U.S. Department of Transportation

News:

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELAINE CHAO
SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MAY 3, 1989

On behalf of Secretary Skinner, I am pleased to be here today to speak before your annual government-industry meeting. I am also happy to have here with me today General Jerry Curry, Administrator-Designate of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

SAE's achievements over the last 84 years -- and the contributions of such distinguished members as Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and Orville Wright -- are impressive. In designing, manufacturing, marketing and maintaining self-propelled land, sea and air vehicles and their components, SAE has played a significant role in improving transportation safety, versatility, and reliability in America and throughout the world.

Safety, versatility and reliability -- these are integral to the national transportation plan which the Secretary has made a major focus of his administration. It is an assessment of our current transportation system and our projected needs into the 21st century. It will provide the framework for achievement of a total transportation system for the future -- one that is first and foremost the safest in the world; secondly, provides the capacity we need both for industry and individuals, and one which is efficient and fiscally prudent.

There are a few issues I wish to discuss today, but as you had originally expected Secretary Skinner, let me update you a bit on the leadership he has taken on a number of issues that you may have seen the Department take on the nightly news: Aviation security, the oil spill in Valdez and Eastern Airlines.

As some of you may know, the Secretary just concluded a five-nation visit, to discuss the whole question of aviation security with his counterparts in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, France and the United Kingdom, and to impress upon them the importance of this issue to the President and the Secretary.

On the basis of our preparations for the trip, it was anticipated that the trip would be received in a positive way. But the trip exceeded our expectations. The Secretary found that there is a unified commitment, a unified approach to solving the threat of terrorism in the skies. It requires global solutions. None of us have a monopoly on the information or expertise available to counter the threat. This trip provided the framework for progress. But more work remains to be done, and the U.S. is in for the long haul to solve this problem.

In the Secretary's discussions, every country indicated a strong desire to install proven, state-of-the-art explosive detection devices such as the thermal neutron analysis devices, or TNA, in their airports as soon as possible. The first TNA device is scheduled to be installed in the U.S. at JFK Airport in July. When the Secretary was in London last week, British Transport Minister Channon announced his agreement to place a TNA device at Gatwick Airport.

In fact, by January 1990, the Department expects to have a total of six TNA devices installed in airports both domestic and foreign, with more on the way. These devices have been developed and tested here in America at a cost of over $60 million in FAA research and development funds, with a very high success rate of detection. The Secretary not only offered our technical expertise to other countries, but he also solicited their advice as well.

The question on everyone's mind is what to do with electronic devices. We are also working on a plan in cooperation with other nations, on how to check items such as computers, radios and so on. A total ban of all such items on airplanes is an option we have to consider, but if we can develop a plan for increased passenger safety without banning these items -- and I believe we can -- we will try to do it. At the same time, we will not compromise safety for the sake of expediency.

While in London, the Secretary met with a widow of one of the victims of Pan Am Flight 103. He has had several such meetings with the families, and was in fact responsible for arranging representative of the families to meet with the President on April 3. Such meetings cannot make their pain go away, nor reduce their need for answers to their questions. In part, that is why the whole issue is high on the Secretary's agenda and why our efforts are so important -- as a nation we can learn from that horrible tragedy.

Like the Secretary I want to also emphasize that American airlines are safe to fly and airline travel is still one of the safest forms of transportation available. We are, however, working to make it better. The FAA already has announced several significant steps to increase security standards here at home. We are not going to ask anything of our aviation partners that we will not ask of ourselves. I believe that within the year, you will see some major changes.

Aviation security is but one of the major challenges that we have had to deal with since the start of this new Administration. The Alaska oil spill -- one of the worst environmental and economic disasters this nation has ever faced -- is another. This tragedy not only requires a massive commitment of people and money to contain and clean up the spill, but reevaluation of our whole approach to the water-borne transportation of oil and a review of contingency plans dealing with oil spills. President Bush has made clear his commitment to cleaning up Prince William Sound. He designated Secretary Skinner as his national coordinator on that effort, and the Department is following through on his commitment.

The entire country has a vested interest in seeing that the Exxon Valdez disaster is cleaned up immediately -- with minimum cost to the American taxpayer. The beaches affected in this spill are covered with oil sludge that is proving to be very difficult to remove. The Secretary is in fact, en-route to Alaska to get another first-hand look at the progress to-date. Exxon, the oil industry, the state of Alaska and the federal government must focus on getting as much beach cleaned as possible before winter arrives in October.

The Eastern Airlines strike is another issue this Administration has dealt with. Throughout the strike, the FAA's main role has been to ensure that Eastern is operating safely. We have also monitored service to ensure that it wasn't widely disrupted. According to a Washington Post poll, approximately three-quarters of the American people supported the view of the President -- that labor-management disputes should be resolved by negotiation between the parties, not by government intervention.

Further intervention, beyond the many months of mediation that occurred before the strike, would have been fruitless. The President also was right in emphasizing that the nation cannot and will not be held hostage to economic blackmail; nor will we allow the grievances of a few to jeopardize the efficiency and safety of transportation for all.

As I have tried to emphasize, safety is our number-one priority. I'd like to turn now to that issue in the automotive field. Your commitment to our shared goals of promoting vehicle safety and promotion of energy conservation through local, national and international public awareness programs is commendable. As a major developer of safety standards for motor vehicles, your involvement in all aspects of designing and manufacturing every type of vehicle imaginable -- including air and space craft -- has been instrumental in developing safer transportation technology.

The 1980s have been an era of unprecedented improvement in highway and auto safety, as more and more new cars are delivered with automatic crash protection and safety belt use continues to increase. Today "safety sells" is not just a slogan. It's the cornerstone of a new attitude in this country that combines technology and increased public concern for safety, to save lives and prevent injuries.

Thanks to your efforts and those of other like-minded organizations across the country, the future of highway safety has never been more encouraging. Statistics from our National Highway Traffic Safety Administration indicate that highway travel in this country is now safer than at any time in modern history. The highway fatality rate dropped 27 percent from 1980 to 1988, and stands at a record low of 2.4 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles. But 46,000 highway deaths each year are still far too many -- much more still needs to be done, for safer vehicles and safer drivers.

One long-running discussion has been settled: as the result of a July 1984 DOT rule, all new cars produced after September 1, 1989, will be equipped with either an air bag or front seat safety belts that move into position automatically. Approximately 400,000 airbag equipped cars were produced over the last three model years, and another 700,000 are being offered in Model Year 1989. That number will more than quadruple to 2.9 million air- bag equipped cars next year -- far more than anyone had deemed possible just a few years ago. And it's a tribute

to the engineers who designed and tailored airbags for mass production in many different vehicle styles. Consumers and legislators have demonstrated their commitment to safety, and their trust in safety equipment.

There are also now mandatory safety belt laws in 33 states and the District of Columbia, and safety belt use has risen from a mere 10 percent in the early 1980s to an estimated 47 percent today. And as part of your "Safety Belts are for Everyone" Program, SAE has been instrumental in improving public awareness about child safety seats -- now mandatory throughout the U.S.

While safety, as I have emphasized, must always be our number-one priority, we are continuing our efforts to streamline our rules and eliminate unnecessary regulation of the auto industry. For example, under a recently announced amendment to our federal motor vehicle safety standard, automakers and lighting manufacturers will gain new flexibility in motor vehicle headlamp design. As a result, many headlamp design requirements, which are not needed from a federal regulatory perspective, will be eliminated from our rules so that lighting manufacturers can select and adapt their own rules as they see fit. This action continues NHTSA's efforts to remove the obligation for time-consuming federal approval of each minor change in lamp sizes and shapes, and simplifies the manufacturers' introduction of new headlamp designs.

Other improvements have been introduced by the automotive industry. Anti-lock brakes, for example, have been introduced on several models of cars and light trucks. Manufacturers are working with NHTSA on a field test of anti-lock brakes in heavy trucks. Tire technology has improved to give a better grip on the road. Today's American car has much better handling than it did fifteen years ago -- helping drivers to be more responsive to emergency situations.

At the same time, we know that the vast majority of highway fatalities and crashes are due in large part to human factors. So, we must continue not only to provide safety regulations for vehicles, but also to concentrate on driver programs that can produce the biggest reductions of deaths and injuries on our highways. We know that all the safety features in the world won't protect innocent bystanders from a reckless or alcohol impaired driver. Working to save more lives on our highways through increased safety belt use and continuing our tough campaign against drunk and drugged driving are but two of the many challenges facing transportation today.

Coming as I do from the private sector, I believe government can learn a great deal from private industry. We need greater public-private cooperation throughout transportation. An example of such cooperation is the Federal Highway Administration and General Motor's Pathfinder "smart-streets/smart-cars" project in California, which helps to alleviate gridlock and improve commuter traffic flow.

Technically known as "Intelligent Vehicle/Highway Systems," instantaneous traffic data and routing alternatives are provided by in-car computerized information systems, thus enabling drivers to make informed driving decisions that avoid congested areas. IVHS are evolving from advancement in automotive and highway traffic systems which are in turn, benefiting from rapid advances in electronics communications, and information processing technologies. Current technology, which has been under development for some 30 years, is already capable of improving highway system efficiency and safety. Future prospects for more sophisticated technological developments promise even greater benefits.

As you can see, many challenges lie ahead. A national transportation policy will help significantly in providing guidance and direction in our automotive efforts. Secretary Skinner and I are fully committed to excellence, efficiency and above all, safety, in American transportation.

SAE's contributions to the modernization of our nation and the world are immeasurable. We commend you on your work and look forward to your continuing contribution and assistance as we move into a new transportation era. I personally look forward to working closely with you.

Thank you.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELAINE CHAO
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF AERONAUTICS AND ASTRONAUTICS
KEYNOTE SPEECH -- AERONAUTICS DAY
MAY 4, 1989
CRYSTAL CITY, VIRGINIA

Thank you so much Fred Smith for your kind introduction. I am delighted to fill in for Secretary Skinner as the keynote speaker for Aeronautics Day. It's such a pleasure for me to be among so many people of like minds and kindred spirits. You represent a cross section of engineers, scientists and managers, and your membership spans the aeronautics industry from carrier to manufacturer. Therefore, I know you share with me a common vision of aviation in America: one of continued growth and unparalleled safety and efficiency. All three thrive on the technological advances you create.

I know I don't need to tell anyone in this room that to continue to maintain growth, safety and efficiency into the 21st century we will need something beyond the initial 10-year capital investment envisioned in the National Airspace System Plan. Currently, we have the world's safest and most efficient system of airspace coordination. It is also the busiest and most complex, one that is characterized by expensive upkeep of antiquated electronic equipment, capacity limitations, and limited flexibility. The modernizing of our National Airspace System has to be a continuing process geared

to meeting and reacting to changing demand and traffic flows.

By 1992, the federal government will have invested more than twelve billion dollars on the original NAS Plan. The largest civilian technological undertaking in the history of government sets out 89 projects to modernize the air traffic control and air navigational system. NAS Plan achievements have been substantial. Almost one-fifth of the projects are completed and about 90 percent are under contract. For example, an entirely new generation of air traffic control hardware and software -- the Advanced Automation System -- is central to the Plan, and its $3.6 billion contract was awarded last year.

I have brought along several videos on several several of the topics I'll discuss. They are brief but interesting. The first video provides an overview of the many elements of the NAS Plan.

VIDEO #1

Needless to say, a plan of this magnitude has presented enormous challenges to the Federal Aviation Administration during the procurement, management and integration processes. Unforeseen technical

problems, especially in the software development area, have required careful attention and adjustments.

For this reason, Secretary Skinner established a task force within the Department to review the Plan's status and make recommendations for accelerating the program.

Although there has been some criticism of delays in the NAS Plan, a more realistic assessment would be that its development is far ahead of anything that exists in the rest of the world. Yes, the NAS Plan has posed challenges, but it has also provided opportunities to make technological breakthroughs in several areas and to incorporate state-of-the-art technology in the management of our air traffic control system.

Let me give you some examples. The Advanced Automation System which I mentioned earlier, along with the Voice Switching and Control System which modernizes communications, require development of millions of lines of computer code. FAA has adopted the ADA, the most modern computer language available for this task. The Advanced Automation System will also be using state-of-the-art large color scan displays. These displays are low distortion, high brightness systems providing 2000 lines resolution on a 20-inch display. The NAS Plan will also be providing for

advanced systems of integration of several forms of radars, combining functions of surveillance and weather radars.

Once the NAS Plan components are in place it is imperative that we continue an aggressive research, engineering and development program to use the equipment to its fullest potential. Presently we are developing our plans for post NAS Plan research, engineering and development and will look to AIAA for leadership in this area.

Beyond the NAS Plan, major advances are being made in other areas. Our traffic management system, for example, is now using satellite telecommunication to coordinate the control of air traffic nationwide. We are also developing an automatic dependent surveillance system which will use satellites to monitor aircraft locations over oceans in combination with the aircraft on-board navigational system. This should solve the problem of near mid-air collisions in areas beyond the coverage of land-based air traffic control radars. The automatic dependent surveillance system should be fully developed for deployment within the next year.

Technology is only one way to increase capacity and enhance safety and efficiency. Another factor in the equation is airport capacity, an issue that has to be

addressed immediately. A number of major airports today are operating at or near capacity. By the end of this year, it is estimated that the U.S. airport and airways system will service nearly a half-billion passenger enplanements -- an increase of 4.6 percent over 1988. Domestic passenger traffic is projected to increase annually through the year 2000 by 4.4 percent; -- yet, a new airport has not been built in this country since Dallas-Fort Worth in 1974.

With air travel demand today growing so much faster than system development, we must move rapidly to optimize use of present capacity. Existing infrastructure must be maintained and rehabilitated. Air traffic flow and safety procedures should continue to be refined. The Microwave Landing System (MLS) is one example of new technology combined with new procedures that will contribute significantly to delay reduction.

The next video will be on MLS.

VIDEO #2 MLS

We also should look at additional ways to gain maximum benefit from existing infrastructure, such as expanded joint civil-military use of facilities, and the conversion of closed military fields to full civilian operation.

Such measures are only a first step; they will not be sufficient over the longer term. Ultimately, we must pour more concrete. We need more runways. We need more gates. We need more airports. Both Denver and Chicago are considering plans to build new airports and plans for runway extensions and other expansions are under way in other parts of the country. Obviously each project must pass individual muster, including meeting environmental and other legal requirements. But the aviation infrastructure is a very important investment. Continued economic growth and prosperity in America are directly linked to the condition of our aviation transportation system. Airports are tremendous incentives to business and industry development. Office and industrial parks spring up around airports, bringing more jobs and greater revenue to the local community. Dulles International Airport, once an under-utilized facility, is an example. An entire suburban commercial corridor developed in Northern Virginia after Dulles was built and local citizens began to promote the airport.

Thus, airport capacity will be a key issue addressed in our national transportation policy -- a comprehensive strategic plan that will identify transportation needs through the year 2020. The policy will cover all modes of transportation but nowhere is it more needed than

in the aviation infrastructure. We expect to have the national transportation policy on the table by early next year, and we look forward to working with AIAA as we develop it.

After we see what needs to be done, we must find the means to get the job done. We have more needs than revenue, but this should stimulate creative solutions, not stagnate them. State and local governments need to work more closely with developers, business and industry, in planning and funding new aviation facilities in their community. With our present budget constraints, increased private sector investment in aviation system infrastructure is imperative.

In addition, the aviation program will be reauthorized in 1990, and the highway program in 1991. The reauthorization process will provide an excellent opportunity to tackle some tough issues.

I trust you will allow me to deviate a bit from this discussion to express my pride in a success story that really belongs to your Astronautics Day program. As some of you know, the Department of Transportation has responsibility for advancing this country's commercial launch initiatives. For the past five years, our Department has been laying the groundwork for a

strong U.S. commercial space transportation industry. This spring, the industry moved off the drawing board, onto the launch pad and into an era of commercial space operations. The successful suborbital launch of the first U.S. licensed commercial rocket from the White Sands Missile Range in March and the first orbital launch scheduled for May 31st are proud landmarks in the creation of a new U.S. industry. And I can assure you that the Department's primary goal in this area, as in our other programs, will be safety. We are also pleased that Secretary Skinner has been named by President Bush to serve on the National Space Council.

Returning to earth, two major challenge facing the aerospace industry today are the issues of security and aging aircraft. These are among Secretary Skinner's top priorities. In fact Secretary Skinner has just returned from a 5 day -- five nation trip to Europe to negotiate with his counterparts on cooperating on increased airline security.

The Federal Aviation Administration has been developing systems and devices which prevent or deter hijacking and sabotage against civil aviation. The emphasis of the program has been on development of capabilities to preclude the introduction of explosives and weapons onto the aircraft.

Secretary Skinner recently announced the requirements for installation of systems employing technology such as the thermal neutron analysis system. One such system has proven to be 95 percent effective in detecting explosives that might be in checked baggage and air cargo, including hard to detect plastic explosives. I would like to play a brief video tape which describes how this system works.

VIDEO #3 -- (Play TNA Video 2 mins. 2 secs.)

The second effort in explosive detection has been the development of a vapor detection system for screening people. Since 1985, the FAA has had a fully funded program in development of a walk-in screening system for passengers. In October 1988, the prototype was tested at Boston Logan Airport.

Results to date show that the prototype reliably detects most explosives concealed under clothing. However, it does not detect plastic explosives. The Department of Transportation is vigorously engaged in research efforts to improve the sensitivity and speed of these detection devices. A full range of technological alternatives is being employed. We are looking forward to a major breakthrough in the near future.

Turning now to aging aircraft, the Aloha Airlines Boeing 737 accident a year ago focused national and

international attention on the issue of aging aircraft. The FAA had been studying the issue since the 1970s and already has strong airworthiness rules for aging aircraft. But, we are determined to give in-depth treatment to the issue to see areas that might be strengthened.

Thus, the ATA/AIA task force has been extremely helpful to the FAA in changing airworthiness directives to insure safety. The FAA already has begun the internal rulemaking procedures required to make more than 160 modifications on three types of Boeing aircraft. The modifications were recommended by the industry task force and will be the subject of industry service bulletins and FAA airworthiness directives. Boeing has also begun the process of producing the service bulletins that will spell out how to do the recommended work. Other industry task forces are developing similar programs for aircraft of McDonnell Douglas and others.

In addition, the FAA has increased its research budget for work related to aging aircraft and continues to add inspectors to conduct maintenance surveillance over the growing airline fleet. The President's 1990 budget request will bring the FAA's commitment to approximately $10 million for aging aircraft research

and proposes to add 400 safety inspectors and support personnel to the agency's ranks.

Whether the issue is expanding the infrastructure or deciding how and when to retrofit aging aircraft, we must work together to realize our shared vision.

American 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. Together we can bring that same ingenuity to bear on the continuing challenges ahead. The results of our efforts can be as wonderful and as dramatic for Americans in future years, as the breakthroughs by the bold innovators of long ago. I am confident that with the creative spirit and energy of private enterprise to help us meet the challenges ahead, we will succeed.

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E.H. HARRIMAN AWARDS CEREMONY
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MAY 31, 1989

It is a pleasure to be here. I'm also pleased that Gil Carmichael, Administrator Designate of FRA is here. Today is a very special occasion for everyone in the rail business and for our passenger public.

Before I was appointed Deputy Secretary of Transportation, I had been the Deputy Maritime Administrator and Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission. In dealing with the sea, I of course had experience with intermodal transportation. Rail is a vital link in that intermodal network, and I am familiar with the men and women who had the courage and vision to bridge a continent with the economic lifeline of railroads.

I know that the words 'rail transportation' and 'safety' have been linked with the name "Harriman" for a long time.

Many of you know that in 1905, E.H. Harriman raced across the country breaking speed records and making headlines. Alice Roosevelt was on board the Harriman express, so like all good fathers, President Roosevelt sent the great railroad magnate the following message:

"Please take care of my daughter on your train." To which Harriman replied: "You run the country -- I'll run the railroads." And he did.

Within thirty years, Governor Harriman would break his father's rail speed record, spanning the United States in 57 hours. Like his father, he made a habit of doing things first.

Governor Harriman was the first to propose serving meals on trains and the first to hire stewards to cater to passenger comforts. He went on to play a distinguished

role in the leadership of the railroad industry and the political history of our times -- but Governor Harriman always maintained his interest in rail safety. Along with his brother Roland, he sponsored the awards we confer here today.

This ceremony is a tribute to their effort, and marks the 58th time that leaders in the rail industry have gathered to rededicate themselves to safety.

Our meeting this year takes place in the midst of a remarkable safety record: The past four years have been the safest in railroad history. In more ways than one, safety is no accident.

The achievements of the last decade did not happen by themselves. Since passage of the Staggers Act in 1980, the railroad industry has invested billions of dollars in railway track and equipment -- and it shows. Accidents caused by track, signal, and equipment failure have declined 75 percent. This is certainly good news, but there are other problems that cannot be overlooked.

In 1988, 'human factors' became the leading cause of rail accidents -- and the most dangerous human factor may be alcohol and drug abuse. As we sift through the wreckage of several recent rail mishaps, there is more and more evidence that substance abuse by key employees played a significant causal role. This only reflects unfortunately what is happening on a larger scale within our country. Drug abuse is a national tragedy. It permeates every aspect of our society; every walk of life. So when I talk about the subject, I am not singling out transportation workers.

To the contrary, rail labor and management deserve a great deal of praise for Operation Red Block and other voluntary prevention programs. Certainly, it is preferable that people recognize their drug abuse problems and seek help before tragedy occurs in the workplace or elsewhere. Unfortunately, not everyone is responsive, and other measures are necessary to ensure the drug-free transportation system this country expects -- and deserves.

Transportation is, after all, a public trust. Our recently issued drug-testing requirements for the industry seek to preserve and safeguard that trust. The Supreme Court has recognized the constitutionality of the Federal Railroad Administration's rules mandating pre-employment, reasonable cause, and post-accident drug and alcohol testing.

The purpose of these tests is not to 'catch' people. The primary purpose is deterrence. Drug abuse is a debilitating personal problem, for which individuals need help through counseling and rehabilitation. Drug testing itself can be conducted, we believe, with care and regard for the dignity of employees. Sensitivity and safety are not mutual enemies -- they are mutual objectives.

Stronger laws and regulations are taking effect to help us meet these objectives. The FRA is pledged to vigorous enforcement of the Rail Safety and Improvement Act of 1988, which granted powerful new enforcement tools, including: civil penalties for violation of safety regulations; suspension or disqualification of individuals from safety-sensitive positions; strengthened certification requirements for locomotive operators; and the ability to penalize tampering with safety equipment. Implementation of the Act is proceeding, and forms an important part of the Bush Administration's transportation policy.

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locomotive operators; and the ability to penalize tampering with safety equipment. Implementation of the Act is proceeding, and forms an important part of the Bush Administration's transportation policy.

The FRA also has begun training field inspectors for their new responsibilities. For Fiscal Year 1990, the Administration has requested a 10 percent increase in safety inspection staff.

I am confident that these important initiatives will contribute to significant further improvements in rail safety.

Higher safety standards can and must be achieved. It is time to demonstrate to the American people that we have the vision and boldness that characterized the Harrimans. We can break records for safety, just as E.H. Harriman and Governor Averell Harriman shattered barriers of time and motion.

As we honor the railroads and individuals who achieved outstanding safety records during the past year, we must renew our commitment to work together -- government, labor, and management -- to give the American people a safe and drug-free rail system.

Every day, shippers and the traveling public put their trust in our railways and those who operate them. I

look forward to the day when more freight is sent safely and efficiently by rail -- and when more Americans choose to experience the beauty of this country as seen from the window of a train.

Thank you.

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