



GROWTH AND Consequences

The chief executive for United Breweries Limited, an Indian company, came to the 2004 Farnborough Air Show to explain why his company was buying A320s and starting Kingfisher Airlines. Among India's one billion-plus people, he said, is a middle class of more than 200 million able to afford air travel, or about the same number of middle class travelers that live in Europe. These people wanted to fly, he said, but they had few opportunities. The capacity just wasn't available.

That, to me, was a stunning bit of news. Only a few years earlier the Indian government had opened the door to new airlines; before that, the nation's incumbent airlines had a fleet of fewer than 200 jets. Here were 200 million people who had fought to get a better life only to discover that the travel available to others was not available to them.

This was and remains a politically untenable state of affairs. As the standard of living continues to rise around the world, more and more people have the time and the money to travel, and they demand that their leaders allow more air service, competitively priced. So quality airlines like Jet Airways and

Air Asia spring up and packed airplanes quickly turn sleepy terminals into hot destinations, and there is no turning back. The increased travel spreads and energizes commerce, spurring even more travel and, sometimes, the birth of carriers of dubious quality.

Thus we arrive at a troubling crossroad, reached through the happy success of world development creating a rising demand that threatens to push the aviation industry into increasingly dangerous territory, the growth straining infrastructure and the abilities of regulators, as Bill Voss discusses in his President's Message (p. 1).

Restraining growth either by direct edict or indirectly, by refusing to expand airports and related infrastructure, is not only politically unpopular, it works against that economic growth and prosperity thing that everyone believes is so good.

Manufacturers' market forecasts agree that huge growth in air travel will continue. Even if a state here and there throttles its own traffic, they eventually will be swept along with the tide by their neighbors' activity.

Thanks to the Global Aviation Safety Roadmap, the path to safe, responsible growth is clear. But that leaves one final

piece that must be set into place to make it all work: money.

Nations struggling to provide their people with the bare necessities find it difficult to redirect scarce funds to aviation. However, a well-trained and well-paid inspector force is an essential part of any aviation safety system, especially when dealing with a lot of start-up airlines and flight personnel with minimal experience, as is often the case in developing countries. Wayne Rosenkrans describes in this issue inspector force problems uncovered by International Civil Aviation Organization audits (p. 30). We must restate the importance of funding an empowered, trained and sustainable inspector force in a way that does not involve payment directly from the operator.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.A. Donoghue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "D".

J.A. Donoghue
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