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AIR TRANSPORT

US Concorde landings enter the last lap
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EXT MONDAY, January 5, ithe US Department of
Transportation will hold a one-day hearing, at which
Secretary for Transportation Mr William T. Coleman will
hear arguments for and against US landing rights for
Concorde. Thirty days later Coleman will decide whether the adverse impact of small-scale Concorde operations is great enough to justify the unprecedented step of banning foreign airlines' equipment under domestic rules.
Recent moves in the US have complicated the situation. The Environmental Protection Agency weighed in with its own evaluation of the final Environmental Impact State-ment (see World News, Flight for December 18), coming out against the SST. The Concorde proponents in British and French industry and Government did not treat the EPA statement with the same respect they had accorded to the EIS.
A move in Congress to ban Concorde from the US achieved partial success last month. The House of Representatives passed (199:188) an amendment to the Airports and Airways Development Bill which would ban Concorde from all US airports for six months. The amend-ment cannot take effect until it receives Senate approval and Congress is now recessed. It is understood that the amendment will not affect either the hearing or the timing of Coleman's decision.
Mr A. R. Gordon Cumming, civil-aviation attache at the British Embassy in Washington, and his French opposite number, M Leonce Lansalot-Basou, rejected the EPA state-ment as "grossly inaccurate" at a press conference last month. They described the report as an unprofessional document containing badly drawn noise contours to illu-strate a case that might occur but which is clearly rare in practice.
Mr Kenneth Binning, director-general Concorde at the

British Department of* Industry, also responded, with a letter describing EPA Administrator Russell Train's testi-mony as misleading and ambiguous. The text of the letter is reproduced here in full: "We thought it important to write to you on behalf of the members of the Concorde project about your Agency's study of Concorde noise con-tours at Dulles, and about the oral comments made on it by yourself and other members of your staff, which have been widely reported in the press on both sides of the Atlantic.
"You will of course know that we share the view held
by the majority of experts in the matter of noise that the measurement of single noise events is not an appropriate basis for decision-making about proposed changes in a series of aircraft operations. We recognise that the choice of method is, in the last resort, a matter of professional judg-ment, and for that reason I will not debate this aspect further now.
"We are, however, very concerned about ambiguities in the text accompanying the maps which have, not surpris-ingly, led to widespread misunderstanding and misinterpre-tation. Some of the more striking examples are:
A Failure to make clear that the contours do not represent single events but show the effect of all the likely take-offs and landings from the airport, totalling seven. B Failure to indicate that, for the number of flights for

Making a positive contribution to the New York Kennedy environment is
Air France's first A300B4, operating daily (except Wednesday) round-trips to the French Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. The carrier regrets that it can supply no noise figures for its A300B2 operations into London Heathrow, since monitors have consistently failed to detect the aircraft above ambient sound levels