

**Remarks by Capt. John Prater, ALPA President  
43<sup>rd</sup> Regular Board of Directors Meeting  
Monday, October 11, 2010**

**“One Goal, One Vision, One Union”**

Good morning and welcome to the 43<sup>rd</sup> ALPA Board of Directors meeting. As you can see, the theme we've adopted for this meeting is “One Goal, One Vision, One Union.”

Let's start with our goal — but first, a little hangar flying, and a little history.

What's our primary goal as airline pilots flying the line? I'd say it's to fulfill this union's longstanding motto, “Schedule with Safety.”

And what a job airline pilots do. On any given day, thousands of our members from dozens of our airlines span the globe to deliver our passengers and cargo safely to their destinations.

To make that happen, we need to finish the leg by putting the mains in the touchdown zone, straddling the centerline, on speed and at the appropriate descent rate. To get to that point, we pilots and an enormous number of other workers behind the scenes need to perform a great number of specific tasks, and do them right. We must meet high standards, flight after flight, for our entire career.

We have to arrive at the airport on time, rested, fed, hydrated, in good health, well trained, and well motivated.

We deserve to have the peace of mind of knowing that the terms of our employment, our rates and rigs, our benefits and our due processes, are codified and protected by a solid collective bargaining agreement negotiated by our union.

We have to have a well designed, well maintained, airworthy aircraft. We need to have the best possible airports and infrastructure — air traffic control, dispatchers, weather reporting and forecasting, baggage handlers and loaders. We need enough Jet A in the tanks to get us to our destination, miss, go to our alternate, and still safely land. And when we don't have all of those, we need to have the conviction and courage to say, “No. We won't go.” And, at that time, that pilot needs to have the power of this international union behind him.

Ours is a very dynamic industry, based on action and speed — but also promising safety, security, and comfort. We need to launch with a good plan, have options, be flexible, and continue to re-examine those options every step of the way.

Leading this international union of 53,000 airline pilots is much like flying an airliner. We have to have a good plan, follow it while remaining flexible, and be fully prepared to change course when necessary. We must be willing to make quick, bold — but prudent — decisions and take calculated risks based on the best information we have available to us. Most of all, we need to maintain maximum situational awareness in all phases of the operation.

I often think about the fact that ALPA was founded by pilot labor leaders in 1931 because their peers were sick of pilot-pushing, often in bad weather, when they were forced to slog on into terrible conditions and their options went from poor to nil. The early airmail pilots, and the airline pilots they became, were sick of being told, “I don’t care how low the fog is, if you don’t get in that airplane right now and fly this trip, you’re fired!”

In 1968, this Association made one of those early airmail pilots an honorary ALPA member. His name was Charles Augustus Lindbergh, and although he never was an airline pilot, ALPA recognized him for his many contributions to aviation. Fittingly nicknamed “The Lone Eagle,” Lindbergh was a complex and controversial figure best remembered for his 1927 flight from New York to Paris — the first solo transatlantic flight — flying *The Spirit of St. Louis*.

I often think about how different our era is from his; yet how so very little has really changed for pilots.

When Lindbergh, only 25 years old, won a place in the history books and the \$25,000 Orteig Prize by flying that nonstop flight, the number ‘1’ possessed a special magic. Lindbergh’s globe-shrinking flight was a successful gamble on *one* engine, *one* weary pilot (yes, himself), *one each* of a few basic flight instruments, *no* radio, and *practically no* survival equipment.

“Lucky Lindy” had a plan, but the concept of redundancy was not part of his strategy. He bet that the unreliable weather reports of the day were correct and that, for at least 36 hours, each essential component would not fail. He was a pioneer, but he was also a shrewd gambler. And he flew alone.

The earliest pilots flew by “contact” — by maintaining visual contact with the earth. After contact flying came rudimentary instrument flight, after that came even-more-precise cockpit and navigation instrumentation — thanks in large part

to years of ALPA pilots assisting the government, aircraft manufacturers, and airlines to figure out just what pilots needed to know and see to fly and land.

The newest achievement in the field of aircraft design will come with the delivery of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner — complete with heads-up displays for both pilot and co-pilot, and a host of other features our founding members could never even have dreamed about in 1931.

Likewise, the ALPA toolbox offers many different resources that can be used a number of ways to achieve our goals. As varied as the airplanes we fly are the tools you have available to represent your members' interests. And though we've often said, "It takes a pilot," to be even more accurate, "It takes a crew."

And that's what we have — a superb crew. I've been pilot in command of this union for almost four years now, but keeping ALPA aloft on a day-to-day basis is not a one-man job. Our challenges are far too many and far too diverse to need less than a full crew, which includes our national officers, executive vice-presidents, all of you — the ALPA Board of Directors — along with hundreds of volunteers and staff experts.

Today, your crew will report threats near and far. As our ALPA First Vice-President Captain Paul Rice will outline in more detail, today we must deal with the desire of some domestic and foreign managers and investors who, with the enthusiastic support of some governments, wish to beat us on something even more important than being the first to complete a solo trans-Atlantic flight. They want to take away our very livelihoods, by taking our flying.

The ALPA Vice-President-Administration/Secretary is the national officer who makes sure we have all the ALPA equivalents of checklists, dispatch papers, clearances, and gate assignments, and that we *comply* with them. Captain Couette has much to update you on regarding how we have streamlined administrative processes and implemented new technology.

The main responsibility of the ALPA Vice-President-Finance/Treasurer is to make sure that we monitor that the tanks are balanced and act to ensure there is enough fuel for our flight. We have resources ready to support our members around the world, day and night. Captain Randy Helling will talk more about the financial "fuel" that powers our Association later this morning.

I said earlier we have adopted as our theme for this Board of Directors meeting, "One Goal, One Vision, One Union."

Our members fly aircraft of different sizes with different propulsion systems, with varied paint schemes and brand names. But we are still One Union.

We are 53,000 members. We are 38 different pilot groups. We are one union.

Because we are ONE union, we have worked together to adjust and still be remarkably successful with fewer resources over the past few years.

We have reversed the trend of concessionary, bankruptcy-driven bargaining of just a few years ago and made positive gains in new collective bargaining agreements at Jazz Air, Wasaya, Alaska, Hawaiian, Spirit, and just last week, Air Transat.

The Spirit pilots' five-day strike in June led to a new contract and was a superb testament to their solidarity and tenacity. They were supported by the power and vision of ALPA's Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee which brought together pilots from across our union to the Spirit rallies and picket lines.

The merger of US Airways and America West began in 2005. From the beginning, it was laden with frustration due to concessions, furloughs, and a loss of pensions.

As seniority integration began, positions hardened and personal slights created open wounds.

Arbitration resulted in a new seniority list and then the conflict became open warfare.

The merger of airlines followed by the inability of union representatives to resolve conflicts destroyed ALPA representation on THAT property — and their pilots have lost major contractual gains.

While we have made important improvements in ALPA merger policy, there is nothing in any ops manual, regulation or procedure that will prevent a pilot from making a bad decision.

As local Union leaders, it's in your hands to make decisions based on fact, not fear or internal politics.

There are a lot of pilots right now in this room, union leaders, who are facing the challenges of a merger, joint collective bargaining agreements, and seniority list integrations.

- United and Continental
- Pinnacle, Mesaba and Colgan
- Atlantic Southeast, and ExpressJet

Your pilots and their futures depend on you to utilize the merger policy and resources available to you. Your efforts in the days and nights ahead will establish the solidarity of your combined groups and ultimately determine if ALPA will survive at your airline.

This union will continue to stand by our Midwest pilots as they go through their own four-way merger. And I hope our brothers and sisters at AirTran know that this union—your brothers and sisters—will stand by you, as well.

Now let's talk about our future. By creating our Professional Development Group, we acted upon the recognition that early interaction with future airline pilots will provide our Union with stronger ties to the next generation of ALPA members.

With support for pilots from the moment they first dream of flight throughout the span of their careers, from furlough support to military service, we strengthen our ability to bring out the best in our profession.

The passage of H.R. 5900, the latest extension of the FAA reauthorization legislation, brings about a law with a strong and positive ALPA imprint. Your union played a major role in bringing about landmark legislation that will improve airline pilot qualifications, selection, training, and mentoring, helping to raise our profession to even higher standards. H.R. 5900 also set the deadline for the FAA to issue its long-overdue notice of proposed rulemaking on flight- and duty-time limits and minimum rest requirements. And by law set a deadline for these rules to be complete.

ALPA was critically involved in shaping the FAA's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on flight-time/duty-time rules. Board of Directors Committee 3 will review and provide direct input to our FTDT Committee on the preparation of our public submission to the NPRM.

Turning to the future, in many respects, we have a tougher situation than Charles Lindbergh faced in 1927. He had a single goal on his flight: to safely cross the Atlantic and win the prize. We, however, don't have the luxury of a single goal — or *DO* we?

You might say, "My goal is different from your goal." For example, when you're negotiating the retirement and insurance sections of your contract, surely you will face wide ranging personal priorities from members whose ages may be four decades or more apart; who fly different airplanes, and who have differing priorities. Ask 100 pilots what they want in their next contract and you may get 100 different answers.

So, what single goal can keep us together?

Our goal as the ALPA Board of Directors is what it's been for 79 years: *advancement of the airline piloting profession*. Each of you are ALPA leaders and as such take your responsibility and duty to your members honestly and with complete dedication. But together as we meet this week you represent the entire professional membership of 53,000 airline pilots and ALPA members. Old, young, junior, senior, and, yes — future members.

And that brings me to you, and your role here this week. As union leaders we have decisions to make and sometimes they are difficult. But we need to establish our priorities and determine what is needed to accomplish those goals and be ready for the next opportunity.

For example, in the summer of 2009, when FAA Administrator Babbitt created the Flight Time/Duty Time Aviation Rulemaking Committee and invited the Association to participate, we knew that doing so would be expensive, but we also knew that ALPA could not afford NOT to participate. We found the means to do so, and our participation was vitally important to every ALPA member. We are already involved with three more Aviation Rulemaking Committees, and your fellow ALPA volunteers are setting the rules for the future.

But as pilots, we need to be thinking 100 miles ahead of the airplane; and as union leaders we need to be thinking decades ahead of our union. Leading this union, like flying, is such a dynamic activity that we must be very good at setting priorities — and as union leaders you know that setting priorities is crucial to being prepared to take full advantage of every opportunity.

Part of our role as ALPA leaders is to remind each other that we are members of a proud and noble profession. And we need to remind the public that their airline pilots' abilities, skills, and leadership cannot easily be replaced. Not only do we carry cargo and passengers to their destinations safely, but our profession helps keep the global economy running and international commerce flowing.

In that vein, we have produced a public service message to demonstrate the important role that pilots have in connecting families, sustaining communities in all regions of the world, defending our countries, and so much more.

I asked for this public message to be developed to underscore the essential role airline pilots play in their everyday lives. But, in hindsight this is a message that we all need to hear. After all, our profession isn't for everyone. Only a small percentage of the population has the skills, ability, dedication, and perseverance to do what we do, and as the video illustrates, what ALPA pilots do every day

matters. Whether it's bringing families together or providing relief assistance after a disaster, our jobs are important.

Just as fundamentally important is our commitment to assist in the evolution of airline pilots. Now — this week — is when we must make decisions and take actions that will affect this union and our profession — for the near term, the long term, and for the next generation of our fellow airline pilots. Now is the time for us to listen and learn, speak our minds, deliberate, and act — not as “Lone Eagles,” but as fellow union leaders committed to all airline pilots and not simply seeking your own prize.

As sisters and brothers bound by our commitment to our profession and to our Union, we must pledge our solidarity and vow to create and endorse the absolute best flight plan to secure our members' collective future. Now is the time for us to work together to create a strategic plan that will encompass our goals and vision for this union.

Like Lindbergh, like the airmail pilots who founded this Association, like the World War II vets who led the transition from props to jet airliners, all of you are pioneers. In this place, in this time, you walk boldly through threats and into an uncertain future, but one ripe with possibility and promise. Through ALPA, you are facing that future unified, as ONE UNION, with one goal and one vision. Unlike “The Lone Eagle,” you don't have to fly solo — you have a crew. We are each other's crew... and with 53,000 fellow airmen... and thousands more across the world who want to join us and be like us, you are the Union leaders who will determine the future of this profession and our Union!

I am proud of you and it is truly an honor to be one of you. Thank you.

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