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# POSTWAR INTERNATIONAL ROUTE PLANNING BY THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD\*

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**A**T the beginning of World War II, the Pan American Airways System was the only international United States airline. Although the Board had certificated American Export Airlines to operate across the North Atlantic that company had failed to secure the necessary mail pay appropriations from Congress which would enable it to commence service. At that time the Pan American Airways System had an extensive network throughout Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. It operated across the Pacific to Hong Kong, from Seattle into Alaska, and had begun service across the North Atlantic to Great Britain and France. Notwithstanding this far-flung Pan American network, many important trade centers in Europe and Asia were still not tied to the United States by air routes.

When the war compelled the operation of extensive military and naval air services they were successful on trans-oceanic service on a global scale. Under contract with ATC and NATS the domestic air carriers supplied a large portion of this military transport lift. Their success demonstrated to the Civil Aeronautics Board in the first year of the war that the technique of overseas air transport operations could be mastered by domestic air carriers as well as by Pan American, and that multi-engine aircraft had been perfected which, with proper navigation instruments and communications facilities, could make international air travel an immediate postwar reality.

The Board was also keenly aware that technical progress was not enough by itself to make postwar international commercial air service a reality. It was a well established principle of international law that the sovereignty of each nation extended to the air space and consequently no aircraft could fly across any international border without consent. Therefore, permission would be required to fly into and through each sovereign nation to which air service might be inaugurated. A further

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\* This article presents the contents of Appendix III-A, of the Staff Report on the Civil Aeronautics Board to the Committee on Independent Regulatory Commissions of the (Hoover) Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government, September-November, 1948.

complication was wide-spread fear among our allies that the far-flung military operations of American military transport services might be arbitrarily exploited for commercial purposes after the war.

Under the Civil Aeronautics Act the peacetime operation of commercial air transport service by United States air carriers requires a certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Civil Aeronautics Board. However, the Board realized that this certificate would be meaningless unless operating rights could be secured from each sovereign country along the proposed route.

In the summer of 1943 the Board pondered the question whether it should proceed to certify United States carriers over specific routes and then seek operating rights, or should wait until the United States could first secure operating rights from the countries on the routes. In either case it was clear to the Board that it was first necessary to determine the postwar air routes that the United States should seek to operate for commercial or strategic reasons.

These questions were presented to an informal committee assembled at the invitation of the Secretary of State to determine postwar air policies for the President. This committee functioned for two years under the chairmanship of an Assistant Secretary of State and included the Assistant Secretaries of War and Navy for Air, the Under Secretary of Commerce and the Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board.

As a result of discussions in the Board and with this committee it was felt that the fears of our allies with regard to the scope of our postwar plans would be allayed if this government would announce the air routes it hoped to operate. Furthermore, such an announcement would be a helpful preliminary step to the formal hearings leading up to the issue of certificates to individual United States carriers.

Consequently, the Board on September 2, 1943, issued a press release announcing that it would make an informal study of international air transport routes and inviting interested parties to submit suggestions by October 1, 1943, supported by analysis and data. The study was to be used later as a basis for formal consideration of applications for certificates of public convenience and necessity involving international services. The study was not to involve the determination of the particular United States carriers by whom service would be operated but was directed solely to the question of routes.

At the same time the Board advised all the interested government Departments and committees of Congress of the study it was making.

The Board requested its Analyses Division, in the Bureau of Economic Regulation, to make a traffic study of world trade routes. The division assembled comprehensive statistics on the past and potential movement of passengers and cargo by ocean vessels and aircraft with principal emphasis upon movement to and from the United States. The CAB also prepared studies of the movement of United States over-

seas mail, passport data, and hotel reservations, and obtained data from the Board of Economic Warfare.

The general route study was carried on under the personal supervision of the Board's Chairman, Mr. L. Welch Pogue, with the active support of its Vice-Chairman, Mr. Edward Warner and with close administrative assistance from the Chairman's assistant and the Director of the International Office of the Board, as well as the Analyses Division. Other members showed a keen interest. By confidential letter the Board sent to the interested Departments on October 7, 1943, a draft study prepared by the Analyses Division presenting tentative North Atlantic air routes to the European Mediterranean areas. It included factual material and staff interpretation upon which to estimate the volume of air service necessary to develop the potential traffic.

#### INTRA AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL LIAISON

Apparently the Departments and Congressional committees did not initially submit important suggestions or comments. In November, the State Department outlined informally the air routes it classified as of primary, secondary and of strategic or military importance. Discussions were held with military and naval authorities and the air transport routes of these services were studied in detail. The Board also conferred with representatives of Pan-American Airways and with domestic air carriers and steamship companies who had applications on file to fly overseas or intended to file such applications. The Analyses Division prepared numerous maps and mileage tables showing various route combinations.

On January 26, 1944, the Board wrote the Director of the Budget and the War, Navy, Post Office and Commerce Departments listing the postwar trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific routes that it had tentatively concluded should be operated by United States carriers. The Board emphasized that this route pattern, with whatever desirable modifications might be suggested by other interested government agencies, would furnish the basis upon which to enter into negotiations with foreign governments at an appropriate time. A copy of these letters was sent to the Department of State with the statement that the Board considered it advisable to obtain the views of those Departments before consulting the Department of State on political aspects of the proposal.

In February 1944, the Bureau of the Budget asked the Board if it could make an estimate of the annual net cost to the government of flying these routes, particularly whether they would be (1) supported by commercial revenue from the beginning, (2) supported after a time or (3) likely to operate at a loss indefinitely. This difficult request was again assigned to the Analyses Division.

The Department of Commerce made studies of commercial traffic potentials of the various routes and submitted numerous suggestions to

the Board. The Department of State gave careful consideration to the proposed routes and suggested some modifications.

During the course of the study the Senate Committee on Commerce urged the Board not to issue permanent or temporary certificates for any international service during the war except temporary certificates after consultation with the committee. The committee also objected to the preparation of a route plan on the ground that it was not compatible with the Board's responsibilities under the Civil Aeronautics Act, and apparently on the ground that it might adversely affect the committee's plan to sponsor a single company to operate all United States overseas air services, *i. e.*, the chosen instrument. Executive sessions were held by the committee with members of the Board.

The War and Navy Departments referred the route plans to the Joint Chiefs of Staff who, due to the urgency of war problems, did not give much attention to the matter but indicated reluctance to approve any plan because of the possibility that suspicion of our intentions might interfere with the war effort. However, the Board took the matter up with the Army Air Forces and since it was apparent that the military transport routes might serve as a valuable foundation for postwar air services, eventually obtained War Department approval. Moreover, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on May 27, 1944, approved the plan and the Board's proposal to immediately unfreeze route applications, but suggested that it might be desirable to consult with the Soviet Union in advance of public release.

Upon receipt of comments and suggestions from the Departments, the Board conferred with its staff advisors and modified the details of the route plans. Only routes were retained which led directly out from the United States with one exception, namely, a route from Natal (Brazil) to southwestern Europe. It included air routes through the Caribbean and to South America, but excluding overland routes to Canada.

The revised route plan was again cleared with the Departments and was submitted to the President personally by the Chairman of the Board and was approved.

The proper method of announcing the route plan disturbed some members of the Board. Because of the requirement of the Act for the Board to base its certificate decisions upon evidence and a record presented in formal hearing, the Board had always been reluctant to announce route plans or standards which might in any way embarrass or bind it in subsequent formal proceedings. In December 1943, the Board did not contemplate publication of the plan but, as it tentatively agreed upon particular routes the Board intended to advise the Department of State of its conclusion so that the route could form the basis for immediate negotiation with foreign countries of operating rights. After lengthy discussion it was decided that the Board should announce its study at a press conference and should point out that the study

would be used only as a basis for formal consideration of applications to be determined in subsequent proceedings.

On June 12, shortly before the press conference, the Board sent an advance copy of the plan to the Senate Committee on Commerce and to other interested committees, advising them that it had become important to the public interest to unfreeze applications for authority to engage in foreign air transportation throughout the world and that the Board intended to make public this policy and the proposed international air service which it had decided should be operated by United States air carriers. All of the Departments of Government and the President having agreed to the publication of the plan, little opportunity was given for committees of Congress to comment.

At this time a Soviet air mission was in Washington discussing, among other matters, postwar civil aviation. The route plan proposed service to Moscow and beyond to some point in China or Afghanistan and another route across eastern Siberia on a route between Alaska and China. With the approval of the Department of State and the military, the route plan was discussed with the Soviet representatives before its release. It is understood they made no objection to the proposed routes or to the announcement of the plan.

On June 14, 1944, the Board held a press conference in its hearing chambers and gave out a five-page release including the list of air routes set forth in Appendix A. This explained carefully the nature of the study and the purposes for which it was intended. At the same time the Board disclosed that applications for authority to operate these routes would be brought to hearing and final decision by the Board as rapidly as circumstances would permit. The Department of State notified all foreign governments concerned in advance that the announcement of the Board was merely a step taken in following the statutory requirement of the Civil Aeronautics Act and obviously no service would be operated until suitable diplomatic arrangements had been concluded.

Following the release of the public announcement of its route pattern the chief hearing examiner of the Board conferred with the United States carriers desiring to operate the various routes. Five separate route proceedings were proposed and applications involving these areas were consolidated, namely, the North Atlantic Area, the South Atlantic, North Pacific, Latin America and Central Pacific. Hearings were arranged to begin in the early fall of 1944 and continued into the winter.

#### CONCLUSION

The Board completed its study of the estimated cost to the government of operating the proposed routes and submitted its report to the Bureau of the Budget on August 21, 1944. The detailed traffic studies

of surface travel on the principal trade routes of the world, commenced by the Analyses Division in 1943, were brought to completion and made public in eight volumes in the fall of 1944 and this data was used extensively by applicants in the formal proceedings. The various Departments continued to recommend slight modifications even after the release of the plan. The route from Brazil to Europe was deleted.

The Board was complimented on the foresight shown in making this and releasing it to the public and the industry through an open press conference. The aviation industry and foreign governments were both assured that the Board had placed reasonable bounds upon its postwar plans, United States and foreign carriers could plan accordingly.

The Board's plan, with slight modifications, has been followed in all of its postwar international route decisions.<sup>1</sup> While the international route pattern is infinitely simpler than the domestic air route network, the international study would nevertheless appear to indicate procedures valuable in undertaking a reevaluation of the domestic air route systems.

APPENDIX A — THE WORLD PATTERN FOR UNITED STATES CARRIERS,  
JUNE 12, 1944

1. New York—a point in Newfoundland or Labrador—a point in Eire—London—Berlin—Prague—Vienna—Istanbul—Cairo
2. New York—a point in Newfoundland or Labrador—a point in Eire—Paris—a point in Switzerland—Rome—Athens—Cairo—Basra—Karachi—Calcutta
3. New York—points in Newfoundland or Labrador, Greenland and Iceland—Oslo—Stockholm—Helsinki—Leningrad—Moscow—Teheran—Basra
4. New York—Bermuda—Azores—Lisbon:
  - (a) Lisbon—Madrid—Marseilles—Rome
  - (b) Lisbon—Algiers—Tunis—Tripoli—Cairo
  - (c) Lisbon—London
5. New York—San Juan—Trinidad—Paramaribo—Belem—Natal:
  - (a) Natal—Dakar—Casablanca—Tangier—Madrid—Paris
  - (b) Natal—Dakar—Monrovia—Lagos or Accra—Brazzaville—Johannesburg—Capetown. As alternate on express trips, the route would be via Natal—Asencion Island—Lagos—Accra, or Point Noire.
6. San Francisco—Los Angeles—Honolulu—Canton Island—Suva—Noumea:
  - (a) Noumea—Auckland
  - (b) Noumea—Sydney

<sup>1</sup> For example, see: *Northeast Air, et al., North Atlantic Routes*, 6 CAB 319 (1945); *Additional Service to Latin America*, 6 CAB 857 (1946); *Northwest Airlines, et al., Pacific Case*, 7 CAB 209 (1946); and *American Overseas Airlines, et al., South Atlantic Routes*, 7 CAB 285 (1946).

7. San Francisco—Honolulu—Midway—Wake:
  - (a) Wake—Tokyo—Shanghai
  - (b) Wake—Guam—Manila:
    - (1) Manila—Macao—Hong Kong
    - (2) Manila—Tarakan—Singapore—Batavia
8. Chicago—St. Paul—Minneapolis—Alaska and Seattle—Alaska. At least one of these routes to be extended beyond Alaska to:
  - (a) Alaska—one or more intermediate points in Siberia—Vladivostok—Mukden—Shanghai—Hong Kong (or Canton)—Hanoi—Calcutta
  - (b) A leg from Mukden to Peiping and Chungking
  - (c) Alaska—Unalaska—Kiska—Paramushiru—Tokyo—Shanghai—Hong Kong (or Canton)
9. Miami—San Juan—Trinidad—Belem:
  - (a) Belem—Fortaleza—Natal—Recife—Victoria—Rio de Janeiro
  - (b) Belem—Barreiras—Rio de Janeiro:
    - (1) Rio de Janeiro—Porto Alegre—Montevideo—Buenos Aires
    - (2) Rio de Janeiro—Sao Paulo—Asuncion—Buenos Aires
10. Miami—Havana—Merida
11. Miami—Cienfuegos—Kingston:
  - (a) Kingston—Cristobal
  - (b) Kingston—Barranquilla
12. Miami—Nassau
13. New Orleans—Merida—Guatemala City
14. Brownsville—Mexico City—Guatemala City—San Salvador—Tegucigalpa—Managua—San Jose—Balboa—Cristobal:
  - (a) Cristobal—Barranquilla—La Guaira—Trinidad
  - (b) Cristobal—Medellin
15. Cristobal—Cali—Guayaquil—Lima—Arica:
  - (a) Arica—La Paz—Buenos Aires
  - (b) Arica—Santiago—Buenos Aires
  - (c) Arica—Antofagasta—Salta—Buenos Aires and certain connecting services
16. New York—a point in southeastern United States—Ciudad Trujillo or Port-au-Prince—Caracas—Manaos:
  - (a) Manaos—Coiania—Bello Horizonte—Rio de Janeiro
  - (b) Manaos—Cuyaba—Corumba—Asuncion—Buenos Aires—Montevideo
17. New Orleans—Havana—Santiago—Port-au-Prince—Ciudad Trujillo—San Juan
18. Tampa—Havana
19. Balboa—Cali—Iquitos—La Paz—Buenos Aires
20. New York—Charleston—Nassau—a point or points in Cuba—Kingston—Balboa (or Cristobal)