

**Talking Points for IAM President, R. Thomas Buffenbarger
IndustriALL World Aerospace Conference
July 1-2, 2015
Berlin**

- **On behalf of over 50 million workers represented by our Global Union Federation, IndustriALL, let me welcome you to Berlin and to the Global Union World Aerospace Conference.**
- **We are honored that so many delegates from around the world have joined us here today from Japan, Australia, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the U.S., Canada, Belgium, Brazil, Morocco, Chile, Sweden, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Tunisia, and many other countries.**
- **I want to offer our special thanks to IG Metall for hosting this world conference.**
- **And we are delighted that Jürgen Kerner, Treasurer of IG Metall and Kemal Özkan, Assistant General Secretary of IndustriALL have also joined us.**
- **Welcome to you all.**
- **Over the years, IndustriALL, and its predecessor, the International Metalworkers' Federation, has worked with many of you on efforts to organize the unorganized, achieve industry leading collective bargaining agreements, and put forward a unified position on trade.**
- **We have discussed issues, both large and small.**

- **In this entire time, however, we have never gathered the representatives of nearly all of the world's strongest aerospace unions together to seek the answer to one basic question: "How do we build a Global Aerospace Union to meet the challenges of a Global Aerospace Industry"?'—the theme of this conference.**
- **This question comes at a pivotal time for the world's aerospace workers.**
- **In the U.S. and Canada more than 600,000 aerospace jobs—nearly 50 percent of the entire aerospace workforce—have disappeared in the past twenty years.**
- **China a new entrant in the aerospace industry is now poised to swallow the industry whole—relying on its apparent freedom to undervalue its currency, supply huge subsidies to its companies, and deprive its workforce of fundamental human rights—like the right to form their own trade union and demand livable wages.**
- **In addition, China has successfully used western aerospace companies where we represent workers to transfer valuable production and technology to its companies in return for market access.**
- **If one has any doubt, just look at China's new military jet or its large commercial aircraft.**
- **Many of the companies where we represent workers have been only too willing to comply and hand-over our work to China.**

- **The global aerospace industry is at a cross roads.**
- **It must choose between two paths:**
- **The first is the path that views unions and their workforce as the enemy.**
- **It is a path that attempts to force workers to give up the fundamental right to strike—a right recognized by national laws, the United Nations, and the ILO.**
- **And it is a path that blames workers for management failures from the very top.**
- **The second path is one that embraces aerospace unions and makes us and the workers we represent a partner that truly understands the value of a unionized workforce that is able to freely engage in collective bargaining.**
- **Some aerospace companies have chosen the latter path—the path that embraces unions.**
- **They recognize that a proud union workforce is the engine that drives their success.**
- **Some embrace the rights of workers to form a union and negotiate industry leading contracts.**
- **The IAM and many of your unions have good relationships with these aerospace companies.**

- **Tomorrow, we will hear from one of these companies, Spirit AeroSystems, who has worked with the IAM to achieve industry leading collective bargaining agreements.**
- **Unlike these high-road companies, like Spirit AeroSystems, the low road companies do their best to keep workers apart.**
- **They pit workers against one another at each of their facilities and within their own countries.**
- **And they pit workers in one country against workers in another country using the excuse of international competition.**
- **“International competition” is usually just an excuse to squeeze one more dollar, euro, kroner, pound, yuan, yen, or real out of the pockets of real workers.**
- **When was the last time you saw a CEO take a real pay cut so that his company could better compete?**
- **We must be honest.**
- **Keeping us apart has not been all that difficult.**
- **After all, we come from different countries, speak different languages, and have different labor laws.**
- **But, just as global aerospace companies have used these differences to create barriers between us—our union power removes these barriers and brings us together.**
- **Let us never forget—we all represent aerospace workers.**

- **We all share a fervent and committed desire to make fundamental human rights a reality for workers everywhere.**
- **We all have the same desire for better wages and benefits, health care, retirement and job security.**
- **And we believe with all of our hearts in justice and dignity for all the world's citizens.**
- **It is these shared ideals that bring us together over the next two days.**
- **Our job this week is to advance the process of harnessing our power—our union power—in this growing global aerospace industry.**
- **Our success will be measured by how we can improve the lives of regular working people all over the world—not the lives of millionaire CEO's or billionaire investors who travel all over the world.**
- **How can we accomplish this goal?**
- **First, we can begin by forgetting about everything aerospace companies have told us about one another.**
- **Second, we must have an open and frank conversation with one another so that we can learn about one another from one another, not from a company trying to keep us apart.**

- **In order for us to be successful we must honestly and openly begin talking to one another in terms each of us can understand.**
- **We must explain the obstacles we each face and state the specific goals each of us has for our own members.**
- **This means we must take on tough issues.**
- **Tough issues include trade, outsourcing, job preservation, and other matters affecting job security.**
- **None of this should be new to anyone of us.**
- **We have practiced these basic principles of trade unionism with each other for many years.**
- **In fact, the IAM has worked closely with many of you and you with us during times of struggle.**
- **We know that IG Metall and the Works Council will be there right beside us as we assist Airbus workers in Mobile, Alabama, choose to form a union.**
- **In this fast-paced, aggressive industry we need to strengthen our efforts to bring justice to aerospace workers all over the world.**
- **We need to take international solidarity to a new level.**

- **When a company tries to force workers to give up their right to strike in order to gain valuable jobs, we know that it is time to take solidarity to a new level;**
- **When a country would rather create jobs in China—instead of at home, it is time to take solidarity to a new level;**
- **And when a company tries to keep the global aerospace workforce apart by pitting us against one another in the name of competition, it is time to take solidarity to a new level.**
- **And taking solidarity to a new level starts today with this Global Aerospace Conference.**
- **I started my talk this morning with one simple question—how do we build union power in the global aerospace industry?**
- **The answer is simple: “we do what workers all over the world do every day, we form a strong union.”**
- **In the past, we have made references to building a world union of aerospace workers.**
- **The only way that we can accomplish this is by doing more than the occasional meeting.**
- **We must build a day to day network that keeps us all informed of all activities and aerospace company trends.**
- **And that, above all leads us into action.**

- **It is not enough to gather information: WE MUST ACT— AND ACT TOGETHER AS ONE UNION.**
- **I have no illusion that this task will be easy or simple.**
- **It will take a great deal of work and will not happen overnight.**
- **In order to create a Global Aerospace Union, we need a firm commitment from IndustriALL to build an aerospace staff with the proper resource that can take on these activities.**
- **After all, Brian cannot do it alone. No one could do it alone.**
- **He needs help.**
- **And we call upon the General Secretary, Jyrki Raina, to give Brian the proper resources and staff so that we can achieve our goals for IndustriALL's Aerospace Work.**
- **And by the time this conference closes tomorrow, I urge us to declare our support for this proposal.**
- **The day when we organize together, bargain together, strike together, and yes—enjoy the same collective bargaining agreements, is the day when we bring justice and dignity to all of the world's aerospace workers through union strength.**
- **Before I conclude let me also add that we must begin by recommitting ourselves to demanding that aerospace companies enter into effective and enforceable international framework agreements based on our own model.**

- **These agreements, when negotiated properly, commit corporations to honoring international labor standards as provided by ILO conventions throughout their world activities.**
- **As mentioned, we will closely be watching Airbus in Alabama to make sure that they live up to their promises.**
- **We can no longer be divided by barriers that have been erected by global aerospace companies to keep us, the world's aerospace unions, apart.**
- **This is our opportunity to remove these barriers forever.**
- **It is our opportunity to build a global aerospace workers union that rivals global aerospace companies.**
- **And it is an opportunity that we cannot afford to waste.**
- **Welcome to Berlin and the IndustriALL Global Aerospace meeting.**
- **Now, I would like to call on Jurgen Kerner for a few remarks.**