



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today said the U.S. Department of Transportation and the United Kingdom will begin a series of tests on March 21 of a new electronic cargo data transmission system designed to simplify and speed cargo movements in international trade.

The new procedure, under development for over a year, makes use of automatic data processing systems and uniform commodity and other transportation codes to replace the documents now needed in international commerce by shippers, carriers, and governments.

"This is one of the most significant developments in world trade since the introduction of aircraft and fast ocean vessels," Secretary Brinegar said. "It is in keeping with President Nixon's resolve to strengthen our ability to compete more effectively in world trade."

Secretary Brinegar said that the paperwork now required in international commerce cost some \$6.5 billion annually, or 7.5% of the value of U.S. imports and exports. This high cost of doing business, he said, seriously endangers the nation's capacity to do business abroad on a profitable basis. The Secretary said that the new system provides the means for greatly reducing the expensive, frustrating delays while paperwork wends its slow, and sometimes confusing way through channels.

The Secretary had reference to the layering, one on top of the other, of the myriad of commercial, financial, and government forms, licenses, and assorted documents now needed in the international movement of cargo.

The tests will be conducted in phases, with the first one taking place in Departmental headquarters in Washington. Data relating to air cargo shipment will be transmitted electronically from Washington to Heathrow Airport in London, where it will be processed by the British Board for Simplification of International Trade Procedures (SITPRO). Subsequent tests will incorporate data for truck movement of air cargo, and rail and barge movements of cargo to and from ocean ports. Tests with other

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countries are also planned.

On-line input/output devices are at Department of Transportation headquarters in Washington, D.C., with the centralized computer for the tests located at the Department's Transportation Systems Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The data transmission program is being coordinated by the Office of Facilitation under the Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Environment, Safety and Consumer Affairs, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Technical direction and computer programming is being provided by the Office of Telecommunications under the Assistant Secretary for Systems Development and Technology, Robert H. Cannon, Jr., and the Transportation Systems Center.

The National Committee on International Trade Documentation, and the Transportation Data Coordinating Committee, two non-profit research organizations representing private industry, are assisting in determining needed data elements and codes to simplify the system. Other government agencies, such as the Bureau of Customs, Office of Export Control, the Bureau of the Census, and Maritime Administration are also participating in the study.

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