HEADLINE S

Swissair trains Libyan pilots for Airbus A310
BY ALAN GEORGE

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wissair is training Libyan
pilots to fly Airbus A310s
which Libyan Arab Airlines
(LAA) acquired three years ago
in defiance of US sanctions, al-
though the airline claims that the
courses were approved in ad-
vance by Washington.
The LAA pilots are attending
seven-week courses at Swissair's
Kloten Airport training centre in
Zurich. The first group of six
started training on 4 December.
They have completed their basic
instruction, and are soon due to
undergo training on Swissair's
Airbus A310 simulator. A second
group of Libyan pilots will arrive
in Zurich in late January for
similar training.
Swissair spokesman Hannes
Kummer says: "I confirm that we
have the Libyan group here for
simulator training." He adds that
the airline had cleared the deal in
advance with the US Department
of Commerce, ". . . and they
agreed that the training could go
ahead".
In Washington, the Commerce
Department declines to discuss
the affair, saying that to provide

any information on a specific
case would be "... a breach of
confidence".
The training is being organised
by the Zurich firm, Homac Avi-
ation, which has longstanding
links with LAA. Homac chief
executive Paul Hoegen says that
the first course had originally
been planned to start on 27
November, but was delayed
pending the arrival of a down-
payment from Tripoli. The
second course, he adds, has "yet
to be confirmed by the Libyans".
The two Libyan A310s were
owned by British Caledonian
until 1986. The aircraft were
acquired by LAA in a complex
£105 million deal involving two
intermediary brokers. Service
Airlines of Hong Kong and UK-
registered Cobra Airways.
Although European-built, the
aircraft fell within the scope of
US sanctions against Libya be-
cause they use American-made
General Electric engines. BCal
(which has since been taken over
by British Airways) claimed that
it had been duped into believing
that the aircraft's end-user would
be a French charter airline. A UK
Customs investigation into the

Soviets in 747 purchase talks S

oviet businessmen hoping to
set up a new airline to com-
pete with Aeroflot are negotiat-
ing to buy five Boeing 747
airliners and 20 other Boeing
aircraft including 767s.
The Soviet group, ACDA,
hopes to use the 747s on non-
stop routes to the USA, Australia
and south-east Asia. It also wants
to boost capacity on domestic
routes, particularly to the Soviet
Far East, and open new routes to
cities on the US West coast.
ACDA working group chief
Yuri Mamsurov is quoted in the
London-based Soviet Weekly as
saying: "We plan to buy five 747s
in 1991 and eventually hope to
build up a fleet of 25 Boeings—a
mixture of 747s and 767s."
ACDA is understood to consist
in part of a number of serving or
ex-Aeroflot officials.
Boeing confirms that an eight-
man Soviet delegation, including
pilots, engineers and two mem-

bers of the Supreme Soviet, were
in Seattle last month for talks
following a visit by Boeing to the
Soviet Union earlier in the year.
Boeing says however, that there
is no contract with ACDA and
that the talks were "information
sharing". The Soviets would have
to lease 747s if they were needed
next year, says the US company.
The talks with Boeing could
mark the start of the removal of
the monopoly of the world's larg-
est carrier. Aeroflot's inter-
national aviation directorate is
already seeking to break away
and wants to acquire Airbus
Industrie aircraft.
Meanwhile, Aeroflot itself is
negotiating for up to ten Airbus
Industrie A310-300 long-range
twins for use on international
routes.

Ilyushin's competitor to the
Boeing 747, the 1-196-300, is
behind schedule and not ready
for service. D

affair ended in late 1987 with the

airline paying a $1 million pen-
alty for its role.
In late 1986 the Libyans
awarded a Paris company, DAT
International (DATI), a $13.5
million contract to maintain the
aircraft and supply flight and
ground crews and spare parts.
However, it was unable to secure
sufficient spare parts to keep the
aircraft flying, and DATI's con-
tract was terminated in mid-
1988. Homac had also been
involved in DATI's work, assist-
ing in pilot recruitment.
With its aircraft grounded for
lack of spares, Tripoli late last
year decided to cut its losses,
transferring the two Airbuses to
Algeria, where they were re-reg-
istered. It was claimed that LAA
had sold the planes to Air Algerie
but in reality they were leased.
This year, one of the Airbuses—
in LAA colours but with "Air
Algerie" on its fuselage—re-
turned to Libya where it has been
operating domestic routes with
an Algerian crew.

Libyan Arab Airlines A310s set to fly
with Swiss-trained pilots

Andrew Auer, the head of non-
scheduled services and multi-
lateral relations at the Swiss
Ministry of Transportation's Fed-
eral Office for Civil Aviation,
confirms that Swissair is training
Libyan pilots.
The Swiss authorities were not
approached by the airline—
which is partly government-
owned—before undertaking the
contract.

There is no formal require-
ment for Swissair to seek per-
mission from the Federal Office
for Civil Aviation. Nevertheless,
local companies intending to
offer training for Libyan heli-
copter pilots in the past have
sought approval for the work.
Auer says that three groups of
Libyans are involved in the train-
ing. One group is already in the
country, a second is set to start
training this month and a third
group is planned to arrive later
this year. •

American on routes buying spree
London route, plus other assets,
for $195 million.
The purchases also include
Eastern's Miami-Madrid service
and two Florida-Canada routes
and a number of Continental
gates and buildings at New York,
Miami and San Juan.
American's shares rose on the
news but the deals face union
opposition. TWA's pilots have
described the deal as "a first step
in the controlled liquidation ot
TWA". •

American Airlines is buying a
xVseries of routes from East-
ern, Continental and TWA as
part of its strategy of world
expansion.
In a series of deals, which will
have to be cleared by the Depart-
ments of Justice and Transporta-
tion, American has secured:
Eastern's central and South
American routes, involving 20
destinations, for $471 million;
Continental's Miami-London
service; and TWA's Chicago-

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