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IFALPA voices infrastructure and security concerns over Iraq and Afghanistan flights

CHERTSEY 1 February: With the resumption of scheduled passenger flights to and from Iraq and Afghanistan, IFALPA has voiced concerns over the safety of these flights. Naturally, there are concerns about the security provisions for flight and cabin crews, not only while they are on duty but also for those that may layover in these locations. These concerns are, however, obvious and need no reiteration.

The Federation has also voiced concerns over the safety and security of the two countries' navigation and surface infrastructure. Clearly, the armed conflicts in these countries have resulted in significant damage to the transport infrastructure, but the scale of this damage and its possible impact on commercial operations remains an unknown. In addition to possible degradation of surface navigational equipment, there are also questions over the Rescue and Fire Fighting (RFF) capabilities at airports in the two countries. Although this service may be provided by coalition forces at some airports, as with navigation equipment, the actual availability and quality of these services remains an unknown.

The Federation recognises that there may be compelling commercial reasons for airlines to introduce these services, but at the same time argues that notwithstanding the fiscal benefits, the safety of passengers and crews should remain paramount, and that the operational integrity and security of surface based navigation equipment and RFF provisions must be confirmed as complying with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices prior to a resumption of service.

Notes to Editors

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 95 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. See the Federation website www.ifalpa.org

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