

April 7, 2008

Dear Sun-Times Editor:

As a veteran public watchdog organization that has seen almost every trick from Chicago Mayor Daley and his downtown real estate “good ole boys”, we have been watching for their attempts to expand Midway airport very closely.

It is important to note that Mayor Daley has said that he could handle any increase in flights at his Chicago airports; he didn’t want Peotone. What he hasn’t told you follows below...

There is a play to make Chicago the world’s financial capital and as a result, the normal Daley “good ole boys” are the major players behind economic globalization. Doing this includes putting into effect a 4-phase deal to massively increase flights in the US very quickly.

The deal is structured to go around US law and crowd out the competition. This includes viable transportation alternatives, such as a national bullet train, which independent government agencies have already stated is a viable alternative to increased flight levels. According to what the U.S. DOT has publicly stated, flights overall would triple from a few years ago and, according to the FAA and NASA, double every 8-10 years, until 2050. Of course, this assumes that the deal being pushed through is actually sustainable – which it isn’t, but the taxpayers will be footing the bill anyway.

The first phase of the deal involves flight expansion based on the 2008 United Nations economic globalization treaties (Open Skies). The Open Skies treaties have recently gone into effect and are currently closely associated with the disastrous opening of London’s Heathrow’s new terminal. Please note that Bill Daley, the mayor’s brother, fathered the treaties and other associated deals into place when he was Secretary of Commerce during the Clinton Administration.

Historically, what the massive expansion of Open Skies means to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is that the major airports are going to become jammed very quickly with foreign passengers, especially foreign cargo. Another fact is that the FAA has designated thousands of general aviation airports, generally located within about 45 miles of the major airports, as relievers (*Operational Evolution Plan*). This will have significant negative impact on surrounding communities and, since the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) has been continuously skirted in the expansion plans of these airports to theoretically accommodate the treaty, the communities are not even aware of the noise, pollution, health hazards and danger that is flying into their lives.

The Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) has been tasked to develop systems that will “... accommodate high levels of demand and maximize the use of capacity-limited “airspace” (sic) and airport resources.” Again, the general public is unaware of what is happening and how this will affect their lives.

What this unprecedented massive expansion scheme means, according to the U.S. General Accountability Office (GAO) is that thousands (over 6,500) of U.S. airports will be, and are, expanding to handle this extraordinary massive flight scheme. Here in Chicago, adding to the air and ground traffic and associated problems is that, with the fruition of O’Hare expansion, O’Hare alone, would experience double the number of flights; 2.4- 2.8 million annually (with “today’s” delays).

Interestingly enough, at Midway airport, while searching for O'Hare expansion records, AReCO discovered that there are actually federal documents outlining the plan for at least 2 new runways at Midway, to be put in place "when politically possible". Aha! A light goes on, "Daley's scheme" is to privatize Midway so that he can get political cover, so that he can wash his hands and then say, "it's them, not me". He also thinks this is the fastest way...

As environmental, public health, safety and aviation watchdogs, we would love to see U.S. major airports privately owned and run, for a combination of obvious and not so obvious reasons. However, the public must be warned that airports must not be able to pass off their problems and liabilities to Chicago, Illinois and federal taxpayers. Nor should airports and their management have special laws written to exempt them from responsibility and liability. We've seen how well that works with the recent financial meltdown.

Privately owned airports and operators must be held accountable for all of the problems they wreak on the public! The Daley 4-phase deal must see the sunlight, be properly analyzed, publicly discussed, redrafted following all state and federal laws, and the full impact of the Open Skies treaties must be presented in full disclosure to the American public.

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