

## THE MINERAL INDUSTRY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

by

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The sessions thus far at this impressive conference have covered with marked effectiveness the environmental aspects of mining and the mineral industry as they relate to land, water, and air, and to matters of safety.

From what has been said thus far, all of us have been given much to think about as we ponder the quality of the environment in which we live, the quality of the environment in which we work, and the quality of the environment we leave to succeeding generations.

But for mining there is more to the total environmental picture than land, air, and water quality. More too than safety. Perhaps the most significant element of all in this is what I would call the environment of government policy.

Why do I say this? I say it because of the extent to which our whole national existence literally depends on a healthy, growing minerals industry.

The minerals industry, more than any other, underpins our entire economy. From this industry comes all of our raw materials and fuel, the foundation stones of every other industry which exists today to support not only the defenses of the free world, but also the very standard of living we in America have come so much to enjoy, and indeed to take so much for granted.

This Nation has been well blessed by a Gracious Providence in the quantity and diversity of our minerals, our coal, our petroleum, and the rest. Yet, our resources are not without limit--and our capacity to produce them can easily be jeopardized. This very week, in testimony before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Mineral Resources--The Honorable Hollis M. Dole--had this to say. While we are not running out of mineral resources, "there is every indication that we are short-changing the science and mineral technology needed for their discovery and profitable production and processing at a time of widening world competition and increasing demand."

We cannot afford to "short-change" (if I may borrow an expression from Secretary Dole) any part of our total responsibility as a Nation

for the development of a healthy growing minerals industry. This industry must grow and flourish in such a manner that it truly continues to serve the whole National interest. And that goes beyond the business of locating, extracting and processing our mineral resources. It includes a responsible concern for the quality of our environment. It includes a realistic look at the competitive posture of this industry vis-a-vis the rest of the world. It includes a dispassionate look at our military defense needs and their dependence on a strong domestic minerals industry. It includes that added and essential environmental quality I referred to earlier--a Governmental Policy Environment which assures a delicate balancing of many interests--all in the National interest.

Many and varied concerns command the attention of many people, many groups, as they view the mining industry's role in 20th Century America. But no one of these concerns can be viewed in a vacuum. No one can be permitted to run at its own speed on a track which is parallel to the others, and oblivious to the others.

We need, as I said a moment ago, a delicate balancing of many interests--all in the National interest.

In short, we need a comprehensive National minerals policy.

Efforts to develop a National minerals policy date back to the Paley Commission in 1952 and to 1954 when President Eisenhower established the Cabinet Committee on Minerals Policy. Legislation seeking to develop a National minerals policy has been introduced in the 91st Congress by Senator Gordon Allott of Colorado. We in the mining industry hope for early hearings on this bill. Action in this respect is long overdue.

Perhaps now our speakers can give us some insight into how each of them views the minerals industry and its relationship to the general public within the context of the theme of this conference.