# Boeing adds 163 'unidentified' orders to swell backlog list

GRAHAM WARWICK/**WASHINGTON DC**

BOEING HAS added 163 aircraft to its firm order backlog by revoking its policy of not listing sales to unidentified customers. The aircraft, ordered over the past two years, are valued at $9 billion.

The US manufacturer says its move to "adopt an industry-wide practice" and include unidentified customers adds 99 aircraft to its 1999 order intake, taking the total so far to 368. This figure includes the newly announced sale of 20 aircraft to US leasing company GE Capital Aviation Services.

The move boosts Boeing's order backlog to 1,527 aircraft as of 15 December, compared with Airbus Industrie's 1,436 to the end of November. Airbus has taken 417 firm orders so far in 1999, bringing the industry total to 785 aircraft, compared with 1,200 in 1998.

Boeing's 163 new orders from undisclosed customers include:
- a 737 Classic (a -300 believed to be for Air New Zealand);
- 131 Next Generation 737s;
- a 747-400 (believed to be for United Arab Emirates Amiri Flight);
- 14 757-200s;
- 12 767s;
- four 777s (two -200ERs and two -300s).

*Boeing hopes recovering Asian carriers will boost sales fortunes in 2000*

The GECAS deal, worth $2.6 billion, includes 15 767-300ERs and five 747-400F freighters. All aircraft are powered by General Electric CF6-80C2s and will be delivered to GECAS beginning in the fourth quarter of 2000. Boeing says the leasing company has the option of substituting stretched 767-400ERs for 767-300ERs.

Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group president Alan Mulally says the company is "on track" to deliver a record 620 aircraft in 1999, and forecasts it will deliver 480 "or a little higher" in 2000. He expects order intake in 2000 to be "about the same level or slightly higher than this year – if Asia comes back as expected".

Acknowledging that Boeing's order intake, even including the newly revealed unidentified customers, is down on 1998's total of 648 aircraft, Mulally argues that deliveries should be used as the measure of market leadership. ❑

*See Air Transport, P12, and Forecasts PP24-31.*

## Aerospace Awards judges named

*Flight International* has lined up a distinguished panel of judges for the Aerospace Industry Awards 2000. The panel will consist of Don Bateman, chief engineer of flight safety avionics at Honeywell (formerly AlliedSignal) and the *Flight International* Aerospace Personality of the Year 1999; Graham Forbes, chief executive of the UK's General Aviation Manufacturers & Traders Association (GAMTA); Gen Richard Hawley, retired commander of US Air Combat Command; Brian Rowe, chairman emeritus of GE Aircraft Engines; and Peter Sutch, executive director of John Swire & Sons and former chairman of Cathay Pacific Airways. The closing date for entries for the Aerospace Industry Awards 2000 is 31 December, 1999, and entries will be judged on 10 and 11 January. The awards will be presented at a gala dinner during the Asian Aerospace show in Singapore on 23 February

## Irish pave way for Aer Lingus offer

THE IRISH Government has approved the flotation of shares in flag carrier Aer Lingus, paving the way for an initial public offering by early 2001.

Public enterprise minister Mary O'Rourke indicates Dublin may dispose of its 95% holding in Aer Lingus, but the government is opposed to the carrier's oneworld partners British Airways and American Airlines securing a stake.

Aer Lingus chairman Bernie Cahill welcomed the government decision, saying privatisation is a fundamental requirement to provide the capital needed to expand the carrier, "particularly in the context of its recently announced alliance strategy with the oneworld grouping". ❑

## Air Canada secures hold on Canadian's Tokyo slots

AIR CANADA has achieved one of the main goals in its bid for Canadian Airlines International by buying Canadian's landing slots at Tokyo's Narita Airport, enabling it to launch direct Toronto-Tokyo services.

The deal will also provide cash-strapped Canadian with bridging finance until its C$92 million ($62.5 million) takeover by Air Canada is complete.

Canadian cut direct Toronto-Tokyo services in 1998 to save money, but continues to serve the route with a stop in Vancouver.

On completion of the acquisition early in 2000, Air Canada plans to launch a series of new routes to destinations in Asia and Europe

- InterCanadian Airlines, which stopped flying on 27 November because of a lack of funds, has received an offer from a union-backed investment fund. Financial terms of the proposal were not disclosed. Under the proposal from the Quebec Solidarity Fund, the airline, which fed Canadian from the five eastern provinces, would serve Quebec only.

The workforce would also be reduced from 900 to a maximum of 400, and the 23-strong aircraft fleet cut to 10. Most of the aircraft have already been seized because of unpaid fees. ❑

## AMR plans to spin off Sabre information technology arm

AMERICAN Airlines' parent AMR is to spin off its computer reservations and IT subsidiary Sabre as a separate company, allowing it to focus on the airline and its sister regional airline, American Eagle.

AMR will spin off its 83% interest in Sabre early next year by distributing its 107 million shares in the business to AMR shareholders. Sabre will become a "fully independent technology company" under a new president and chief executive, William Hannigan, who joins from telecommunications company Southwestern Bell.

Sabre was originally part of American Airlines but became a separate subsidiary in 1996, when an initial public offering made 18% of the company's shares available to investors.

Before the spin-off, Sabre will pay a one-off $675 million cash dividend to shareholders, including AMR. ❑