

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY  
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ASIAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
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Good evening -- and thank you, Robert, for that kind introduction. It is a pleasure to be here in Dallas to join this distinguished group.

As you know, I speak before many groups. Some are professional groups; others are political. But, tonight, well, tonight is different. Tonight is very special. Tonight, I feel that I have come home.

For me, this evening is more than just a gathering. Tonight is like a family meeting. Tonight is an opportunity to speak to friends about things that I know with my head and feel with my heart. Tonight, I would like to talk about my responsibilities at the Department of Transportation after a year as Deputy Secretary, and also about our community, what we have accomplished and how, and about how I believe our future as a community can and must be.

As President Bush said in his State of the Union address, the Berlin wall has fallen and and peace and democracy is breaking out all over. The 1990s will be a decade of far-reaching change -- perhaps more than in any decade since World War II.

You might say the world is shifting gears, and transportation is no exception. In coming years, we're going to be making greater demands on our transportation system. We're going to be asking it to do more for America.

At the DOT, we are picking up speed to meet this demand. For fiscal year 1991, we will have approximately 106,000 employees, with a requested budget of \$26.9 billion. These are your tax dollars at work, so let me take a few minutes to highlight where these dollars are going at the DOT.

The Federal Aviation Administration is responsible for controlling the air traffic in our skies. We are in the process of updating the National Air Traffic Control System to meet the need for the latest in electronics -- and ensure that the best air traffic controllers keep up with the demand for air travel. We are also funding the latest research on explosive detection devices to increase security in the skies.

The Federal Highway Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration lead our efforts to meet highway infrastructure and safety needs. Federal aid to highways is at record levels, and the budget to enforce drunk driving laws has been doubled.



The U.S. Coast Guard is also a part of the Department of Transportation. It continues to play a crucial role in keeping our coastal waters safe, and will spend over \$700 million alone this year to support drug interdiction programs.

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration is requesting \$2.3 billion this year in support of transit programs in the country's major urban areas -- a 47 percent increase over last year. Given the congestion of our roadways, there is a strong need to maintain the systems we have and focus federal dollars on the most cost-effective new projects.

The Federal Railroad Administration devotes most of its efforts to ensuring railroad safety, and funding research and development on rail technology. These are exciting technologies on the horizon, particularly with the potential use of magnetic levitation on high speed trains and monorail systems.

Finally, the Maritime Administration is responsible for promoting the U.S. flag fleet. The Department is in the process of reviewing ways to revitalize the merchant fleet."

It is not an overstatement to say that I am the Deputy Secretary for Trains, Ships, Boats, Cars and Planes. In the

past year, the Department has been very busy and many of our issues are front page news.

Our very first crisis was the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, by a terrorist bomb. This act of terrorism reminded all of us how vigilant we must be about airline security.

Perhaps no issue has been more emotional. I went to Lockerbie to help speed up the return of personal belongings to the relatives of the victims. On my trip, I was so deeply impressed by the compassion of the people of Lockerbie -- their courage in restoring normalcy to their lives, their determined sleuthing to find the source of the bomb and their efforts to ease the pain for the relatives of Pan Am 103 victims. The bravery of the relatives of Pan Am 103 victims have been heart-wrenching.

The threat of aviation terrorism is not over. It is a long-standing problem, a complicated problem. It is a priority within the Department and the Administration as long as we are here. It will require a unified commitment by government, industry, and the traveling public.

Another major incident last year was the grounding of the Exxon Valdez. The oil spill in Alaska is the most significant environmental disaster this nation has ever



faced. It is a tragedy and an assault on our environment.

Ten million gallons of heavy crude went into the water within three hours. AS bad as it was, it could have been four times worse if the United States Coast Guard, working with Alaskan authorities, other military organizations, and the Exxon company, had not safely unloaded 40 million more gallons on the tanker.

I went to Alaska in August of last year to check on the clean-up process. The question uppermost on everyone's mind is: What is the long-term result of this disaster? I think despite all our efforts, mother nature will be the best cleaning agent. We are virtually on the cutting edge of technology in learning how to deal with a spill of this magnitude.

The expertise gained in this spill is useful in the future. At the same time, the industry must develop contingency plans that make sense, that are financially sound, and work. More important than technology, however, is the human factor. An overwhelming percentage of accidents occur because of human failure. The industry and we as a nation must work harder to ensure better training and preparation of our seagoing labor force. The Administration has submitted to Congress comprehensive oil spill liability legislation and

ratification of the international protocols. We are hopeful of its passage.

Our Department also played a key role in responding to the earthquake in Northern California last October. The benefits of public education and community preparedness -- as well as the stringent building code in the State -- were apparent in the low number of casualties.

But two disastrous structural failures did occur in the collapse of Interstate 880 in Oakland and the fall of a 50-foot span of the Bay Bridge. The DOT is taking a fresh look at construction standards for all modes of transportation in light of this experience.

So, it has been a full agenda. This year, the Department will continue to monitor the state of airline competition, review high-speed rail options, and the maritime industry. People often ask me how my first year was. One thing that I have found so challenging in my position is that the issues are so visible. Decisions must be made both quickly and in the public eye. I think it is this visibility, as well as the need for speed, that makes it particularly critical for decision-makers to base their actions on sound public policy.

My work in government has brought me into mainstream issues -- issues that touch the lives of all



Americans. For me, being in government does not mean just holding an office and enjoying its perks. For me, being in government means a commitment to public service, contributing ourselves to ensuring a better America. Given the array of tough issues, having a philosophy and willingness to make tough choices is the key.

I believe that we as a community have strongly held views and convictions: Faith in the family, faith in the free enterprise system, respect for the proper role of the federal government, preservation of individual choice, and traditional self-reliance. These are values which have stood us in good stead as we make our way in American society.

As a group, we have the highest family income, the highest personal income, the highest scholastic aptitude test scores, the highest rates of college attendance, and among the highest level of representation in the nation's finest universities, relative to our numbers, of all groups in America.

Indeed, we have much to be proud of. Even as we struggle, we must be vigilant about opportunities -- opportunities for Asian-Americans s-- opportunities for all Americans in our university system.

In the last few days, an Asian-American has been appointed the Chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. I applaud this appointment and hope that he will work to eliminate the existence of implicit or explicit quotas against Asian-American students in Berkeley's admissions.

As you know, for the past 25 years, many universities, in an attempt to create a "diversities" entering class, try to admit students based on national population ratios. Because Asian-Americans comprise only 1.5 percent of the national population and in most cases, are admitted in higher ratios, we are considered an "over-represented" minority subject to caps on our admissions.

This is clearly unfair to Asian-Americans. Admissions should be based on merit. This is a basic American principle. We must be vigilant on this issue. Nothing is more sacred than preserving opportunity for our young people.

As many of you may have heard, 1990 is the year of the census. The Department of Commerce is hiring people to take the Census. It is very important for our community to participate in this count. The Commerce Department is interested in hiring individuals with bilingual skills. The wage is above minimum wage. The



hours are flexible. For those of you who can spare the time, I would urge you to get involved in being a census taker. Mr. Robert Hsueh, Census Minority Advisory Council Member, has been extremely helpful to the Department of Commerce's promotional efforts.

As I end tonight, I would like to convey a few personal thoughts before this illustrious group. We live in a wonderful country with abundant opportunities. It is a land in which we define our own limitations. Our heritage is our strength. Our philosophy and our values our guiding principles. WE should be very proud of our heritage and proud of what we have accomplished. In our journeys, we should also remember our fellow Asian-Americans and be ready to lend a helping hand. In unity, there is strength.

As you can tell, I feel very strongly about the duty not only of Asian-Americans, but of all Americans to become part of the American mainstream. For me, my life is summed up in the life of one man. His life is not an unusual life. In many ways, it is a typically American life. And yet to me, it is a very special one.

As a young man, he saw his native country torn apart, first in war, then in revolution. He began to dream of a land of opportunity beyond the sea. So, without much

financial resources, he came to America. It took him three years to save enough to send for his family.

He was a hard worker. He took two full time jobs while attending graduate school during the evenings and weekends to obtain his advanced degree. When he quite the two jobs to form his own company, each firm hired three people to replace him.

Still, he always had time for his children. His third grade daughter knew no English when she came here, so each day, she would copy everything on the blackboard at school and each night, he would translate and teach her the daily lessons.

I remember how I used to reverse the D's and B's and the P's and the Q's, and how he had to struggle to make sense of my notebook. I remember his patience, his strength, and his love and that of my mother. He is a respected and accomplished entrepreneur now, and a father of whom I have always been very proud. Without this land of peace and opportunity, he could never have built all that he has and his children could never have grown to be what they are today.

We as Asian-Americans have so much to give to America. Our heritage of moderation, of self-harmony and of rejecting quick gains and passing fads for the long-term good is just what is so often needed . . . and



so often missing . . . from our American life. When I think of what America gave to my father and my family, I can't help believing that we owe it to America to give in return more freely of those qualities.

I said at the outset that I think of this as a family gathering. Our family owes so much to this land. To its decency. To its values. To its opportunities. We Asian-Americans should resolve to share more with America our values, the values and our pride which enabled us to achieve such advancement in America.

This is our duty as Asian-Americans. I know that a great deal of work went into making this gathering what it is tonight. I want to thank all of you for your support and enthusiasm.

Thank you again for letting me be with you tonight.