



# HEAD OF AMERICA'S AIRBUS WANTS TO SEE REFORM OF ATC SYSTEM

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The Airbus Group Inc. Chairman and CEO, Allan McArtor, has spoken openly at an International Aviation Club lunch meeting, stating that the US national air traffic control system needs to be “free from political shenanigans” and taken out of the federal procurement system, continuing, “It’s high time to move beyond words and into action.”

McArtor, himself an ex-FAA administrator, made it very clear that the US ought to follow the examples set by Canada and New Zealand, which spun off their ATC systems and subsequently saw reduced delays and greater efficiencies while still maintaining acceptable safety standards. “I want the safest ATC system in the world, but I also want the most efficient system in the world,” he stated. “We have the safest system in the world, but that’s not the issue. It’s about efficiency.”

He suggested there should be a new corporate national ATC system which should be comprised of a board of directors representing all aspects of the industry and who are business people. The set-up should be “an all-new company with a fresh start”, permitting the FAA “to get out of the business of controlling air traffic and to focus on what it does best – safety and certification.”

McArtor also mooted that funding from congress for five to seven years should then allow time for the body to become self-funding, suggesting that airlines pay on a per-plane basis, indicating US\$50.00 as a levy. He made his feelings clear, “I don’t think there’s going to be any resistance

from the community; I think you will get applause.” He also said that to get the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) on side, skills of their members would be necessary, though additionally there would need to be alterations to the rules.

Backing for taking the US ATC system out of FAA control and putting it under the governance of a commercialized, not-for-profit organization is increasing. A number of CEOs of major US airlines have spoken positively about a new approach, including American Airlines’ Doug Parker and United Airlines’ Jeff Smisek. Currently it is acknowledged that the politicized system does not allow for consistent, long-term funding and requires overhauling.

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