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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Monday, May 4, 1992

Remarks by U.S. Secretary of  
Transportation Andrew H. Card, Jr. at the Birthday  
Dinner Fundraiser for Governor Ashcroft, Jefferson  
City, Missouri.

This document was transcribed from a micro  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

## P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

So thank you very much. This is a treat for me to be in Jefferson City, and especially an honor for me to be here to help celebrate John Ashcroft's fiftieth birthday, even though he's got five more days until he really gets to celebrate it in style.

This is not my first visit to Jefferson City. My first visit to Jeff City came, I want to say soon after John Ashcroft was sworn in as governor. And there was a major crisis. There was a crisis that involved the federal government, in fact that involved the Department of Defense, and it involved the State of Missouri.

And notice that John Ashcroft taught me to say "Missoura." I want to say "Missouri" because I'm from Massachusetts. (Applause) So I will say "Missoura." Governor Ashcroft was very persistent in calling the White House about the crisis that existed. It turns out that the President had decided to call up the battleship Missouri. And the great punch bowl rested in the mansion. (Laughter) And Governor Ashcroft did not want to give that punch bowl up without knowing that he could get it back. (Laughter)

And I was just asked to speak with the

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1 Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman who did not want  
2 to have to make any commitment with regard to that  
3 punch bowl. In fact, he was about ready to send the  
4 Marines in to get it. (Laughter) But the good news  
5 is that the USS Missouri was recommissioned. It did  
6 have the punch bowl. But my first visit to Jeff City  
7 came to see the punch bowl in the mansion.

8 I then went with President Bush to Pearl  
9 Harbor on December the 7th, just this last year. And  
10 I got to see the punch bowl in the Missouri. And  
11 tonight I'm going to go see the punch bowl back in the  
12 mansion. (Applause)

13 You have one of the most wonderful people  
14 I have ever met serving as governor. And I say that  
15 Governor Ashcroft is just kind of a perfect person.  
16 And I mean that. This is not a facetious comment.  
17 He is one of the truly nice, nice people that I have  
18 met in politics. I have had the pleasure of working  
19 with him when he was attorney general.

20 The National Association of Attorneys  
21 General saw the wisdom of John Ashcroft's leadership,  
22 and he was their leader. The group is called NAAG.  
23 He nagged. Quite right. And then I had the pleasure  
24 of working with him as governor. But he is a man of  
25 tremendous intellect, tremendous compassion. He has

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1 great leadership. He also has great decency.

2 I have witnessed his decency many times.  
3 He is one of the few people who is always consistently  
4 nice. And he has been perfect for the people of  
5 Missouri. He has been good for the people of the  
6 United States. And his leadership is recognized.

7 There are not many governors who are  
8 recognized as leaders by other governors. But John  
9 Ashcroft is highly respected and highly regarded by  
10 his colleagues of both parties, Republicans and  
11 Democrats. And I am pleased to be able to be here to  
12 help celebrate his birthday.

13 I am also thrilled to be here as Secretary  
14 of Transportation, something that I didn't think would  
15 ever happen. President Bush, it was very interesting,  
16 when the opportunity to appoint a Secretary of  
17 Transportation came along, when John Sununu left the  
18 White House, and the President made the decision to  
19 pick Sam Skinner as chief of staff at the White House.  
20 And one of my jobs as deputy chief of staff was to  
21 keep the President on the task at hand.

22 And as soon as Secretary Skinner departed  
23 Transportation, there was obviously an opening in the  
24 cabinet. And I was tasked by the President to go out  
25 and collect names and resumes, and make

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1 recommendations with regard to that particular cabinet  
2 position. And I remember the first week that  
3 Secretary Skinner was over at the White House, I sat  
4 with the President. We talked over a whole number of  
5 names. He sent me out to collect information on  
6 people.

7 And he said that he was going to put my  
8 name on his list. And I kind of grinned. "That's  
9 right." "Sure." And proceeded to collect names, gave  
10 names to the President. And then -- a six weeks went  
11 by, and the President had not made a selection. And  
12 I was kind of a thorn in his side. It was the week  
13 that the President really filled that Cabinet slot.  
14 Holiday season was over, we've got to get going.

15 And it was on Martin Luther King's day,  
16 actually it was Friday before Martin Luther King day  
17 when the President flew down to Atlanta to help  
18 celebrate Martin Luther King day, and we were flying  
19 back on Air Force One. I was up in the suite with the  
20 President. And the President told me that he was  
21 going to make his decision on transportation that  
22 weekend.

23 And again, we went over the list of names  
24 that the President had. And again he kind of teased  
25 me. As I was walking out of the suite, he said, "Oh,

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1 by the way, Andy, your name is still on my list." And  
2 then Monday was the holiday. I showed up from work  
3 at about 4:00 in the afternoon, the President got back  
4 about 4:30 in the afternoon from Camp David.

5 And I walked by the Oval Office, and he  
6 was in there working. And he stuck his thumb up in  
7 the air like that. I walked by, and stuck my thumb  
8 up in the air like that. (Laughter) I don't know  
9 what that meant. (Laughter)

10 And then Tuesday morning at 7:15 in the  
11 office, I had a call. The President wanted to see me  
12 in his office. I went down, and stood in the doorway  
13 to his private study, which is the just off the oval  
14 office. And the President said, "Andy, I want you to  
15 be Secretary of Transportation." And I said, "Yes.  
16 Right, Mr. President."

17 And he said, "No, I'm serious." And then  
18 we sat down. My life changed. And it changed in a  
19 way that I never expected that it would. It changed  
20 because the President introduced me to an opportunity.  
21 But really what he did was allow me to participate in  
22 a revolution that was almost unnoticed.

23 Because the President really introduced  
24 a revolution to the -- transportation. I don't know  
25 if you remember it, but it was about 15 months ago,

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1 we had just come off the success of Desert Storm and  
2 Desert Shield. And the President addressed Congress.  
3 And he gave Congress a challenge.

4 He challenged Congress to pass in 100 days  
5 a transportation bill. And Senator Kit Bond picked  
6 up that challenge the very first moment. He  
7 introduced the President's bill to Congress for a  
8 transportation bill. Congress did not meet the  
9 challenge. They did not pass that transportation bill  
10 in 100 days.

11 If they had done so, I don't think there  
12 would have been a recession, or at least we would have  
13 grown out of it last September. But Congress didn't  
14 meet the challenge within 100 days. The good news is  
15 that they did finally do it in July.

16 And it was on December 18th of last year  
17 that the President signed into law a bill with a great  
18 big long name. But it is important that we know that  
19 name, because it may and does represent new thinking  
20 in transportation. It's called the Intermobile  
21 Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. I call it ice  
22 tea. (Laughter)

23 It's the first type of bill that is passed  
24 by Congress that has a word in it that doesn't even  
25 exist in a lot of dictionaries today: intermobile.

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1 It also has the word efficiency in it. You don't find  
2 that in government in very many places. (Laughter)

3 Okay. But that bill does change the way  
4 we think about transportation. And it also provides  
5 the resources and the direction to make the change  
6 happen. The bill provides \$155 billion over six years  
7 for surface transportation. This year alone, some \$20  
8 billion will be spent to make sure that our  
9 infrastructure is ready to support the commerce of the  
10 21st century.

11 The bill also breaks the mold. It changes  
12 the way business is done in transportation. And it  
13 does represent a real revolution. The -- proposal  
14 causes people to think outside of their normal areas  
15 of transportation responsibility. Someone who cares  
16 about pie rates is supposed to think about transit.  
17 Someone who thinks about airports is supposed to think  
18 about railroads.

19 It changes the way we think about  
20 commerce, recognizing that commerce always understood  
21 that that was the solution to the problem. Because  
22 to have a truly successful transportation network, we  
23 have to have a seamless transportation network. One  
24 that will allow for the gears to move without  
25 interruption from one mode of transportation to

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1 another, that will allow the people to move from one  
2 mode of transportation to another.

3 The best example of how intermobility was  
4 not considered happens to be in Washington, D.C.,  
5 surprise, surprise. I don't know how many of you have  
6 ever flown into National Airport. National Airport  
7 is an exciting airport. It is very close to the city.  
8 You can almost fall out of your plane and you're in  
9 the city.

10 And Washington, D.C. has one of the most  
11 exciting, cleanest, efficient subway systems in the  
12 world, the Metro. And you can ride the Metro all  
13 around Washington, D.C. And you can ride it out to  
14 the airport promptly. But you cannot ride it into the  
15 airport terminal. The subway stops 300 yards short  
16 of the airport terminal.

17 So if you want to take the subway and go  
18 to the airport, you take the subway. You carry all  
19 your luggage. You go down the escalator that's  
20 running. You cross the street, and -- it's just a  
21 regular street, I mean, there's no walkway. You cross  
22 the street. You go through a parking lot. Then you  
23 walk down the sidewalk, and then you go into the wrong  
24 end of the terminal. (Laughter)

25 If they would have built that subway 300

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1 yards longer and put it into the terminal, there would  
2 have been an intermobile transportation network in  
3 Washington. There would have been a seamless change  
4 from one mode of transportation to another. And that  
5 is what we are going to have happen.

6 But that term itself, intermobilitism, isn't  
7 the only part of the revolution. The other part of  
8 the revolution that came happened because governors  
9 like John Ashcroft made a wake up call to Washington.  
10 The governors have been saying for years, "Give us the  
11 flexibility and we can make things work."

12 In the past, surface transportation bills  
13 were passed with requirements where Congress, usually,  
14 sometimes the Department of Transportation, but always  
15 Washington told virtually every state what to do with  
16 their money, on what project, and when. The  
17 Department of Transportation would say, "Build this  
18 road today. Fix that bridge today. Fix that transit  
19 system. Buy that bus."

20 There was no flexibility. The governor  
21 had no ability to recognize and address parochial  
22 concerns. The new ISTEA legislation provides  
23 governors flexibility. They now can move resources  
24 from highway funds to transit funds, from transit  
25 funds to highway funds. They can spend dollars to

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1 build a road, and at the same time address a wetlands  
2 problem, wetland mitigation.

3 They are part of the solution, rather than  
4 just pawns in the federal bureaucracy's plan to  
5 develop a transportation network. And that revolution  
6 is taking hold. Many, many governors did not  
7 understand exactly what that opportunity meant. But  
8 Governor Ashcroft did. And he measured it in Missouri  
9 -- in "Missoura," as he is leading the way for other  
10 governors.

11 And in February the governor got passed  
12 in this state an important tax increase. Nobody likes  
13 to see tax increases passed. But this is a tax  
14 increase that builds for the future, gas taxes. And  
15 it is going to provide the infrastructure funding to  
16 take advantage of ISTEA. With that Missouri is also  
17 using the flexibility to address Missouri's problems  
18 of transportation rather than Washington's perception  
19 of Missouri's problems in transportation.

20 Now this revolution you might not think  
21 is very significant. But think back the last time  
22 there was revolution in transportation. It was  
23 President Eisenhower, when he built the interstate  
24 highway system that opened America for commerce.

25 If we did not have that interstate highway

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1 system, we might be in the same boat as Russia is  
2 today. Russia has resources. Russia has markets.  
3 But Russia doesn't have a transportation  
4 infrastructure. President Eisenhower woke America up  
5 to transportation. President Bush has woken America  
6 up again to transportation.

7 President Bush is the agent of change.  
8 He is the one that called Congress to order right  
9 after Desert Storm/Desert Shield, and said, "Get busy.  
10 on America's agenda. Get busy on education. Get busy  
11 on transportation. Get busy on a crime bill." And  
12 Congress was only able to do one of those three  
13 things, and that was transportation.

14 And it took them twice as long as it  
15 should have. But at least they did it. It is having  
16 an impact, having an impact right now on our economy.  
17 We have seen job growth for the last three months.  
18 Job growth: 164,000 jobs were created in January,  
19 about 110,000 created in February. We have seen about  
20 150,000 created in March.

21 A healthy percentage of those jobs are  
22 being created in the transportation sector, because  
23 the President put the resources there and told me to  
24 spend them. There was one other cabinet member,  
25 probably there has never been another Republican

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1 cabinet member who was instructed by a Republican  
2 President to spend money fast.

3 But that was what President Bush wanted  
4 me to do. He said, "Take the money that is in that  
5 pipeline, that \$20 billion, and put it out of the  
6 pipeline. Tell the governor where the spigots are.  
7 Show them how to open them. Get that money into the  
8 system, because that money represents jobs. And  
9 Governor Ashcroft took the opportunity, and he is  
10 creating jobs in Missouri.

11 We will see this year, if we spend the  
12 resources that the President made available in ISTEA,  
13 the creation of about 600,000 jobs. Now we want you  
14 think that every one of those jobs is someone with a  
15 high cabinet shovel. Sometimes it's the fellow around  
16 the coffee -- supporting the construction sector. Or  
17 the insurance agent who is helping to sell insurance.  
18 Or the equipment that is being used to build the road.

19 But those 600,000 jobs are real jobs. And  
20 they are there as a result of the President's  
21 initiative. Why do I say the President brought this  
22 revolution? Because that is what the President is all  
23 about. Think about it. Four years ago,  
24 Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, all of  
25 the Soviet Union were the same way we had known them

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1 for the previous 50 years.

2 The President brought a revolution for the  
3 world. Germany is now one. Poland, democratic.  
4 Hungary. A playwright elected president in  
5 Czechoslovakia. We have seen opportunities in the  
6 Soviet block because the Soviet block doesn't exist  
7 anymore.

8 Would you have thought two years ago that  
9 there would be no Soviet Union today? No way. The  
10 President made that revolution happen. He built on  
11 the foundation that President Reagan gave him. He  
12 carried the torch of freedom, and he passed it on.  
13 And the voice of America was heard around the world.  
14 And President Bush made it happen.

15 President Bush wants to bring that same  
16 kind of revolution to our everyday life. Why do I  
17 know that? Because he did it in the area that I am  
18 responsible for now, transportation. He has called  
19 for a revolution in education, America 2000. If we  
20 don't want a revolution in American education, we may  
21 not be able to meet the challenges of a global  
22 economy.

23 He got up on that -- and he didn't say,  
24 "I can do it all alone." Instead he said, "We have  
25 to do it together in the communities, in the states.

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1 And not only in Washington." And that is  
2 revolutionary in making it happen. He has asked for  
3 legal reform. He has asked us to take a look at our  
4 legal system, the tort requirements that erupted.  
5 Change them.

6 A revolution in the legal community. He  
7 is doing it in health care. He has called for a  
8 revolution in health care. He has called for a  
9 revolution in trade. Open up the trading  
10 opportunities with Mexico and Canada. Have a level  
11 playing field around the world. Get a GATT agreement  
12 that is good for everyone in the world. Good for  
13 peace. And that is what the President has said.

14 And finally the President has called for  
15 governmental reform. Boy, do we need a revolution  
16 there. He has called for -- us to take a look at the  
17 way campaigns are funded. He is shaking up the  
18 system. So you see the President really is the agent  
19 of change. And we have to make sure that he can be  
20 there so the change will become reality.

21 He needs a Republican Congress. He needs  
22 a Republican Senate. And the change will come. But  
23 most important, we need President Bush. He is the  
24 only, and I emphasize only, the only world leader  
25 today. There are no other world leaders. The whole

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1 world is looking to President Bush for leadership.

2 The good news is he has the capacity to  
3 deliver it. And he has proven that over and over  
4 again. But I appreciate the fact that -- because you  
5 understand what it is to be part of a revolution.  
6 Victory in '92. Ronald Reagan would not have been  
7 elected in 1980, if he went for victory -- it was  
8 Commitment '80 then. It was a grass roots  
9 organization.

10 Volunteers working with limited resources  
11 but important resources, spending them wisely. I was  
12 talking on the way here from St. Louis, and I said,  
13 "I love the state Victory '92 organization because  
14 they spend the money wisely in the right places." The  
15 resources that you have contributed tonight will be  
16 spent the right way. They won't be funnelled to some  
17 high falutin' lobbyist or consultant.

18 They will be spent on getting people to  
19 register to vote, and making sure they show up. You  
20 can't win an election if no one shows up to vote. The  
21 simple rule in politics. And Victory '92 is the  
22 vehicle.

23 I thank you. I am pleased to be here.  
24 I am glad to celebrate John Ashcroft's fiftieth  
25 birthday. I don't think he looks 50. But I am glad

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1 to celebrate it. And I am thrilled that you are all  
2 part of the solution in America. And I hope that you  
3 will go forth and multiply. But if you don't -- I  
4 think with one story -- I try to tell a story in  
5 almost every audience, and I apologize if some of you  
6 have heard this before.

7 I grew up in a country that was very, very  
8 political. I don't remember it being very partisan,  
9 but it was very political. My grandmother was quite  
10 influential. She had been a suffragette, wearing a  
11 white dress, marching down Commonwealth Avenue in  
12 Boston to get women the right to vote. And she was  
13 very proud of the picture she has of her marching down  
14 Commonwealth Avenue.

15 And when I was growing up, my parents used  
16 to dump me off at grandmother's house almost every  
17 Saturday. I must have been really bad, but they would  
18 dump me out at grandmother's house. And we would sit  
19 at the table, and all of the children would sit around  
20 the table. And before we could eat dinner -- in  
21 addition to grace, we had to say something from the  
22 newspaper that day. And it was a real pain in the  
23 neck.

24 And -- grandmother used to read the  
25 newspaper. And we used to try to cheat. "Tell me

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1 something from the newspaper today." (Laughter) But  
2 we would stand around the table. And we went around  
3 to each person at the table, child or adult, and  
4 repeat something from the newspapers. And so I would  
5 remember my state representative. I knew who the  
6 state senator was. I knew who the governor was. I  
7 knew there would be a town meeting. I would tell her  
8 what the school committee problems were.

9 And we used to have lengthy debates at the  
10 breakfast table or the dinner table. And so I did pay  
11 attention to politics. And then I went to college,  
12 and came back from college, with a family. I married  
13 and had two children, and I moved into grandma's. And  
14 it was the same deal, "Tell me something from the  
15 newspapers." (Laughter) And I ran for the planning  
16 board in -- 1971, and got elected.

17 And my grandmother was thrilled that I was  
18 on the planning board. Unpaid position, thankless  
19 hours. But she paid attention what was going on at  
20 the planning board. The board was getting what permit  
21 on what cul de sac. She knew it all. And then it was  
22 -- I bought a house, she came to live with me for a  
23 while. And then she got very sick and she went to the  
24 hospital.

25 And it was Christmas of 1971. And I went

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1 over to the hospital to visit her with my father and  
2 my two brothers. And she told us that night that she  
3 was going to die. She said that we shouldn't worry  
4 about it. She had lived a good life. And that we  
5 should remember that Christmas is for kids, and we  
6 should make sure the kids have a good Christmas.

7 And I remember saying, "You're not going  
8 to die." And she said, "No. No. My time has come.  
9 But don't worry." And she wanted to talk to each one  
10 of us alone. And my youngest brother Brad went in.  
11 And my brother John went in. And then I went in and  
12 sat with grandmother.

13 I held her hand, and she said, "Andy, tell  
14 me something from the newspaper today." (Laughter)  
15 And we talked about current events. We talked about  
16 what was happening at the bank board. What was  
17 happening at town meetings. Who was running for state  
18 legislature. Just general politics. And then she  
19 said, "Andy, continue to participate in politics.  
20 Because if people don't participate in their  
21 government, democracy will die."

22 That was literally the last thing she said  
23 to me. She did die that night. And so I live with  
24 a curse. I don't have any choice but to participate  
25 in politics. But it's about the greatest curse you

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1 can have. There are people all around the world that  
2 want that curse, and not enough of us take it.

3 And I want you to take it. And just  
4 remember, if you don't vote, remember my grandmother.

5 (Applause)

6 (Whereupon, Secretary Card's comments were  
7 concluded.)

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MATTER: U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H.  
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