

Opening Remarks

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Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for attending the 8th Annual Conference on U.S.-Japan Cooperation in Transportation.

First of all, I would like to express my condolences to all those who have suffered as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, and even more recently, the loss of American Airlines Flight 587 on Monday. These are truly difficult times, and I would like to offer my sympathies to the American people who have endured two tragedies in such a short time.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks, the United States, in cooperation with many countries including Japan, launched a war on terrorism. A great number of governments and related organizations throughout the world are taking a wide array of measures to prevent terrorist attacks in the future, and they have begun to implement those measures to ensure the public's safety. Initiatives to ensure safety and security in the field of transport, including aviation, rail and shipping, are essential. Bilateral meetings (including those between U.S. and Japanese authorities) and international forums will have roles in crafting and implementing those measures. Based on our experience in U.S.-Japan cooperation, it is my hope that the Japan International Transport Institute may also play a role in increasing understanding and awareness between our transport sectors.

While the intensive fight continues against terrorism, today we hold this conference with the theme "Realizing the Full Potential of ITS: Mobility, Safety and Availability" as scheduled, in light of the significance of conducting business as usual. Needless to say, automobiles are the most familiar and convenient modern means for transport and travel, and are expected to remain so in the future. In order to make road transport safer, more efficient and more comfortable, ITS projects are being studied and field-tested by the public and private sectors in both the U.S. and Japan. Today we have assembled several leaders in the field to share their views, to highlight new initiatives, and to discuss potential obstacles in realizing Intelligent Transportation Systems.

I sincerely hope that this conference will provide a forum to exchange views between the U.S. and Japan, and thereby further the realization of effective ITS in both countries. I also expect that this occasion will lead to innovations and closer cooperation between us not only in road transport but also in other transport sectors as well. Thank you .