

Boeing's Perilous Bungling Requires New Leadership

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Global Research, December 19, 2019

[Common Dreams](#) 17 December 2019

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

The Boeing executives and marketers responsible for over-ruling Boeing engineers on the 737 MAX are still in charge of this very troubled aerospace company. Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg and the rubber-stamp Board of Directors, with two trophy ambassadors, are still running Boeing – thirteen months after the deadly 737 MAX crash in Indonesia and nine months after the deadly 737 MAX crash in Ethiopia that together took 346 lives. Boeing said in October that it would appoint a board member with deep air safety experience, but it has not happened yet. (Muilenburg is the only board member with an aeronautical engineering background)

Boeing has displayed an egregious pattern of mismanagement. The company is in trouble from contractors, the Department of Defense, and NASA. California Representative John Garamendi said Boeing had “serious quality issues” with the KC-46 aerial tanker used by the military and accused the company of “pushing profits over quality and safety.” According to NASA’s Inspector General Paul Martin, NASA “essentially paid Boeing higher prices to address a schedule slippage caused by Boeing’s 13-month delay.”

First-rate former Boeing engineers, including John Barnett and Ed Pierson, are exposing the reckless conditions at the Boeing 737 and 787 Dreamliner plants in Washington state and South Carolina.

Boeing managers and directors are still on the job and paying themselves handsomely. These reckless marketers are able to get away with this because Congress and the White House have disabled the FAA and turned it from a safety watchdog into an industry lapdog, leaving Boeing free to self-certify its planes.

With intensifying investigation by the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, under the chairmanship of Congressman Peter DeFazio, a stunning internal FAA risk assessment turned up. After the October 29, 2018 Lion Air Flight 610 was hijacked by powerful MCAS software which took control of the aircraft from its pilots. A December 2018 FAA memo concluded that there would be 15 catastrophic crashes globally over the life of the 737 MAX fleet – ranging 30 to 45 years. That would mean the deaths of at least 2900 human beings.

Dr. Alan Diehl, an aerospace engineer with extensive experience at the FAA, at the Department of Defense, and in private business, told the Wall Street Journal that this prediction “would be an unacceptable number in the modern aviation-safety world.” The FAA analysis, surfacing very late in the wake of the two planes going down due to Boeing’s

criminal negligence, was conditioned on the 737 MAX not flying until there are design and software corrections.

Chairman DeFazio noted other design problems with the Boeing 737 MAX, including rudder vulnerabilities. Boeing leadership has displayed all sorts of derelictions, including refusing to adequately inform pilots about the problems with the 737 MAX, producing faulty training manuals, and refusing to insist on full simulator training. Not only that, but the 787 Dreamliner has been found to have inadequate protection in case of lightning strikes (another Boeing bosses over-ruling of their own engineer's warnings). Boeing also laid off hundreds of quality control inspectors in its factories, preferring to rely on machines.

The FAA's new chief, Stephen Dickson, recently warned Boeing to stop announcing ungrounding times for the approximately 400 737 MAX already in the hands of the airlines. He indicated that the FAA is stiffening its backbone a little by saying that the ungrounding schedule will be decided by the FAA. Boeing has just announced it was suspending production of the 737 MAX for the time being.

The next step for Dickson would be to ask FAA Deputy Administrator Daniel Elwell and Associate Administrator for Safety Ali Bahrami to resign. Elwell and Bahrami turned their backs on airline passenger safety, let Boeing dictate its own safety decisions, and kept the public and Congress in the dark. There is no way the FAA can recover its responsibilities so long as Elwell and Ali Bahrami are still in positions of any responsibility.

Bahrami admitted he wasn't even aware of his own agency's risk assessment of the Boeing 737 MAX, noted above.

Meanwhile, the families of the deceased continue to advocate that the Boeing 737 MAX be required to undergo full certification with full pilot simulator training. In their grief, these wonderful family members are fighting daily for the future safety of tens of millions of airline passengers.

Please see flyersrights.org for updates and your participation. You can find their comprehensive report [here](#).

And see a [Democracy Now! Interview on Boeing's misdeeds](#).

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[Ralph Nader](#) is a consumer advocate, lawyer, and author. His latest books include: [To the Ramparts: How Bush and Obama Paved the Way for the Trump Presidency, and Why It Isn't Too Late to Reverse Course](#), [How the Rats Re-Formed the Congress](#), [Breaking Through Power: It's easier than we think](#), and [Animal Envy: A Fable](#)

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