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Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers

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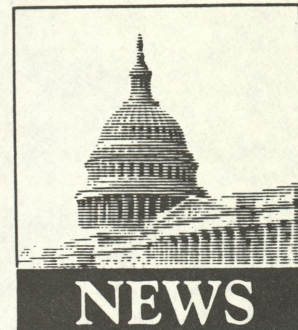
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Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



FAA GROUND BREAKING SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1998 HONOLULU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This is an important day for Hawaii. An important day in many respects.

As we break new ground, we commit ourselves to a new facility which will bring all air traffic control systems and personnel to a single location. It will be a state-of-the-art facility, with the latest equipment and technology. It will provide Hawaii with the important tools to carry us into the new century.

As we break new ground, we commit ourselves to our number one industry - tourism, and our number one defender - the military -- both of which are dependent on the safe, efficient, and coordinated operation of all of Hawaii's runways and airports. In 1997, the Diamond Head facility directed 470,100 operations which includes landings and take-offs. In 1997, the Honolulu Airport Traffic tower directed 356,300 operations making it busier than the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. Hawaii is very dependent on a healthy aviation system.

As we break new ground, we commit ourselves to providing our residents and our visitors with the highest level of public safety and public confidence. Our air traffic controllers provide a critical service -- it is oftentimes a tireless and thankless job. To all who are present today, please accept my commendation and appreciation for a job very well done. This is coming from a frequent flyer who appreciates your contribution to air safety. During the last three years, I made approximately 25 trips to Hawaii, and I would estimate 400 hours in the air.

As we break new ground, we commit ourselves upon the opening of this new \$45 million facility in 2001, to restore old grounds, lands that have special meaning for many in Hawaii -- Diamond Head Crater. The FAA has maintained control of a portion of Diamond Head since 1958. It served as the site for a critical public service. It is most appropriate that on this 40th year, we announce our intention to return this sacred site to the State of Hawaii.

Over 200 years ago, it is said that King Kamehameha I held a formal ceremony at one of the sacred Diamond Head heiaus to celebrate his success in bringing the Islands under one rule.