

# *The State of Your Union and What's the Harm in Harmonization?*



*Chris Beebe  
MEC Chairman*

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**A**s I write this article for the *US AIRWAVES*, another chapter of US Airways labor history is drawing to a close. The Association of Flight Attendants has concluded a five-year agreement with management. I am told that this is the first time in 14 years that the management of USAir/US Airways has not had an open contract with a labor union to negotiate. If true, it would be an excellent time for our management to refocus their attention on running our airline. ‘Nuff said.

For our part, the crisis created by the AFA talks and the potential shutdown of flight operations that was threatened by management allowed us to concentrate on building and testing a large part of our communication network for the future. The operation of the Comm Center, although for just a few days, gave us the opportunity to debug the spool up and implementation. As we progress toward 2003, and the contract we negotiate, this will stand us in good stead for accurate, timely dissemination of information to you.

## **Whoever heard of harmonization?**

This is one of those terms that sounds pretty innocuous when you first hear it. Harmonization is the aligning of our FARs with those of other countries with the stated intent of providing seamless service in regard to ATC, aircraft maintenance, manufacturing, simulator certifi-

cation and the aviation infrastructure. It all began 16 years ago, if you can believe it, and continues through today. The most recent talks have been with the European Union and involve their JARs (Joint Aviation Regulations). As I said earlier, the stated intent is to provide seamless ATC services.

But, wait a minute. It also involves pilot licensing. Today, except in situations approved by the FAA, only a pilot with an FAA license can fly an airplane with an N at the beginning of the tail number. Harmonization would allow someone with the equivalent of an FAA pilot’s license to fly that same airplane. I suppose the good news here is that if you are of a mind to apply for a job in the EU or wherever else licensing requirements are harmonized, you can do so without muss or fuss. The bad news, of course, is that a pilot from the EU can come here and do the same.

Carry this one step further, and you can see how a startup carrier could enlist flight crews from other countries, hire them at less than competitive wages, and begin the cycle of deregulation all over again, this time on a global scale. It does not take a rocket scientist to see how this could also provide a ready pool of individuals who might just be willing to fly through a job action in order to get a job with a large US carrier.

## So, what do we do?

Harmonization has been placed on a fast track by our FAA. They have targeted 230 FARs and it is their intent to move forward with this process as quickly as possible, according to Jane Garvey, FAA Administrator. She has also stated that the “people issues” must be dealt with. Well, we’ll see. In the meantime, ALPA is working full time to make sure that we have a place at the table as this moves forward. Have no doubt about it, this will happen. First with the EU, and then with some other country or group of countries. Only by remaining vigilant and insisting on our participation can we advance our own job security agenda. I’m sure you will hear more of this in the near future.

## Smile, you’re on . . .

At ALPA’s Global Pilot Symposium, NTSB Chairman Jim Hall addressed a myriad of issues. Some were related to a review by the Rand Corporation as to how the NTSB is equipped to investigate accidents in the future. He started by framing the issue of accident investigation against a global backdrop. The NTSB has been providing investigative services worldwide to a number of countries. This will expand as the nature of aviation accidents, such as Alaska 261, USAir 427 and EgyptAir 990, becomes much more complex. He also stated that the “party process” of investigation has proven itself time and time again as a reliable methodology for getting to the cause of an accident.

Chairman Hall then commented on the need for better recording of events leading up to the time of an accident. He spoke of improved Flight Data Recorders and Cockpit Voice Recorders. As an enhancement to the existing record, he also said that the NTSB would be making a recommendation for the installation of Cockpit Video Recorders for FAR 121 aircraft with glass cockpits and also single-engine aircraft used for FAR 135 operations. This is the only way, he said, that a record of what the instruments were reading at impact could be preserved.

Now, we have an excellent relationship with Jim Hall, arising from USAir 427, and we respect his abilities as head of the NTSB. He has spoken at our Safety Forum and been readily available to us on a number of occasions. Nevertheless, in this balance between privacy and safety, ALPA has worked vehemently to protect the privacy side, and will continue to do so.

## A real labor guy

Also at the Global Pilot Symposium, one of the guest speakers was John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO. If any of you do not know that ALPA is affiliated with this organization, shame on you. The AFL-CIO was the prime mover behind labor’s presence at the World Trade Organization talks in Seattle. You might also remember that a march was held there to help emphasize labor’s insistence that we be included in those talks. As a result, the WTO did not act at this meeting and instead must do so at some future time and place. The issue is whether or not to include aviation in the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) or not. This would lead to increased liberalization of aviation on a global basis and therefore be disadvantageous to labor.

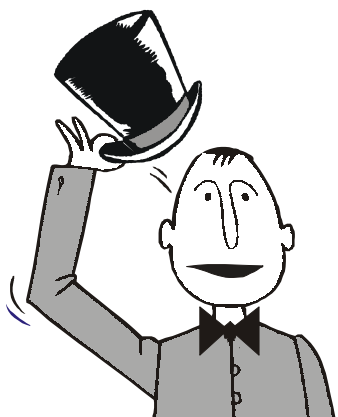
John Sweeney also commented on the goals of the AFL-CIO in the upcoming elections (no, this is not to be viewed as ALPA’s endorsement) as sending Al Gore to the White House, winning back a Democratic majority in the House, and narrowing the margin held by the Republicans in the Senate. He sees this as the best way to prevent foreign ownership and cabotage. Additionally, it would allow for the inclusion of labor and human rights standards in international agreements.

## So, what’s your point?

I realize that most of us want to hear of the latest scheduling, grievance, or representational issue facing our pilot group and how ALPA is continually working to protect your interests. It is equally important to make sure that, while we are focusing on issues close to home, we do not lose sight of other important issues that are looming. Most times, we are dealing with the crisis *du jour* and have no spare time or energy to devote to some of these items. Nevertheless, they too will be upon us before we know it and I will do my best to keep you abreast of them. Don’t say I didn’t tell you so.



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## *Tip of the Hat*

*Highlighting achievements and outstanding work of your ALPA representatives.*



Thirty US Airways pilots volunteered to man the Comm Center as the AFA-Company cooling-off period entered its last days. They answered over 900 calls from pilots between 9:00 a.m. March 22 to 10:00 a.m. March 25.

The Comm Center was a joint effort of the Communications and Strike Preparedness Committees. Members of the Strike Prep Committee, including Steve Smyser, Mike Lyons, and Pete Dugstad, trained pilot volunteers on the phone banks and the computers. Jack Stephan, Strike Prep Committee Chairman, prepared SPC contingency plans for the pilots, and Roy Freundlich, Communications Chairman, planned and executed the Comm Center setup and activation, and prepared MEC Communications throughout the operation.