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Military Need Seen As Chief Factor in Post-war Control

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WASHINGTON, April 3.—American recognition of Canada's key geographical position in world aviation is reflected in the careful scrutiny being given today by U.S. airline officials and others to the Prime Minister's statement on civil air policy.

No comparable statement by Mr. King in many months has created such interest. The reason is that American airlines, their global ambition fired by wartime operations for the U.S. Army, are already scrambling with each other for "priority of position" on claims for world air routes—and most of these will pass over Canada.

But there are indications that perhaps all present talk about civil air transport may be beside the point.

World politics and military requirements are going to be the determining factors in United Nations air policy.

MILITARY FACTOR

Whether Canada is able—as Mr. King suggested—to terminate the wartime privileges and concessions granted both the British and United States services will depend less upon agreements than the future military requirements of the Commonwealth and the United States.

This affects particularly the Alaska Highway and the great northwest military air transport line, one of the most amazing developments of the war, and now looked upon by military men as one of the major arteries for hemispheric defense.

It also affects the supply lines to Britain.

Four statesmen—President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles—have referred recently to the necessity of backing the coming world order with sufficient force and maintaining disarmament of the aggressor nations.

HARD TO SEPARATE

This makes it evident it is going to be hard to divorce civil

and military aviation; or the routes by which such aviation operates for the common security of at least the British-American concert, and it is hoped, for all the United Nations.

Thus although Canada has a firm agreement by which concessions or privileges may be cancelled, the question will arise, Will the military necessity which required the granting of the concessions vanish when hostilities cease?

That obviously is a question which can not be answered now.

While exploratory conversations on post-war air policy have already taken place and studies on high policy now occupy London and Washington, international talks on air may still be some distance off.

London and Washington, as the Eden visit made manifest, are agreed that the way to world collaboration is by tackling easy questions first where there exists already basic agreement on long-range objections. They appear to be, and in this order—food, currency, relief, the refugee problem and raw materials.

On a "Don't quote me" basis, many of the private executives of the airlines here dissent in private from the U.S. Government's policy which makes no claim for American post-war priority or interest as a result of lend-lease operations or other undertakings

dictated by immediate military necessity.

FILE APPLICATIONS

On the chance that American airlines will have unlimited opportunity to operate abroad, many of the companies are now rushing to get in their applications.

This explains why Northwestern Airlines Inc., a New England outfit that flies over the Maritimes, has filed for an air route from Boston to London, Paris, Moscow and other European capitals.

Similarly the aggressive Northwest Airlines which taps Canada at Winnipeg and runs to Alaska under the Air Transport Command, seeks a franchise for a route to India over Canada, Russia and China.

In the last analysis, post-war air transport will be decided not by such applications, the views of private individuals who run these air lines, but world politics.