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IFALPA - Your Association Beyond Our Borders.

By Robert "Rip" Torn, IFALPA Air Traffic Services Committee Chair

The Air Line Pilots Association International devotes a great deal of its attention to aviation policy, but the limits of that endeavor are reached offshore at the 12 nautical mile limit. Who represents us when the DME shows 12.1?

The International Federation of Airline Pilot Associations (IFALPA) is comprised of over 100 pilot associations, representing over 100,000 pilots globally. ALPA-International is the sole representative of the U.S. and Canadian pilots to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) based in Montreal, Canada. ALPA-International is also the largest member in IFALPA and is very active in its leadership and direction. One of our own, Captain Don Wykoff, currently serves as the president of IFALPA, and many of the leadership roles, from vice presidents to committee chairs, are pilots from our ALPA-International group.

The role of IFALPA is to coordinate our pilots' interests at the international level with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and other international bodies such as the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers Associations, International Air Transport Association, and a host of other alphabet-soup groups looking to maximize their constituents' interests, sometimes at our expense if left unchecked.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Nav Canada have a policy now of adapting ICAO standards whenever possible instead of going it alone in the global aviation world. They are very active through ICAO in future air navigation initiatives and changing current operations and procedures, despite the U.S. sequestration restrictions. The presiding body of ICAO is the Air Navigation Council (ANC) and IFALPA has a permanent representative, Captain Mike Jackson (DAL-ret.) who sits in and speaks for the federation. Last year we attended the 12th Air Navigation Conference in Montreal and introduced several issues for discussion that affect the "roadmap" of the ICAO work plan for the next five to ten years. ***No other U.S.-based pilot group was invited to attend this or any other work program of the organization.*** You simply don't see the independent pilot unions at these venues.

Similar to ALPA-International's work with the FAA NextGen program and other current operations affecting U.S. and Canadian flying, IFALPA strives to influence flight operations policy further abroad. The workload is divided into several working groups and panels, each staffed by a representative pilot from the standing committees, who in turn is assisted by various subject matter experts, including former aviators and air traffic controllers.

There are 12 IFALPA standing committees:

- Accident Analysis and Prevention
- Administration and Finance
- Aircraft Design and Operation
- Aerodrome and Ground Environment

- Air Traffic Services
- Dangerous Goods
- Helicopters
- Human Performance
- International Flight Engineers
- Industrial
- Legal
- Security

For the last three years, I have had the privilege of chairing the Air Traffic Services Committee, and I have been a working group representative and vice chairman for over ten years. In recent years the ATS Committee has enjoyed a very close relationship with the IFATCA Technical Operations Committee (TOC), sending a committee representative to their regular meetings, as well as the IFATCA Annual Conference. Our mutual interests have been advanced in working with the other stakeholders in our industry.

As an example of what we do for the Delta pilots, here is a list of the topics we discussed in the 2012 meetings between IFALPA ATS and IFATCA TOC:

- Global standards for transition altitudes
- Wake turbulence transition zones
- User-Driven Prioritization Process (a means of slot allocation)
- Downlinked ACAS RA (a project to alert controllers to TCAS RA events)
- Remotely piloted aircraft and systems
- Constant climb and descent terminology
- Communications security

Both groups continue to have an open and frank discussion of issues and mutual support. Retired Captain Paul McCarthy (also of Delta Air Lines) attended this annual conference and was recognized for his service to our profession and industry. I represented IFALPA this year as its sole representative. That's just one conference, covering one little segment of the work done by IFALPA but some very important work was done during that short time.

The global airline industry is poised for rapid growth in the coming decades, and the need for modernization has never been more pressing. Our status at ICAO ensures that the pilots, who bear the heaviest portion of risk, take part of the decisions that will shape our future. This is your Association at work, making the job a little safer every day. From pilots in LEC meetings, to your reps, to your MEC, to Herndon, and then to Montreal and the world, your representative is ALPA. And ALPA, through IFALPA, is the voice of pilot labor in the world beyond the FIR boundary.

Fraternally,

Robert "Rip" Torn
7ER Captain