

ALPA's Global Vision

Any pilot who has taken off to the west at LAX



has no doubt seen the vast port facility off the left side, in Long Beach, Calif. Hundreds of container ships line up to offload their cargo, all destined for hungry consumers somewhere in North America. On the surface, it's an economic jewel for the United States. As a port of entry, it is crucial to our economy, but it is also a mirage.

Nearly every one of the thousands of men and women working on those container ships—from captain to deckhand—is a foreign national. Imagine a world in which every flight inbound and outbound for a foreign destination belonged to a non-U.S. or Canadian carrier, all with foreign crews. That's the world that the U.S. maritime industry has become—because of decisions made by the U.S. government, the desire for the industry to lower costs, and the failure of maritime labor to influence the process.

This issue of *Air Line Pilot* is dedicated to the host of global issues that affect airline pilots across ALPA. Whether you fly in the right seat for an express airline providing mainline feed, or you serve as a flight engineer on a cargo airliner, or you are the senior captain at a major airline with your choice of international routes—this magazine matters to you.

The truth is that many aspects of our very regulated pro-

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profession are increasingly affected by decisions made in other countries—whether by corporate entities or government agencies. A few recent examples make that truth very clear:

- ICAO's adoption of the Age 65 retirement standard pushed the FAA over the edge toward planning to change the U.S. regulation.
- The detention of the two ExcelAire pilots in Brazil after their midair collision with an airliner in 2006 showed criminalization's ugly face.
- The KLM–Air France and Delta Air Lines decision to coordinate transatlantic flying brings globalization home.

The truth is that global economic growth will be fueled by the growth of air travel. Predictions about the increasing scale of our industry are way off the charts. If we, as ALPA pi-

lots, want to make sure that we are not the next profession to lose control of our job protections, we need to make sure that our union maintains a strong position with Congress, Parliament, and other decision-makers.

Pilots can only influence the process with a strong union able to deal face to face with ICAO, the EU, China, global



airline alliances, and the corporate money behind airline growth. Failure to commit to a global vision

could lead to a world in which ALPA pilots remain flying just to provide fee-for-departure feed for the foreign airlines that fly lucrative international routes.

Don't think it could happen? Drop by the Port of Long Beach—or the ports in New York or Jacksonville or Houston, for that matter—and ask the seaman who brought you the latest batch of high-definition TVs that will soon be on sale at nonunion Wal-Mart. In the end, no one cares more about your job than you. And no one cares more about all the issues that affect our profession and airline pilots' futures than our union.

The good news is that we have allies in this fight. The international unions that form IFALPA share a common interest. And within the three major airline alliances—Star Alliance, Skyteam, and oneworld—pilots are working to coordinate their interactions with managements within these powerful global networks. Once again, it's not about pilots fighting pilots, it's about pilots uniting across the world to make sure that the standards—both economic and safety—are adequate everywhere.

In 1931, the Key Men of ALPA had a grand vision for a union that would stand the test of time. They built a union that would one day help make flying a job worth having. They built a union that would one day make flying the safest form of transportation the world has ever seen. We must now build on that legacy and make sure we construct a union that makes airline piloting a profession that flourishes in the globalized economy.

Please invest some of your time in reading about these issues and supporting our union's efforts to win in this global game.