

REMARKS FOR SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, JR.
MEETING WITH FAA EMPLOYEES
APRIL 15, 1992
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm glad I could get over here to introduce myself and to meet some of you. Jim Busey tells me you're the best agency in the federal government, so I wanted to come see for myself what he was talking about.

Actually, long before I met Jim Busey, I was aware of the excellent reputation the FAA enjoys. It's one of the major reasons I was excited about taking this job. I knew I would be surrounded by top-flight professionals dedicated to working on some of the most important day-to-day issues facing this country.

For this reason, you are going to enjoy working with General Richards. He also will bring to this job a strong commitment to excellence, a love of aviation and a proven record of successfully running large operations.

Tom Richards is a man who has had a distinguished career in the Air Force, culminating in three years as Deputy Commander in Chief, Headquarters U.S. European Command. A four-star general, he has over 5,000 flight hours and 30 years of experience in flying propeller, single and multi-engine jet aircraft. I am looking forward to having him on the DOT team.

While I'm on this subject, I want to take this opportunity once again to thank Barry Harris for serving as Acting Administrator. We are all grateful to him for the superb job he did pinch-hitting until the President could find a successor to Admiral Busey.

Since coming on board as the new Secretary, I have been reaching out to all segments of the transportation community to try to get my arms around this job. What I see is an industry in transition facing challenges it's never had to face before and at a point where business as usual will no longer carry the day.

I am pleased to see the Department rising to this challenge. The recently-enacted Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) is a case in point, if you don't mind me shifting away from aviation issues for a moment. As someone recently noted in The Washington Post, this represents a significant change in transportation legislation that didn't get the fanfare it deserved.

It's a radical departure from those days when no matter what you called it, a surface transportation bill was nothing more than a revised highway bill with a mandate to build more roads. Period. Now with ISTEA, we have the tools to change that -- to look at surface transportation needs from a broader, system perspective.

This represents a new, creative approach to dealing with transportation legislation that really started with the FAA reauthorization package sent to Congress three years ago. And it continues with the follow-on FAA reauthorization package that is now before the Congress.

The first proposal gave us the passenger facility concept and for the first time a national noise policy.

The three-year FAA reauthorization proposal currently before the Congress builds on the earlier package. In the Airport Improvement Program, for instance, airport entitlement funds would be available for the first time to improve access to airports. It also promotes aviation-related planning as part of a broader metropolitan planning effort.

These are quiet but revolutionary changes and they represent the innovative approach we need to deal with the problems and challenges facing us. I will do everything in my power to encourage this creative thinking throughout the Department. It's just a whole new world out there, no longer confined by national boundaries, and we will need to unleash all the creative talent we can to deal with it.

Through it all, of course, FAA's bottom-line challenge will be to keep the skies safe. This mandate has not changed and never will. But how you accomplish this can and must change from time to time. In the regulatory area, for instance, President Bush has asked all federal agencies to review their regulations to see if they are imposing needless regulation that might hamper national economic recovery and unduly burden those we regulate. Later this month, this 90-day review period is up and we'll report back to the President on what we have found.

Even after the 90-day moratorium expires, the challenge remains. What President Bush has asked us to do on a one-shot basis, I want us to adopt as our routine way of doing business. I am pleased to see that the FAA already is operating in this spirit with its Rulemaking Advisory Committee. Though this arrangement, the aviation community gets involved in the rulemaking process from the outset to make sure that rules are realistic and reasonable.

The aviation industry faces a number of stiff challenges. How to help the airline industry recover from the economic downturn and how to revitalize the once-strong general aviation manufacturing industry in this country are two of the biggest challenges.

No doubt about it, these are tough problems but they are not beyond our ability, working together with the industry, to deal with them. Someone has noted that the Chinese word for "crisis" is a combination of the words "problem" and "challenge." So, I look forward to working with you on these critical issues. Now, if I can take some of your questions.

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