Air transport
NTSB says US air traffic should reduce further...
THE US National Transportation
Safety Board has produced a report
on the post-strike US air-traffic situa-
tion which implies that controllers are
still overworked, and that they may
continue to be after October 19, when the Federal Aviation Administration's new winter flow-control procedures are implemented (see Flight, last week, page 1127).
The Federal Aviation Administra-tion had predicted that by now con-trollers would be working 40hr, five-day weeks. But many are still working far more, and leave is very difficult to get.
The NTSB report—which has not

yet been officially adopted by the Board—includes three recommenda-tions: supervisors should be indoctrin-ated by flight surgeons, with the aim of detecting and controlling the onset of stress; also that controls should be introduced at national and facility levels to limit ATC services provided to non-airways IFR and VFR traffic. The NTSB found that the level of these operations had increased at some centres following the strike as traffic bypassed airways restrictions. In some cases, it was apparent that some pilots were illegally using air taxi designator codes to gain priority. The NTSB finally recommends that

some supervisors should be able to take more time off.
The NTSB tells our US West Coast correspondent that its investigations did not reveal that stress levels pre-sent an immediate problem, but that its interviews with 175 controllers at 35 centres led to "recognition that short-term fatigue and stress may affect their future performance."
The aim of the FAA's limits is to reduce operations at the 22 airports affected by current restrictions to 75-77 per cent of pre-strike levels. In mid-October operations had reached about 80-83 per cent of the pre-strike level. .

as USAF says no to supplying more controllers
USAF bases have received a signal
from communications command say-ing that "In view of the overall im-
pact [of the Service's shortage of air
traffic controllers], we do not recom-
mend any additional active duty mili-tary controllers, beyond the 635 in the original tasking, be used to augment Federal Aviation Administra-tion facilities."

At present the FAA is using about 430 Air Force, 150 Navy and 200 Army controllers. The USAF makes clear

. . . and airline

finances suffer
PREDICTIONS that the US control-lers' strike would lead to high load factors and air fares being sustained at higher levels have been proved wrong yet again, writes our US West Coast correspondent, as major airlines start a series of fare cuts on trans-continental routes.
The latest round of cuts was started by United Airlines and unlike last year's price war it centres on full economy fares. United reduced its round-trip fare from $600 to $458 and was immediately matched by its main rivals.
Continental, however, which has no non-stop trans-continental routes, an-nounced a $358 transcontinental fare. American and TWA announced that they would match Continental on their own one-stop flights, but United has introduced new and lower fares on all flights including non-stop trips. Obser-vers are puzzled by the fare cuts, but one source has suggested that they may be intended to attract business traffic away from promotional fares.

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in a report on the situation that when the complete first batch of 635 con-trollers has been released to the FAA this will have a "painful" effect on operation. And if a second batch of 635 has to be released, then "a wide-spread curtailment of services would be required."
The report also recommends that an annual bonus of $2,500 should be paid to some military controllers, otherwise the USAF "will be lucky to retain 10 per cent of those 1,000 or more controllers with a date of separation within the next 12 months." They would take their option to leave the Service because their pay would be so much better with the FAA.

At present the FAA is awaiting clearance from Government to imple-ment a pay increase for its civilian controllers, backdated to the begin-ning of August, almost identical to that rejected by the Professional

Air Traffic Controllers' Association (Patco) when it went on strike.
• A group of 37 Democrat politicians has written to President Reagan ask-ing him to negotiate with Patco. They quote his letter to the union, written when he was canvassing for election support, in which he pledged to co-operate with Patco in raising staffing levels, reducing working hours, and by investing in new equipment that the union insisted was urgently re-quired. The group says that a negoti-ated settlement between the FAA and the sacked controllers would "be in the national interest."

Patco, of course, is delighted with this move, as it is with the fact that the Federal Labour Relations Auth-
ority is taking a long time to make up
its mind whether or not Pate© should
be decertified as a union. The FLRA
obviously has not found the matter a
cut-and-dried case.

Airbus A3I0 No 2, in the foreground, is well under way, with cockpit and forward fuselage as-sembled. The first A3I0 is complete except for its fin, and it will roll out in February for first flight
in March