**EPISODE 334**

[EPISODE]

**[0:00:08] IP:** Hello and welcome to episode 334 of AvTalk. I am Ian Petchenik, here, as always with –

**[0:00:16] JR:** Jason Rabinowitz. Hello, Ian. What's going on?

**[0:00:20] IP:** It's Wednesday, it's the morning, and I'm still drinking coffee.

**[0:00:24] JR:** Now, weird.

**[0:00:25] IP:** We're recording even earlier this week than we normally do, because Jason, you've got something very special going on.

**[0:00:31] JR:** I do. I have encroached into my typical lunch hour break here at work to record this, because later today, I will be joining not an airline, but a railroad, specifically Amtrak to be on the media departure out of New York, up to Boston, or really, New England, somewhere in New England. Don't know where yet. On the NextGen Acela, which is very exciting, and only about half a decade behind schedule. Things are looking good.

**[0:00:58] IP:** That's like one Boeing 777X delay.

**[0:01:04] JR:** Yeah. I mean, this thing was originally announced in 2016, finally hitting revenue service in 2025. If you compare it to Boeing standards, actually, it's still bad. It's not great.

**[0:01:20] IP:** Have a good time.

**[0:01:21] JR:** Thank you.

**[0:01:22] IP:** We'll be interested to figure out how you get home next week.

**[0:01:24] JR:** Me too. Because my return train is canceled. Because, of course, it is.

**[0:01:29] IP:** Because, of course, it is. Speaking of returns being canceled, there are some folks in Nuuk, Greenland, who are trying to figure out how to get home, because yesterday's United flight from Newark to Nuuk returned to Newark.

**[0:01:51] JR:** Ah, the worst shameful event.

**[0:01:54] IP:** Not because there was anything wrong with the United aircraft. Not because there was any disturbance onboard. Not for any reason that United had any control over. However, the flight returned, because the return flight from Nuuk to Newark would not be able to operate if they landed in Nuuk. Because the Danish airport's authorities have suspended international passenger screening at Nuuk for unspecified training failures of the folks working at the airport.

**[0:02:35] JR:** Yikes. I feel like, I don't know, we've heard this before. I think the entry into service of the new terminal was slightly delayed, because of the certification of the security procedures at the airport. This isn't a huge surprise, but it was very ironic that it came, or coincidental, I should say, that this issue, which led to United actually suspending sales of the route through the end of the summer season, came on the same day that Newark said, this route is great and we will be returning in 2026 summer season. At that time, it could not have been worse, because it looks like they won't be able to complete this summer season. Really don't know what is the deal with the United, or other passengers. This isn't just a United issue. This is also SAS, I believe, has a flight to Copenhagen.

**[0:03:23] IP:** SAS was scheduled to operate through today. Today was their last summer season service.

**[0:03:30] JR:** It did not happen.

**[0:03:31] IP:** To Nuuk. That flight was canceled. There are folks in Greenland, who I assume will be put on the Air Greenland A330 to Copenhagen, probably via Kangerlussuaq, where they can do the security screening. Because what the Greenland airport's authority has said, they will in short order, perform international security screening at Kangerlussuaq, which is the only other

runway that can handle large jet traffic. That'll be interesting to see how quickly they can make that switch, but just an odd thing to see that this has come up again.

**[0:04:14] JR:** Yeah. It looks like there are a few flights to Reykjavik currently out of Greenland. Not sure what the passenger capacity is on that, because they're using the tiniest variant of the Dash 8, both Air Greenland and Icelandair, interestingly. Man, that's a long way on a not very big airplane.

**[0:04:32] IP:** We've got a great video of the transatlantic Nuuk to Reykjavik on the Dash 8 on our YouTube channel.

**[0:04:40] JR:** Yeah. It's actually a Dash 8-200, so I guess it could be smaller.

**[0:04:44] IP:** It could be even smaller.

**[0:04:45] JR:** It could be smaller. But a United 73 MAX, we're talking about over 100 people, if it was selling well, and I think it was. I don't know what United is doing with those passengers, because it's not really their fault, but they're still –

**[0:04:59] IP:** They’re still responsible for them.

**[0:05:02] JR:** I don't know what they do. I guess, they're very slowly over the course of days, shuttle them over to Iceland. But interesting. I guess, a flight from Greenland to Denmark still counts as international, even though it's – That one's confusing.

**[0:05:16] IP:** Yeah. You still have to go through a passport control check, because it's – I think it has something to do with Schengen and Greenland status, as opposed to Denmark's status. I can go back to the video that Gabe shot for the A330neo inaugural, because there was something there where he had to go through a passport control, even though it's technically some sort of domestic flight.

**[0:05:45] JR:** There was also some speculation that this was, I don't want to call it retaliation, but punishment to the US, specifically to United to get them to cancel flights, because this

happened to come the day before Denmark summoned a US envoy after a report of conducting some influence operations in Greenland. Not really sure what is going on there, but this would have been using a shotgun to kill a fly in the house. Did everything else. You can't really get anywhere out of Greenland right now, and they're not going to cast such a wide net to punish the US. I mean, maybe they would, but I really, really don't think so. Just very coincidental timing.

**[0:06:24] IP:** That seems rather unlikely. We'll keep abreast of this. Hopefully, they figure out – I mean, the Nuuk Airport rollout has been beset by –

**[0:06:32] JR:** It has been bad.

**[0:06:32] IP:** - problems in general at the beginning of the month, and this has nothing to do with the airport specifically. Just happened to the airport. But at the beginning of the month, everyone who worked at the airport went reindeer hunting, because it was reindeer hunting season, and that's a thing in Greenland that is extremely important, both practically and culturally. To be expected, but it's just a book ending of the months.

I mean, the rollout of the new terminal and the transfer of everything from Kangerlussuaq down to Nuuk has been a bit of a rough bit of business, shall we say, especially with the weather, which was not unknown. It's one of those things that –

**[0:07:12] JR:** Not without its problems.

**[0:07:13] IP:** It hasn't been without its problems. Hopefully, everything gets ironed out, smoothed out, and they're back up and running in relatively short order. Let's head to Korea, where Korean Air has signaled its intent to purchase 103 Boeing aircraft. Good round number.

**[0:07:37] JR:** Yeah. That's a nice, specific number. This was announced at the Korea-US Business Roundtable “Partnership for a Manufacturing Renaissance.” Cool. I don't know what the hell that is, but airplanes came out of it.

**[0:07:55] IP:** Airplanes came out of it.

**[0:07:56] JR:** That's great.

**[0:07:57] IP:** That's why we're involved in the manufacturing renaissance. The order includes MAX 10s, 777-8 freighters, 777-9 passenger aircraft, and 25 787-10s. Of the order of more than a 100 Boeing aircraft, only 25 of those are actual orders, based on the fact that none of the other aircraft exists yet.

**[0:08:28] JR:** Orders for aircraft that are a sure thing that are certified and will be a thing. I wouldn't say that they are not real, because none of this is real. It's an intent to order.

**[0:08:38] IP:** Yes, this is not a firm order.

**[0:08:40] JR:** Right. But the bulk of it that the 20 777-9, 50 737-10s, the eight 777X freighters, those aircraft aren't certified yet. At this rate, they may never be. I'm sure they will be one day, but –

**[0:08:53] IP:** One day.

**[0:08:53] JR:** That's a lot of airplanes. 103. Interesting number.

**[0:08:55] IP:** They, both Boeing and Korean say, it is the largest single order from an Asian carrier for wide body aircraft.

**[0:09:05] JR:** Well, don't forget that Korean is eating for two these days. Now that it has fully absorbed Asiana, that's a lot of fleet to refresh. It's not just Korean anymore. It is the Korean airline.

**[0:09:19] IP:** That's true. Though, Asiana does have Airbus aircraft still on order.

**[0:09:24] JR:** Yes. Korean’s been taking those, at least some of those A350s in the Korean livery, right?

**[0:09:29] IP:** Yeah, that'll be interesting to see if we see a top-up for any Airbus orders. However, they still have quite a few on order. I think they've got, I think, it's more than three dozen A320neo family aircraft outstanding, and more than 30 A350s still to be delivered. I don't think we're going to see a top-up anytime soon with Airbus, but you never know.

**[0:09:56] JR:** Yeah. Good day for Korean. They just swapped my flight from Busan to Tokyo from a 73 MAX to a 321neo. I'm pretty happy about that.

**[0:10:05] IP:** There you go.

**[0:10:05] JR:** They also switched, less happy about this, my 747-8I to an A380. Less happy about that one.

**[0:10:13] IP:** Oh. Well, I mean –

**[0:10:15] JR:** Yeah. I'm conflicted. I'm conflicted on that one.

**[0:10:17] IP:** That's a fair thing to be conflicted about.

**[0:10:19] JR:** I've been on a lot of A380s, but the 748 aren't exactly a whole lot of those.

**[0:10:24] IP:** Yeah. I know that you had booked specifically.

**[0:10:27] JR:** I did. Korean's A380, well, it's no Etihad, or Emirates A380. It is elderly at this point.

**[0:10:36] IP:** Less well loved, shall we say?

**[0:10:38] JR:** Yes.

**[0:10:40] IP:** Let's stay in the neighborhood and talk about an even less real order. This has been bandied about all summer, and now it has expanded from Airbus to Boeing. I want to say

in late June, early July, Bloomberg began citing people familiar with the matter, those close to the situation, etc., etc., saying that China was looking to order about 500 planes from Airbus.

**[0:11:15] JR:** Healthy at a time.

**[0:11:16] IP:** There were all sorts of timings of when the Chinese president meets with the French president. This happens when that happens, the order will be announced. Now we're getting into 500 aircraft for Chinese airlines for Boeing.

**[0:11:29] JR:** So nice to be back in the land of one day, Chinese airlines are being forced to return their 737s to sender, that being Boeing. The next day, we're talking about maybe a 500 order split to half that to Boeing. It's just whiplash again.

**[0:11:47] IP:** I know, right? The Airbus breakdown seems to be firming up along the lines of 100 planes each for the big three, so Air China, China Southern, China Eastern. Then Xiamen airlines and Sichuan Airlines would pick up the balance. Then on the Boeing side, no idea. We're at the beginning of the rumor mill, sussing out what that order could look like. Interesting though, I didn't realize that Chinese airlines have not ordered any Boeing aircraft since 2017.

**[0:12:22] JR:** Did not know that. Has it really been that long?

**[0:12:25] IP:** It's been that long. When you think about that timeline, make sense, 2017, there was an order. Then 2019 was the 737 MAX grounding. From there, they're not going to order anymore. I didn't realize it. It was 2017. It was two years before the grounding that they made any orders. That would be a huge, huge win, both commercially for Boeing, as well as for the, I think, frosty is to warm a term commercial relationship between China and the United States at the moment. We'll see where this one goes. But be prepared for more sources close to people who might know what they're talking about over the next couple of weeks as this all begins to play out.

Speaking of the 737 MAX grounding, Boeing has removed the last of the 737 MAX aircraft for Moses Lake that it initially stored there when it ran out of space closer to the Seattle area as the grounding progressed. This aircraft will eventually be delivered to Air China. It was first flown in

early 2019. They've done all the rework there. They've gotten it out of storage. Now they're preparing to deliver it. Good for them on clearing that backlog.

**[0:13:46] JR:** Yeah. I remember going out there, when is it? Moses Lake in 2021, I want to say. It was truly just a parking lot. An overflowing parking lot of 737 MAX aircraft. Hard to picture it without those now, because that's the only state I know it in. I don't believe they have any commercial operations there, so it's really just a gas and go and storage operation for Boeing. There's also some military stuff there. But a lovely preserved time capsule of a passenger airline terminal. I guess, that's back to its roots at this point. I can't believe the parking lot is going to be cleared out.

**[0:14:23] IP:** Yeah. For its part, Boeing says, they will continue to do delivery prep and rework out at Moses Lake, so there's still work to be done. But the initial stored batch of grounded 737 MAX, that's come to a close, I might say.

**[0:14:38] JR:** Who was the last one going to? Do we know?

**[0:14:40] IP:** Air China.

**[0:14:41] JR:** Air China. Full circle.

**[0:14:43] IP:** There you go. Copa Airlines down in Panama says, it may not take the 15 737 MAX 10s it has on order. They are satisfied at the moment with the mix of MAX 8 and 9 that they already have. The MAX 10, who knows when it'll be certified. It sounds like, they don't really want to deal with that. They're an airline that really prides itself on fleet commonality. They say, “Well, we don't necessarily need the 10 right now. The 9 is good enough. We ordered the 10 in 2017 and we probably won't get it until 2027. Maybe we convert these to existing Max 8 and 9s and then we take a look at it later on.”

**[0:15:34] JR:** Cool. my Internet went out for about the last 30 seconds, but you kept talking to that whole thing, so I'm just going to nod and agree and say, yes, Copa. Yes, trade in those planes for something that's real. That's a good plan. I'm shocked. Other airlines looking at you

United haven't quite done this just yet, because they really need those MAX 10s. But they are a figment of everyone's imagination still.

**[0:15:56] IP:** So far. Let's turn our attention to the more commercial side of the business and talk about some roots. Frontier launched a whole bunch of new roots.

**[0:16:12] JR:** As it is known to do.

**[0:16:14] IP:** But these new roots –

**[0:16:15] JR:** It was a bit more tactical.

**[0:16:16] IP:** A bit more tactical. This is not just, let's see if we can make money flying between, I don't even have –

**[0:16:23] JR:** Choose carefully.

**[0:16:25] IP:** But here, they're going to try and make money between certain city pairs. I'm going to list the city pairs, and then you tell me what those city pairs might have in common. Baltimore-Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale-Houston, Detroit-Miami.

**[0:16:43] JR:** Interesting.

**[0:16:45] IP:** What might Frontier have in common with another airline, perhaps, that operates on those roots?

**[0:16:51] JR:** I get the spirit of what they're trying to do here. Yes, as you put in the show notes here, Frontier smells blood in the water. There's no illusion here. We saw last week, they announced routes to Atlantic City. No other airline serves Atlantic City. No other airline has served at Atlantic City for a long time, except for Spirit, unless you count American's landline bus connections to Philly, but that doesn't really count. Frontier is just, they're just going all out now, trying to siphon off as much of Spirit's potential revenue as possible to really twist the knife in the back. That's just business, I guess.

**[0:17:29] IP:** I mean, that's opportunity. If they can capitalize and gain some market share, good for them. Like we talked about when we talked about Spirit's issues and their going concern-concern, that, I mean, if I'm Frontier, I'm thinking, okay, what can I pick up now in anticipation of picking up much more when Spirit ceases to be, if that's what I'm banking on?

**[0:17:54] JR:** If Frontier can hasten that gradual demise, they're going to take every opportunity.

**[0:18:01] IP:** Off we go to Germany now, where Lufthansa has completed its 10% investment in airBaltic for the vast sum of 14 million euros.

**[0:18:13] JR:** Okay. Great to see some investment to airBaltic. But 10% at 14 million values them at 140 million euros in total, which doesn't sound all that high, or all that great. But if this is good for airBaltic, then good. This is now our third take recording this airBaltic segment. I'm going to make the same joke and you have to laugh at it again. Here we go. 10% of airBaltic investment from Lufthansa just makes sense, because at any given time, it feels like airBaltic operates 10% of Lufthansa's short-haul fleet. Cue the laughter from Ian.

**[0:18:47] IP:** Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

**[0:18:48] JR:** There it is. Okay, third plan to charm. Let's continue to the next topic.

**[0:18:51] IP:** Moving on. We're sticking with Lufthansa, but now we're switching over to Condor, which if you've been following the podcast for, God, three years now –

**[0:19:02] JR:** It’s been a minute.

**[0:19:03] IP:** What happened was Condor had a special arrangement with Lufthansa, that it had access to Lufthansa's domestic feeder network. It could then send its holiday makers abroad. Those arrangements in 2022, so Lufthansa ended that. There was an agreement that was in place. Lufthansa ended it five years ago. Three years ago, a not court, but administrative body said, “You violated antitrust laws. You can't do that.” So, they got their thing back, sort of, because they had already moved on and figured out what to do in the meantime. Now, a further

higher court has said, the administrative ruling had a bunch of procedural issues, and it can't stand.

**[0:20:12] JR:** Won't stand. Can't stand. That's unfortunate.

**[0:20:16] IP:** Condor is appealing not the ruling, but moving things forward while they try and figure out what to do about the actual structure of that feeder network. The other thing that's going along at the same time is the European Commission's investigation into the transatlantic joint venture between Lufthansa, United, and Air Canada. That is all balled up together. Condor has to deal with how to structure its business in the face of uncertain feeder network that they seem to have done okay with and seem to be doing quite well with their business model now. But then, Lufthansa also has to deal with the fact that the European Commission is further looking into a real thing that they would have a problem with, which is the transatlantic joint venture, because that becomes a huge issue for them.

**[0:21:15] JR:** Yeah. Very tricky for Condor, right? Now, not a great way to have to run a business to one day have a continental Europe fleet, and then the next day not, and then it comes back, and then the courts says, “Actually, no. Never mind.” Really difficult for an airline like Condor that relies so heavily on connecting traffic. Because remember, when this first hit, Condor dramatically reshaped its transatlantic fleet, exited entirely at a lot of North American cities, because those preferential fairs connecting onto Lufthansa were so important. To see this go back and forth and back and forth for Condor, that ain't good.

**[0:21:46] IP:** Yeah. I mean, the difficulty here is that the whole thing is not – it did not address the actual issue here, whether or not Condor is entitled to feeder flights, but just cast everything aside on procedural grounds. Now it's, I don't know enough about the German legal system to know where this ends up, or where this goes back to, what part of the process it restarts at, but it's not great that this is carried on for so long. Jason?

**[0:22:19] JR:** Yes.

**[0:22:19] IP:** Swiss is now the latest to come up with an even more firsty first class. They're calling it The Grand Suite.

**[0:22:31] JR:** What does that mean?

**[0:22:33] IP:** This will be beginning on Swiss A350s and A330s and then extending to their 777 fleet. They will take the left side first row and the center first row and first class and give you some divider, or blockage, so that seats 1A, 1D, and 1E become a grand suite all to yourself.

**[0:23:04] JR:** It's curtain.

**[0:23:04] IP:** Maybe. Unclear what type of thing they're going to put there, but curtain does seem what they're going to do. Yeah.

**[0:23:14] JR:** Okay. Things are getting weird with premium cabins on airlines these days between business class and business class suites and business class plus, and the odd but revival of first class and then premium first-class thing, there's no standardization to any of this. It's all very confusing. If it's confusing for me as someone who does this professionally for a living, it must be unobtainium information for people just trying to book a damn flight. Especially with Allegra's, none of this, or I think they call it senses at Swiss. They may have gone a couple of steps too far in differentiation. But hey, premium products is something for everyone, even if there isn't someone to fill those seats, because it's too confusing, there's something for every hypothetical type of passenger.

**[0:24:00] IP:** Every hypothetical person who is never going to book this. Because if you're going to book this, more likely, I mean, given the price point of these things, doesn't it at some point like, “I'm just going to fly private.”

**[0:24:12] JR:** There are some people who will use a travel agent and will just say, “Book me whatever is most expensive.” For those people, there's this.

**[0:24:21] IP:** I want to meet those people.

**[0:24:22] JR:** I am not one of those people, unfortunately.

**[0:24:25] IP:** No. Well, I think fortunately. I think that would be a weird dynamic in this relationship if you were that person.

**[0:24:30] JR:** Yeah. I mean, I won't hate it. If I had so much money, I could just say, "Book me on the most expensive thing, please."

**[0:24:37] IP:** The most expensive flight you can find.

**[0:24:39] JR:** I don't care what it is. Just book it.

**[0:24:41] IP:** Tell Hi Fly to get the A380 out of the desert and start flying again.

**[0:24:44] JR:** 9H MIP, come back to us.

**[0:24:46] IP:** All right. We'll figure out this someday, maybe.

**[0:24:51] JR:** The transition here, Ian, is you know who else is having to call Hi Fly?

**[0:24:57] IP:** Ah, that's a good one.

**[0:24:58] JR:** Yeah, Air Mauritius, potentially. Turns out, when you take a bulk of your fleet all at once, or in big spurts, all those aircraft, if you operate them equally, they're going to come due for heavy maintenance at about the same time. When you're an airline that only has four A350s, that's a problem, isn't it?

**[0:25:17] IP:** It sure is. Between September and December of this year, all of air Mauritius's A350s will have to undergo heavy maintenance. Here come the wet leases.

**[0:25:29] JR:** Yeah, that's an interesting one, because they actually did not take all four of their A350s at the same time. Two of them were ordered and delivered to Air Mauritius, I believe. Actually, interestingly, they went via South African Airways, I think. Or a couple of them, I'm sorry, a couple of them actually did go straight to Air Mauritius, but those were much earlier. Those came in October, November of 2017. Then two more came via the not taking up units

from South African Airways, but those came in October and November of 2020, so three years later. Both of those were also very close off the line. It's 145, 157, and 354, and 365. They are quite close to each other. That is some real bad luck that they have four aircraft delivered in two different batches that apparently, all come up for maintenance at the same time. That's some bad aircraft utilization planning, I guess.

**[0:26:23] IP:** I think that's just how it works out for them. They're looking into wet leasing, or some other type of capacity arrangement, so that they can ensure their operations remain as unaffected as possible. Because they have had problems recently with flight completion, shall we say?

**[0:26:44] JR:** Yes. Well, they also have some A330s out there as well. A pair of 200s and a pair of three 330-900neos. There are other aircraft, but the 350s are the actual long-haul aircraft. Whoops.

**[0:26:58] IP:** Here's an interesting idea. If you fly to Thailand, they will pay for you to fly around Thailand. I think this is a very interesting idea. The idea is that if you go from somewhere to Thailand, they will then comp your domestic tickets around Thailand, so that you can go see more of the country.

**[0:27:22] JR:** Are domestic tickets in Thailand expensive enough, where this is going to move the needle?

**[0:27:27] IP:** I mean, I think people just like free stuff.

**[0:27:30] JR:** Free stuff is good, if you don't have to jump through a lot of hoops to get them, I guess.

**[0:27:36] IP:** It sounds like, it's one of those things where if you've booked a flight on certain airlines, then domestic flights on those airlines are now free for you.

**[0:27:46] JR:** Okay. Flights throughout this country are not known to be expensive.

**[0:27:49] IP:** No, they're not expensive.

**[0:27:51] JR:** They'd be quite the opposite.

**[0:27:52] IP:** We're talking about a $100 round trip, basically.

**[0:27:55] JR:** Less than that. There are flights I'm seeing between –

**[0:27:57] IP:** No. That's the cap. That's the cap on the cost of the free.

**[0:28:02] JR:** I'm looking at flights between major cities and they're $24 with 90,000 departures a day on NokAir. Sure, if this moves the needle. If you didn't want to go see some cool stuff in Thailand because the flight cost $24 before, well, your ship has arrived, I guess.

**[0:28:20] IP:** You're all set now. We'll see how that goes. They're debating that in the government now. If it goes into place, it'll go into place. Well, you have to fly to Thailand before the end of the year. Keep an eye on that if you were thinking to yourself, "I should go to Thailand." Lord knows that nearly every airline ever flies to Thailand these days, or is launching service to Thailand.

We haven't really talked about this on the podcast a lot, but it's very well known in avgeek circles, especially among more military aviation focused peoples. The New Zealand Royal, New Zealand Air Force has two 757s that are old and sad. I believe at some point, the Prime Minister of New Zealand got stuck somewhere, because one of these went tech. They're finally replacing them with two A321XLRs.

**[0:29:14] JR:** Hey, that's cool. Even I've seen these New Zealand 757s out here in New York for view in a week, I believe. But yeah, anyone operating a 757 for governmental reasons is probably operating quite an old elderly 757. We know even the US here, what is it? Air Force 2, or whatever the vice president –

**[0:29:36] IP:** The C32s, yeah.

**[0:29:37] JR:** C32s, those are stranded people all over left and right. This is just natural that the 321XLR would be the replacement for it. Don't know what's going to happen here in the US to replace those 75s for the US government, because Boeing doesn't have an equal product.

**[0:29:54] IP:** 737-10.

**[0:29:56] JR:** Doesn't have the range. Doesn't have nearly the legs to compete with the 321XLR. Can't. Not even in the same class of aircraft. It's also hypothetical, not real aircraft.

**[0:30:08] IP:** 737-11, then.

**[0:30:10] JR:** Sure. What could go wrong?

**[0:30:14] IP:** Jason, if you were running an airline that was merging with another airline, and you were going to have that merged airline operate a specific set of flights that didn't leave the borders of that country, what might you call it?

**[0:30:31] JR:** I feel like I've played so many mobile phone games where you manage airlines, where it creates ridiculous names for just a situation. I would go with Intergalactic Airways.

**[0:30:44] IP:** That would be fun. That's not what they went with. The newly formed Algerian carrier is named Domestic Airlines.

**[0:30:53] JR:** Hey, it is what it says it is. This should prohibit them from ever operating a flight over any border, because then they'll have to change their name. It won't be what it is. I like when airlines, their name is what they are. Wasn't there a Czech airline just called OK Airlines. Like, hey.

**[0:31:11] IP:** Yeah, OK Airways.

**[0:31:12] JR:** They're fine. They're okay. They are what they say they are. It's nice when things are what they claim to be.

**[0:31:18] IP:** There is that. this is the merger between Tassili Airlines and Air Algérie. With Air Algérie, basically subsuming the larger aircraft in the Tassili fleet, and then creating domestic airlines.

**[0:31:33] JR:** No, hold on. In the show notes here, you have Domestic Airlines, because it's an exclamation point at the end of it. Please, tell me that's real, and it's not just –

**[0:31:41] IP:** Oh, no. I'm sorry. I was just excited about it. That was just me personally being excited.

**[0:31:47] JR:** Well, personally, I feel like, they should take that as feedback, and it should be Domestic Airlines!

**[0:31:53] IP:** With an exclamation point.

**[0:31:54] JR:** Really amp up the energy.

**[0:31:56] IP:** We will make a note of that, and I will fire off a letter. Vietjet is either creating hundreds of jobs, investing hundreds of millions of dollars in MROs, aircraft, and other infrastructure, or they're about to go bankrupt. The stories between the two every other week. This week, they're spending 100 million dollars in an MRO facility.

**[0:32:28] JR:** Oh. Where is it getting 100 million dollars for this MRO facility? You know what? Don't want to know the answer to that. I don't want to know.

**[0:32:36] IP:** We'll be back next week with another story of how they owe some other organization 100 million dollars that they have not yet paid. We'll figure out what's going on here one day. Speaking of figuring out what's going on here one day, this is a story that just keeps getting more and more bizarre. When the book is finally written on 777 Partners, it's one of those techno thrillers, maybe, with a bit of big short thrown in. At the moment, 777 Partners, which was an investment firm that backed Bonsa in Australia, they have backed other airlines here in North America, they were ordered to pay their former CFO’s legal bills, because the

former CFO and the 777 Partners organization went at each other through the courts for a while. The courts awarded the former CFO legal fees, which 777 Partners has not paid.

They have, however, paid over 6 million dollars to other law firms, while not paying the $600,000 it owes their former CFO. The court said, “Guess what? We're placing you in limited receivership now. You are going to pay this and you're going to straighten out your act.”

**[0:34:08] JR:** All right. Serves them right for being called 777 Partners, and I don't think they actually leased, or had any 777s. It was mostly narrow bodies. Right there, we just talked about things that are named for what they are. This is named for what they are. It was all there from day one.

**[0:34:24] IP:** Yeah. We'll follow this along and see how long they can limp around. Just such a bizarre turn of events at every turn with these guys. I mean, especially, because there were no 777s at all. It was just a bunch of 737 MAX. Because they went to Bonsa, they backed Flair.

**[0:34:41] JR:** It was suspicious the whole time.

**[0:34:43] IP:** Just a weird thing. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency has now proposed eVTOL noise requirements. These go specifically to eVTOL aircraft, or not just eVTOL, but VTOL aircraft. Rather than taking the helicopter noise requirements and the tilt rotor noise requirements and saying, “We're just going to combine those.” These are going to be specific for VTOLs based on requirements that are not covered by the ICAO Annex 16, which deals with existing noise requirements. This is a whole new thing that IASA is working on, because they say, “We need something specific to VTOLs, because all of the surveys that we've done says, everyone's concerned about safety first. Are these things going to fall out of the sky onto my house? Then, how loud is it going to be when they eventually start landing near me?” That's number two on the concerned list.

They say, we want to have a level playing field for all of the manufacturers. We want to have certified noise levels, so that we can benchmark everything across the board. we want to make sure that these things don't noise pollute everywhere they are. That proposal is out. We'll put a link to that in the show notes and you can take a look at the proposed regulations. That will go

through the end of the year. The process will conclude next year ahead of what's expected to be a 2027 timeframe for the beginning of certification for these aircraft.

**[0:36:30] JR:** All right. Let's bring some of that noise limitation to current day helicopters. That would be fantastic, too.

**[0:36:37] IP:** Wouldn't that be something?

**[0:36:38] JR:** That would be nice.

**[0:36:40] IP:** Okay. This is a story that just keeps getting better and better. By better and better, I mean, worse and worse for a bunch of people. If you remember maybe a month ago, we talked about the fact that Iran had somehow acquired a pair of 777s. Actually, more than a pair of 777s, a handful of 777s, five of them. Those aircraft had been registered in Madagascar, because they were supposed to be moved for maintenance. Well, they were moved for "maintenance and they ended up in Iran."

**[0:37:16] JR:** Whoops.

**[0:37:18] IP:** The government of Madagascar got big mad about this. They took it as a national affront, that they could have been used for such a purpose. To the point where a few weeks ago, we talked about two people who had been intimately involved in the forging of documentation to keep those aircraft registered at Madagascar, so that they could have been eventually be transferred to Iran. Those people had been arrested. Now, 22 people have been arrested, and there are 33 –

**[0:37:51] JR:** Good. I mean –

**[0:37:52] IP:** - total individual.

**[0:37:54] JR:** Shocked. There can be 22 people in somewhere as small as Madagascar involved in the same criminal conspiracy to deliver aircraft to a sanctioned country. That's got to

be a good chunk of the entire country. I don't know what the actual population is, but 22 seems a lot for this thing anywhere in the world, let alone Madagascar.

**[0:38:13] IP:** All of the charges are ranging from official corruption, forging of documents, money laundering, abusive power, and my favorite one is endangering state security. They are really upset about this happening.

**[0:38:24] JR:** All right. Well, you know what? I don't know if this comes true, but round of applause to the officials and the prosecutors and everyone involved in investigating this in Madagascar, because this is the thing, or if you look the other way once, it's going to happen again. Nobody wants to be known as the country that isn't the intermediary for illegally delivering aircraft to Iran. That's just not good for your reputation. Really nice to see that they are slamming the book down on these people. 22 people.

**[0:38:54] IP:** No, no, no. The 22 people arrested, 33 wanted for arrest.

**[0:39:00] JR:** That's crazy for such a small country. Most crime rings, I feel like, overall are not that big to begin with. For that many people to be involved in a very small niche thing.

**[0:39:10] IP:** This is why I don't believe in most conspiracy theories.

**[0:39:13] JR:** No.

**[0:39:14] IP:** Because if it takes 33 people to forge enough documentation to transfer five 777s, imagine what it takes for actual serious major conspiracy theories.

**[0:39:25] JR:** If you are involved in a serious major conspiracies and want to talk about it.

**[0:39:28] IP:** Email us at podcast@fr24.com.

**[0:39:32] JR:** It'll just be between us and you.

**[0:39:34] IP:** Perfect. Perfect. On that note, this has been episode 334 of AvTalk. If you do have anything you want to talk about, or want us to talk about, comments, criticisms, suggestions, email us at podcast@fr24.com, and we will give those a read and talk about them in a future episode. I am Ian Petchenik, here, as always with –

**[0:40:00] JR:** Jason Rabinowitz. Thanks for listening.

[END]