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No holds barred in Miami fight

PRELIMINARY statements from US
carriers competing for the London-
Miami route have underlined the
eagerness to take over one of the
few remaining transatlantic routes
which are actually profitable. National Airlines currently holds the Miami-London licence (British Airways is the UK-designated carrier) but will lose it when the merger with Pan Am becomes effective later this year. The US Civil Aeronautics Board, when it approved the Pan Am merger, said that it would withdraw National's Miami-London licence to prevent Pan Am from automatically taking over the route with the airline.

So far 10 airlines have applied for the route, including Pan Am, Braniff, Delta, Eastern, Air Florida and West-ern. The carrier to watch is Air Florida, a fast-growing regional air-line which, until deregulation in late 1978, flew no services outside its home state. Air Florida is currently one of the CAB's "blue-eyed boys" and is often cited by the Board as an ex-ample of the good effects of deregula-tion—a small carrier expandin g aggressively into the established trunks' territory and capturing traffic with low fares. The airline is mount-ing a publicity campaign under the theme "join Air Florida's battle for

Airliner market

• Air Europe, the Gatwick-based UK charter airline, has ordered its sixth Boeing 737-200 for delivery in spring 1981.

• Alia, the Jordanian flag carrier, has announced an order for five Lockheed TriStars (Flight, December 22, page 2042). A decision on the exact mix of -200s and -500s, for medium and long-haul operations, is expected soon. The Jordanian airline has also ordered one Boeing 747-200B, for delivery in March 1981, powered by General Electric CF6-50Es.

• Egyptair plans to convert four options for Airbus A300s into firm orders, adding to three A300s ordered earlier this year. Egypt's flag carrier has, been cleared to buy four McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30s by a committee set up to examine the deal in the wake of the Chicago crash. But the order is being delayed while financing terms are being negotiated.
• Frontier Airlines has ordered two Boeing 737s for delivery in spring 1981. When these are delivered, Frontier will have a fleet of 45 737s.

• The Government of Madagascar

Britain" to get its name better known on both sides of the Atlantic. Air Florida proposes a normal one-way economy fare of $175 (peak season) or $143 (low season) and a $465 one-way first class fare (which compares with the current level of $803).
Air Florida proposes to use DC-lOs on the route and has leased one -30 from World Airways for the coming summer season. It holds options to lease another two. These plans pro-duced an extraordinary statement from Eastern Airlines' , president Frank Borman in testimony to the CAB law judge before Christmas. Borman says that "recently there appears to be renewed public concern about the DC-10, following the An-tarctica crash, although that crash was apparently not related to any al-leged design defects. It is not my view that the DC-10 is an unsafe airplane. In fact, we have had East-ern's engineers examine the DC-10 and they found it a safe, airworthy aircraft. It does appear, however, that many passengers now are troubled about the DC-10, and even before the grounding, they strongly preferred the 747 [Eastern proposes to use 747s on Miami-London]. I am confident that the DC-10 safety issue will be resolved in the long run, but in the short run,

has ordered three BAe 748 Series 2Bs for use by Air Madagascar. The first aircraft was delivered at the end of December, one more will follow this year and the last will be delivered in 1981. Worldwide sales of the 748 now stand at 345.

• Malaysian Airline System has ordered a third McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30 for delivery in early 1981.
n Mexicana has ordered six more Boeing 727-200s to add to its fleet of 34 aircraft of this type. The new air-craft will be delivered between October this year and June 1981.
• Royal Air Maroc, the Moroccan flag
carrier, has ordered one Boeing 727-200 for delivery in July 1980. •
• South African Airways has made the biggest aircraft purchase in its history by ordering 12 Boeing 737 s worth $146 million.
• Swissair has announced that it is to
order a third Boeing 747-200 for delivery in March 1982 and place an option on a fourth for spring 1983 delivery.
• Yemen Airways has ordered two
de Havilland Canada Dash 7s for delivery later this year.
• Ansett Airlines of New South Wales, the Ansett regional subsidiary, has taken options on four de Havilland Canada Dash 7s and intends to operate them on the Sydney-Norfolk Island route, currently flown by rival regional East-West Airlines, using F.27s. The The Australian Government has ap-proved upgrading of Norfolk Island's airstrip to take jets and East-West may buy BAe 146s or Fokker F.28s.

a DC-10 operator will be at a com petitive disadvantage against a carr flying Boeing 747s."
Borman's statement, highly unco ventional even in the context of th cut-throat world of US deregulatio possibly indicates how worried som of the big carriers are that Air Florid will run off with the Miami prize. Pan Am, which is applying to take o

the route following the National meger, is playing on the fact that it
the only airline which will be allowed to operate into Heathrow, rather th Gatwick. "Another major advantag which we enjoy is our ability to serv Miami-London via Heathrow Airport the busiest international airport the world. Heathrow not only offer access to London itself, which superior to that afforded by Gatwic

but offers many more connecting oportunities beyond London to Europ

and the Middle East. We are the on applicant in this case who can certain of serving Heathrow. We a National's corporate successor a will receive National's grandfathe rights at Heathrow under the curre UK airports policy."
Air Florida would prefer to serv Heathrow, but will accept Gatwick i this is not possible. Delta and Bran already serve Gatwick.

Short hauls ...

• McDonnell Douglas' DC-9 Super 8 has now passed the lOOhr mark in

flight-test programme and is performing up to, and in some respects byond, expectations. A second aircra

has already joined the $36 millio test programme and a third will b

airborne early in 1980. Airline deliveries will start next summer. Swisair and Austrian Airlines are the firs

two customers.

G Pan American is to fit a new groun proximity warning system to its Boein 747, 727 and TriStar 500 aircraft. Th GPWS, manufactured by Sundstra

Data Control Inc., of Redmond, Wasington, is the Mk 2 version of that installed in Pan Am aircraft in 1974

The new system gives pilots audib warning, in five modes, that terrain in the flight path. The various mode give verbal warning of excessive ra of descent, approaching high groun

incorrect configuration during approach, negative rate of climb aft
take-off, and glideslope divergence.

Q Braniff International reports tha the number of passengers carri

during 1979 shows a 20 per cent crease over the previous year. Figu
for international passengers show 40 per cent rise. The first phase Braniff's terminal expansion at Dallas Fort Worth is under way. The ne building will be capable of handlin five Boeing '747s simultaneously an processing 1,500 passengers an h through customs and immigration.