



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NEWS

## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
JOHN A. VOLPE AT A MEETING WITH EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS,  
APRIL 1, 1970

First, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the members of your organizations who have so steadfastly remained at their post of duty during this strike. May I also express my appreciation to each of you for your support.

The events in connection with the Air Traffic Controllers' strike of the past few days have been hectic and accompanied by a great deal of misinformation. I thought I should ask you to come in so I could explain the situation as it really exists. The important point I want to make is that we have not been negotiating with PATCO, F. Lee Bailey or any of the PATCO officers.

The strike started on March 25, Wednesday. On the same day we went into court and obtained a temporary restraining order or injunction against PATCO and its officers or anyone else participating in the strike. The order expires on April 6, 1970. Based upon the temporary restraining order, we contacted each employee who was absent, advised him of the contents of the order as it affected him, and told him that if his absence continued for more than 24 hours after receipt of this telegram or if he failed within that time to furnish adequate medical proof of his illness, adverse action would be initiated against him.

Telegrams or registered letters were then sent to employees as quickly as possible. Those employees who complied with the provisions of the telegram or letter and were absent on other than a bona fide leave were carried in an absent without leave status for the period of absence in duty. Those employees who did not comply with the provisions of the telegram or letter were served with a notice of proposed removal.

On Monday, after confirming our suspicions that most of the controllers had been deluded by strike organizers, we advised that in such cases the ultimate penalty of dismissal would not be appropriate. Those who want to return to work now will be charged with absence without leave for the days that they were out. In addition, at some future date, they will also be suspended for the number of days equal to the number of days they stayed away from work. Those who were genuinely ill or were authorized annual leave, of course, will not be penalized. Those who led or actively encouraged employees to stay away from work will receive more severe penalties, including removal.

We have obtained temporary restraining orders against PATCO officials throughout the country. We have also obtained a show cause order against Bailey and the national officers. The hearing on the show cause order to give the national officers an opportunity to prove they were not in contempt of court was scheduled for Wednesday; it has now been postponed for 24 hours. During this period of time a determination will be made as to whether or not PATCO officials have complied with the temporary restraining order. This determination will be based upon the



extent to which PATCO members return to work and the efforts of PATCO in this period. Action on the show cause order will take place on Thursday, April 2. Again, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the members of your organizations who have so steadfastly remained at their post of duty during this strike. I'm sure you're aware of the recognition given them by the President and the industry, and of the tangible recognition the FAA Administrator and his managers plan to give.

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