

National

Air traffic controllers ask that talks be resumed

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization Wednesday asked a government authority to order the Federal Aviation Administration to resume talks to end PATCO's six-week-old strike.

The request was made to the Federal Labor Relations Authority, which is considering the union's appeal of an administrative law judge's recommendation that

it be decertified as the bargaining agent for FAA controllers.

The FAA quickly opposed the suggestion, telling the three-member authority that if it orders the two sides back to the bargaining table, "it would in fact be sanctioning strikes by federal employees."

FAA General Counsel Dolph Sand denied what he said were reports the administration would

welcome a return-to-bargaining order. To date the administration has taken a hard-line stance since the controllers walked out Aug. 3.

"Speaking for this administration, we insist that the law be enforced," he said.

What that demands, he insisted, is nothing less than PATCO's permanent decertification.

The union asked the authority to issue an interim order requiring

PATCO and the FAA to resume negotiations by Sept. 23, with any unresolved issues sent to arbitration if no agreement is reached by Oct. 23.

Under the proposal, the arbitrator would send recommendations back to the authority, which then would also decide the decertification question.

Earlier, Kenneth Blaylock, president of the American Feder-

ation of Government Employees, the nation's largest union of federal workers, and head of the AFL-CIO Public Employees Department, called decertification a "temporary" solution and warned unrest is growing among other federal workers.

"I don't think PATCO is on trial," Blaylock said. "The whole federal labor relations system is on trial."

He said the FAA, in seeking decertification, wants "a gallon of blood and punitive action" against the union, but said eliminating one side will not resolve the labor dispute.

PATCO General Counsel Richard Leighton asked the authority to reverse the recommendation of administrative law judge John Fenton and remand the case for a new hearing.

The hearing before the authority, which acts similar to the National Labor Relations Board and oversees enforcement of labor laws affecting federal workers, could be the last out-of-court move by PATCO.

Fenton recommended decertification in ruling Aug. 14 that PATCO had engaged in an unfair labor practice by striking illegally.

Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis and Federal Aviation Administration officials, acting on orders from the White House, have refused to rehire striking

controllers. Instead, they have set out to "rebuild" the air traffic control system by training new recruits.

Following Fenton's decision, PATCO appealed to the authority on Sept. 1, alleging in part that Fenton had engaged in possible "grossly improper conduct"; the union did not have adequate time to prepare for the early hearings; and the government did not show sufficient proof that PATCO called the strike.

The union was particularly upset over what it felt was Fenton's speedy action in rendering an adverse decision, saying he apparently did not even read their brief.

"It is difficult to believe that the administrative law judge could have read PATCO's 20-page brief, seriously considered it, drafted a 10-page, single-spaced decision, and had it typed with only one or two typographical errors, all within four hours — even if he skipped lunch," the union said.

Nation's industrial production drops, unemployment increase projected

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The nation's industrial production dropped by 0.4 percent in August, the biggest decline since last year's recession and one reflecting cutbacks in autos and appliances, the Federal Reserve reported Wednesday.

The August decline was the first drop for that month since 1979, which deviated from what otherwise had been a fairly consist-

ent pattern of August increases over the years.

On the basis of recent measurements of inventory buildup and lackluster retail sales, as well as the latest production figures, the economy "is beginning to look a lot worse," said economist Evelina Tainer of the First National Bank of Chicago.

"I'd say unemployment is going to increase sharply in September," she added.

Industrial production is closely tied to employment levels and accounts for about 30 percent of gross national product. A third-quarter measurement of GNP is due on Friday.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige Tuesday predicted the figure for July through September would show no change or be a slight overall decline.

The August drop in production followed a 0.3 percent rise the

previous month. The last downturn was a 0.1 percent decline in April. But August was the steepest since the end of the recession — a 0.8 percent dip in July 1980.

The depth of the recession for production occurred in May of last year, when it dropped a full 3 percent. All of the figures were after seasonal adjustment and some represented new revisions by the Fed.

While most of the August production decline was in autos, trucks and vehicle parts, a sharp decline of 1 percent was also regis-

tered for consumer goods, and 1.8 percent in home goods, mostly appliances. Automotive products, including auto parts, were down 7.1 percent.

Output of equipment, both business and defense, advanced in August, but output of materials was down half a percent, reflecting a reduction in production of metals such as steel and of parts of consumer durable goods.

At 152.8 percent of the 1967 average, the industrial production index for August was 7.5 percent higher than a year earlier.

Airplane's fuel depletion under FAA investigation

United Press International
TAMPA, Fla. — The Federal Aviation Administration confirmed Wednesday it is investigating a Sept. 6 incident in which a Pan American World Airways DC-10 en route from Los Angeles to Miami was diverted to Tampa International Airport and landed moments before it ran out of fuel.

The pilot of the jumbo jet was

about halfway across the Gulf of Mexico when he alerted air traffic controllers his gauges indicated his fuel supply had dropped dangerously low.

The plane, Flight 866, was diverted to Tampa as the closest facility with a runway large enough to handle the jet and it landed about 6 a.m.

"When the airplane landed, all three engines were running," Pan Am spokesman Jim Arey told The Tampa Tribune. "But when it was taxiing to the terminal, the engines started to quit from lack of fuel. It was a critical fuel problem."

"They didn't have as much fuel on board as they should have," FAA spokesman Jack Barker said Wednesday in Atlanta. "There was no real danger to it. They just didn't have sufficient fuel to go non-stop into Miami so they went into Tampa."

"Evidently a mechanic in Los Angeles may have measured the wrong tank," Barker said. "There were three fuel tanks and one of

the tanks' fuel gauge was placarded as inoperative. There's a probability the mechanic, using a built-in dipstick measured the wrong tank."

"The investigation is continuing as to exactly why this happened," Barker said. "The crew was grounded. That's the normal procedure. The crew was taken off flying status until an investigation is completed."

Barker said the captain, flight engineer and mechanic all are involved in the investigation being conducted by FAA offices in Los Angeles, Miami and New York — the captain because he is involved in all aspects of the flight, the flight engineer because he is in charge of fueling and the mechanic because of the nature of the problem.

The passengers aboard the plane apparently were not told why the flight was diverted to Tampa and they disembarked at the terminal and boarded another flight to Miami. The DC-10 then was ferried to Miami.

Capote in hospital for few days

United Press International
NEW YORK — Author Truman Capote, an acknowledged alcoholic hospitalized for the third time in three months, was reported in stable condition Wednesday in New York Hospital.

Capote, 56, collapsed about noon Tuesday in his luxurious Manhattan apartment building, across the street from the United Nations.

He was rushed, pale and trembling, to the Upper East Side hospital, where a spokesman said he was in stable and satisfactory condition.

The spokesman said Capote will stay in the hospital for a couple of days for tests.

Capote, who is as well-known for his talk-show appearances as his writings, was hospitalized twice on Long Island during the summer. Doctors have failed to diagnose his illness.

The writer has publicly admitted he is an alcoholic, but has denied his recent illnesses were the result of alcohol.



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