

# Same Terms



Uncertainty still surrounds the fate of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 as we go to press. ALPA has offered any assistance we can contribute through our membership in the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations. The investigation is ongoing. For that reason, our union has selectively granted news media interviews in the context of the event, but we have restricted our

outreach to clear opportunities to advance ALPA's long-standing safety priorities and to comment free of speculation.

While ALPA has been dedicated for more than eight decades to advancing the highest standards of safety and security, it is also our union's responsibility to ensure that the U.S. airline industry is economically strong and competitive. Equally important, we also work to make certain the pilots we represent garner the strongest possible contracts to advance their careers and the profession.

In a recent address before the International Aviation Club of Washington, D.C., I underscored how the United States must adapt its current international aviation policy to meet new challenges in the global economic arena.

In the Norwegian Air International (NAI) scheme, it is easy to find compelling evidence of the urgent need for the United States to adapt its air services agreements to give U.S. airlines and their employees a fair competitive fight. Even though its operations are centered in Norway and its parent company is Norwegian Air Shuttle, NAI just received an air operator's certificate (AOC) from Ireland, despite the fact that it does not plan to operate flights to or from that country.

Understandably, the opposition is rapidly escalating to Norwegian Air Shuttle's attempt to use NAI to avoid Norwegian laws and exploit the U.S.-EU Open Skies Agreement to perform long-haul international flying with an unfair economic advantage over its U.S. competitors.

In a recent letter to Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, a remarkably large bipartisan group of 38 U.S. senators raised serious concerns about NAI's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation for a foreign air carrier permit that would allow it to fly to the United States. In addition to the Senate letter, which was led by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), and Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.), more than 60 members of the U.S. House of Representatives have also written to the DOT expressing concern or outright opposition.

As Lufthansa chief executive Christoph Franz reportedly told one of Norway's largest business newspapers on March 17, "We respect Norwegian highly and gladly compete against them on long-haul routes, but that must take place on the same terms."

With objections mounting in all corners, NAI now appears to have flip-flopped on its public message. In a March 12 story published in *The Wall Street Journal*, the CEO of NAI's parent company said that he is making plans to buy another European carrier with an existing permit to serve the United States should NAI fail to obtain a permit from the DOT.

In contrast, those who oppose the NAI scheme have done so in no uncertain terms. ALPA has delivered its message of objection to the DOT directly and through international news media outlets ranging from stories carried by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation and *The New York Times* to a letter to the editor published in *The Wall Street Journal*. In addition, nearly 30,000 pilots, other industry workers, and concerned members of the public have joined ALPA's petition and called on the DOT to deny NAI's application.

For myriad reasons, not least that it mirrors the "flag of convenience" business model that cost tens of thousands of U.S. maritime jobs, ALPA has called for DOT to reject NAI's scheme.

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As always, our union is focused on ensuring that the U.S. airline industry is competitive and can support and create U.S. jobs, but we are equally determined to build stable careers for airline pilots through strong contracts. In our union's collective bargaining, we recognize that no silver bullets exist for challenges in the fee-for-departure or any other sector of the industry. Acting to advance individual pilot group contracts requires formidable resources, thorough expertise, and tough decisions.

As ALPA does for all the pilot groups our union represents, we provide a comprehensive array of resources to assist our pilot group leaders in taking on issues ranging from longevity and pay rates to flow and career progression. In the end, it comes down to each pilot group leader's finding common terms, making a decision, and moving forward.

While the terms of contracts and global competitors' schemes are ever changing, your union will always provide its unrivaled expertise and essential resources on the same terms: membership. 🌐

  
Capt. Lee Moor, ALPA President