

I've got some good news to start off with. As some of you may have heard, the airport in Bangkok has now re-opened. The siege is over, and cargo flights have already begun moving out.

The airport is expected to resume full operations by tomorrow. But you just don't shut down an airport of that magnitude and push the reboot button to get it started again. It takes time.

It goes to show how important our line of work is. When something happens in aviation, be it in Thailand or wherever, the world feels it.

[pause]

So here *we* are. Another safety forum comes to a close.

I want to extend my deepest appreciation to the folks who worked so hard to make this such a success. Nick Sabatini, Peggy Gilligan, Di Reimold, Victoria Frazier and so many others.

A word of thanks as well to our sponsors and donors ... AAAE, IATA, ATA, to name a few. We couldn't have pulled this all together without you.

And finally, to all of you. Our attendees. The people who've traveled many miles and many time zones for the sake of safety.

After hearing your comments and concerns, I can honestly say that no one could ever accuse of you of being all thrust and no vector. I welcome your candor. So, I want to remind everyone to please fill out the evaluation cards and drop them off at the registration desk upstairs.

You know, during the panel discussion just now on the media, I couldn't help but think of how much you do and how little recognition you get for it. I find myself reminded of a story about Orville and Wilbur Wright and this whole issue of getting credit where credit's due.

The Wrights had tried repeatedly, as we all know, to get off the ground with their new flying contraption. They had one disappointment after another.

And then finally, on that December day, there on the sands of Kitty Hawk, Orville did what no one had ever done before.

It had to be the greatest news scoop in history. So, Orville and Wilbur wired their sister, Katherine. Quote "We have actually flown 120 feet. We'll be home for Christmas." Unquote.

And she took the wire and ran all the way to the local newspaper, handed it to the editor.

And you'll never guess what he said when he saw it – “Well, isn't *that* nice? They're going to be home for Christmas.” He just didn't grasp the importance of what had just happened.

[pause]

Well, I know what you do for aviation, and I want to congratulate you all for confronting the issues that our nations are facing together. We agreed on some things, disagreed on others. But the point is, we're *talking* about them. And challenges that had been building for years are now being addressed, and they will be solved. And in turn, lives will be saved.

I think Bill Voss teed things up rather nicely yesterday when he asked “Does aviation safety really matter compared to all the other things that are going on in the world?” Well, yes, it does.

The issues that've been raised in this ballroom are the very ones that affect us all in one shape or form.

Remember at the luncheon yesterday, when Solange told us how Brazil is dealing with congested airports? She could've very well been talking about airports in Australia, India or Kenya.

And what about human factors? Clearly they're one of our greatest safety challenges.

During the first panel discussion on modernization, David Behrens stressed the need for a balanced approach ... focusing on safety *and* efficiency. Agree or disagree, that's enough to get a real conversation going.

Erik Merckx of Eurocontrol put it well when he said that we're in the business of saving lives, which makes us no different than a police officer, a surgeon or a fire fighter.

From there, the conversation turned to an issue that I personally feel very strongly about – runway safety.

As our airports chief, Kirk Shaffer, mentioned, the most serious kinds of incursions are down 55 percent since 2001. That's the good news. But in the last few years, *all* types of incursions have actually climbed. Last year alone, they were up 14 percent. So obviously, we have some work to do.

We responded with a Call to Action ... to galvanize the industry's participation. The result was a number of life-saving measures, like ASDE-X and runway status lights.

One of our panelists ... Jim Crites from Dallas/Fort Worth ... with its seven runways, said runway lights are working.

They detected two incursions in the first year alone.

Sometimes the answer to runway safety is not technology, but something very simple yet still very effective – paint. Airport directors are telling us that enhanced centerline markings are making a huge difference. And, they don't cost millions, either.

As Kirk pointed out, it cost about \$1,200 for a paint job. So sometimes, the simplest solutions are staring us right in the face.

We wrapped up Tuesday with concurrent panel sessions on GA and the environment. These are very real issues with emissions ... noise ... and air quality. Just as challenging is the way we balance our green obligations, as most of the panelists noted.

The airlines want to make alternative fuels a priority, as Nancy Young pointed out. But, they have to be as safe as petroleum-based fuels.

Renee from Airbus says various groups are looking at biofuels ... including algae. They're in the early stages, but it'll be interesting to see where that goes.

Just as provocative was today's opening discussion on data sharing. How do we sort through the data ... and there's lots of it ... and make sure we get the right information?

Like the discussion on congestion, we could be talking about any place in the world when we raise these issues.

And to wrap things up, our final panel dealt with the public's perception – good or bad -- of how we do our jobs. It all goes back to what I said yesterday ... about managing risk and educating the public about how safe it is to fly.

Because, in the end, it's the *people* who use our systems that we ultimately have to answer to.

And that's the whole point of why we're here. To talk, to network, to exchange ideas. Based on that criteria alone, I'd say this gathering has been a huge success.

Before you head home, I want to leave you with a challenge. Make good use of those business cards you've picked up. Call each other. Keep the dialogue going.

Remember – we're one world, one sky, one mission. That means no one has all the answers. No one country has a monopoly on safety.

Thank you, and travel safely.

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