

2 Nations Warn Concorde Ban Could Bring Retaliation

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 — France and Britain warned today that a ban on Concorde flights to the United States might lead to retaliation against United States plane builders and airlines.

But the Environmental Protection Agency, in a hardening of earlier concerns, called for a ruling against the French and British requests for permission to operate limited service to New York and Washington.

The clash of views came in a one-day hearing presided over by Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman Jr.

Mr. Coleman has promised a decision by Feb. 4. A favorable ruling would presumably open the way for Concorde flights to Washington's Government-operated Dulles International Airport. But Governor Carey said yesterday that allowing the Concorde to fly to New York "must be denied." And his stand is expected to keep the supersonic jet out of Kennedy International Airport for a year or more, pending the outcome of a court suit the French and British are understood to be holding in reserve.

Maps and Books

At the opening time of 9:30 A.M., the first of a list of more than 70 witnesses took the microphone in a Federal auditorium here. Mr. Coleman sat alone on the stage behind a small desk fronted by a blue cloth. Behind him, were mounted

maps showing noise-impacted areas at Kennedy and Dulles, and a bookshelf on wheels containing key documents on the case.

The biggest reaction of the day from the several hundred in the audience was produced by Bishop Hugh Montifiore of Kingston-Upon-Thames and representative of the noise-control association of communities around London's Heathrow Airport.

Tall, in white collar and red shirt, the Bishop told of a flood of complaints generated by Concorde flights there, adding, "The noise is not hell because hell goes on forever. It is more like a secular form of purgatory."

Find Exaggeration

The first witnesses were six officials representing the French-British partners in the \$3 billion Concorde project, including Gerald Kaufman, Minister of State of Britain's Department of Industry. Mr. Kaufman said the United States Government's own environmental impact statement "indicates, in essence, that the impact of the Concorde on the American environment will be slight and it will be controllable."

In a written submission, the two governments charged that the environmental impact of the Concorde had been "grossly exaggerated."

On the subject of possible retaliation if the Concorde was kept out of the United States, they said:

"Banning Concorde operations by British Airways and Air France would be widely viewed as a double standard, and could lead to reciprocal limitations on United States suppliers and United States air carriers."

The British and French officials disputed conclusions of the impact statement that the noise of the Concorde under the takeoff path was twice that of the Boeing 707 and four times that of the Boeing 747.

They said that the calculations were faulty, that the Concorde was quieter than old jets on the landing approach, and that, what was important was not the noise on a single flight but the relation of limited operations to total cumulative noise. The four flights a day proposed for Kennedy and two for Dulles would have a minimal over-all impact, the Concorde backers emphasized, quoting from the impact statement.

E.P.A. Aide Questioned

The E.P.A. stand against the Concorde, which is only an advisory contribution to Mr. Coleman's deliberations, was announced by Roger Strelow, an assistant administrator of the agency. Mr. Strelow was vigorously questioned by Mr. Coleman, who recollected that the E.P.A. had suggested early last year that the first 16 Concorde might be exempted from noise rules for supersonic transports because they were already in production. The rules were

proposed to the Federal Aviation Administration, which is under Mr. Coleman and has the final authority.

Mr. Strelow took issue with Mr. Coleman's interpretation, saying the agency's proposal had not dealt with the 16 Concorde already in production. He said that the E.P.A. had simply put forward the idea that the 16 might be "exempt from flat equivalency" and that operations might be considered "on an airport by airport basis."

Kennedy Not Suitable

"Our criteria were almost certainly that an airport like Kennedy would be suitable," he said, adding at another point that "Dulles is clearly more marginal."

Among the other witnesses were Senators James L. Buckley, Conservative-Republican of New York and Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, and a number of representatives, including several Concorde opponents from the Kennedy airport area.

Mr. Buckley, an opponent, said he understood how a ban might jeopardize the huge Concorde investment and how important it was to maintain good relations with traditional friends.

"But," he said, "I honestly do not see how we can be held accountable for the collapse of what appears in retrospect to have been an ill-considered commercial venture."

Mr. Goldwater, a veteran pilot who is a supporter of the Concorde, said: "In all of my experience, I have never known of so much misinformation being put out on any one subject as on the supersonic transport plane. These threats are so ill-founded and unsupported by facts that the Europeans could justly interpret a decision against Concorde as being based upon nothing more than economic protectionism meant to isolate our airlines from foreign competition in our own market."

Barred from the United States for the time being, the Concorde is due to go into regular service on Jan. 21 between Paris and Rio de Janeiro, and between London and the Middle East sheikhdom of Bahrain.