

U. S. Department of Transportation news:



Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

Contact: Linda Gosden
Tel.: (202) 426-4570

STATEMENT BY U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION DREW LEWIS
APPOINTMENT OF TASK FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
August 18, 1981

During the past two weeks, the effective and safe operation of this country's air traffic system has been the result of the hard work, dedication and competence of the controllers and supervisory personnel who are manning the system. Now, as we proceed with the rebuilding of our air traffic control system we want to be certain that we provide every possible support to the men and women working in the system.

During this difficult period, we necessarily have been required to focus on the operational aspects of air traffic control. However, as employers, we do not intend to ignore the individual concerns and needs of our employees; nor do we intend to ignore the lessons from the past.

When we took office, it became apparent to Lynn Helms and me that improvements should be made in the personnel management of the air traffic control work-force. Our objective is to be responsive to the controllers and their supervisors, and to provide them all the tools available to assure the continued safe and effective operation of our air traffic system in a suitable work environment. For this reason, we are today establishing a Task Force to study the employment conditions of air traffic controllers employed by the Federal Aviation Administration.

This Task Force will look into all "people aspects" of the air traffic control system, including job requirements and qualifications, career and job growth opportunities, as well as promotion, retirement and other personnel practices. The Task Force will have full freedom to identify problems wherever they occur and to recommend remedies.

We believe that through the efforts of this Task Force we will improve communications and create a better climate for future management-employee relationships. We have great respect for the air traffic control profession and a high regard for the skills of those who direct the nation's air traffic. They do a difficult job and they do it well. We consider it our obligation to see that they have the best working environment possible.

The Task Force consists of three well-qualified, professionally competent private citizens. They are: Lawrence M. Jones, Chairman; David G. Bowers; and Stephen H. Fuller. We have asked them to conduct their review of the FAA controller employment environment within 150 days. They will have our full support and the cooperation of all executive departments and agencies.

We are asking for an honest, independent assessment of the situation, and the Task Force's best recommendations on ways to help FAA management respond to the needs of its people. The American people have our assurance that we will fulfill our obligations to improve relations between the FAA and the air traffic controllers to see that the situation that troubles us all today hopefully will not happen again.

#####

The Following is a Transmission from the Fort Lauderdale Facility:

August 4, 1981

Pilot: Fort Lauderdale Tower. Palm 76 on left base for 9 left.

Spurious Voice: Roger, Roger. To land at Pompano.

Tower: Palm 76. Fort Lauderdale Tower, runway 9 left clear to land. Wind 090⁰ degrees at six.

Spurious Voice: Palm 76. Tower, please go around.

GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT TRANSMISSION: ATC Tower - 87 Tango Whiskey. (general aviation aircraft attempting to reach tower)

Tower: Palm 76, Fort Lauderdale Tower. Clear to land runway niner left. Wind 090⁰ degrees at six.

Pilot: Palm 76. Roger.

*The Spurious Voice is an unauthorized transmission.