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SP shows its worth L

ONG-RANGE non-stop Boeing 747SP
. services are now available in five markets. Wherever there has been time to assess results, the S'P operator has increased its market share and load factor. Yet no competitor on any of the routes has immediate plans to offer similar non-stop services. Pan Am, which operates four SP routes (New York-Tokyo, West Coast-Tokyo, San Francisco-Sydney, and New York-Bahrain), is content to continue with one - stop and two - stop services between New York and Tehran, on which Iran Air has been flying non-stop since May.

William R. Roy, staff vice-president passenger marketing, explains why Pan Am introduced the non-stop 747SP on New York-Tokyo last April: "All our market surveys show that where business travel is a big chunk of the market, the passenger is par-ticularly sensitive to schedule and time. More than half of New York-Tokyo is business. We were at a com-petitive disadvantage in this market compared with Northwest, which was able to offer wide-bodied service with an intermediate stop in Seattle, while we had to stop at Fairbanks. We were against JAL, which used a wide variety of approaches, including a high level of service that we could not economically match."

The non-stops have increased Pan Am's market share from 16 per cent to about 22 per cent, according to Roy, and the SPs are achieving a 60 per cent load factor with first class "full or close to full." But despite this success, Pan Am's competitors, North-west and Japan Air Lines, have no immediate plans for non-stop services. Kiiohi Ito, JAL's vice-president for the Americas, explains why his air-line thinks it possible to stay competi-tive with a stop at Anchorage: "The impact has been mainly on the first-class business travellers, and economy class has been less affected. For-tunately, we are now getting a bigger total demand than we expected, so we actually have more passengers now than last year."

In August 1975, for example, JAL carried about 2,500 New York-Tokyo passengers, with less than 10 per cent of them in first class. August 1976 saw the number of first-class passengers drop by almost a third, but the total passenger load was up about 20 per cent to more than 3,100.
As in most international markets, flag loyalty is a factor. In 1975 JAL

Airliner market

American Airlines has followed TWA in buying back a Boeing 747 which it sold earlier to a Middle Eastern opera-tor. The latest deal involves one of two 747-lOOs sold to Trans Mediter-ranean Airways and converted to freighter configuration. Unlike TWA, American paid the original selling price for the aircraft • Arkia will take delivery in March of an ex-Trans-brasil BAC One-Eleven 500 acquired via the manufacturer, and a second will follow in September. The airline may take delivery of a third One-Eleven in 1978. Arkia will operate the aircraft in 119-seat configuration on domestic scheduled flights and over-seas charters • British third-level carrier Brymon Aviation (previously a Twin Otter operator) is buying a Handley Page Herald from British Midland Airways for a new London-Newquay service. BMA crews will operate the aircraft initially, but Brymon will take over in due course. The route has been flown by BMA up to now, but the timetable is no longer compatible with BMA's other services

Air Bridge Carriers is now operating this BAC Merchantman acquired from British Airways.
It supplements the airline's Argosies and Viscounts.

carried about 71 per cent of the Japanese nationals (who constitute about a third of the total market) travelling on the route, but only 28 per cent of the non-Japanese.
Mr Ito concedes that Pan Am has also taken some Japanese travellers from JAL, but is confident that most of them will return to JAL. "The Japanese like to try new things," he says, "but we have heard that there are some shortcomings in the service on Pan Am's SP flights. Some people say the stewardesses get tired and the service deteriorates. We put on a fresh crew in Anchorage. We find the fact that the SP is a wide-body is more competition than the fact that it goes non-stop."

JAL therefore plans to replace the DC-8-63s which it now uses on the route with DC-lOs in April.
Pan Am's William Roy admits that the 131

2hr non-stops have been "a
new experience for the flight crews" and that Pan Am has been "concerned about the level of service." But he

• Source of Comair's two Fokker-VFW F.27-200S (Airliner market, December 11) is Australian Aircraft Sales of Sydney. Both aircraft, be-lieved to be ex-Ansetr, should be delivered by the end of this month • Reports from India now suggest that Indian Airlines' choice of a new short-haul twinjet may be delayed. The latest order for three Boeing 737s with new low-pressure tyres, 16,4001b/ 17,4001b-thrust Pratt & Whitney JT8D-17R engines and the automatic performance reserve (APR) system will allow the airline to serve the high-altitude airport at Leh and the difficult Port Blair in the Andaman Islands. Although there remain many airports on the network which even the latest 737 cannot use, the order is seen as a move to reduce pressure for an early decision Q Lockheed Tri-Star prices are hardening on the second-hand market, having slumped to about $16 million after the US traffic recession. Eastern Airlines still has three aircraft available, but is now asking up to $22 million Q Transavia has cancelled its order for an Airbus A300B4 and is announcing the pur-chase of a fourth Boeing 737 from the manufacturer. The airline also oper-ates two leased 737s and plans to have a total fleet of eight by the end of this year. Cancellation of the A300, which would have been delivered in the coming spring, is a serious setback for Airbus Industrie Q Zambia Air-ways may order a Boeing 747SP this year.