



13 May 2003

Joint Press Release - IFALPA and IFATCA Prosecution of Air Traffic Controllers and Pilot of JAL 907



The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) and International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations (IFATCA), representing the vast majority of the worlds' airline pilots and air traffic controllers, note with great concern the recent developments in the matter of a near mid air collision between two Japan Airlines aircraft above Yaizu, Japan on 31 January 2001.

The police have submitted a report to the local Prosecutor, recommending prosecution under the Japanese criminal code against the on duty air traffic controllers and the pilot of JAL907.

This action represents the latest incident where the response to an air safety concern is criminal prosecution. Where, as here, there is no suggestion of intent to do wrong, prosecution is not only misdirected, it may actually make air travel less safe by imposing a climate of fear over the internationally required technical investigations.

"By prosecuting professionals who are working in a highly complex environment where interactions between machines and human beings are crucial—the Japanese authorities are not improving the safety of the travelling passenger", said Marc Baumgartner, President of IFATCA.

Captain Dennis Dolan, President of IFALPA, added: "There is still a need to increase safety on a daily basis, and investigations of incidents such as this present the opportunity to make the overall system safer. Filing criminal charges against pilots or air traffic controllers will have just the opposite effect by discouraging participation by these key parties."

IFALPA and IFATCA call upon the Japanese Government to cease and desist both this prosecution and the prosecution of the Captain of JAL706 currently in process in Nagoya. They further call upon Japan to honour both the letter and the spirit of the International Standards for accident investigation which specifically limit the technical investigation to actions which will improve air safety, rather than impose blame or liability on individuals.

Queries and comments should be addressed to:

Debra Batson

IFALPA Media Communications Officer

Email: debrabatson@ifalpa.org

Marc Baumgartner, IFATCA President

Email: office@ifatca.org

The International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers' Associations is the non political and non-industrial world professional organisation representing approximately 40,000 air traffic controllers in more than 100 countries.

The mission of the Federation is to protect and safeguard the interests of the air traffic control profession

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represent in excess of 100,000 pilots and flight engineers in more than 90 countries world-wide.

The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations.

04PRL001