

TALKING POINTS FOR
SECRETARY ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
RADIO TECHNICAL COMMISSION FOR AERONAUTICS AWARD
TO CONGRESSMAN MINETA
MAY 12, 1983

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* Thank you, Mr. Ortega. It is indeed a pleasure for me to have the privilege of participating in your annual awards luncheon.

* We have a strong aviation industry in America -- we remain the world's aerospace leader -- because organizations like RTCA, and people such as those being honored here today, have dedicated their talents, their skills and their lives to aeronautical progress.

* Examples of that progress are all around us -- and many are quite literally beyond us.

-- The U.S. Pioneer space probe, after nine years and billions of miles away from the earth, is still sending back information.

-- The U.S. space shuttle is an unparalleled success -- and soon will take the first woman astronaut into space.

-- American-built jetliners are still preferred around the world, and U.S. aviation/aerospace exports are second only to agriculture in contributing to our balance of payments.

* One of the most significant aeronautical developments in recent times, in my view, is the National Airspace System (NAS) Plan. The technological advances to be included in the modernization of our air traffic control system will double airspace capacity, reduce operational costs and provide more and better information to air crews. It will essentially "weather proof" the system, greatly improving air safety.

* This modernization program is economically feasible due to the user fee revenues flowing from the Airport/Airway Act -- and that legislation, as well as the NAS Plan itself, are in very large part a tribute to the leadership of the next recipient of the RTCA Achievement Award.

* The citation explains that this award goes, and I quote: "To a person who in the previous year has made a significant contribution to the aviation community."

* Everyone who knows Congressman Norm Mineta will agree that "significant contribution" is an understatement -- and that this award is richly deserved.

-- Norm's very capable leadership of the House Public Works Aviation Subcommittee has been ably demonstrated, time and time again.

-- It has been his commitment to the National Airspace System that has spearheaded support in the Congress for the very essential modernization program that will enable us to meet our nation's aviation needs on into the next century.

-- And during consideration by the Congress last year of the Airport/Airway legislation, Norm not only guided the bill through his own committee, but was always on hand during its consideration by the Ways and Means Committee. He stayed through the long nights while the Conference Committee finalized the bill, and without his leadership it is doubtful that we would have been successful in getting this legislation which is so important to the aviation community.

-- I would add that since I have been Secretary of Transportation I have relied on Norm's advice on the best ways to implement the airport improvement program. We are both committed to seeing that adequate funds are provided and, in that context, we both would like to see the President's request fully funded by the Congress. (Of course, I understand that Norm would like to go even higher, but we'll have to straighten that out later.)

* I am personally very grateful for Norm's interest in aviation and for the very knowledgeable way he represents the aviation community in the Congress. He obviously has your appreciation, as well, as this award so clearly demonstrates.

* One reason he is so knowledgeable is that every time he flies back to his home district in California he leaves his regular passenger seat and occupies the jump seat in the cockpit. Norm tells me that after listening to the air traffic controller and pilot conversations about 50 times a year he virtually knows them by heart. If Norm ever retires from the Congress, we could probably take him on as a controller -- unless the airlines get him first.

* It is a privilege for me to present, on behalf of the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics -- its officers and members -- the RTCA Achievement Award, to the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta.

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