

Retire old airliners; don't just fix them

"A gaping hole ripped open on the right side of a United Airlines jumbo jet carrying 354 people Friday, sucking nine passengers to their death 20,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean," according to wire service reports.

Is this just another case of airline tragedy that could have been avoided? Yes.

The incident raises questions about conditions that would allow such a hole to open on the side of an airliner, and about the safety of all older airliners. These are questions that were scheduled before Friday's disaster to be answered at a news conference tomorrow by the Aging Aircraft Task Force established by the Air Transport Association.

Aside from the obvious reason of passenger safety, the mandatory updating of airliners suggested by the task force could very well increase the pressure on airlines to get rid of their most-used aircraft if the changes send the cost of maintaining an old aircraft beyond that of purchasing a new one.

Although federal aviation investigators have not determined the cause of the hole, they suspect structural, or stress, failure perhaps compounded by maintenance problems.

Moreover, last July the government ordered airlines to improve cargo door lock systems on older Boeing 747s, saying the directive was prompted by "a lower lobe forward cargo door with damaged lock sectors that partially opened in flight." The airlines were given 30 to 90 days to conduct inspections and any necessary repairs on these early model Boeing 747s.

Aviation experts say the raw age of an airliner has little to do with its safety. Rather, the number of takeoffs and landings, hours flown, the flying environment and the quality of maintenance all have a greater impact on an airliner's life expectancy.

But rather than base passenger safety on the previous opinion by an independent aviation appraisal firm, it would behoove the airline industry to bow to pressure and retire the geriatric lot of airliners involved in such accidents as Friday's.

Bush's honeymoon ends; lacks 'Tower' of strength

The looming rejection of John Tower as secretary of state by the U.S. Senate signals the end of what turned out to be, after all the rhetoric and platitudes, one of the shortest presidential honeymoons in recent memory.

Before George Bush's supporters line up and start beating the drum of the "hostile, Democrat-controlled Congress," however, they should examine closely Bush's track record in personnel selection, beginning with his campaign staff, continuing through his selection of Dan Quayle as his running mate and concluding with his choice of Tower as defense secretary.

Few remember it now, but Bush's campaign was rocked early and often by charges of anti-Semitism among his campaign staff. Bush, company man that he is, stood foursquare behind his people, but at least nine quietly resigned when their anti-Jewish tendencies became public. Bush just as quietly accepted those resignations and plodded on.

Bush's choice of Dan Quayle as the GOP's vice presidential nominee was his own. It came over the vehement protests of key campaign and GOP advisers, who knew all that glitters is not gold.

George was going to surprise us with his choice, he said. He certainly did. He surprised us with his preference to make a bold, "presidential" decision over calm inquiry into Quayle's fitness for the position. Bush stubbornly survived that decision because the American people apparently were willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Congress is not so lenient or forgiving. By an 11-9 vote, the Senate Armed Services Committee on Feb. 23 recommended Tower be rejected by the full Senate for the crucial defense cabinet position. In this case, it rightfully demanded accountability about such matters as conflict of interest, alleged alcohol abuse and other alleged transgressions.

Keep in mind, this is the same committee Tower himself headed for four years before his retirement from the Senate. The rancor unveiled by the process should have been evident beforehand, especially to Bush, who was president of the Senate for eight years as Ronald Reagan's vice president.

The real news is not that Tower likely will be the first cabinet appointee rejected in 30 years. Rather, it is that George Bush was willing to sacrifice the cooperative mood of Congress and his claim of a higher ethical standard to once again defend a choice that was not adequately considered beforehand. Had it been, the evidence suggests it would summarily have been dismissed.

SKELLY



Letters

What you eat

Survival Center is pleased to announce a campaign to promote awareness of nutritional values and ethical implications in what we as individuals eat. We encourage students to be more conscientious of the old adage, "You are what you eat."

We are acting to facilitate student participation at Grower's Market, a local cooperatively owned food market. Shopping at Grower's Market is a statement in support of our local economy and support for organic fruits and vegetables. Shopping at Grower's is saying no to multi-national food corporations and the depletion of our state's rain forests to excessive packaging.

We are offering a \$25 gift certificate to be raffled off at the end of each quarter to University students who shop and sign up at Grower's. This kind of support from us is nothing new being as University students once had their own food co-op on campus over in the Agate Street huts.

The new interest is partially inspired by the recent controversy concerning the EMU's proposal to open a fast food restaurant in the EMU. From conversations with alumni from the University there was a time when the EMU food services offered a more wholesome and nutritional selection in the Fishbowl and the Main Desk. That meant a lot less sugar. Join us in raising the student body's awareness of the EMU fast food issue. Call the EMU Administration, write letters to the editor.

Feed your tummy what your mind speaks.

Brian Hoop
Director
Survival Center

Unprofessional

I am writing as a concerned observer of the IFC. I attended a meeting last night to fund the Oregon Commentator, and was shocked by the abusive and very unprofessional actions of the IFC members toward the speakers for the Commentator. I have never read the Com-

mentator but must agree with the IFC that the paper is sexist, racist, Republican, and biased. After hearing and seeing the evidence, I would have frozen their funding too, but that is no excuse for blatantly unprofessional actions of the IFC.

I saw flaring tempers and personal biases of IFC members lead to at least one incorrect vote. IFC members were smirking, laughing and talking among themselves when Commentator representatives were trying to make a point. They disregarded input from some observers, while heralding anti-Commentator input from others. What really got me though was when someone said (I don't remember the actual quote, but the point was), "Well, obviously some people enjoy our magazine" to which two IFC members responded to in unison by saying "bullshit." They laid a perfect ambush, then belittled the hell out of the Commentator.

I agree with their final decision, but despise the tactics of this group that doles out \$3 million of our money.

M. Swanson
Student

S.P.I.F.

I'm not sure what finally pushed me over the edge, from my comfortable bed of apathy to the riskier unknown of action. Whatever the reason, let it be known that I am steadfastly, irrevocably, unswayingly in favor of the use of animals for experimental research, particularly in regards to testing the safety and effectiveness of new drugs and surgical techniques. Too many arenas of science and medicine owe dramatic breakthroughs to the benefits of using laboratory animals. There does not yet, and may never, exist a viable substitute for animals in many studies.

I like pets, I value the bonding shared between man and animals, but I do not consider the lives of individual laboratory animals superior to, or equal with, that of the human lives they can save.

This issue lacks the fundamental importance of checking our government's involvement

in Nicaragua or El Salvador, or the rights of a woman over her own body. It's not a glamorous cause, but I'll make it my own.

I hate to see some overly vocal, under-informed zealots get too much publicity. I therefore propose the formation of a new organization — S.P.I.F. for Saving People Is First. I will happily serve as president pro tem, and will be in front of the administration building March 1. To all of you who share this conviction, join me. To those who don't, a Bronx cheer.

Thank you.

James Duhaime
Graduate student, CIS

Hypocrisy

Well, they have finally done it. In deciding that the Oregon Commentator is un-fundable, the IFC has finally managed to muzzle the last bastion of vocal conservatism on campus. The problem is that even the Commentator has a right to be heard, no matter how those on the IFC feel about what they publish.

While I often disagree with the Commentator, I respect their right to publish what they want, free from censorship and outside intervention. To those of you who are unfamiliar with these ideas, I suggest that you look up the U.S. Constitution's amendments regarding freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

For the IFC to support groups such as the Sister University Project and the Student Campaign for Disarmament at the same time they find the Commentator un-fundable is, in my opinion, sheer hypocrisy. As students at a major university we must be allowed to read the works of people from all sides of an issue and not just those the IFC believes to be politically correct.

I sincerely hope that Karen Gaffney will act in the best interest of the students by appealing this decision lest we allow the IFC to decide once and for all what we are and are not allowed to read.

Pieter Paulson
Vice-chair
Student Senate

Monday, February 27, 1989