellow ICAO member nations to support these recommendations when ICAO meets in November. The Federal Aviation Administration has been working closely with foreign airport operators to ensure that U.S. operations at those airports comply with ICAO security standards. Through this type of excellent cooperation, we can comprehensively address the issue of aviation safety and security and thus ensure all citizens of the integrity of our international airspace system. Finally, while most of the attention has been focused on the international scene, I would urge that we all redouble our security efforts at home.

Amidst all the change in American aviation, one thing remains constant: our commitment to maintaining the safest skies in the world. Our national air system is first and foremost a safe system, and I will spare no effort to keep it that way.

While my commitment spans all forms of transportation, one of my first initiatives in the Department was to call for the "white glove" inspection by the Federal Aviation Administration last year, which told us that the vast majority of the nation's airlines are complying with federal safety regulations. 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, most in record keeping operations. All such violations were remedied and enforcement actions were taken. And we continue monitoring the system through unannounced checks as well.

Next, I called for an intensive general aviation safety audit. The first phase showed a high level of compliance with the FAA's safety regulations by non-airline operators of large aircraft. Of the 281 inspections and nearly 3,000 findings, 87 percent were satisfactory. All of the deficiencies uncovered by the audit were corrected at the time of the audit or shortly thereafter. The second phase -- inspection of 29 older large jet aircraft operated by corporations in support of their businesses -- showed better than a 90 percent rate of compliance with safety standards.

Last month, a report prepared by my Safety Review Task Force on the FAA's flight standards safety program 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.

Another "self examination" is "Project Safe," 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. Indications are that the study supports the need for additional inspectors. As you know, I increased the inspector workforce by 25 percent in early 1984 and, looking to future growth, thanks to deregulation and a strong economy, I plan to add an additional 500 air carrier and general aviation inspectors and support staff over the next three years.

I am announcing today an initiative that will help our controllers to ensure safe travel, a final rule that will require all airplanes equipped

with transponders to have those transponders turned on while operating in controlled airspace. While all air carriers have their transponders on, this rule will require all aviation --including general aviation -- to have them on also. Pilots who have transponders now will be required to have them turned on when operating in airport control zones, designated federal airways, and transition zones. This rule will help controllers identify potential traffic conflicts and take the necessary corrective action to prevent an accident or incident. The purpose of this rule is simply to provide coverage of all air traffic and to make the skies safer.

As I travel, I meet with controllers, as I did in Miami today, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate their suggestions and views. They are very professional and I am indeed proud of their work. The essential task now is to ensure that the controller work force is maintained at a level that will be fully responsive to future challenges: the airline industry is flourishing in the freedom afforded by deregulation, and passenger demand is expanding on the strength of economic recovery. In the new fiscal year, the air traffic control work force will be increased by about 40 a month -- almost 500 positions. Another 480 controllers will be added the following year, bringing the force up to about 15,000 people. However, last week the Senate took action which would cut \$300 million from FAA appropriations. We're hopeful this issue can be worked out in Conference because this cut would have serious ramifications on our safety program.

As you are aware, we are modernizing the airspace system in an integrated and comprehensive way. The National Airspace System Plan is our long-range, \$11.7 billion program to modernize the nation's airways. 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. We estimate the plan will actually save the government about \$18 billion by the year 2000 through reduced operating and maintenance costs, and it will save users an additional \$10 to \$30 billion through lower costs and fewer delays.

And finally, in keeping with our commitment to aviation safety, the Department has completed action on a number of important safety regulations in the past year, and recently proposed legislation that would increase civil penalties for safety violations from \$1,000 per violation to \$10,000.

The seat cushion flammability rule -- effective November 1984 with full compliance by 1987 -- sets a new fire resistance standard for airplane seat cushions. In conjunction with this standard, the FAA has tested over 200 types of seat cushion materials and we take great pride in the fact that the FAA Technical Center -- opened in 1981 -- has the world's largest full-scale fire test facility. We are impressed not only by how quickly the industry is moving to comply with this rule, but with the high standard of seat cushions being used. The materials are lighter, better and even more advanced than we envisioned when formulating the rule. These new cushions-- affecting over 400,000 seats industry-wide -- will have a tremendous impact

on reducing the intensity of cabin fires, and I greatly appreciate your cooperation.

In August, 1984, we proposed a new fire resistance standard for cargo compartment fire protective liners. The rule would require that liner material pass a severe flame impingement test. While this rule would apply to new aircraft, we are currently reviewing the feasibility of upgrading the current fleet. A final rulemaking decision should be made on this proposal by December.

In a related action, this April we proposed a new fire resistance standard for interior paneling materials, designed to inhibit a fire from spreading by ensuring the paneling itself does not become a fuel. And, as a matter of fact, FAA will meet November 1 with industry officials to talk about flammability testing standards. The comments we received on the rule are being analyzed in order to reach a decision by January.

Earlier this month, I announced a proposed rule to require that improved protective breathing equipment be installed in aircraft to enable flight crews to perform critical tasks in the event of fire. Under the proposal, protective breathing equipment -- either a face mask or a mask covering the nose and mouth -- both having a portable oxygen supply, and goggles covering the eyes -- would have to be located within three feet of each hand fire extinguisher in the cabin. And an additional rule was announced in March requiring smoke detectors and automatic fire extinguishers in aircraft lavatories. My thanks to ATA members for your helpful comments and assistance during the development of these important life-saving rules, and especially for the quick action in installing smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

Another important safety rule deals with emergency evacuation systems, specifically escape path marking. This rule -- effective November, 1984, with compliance by 1986 -- is designed to help passengers find their way to the nearest exit by using floor lighting when dense smoke has obscured overhead lights. The FAA is making a special effort to assure the adequacy of the systems installed. An advisory circular outlining acceptable methods of compliance was published this month. When we issued this rule, we felt that two years was a reasonable compliance time and I've told Congress there will be no extensions on the rule. We have the people in this audience this evening who can make this truly lifesaving device work. We've solved bigger problems before and I know that -- together -- we can move forward quickly on this one.

The whole area of emergency evacuation is under review, starting with a well-attended public forum in Seattle in September. As a direct result of this forum, three working groups -- encompassing industry, labor unions and consumer leaders -- were formed to focus on the technical problems in this area and to develop innovative ideas for improving passenger safety through cost-effective programs. The first meeting of the Design and Certification working group is scheduled for the week of November 18 in Seattle. This

group, which includes ATA members, suppliers and manufacturers, will be looking at designs for evacuation systems. The other two working groups -- on Operations and Training, and Maintenance and Reliability -- will be meeting in early December. I believe it is imperative to take a fresh look at this issue in today's environment.

Aviation has a proud record of unparalleled ingenuity. Wilbur Wright's short flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, at the turn of the century spanned only a few seconds and about 120 feet. But the Wright Brothers that morning ushered in an era of powered flight that fulfilled the dream of centuries. Nowhere is that dream better illustrated than by the people in this room. The dramatic accomplishments of American aviation have been logged over the years by a cooperative effort between government and industry.

I know that together we can bring that same ingenuity to bear on the continuing challenges ahead. I deeply believe the results of our efforts can be as wonderful and as dramatic for citizens in future years as the breakthroughs by the bold innovators of long ago have been for us.

Let us join forces to promote, enhance and protect aviation safety in America. I ask you to help me reach the millions of aviation professionals you represent to tell them "we will continually strive to make the safest system in the world ever safer."

Your industry has changed dramatically over the past 49 years since this organization was founded. But one thing that hasn't changed is your dedication to the safety of the traveling public.

If only the Wright Brothers were here with us today. They would be mighty proud.

Thank you very much.

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