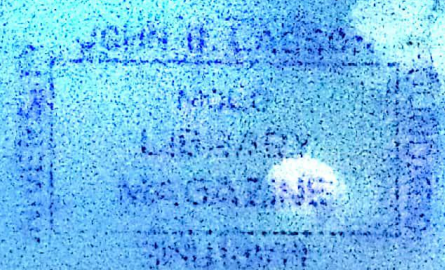


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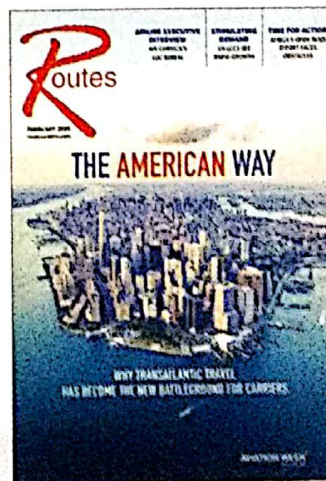
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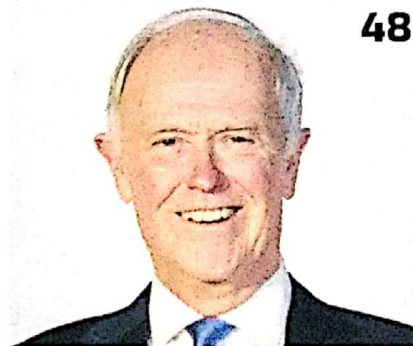
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BUSINESS/AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

PUBLISHER, AIR TRANSPORT WORLD MANAGING DIRECTOR, AMERICAS, AVIATION WEEK
Beth Wagner
Aviation Week Network
2121 K Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20037
Tel. 202-517-1061
beth.wagner@informa.com

PRESIDENT AVIATION WEEK
Gregory Hamilton
greg.hamilton@informa.com

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT SENIOR DIRECTOR
Abi Ahrens
TEL: +1 913-967-1686
abi.ahrens@informa.com

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Tyler Motsinger
TEL +1 913-967-1623
tyler.motsinger@informa.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Printed in USA Copyright © 2020 by Informa Media, Inc., all rights reserved. Air Transport World (ISSN 0002-2543) is published monthly except for combined issues in July/August & December/January by Informa Media, Inc., 9800 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66212-2216, USA. Periodicals Postage Paid at Kansas City, MO, and at additional mailing offices.
Submit payment for subscriptions and/or single copies via <http://atwonline.com/catalog>. One-year subscription rates start at US\$69 for the digital edition, and at US\$89 for US and US\$129 outside the US for the print edition. Single issues are US\$15/copy. The annual World Airline Report issues are US\$50/copy. For subscription related questions or for alternate payment options, please contact atwplus@informa.com.
Qualified subscriptions are limited to management personnel in airlines and selected industries at the discretion of the publisher.
Canadian GST #R126431964. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No: 40612608. Canada return address: IMEX Global Solutions, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, Canada.
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EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief

Karen Walker
+1 703-656-6300
karen.walker@informa.com

Managing Editor

Jack Wittman
jack.c.wittman@informa.com

News & Online Editor

Linda Blachly
linda.blachly@informa.com

Europe Bureau Chief

Victoria Moores
Tel: +44 (0) 7966 389 339
victoria.moore@informa.com

Europe/Middle East Editor

Alan Dron

South East Asia & China Editor

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Senior Editors

Sean Broderick
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David Casey
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Director, Editorial Production

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Contributing Photographers

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Editorial



Karen Walker | Editor-in-Chief

karen.walker@informa.com

Stop airliner shootdowns

Almost five years after the July 2014 shooting down of a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 by a missile over Ukraine, IATA's safety chief lamented the lack of progress on information-sharing initiatives that would help prevent similar travesties.

"We need better information," IATA SVP-safety and flight operations Gilberto Lopez-Meyer said during the IATA AGM in Seoul in June.

Just seven months later, his words proved tragically prescient. A Ukraine International Airlines Boeing 737 was shot down, after it took off from Tehran, by Iranian missile operators who were on high alert after the US assassinated Iran's top general. They appear to have mistaken the 737 for an enemy plane. All 176 people onboard were killed, just as all 298 people onboard flight MH17 had their lives instantly wiped out.

IATA CEO and director general Alexandria de Juniac called the downing of PS752 "an outrage" and he is right. The shootings may have been inadvertent, but that is no comfort to the families of those who died. And it's no reassurance to the traveling public or the flight crews who can see that governments have done little to nothing since MH17 to safeguard them in an increasingly volatile and dangerous world.

In the aftermath of the MH17 shooting, there were industry calls, led by IATA, to set in place an infor-

mation-sharing system that would quickly and confidentially ensure that airlines were kept out of airspace that had become potentially dangerous because of conflicts. The airline industry has no interest in taking sides, in being privy to the inner workings of intelligence-gathering organizations or betraying sources of sensitive information. Airlines are only interested in getting timely, useable and expert guidance that allows them to make sound risk assessment calls on where it is safe to fly.

But even after MH17, governments, including the US government, have been woefully and shamefully lacking in their willingness to provide such guidance.

Before PS752, ICAO was calling for air traffic service authorities to report conflict zone hazards in notices to pilots, which is a good move but one that won't take effect until the end of this year. That work should be given top priority and fast-tracked.

The crash investigation must also include a thorough review of what information was shared or withheld that might have changed the outcome. And the efforts to set up a global safe airspace information sharing for airlines that began after MH17 must be renewed with a determination to not let governments and military agencies off the hook once more. Airline passengers and crew should not be war collateral. **ATW**



CONTACTS

ADVERTISING SALES

North and South America
 Beth Wagner
 Publisher, Air Transport World
 Managing Director,
 Air Transport MRO Media,
 Aviation Week
 Tel: +1 202-517-1061
 beth.wagner@aviationweek.com

Tom Davis
 Sales Director,
 Commercial Aviation
 Tel: +1 469-854-6717
 tom.davis@aviationweek.com

Europe
 Iain Blackhall, Managing
 Director, Global Media
 Tel: +44 (0) 207 975 1670
 Mobile: +44 7824 597499
 iain.blackhall@aviationweek.co.uk

Asia Pacific
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 Managing Director, Asia Pacific
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CUSTOM MEDIA SALES

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 jason.washburn@aviationweek.com

Emily Soucy
 Senior Program Manager,
 Informa Marketing
 Tel: +1 603-404-0276
 emily.soucy@informa.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Steve Copley
 Advertising Sales Representative
 Tel: +1 440-320-8871
 steve.copley@aviationweek.com

CONTACT ATW

Beth Wagner
 Publisher, Air Transport World
 Managing Director,
 Americas, Aviation Week
 Tel: +1 202-517-1061
 beth.wagner@aviationweek.com

Jacqi Fisher
 Production Manager
 Tel: +1 630-524-4479
 jacqi.fisher@informa.com

ATW Address
 2121 K St. NW, Suite 210
 Washington, DC 20037, USA
 Tel: +1 202-517-1100
 Fax: +1 913-514-3909

Gregory Hamilton
 President, Aviation Week

Elizabeth Sisk
 Director, Marketing
 Tel: +1 860-495-5498
 elizabeth.sisk@aviationweek.com

SERVICES

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