

## **Continuity and Change in Furthering the FSF Mission**

Opening Remarks, 58th Annual International Air Safety Seminar

Moscow, Russia, Nov. 8, 2005

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### **Introduction**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to Moscow, and welcome to Flight Safety Foundation's 58th consecutive annual International Air Safety Seminar. This is the oldest, longest-running and certainly the most prestigious aviation safety seminar, and I'm delighted that you all could be here.

It seems like hardly yesterday when we were at our last meeting in Shanghai, China, and Gen. Pieter Denekin invited us to bring our next seminar to Moscow. I would like to start off by thanking our colleagues in Flight Safety Foundation–International (FSF-I),

based here in Moscow, for hosting us in this beautiful, but chilly, city. Those of us from Washington, D.C., are not used to seeing snow so early in the year! I hope that most of you were able to attend the reception last night at the Kremlin. We owe a debt of gratitude to our hosts for organizing such a unique and wonderful event, and, in this respect, I must pay special tribute to Valery Shelkovnikov and Rafail Aptukov, as well as their other colleagues.

I also owe thanks to the staff of Flight Safety Foundation for all of their hard work in pulling this conference together. I would like to thank Jim Burin, Ann Hill, Linda Horger and, especially, Bob Vandel, our executive vice president, who contributes so much to all of the Foundation's activities. Without their efforts, we wouldn't be here today.

### **Recent Accidents**

As we gather for this 58th international seminar, the aviation industry can look back on a year that proves the importance of what we do and how vital it is that we continue on our course. A cluster of accidents this summer throughout the world demonstrated that there will always be a need to educate new generations. We can also see that there is a growing disconnect between the industry response to aviation accidents and that of world governments.

Industry looks at every accident as an opportunity to improve and to learn. Careful investigations lead to safety improvements, whether through maintenance changes, pilot training or technology upgrades. We've seen a dramatic lowering of accidents as planes are equipped or re-equipped with the newest accident prevention technology.

But what have the world governments done? There is an increasing concern that there is a movement towards finding criminal blame or even stonewalling investigations. I will return to this point later in my address to tell you what Flight Safety Foundation has been doing on the matter, but in the meantime, the Foundation calls on all states to pass legislation that will ensure expedited and unhindered accident investigations in order to prevent further problems, as opposed to focusing primarily on litigious apportionment of blame.

### **Continuing FSF Technical Activities**

I'd like to say a few words about some of our activities that have now been successfully completed or are ongoing. I'm not going to spend too much time on them, because of what you can read in your handouts or on the Flight Safety Foundation web site. In addition, some of them will be covered in later presentations during the seminar. Nevertheless, the ones I will mention are extremely important to the continued development of aviation safety and certainly are ones that have kept us very busy.

#### *Ultra-long-range Operations (ULRO)*

First, I want to talk briefly about ultra-long-range operations (ULRO). This is an effort of which I am particularly proud, since it represents a classic example of Flight Safety Foundation identifying a potential problem and taking action to solve it before it even existed.

As you will recall, for some time the Foundation has been leading an industry team examining ways in which ultra-long-range commercial aircraft, which are now available

from the major manufacturers, should best be crewed and operated. This work was completed with a number of recommendations for best practices that are now being used in airline service.

Using FSF recommendations, Singapore Airlines is now flying non-stop from Singapore to New York (Newark) and from New York to Singapore. The latter flight has a scheduled time of 18 hours, 35 minutes and is, currently, the world's longest scheduled-service flight. This is all possible because of the work Flight Safety Foundation did to bring together the main stakeholders to obtain a consensus on best practices. Under the Foundation's neutral umbrella, the scientific results derived from these practical operations are now being shared throughout the industry, and other airlines, including Emirates, are following closely behind with their own ultra-long-range scheduled operations. In doing so, they are relying heavily, if not completely, on the Foundation's work that is set out fully in the August–September 2005 edition of our *Flight Safety Digest*. In closing my remarks on this highly successful project, I would like thank the Foundation's Bob Vandell and Curt Graeber from Boeing, who co-chaired the effort, as well as those who contributed to it, including Airbus, the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), Boeing, the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) and various major long-haul airlines.

#### *Approach-and-landing Accident Reduction (ALAR)*

Approach-and-landing accidents continue to account for about half of all accidents. Flight Safety Foundation has long since completed the FSF *ALAR Tool Kit* that was developed under our umbrella. The FSF *ALAR Tool Kit* has been recognized as a major

safety improvement tool, for which it has received numerous industry awards. If used by all operators and pilots, around the world, approach-and-landing accidents could be significantly reduced. However, until every commercial pilot is aware of and is using our recommendations, this will not happen. Consequently, a considerable part of our resources remain committed to holding workshops in different parts of the world encouraging use of the FSF *ALAR Tool Kit*. During the past year, we undertook four of these workshops in as many countries.

On the other hand, I do not believe that we should be the only ones undertaking this task. While we developed the FSF *ALAR Tool Kit*, doing something we are very good at, we are not really the best ones to be trying to bring about its worldwide implementation. We do not have the financial resources, nor do we have enough people to do this job properly. As a result, we are conducting our workshops only intermittently. Neither do we always have the clout to change the operating practices of the intended recipients.

To spread the ALAR implementation message properly, there should be a continuous effort by those who have the resources, by those who have the most sway among the audience they are trying to influence, and by those who have the most to gain from its success. Ideally, ALAR implementation should be done not only by Flight Safety Foundation, but by the airlines' and the pilots' associations. Consequently, I call upon major organizations, such as the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA), the Air Transport Association of America (ATA), the European Regions Airline Association (ERA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Regional Airline

Association (RAA), and the pilots' unions to participate more strongly with us in this task.

#### *Ground Accident Prevention (GAP)*

We will certainly continue with our Ground Accident Prevention (GAP) program, and you will hear a lot more about it during the forthcoming sessions. Consequently, I will not dwell much on it here. Suffice it to say that we have made tremendous progress during this past year in collecting confidential data, particularly from major airlines and other organizations around the world, that have enabled us to develop a database that can now determine for individual carriers where their main risks lie and the likely costs associated with various aspects of the problem. Parallel ground accident prevention programs are being conducted by other organizations, particularly AAPA, ATA and IATA, and in the United States we are coordinating our efforts with them to ensure that our efforts are not duplicative.

#### *Protection of Accident Safety Data*

As I said earlier, the Foundation has been very concerned recently about the growing tendency for judicial interference in accident investigations. As a result of this, we worked with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to develop language for an Assembly Resolution in which states agreed to develop adjustments to their own local laws or regulations that would allow the accident investigators to do their work unimpeded, with priority being given to determining the cause of any accident. This Assembly Resolution was passed at the ICAO Assembly just over one year ago, and,

since then, we have continued to push for ICAO to provide assistance to states with language on how they might adjust their laws and/or regulations accordingly.

A lot of progress has been made, and, rather than a further Assembly Resolution along the lines mentioned above, we now see a possibility of the proposed changes being incorporated into ICAO Annex 13 itself. This is the annex that lays down how accident investigations are to be conducted and, if this were to be done, it would settle things once and for all. Regrettably, matters like this do not move as quickly as we would like; nevertheless, changing Annex 13 to protect data collected during accident investigations would be the very best that we could ever hope for, and we are now hopeful of being able to do this at the ICAO Assembly next year.

If we are successful, this will be a major step forward for aviation safety since it will then be possible for future accidents to be investigated without concern on the part of witnesses that their evidence given to accident investigators might possibly be used later to prosecute them. In this way, we could expect evidence to be given more willingly, as a result of which we could anticipate that accident causes would be ascertained and problems corrected more easily. We are far more interested in improving safety by removing the causes of past accidents, to ensure that they are not repeated, than we are in punishing those involved without regard to the reasons. Consequently, I urge all of you present to support this FSF initiative by ensuring that your individual governments vote for this change when it comes before the next ICAO General Assembly.

Akrivos Tsolakis' experience in Greece as investigator-in-charge of the tragic Helios accident is a good example of how an investigation can go well if unhindered by judicial authorities.

### **Aviation Safety Alliance**

I am very pleased to announce that the Boards of both Flight Safety Foundation and the Aviation Safety Alliance have approved the merger of our two organizations.

The Aviation Safety Alliance was founded in 1997 to provide education to the media so that they would be better informed about the aviation and air transport industries, with particular emphasis on the safety aspects. It does this through seminars, breakfast meetings and other direct outreach programs. In fact, the Alliance will be hosting one of its newsmaker breakfasts for the Russian media on Wednesday morning. ASA's focus on aviation safety issues and its mission of education makes it a logical addition to the FSF brief. Ms. Susan Coughlin has been the driving force behind the Aviation Safety Alliance, and she has successfully advocated merging its activities with those of the Flight Safety Foundation, which will give our aviation safety message an even stronger voice. While we are still finalizing the formal legalities, the intention is that, as from the end of this year, ASA will be absorbed by Flight Safety Foundation, with its activities then being continued under the FSF umbrella.

We will also absorb ASA's small staff, who, of course, will continue to stay very much involved in former activities. However, we will also take advantage of their



communications expertise to promote FSF activities, and I will talk about this some more later.

## **Board Priorities**

Now I want to tell you about plans that we have to provide further added value for industry and all individuals affected by aviation safety. First, I want to introduce the new chairman of the FSF Board of Governors, Amb. Edward W. Stimpson. Recently, under his direction, the Board of Governors has been taking an increasingly active role in directing the Foundation's affairs.

For several years, one of the Foundation's overriding priorities has been to build an adequate financial reserve to ensure our economic stability. I am pleased to tell you that this level has been achieved and the Board of Governors has now agreed that we should further strengthen the Foundation's position in the industry, as well as the service we provide, by committing more resources to our efforts and by being more proactive. With the various problems and issues facing the aviation industry, the Board is strongly convinced of the need for, and continuing relevance of, an independent and objective Foundation.

With this in mind, earlier this year, the Board held a two-day strategy meeting to consider how best this should be done. From this meeting, the Board identified a number of priorities that included governance, membership, finances and market relevance. However, the top two priorities were:

1. Increase FSF visibility to enhance the aviation industry's awareness of our past successes and continued relevance in an age when safety is at its highest level ever.
2. Focus our efforts on those areas of the world needing most assistance.

Separate Board committees were established to address each of these priorities, and I would like to tell you some of the things that that we will be doing as a result.

### **Increasing FSF Visibility**

#### *Communications Department*

In response to our main priority, the Foundation has now established a Communications Department. The director will be Ms. Emily McGee, who joins us as part of our cooperation with ASA. The new department will have the primary responsibility of external communications, including media relations and education. Another benefit will be that a strong external communications department will explore different ways to distribute news and information to our members and media.

To help us in all this, we have also secured the services of a professional public relations firm, Xenophon Strategies, that has considerable experience in the aviation field and which I would commend to anyone in the industry.

#### *Publications*

Integral to the Foundation's external image, and how we are perceived by those outside our organization, are our numerous safety publications. Flight Safety Foundation has

published and distributed safety-related publications ever since it was founded. They convey impartial safety advice and are held in the highest regard throughout the industry worldwide for their accuracy and veracity. I want to acknowledge the contribution that our former director of publications, Roger Rozelle, made in bringing our publications to the level of excellence they enjoy today.

We intend to maintain this traditional level of excellence; however, tradition is not a reason to avoid change. Consequently, during the course of the coming year and under the guidance of a new director of publications, whom we are now in the process of recruiting, we intend to transform the traditional format, combining our various different publications into one monthly journal that will make full use of color for maximum visibility and effect.

I want to emphasize that the new magazine will continue to provide our members with the same information that is contained in the existing publications, but it will be in a more up-to-date and attention-grabbing format. The new format will also be expanded to provide more news about the FSF day-to-day activities, and, in doing so, we will also provide our members with a chance to respond to articles or offer their own opinions with a letters to the editor section. In addition, we will invite industry leaders and other recognized individuals to contribute opinion pieces that address current aviation safety issues or concerns.

## **Web Site**

Our web site will be expanded to reflect all these changes. Our publications will still be posted there, but there will be a lot more besides.

We are very excited about the new possibilities to project our image and to establish a greater industry presence.

### **Focusing FSF Safety Efforts Where They Are Most Needed**

The second priority is to focus our efforts on those areas of the world needing most assistance. Of course, that has been our traditional mandate, and we have been doing this in any case for many years. Nevertheless, the Board wanted to ensure that it remained high on our activity list and, very importantly, has authorized additional resources to help us undertake the task. We will take on additional staff to assist us, and, together with the input of our Icarus Committee, we are now developing plans for renewed effort in this field. Importantly, we are not planning to do this alone. As you may know, ICAO is eager to develop what has become known as a “Safety Road Map” — a program to further improve aviation safety, especially in underdeveloped areas. Consequently, we are working closely and integrating our efforts with various other organizations, particularly IATA, to ensure the best use of our combined resources and to avoid duplication of effort. You will hear more about this from IATA.

### **Closing**

As you can see, Flight Safety Foundation has had a busy year and has big plans for the next. After the accidents and incidents of the past few months, our mission is more important than ever. We work hard to educate the industry about important safety

issues, and next year we will increase our education of the media with the upcoming merger.

Our service to our members and the rest of the aviation community will improve with the consolidation of all of our publications into one, without sacrificing any of the quality for which Flight Safety Foundation is known.

Importantly, we are working to build even closer relationships with others in the industry to assist them or have them assist us in further safety-improvement efforts. 2006 promises to be an exciting year for Flight Safety Foundation. We are very excited about these changes, and we look forward to the forthcoming year.

Finally, I want to thank you again for showing your support for Flight Safety Foundation by attending this seminar. We have a first-rate lineup of speakers, and we will be hearing about the latest issues in aviation safety. I am also hoping that the next few days will provide us all with a chance to share our thoughts and ideas about the further development of aviation safety. We are at a crossroads in the industry. We are faced with the threat of terrorism and the debate on how best to fund the anti-terrorism effort while maintaining the safety record of the industry. Meetings such as this are an important tool in these debates, and I'm glad that you are all here.

So, I hope you enjoy the next few days. I also hope that you have a chance to get out and see this beautiful city.

Thank you very much.