

Predictions



*Chris Beebe
MEC Chairman*

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On January 31, Vice Chairman Craig Skinner, Secretary/Treasurer Phil Osterhus, and I met with senior management: Mr. Wolf, Mr. Gangwal, and Ms. Michelle Bryan, Senior Vice President of Human Resources. We advised them of the seriousness with which both the MEC and I took Messrs. Wolf and Gangwal’s letter of January 20, a letter addressed to me but copied to the pilot group.

I told management that their communication with the pilot group was an overt attempt to separate the pilots from their MEC leadership. I also told them that this was a strategy doomed to failure since neither the MEC nor our pilots would tolerate such a tactic.

It was obvious that management was frustrated with the progress of regional jet negotiations. I reiterated to them several times that there would be no resolution to the RJ talks until the pilots were satisfied that our contractual and operational issues were addressed, and that our job security concerns were alleviated.

In response, Mr. Wolf proposed creating a committee of ALPA members and Company representatives to solve these items. I told Mr. Wolf that the MEC had already drawn up a list of outstanding issues that was currently in discussion with Labor Relations and our Negotiating Committee as a part of the RJ talks.

Then, a week later, Michelle Bryan wrote a letter to me and copied it to the pilot group. This letter was filled with inaccurate statements about the RJ negotiations and the Company’s dealings with the Union.

I wanted first, to advise you of what occurred at the meeting with senior management, and second, and more importantly, to discuss events that have happened since then, as well as what we might expect in the future. Specifically, the Company has now announced that a significant number of Check Pilots will return to line flying. Is this coincidental? I think not.

I will speculate that there will be a succession of “bad news” events in the not-so-distant future. The return of Check Pilots to the line is just the beginning. For example, in light of their three straight quarters of losses, it is likely that management will begin dropping hints that they will no longer be able to continue with their aggressive acquisition plans for new narrow-body aircraft. They will likely also point to their inability to purchase wide-body aircraft in light of the lack of feed for these aircraft. We may also see a diminution in the level of flying at some domiciles.

We now have approximately 1,200 new pilots who are not covered by the no-furlough language of our Contract. Without a doubt, management is aware of this. They could advance the threat of having hired too many pilots. The clear implication would be one of furloughing a part of our pilot group, a strategy we have seen before.

Also, at the time that this *US AIRWAVES* went to print, the Company was still threatening to shut down operations at the end of the AFA-Company cooling off period at 0001 EDT March 25. Although the Company is bound by the



Contract to properly provide us with pay and benefits, a decision like this puts the future of US Airways at stake.

These actions are predictable for our management and, in fact, for any management that feels they are being impeded in their business plan. However, we cannot allow this to intimidate us. It is true now more than ever that we must vigorously defend our Contract, our profession, and our fellow pilots.

Please keep in mind that if management reneges on the commitment to growth that they made to our pilot group, it is due to their inability to execute their plan for turning US Airways into a “world class carrier of choice.” It is not the pilots’ fault for defending our current Contract, or demanding appropriate job protections in the RJ talks. Our job security concerns must be satisfied.

Now having been the bearer of what might appear to be some dire predictions, where do we go from here? First of all, your MEC will continue to do what is in the best interests of the pilot group. We may not proceed in a manner that meets the expectations of management, but it is more critical that we meet your expectations. Second, prior to making any decision, the MEC will, as in the past, take every reasonable step to analyze the issue. Finally, through careful deliberation, communication of the issues to you, and the democratic process of ALPA, we will collectively protect our current and future interests.



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