

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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U.S. TRAVEL AND TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD

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MEETING

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FRIDAY,
MARCH 31, 2017

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The Board met in the U.S. Department of Commerce,
Room 3407, 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC, at 9:00 a.m., John Sprouls, Chair,
presiding.

PRESENT:

JOHN SPROULS, Universal Parks and Resorts, Chair
MARGARET MCKEOUGH, Metropolitan Washington
Airports Authority, Vice Chair
GEORGE AGUEL, Visit Orlando
HELANE BECKER, Cowen and Company
TODD DAVIDSON, Travel Oregon
BRAD DEAN, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
FRED DIXON, NYC & Company
KURT EKERT, Carlson Wagonlit Travel
ELLIOTT FERGUSON, Destination DC
MIKE GALLAGHER, CityPASS
ADAM GOLDSTEIN, Hipmunk
JAMES HAGEN, South Dakota Department of Tourism
NICK HENTSCHEL, AmericanTours International
ADAM MEDROS, TripAdvisor

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STEVE MORRISSEY, United Airlines
MARY MOTSENBOCKER, International Tourism
Marketing, Inc.
SUSAN PRESBY, Mt. Washington Cog Railway
OLGA RAMUDO, Express Travel
SHERRY RUPERT, American Indian Alaska Native
Tourism Association
GARY SCHLUTER, Rocky Mountain Holiday Tours, LLC
WILLIAM TALBERT, Greater Miami Convention &
Visitors Bureau
DENISE THEVENOT, Louisiana Tax Free Shopping
ERNEST WOODEN, JR., Los Angeles Tourism and
Convention Board

ALSO PRESENT:

WILBUR ROSS, Secretary of Commerce*
KENNETH E. HYATT, Acting Under Secretary for
International Trade, U.S. Department of
Commerce
ISABEL HILL, Director, National Travel and
Tourism Office, U.S. Department of Commerce
ROGER DOW, President and CEO, U.S. Travel
Association
CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON, President and CEO, Brand
USA
THOMAS S. ENGLE, U.S. Department of State
MATT HAYDEN, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
JOE HOLECKO, U.S. Department of Commerce
CLAIRE KELLY, U.S. Department of State
TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, U.S. Department of the Interior

* Via telephone

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(9:12 a.m.)

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Good morning all. Nice to see so many friends and colleagues from around the industry. What a great celebration of Todd's role a couple days ago at the U.S. travel event.

Note that there is an empty seat next to me. If you have been tracking, there are two Executive Orders coming out or have come out today. And as we speak the Secretary is on a television broadcast that comes forth. So he's being interviewed on a set of stations over the next little bit of time.

And therefore, he will -- we're trying to organize, if we can make this work, that he will call in in about an hour. But he's literally going from television to television. He's at the White House this morning back and forth. So he apologizes.

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And therefore, we will have to try to help you go through the agenda here. And try to be flexible as we go through this. But let me start and say welcome. It is always nice to be at a TTAB meeting.

I think we are at a very important time as we transition from administration to administration. And I think the task of the TTAB is now as important as it ever has been in terms of really framing what are priorities for this administration.

I think there's a recognition of the importance of the sector, of its connections with job creations. And we really need your help in being precise around what should be the priorities be of this administration.

And again, I'm certainly not going to speak for the Secretary. But my operating assumption is in an hour when he calls he's going to say what are the priorities? What are the priorities for the Department of Commerce working

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with our colleagues in the inner agency to, again, promote inbound travel while keeping the country safe.

And that's that sort of conversation that we have all been in for many years together in many years. How do we make this country welcoming? How do we welcome folks in? How do we keep us safe? How do we promote the country? How are we on the visa side? How do we improve the entry experience?

And I think that's the conversation. And again, I think this Board needs to come back, and I would say by June, the tasks should be, by June, very clear priorities.

And I think the number that we suggested was five. But if it's three to five -- but it's a very actionable set of recommendations. So that's sort of point number one.

Point number two, I think it makes sense to use the strategy and use that as a vehicle to also educate that conversation. And that is to

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say, you know, we're at the midpoint of the strategy.

And there is an executive summary. It's only three or four pages which articulates the 100 million visitor goal by the end of 2021. Articulates a set of different strategies to promote, enable customer experience, research, and cooperate across the U.S. government.

And I think this group should also take a look at that and think about the goal. And I think if you've been tracking, as many of us have, you know, we were on that compound annual growth rate to hit the 100 million. And there is some data that suggests '16 will be flat which sort of takes us -- and we're down. I try to be optimistic about it.

But that sort of puts pressure on hitting 100 million by the end of 2021. And so it at least then asks the question, so what do we think of the goal?

And I think the private sector, you

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know, this group is beautifully positioned to say let's bring our expertise and our advice about the goal itself.

And I'm not, don't hear me saying back away from the goal. It's think about the goal. What are we thinking about? And then, again, look at each of those pieces of the strategy. That seems like a very appropriate way to frame the priorities.

And that's probably -- Isabel, do you want to add anything?

MS. HILL: No. I think that it's, you know, again, that strategy was done five years ago. The world has changed substantially. And is changing at the moment both in our markets and with the value of the dollar.

So I think that grounding this in the current conditions of the marketplace, looking very carefully -- and I think Brand USA does a fabulous job. We will be coming out with a new forecast.

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And Brand USA does a great job in looking at what does that mean for each of our markets? What do we have to do to get to that goal?

So I think that kind of input to that goal -- looking specifically at where do we need to drive business so that we can then use that strategy both across government and connecting with the private sector with the destinations in terms of driving priorities for how we engage together. And where we focus increasingly precious resources.

And I think we have to underscore the fact that we have to be zen like in our approach in terms of how we apply resources. Looking at this strategy, what is it that is critical to do? Then what is it that is nice to do? What are the essential things that we have to have in place in order to succeed?

And then building out from there so that we understand what the core of what we need in place is so that we can continue to ensure that we

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advocate for those within the budget process, that we understand exactly why we need them in place.

And if there are things that we don't need, we should know that too. Did that make sense?

CHAIR SPROULS: Question, so when you talk about coming up with the recommendations by June, when you talking about reevaluating the national tourism strategy, is it that the Secretary understands the importance of tourism, understands there's a strategy and things that need to be relooked at?

Or are you saying that this Board needs to help him understand that that's what he should be thinking?

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Good question. Again, I don't want to speak for him. But I do sit and say that we're at the beginning of a new administration. And we have a strategy that is literally at the midpoint.

It's a strategy that ends the year after

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this administration finishes. Maybe not. And therefore, I think part of the thinking is to say taking a look at the strategy now is an opportunity for this administration to put its mark on the strategy.

And I think that, for me, is value creation. For the industry it makes it this administration's. And that's part of the thinking. So that's how I would answer the question. That's how I would answer the question.

And the priority piece for me is just he is extraordinarily action oriented, extraordinarily action oriented. And it's just, again, let us be very precise on the USG side around, you know, where do have to focus?

Because there's a lot going on. And there are resource constraints, as Isabel said, in different part of the government. And we've just got to be razor focused.

And we haven't done that in the last couple -- you know, we haven't sort of stepped back

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and said, all right, you know, we've been going along with this strategy working very well, et cetera. We haven't done that step back, you know, where we --

MS. HILL: Brazil was looking really good a few years ago.

CHAIR SPROULS: So what do the folks on the committee think?

MEMBER EKERT: So I think the suggestion is good. I do think there's a more immediate opportunity. And that is that with some of the Executive Orders around travel, inbound travel to the United States, we ought to form a very near term committee to look at how we reduce the friction.

Not questioning the policy. But whether it's visa access through immigration points -- how do we make sure that that's frictionless as possible? Because the Executive Order on top of some of the constraints that are already in the system from an infrastructure

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standpoint are going to challenge the growth substantially by itself.

I don't think we should wait six months to do that given the state of things.

CHAIR SPROULS: I agree. But I think maybe there's a threshold question before that which is to ask the Secretary to help us understand does the administration embrace the concept that, while security is paramount, that inbound tourism is also something that they embrace and support.

I mean, for our industry, if the President came out and said we're keeping our country safe, security is paramount -- but for those people that should be coming in, we want to be a welcoming country for tourists.

I don't think we need a committee. I think that alone would solve the problem. And I could be wrong.

MEMBER EKERT: I fundamentally disagree with you.

CHAIR SPROULS: That's fine.

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MEMBER EKERT: There's so much friction in the system regardless of the Executive Order. We should try to mitigate that so when the orders come out we're helping the government shape the policy so that it is as pro-growth and pro-positive for entry as possible.

Otherwise things come out and then we're dealing with the consequences without having influence in the decision or the way it was, the language.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: It also could be an and, right? It could be an and in that communication that we want to welcome legitimate travelers. And we should make certain we're doing everything we can to make the experience as welcome -- it might be an and, right? And I think that's something that --

CHAIR SPROULS: No, I totally agree. But I think until we know and until -- not so much even our industry. But until everyone in the world hears that we are welcoming for those that we would

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like to have come in, you know, everything else that we do is going to be below the surface.

MEMBER WOODEN: Again, I have a point of view that I think we're probably saying the same thing. That the real objective here is to deal with the sentiment that we sense from the global traveler.

The tactics about dealing with that sentiment, the tactics against that strategy might be, and probably appropriately should be, multifaceted including very direct things in the short term and augmented by more positive sort of affirmations of our welcome mat from the White House and others.

So I think it's part of the, I think the committee would do well to think about what is the main strategy? What's the problem we're trying to solve?

And then we can come up with a multiplicity of strategies, of tactics to work on.

MEMBER RAMUDO: John and Ken, I think

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Ken made a very, very valid point. From what we have seen this administration wants to take ownership. I think we need to help them take ownership of our efforts moving forward. How do we achieve security and how are we welcoming at the same time?

The strategy maybe needs to be changed. We might recommend what we need to do for them to achieve this.

CHAIR SPROULS: Roger, you got any thoughts?

MR. DOW: A lot. Thanks John, I totally agree. One, great to be here. We've got a terrific relationship with Commerce that's been building on. And TTAB has been a great factor in making that happen. A chance to build this with a business person in this role as Secretary is very important.

I know almost everyone in the room. If you don't, I represent the U.S. Travel Association and all aspects of our industry. There's several

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things.

One, if you look at the numbers -- and I think this is a great chart that's in your book. It really tells it as clear as can be. You know, we've gone from -- if you look at 2002 after September 11th, we were at 45 million visitors and \$100 billion.

2015 we're at 77 million visitors and \$250 billion. This is serious, serious money, serious jobs. When you look at it, it's our number two export and it's the number one service export, \$250 billion.

The nice thing about it, travel tourism, is 25 percent of all the growth of exports in the past couple years has come because of travel and tourism. And a \$90 billion surplus.

So this is all really important. I think John, you've said it well. We've got to have, you know, the welcome experience. People have choices all around the world. And just like, you know, five restaurants and you've got lots of

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choices.

And so this whole thing that's going on with perception, it could become a problem. We had Terrell Davis, a football player. So I was talking to him and I said, boy these concussions are a real problem from some of these hits these days. And Terrell said no, no, no, it's not those big hits. He said it's the tap, tap, tap, tap, tap from when I'm high school, college, pros, thousands and thousands of times of just getting these little hits.

So we have to make sure we don't let that tap, tap, tap, tap that's going on around the world. And the media, you know, if you look at the media in the world their hair is on fire over this.

I mean Ernie just shared with me, just the other day they had the Paris-London Business Welcome Project. And I don't think the French get along with anybody. And here they are, they're sensing blood in the water. And they're saying we're going to go for it as is every country around.

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So I think there's a great opportunity.

I totally agree, I think our philosophy has to be, from every administration but the President, you know, we're closed to terrorists but we're open to legitimate travelers. And we want more of them.

I agree with what Kurt just said, the entry process, going through security, we have to look at efficiency. We've got to make sure we don't let it fall through the cracks as we, you know, ramp up vetting and things like that. We've got to make sure whether it's people, technology, whatever, we can't have that barricade.

Brand USA, my friend Chris Thompson who you'll hear from in a minute, has a tremendous role to play here. After September 11th, the industry got together and raised \$15 million and said come to America, travel.

And I think there's an opportunity now that we have Brand USA to really, for them to step out again, and all of us, you know, saying that

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message.

Another thing that's important, I think, is preserving open skies. If I really look at it, we've talked about it. Years ago no one was talking about traveling from China. It was 400,000 or 500,000 six or seven years ago. Now 2.5 million heading for 4 million.

What's going to happen is no one's talking about Africa right now. Ten years from now we'll be sitting in this room saying how do we get more from Africa? And that's the way the world works.

And our airlines aren't serving these areas of Southeast Asia, you know, the India, Africa. So we need to keep our open skies agreement. And understand that despite the rhetoric you're hearing, this is good for everybody. A rising tide helps all boats.

MEMBER MORRISSEY: There are other views on that issue.

MR. DOW: I understand. And I

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appreciate the other views on that issue. Let me finish. So also, investing in our infrastructure, I think, is so important.

And what happens with infrastructure is -- the message the administration has put out is so big. And there's an opportunity with infrastructure to with a small local charge raise the PFC to fund that without taxpayers. And I think we could move the airport part of it along very fast.

So in conclusion I think we've got a great opportunity here. This TTAB is so important. We've got a fabulous vision. And I think they can take it to the next level.

You said five priorities. I'd say welcome, welcome, welcome is number one. Number two, secure and efficient. Find ways to make sure we're extraordinarily secure but efficient.

Number three, a visa waiver program. Best program in the world with the lousiest name. Make sure we don't throw that under the bus.

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Infrastructure, and lastly, open skies.

So that's my thoughts. Thank you very much. Thanks for inviting me to be here. Appreciate it. Thanks John.

CHAIR SPROULS: Thank you. Chris, why don't you give us your thoughts?

MR. THOMPSON: Well again, thanks for allowing me to be here. I appreciate working with you all over the year. I think probably the biggest thing I would like to emphasize is that back when the Travel Promotion Act was passed, and that would be to create Brand USA -- but it created a public-private partnership with the United States government with Commerce being the lead of that relationship.

And I think that that probably is number one. And I would emphasize is that I can literally attribute everything that we've been able to do as Brand USA, everything we've able to do in partnership with our partners that are our destinations of our brands, to the passage of the

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Travel Promotion Act.

The creation of a national travel and tourism strategy, creation of the public-private partnership, our ability to be able to leverage U.S. government assets in market and in Washington with what the industry brings to the table as it relates to being able to promote the United States of America, communicate visa and entry policy, and really hold travel and tourism up in Washington and throughout the federal government with an awareness of it, as Roger said, as an export and as a positive balance of trade as it relates to the overall picture of trade -- the export being the experiences and the memories that the destinations and brands around this table create every day. That's the product that people can take home.

So I don't think it can be underestimated that Commerce's role in that regard. In the relationship we have a tourism policy council. So this national travel and tourism strategy that is now spread over at least

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nine federal agencies with a goal to welcome 100 million visitors, \$250 billion in spending, that strategy is driving everything that we're doing.

Everything that we do as it relates to trying to figure out how do we deploy our resources is tied to the numbers that we get from the National Travel and Tourism Office. And that our ability to analyze the markets and figure where do we have the greatest potential to get 100 million visitors and \$250 billion extend -- that is a critical role that the Department of Commerce has played from the very beginning.

And the Secretaries of Commerce have led that initiative and that effort. And have contributed to the fact that travel and tourism has an awareness in the DNA of the agencies in Washington, D.C. And throughout D.C., the greater D.C., travel and tourism is a significant contributor not only economically but diplomatically.

You can also look at some of the major

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initiatives that were accomplished. We just came off a Year of Tourism. That was an initiative that was created by our partners at the Department of Commerce with the China National Tourism Administration. And created a year where we were able to have the two countries come together, focus on policy, and figure out how do we grow our tourism industries to the benefit of both countries.

We're right now in the middle of a partnership Year of Tourism, a strategic and commercial dialogue that was created by our department, driven by our Department of Commerce with our national governments.

And now we have a year to look at how do we influence and change policies between our two countries to be able to grow the travel and tourism industries.

As Roger mentioned, you know, in India we have one of the most liberal open skies agreements. And it's one of the most under-utilized open skies agreements just because

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there's so much unrealized potential there.

And then not the least of which is you look at our national parks which are iconic. They're gems. They are things that everywhere in the world people recognize whether you've been here 100 times or you've been here and you've always dreamed about coming here.

And the private-public partnership served the 100 year anniversary in 2016 of those national parks. Because the federal government was going to raise that up high anyway. But we leveraged that around the world in ways that they would not have been able to do. Not the least of which producing an IMAX film that's now in 100 markets around the world telling the story of the United States through the filter of those parks.

So I think one thing -- other than I agree with what Roger says as far as policy issues that could move us forward in our ability to be able to grow our tourism industry.

But I think that what I would have to

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hope would be emphasized would be the contribution of this advisory board, the contribution of the Tourism Policy Council led by the Secretary of Commerce. And then the actualization of a national travel and tourism strategy that, as Ken said, that we're only halfway through that we have still very aggressive goals.

And the only way we're going to hit those goals is if we're in lock step with our federal partners. And we're able to leverage the limited resources. All of us have limited resources to actually to get to that end.

And everybody has a part and a play in that. And we all have a part. And we have a tremendous platform we've never had to be able to advance those goals. So that's what I would tell him about agenda.

MEMBER DAVIDSON: Thank you John. I'm going to kind of draft off of Ken's use of the word and earlier in this meeting. Because I do think it's an and.

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And I would absolutely put the pinnacle of your comment John that we know this administration has a key priority on national security as do we all. But whetted to that has to be the message that legitimate travelers are still welcome here.

So I think, you know, as our Chair, your desire to ask the Secretary to be communicating that message, you know, to the White House is number one.

I also think our inherent innate transition, regardless of who is in the White House and which parties, et cetera, there will be friction with the transition. Because people are changing and everybody is getting settled.

So I think the idea of having, you know, a task force of sorts that would look at those places where we could find friction in the system -- we'll want to take a look at that.

I know coming back from India we heard a lot from folks that the hiring freeze may impact

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the ability to process visas in an expeditious manner in that country. And yet, we know the demand for travel is there.

So how do we want to help this administration understand these friction points? So I think the short term friction idea is also there.

The plan review is prudent. We're halfway through. The world has changed. Macroeconomics are different than they were before. The strength of the dollar is different. We've all talked about that.

But it will be interesting to see how that changes now that the Fed is changing interest rates. You know, and how that's going to change the value of a dollar. And what we would anticipate doing as a result of that.

Market shifts, when the plan was written there was not ten visa validity in China. And there is today. I mean there's a lot of things have occurred.

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I think it's prudent that we take a look at the plan and make sure the priorities are the priorities. And part of that is taking a look at the goal.

As Chris just mentioned, the goal had two parts, 100 million and a quarter billion, you know, in terms of the economic impact. Excuse me, \$250 billion. Not a quarter billion, \$250 billion in economic impact. We've hit that number early.

So anyway, I just think that's prudent. And then the work that you've done as our Chair in establishing standing subcommittees that are doing the work and bringing recommendations and priorities forward.

So those would be my ands. But it has to start with, as you said, I think that message from the Secretary to the White House that the U.S. welcomes legitimate travel.

CHAIR SPROULS: And I think I know the answer. But we just want to know that the Secretary understands the impact this industry has

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around the country.

And that, you know, our goals are very much aligned with the goals of the administration. So I hate to use the word but it should be a no-brainer that this would be something that he would embrace.

And to the extent we can feel that from him, I think that makes all of our work both easier and more impactful. Because we understand that he understands where this industry is and how it supports what all of our goals to the extent they're aligned with the administration.

So that's really, in 15 minutes if we can get that. That gives us enough -- and I want to make certain you feel heard. Yes, go ahead.

MEMBER DEAN: One of the friction points would seem to be the budget. And from an outside perspective it would appear that Commerce is likely to see some level of budget cut.

Maybe I'll offer some guidance on as we think about making recommendations, how should we

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approach that? And I'm thinking specifically in the case of the research subcommittee. There is strong consensus that we need more science surveys.

But perhaps it might be a bit naive to recommend growing and spending more on that program. And maybe our focus needs to be simply advocating to maintain that.

So I don't want to take us into the weeds on that one recommendation. But could you offer a little bit of guidance and perspective on how you would recommend we approach the financial friction point?

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: That's a good question. I cannot talk about -- the budget is under development. And until May when the President's budget is announced, everything is still pre-decisional. Everything is pre-decisional. So there are no decisions made on the budget.

I think it is fair to assume that Commerce, that there will be resource constraints

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everywhere. And that the committee, I think, needs to be very thoughtful about how to be more efficient with the SIAD. Are there alternative ways of funding it?

Everything has to be on the table, right? Everything has to be on the table. Because we are, we just don't know where this is going to land. And we actually won't know where it lands until May. We just don't have a good feel for that.

You have top lines for the different departments which are out there and published, different top lines for the different departments. But how this all shakes out, it's too early to tell.

MEMBER TALBERT: I think we're all --

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Please go ahead.

MEMBER TALBERT: Bill Talbert from Miami. We're all in the messaging, agree to have the Secretary deliver the priority message about tourism. Security obviously too.

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But I think if there is not an articulation by the administration that tourism is important and we don't hear that message, we're going to assume it's not important.

CHAIR SPROULS: Ernie, do you have a question?

MEMBER WOODEN: Yes. The question I have about friction is that at some given point on this matter of the budget and the fiscal restraints that you and others are going to grabble with, is there a mechanism where the TTAB can help influence that decision making?

I'm asking that question from the perspective of what we believe very strongly, and I'm not even on the committee, that the value of the research that is driven out of this department and how it changes the way we go about our work, how important it is.

Is there a point in time where we can raise our hand and advocate for that? Or is that something that will be done without the TTAB's

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input?

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: I don't know if Joe Holecko is here. My view would be that the TTAB is not the vehicle for that. And it's something we should come back to.

I mean, because the TTAB commenting on the President's budget, for me, feels less helpful. But we should come back to you on that one. And I just, sort of the role of an advisory committee and how it comments to a Secretary on a President's budget, I just don't have a good feel for.

MR. HOLECKO: I mean the TTAB can't lobby Congress, who obviously sets the budget. So I mean the President's budget is a proposal. So you can't directly lobby. I mean you can make recommendations involving certain programs.

But then I think addressing certain line items in the budget -- we'll have to work with the lawyers to figure out what the --

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: We should come back to you on that question.

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MS. HILL: There is a distinction between a recommendation and an advocacy. And sometimes that can appear to be a bit of a grey line.

And so I think the role of the Travel and Tourism Board is to stay very clearly in the recommendations, the priorities, this is what we think is important for us to be competitive, et cetera.

Those are inputs and opinions. There is a separate role that, for example, U.S. Travel plays which is clearly an advocacy role. And you know, the laws of the country govern both the actions of this board and the actions of the private sector.

So there is a distinction and, I think, a role for this organization to play. But I think we can work with the Chair and the attorneys to make sure that we do that in a way that it is most productive for this board and for what you want to accomplish.

MEMBER GOLDSTEIN: One thing, just a

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thought, is I agree with the sentiment that trying to compel the Secretary and the administration to say that we are pro-inbound travel.

While that's logical and it's a motive, they may think that undermines the security message. I think we'd be better off advocating for a few key positions. But articulate to them why it's in their best interest to go down that path, to do better marketing on inbound travel, to reduce the friction, et cetera.

But to expect them to simply say, yes, I'm not sure what that's worth. It's worth it if they go out externally beyond this audience and do that. But other than making us feel good, I don't see the value in that. I don't think that's where we should hang our hat.

CHAIR SPROULS: You're asking for that external piece. That's what you're asking for.

MEMBER GOLDSTEIN: I think you have to articulate why. And I know we do that. But I think we've got to be very crisp --

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CHAIR SPROULS: I agree.

MEMBER GOLDSTEIN: -- why it doesn't undermine the security message. And that's what I'm saying, don't question the philosophies or the priorities that the administration has set. Figure out how we work around them within that.

I think that's going to be critical for us having influence on this administration.

CHAIR SPROULS: Totally agree.

MEMBER MEDROS: One thing I haven't heard us talk about in TTAB a lot is making a direct connection to job creation. This is an administration that ran heavily on job retention in the United States and job creation in the United States.

And I think we all understand that connection between being welcoming driving tourism, tourism driving jobs throughout the United States. But should the TTAB -- this is an open question. Should the TTAB be taking a more direct approach on tying that connection between

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travel and job creation and job maintenance in the United States?

And even secondary economic effects that has in terms of local spending and other job creation.

CHAIR SPROULS: I think we absolutely should.

MEMBER GALLAGHER: So I'm going to take a different perspective on this thing. Sometimes you don't appreciate stuff until it's gone.

And in the case of this industry, it was unappreciated. And then 9/11 happened. And 9/11 woke us all up. I mean that's where basically the whole -- who would have thought that was even going to happen?

But this group came forward. I mean Roger's organization changed completely and is such a better advocate. And then Chris was created with Brand USA which maybe wouldn't have happened if 9/11 didn't happen.

But now we have that. And so this guy

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here -- we're in an opportunity industry. We're not a problem industry. To know us is to love us. We're the good guys. We're not a problem. We're the good guys.

MS. HILL: Can I speak to the comment earlier about messaging? I obviously can't speak for this administration. But what I can tell you is that we have, at the staff level across agencies, had this conversation about the continuing importance of ensuring that our message is very clear.

That as we evolve our security posture, that people understand why we are doing that. That this is our principle responsibility as a government, to keep travelers safe and to keep our country safe.

But there is a recognition that there is another message. And I don't think that the challenge is going to be around whether or not the premise is the case.

I think the challenge is going to be a

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little bit more specifically around exactly how do we message that to ensure that the message is clear that security does remain, as you all have said and understand, that for our industry is paramount.

And so I just wanted to sort of say that we have been working and continuing to have this conversation through the Tourism Policy Council with the staff of the different agencies as this transition is taking place.

And there is nothing that we have had signaled from those agencies that the thinking is different. But there is obviously an immediate focus on the security piece.

So I just wanted to kind of give you a little insight as you move forward and talk to the Secretary, at least from what we are hearing through the interagency conversation.

MR. THOMPSON: I just want to add to that, just a way to communicate it is obviously security is a number one priority to not only keep our citizens safe but to keep our visitors safe.

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And so they have to be mutually exclusive. That's not a mutually exclusive goal. One of the things Arne Sorenson -- he joined our board about three years ago, four years ago.

And in his very first meeting he pulled me aside. And he said I look forward to learning what the destination marketing organization for the United States of America does on our behalf as I serve on this board.

Well here's what I tell you, it doesn't matter whether we spend \$100 or \$100 million, if we don't let the world know they're welcome, we're wasting our money.

And so that's kind of what I would suggest as -- it's not a mutually exclusive conversation. It's the fact that our secure borders not only benefit us but they benefit our visitors. And so they feel safe when they come.

And so Roger's whole notion about, you know, we're against terrorism, we're against terrorists. Well we're open and welcoming

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legitimate travelers. That's kind of a way to look at it.

CHAIR SPROULS: Pretty simple.

MR. THOMPSON: Yes. Matt?

MR. HAYDEN: Thank you for having us as a representative from Homeland Security. I can echo the comments that were shared that at a staff level, throughout meetings since the inauguration there's been a focus on maintaining the economic standards that our economy grows on such as travel and tourism.

We've met with airline industries. We're meeting with every staff and group that we can get that can give us feedback as to how those types of engagements can support the mission of providing of providing security and a stable economy within the United States. Because a stable economy equals a division of security as well.

So we work with groups like this as well as with State as with Commerce letting Commerce be

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our connection with the Travel and Tourism Board.

But we look forward to those priorities and working with all of you to make sure with safety also comes economy and travel and tourism. Because we do find that is a very important resource to make sure.

CHAIR SPROULS: Tom, did you have anything?

MR. ENGLE: Just real quick, I would say on open skies, until I hear otherwise it remains the policy that we pursue open skies agreements with any friendly foreign government that would like to have it.

And may I say a word quick about Minnesota and 2023?

CHAIR SPROULS: Absolutely.

MR. ENGLE: Just real quick on that, as many of you may know Minnesota is now the official U.S. candidate to host the 2023 World's Expo. They have competition and I'll get to that in a second.

But organizers estimate that there will

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be more than 200,000 international visitors over the 90 days of the expo which the good people of Minnesota have decided to hold in the summer. And total economic impact from the expo is estimated at \$1.5 billion.

So State and our colleagues here from Commerce cooperated closely to recommend that President Obama determine that this expo would be in the U.S. national interest. So thanks to Ken and Isabel and their teams for that.

There's competition from Poland and Argentina I believe to do this. And the snag is that the U.S. needs to join what's called the Bureau of International Expositions in order for Minnesota to win this bid.

And this needs some Congressional action. And the administration is currently considering how best to instigate the required Congressional action.

But this would be good for tourism. And we want to do everything we can to support

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Minnesota on this. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Let's not forget L.A. for the Olympics.

MS. HILL: So if you'd like I can give an update from the National Travel and Tourism Office.

CHAIR SPROULS: That'd be great.

MS. HILL: And a few things that we've done. The first thing I'd like to John, is thank you for a fabulous dinner, and Mike, last night.

CHAIR SPROULS: Oh you're welcome.

MS. HILL: It was really lovely. And I wanted to also let you all know that the previous board had provided us in Commerce some very good, very thoughtful recommendations about how we can work better with Brand USA, to work more efficiently.

Now that we have evolved our relationship, now that we have a greater understanding of how we can work together, how they are structured, put policies and procedures in

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place around the governing of the in-kind match and all of those things that are involved in ensuring that we're all buttoned up when we ask Treasury to write those checks. But there is clearly room for improvement.

And so we reached out and asked the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board to help us with that. And as I said, they gave us a number of very thoughtful recommendations, recommendations that it has taken us a long time to think about.

Hence you have a new board. But we did engage people, lawyers across the government. I know there was a lot of reach out to the private sector to find ways that we could look at some of these.

We've worked extensively with Brand USA on those. And we delivered last night to the Chairman and to Mike. And thank you Todd, you talked about this last night. Thank you very much for your help.

Because I think we have arrived at a

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place that is going to allow us to be much more efficient in terms of what we do, providing a greater certainty for Brand USA in terms of the cash flow while maintaining the overall oversight and guidance that we have that ensures that the taxpayer's money is well accounted for.

So I really want to thank you all. I think moving forward this is going to be a very, very productive step. And we couldn't have done it without you. So thank you so much for that work.

The other thing is I think Chris mentioned the U.S.-India Tourism Partnership Year. We did establish a formal travel and tourism working group with the government of India under the overarching strategic and commercial dialogue which includes everything from defense and now commercial including travel and tourism. So it's a very strong framework between the two governments.

We were in India. I want to thank several members of this board who joined us when

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we had an aviation roundtable to talk about how we could maximize the potential of the open skies agreements that we have, how the air service airlines could work with destinations, with organizations in the private sector on both sides to more strategically support connectivity.

So it was, I think, a very good dialogue. I want to thank Todd -- you're almost all together here. Fred was there, Nick Hentschel, and also Pam Inman, who has joined us here as well, were part of that conversation. We had then a very nice welcome dinner. Thank you to Brand USA.

One of the goals of this partnership is to look at how we can build bridges between the private sectors. Because it seems, from where we sit as government, that there may be some policy framework questions. But not like it was in China when we had to come up with a formal MOU to open the market for travel and tourism.

But rather there is, perhaps, work that

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can be done for the private sectors to come together and understand one another better. Because I think that there are some challenges about how business is conducted.

And so if we can bring those players, those actors together to have conversations and surface those issues, where the government can act, we can then engage with our government colleagues. Where the private sector can act, they can choose to act.

So I think this is going to be a great partnership year. We're looking to have a dialogue around how tour operators can work together later this summer.

But this is the beginning of a long term partnership. So this is not like a one year and then we go home. This is, I think, a year where we are beginning to look at that market potential. And how we can work with all of you to unlock that potential over time.

So I hope that you all will feel very

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free to engage in that, to give us any insight, thought, or advice on that project. I know we have a key markets committee that has done some work looking at these questions. And we look forward to working with you all on that moving forward.

And so I think that covers the highlights. One other bit of business which is a little more housekeeping is that, as you all may know, in the past we have had a system where there was one office, the Office of Advisory Committees, that sort of managed what we call FACA. You all, you're FACA, the groups that are underlined under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

And then separately we have been working sort of on the content of the policy piece. I wanted you all to know that we are actually going to be merging those functions under the National Travel and Tourism Office.

So we will be working with you directly on all aspects of this board moving forward.

CHAIR SPROULS: And Isabel, could you

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get that letter that you gave me a copy of to everybody else?

MS. HILL: Yes, certainly. I'd be happy to do that.

CHAIR SPROULS: Thank you.

MEMBER GALLAGHER: Can I comment on the letter? Thank you for doing that. I mean basically you -- Brand USA is an amazing organization. You've made it better with that letter and resolving those issues. Ken, you also.

So you know, we needed him most. And he's certainly delivered.

MS. HILL: I can make his job as easy --

MEMBER GALLAGHER: And now he can even deliver more. So thank you.

CHAIR SPROULS: Okay. Margaret, did you have anything?

VICE CHAIR MCKEOUGH: I just had a general question for maybe Ken or Isabel. Often our work here at the TTAB has been influenced by

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and kind of queued up in accordance with the policy council meetings.

Has there been a policy council meeting? Or is there a target for a policy council meeting? Or any insights you can share with us about that entity?

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: So our recommendation to the Secretary is that we would target July-ish. And our thinking is that your work then sort of sets it up.

And that you sort of do, you know, this group comes with private sector think about what you're potentially going to deliver. You know, it sure wouldn't be the TTAB's sense of priorities. It would be comments on the strategy itself. That's fantastic product for a tourism policy council meeting behind it.

The other piece is that we need some time for some of the political appointees to come into the department. So it would be early, I think, to do it now. And that was our thinking.

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So a recommendation sometime after the delivery of these -- you know, when you do it in June. I don't know if we would do it in June. But that was at least the sequence and thinking.

CHAIR SPROULS: Has anybody on the committee, recognizing that and the work product that we will try to drive toward in June, how do we feel about the current subcommittees? And how they're set up and the issues that they're tackling? Are we comfortable with that? Do we think we need to revisit any of that?

VICE CHAIR MCKEOUGH: John, if I could, I think with the guidance we were given this morning it sounds like we really need to kind of get a big more macro on some of these themes that have been articulated around the table and we affirmed in some of the comments from Kevin and Isabel.

That would be my thought, that I think this is the time to not abandon those very valid efforts, but maybe to reprioritize our attention on the things that we discussed in terms of

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messaging.

So hopefully we would be successful in the work that we're going to do between now and June. And then be able to kind of get back to reemphasizing some of those other issues.

Although I will point out there's a lot of policy that's on the table affecting some of our committees like infrastructure. So we probably want to think a little bit about that as well. Maybe the infrastructure theme needs to stay front and center as we reprioritize.

I can't recall the five that we got. I think infrastructure was on, Roger, on your list as well that you were suggesting.

MEMBER DEAN: Mr. Chairman, on that point I think you all heard earlier that you're going to give us some guidance from staff on some of these procedural issues.

I think one that might be helpful is to what degree -- or maybe better stated, how do we work with other advisory committees outside of

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Commerce on that point? Because I know infrastructure is important to a lot of us.

And to Roger's point earlier, it ought to be a priority. There is now a National Advisory Committee on Travel and Tourism Infrastructure. And some of that aligns similarly with that.

There is a research subcommittee with that group. So I think maybe a little guidance --

CHAIR SPROULS: Yes, we can do that.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: And I agree there has to be -- and exactly how it's structured -- but there does need to be some macro thinking here.

And you know, whether one would have a macro group. And then still have subcommittees looking at how do you promote, how do you enable visa order, how do you think about customer service?

You know, the strategy is also an organizing concept. But there has to be some macro group which is trying to. Or people will be too

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quickly, you know, sort of detail on how versus here are the real priorities.

And again, we can also help working with you after this.

CHAIR SPROULS: I think the request is not that unusual. If you remember when Secretary Pritzker came in, initially she said, what are we going to get done now?

And at the beginning of last year she said, all right what can we do that was going to get accomplished this year? And those are the priorities you were looking for.

So I think as a board it's not new territory for us to say that we're going to sit down and come up with those three to five big things that make a difference.

And I think that plus a review of the tourism strategy makes a lot of sense. And if that's going to drive the agenda of the Tourism Policy Council, I think that's a lot of meat for this committee.

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ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Well it sort of lines up reasonably well.

CHAIR SPROULS: I think it should.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Yes.

MEMBER GOLDSTEIN: John, I'm glad you mentioned that. That was going to be my only addition to the subcommittee structure at this point, was having a group that would do the review of the plan. And you've already noted that.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: And then I think the group has to consider whether, given some of the urgency around the welcoming and message, whether one wants to move on something like that more quickly.

Because one could think priority, think plan, and also say what are short term concrete things that would be of value. And one could do that.

Because I do think, you know, on the messaging piece there will be, you know, a clear request around the administration messaging,

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around wanting and welcoming legitimate tourists. And then again, you know, travelers.

And there have been also, I think, questions around how also the private sector, how the private sector would amplify that message. Because there's an awful lot of press out there that focuses on certain negative things. And it gets sort of blasted out, reinforces all kinds of messaging.

And I think even as -- if you were to get some of the messaging out, how do we make certain it gets amplified and it gets out there? And that, I think, would be a shared responsibility of the industry which I think would be of value to everybody which also would be a good thing to think about, right, short term --

MS. HILL: Yes. Sort of an overarching public-private strategy. And again, looking very carefully at how we do that message, if it works, for both.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Yes.

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MEMBER WOODEN: I agree with that, that just the language travel ban that the press uses all the time creates this image. So maybe collectively we can come up with a better way of saying that. But the word travel ban says you don't want to come here.

MS. HILL: Right. And I think there's good research that indicates that -- I mean, you know, if you look at the actual effect on the number of travelers that are affected by the Executive Order, it's really very small. And it's also, by the way, not in effect.

So you know, all of this kind of reactions are clearly media driven. I mean, I think there's a good amount of research that was shared by Brand USA in their last meeting that says, you know, there is a pretty clear correlation between how active and in what ways the media -- so I think, you know, it is exactly that. It is, you know, it carved by them. Where does that come from?

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MEMBER WOODEN: Who came up with that?

MS. HILL: Correct. And so I think that there, you know, one of the beauties of having a free press is that they get to say what they want to say. You know, that's a good thing.

But then again, there is a responsibility to ensure that it is accurate at minimum. Much less being able to put a counternarrative out there that is more reflective of what we all think. I think both in the public and private sectors to be the case.

MEMBER DIXON: And can I just add to that as well? I mean I agree, we shifted our entire efforts this year to the welcome. Everything that we're doing in New York City is about welcome to overcome these perceptions.

And the biggest issue -- and I agree with Ernie. My heart is with you in going to Denmark and pitching the Olympics at this moment. It's about uncertainty. The travelers, I mean, the Toronto school ban is a great example.

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You know, there is no ban in place. But they have cancelled all school groups to the United States this year. So I mean, the perception has become reality.

And the sooner and quicker we can address the issue -- and I think a public-private partnership in terms of welcoming, and I know Brand USA is going to be doing their piece, the sooner the better.

Because we are pitching not only on business for tomorrow but business for five years from now. The first day the travel ban was announced, we lost a convention that very day for 2019.

And it is happening over and over again. So it isn't just business this week, this month, this year. It's business four, five, six years from now that is being affected. And it all has been causing uncertainty.

So I think the sooner we can address that -- if the industry comes together in a bridge

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campaign with the federal government to say that all legitimate travelers are welcome to the United States, the sooner that happens the sooner we can cut the losses. We would welcome that.

MEMBER DEAN: I think this also underscores what you were saying earlier about the broader perspective and the overarching goals. Not to suggest that -- because I completely agree with what Fred just said.

But the research subcommittee just recently received some information from Brand USA, one country, I think, in particular but I suspect this isn't the only one, that while the notion of a travel ban or the rhetoric out there is certainly having some impact on the mindset of potential travelers.

The bigger impact, if I'm not mistaken, was on the dollar. And so we can't lose perspective on some of those other issues that every bit as big or bigger.

Not to demean this because it's an

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important issue. But in this case we did a lot to travel and tourism to lose on the dollar than we did on the rhetoric.

MS. HILL: Exactly. Exactly. And I think that this is a message and a conversation that we've been having for a long time, since at least I came here in 2003 at the end of the Bush administration when we started the Rice-Chertoff initiative with the help of a good many of the organizations here.

And as the threat evolves, then obviously the response has to also evolve. So I would love to say that this is a one-off and we'll get that message out there and it'll fine.

But I think that the opportunity here is for us to begin to look at how we can begin to codify a system that provides an ongoing resilience over time towards these kinds of things.

Because it's also going to be the case with health concerns, you know, Zika or any of these other kinds of shots to the system. So I think this

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is an opportunity looking at how this kind of communication can best take place.

Not just to look at this immediate challenge but to use this opportunity to look at sort of developing a framework for -- I hate to call it crisis communication because I don't think it's always about a crisis. But about how we can develop a rapid response to kind of a network system which I think is best practice globally.

And I think is a great opportunity for us to kind of elevate that conversation a little bit above yes, we have to do this now and this is good. But let's look at it, looking at it as a systems situation.

MEMBER DIXON: Isabel, can I also just suggest -- and as one example we might want to look at what Great Britain did upon Braeside. When they launched the great open campaign, the fact that the United Kingdom was open for business and welcoming.

And they quite quickly, you know, put aside a lot of perceptions around entry process and

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their engagement with the world. So I mean there might be some good learnings there.

MS. HILL: Yes.

MEMBER DIXON: And that was driven by government and foreign trade investments.

MS. HILL: That's a great idea. And I think there are some other best practices. Yes.

MEMBER FERGUSON: And there's a great opportunity, clearly, in 64 with IPW right in our back yard --

MS. HILL: Very good. Exactly.

MEMBER FERGUSON: -- to have the Secretary -- and maybe we could influence some of the opportunities for him to engage with those that are really hearing it from a global perspective about America as a destination.

And I think we definitely should look at that and see exactly how we can possibly have him tied into that opportunity.

MS. HILL: Yes. I think that's a terrific note to put in there as part of, you know,

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what we look at. Where are those opportunities? Where can we deliver the message? How can we make sure that we are delivering that message in a way that is very clear about the intention of the United States?

Because one of the things that I observed that was quite interesting is in some markets the reaction is actually positive. I mean, you know, the research that Universal did when we were looking at the border experience I thought was very illuminating was that the traveler recognizes and wants to know that they are in a secure environment.

It was very interesting to me when the research was done that, you know, how welcoming do you want the officer at the border to be? And what they said was -- the Secretary is about to call in. Is he ready?

MR. HOLECKO: I think we're going to try to call his assistant and patch in.

MS. HILL: Perfect. So you know, what

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they said was if they started chatting us up and saying, what are you doing, where are you doing? They think that's a little weird.

You know, they want these people to be professional. So it was good knowing that that balanced message is important on both sides.

OPERATOR: Secretary Ross' office, this is Brooke.

MR. HOLECKO: Hey Brooke, this is Joe Holecko in ITA. I'm here with the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board. We're just ready to go ahead and patch in with the Secretary when he's available.

OPERATOR: Great. Can I put you on hold for a moment?

MR. HOLECKO: Sure.

OPERATOR: Thanks. Thank you for holding. I'm going to transfer you.

MR. HOLECKO: Great. Thanks.

OPERATOR: I have Secretary Ross.

SECRETARY ROSS: Hello.

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CHAIR SPROULS: Good morning.

SECRETARY ROSS: Thank you for indulging to participate by phone. There's a lot going on right now. You'll probably see some of it over the media. And those of you that will be there physically. But you should not interpret that as any lack of interest or support.

We do recognize the huge importance of international travel. It is certainly one of the major factors in our services surplus with other countries. And it accounts for some one third of this and some 11 percent of our total.

So we're well aware of its importance. And we're also aware that plays another role which is the more foreigners who come here and get to the country a little bit, we have a chance to make friends with them.

So it can also be very helpful from a diplomatic point of view and from a trade point of view, a commercial point of view from the point of view of foreign direct investments.

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So I feel very strongly about it. I know the President feels very strongly. So that's nothing you should worry about.

Second, I know that there's been some concern expressed about the recent border security measures that we put into place, particularly about the electronic devices on planes.

I think you should use that as an opportunity. And make clear in your advertising and everything else, this is the safest country to go to because of all the measures that we're taking.

I think the biggest retardation for international travel nowadays is people are afraid that something will happen to them either on the ground in the foreign country or in the air.

So I would urge you as part of your promotional efforts to convert a sales advantage towards the U.S. I also would like to task you with developing some specific recommendations for us. And there are just three of those that I'd like to outline.

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One is a top line review of international travel and tourism strategy goals and strategies going forward. I was a little disappointed that you're revising your forecast about how much tourism we can get to. And I'd urge you to try very hard to find some way to overcome that shortfall.

Second, try to identify a list, maybe four or five priority issues Department of Commerce could address to support the global competitiveness of the travel and tourism industry based on your review of the national travel and tourism strategy.

And then third, provide at least one element to the administration and private sector of what some sort of joint activity can do to make sure the United States remains a welcoming destination. In that being mindful as I mentioned at the beginning that we must ensure national security.

I would also like to add one suggestion.

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I'm not a marketing guy, consumer marketing guy. But I think if you think back to New York City, think back to the ingenuity and success of the Big Apple program and I love New York program.

Those are catchy sayings that really did help tourism a lot. And I think in the promotional activities that the tourism industry puts out, you would do very, very well to try to come up with something as catchy and as memorable as that.

And I think that would go a long way toward differentiating our tourism product from those of other countries. And I think especially if I were you I would be trying to promote summertime projects and wintertime projects.

A lot of the places that tourists have been going to, the Turkey, the Greece, the places like that, probably are going to have a rough time because of all the refugee problems, the civil sort of problems in those countries.

That may well be an opportunity to

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promote the vacation travel to the warm parts of the U.S. during the same season when people would have gone to some of those other countries. Because people still are going to want to travel.

So those are the thoughts that I wanted to leave you with. To the degree that you are going to take the suggestion of the several bullet points mentioned and give us some recommendations, I'd like very much to get them by the end of June this year so that we can really put them into effect.

So I thank you very much for letting me participate by phone. I reiterate we are supportive of your industry. We are with you. We want to make you succeed. And hopefully get back to the original longer term forecast for tourism.

So I thank you for letting me participate by phone. And I hope you have a good rest of your meeting. Thank you.

MEMBER EKERT: He just opened the door. We have to articulate to him how we achieve the original forecast while maintaining what the

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Administration wants to do from a security standpoint.

CHAIR SPROULS: Exactly.

MEMBER EKERT: That's what we need to give them.

CHAIR SPROULS: I think it's great. What I see happening between now and June is us working on sort of three prongs. One is this whole friction openness.

What are the things we can do short term to reduce that friction and make people understand that we are welcoming? And what do we need to ask of the Administration and of Commerce, what is their piece of doing that?

Secondly, work on the review of the strategy. And then third, work on these three to five what are going to be macro priorities but things that are actionable that he can support in the Tourism Policy Council.

So what I think I'd like to do is work with Isabel and come up with, sort of reassign

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everybody to a different committee. And put three committees together that are going to work on those things immediately so that we can turn it around, shoot for a meeting the middle to the end of June.

We come together, sign off on those things, and get them to the Secretary in the timeframe that he's looking for. And it might even be early June.

I think we know a lot about these things. I don't think it will take us that long to come up with what should be on the list. There may be ten things we have to whittle to five. But I don't think it will be a problem in terms of generating ideas.

So we will do that, you know, as soon as we finish this. And next week let everybody know here's what we'd like to do. Get some subcommittee meetings together quickly. Put stuff down that we can get out to everybody on the committee so we can react to it and be ready to go with a meeting sometime in June. Probably the

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earlier the better.

MEMBER PRESBY: Can we set that meeting relatively soon? I travel but I have to schedule.

CHAIR SPROULS: Can we try to set it? It's here in Washington. That would probably work great. Because I am actually out of pocket from the 8th until the 23rd.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: What date did you say?

CHAIR SPROULS: Yes, the IPW is in Washington from the 3rd to the 7th. So I would guess that if they're presenting the committee is going to be here anyway.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Yes we will.

CHAIR SPROULS: So we will try to work a meeting around that. So the meeting can take a half a day or a day depending on how long we need as a committee as part of IPW.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Mr. Chairman, Margaret just said it but Isabel, Ken,

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Julie thank you. Because obviously the Secretary understands the importance.

CHAIR SPROULS: He got it.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: That said, and you guys obviously got that message.

MS. HILL: Thank you. You're very welcome. May I just make a couple things? One, I would like to thank Joe Holecko who every time I want to thank him seems to not be in the room. I want to thank Joe Holecko for the work that he has done.

I want to introduce you to Brian Beall on my team. He'll be working as our principle liaison. And Jennifer Aguinaga who is going to also be the second. Of course, you all know our whole team will be here to support you and we look forward to that.

We passed out a copy of the Executive Summary of National Travel and Tourism Strategy. When the Secretary said a top line review, I think that is the level of assessment that he is looking

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for to look at the goal and the strategies themselves.

So we also send you an electronic copy. Are they the right strategies? You all know how to do this. So I hope that is helpful to you. And we'll also send, with your permission, the very specific language that was used in each of those taskings so that we can make sure --

CHAIR SPROULS: I think that would be good.

MS. HILL: -- that we are on, that we are very clear on what it was he asked us to do.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: And can I make one suggestion? It's as part of the third tasking, that the TTAB consider writing a letter in the very, very short term about the importance of messaging want and welcome.

So I think that would be a concrete deliverable that should be delivered quickly. And lay that out, make the best possible letter. I think that would be a great short term deliverable

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for your consideration.

CHAIR SPROULS: I agree.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Just sort of make the case and what it would look like.

CHAIR SPROULS: Right. Make the case and commit to what we're going to deliver in June.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: I think that would be a good thing to do.

CHAIR SPROULS: And while you were walking back down, we're going to sort of, we're going to temporarily reallocate into three subcommittees to attack the three pieces that we think about.

As Kurt had brought up, the whole friction openness. What are the things we could do short term that would have a positive impact? Second, a committee that will review the strategy and come back to the full committee about what we think our recommendation should be around that. And then the three to five priorities.

And we're shooting to have a meeting in

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June. But we as a committee will sign off on all of that and deliver it to the Secretary. It's looking like we'll have that meeting during IPW which is in D.C. June 3rd to the 7th.

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: Okay. Great.

CHAIR SPROULS: Anybody else? Roger?

MR. DOW: First of all, I appreciate your allowing Chris and I to be here. I know I'm not part of the committee. But I have one recommendation and one offer.

We talk about travel and tourism being \$2.1 trillion. But it's really the front door to economic development. And I really think for the Secretary, and I'm happy to get our resources to put that together, to talk about what happens beyond travel whether it be trade shows.

If people don't come or can't come to our trade shows they don't buy Caterpillar tractors and American electronics. Real estate, I live in Florida. All the languages spoke and all the real

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estate that's been driven by visitors when they come here.

Manufacturing, moving companies here. If you look at Alabama, all the automotive, seven or eight automotive companies. They came because of the Robert Trent Jones golf course. I mean, the people came and they said we're going to put our Toyota plant here.

I think infrastructure -- Boeing. So I think, I'd be happy to have our economists give you something that would tie. Because I think the more we talk about -- I heard the Secretary just talking about our industry.

And I think we could help broaden it to United States, manufacturing, the things that are in their power alley. And I'd be happy to help in any way John. Thank you for inviting me.

CHAIR SPROULS: I would welcome that if you would get to that to us so we can share on our committee.

MR. DOW: I will. Thank you.

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MEMBER HENTSCHEL: If I could, I totally agree with that. I would just add that listening to the Secretary he also was talking very specifically about leisure visitors that were choosing the U.S. potentially over destinations like Turkey.

So I think we also have to focus on those types of visitors as well. And how we grow those numbers in the goal. And obviously being part of that --

MEMBER SCHLUTER: I'm representing the International Inbound Travel Association. And we wanted you to know that our priorities are very much in alignment with what everybody on this committee is doing as well. And that we are here to help in any way that we can as part of the industry as well.

CHAIR SPROULS: Great. Thank you. Anyone else? Ken, do you have any last words?

ACTING UNDER SECRETARY HYATT: As always, looking forward to supporting you as you do this in any way we can. And you know, obviously

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open doors to all of us.

And I do think that the letter would be a really good thing to do really quickly.

CHAIR SPROULS: Got it. Thank you everyone. Great. Well everyone thank you all for being here. Thank you in advance for all the work you're going to do between now and June. And if I don't see you before then, I will see you in June.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 10:29 a.m.)

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