

The CAA, PICAQ, and the Establishment of International Aviation Standards

The Provisional International Civil Aviation Organization (PICAQ) held its first general assembly from May 21 to June 7, 1945. The Assembly's first priority centered on determining what steps needed to take to ensure the smooth transition from the provisional to the permanent International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). In one of their first acts, assembly members determined the membership of the PICAQ Council. The Council, which held its first meeting on August 15, 1945, in Montreal Canada, would be the decisionmaking body of the new organization.



First meeting of the PICAQ Council

The nations that formed the Council included: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, El Salvador, France, India, Iraq, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States. Members of the Council were chosen on the basis of population areas, geographical representation and contributions to aviation. All members had to be members of the United Nations. The Council held a 21st seat for Russia if it decided to join the organization. When Russia did not join, the council selected Ireland as the final council member. (Russia did not sign join ICAO until 23 years later.)

PICAQ grew out of the 2-month long 52-nation aviation conference in Chicago. Delegates met between November 1 and December 7, 1944. The conferees agreed upon the Convention on International Civil Aviation, known as the Chicago Convention, which laid the groundwork for the first truly global organization for civil aviation. The agreement provided that thirty days after the governments of 26 nations (i.e., half of those present at the Conference) ratified the Convention, the new organization, ICAO, would come into existence.

Anticipating a considerable time would elapse before 26 governments ratified the Convention, the conferees provided for a provisional body to function in the interim period. PICA0 was to remain in existence until the permanent organization was created (but for no more than three years). PICA0 had no power in the economics and politics of international flying, but rather would focus its activities on laying the groundwork necessary to stand up its replacement organization, ICAO. Council members also discussed how to gain international agreement on airways, airports, communications, licensing, weather reporting, navigation, search and rescue, airworthiness, and aircraft registration.



Warner (left) greets Roper

In remarks during the first day of the PICA0 Council's first plenary session, Dr. Warner, vice president of the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, remarked, "Civil aviation has a large part to play in the restoration and reconstruction of a shattered world. It perhaps is not too romantic to suggest that a contribution can be made both to physical and spiritual restoration. People long afflicted by war now eagerly await that resumption of contacts with one another for the provision of which air transportation will be so largely responsible." Two days later, on August 17, the PICA0 Council elected him chairman. Warner immediately appointed Dr. Albert Roper of Paris, France as

secretary-general.

Per the mandates of the Chicago Convention, the Council immediately began organizing standing committees. The council established three permanent working groups to work on issues related to air transport, air navigation, and the transition to the permanent organization, including organizational structure, the number of employees needed, how employees would get paid, and organizational rules of procedure.

The Council adjourned on August 30, 1945, with plans to reconvene in October. In the meantime, the two technical committees began work with the hope of finding agreement on how to standardize the technical aspects of international aviation. An early point of disagreement centered on airworthiness standards, with some countries seeking lower minimum requirements than in the United States.

Beginning on March 4, 1946, PICA0 began holding a series of international regional air navigation planning meetings. During the first meeting, held in Dublin, Ireland, attendees worked on developing standard operating procedures for North Atlantic air services. They held similar meetings around the globe. CAA representatives attended this meeting as well as later meetings held in a Paris for the European-Mediterranean region, Washington, DC, for the Caribbean region, and Cairo for the Middle East region. As a result of growing international cooperation, the CAA opened offices in the PICA0 member cities of Paris, London, Cairo, Mexico City, and Sydney. The CAA also sent technical missions to Turkey, Colombia, Peru,

Venezuela, Chile, Mexico, and Brazil to help pave the way for the adoption of U.S.-developed navigation aids.



CAA's research aircraft NC-11, a Boeing 247, in front of the Indianapolis Experimental Station

From October 10-23, 1946, at the invite of PICA0, representatives from 60 foreign countries attended demonstrations of U.S. air navigation and air traffic control equipment and techniques at the Civil Aeronautics Administration's Experimental Station in Indianapolis. These detailed demonstrations helped influence the decision, taken later by the delegates at Montreal, to recommend acceptance of the systems and techniques proposed by the United States as international standards. On November 23, after a three-week long meeting in Montreal, the PICA0 Radio Technical Division recommended the CAA's localizer glide path, or ILS system, and the agency's very high frequency omni-

directional range with distance-measuring equipment as the world standards.

After the announcement, Warner said that when the recommendations were carried out, "civil aircraft will be able to use a uniform navigational system as they fly along the main international air routes of the world. This will result in a simplification of crew training and a much lower financial burden to airline operators and governments . . . The program will contribute to safe, regular and efficient flight."



On April 4, 1947, the Convention on International Civil Aviation came into force after being ratified by 26 countries, thus creating the International Civil Aviation Organization. The PICA0 Council held its 8th and last session from April 29 to May 7, 1947. The new ICAO Assembly met for the first time in Montreal from May 6 -27, 1947, and the ICAO Council held its first session from May 28 to July 1, 1947. Edward Warner was elected ICAO president. He held that post until he retired on April 18, 1957.