

It is quite incongruous to see a \$1.5 million airplane with \$200,000 of avionics equipment, operating at speeds close to mach 1, at altitudes up to 45,000 feet, having to be tied to a system that is 30 years old and dying fast. It is so far behind the times that it is virtually useless.

I am aware of proposed changes in flight service configurations. There will be a consolidation of facilities with increased efficiencies but without significant improvement in basic service offered. The cost of providing this same service is going to be slightly less but it is no better. I feel it is time we take a hard look, particularly from the FAA's point of view, at just what is the best way to present information.

I can give you another example right here at your own National Airport. I have navigated all across the ocean with a little bubble sextant. I have been able to hit the Azores right on the button after 7 hours of flight where errors can accumulate very rapidly. I have navigated all over the United States using the existing system without getting lost.

Last night I landed at National Airport and I was a blubbering idiot because I didn't know how to get off the runway to the parking area.

I couldn't see the correct taxiways, find the turnoffs. I didn't know where I was; I couldn't see other aircraft, and obstructions—it is ridiculous. It is absolutely ridiculous, that I should be completely lost on the ground.

This typifies the inconsistency of our system—we are able to operate very sophisticated aircraft systems in the air but cannot begin to handle the basic ground problems.

I do want to say one more thing. Although I would like to amplify the vital role of the air traffic controller, I think Mr. Bailey has done an adequate job. I think Mr. Bailey understands the controllers' problems. I don't have the eloquence that he has demonstrated and I don't think it is necessary for me to continue on that vein.

I do implore you, gentlemen, to take the opportunity to find out personally what the problems really are. Go out and talk to the people who are living with the problems—the pilots, the controllers, and the flight service specialists. Only in this way will you really understand the problems of air safety.

I would be delighted to see you organize some informal working group of operational people to assist in gathering information about safety for you. I know of many controllers, pilots, and accident researchers who would be delighted to present the facts as they see them to you without bias and without possible recriminations. I would be delighted to serve in any capacity in gathering information so that you can make better decisions or make more clear decisions based upon facts.

It is my sincere hope that the testimony I have given you will be germane to the hearings you have been holding for the past 7 months. It is true that we need more money to evolve a better air traffic system. We can spend the money to make the system better or we can pay the liability claims for accidents. I think we have a choice. I think we all—the Congress and the American public—would like to go to heaven without dying. We don't want to pay the money for a better system, yet we want a better system. I think we need to get down to the grassroots