

When you look at the Washington area, we have a solution. That is provided in the Chairman's bill, to set up a corporation that would include Washington National and Dulles. In that bill, there is authority for the corporation to plan for general aviation airports around the Washington area, which I think are seriously needed.

Mr. SPRINGER. Let's say until the Chairman's bill can be worked out, can we do anything here, in transferring general aviation to the Bolling-Anacostia area, or to Dulles? That is not doing much business.

General McKee. I don't have the authority to do it, unless I can show loud and clear that we have a real safety problem. When you look at the problems all over the United States, I can't declare, in all honesty, Washington National as a crisis airport. It isn't.

Mr. SPRINGER. I am glad to hear that, because there are some of us that would differ with you on that. You are certainly a knowledgeable person. I would take your word for almost anything.

General McKee. There are a lot of people who would seriously disagree. I would like to see less traffic at Washington National. I get more complaints every day about Washington National than any other thing in FAA. I get it from everyone in Washington, practically.

Anything we can do to relieve Washington National, I am all in favor of.

Mr. SPRINGER. What would be wrong with transferring general aviation to Dulles?

General McKee. I don't have the authority to do that.

Mr. SPRINGER. Who does have that authority?

General McKee. I don't think anybody does. The way the law is set up, when you read the law, the only time I can step in and demand that is if I can justify it strictly on a safety reason.

Mr. SPRINGER. You say you can or you can't?

General McKee. If I can justify it on a safety reason. Right now I can't do that.

Mr. SPRINGER. You think, then, that National as it is, with all these coming in, with these 6,000 military aircraft, that it is safe?

General McKee. I consider it as safe as any other airport in the country with a like amount of traffic.

Mr. SPRINGER. That really doesn't tell me much of anything.

General McKee. Mr. Springer, and you know this as well as I do, regardless of what we do, we can put in radar at every airport in this country, ILS systems at every airport in the country, it will obviously greatly improve the operations. But even with all of that, and billions of dollars on airports, I couldn't guarantee you a 100 percent safe operation, as long as we have people who make mistakes and as long as we have equipment that goes out.

There is no infallibility in this thing. What we subscribe for is the maximum possible safety we can get.

Mr. SPRINGER. I don't think any one challenges that people make mistakes and that equipment will go out. Those things will happen. But what we are talking about is that the percentages go down, the fewer aircraft come in, don't you think so, with the fewer aircraft using an airport?

General McKee. That is right. If you had none, you would have 100 percent.