

CONCORDE FLIGHTS TO U.S. APPROVED FOR 16 MONTHS; FOES RENEW CHALLENGES



The New York Times/Teresa Zabala

William T. Coleman Jr., Transportation Secretary, holding a copy of his opinion on the Concorde in Washington.

This was because Mr. Coleman's Federal approval now had to be supplemented, in the case of New York, by permis-

Text of Coleman's statement is printed on Page 16.

sion from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates Kennedy International Airport.

Governor Carey, who can veto Port Authority actions, is on record as saying that commercial Concorde operations to Kennedy "must be denied." Expected lawsuits challenging a Carey veto could drag on for a long time.

Opposition in Capitol

No local permission is needed in the case of Dulles because that airport is federally owned and operated. But environmentalists and Congressional opponents immediately initiated legal action to bar flights to Dulles.

Congressional legislation to delay or bar Concorde flights is also being pushed. However, it is uncertain whether Congress will act before flights get under way.

In a 61-page opinion, Mr. Coleman specifically approved requests of Air France and British Airways to make two flights a day each to Kennedy and one a day each to Dulles.

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COLEMAN DECISION

Supersonic Jet Would Give Limited Service Here and in Capital NYTimes

By RICHARD WITKIN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4

Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman Jr. ruled today that France and Britain could operate limited service by the Concorde supersonic jet airliner to New York and Washington on a 16-month trial basis.

While the long-awaited decision could mean flights to Washington's Dulles International Airport by mid-April, most key officials still viewed it as unlikely that the supersonic plane would be allowed into New York for many months, if ever.

The Secretary acknowledged the environmental and economic drawbacks of the 1,350-mile-an-hour Concorde, emphasizing that "the most serious immediate consequence of limited Concorde operations is noise."

He concluded, nevertheless, that the disadvantages seemed to him outweighed by the advantages of a very limited test operation that could be canceled forthwith for safety or other overriding reasons.

Among the advantages of the plan that could almost halve over-water flight times, he cited the following:

☐Facilitation of commercial and cultural exchange.

☐Determination whether a quieter, more efficient future supersonic transport (SST) was feasible.

☐Prevention of serious economic

Continued on Page 16, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

conomic harm to two close allies.

☐Maintenance of international fairness and equity.

"It may well be," Mr. Coleman argued, "that further development of this technology is not economically sensible in the energy and environmentally conscious period in which we live. If so, then the Concorde will fail because it is an anachronism, and its failure will be recognized as such rather than attributed to an arbitrary and protectionist attitude of the United States out of fear that our dominance of the world aeronautical manufacturing market is threatened."

In 1971, Congress canceled this country's SST program under pressure from the environmental movement and economy-minded officials who argued that there were much more pressing uses for the funds. About \$1 billion had been spent on the project.

The French and British, despite soaring costs that they could afford even less than the United States in the short run, pressed ahead.

Passenger Service

Two weeks ago, the Concorde went into regular scheduled passenger service from London to Bahrain, and Paris to Rio De Janeiro.

The Russians have a plane very similar to the Concorde. But it is making only scheduled cargo runs so far, within the Soviet Union.

Mr. Coleman's decision, which he announced at a press conference down the hall from his office here, was followed promptly by an announcement from the White House that "the President will stand behind the Secretary's decision."

A large question on the horizon was whether President Ford might veto any of several varieties of Congressional legis-

lation to delay Concorde operations, at least to New York, or ban supersonic operations anywhere in the country.

On Dec. 18, the House voted to ban the graceful elongated craft for six months from all United States airports except Dulles while more data were obtained on its effects, including noise and the much-disputed peril it poses for increasing the incidence of a non-fatal form of skin cancer.

A Senate committee is scheduled to make a similar proposal tomorrow. In addition, a group of Congressmen have introduced, or plan to, various anti-Concorde bills or riders to other bills.

The six-month delay provisions are amendments to bills authorizing significant sums for airport development. Congressional observers think a more significant threat to the Concorde lies in a number of appropriations bills to which anti-Concorde riders could be attached—riders that would block flights to Dulles as well as to other gateways.

In this connection, one of the strongest of many criticisms of Mr. Coleman's action today came from the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana.

Last year, Mr. Bayh sponsored an appropriations amendment that would have kept the Concorde out of the country if its noise level exceeded that of subsonic planes, which it does to a degree that is a matter of continuing dispute. The vote defeating the Bayh amendment was only 46 to 44, while similar amendment was defeated in the House by a 214-to-496 vote.

The big question remains whether President Ford will veto any anti-Concorde legislation.

Criticism by Bayh

Today, Mr. Bayh, one of many who are seeking the Democratic Presidential nomination, said of Mr. Coleman's decision:

"I regard this as a very serious mistake. The Concorde is wrong economically, wrong environmentally, and wrong in terms of energy. It is a means of transportation available only to a very few rich people. I will push strongly for legislation to overturn the Secretary's decision."

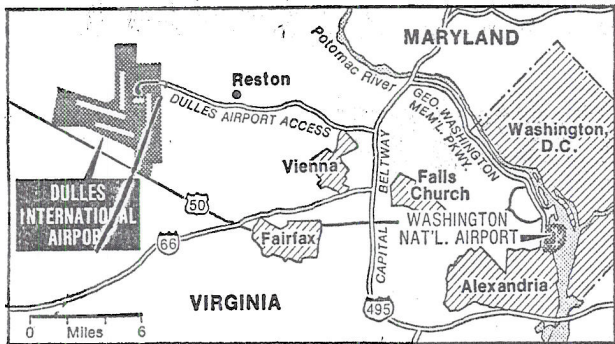
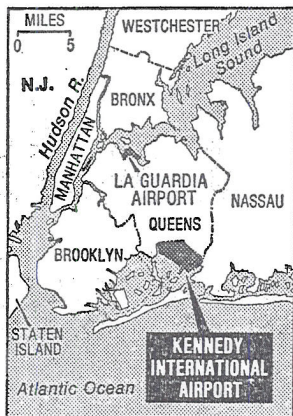
The fare for current flights to Bahrain and Rio in the 100-passenger Concorde has been pegged at 15 to 20 percent above first class. British Airways said today the round-trip fare between London and New York would be \$1,168, and between London and Washington \$1,240. This comes to 17.7 percent above today's first-class fares.

Mr. Bayh's outrage at the Coleman decision was echoed by many long-time opponents of the Concorde, including numerous other Congressmen from areas not facing Concorde operations.

The Coleman decision is effective March 4. He explained that the 16-month period had been picked so that tests could encompass operations in all seasons and then leave four months for the results to be analyzed.

Mr. Coleman set down a number of expected conditions for any Concorde flights, including confining operations to the period between 7 A.M. and 10 P.M. local time and authority for the Federal Aviation Administration to impose any added noise-abatement procedures it deemed safe and technically feasible.

The Secretary directed the F.A.A., which is in his department, to proceed with a program to measure high-altitude pollution and to set up thorough-going noise-measurement systems at Kennedy and Dulles.



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