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Ariana Afghan Airlines took delivery of its first widebodied airliner, a McDonnell Douglas DC-IO-30, on October 5

Air Ircinsp
Gatwick transfers: Government capitulates
JOHN Nott, Britain's trade minister,
has made what appears to be the
Government's final decision on how to
relieve pressure on Heathrow Airport,
now within six months of reaching
saturation. British Airways has agreed to transfer all its Iberian Peninsula services to Gatwick from November 1 and, after that date, any expansion by Iberia, Air Portugal, and Air Canada will be subject to severe restrictions at Heathrow, which will eventually force a move to Gatwick. Nott's decision demonstrates govern-ment acceptance that compulsory movement of foreign airlines to Gatwick is not politically feasible even if legally possible. Political pressure on the three airlines to transfer all operations to Gattwick has been applied for more than a year. A legal stalemate was reached in October last year when Iberia and TAP had obtained a High Court injunction to the effect that the order for thein to move had no legal force under current regulations (Flight, November 4, 1978).
The Government decision not to

force any airlines to move, but to apply restrictions instead and rely on market pressures and Heathrow con-gestion to cause transfer decisions, will initially mean that the hoped-for cut in passenger numbers through the airport will be 600,000 instead of 2-2 million. The British Airports Authority's power in these matters is limited to setting a ceiling on Heath-row traffic, and its policy is to point airlines in Gatwick's direction with lures of lower fees and less con-gestion.
• Permission to build a fourth pas-senger terminal at Heathrow is still not forthcoming despite the passing of yet another deadline for decision. The earliest date by which such a terminal could be operational is now 1985.

The planning inquiry into a second terminal at Gatwick Airport is expected to start on November 27, but West Sussex County Council is seek-ing a deferment until February next year in order to gather more informa-tion in the campaign to oppose it.
In both cases the opposition is on

environmental grounds. Ironically, if opposition succeeds, the environment may undergo! greater changes because a block on development at existing airport is more likely to be sited on airports means that the third London virgin territory. The intractability of the problem increases again because environmental lobbies for the country-side sites are even more vocal. In Gatwick's case the borough council of neighbouring Crawley supports the expansion proposals, and Kent County Council maintains a neutral, stance.
• The Greater London Council has mounted an intensive campaign for revival of the plans for a third London Airport ait Maplin, 45 miles east of London in the Thames estuary marshes. The GLC argues that, in addition to the fact that the area is thinly-populated, an airport there would regenerate East London and South Essex both socially and economically. The BAA calls the GLC's argument "misleading" and claims that the costs of developing Maplin have been considerably under-played.

New chairman, members for CAA "watchdog"
A new chairman and five new mem-
bers have been appointed by the Civil
Aviation Authority to the Air Trans-
port Users' Committee (ATUC). Tjhis
follows a series of resignations from
that body, which was established \ to monitor the sphere of influence of the CAA as a consumer-protection organi-sation (see Flight, October 6, page 1097).
The new chairman is Mrs Jean Barker, a former Mayor of Cam-

bridge, who is UK delegate to the United Nations Status of Women Commission. She replaces Sir Archi-bald Hope who retired on September 30, and whose successor was to have been Professor Alan Day, of the Lon-don School of Economics. Professor Day said he resigned because if he had not done so, the chairman of the CAA, Nigel Foulkes, would have fired him.
The new members are B. P. Bot-

wood, wine and spirit merchant from Morpeth; John Cox, managing direc-tor of Open University Educational Enterprises; Bobin Duff, chairman of the Scottish Ballet; John Foster, con-troller of computer services for the Beecham Group; and Mrs Cherry Lewis, a barrister with experience of air law and airline consumer rela-tions. The CAA says that all five are frequent air travellers. Their appoint-ments are for three years.