



Winging it across the Atlantic: Pan Am and Africa, 1940–1990

Gordon Pirie¹ 

Accepted: 22 November 2020 / Published online: 2 February 2021
© The Editor of the Journal 2021

Abstract

Pan American Airways (Pan Am) sought footholds in Africa only after it had secured its prominent position in the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. Then, for 50 years, Pan Am operated a variety of commercial, promotional and protective activities in Africa. Its first experimental flight tested aeronautical facilities and limits. For a year, nominally commercial monthly flights were undertaken, mindful of building stepping stones to the Indian Ocean, of serving long-standing US links with Liberia, and of tapping future continental business potential. Geostrategic considerations propelled Pan Am's trans-Atlantic and trans-Sahel re-provisioning of Allied armed forces in North Africa in 1941–1942. After the Second World War, Pan Am resumed commercial flights. It targeted modest passenger and freight opportunities along a slender African route network. Modest results and Cold War rivalry in Africa prompted Pan Am to widen its presence there in the 1960s. The US Government pressured it to get more involved in aviation development projects. For its first 30 years, as a giant airline, Pan Am used its organisational and technical capacities to muscle opportunities out of changing and challenging circumstances. In its last two decades in Africa, the iconic but financially and managerially troubled carrier was there by default, mostly working residue. There had been no single, overarching, uncompromising plan. Improvisation was at the heart of Pan Am's Africa enterprise, a loosely managed, adaptable limb grown by its influential and long-serving founder.

Keywords Aviation in Africa · Cold War · Decolonisation · Pan American Airways

✉ Gordon Pirie
gordon.pirie@uct.ac.za

¹ African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa



Introduction

In the second half of the twentieth century, the USA was the world's most powerful and prosperous nation. Its machinery, products, culture and values spread across the globe. It would have been no surprise to see US civil airliners overhead and at airports in all territories open to Western influence. The appearance of US-badged passenger aircraft in Africa may well have been considered the natural order of things: indeed, it would have been odd had airliners operated by Pan American Airways (Pan Am) not arrived in Africa. After all, the continent was one of North America's Atlantic neighbours, and by 1940 Pan Am was a commercial colossus.

If Pan Am's presence in Africa was unremarkable in some ways, its past there nevertheless deserves more analysis and remark than it has received. Excepting for 1941–1942 when Pan Am assisted with the Allied war effort, corporate histories and academic studies have overlooked its fifty-year-long trans-Atlantic link with Africa. Information is scarce and scattered; so too is evidence and discussion of the purpose, instruments and rhythms of Pan Am's expansion into Africa. It cannot just 'go without saying' that Pan Am operated African routes. But the airline's motives and *modus operandi* in Africa are not easily discernible, whether for its initial leap or for subsequent variations. Airline records invariably focus on outcomes rather than on intentions and style.

An outline of Pan Am's entire 50-year tenure in Africa is an essential vantage point for examining why the airline crossed the Atlantic to Africa, and why and how it stayed for the life of the airline. Public declarations about its aims and mission were rare; inferences from rhetoric and the archival record are only that, but they are at least pointers to the thinking behind Pan Am's operations in Africa. Thorough and effective logistical planning of flights is hardly open to question in the case of an airline as vast and successful as Pan Am. In question, rather, are the vision, the agenda, its coherence and resourcing, and its longevity for what was a corporate side-show.

Initiating

When Pan Am first flew across the Atlantic to Africa in November 1941, the USA had not yet joined Britain as an ally in the war against Nazi Germany. Pan Am was by then one of the biggest airlines in the world; its route network extended tens of thousands of miles across South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Pan Am's legendary founder and boss, Juan Trippe, seemed to regard Africa as a potential bridge between the Atlantic and the Indian oceans.¹ For him, ambitious and acquisitive, it was also another notch in Pan Am's tally stick of stations. He did not run the company to make money or maximise profits: 'he ran it to grow, to cover the world'.²

¹ John Wilson, 'Pan American Airways Route 6', *Air Post Journal*, May (2012).

² Horace M. Brock, *Flying the Oceans: A Pilot's Story of Pan Am* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), 280.



Pan Am's Africa initiative did not start as a carefully researched and immediately viable commercial proposition. At the time, US state interest, public curiosity, and social and business networks in Africa were minimal. Only Liberia stood out for its historic US ties. In 1939, there were no more than about 1000 Americans on the entire continent. Six 'hopelessly understaffed' consulates in Addis Ababa, Dakar Leopoldville, Lourenco Marques, Monrovia and Nairobi were the sum total of US information sources and commercial facilitation.³ Air passenger, mail and freight opportunities were slight. In the short term, Pan Am would have to create its own traffic.

Pan Am first touched down in Africa not as a destination, but as a jumping-off point for its westward 'Clipper' flying boat winter services homebound for New York from Lisbon via either Port of Spain (Trinidad) or Belem (Brazil). After an in situ survey of Bolama (in Portuguese Guinea, now Guinea-Bissau) in October 1940, Pan Am used it as a modest radio, refuelling, servicing and overnighing base. The anchorage was used twice weekly for Pan Am's southerly trans-Atlantic route from 5 February until 2 May 1941. In the northern hemisphere summer, calmer headwinds and ocean swells once again permitted use of the northerly route via the Azores islands.⁴ Pan Am stopped at Bolama fortnightly the following winter, after the US entered the War and reduced its trans-Atlantic flights.⁵

Pan Am extended its search for African bases, possibly to be further out of reach of Nazi threats, including perhaps at Vichy-controlled Dakar. Pan Am's suspicions of German informants and collaborators at air bases in South America followed it across the Atlantic.⁶ The airline's July 1941 aerial survey of a large lagoon in Liberia near its border with Sierra Leone showed promise. Liberia negotiated road construction funds, and an aircraft for local flying, in exchange for landing spaces. After a trial landing in October, Pan Am began constructing facilities at the end of December. This base at Fisherman's Lake (now Lake Piso) was 800 miles south of Dakar, and some 75 miles west of Monrovia. It became fully operational in April 1942.⁷

Pan Am's first trans-Atlantic flight eastbound into Africa was in November 1941. Cooperation between Pan Am and the US Government reduced the risk: Trippe insured his airline against the danger of German submarine activity in the Atlantic by persuading the US Government to purchase one of his flying boats and then

³ Edward H. McKinley, *The Lure of Africa: American Interests in Tropical Africa, 1919-1939* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974), 51, 58–59.

⁴ 'Bolama round-up', *New Horizons* 11 (8), May 1941, 18-19; Burr W. Leyson, *Wings around the World: The Story of American International Air Transport* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1948), 102.

⁵ Peter Wingent, *Extracts from the Air Ministry Civil Aviation Intelligence Report Summaries, 1939-1945* (Dronfield: West Africa Study Circle, 2010), 207, 209.

⁶ On Pan Am's dismantling German involvement in Latin American airlines, see e.g. Stephen James Randall, 'Colombia, the United States and Interamerican Aviation Rivalry, 1927–1940', *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1972): 297–324; David Haglund, 'De-Lousing' SCADTA: The Role of Pan American Airways in U.S. Aviation Diplomacy in Colombia, 1939-1940', *Aerospace Historian* 30, no. 3 (1983): 177–188.

⁷ Lou A. Phillips, 'Airports throughout the World', Pan American World Airways Teacher 7(2), November–December 1950, p. 11; Jenifer Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air: Aviation and the American Ascendancy* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 152–153.



lease it back to him.⁸ Departing Miami and Natal (Brazil), it crossed the Atlantic at one of its narrowest stretches (1847 miles) landing at Bathurst (now Banjul). Flying onward to Lagos and Leopoldville, and back via Fisherman's Lake, it was a sixteen-day route and aircraft proving exercise to and through Africa.⁹

Exactly where Trippe wanted to take Pan Am thereafter is obscure. South Africa was certainly one target that he had in mind. In the first half of 1940, Pan Am held technical discussions with South African Airways about serving Cape Town, a populous and relatively prosperous coastal city which would have had tourist and some business traffic prospects.¹⁰ At the time, the South Africans were working on their own plans for flights between Cape Town and the Congo. And, the 1933 air service agreement between the US and South African governments might have crimped Pan Am's preference for exclusive rights.¹¹ In August 1940, Pan Am was said to have applied to the US Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) for a twice-weekly New York–Cape Town service and to have estimated needing an annual mail subsidy of US\$2.2 million to break even.¹²

Likely disappointed, in January 1941, Pan Am turned its attention to getting a concession to operate in the Congo. Leopoldville (renamed Kinshasa in 1966), on the south bank of the Congo River, was ideal for Clipper flying boats, but it was not going to be a major revenue traffic generator: the 3500 European expatriates there were most likely Belgians who would want to fly to and from Brussels. The ten times more numerous African population of the Congo had no immediate prospects of becoming air travellers.¹³ On the other hand, the USA was eager to access the Congo's considerable mineral wealth (including copper and uranium) while it remained on-side in the War against Germany after Belgium's capitulation in May 1940.¹⁴ And, indeed, Pan Am did transport Congolese uranium ore secretly to New York for atomic bomb manufacture.¹⁵

Prospects at Leopoldville led Trippe to think again about anchoring his African service at Fisherman's Lake. Leopoldville was further out of range of Vichy France and Nazi Germany and was a safer bet. And, in the words of Robert Daley, the

⁸ Matthew Josephson, *Empire of the Air: Juan Trippe and the Struggle for World Airways* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1944), 167.

⁹ 'Africa and return', *New Horizons* 12 (3), December 1941, 11–12.

¹⁰ Pan American World Airways Inc. Records, Special Collections Division, University of Miami Libraries, Coral Gables, Florida [henceforth PAA]: Accession Number 1, Box 54, Folder 4 [henceforth 1/54(4)]: Brief History of Pan American Airways' Service to Africa, Exhibit #PA-10, CAB Docket No. 1171 (undated).

¹¹ Margaret Lambie, 'Aviation Arrangements between the United States and the Union of South Africa', *The Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 5, no. 2 (1934): 316–321.

¹² Wingent, *Extracts*, 40, 196.

¹³ PAA, 2/718(17): H. M. Bixby, Memo, 15 January 1941.

¹⁴ William R. Stanley, 'Trans-South Atlantic Air Link in World War II', *GeoJournal* 33, no. 4 (1994): 459–463.

¹⁵ Susan Williams, *Spies in the Congo: The Race for the Ore That Built the Atomic Bomb* (London: Hurst, 2016), 7, 207.



writer contracted to present Pan Am's history,¹⁶ Trippe knew that if he could reach Leopoldville, then after the War 'the whole of the rich portion of southern Africa would lie open to him'.¹⁷ Writing in 1950, another commentator alluded to imperial duplication: 'With control of the West African gateways, Pan Am might have won a new empire, as it has in the Pacific area. At any rate, it had pioneer equities in Africa when the time came to take over peacetime routes'.¹⁸ Pre-positioning Pan Am for future commercial advantage was Trippe's *métier*.

Pan Am's September 1941 temporary licence from the CAB to fly south to the Congo River hints at dreams of an onward route to the Indian Ocean across Africa using water bodies suitable for flying boat operations. Indeed, in December 1941 it was reported that Pan Am was arranging a survey flight from Leopoldville to Port Bell, Lake Victoria (Uganda).¹⁹ The West–East link might have become part of Pan Am's round-the-world goals. Trippe surely spotted a gap which Pan Am could fill: most international air services tracked across Africa on a North–South trajectory. Another possibility is that he just wanted to enlarge his continental portfolio. 'Planning was totally non-existent in Pan Am except, perhaps, in Trippe's head', wrote Horace Brock, Executive Manager of the airline's Atlantic Division (1947–1954) which had responsibility for Africa. 'Major decisions would be made on the spur of the moment as publicity dictated'. Trippe himself once told Brock: 'We must experiment. We must not be afraid to try things; some things may be mistakes, but we must try'. Brock's view was that considerations of efficiency or cost would never deter Trippe from making a decision which would increase the size, importance or fame of Pan Am.²⁰

Named prematurely, Pan Am's *Cape Town Clipper* flew twelve round trips between New York and Leopoldville between 20 December 1941 and 17 October 1942. The journeys (via Bathurst and Lagos) lasted 60 h in each direction; they were fortnightly until November 1942, then monthly. They were operated and timetabled semi-clandestinely as civilian mail services, but also carried pilots headed for military transport deliveries in Africa. The small amounts of mail generated only 0.6 per cent of the revenue.²¹ Sixteen Pan Am pilots and mechanics flew on the second outbound Clipper flight, in December. The return flight carried twenty-one passengers to Miami. Among them were a woman missionary returning from 3 year's work in Liberia, and three employees of the US rubber tyre corporation, Firestone, which

¹⁶ On the authorship and 'storyfication' of Pan Am's approved history, see Gabrielle Durepos, Albert J. Mills, and Jean Helms Mills, 'Tales in the Manufacture of Knowledge: Writing a Company History of Pan American World Airways', *Management & Organizational History* 3, no. 1 (2008): 63–80; Nicholas Mark Deal, 'History in the Making: Following the Failed Attempt of Wolfgang Langewiesche in Pan American Airways History Project', in *Connecting Values to Action: Non-Corporeal Actants and Choice*, ed. Albert J. Mills and Christopher M. Hartt (Bingley: Emerald, 2019), 37–51.

¹⁷ Robert Daley, *An American Saga: Juan Trippe and His Pan Am Empire* (New York: Random House, 1980), 311–312.

¹⁸ Henry Ladd Smith, *Airways Abroad: The Story of American World Air Routes* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950), 82.

¹⁹ Wilson, 'Pan American Airways Route 6'; Wingent, *Extracts*, 196, 197.

²⁰ Brock, *Flying the Oceans*, 253; 260; 267; 270–271; 280.

²¹ Wingent, *Extracts*, 197–198; Wilson, 'Pan American Airways Route 6'.



had extensive plantations there.²² Pan Am made no Miami–Leopoldville flights from March 1943 until September 1944.²³

Replenishing

Concurrent with Pan Am flying to and from Leopoldville in 1942, the purpose, intensity and geography of Pan Am’s venture in Africa—and the dividends from it—altered abruptly when Trippe agreed to help the US replenish Britain’s army and air force in North Africa through a backdoor in West Africa. Britain’s stretched and fragile military supply lines through the Mediterranean to the Egyptian front were threatened by Axis Powers launching attacks from Sicily and Libya. Discussions between January and May 1941 led Churchill, Roosevelt and Trippe to assign Pan Am new tasks.²⁴ Trippe realised that he ‘was being handed a chance to penetrate Africa’.²⁵ It was the first and last US Presidential directive regarding Pan Am in Africa.

Before the US entered the Second World War in December 1941, its neutrality got in the way of conspicuous assistance to Britain. A commercial airline was good cover for what were effectively military logistics. Despite not approving Pan Am’s monopolistic positioning and rough negotiating antics, the White House Administration found loopholes in US Neutrality and Lend-Lease provisions to get military and transport aircraft and crews across the Atlantic into non-combat zones in Africa. From June 1941, a hastily created Pan Am spin-off named ‘Atlantic Airways’ flew the first military loads from Miami via Natal to Bathurst and Lagos.²⁶

From August 1941, a heftier subsidiary, ‘Pan American Air Ferries’, was given the task of flying US-built military aircraft to Africa via Miami and Natal where the US had upgraded or built new airfields. Ferry pilots typically landed their aircraft at Takoradi, west of Accra in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) where they were serviced. Military and transport aircraft delivered by sea were also landed at Takoradi. From there, the US ferry pilots flew their aircraft eastward to Kano (northern Nigeria), and then 1600 miles across the Sahel to Khartoum. ‘Air Ferries’ also helped to get British-built military aircraft from Bathurst to Khartoum. A second Pan American subsidiary, ‘Pan American Airways—Africa (hereafter ‘Pan Am [Africa])’ was tasked with flying non-combat aircraft to carry the air ferry pilots back to Takoradi and to carry urgent military mail, personnel and other material previously flown on British transport aircraft.

All the Pan Am flights were routed through airfields and intermediate emergency landing grounds first built for a branch service of Britain’s colonial airline: many

²² PAA, 1/317 (28): Captain William M. Masland’s memoir; *Miami News*, 6 December 1941; *New York Times*, 17 December 1941.

²³ Wingent, *Extracts*, 198.

²⁴ Alan P. Dobson, *FDR and Civil Aviation: Flying Strong, Flying Free* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

²⁵ Daley, *American Saga*, 311–312.

²⁶ Leyson, *Wings around the World*, 139–149.



were improved and extended by US engineers and machinery, and African manual labourers.²⁷ By the end of 1941, the Americans were operating five services weekly to Khartoum. By mid-1943, there were roughly 8000 US personnel in West Africa, the equivalent of the entire pre-war European population.²⁸ Such was the presence and influence of the US in West Africa that a December 1942 memo from Britain's Colonial Secretary to the Cabinet in London reported rumours that Britain was quitting West Africa and that the Americans were taking over.²⁹

Provisioning, building and flying the trans-Atlantic and trans-Sahel airway was an immense undertaking. It has been remarked on appreciatively by American commentators.³⁰ Senior British military officials in Cairo were less enthusiastic. Their gratitude mixed with resentment about US dismissal of Britain's foundational work on the trans-Sahel air route.³¹ They were not consulted about the inter-governmental agreement signed hurriedly with Pan Am on 12 August 1941. They became frustrated by lapses in the promised US airlift. Not least, they suspected that Pan Am was using its gifted opportunity to carve out a long-term permanent presence in Africa.³² Early-bird feathers were ruffled.

The US equipped and staffed fourteen airfields in West Africa and along the Takoradi–Khartoum route. One of these was Roberts Field, 55 miles from Monrovia.³³ Named after the country's first president, the facility was an urgent, secret 1941 project managed on behalf of the US Government and Pan Am [Africa]. Ostensibly a commercial facility, it did not undermine Liberia's wartime neutrality. The airfield was opposite the tip of Brazil at a narrow span (1880 miles) across the Atlantic; it was sited next to the plantations owned by Firestone, which managed the necessary equipment and labour. Machine operators were flown in from the USA. Before any formal contracts were signed, Firestone spent US\$1.7 million in the first stages of construction.³⁴ A Firestone subsidiary, the Liberian Construction

²⁷ Hugh B. Cave, *Wings across the World: The Story of the Air Transport Command* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1945).

²⁸ J. M. Lee and Martin Petter, *The Colonial Office, War, and Development Policy: Organisation and the Planning of a Metropolitan Initiative, 1939-1945* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1982), 102, 103.

²⁹ Robert Desmond Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy, 1938-1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1982), 28.

³⁰ e.g. Leyson, *Wings around the World*, 139–151; Smith, *Airways Abroad*, 82; John D. Carter, 'Airway to the Middle East', in *Army Air Forces in World War II. Vol. 7: Services around the World* ed. Frank Craven Wesley and James Lea Cate (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 46–62; Tom Culbert and Andy Dawson, *PanAfrica: Across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am* (McLean VA: Paladwr Press, 1998).

³¹ Great Britain (Ministry of Information), *Merchant Airmen* (London: HMSO, 1946), 84–107; 136–138; Anon, 'The Sudan's Service in a Global War: The Story of a Section of the Trans-African Air Ferry Route', *Journal of the Royal African Society* 43, no. 170 (1944): 16–20.

³² Arthur W. Tedder, *With Prejudice: The War Memoirs of Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Tedder* (London: Cassell, 1966).

³³ R. Earle Anderson, *Liberia: America's African Friend* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), Chapter 10.

³⁴ Alfred Lief, *The Firestone Story. A History of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1951); Anderson, *Liberia*, Chapter 10.



Corporation, was formed to build the airport; Firestone gave 25 miles of road on its Concession for public use between Monrovia and Roberts Field.³⁵ By August 1943, the airfield's two diagonal 2000-yard runways handled hundreds of Allied forces' fighter, bomber and supply movements every month.³⁶

British military assessments which were critical of and suspicious about Pan Am [Africa]'s operations played some part in the US deciding to militarise it by December 1942. By then more than 1500 new aircraft had been delivered to the North African front. During the advance notice period before transfer to military control, Pan Am [Africa] intensified its efforts to acquire flying and operating experience across Africa, to boost its assets and profile at airfields, and to cultivate a network of commercial sales outlets and nascent civilian passenger markets in Cairo and Teheran.

The trans-Sahel flights were exercises in emergency military replenishment.³⁷ They played a major role in equipping the defence of Egypt at El Alamein in October–November 1942, and thereby turned the course of the Second World War. They also built out the US 'airfield empire'.³⁸ In the process, military objectives were elided with exhibition of technology, service and efficiency. American work and leisure cultures, and values, diffused from the bases where Pan Am [Africa] employed some ten thousand Africans in total.³⁹

After obliteration of the Axis military threat in North Africa, it was no longer necessary to retain Leopoldville as a last-resort hub for an alternative, southerly trans-Africa supply route to the theatres of war. Accordingly, after the German surrender in North Africa in May 1943, the militarised version of Pan Am [Africa] redirected and tailored its trans-Sahel operations to provisioning and servicing US forces in Iraq, India and Burma.⁴⁰ As the war progressed, it started withdrawing men and machinery from its African air bases. British authorities evidently wanted US fuel stores and navigational aids to remain in West Africa, and along the trans-Sahel route, for their post-war convenience. It was the turn of the Americans to suspect the British of wanting to make commercial gains from US generosity.⁴¹

³⁵ Robert Wayne Clower et al., *Growth without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1966).

³⁶ National Archives, Kew (henceforth NA), AIR 40/2932; AVIA 38/593.

³⁷ Deborah Wing Ray, 'Pan American Airways and the Trans-African Base Programme of World War II' (PhD, New York University, 1973); Deborah Wing Ray, 'The Takoradi Route: Roosevelt's Pre-War Venture Beyond the Western Hemisphere', *Journal of American History* 62, no. 2 (1975): 340–358; Matthew F. Brady, 'War Plan Juan': The Strategy of Juan Trippe and Pan Am in Latin America and Africa before and During World War 2' (Montgomery, AL: Air University School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2012).

³⁸ Jonathan Ruano de la Haza, 'The Rise of the United States' Airfield Empire in Latin America, North Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia (1927–1945)' (PhD, University of Ontario, 2012).

³⁹ Van Vleck, *Empire of the Air*, 147.

⁴⁰ Stanley, 'Trans-South Atlantic'.

⁴¹ Robert Lewis McCormack, 'New Dimension: Air Transport as Development in British West Africa, 1942–1950' (Paper presented at the Canadian Association of African Studies Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa, 10–13 May 1989).



Fractious dialogue was sublimated into discussion about future global airline control and collaboration during peacetime.⁴² In debates about international control of post-war aviation, Britain hoped to capitalise on its far-flung Empire air bases. As the Secretary of State for India put it to the Foreign Secretary, ‘reserving inter-Empire traffic would ... give us a reserve market on the basis of which we could, without excessive subsidies, build up services which could hold their own with Pan American Airways’.⁴³ The USA, on the other hand, aimed to leverage its capabilities in designing and building military transport aircraft. After the War, their manufacturers could switch quickly to civilian airliner production, not least for sale in foreign markets.

Some Americans certainly held the view that there were limited prospects for future civil air services along the Takoradi–Khartoum route.⁴⁴ Pan Am’s focus would revert to its more northerly trans-Atlantic airway between the USA and Africa, and to its West Africa–Congo–South Africa trunk route. Revenue would have to come from passenger and mail traffic; air freight prospects were slight.⁴⁵ Except for precious metals, exports from Africa were unsuited, being mostly low-value and high-bulk commodities. Crucially, after the Chicago 1944 and Bermuda 1946 agreements regulating international civil aviation, all airline business was subject to bilateral agreements between nation states. Inscrutable corporate dealing over airline routes and services became more difficult.

Trunking

In March 1945, re-commercialised Pan Am made a case to the CAB that trans-Atlantic flights to and from the west coast of Africa, the Belgian Congo, the Rhodesias and the Union of South Africa were ‘required by the public convenience and necessity’. Pan Am also told the CAB that the value to the US of the air service substantially outweighed the subsidy costs.⁴⁶ No proof or elaboration seems to have been offered, or required. On 13 January 1946 Pan Am resumed commercial service to Leopoldville.

Onward flights south to Johannesburg took a while to arrange. The CAB eventually granted Pan Am an operating certificate for South Africa, despite it being said in the official hearings that the US had little relation with or ‘community of interest’ in South Africa.⁴⁷ Statistics revealed some affinity.⁴⁸ In August 1946, the CAB

⁴² For full discussion see Alan P. Dobson, *Peaceful Air Warfare: The United States, Britain, and the Politics of International Aviation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

⁴³ NA, FO 954/22a/116: Leo Amery to Anthony Eden, 8 January 1943.

⁴⁴ e.g. Josephson, *Empire of the Air*, 211.

⁴⁵ United States. Department of Commerce, ‘Air Cargo Potentials between the United States and South Africa’ (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1944).

⁴⁶ PAA, 1/344(1): Civil Aeronautics Board: ‘The South Atlantic Case’. Docket 1171, 8 March 1945, 35 pp.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Airways Abroad*, 286.

⁴⁸ In 1946, US direct investments in South Africa had reached US\$60 million. Second only to UK trade, imports into South Africa from the US in 1946 were US\$228 million; exports to the US were US\$151 million: *South African American Survey* (1947), 122; (1949), 160.



awarded Pan Am two Africa routes from New York, one to Johannesburg (via the Azores, Dakar, Monrovia, Accra and Leopoldville), the other to Cape Town (via Natal, Ascension Island and Angola).⁴⁹ The latter never materialised, and might have faltered in the 1960s and 1970s when Angola (beneath the route) leant increasingly into Cuba's orbit. For twenty-one years, until 1969, when South African Airways began flying between Johannesburg and New York, Pan Am had the route to itself.

After a period of offering only trial and non-scheduled service as far as Johannesburg in 1947,⁵⁰ Pan Am's formal inaugural flight connecting New York to Johannesburg on 25 February 1948 carried twenty-two company officials and journalists. Bypassing Lisbon on this first flight sliced off 1000 miles; the end-to-end journey took 44 h. Departing New York, Trippe judged the flight grandiosely as 'a flight to the final frontier'. With a flourish, he added: 'Africa will no longer be the Dark Continent'.⁵¹ Trippe's remarks resonated with notions of American pioneering, conquest, civilisation and modernisation. They satisfied a buccaneering self-image.⁵² They were a veiled reference to the 'backwardness' of Africa, and harked back to a mission spirit. They also squared with the patriotic views of the professor of Modern European History at George Washington University. In 1944, he declared that Africa was 'the last world frontier' where Americans must 'aggressively safeguard their hemispheric defences, economic position, and air communications'. The entire Atlantic littoral between Dakar and Cape Juby, he noted, was but a few flying hours from America, and should never serve as a base of operations against the western hemisphere'.⁵³

Trippe predicted that 'thousands and thousands of businessmen and tourists' would fly Pan Am's African routes. At the send-off in New York, the Acting Chairman of the CAB made no reference to the absence of any 'community of interest' with South Africa. Instead, he vaunted the 'genuine public need' to unite South Africa and the USA. South Africa, he noted, accounted for half of US trade with Africa, but the USA was at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis air services via Europe.⁵⁴ Pan Am's direct air route would surely serve better the booming business behind US exports to and investment in post-war South Africa—and offer access to additional (or alternative) uranium supplies.⁵⁵ More widely, Pan Am's Atlantic-Africa services would, in the next decade, carry US consular staff, and also

⁴⁹ Reginald M. Cleveland, ed. *The Aviation Annual of 1947* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), 61–62.

⁵⁰ *South African-American Survey* (1947), 106–107.

⁵¹ PAA, 1/320(18); Francis S. Murphy, n.d. 'We Fly High to Africa', unpaginated.

⁵² Gabrielle Durepos, Jean Helms Mills, and Albert J. Mills, 'The Pan American Dream and the Myth of the Pioneer', in *Organizational Epics and Sagas: Tales of Organizations*, ed. Monika Kostera (London: Routledge, 2008), 156–168.

⁵³ Lowell Ragatz, *Africa in the Post-War World* (New York: Proceedings No. 2, Research Bureau for Post-War Economics, 1944), 14, 16.

⁵⁴ PAA, 1/317(28); enclosures, Willis Player (Pan Am Publicity) to Graham Young, 20 March 1948.

⁵⁵ See Thomas Borstelmann, *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).



diplomatic bag couriers, itinerant US military and intelligence attachés, and specialist observers. Other passengers were individuals on educational exchange visits, US oil, rubber, timber and mineral company executives, geologists, engineers, and commercial investors, purchasers and sellers.⁵⁶ Barrelling through Cold War clouds gathering over Africa, these passengers were co-navigators of the US Government's anti-communist and anti-imperialist stances, and of the sensibilities of NATO allies.⁵⁷

The first scheduled commercial Pan Am passenger service into and out of Johannesburg started in the last week of May 1948. It was the week of the national (Whites only) election in South Africa that put the Afrikaner Nationalist government into power, that effectively kick-started apartheid, and that, from the 1960s, would unleash a new aviation geopolitics in Africa. Any principled associations which Pan Am had with Africa were going to be tested. Meanwhile, a trans-continental airway anchored in South Africa was a link to what was, at mid-century, 'infinitely the most powerful political unit in Africa'.⁵⁸

Pan Am's landplane (not flying boat) through-service between New York and Johannesburg broadly retained the same routeing, frequency and speed through Central and West Africa for a decade or so. Lisbon remained a pivot. In a kink during tinkering in the second half of the 1950s, Kano became the only stop on one of Pan Am's twice weekly flights between Lisbon and Leopoldville; Accra and Monrovia alternated as endpoints on a third weekly Africa service. The statistical record shows that traffic declined during the 1950s, even in the busiest New York–Johannesburg market. Performance varied along different route sectors. Westbound flights into New York carried most traffic. Across the decade, occupancy of different aircraft offering between sixty and one hundred seats (across first and tourist class) averaged sixty per cent for the end-to-end service between New York and Johannesburg.⁵⁹ Seat uptake was even lower along some route segments.

For a time, it appears that Pan Am's so-called Africa service was used a great deal just to reach Lisbon from New York or Johannesburg. The passenger manifest for the disastrous June 1951 flight (see footnote 59) points at end-to-end service being less attractive than the service to Europe: of the fourteen passengers embarked at Johannesburg, only two were for New York. Seven passengers embarked for Lisbon, four for Accra and one for Leopoldville. At Leopoldville, an additional seventeen passenger boarded for Lisbon and one for Dakar. At Accra, two boarded for

⁵⁶ See Martin C. Thomas, 'Innocent Abroad? Decolonisation and US Engagement with French West Africa, 1945–56', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 47–73.

⁵⁷ See John Kent, 'United States Reactions to Empire, Colonialism, and Cold War in Black Africa, 1949–57', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33, no. 2 (2005): 195–220.

⁵⁸ Ritchie Ovendale, *The English-Speaking Alliance: Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Cold War 1945–1951* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 265.

⁵⁹ Indicatively, all thirty passengers and nine crew died when a 60–80 seater Pan Am airliner *en route* from Johannesburg to New York crashed 45 miles from Roberts Field in mid-June 1951. *New York Times*, 24 June 1951.



New York, two for Lisbon, and one for Dakar.⁶⁰ Whether for licensing or practical reasons, securing through-traffic became an issue: from 1956, Pan Am's timetables stipulated that no traffic could be embarked at Lisbon for Leopoldville or Johannesburg, and none at Johannesburg for just Leopoldville or Lisbon. On Pan Am's Africa services, the Portuguese capital became a technical stop.

Excluding approximately 25,000 trans-Atlantic passenger tickets issued only for flights between Lisbon and New York, Pan Am flew approximately 42,000 inbound and outbound paying passengers on all stages of its route between New York and six African cities in 11 years between 1947 and 1958. On average, some seventy-five passengers (excluding airline managers and engineers) flew Pan Am each week on all its Africa services. In the same period, at Johannesburg, the number of passengers handled (approximately 18,750) ranked the terminus only between 32nd and 43rd busiest among Pan Am's trans-Atlantic stops. European capitals handled orders of magnitude more Pan Am passengers. In terms of passenger numbers, Johannesburg ranked between 124 and 159 across all of Pan Am's markets.⁶¹ South Africa's prime economic hub, in Africa's wealthiest economy, was a modest source and destination of passenger traffic for Pan Am. The American carrier competed with Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch and Belgian flagged airlines on a similar off-Nile geographical track across Africa. In 1958, Pan Am hoped to snare passengers with a curious boast that its Johannesburg–New York return fares in economy class via Lisbon (and four other European capitals) cost less than first-class return tickets between Johannesburg and London.⁶²

It is not clear how Pan Am regarded its traffic record in, to and from Africa. There is no sign of Board agitation or directive. It helped that until 1956 Pan Am enjoyed a US postal service subsidy. In 1950 this provided the airline with a quarter of its revenue.⁶³ Brock noted that routes like those to Oslo, Teheran or Johannesburg had few paying passengers 'but were flown in the national interest, greatly desired by both the White House and the State Department'. Pan Am, he remarked, 'would fly anywhere, anytime, with no apparent interest in normal business considerations'.⁶⁴ Besides, there was limited capacity for and little knowledge about Africa in Pan Am headquarters. The Africa services were managed by the airline's Atlantic Division; its head could devote about a quarter of his time to Africa.⁶⁵ Even that proportion might have been generous relative to Africa's low profile in official circles across the Atlantic: in 1957, the US deployed more Foreign Service personnel in

⁶⁰ PAA, 1/200(19); 2/144(12); 2/69(5); 2/103(11): Civil Aeronautics Board Accident Investigation Report, 5 December 1951.

⁶¹ Data derived from US Civil Aviation Board, *O-D Airline Traffic Survey of Revenue Passengers, 1947–1958*. Published data (omitting 1951) are for March and September only; annual data are a simple six-multiple.

⁶² PAA 1/87(7): Pan Am Clipper Guide [South Africa], June 1958.

⁶³ Anthony J. Mayo, Nitin Nohria, and Mark Rennella, *Entrepreneurs, Managers, and Leaders: What the Airline Industry Can Teach Us About Leadership* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 102.

⁶⁴ Brock, *Flying the Oceans*, 261.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 273–274.



West Germany than in all of Africa.⁶⁶ Correspondingly, in the mid-1950s, four Pan Am flights each week between Africa and the US were a small proportion of all its thirty-five weekly trans-Atlantic flights in mid-1953. By the end of June 1955, Pan Am had logged 50,000 trans-Atlantic crossings.⁶⁷

Considerations of profit and loss may not have been uppermost, but they did surface in corners of Pan Am's Africa enterprise. In Liberia, for example, when the US military stopped using Roberts Field, Pan Am planned to end its own stops there, unless it was compensated financially. At the time, the estimated annual cost to Pan Am of operating through Roberts Field was US\$271,000.⁶⁸ Some user payments ended when, at the end of June 1949 Liberia's Roberts Corporation transferred its title to Roberts Field, and all its airport inventory, to Pan Am.⁶⁹ Then, for a few years a new regional airline served Dakar from Roberts Field, and relieved Pan Am from stopping in Liberia. In 1949, 1951 and 1955, there was also discussion about Pan Am taking a thirty-five per cent share in the capitalisation of a Liberian airline that could feed traffic onto Pan Am's trunk route.⁷⁰

Pan Am resumed flights to Roberts Field in 1954 after the US Government had spent US\$745,000 rehabilitating the facility.⁷¹ Among its passengers would have been employees and executives of the majority US-owned Liberian Mining Company, the US Trading Company (a Firestone subsidiary which owned the local Coca Cola bottling franchise), the Bank of Monrovia (another Firestone subsidiary, chartered in New Mexico), the American Foundation for Tropical Medicine (part-funded by Firestone), and the eighty US Technical Cooperation Administration experts in Liberia.⁷²

Ticket sales to American businesses and government agencies earned revenue for Pan Am; deals cut its costs. Pan Am secured a five-year exemption from customs fees at Roberts Field, and from excise taxes on aircraft fuel, oil and spares, and other equipment such as radio navigation. In addition, the five-year 1954 agreement stipulated that the Liberian Government would contribute US\$150,000 each year to Pan Am's costs. These were estimated at US\$349,413: a little more than half paid a staff

⁶⁶ James Hunter Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 69–73; Francis Njubi Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions: African Americans Against Apartheid, 1946–1994* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 41.

⁶⁷ Pan Am advertisements, *The Times* (London), 15 August 1953, p. 3; 29 June 1955, p. 9.

⁶⁸ PAA, 2/237(15): Brock to Vice-President Dean, 3 June 1948.

⁶⁹ PAA, 2/237(15): Henry J. Friendly, to Pan Am Vice-President Towers, 8 July 1949; Franklin Gledhill, Pan Am Vice-President, to The Liberia Company, New York, 24 June 1949; J. A. Mannion to Towers, 25 July 1949. Edward R. Stettinius, briefly US Lend-Lease administrator, then Secretary of State, and Juan Trippe's father-in-law, organised and part-funded the Liberia Company and its 25,000 acre concession in 1947. Trippe was President of the Company for a time; it was Pan Am's sales agent in Liberia. Clower et al., *Growth without Development*, 172.

⁷⁰ PAA, 2/682(21): Paul M. Strieffler, Assistant to Pan Am Vice-President, to W. K. Trimble, 1 September 1955; to Pan Am Executive Vice-President, 28 December 1955.

⁷¹ PAA, 2/682(21): Strieffler to Vice-President Pryor, 25 January 1954.

⁷² John Gunther, *Inside Africa* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1955), 832, 850–852.



of nine Americans, ten Europeans and 184 Liberians.⁷³ Pan Am bargained over the costs of a guest house and repairs to administrative buildings at Roberts Field; it tried to extend the 1954 exemption by 15 years; it made it a condition for its continued stay that runways were lengthened to accommodate jet aircraft.⁷⁴

Pan Am's hard-nosed negotiations did not affront the Liberian Government. In 1952, it awarded Trippe the Star of Africa (Commander) for his contribution to the 'progress of the Negro race'. Four years later, he was elevated to Grand Commander, in recognition of his interest in the welfare of Liberians and for his role in increasing understanding and forging closer relationships with the US.⁷⁵ Seventeen other non-African countries pinned medals to Trippe's chest; some were 'discreetly solicited by [Pan Am] subordinates'.⁷⁶

Elaborating

The 1960s looked set to be a glorious decade for Pan Am. It assigned prestigious new 140-seat Boeing jet aircraft to the Africa route. They were the New World. They epitomised modernity and acceleration. Journey times between New York and Leopoldville dropped to 27 h and between New York and Johannesburg to 33 h. Tantalisingly, it became possible to fly non-stop between New York and Dakar. By the 1960s, Pan Am had stopped refuelling in the mid-Atlantic Azores. Only US military use of the island was in the balance when, in the early 1960s, Portugal threatened to rescind access, and withdraw from the UN and NATO, if Washington did not support continued Portuguese colonial rule in Angola.⁷⁷

The 1960s were Pan Am's most expansionist phase in Africa. The airline did not retreat from the turbulence there—from a continent where the mix of political turmoil and civil aviation was so transparent.⁷⁸ In that decade especially, all airlines had to contend with (constitutional) decolonisation, regime change and air transport nationalisation on the continent. Lines of political authority there were changing fast: Pan Am was pitched into negotiations with sometimes hostile states, with a West African airline consortium (Air Afrique), and with the newly formed Organisation of African Unity. A 1960 US study of aeronautical export prospects into Africa noted that continental powers were proposing an Air Union of Africa to protect and

⁷³ PAA, 2/682(30): Trimble to Strieffler, 31 July 1954; Strieffler to Division Operations Manager, 12 July 1954.

⁷⁴ PAA, 2(682/21): various correspondence.

⁷⁵ Betty Stettinius Trippe, *The Diary and Letters of Betty Stettinius Trippe, 1925-1968* (privately published, 1982), 298.

⁷⁶ Marilyn Bender and Selig Altschul, *The Chosen Instrument: Pan Am, Juan Trippe, the Rise and Fall of an American Entrepreneur* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 441.

⁷⁷ John Kent, 'The United States and the Decolonization of Black Africa', in *The United States and Decolonisation: Power and Freedom*, ed. David Ryan and Victor Pungong (London: Palgrave 2000), 168–187; Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 195.

⁷⁸ Marc Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds: How Air Travel Changed the World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 80–84.



promote continental interests.⁷⁹ In the bipolar Cold War world (1945–1991), infant African airlines were being courted by West Europeans and Iron Curtain countries.⁸⁰ Several newly independent African countries craved reciprocal rights to fly their own flagged airlines into New York. The trans-Atlantic airway became a bargaining chip in the complex politics of nationalism, decolonisation and the Cold War.⁸¹

Pan Am's direct jet service across the Atlantic to Africa started in January 1961. Coinciding with President Kennedy's vigorous promotion of African ties, the novelty drew some new custom: newly appointed US ambassadors flew outbound, and African heads of state (and their retinues) flew to Washington D.C.: eleven in 1961, ten in 1962, seven in 1963.⁸² Few travellers may have been tempted to divert from routes to and from New York which offered intervening business and tourism opportunities at European stops.

The numerical record is complex, but shows passenger and freight loads that continued to pose questions about the commercial viability of Pan Am's flights between New York and Africa. For example, in December 1961, on twice-weekly, eastbound New York–Johannesburg flights, only forty per cent of seats were occupied; westbound, there was fifty-five per cent occupancy. Freightage fared little better: eastbound cargos took up two-thirds of available aircraft belly space; westbound flights carried a mere nineteen per cent of freight capacity.⁸³ Even on the premier New York–Dakar leg, in both directions, less than half the seats were occupied throughout 1963. Had US Government personnel travelling at rebated rates not flown, only thirty-nine per cent of seats would have been filled.⁸⁴ Half-full aircraft were not uncommon in the early 1960s when high airfares prevailed on over-capacitated routes⁸⁵; Pan Am's capacious jets and high ticket prices on its Africa routes were a case in point.

On a wider canvas, in 1963 Pan Am carried less than five per cent of the 45,000 passengers flying out of Johannesburg on twelve international airlines.⁸⁶ The airline was evidently some way from being a market leader in Africa. European airlines had the major share of air traffic to and from the continent—for Africa, trans-Mediterranean trumped trans-Atlantic. Watching European and British airlines expand their African route networks, in April 1961 a senior Pan Am executive warned that

⁷⁹ United States. Department of Commerce, 'World Survey of Civil Aviation: Africa' (Washington D.C.1960).

⁸⁰ Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 208–213; Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945–1968* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), Chapter 5.

⁸¹ On key actors and episodes, see Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁸² Michael Clough, *Free at Last? U.S. Policy toward Africa and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992), 7.

⁸³ PAA, 2/245(25): Weekly Traffic Report ended 23 December 1961.

⁸⁴ PAA, 2/723(3): Survey of Capacity, Staff and Seat Factors; R. G. Ferguson to N. P Blake, 24 December 1963.

⁸⁵ Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds*, 88.

⁸⁶ PAA, 2/723(1): Paddy Bell to John Shannon, Vice-President, Overseas Division, 23 March 1963.



his airline might soon ‘have nothing but crumbs left for our archaic African route pattern’.⁸⁷

Pan Am’s performance and role came to the attention of the US Civil Aeronautics Board. In 1961 it conducted a study titled ‘Aviation Development in Africa’. Decolonisation and the Cold War provided context for the study: Africa had become part of a US foreign policy agenda intent on containing the spread of communism there. The CAB study authorised Pan Am to conduct bilateral negotiations with countries along its African routes ‘to counter the aggressive aviation activities of the USSR in Africa, and to contribute to the betterment of African aviation, as well as its aviation interests in Africa’.⁸⁸ There was some urgency: possibly after arm twisting of a kind that Pan Am might have recognised, in 1960 the Czechoslovak airline linked Prague to Rabat, Dakar, Conakry and Bamako.⁸⁹ From September 1962, the USSR’s flag carrier, Aeroflot, served Conakry, Bamako and Accra via Rabat and Belgrade.⁹⁰

That year, 1962, the head of Pan Am’s Atlantic Division noted the imperative of cooperating with African airlines lest the prestigious US carrier’s operations ‘die on the vine’.⁹¹ An internal Pan Am report recommended that the airline’s ten-year-old Technical Assistance Programmes should be taken to Africa.⁹² Funded by the State Department’s International Cooperation Administration, these had already been operated in Pakistan, Turkey, Thailand and Afghanistan—on the Cold War’s periphery where successive US administrations had fixated on blocking communist aviation.⁹³ A Technical Assistance Programme was intended to make national airlines self-sustaining by extending financial loans, taking airline equity stakes, leasing aircraft, and offering managerial and technical assistance. A handy by-product was meant to be generation of branch traffic that could feed Pan Am’s trunk routes.

A meeting at the US State Department in August 1962 discussed how ‘to establish US identity in the development of air transportation in Africa’ by participating with African nation(s) in the development of their air transport systems and facilities. The reasons given were that the USSR and its satellites were already operating services to many African countries, and adding technical groups and equipment in Mali, Guinea and Ghana; that France and Britain were established in several African

⁸⁷ PAA, 1/179(1): Herbert F. Milley, Vice-President, Pan Am Overseas Division (Traffic & Sales), to JTS, 20 April 1961.

⁸⁸ PAA, 2/273(2): Alan S. Boyd, Chair, CAB, to Russell B. Adams, Pan Am Vice-President, 27 June 1962.

⁸⁹ Peter Svik, ‘East–West Relations in the Civil Aviation Sector between 1945 and 1963’, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2015): 263–278.

⁹⁰ PAA, 2/723(2): D. Browne to John C. Leslie, 27 September 1962.

⁹¹ PAA, 2/723(2): Harold E. Gray to Trippe, 8 June 1962.

⁹² PAA, 2/273(12): Pan American World Airways, Confidential Proposal: ‘United States Participation in the Development of Aviation in Africa’, 24 July 1962.

⁹³ Jeffrey A. Engel, *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 258. On the Afghanistan case see Jenifer Van Vleck, ‘An Airline at the Crossroads of the World: Ariana Afghan Airlines, Modernization, and the Global Cold War’, *History and Technology* 25, no. 1 (2009): 3–24.



nations; that the USA was not assisting anywhere except in Ethiopia.⁹⁴ Pan Am's Africa experience and traffic rights made it the prime candidate instrument. But there was doubt whether a private US company had the resources and finances to compete with the USSR's offerings.⁹⁵

In the 1960s, Pan Am's developmental work in Africa aimed at capacitating indigenous airlines in Africa and making them sustainable under US tutelage. Its Technical Assistance Programme started with a US\$3 million, year-long project in Nigeria in 1965–1966. No other such exercise took effect for six years.⁹⁶ In 1971 Pan Am signed a Technical Assistance Programme contract with the Liberian Government; it was renewed for three years in 1973 to oversee a US\$8.7 million expansion at Roberts Field. In 1970, the Congo (from 1971, Zaire) began negotiating a US\$5.8 million Programme.⁹⁷ Awarded two years later, it made little headway, and most of the effort went into the capital, Kinshasa.⁹⁸ The Programme struggled in the context of global fuel price hikes, Air Zaire's vast debt from reckless fleet additions, and inadequate financial controls.⁹⁹ Facing its own unpaid debt, and language difficulties, the Zaire Programme was also wracked with internal staffing problems. In addition, it struggled with the rapid succession of Zairean ministers who criticised the credentials of Programme managers.¹⁰⁰ There was also some confusion about the overlapping spheres and obligations of the Technical Assistance Programme and of Pan Am.¹⁰¹ The machinations, sidestepping and manoeuvrings took their toll. In April 1975, G. Erskine Rice, Vice-President of Pan Am's Airline Services Division in New York, scribbled in gratitude to the US Ambassador in Kinshasa: 'never in 25 years [of travelling for Pan Am] have I needed nor asked for so much help, guidance and counsel as in Zaire'.¹⁰²

Pan Am's other responses to its African air traffic performance fell closer to its mainstream airline business. Of symbolic importance, it scheduled a Board of Directors Tour for February 1964.¹⁰³ This had been postponed twice, prioritising Pan Am's other continental markets. The first tangible outcome of the Directors' Tour was a confidential 'blocked space' agreement with the (then) eleven-nation West African federal airline, Air Afrique. The deal involved leasing some first- and economy-class seats and cargo space on some of Pan Am's flights in both directions between New York and six West African cities. Similar (but differently calibrated)

⁹⁴ PAA, 2/272(2): Summary of meeting, 4 August 1962. See also NA, FO 371/165223: State Department reports, 18 May, 17 September 1962.

⁹⁵ PAA, 2/723(2): Norman P. Blake to Theodore C. Achilles, 18 May 1962.

⁹⁶ PAA, 2/463(15): 'The Pan American Technical Assistance Program: A Brief Synopsis'. September 1972.

⁹⁷ PAA, 2/469(2): A Proposal for Technical Assistance and Training for Air Congo, February 1970.

⁹⁸ PAA, 2/235(3): undated 'Opening Remarks' by Joseph F. Gatt; PAA, 2/770(14): Abe Sevinch to Claude Hutt, 2 February 1975.

⁹⁹ PAA, 2/463(27): Zaire—Wallace Report and Audit 1971 to 1973, 26 February 1974.

¹⁰⁰ PAA, 2/770(14): G. Erskine Rice to Senior Vice-President J. T. Flanagan, 20 August 1975.

¹⁰¹ PAA, 2/770(14): Erskine Rice to Joseph Gatt (Project Director, Technical Assistance Programme) and Lou Cecchet (Director, Zaire/FIH), 26 September 1975.

¹⁰² PAA, 2/770(14): Erskine Rice to Deane R. Hinton, 7 April 1975..

¹⁰³ PAA, 2/326(7): Board of Directors Trips—1964, Africa.



two-year agreements were signed the next month with East African Airways and West African Airways.¹⁰⁴

In the USA, CAB approval deemed the arrangements a ‘valid transitional instrument’ for developing air transportation in less-developed nations. Even if it was not sound aviation policy, the CAB added, the State Department supported the arrangement ‘on broader national interest grounds’.¹⁰⁵ Also in 1964, President Johnson invoked US national interests when granting Air Afrique and Nigeria Airways foreign carrier permits to serve New York.¹⁰⁶ He did so in the context of hardening attitudes to reciprocity in US international aviation policy¹⁰⁷—Pan Am still sought better geographical coverage in Africa. It took almost a decade to award Congo’s national carrier landing rights in New York; President Mobutu’s visit there in 1970 finally sealed the deal.¹⁰⁸

Clearly, in the 1960s, Pan Am was not acting on its own in Africa as a purely commercial business in which profit was the sole consideration. Rather, it was being drawn into and aligning itself with broader US geopolitical interests. When Pan Am wanted to expand into East Africa in the mid-1960s, the State Department encouraged CAB approval because it would be ‘politically desirable ... and politically important’.¹⁰⁹ Even in an era of transparent bilateral air agreements, Pan Am faced political pressure. Before the Second World War, and for a decade or so after, the US Government had no formal foreign policy towards Africa, and none that bore down on Pan Am operations there. Now, however, there were grounds for thinking that the licensee airline did the bidding of the US Government, at least in part. As in Pan Am’s free-wheeling pioneering days in the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific, and during its emergency military supply activity in Africa in 1941–42, so too in 1960s Africa, Pan Am could be regarded as ‘a quasi-official strategic and diplomatic arm of the USA’.¹¹⁰ In the (in)famous remark attributed to a retired CIA agent, Pan Am was ‘for all practical purposes an extension of the United States Government’.¹¹¹ But, the way this worked locally was variable, and Pan Am’s own agency is easily overlooked.¹¹² US experts grappled with the merits and manner of yoking US overseas aviation to US foreign aid.¹¹³

¹⁰⁴ PAA, 1/205(4): *Aviation Daily*, 10 March 1964, p. 57; 30 April 1964, p. 382.

¹⁰⁵ PAA, 1/205(4): *Aviation Daily*, 5 May 1964, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ PAA, 1/205(4): *Aviation Daily*, 30 July 1964, p. 168; 23 September 1964, p. 130.

¹⁰⁷ James L. Gormly, ‘Opening and Closing Doors: US Postwar Aviation Policy, 1943–1963’, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2015): 251–262.

¹⁰⁸ PAA, 2/644(13): Russell B. Adams, Pan Am Vice-President, to Joseph C. Watson, Director, CAB Bureau of International Affairs, 7 August 1961; Adams to Frank E. Loy, Department of State, 22 April, 7 October 1968.

¹⁰⁹ Mitch Lerner, ‘Climbing Off the Back Burner: Lyndon Johnson’s Soft Power Approach to Africa’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22, no. 4 (2011): 578–607.

¹¹⁰ Mayo, Nohria, and Rennella, *Entrepreneurs, Managers, and Leaders*, 85.

¹¹¹ Bender and Altschul, *Chosen Instrument*, 477.

¹¹² Erik Benson, ‘The Chosen Instrument? Reconsidering the Relationship between Pan American and the Government’, *Essays in Economic and Business History* 22, no. (2004): 97–110.

¹¹³ Hans Heymann, ‘Air Transport and Economic Development: Some Comments on Foreign Aid Programs’, *American Economic Review* 52, no. 2 (1962): 386–395; Hans Heymann, *Civil Aviation and U.S. Foreign Aid: Purposes, Pitfalls, and Problems for U.S. Policy (Report No. R-424-RC)* (Santa Monica,



In the 1960s, hoping to bolster its influence and traffic revenue earned in Africa, Pan Am doubled the number of cities it served there. Routes proliferated into a lattice shape that replaced the twenty-year-old linear route geography. Flights to and from cities in North and East Africa were intended to open new funnels for trans-Atlantic traffic and to effectively increase frequencies by offering more connections. In 1965, Pan Am's flights to and through Lagos increased to three weekly. That year Pan Am served thirteen African cities.¹¹⁴ In the 5-year period 1964–1968, Pan Am issued 90,415 tickets for 8761 flights between New York and those cities. Airports at Monrovia, Lagos, Dakar and Johannesburg accounted for four-fifths of traffic.¹¹⁵

Pan Am's increased coverage and frequencies eased travel by African government officials invited to Washington D.C. for political talks. African delegations to the UN in New York could travel more easily. So could the teams of US aid experts and US government officials who, by then, were implementing US soft power policy in Africa: by 1965 there were thirty-four US diplomatic missions and twenty-one consulates in thirty-nine African countries.¹¹⁶ Pan Am's print media advertisements promoted its new destinations, but the expanded network and services did little to boost its small share of Africa air traffic. In 1965, eighty-two per cent of the 2.5 million passengers flying on scheduled services between Africa and other continents travelled via Europe.¹¹⁷ At the time, twenty-four European airlines operated African schedules,¹¹⁸ several on reciprocal terms with Africa-based airlines.

More and better engagement with and advertising of Africa might have helped Pan Am.¹¹⁹ Its corporate organisation was unhelpful in this regard: the top traffic and sales staff in New York headquarters seldom visited the airline's foreign sales offices or met personnel in the field. Worse, they knew little about the areas in which they were trying to market Pan Am.¹²⁰ The emphasis on African business traffic might have been diluted, and Africa destinations threaded into Pan Am's famed round-the-world tourism flights. Lapses in all these respects were not made good by a sprinkling of advertisements which depicted Pan Am welcoming African American passengers aboard.¹²¹ Claims of non-racism did not fill aircraft. Nor

Footnote 113 (continued)

CA: Rand Corporation, 1964); Frank E. Loy, *The United States Program of Aviation Assistance to Less-Developed Countries* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, Agency for International Development, 1964).

¹¹⁴ Additions to the African network were Conakry (July 1963), Tripoli (August 1965), Nairobi (October 1965), Entebbe (February 1966), Dar es Salaam (1966), Rabat (non-stop, September 1968).

¹¹⁵ PAA 2/420(18): Coupon Traffic, 1964–1968. It is not clear if coupons were for single or return journeys. The data imply that Pan Am did not carry passengers for just intermediate stages along its route.

¹¹⁶ Lerner, 'Climbing'; Fred Marte, *Political Cycles in International Relations: The Cold War and Africa 1945–1990* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Press, 1994), 89.

¹¹⁷ PAA, 1/344(2): International Civil Aviation Organization, 'Development of International Air Passenger Travel—Africa' (Montreal, 1967), pp. 86.

¹¹⁸ George Weeks, 'Wings of Change: A Report on the Progress of Civil Aviation in Africa', *Africa Report* 10, no. 2 (1965): 14–40.

¹¹⁹ PAA, 2/453(1): Africa Notes – Trip Report, 30 January 1967.

¹²⁰ Brock, *Flying the Oceans*, 254.

¹²¹ e.g. *Africa Report*, August & October 1965, March 1967.



did the mere five per cent of pages given to Africa at the rear of Pan Am's annual *New Horizons* world travel guides in the 1950s. There was no entry for Africa in its *Wings To ...* TV film series catalogues for 1956 and 1958. Only three of some ninety educational tours for US postgraduates in 1960, for which Pan Am offered flights, used its Africa services.¹²² One-third of Pan Am's three-hundred-page 1968 guide to global wildlife hunting and filming was devoted to Africa, but targeted a narrow market.¹²³

Political upheaval was certainly one factor that constrained Pan Am in Africa in the 1960s. It soaked up management time. For example, in 1962, Nigeria revoked Pan Am's permission to land at Lagos from Lisbon, and it rerouted to Accra.¹²⁴ In 1963, a Tanzanian minister objected strongly to Pan Am's presence in East Africa and briefly, succeeded in denying it traffic rights.¹²⁵ Roughly at the same time, when protesting Portuguese imperialism and Moroccan non-recognition, Mauritania denied Pan Am overflying rights on its New York–Lisbon–Rabat–Conakry route; costly diversions soon ended after President Kennedy's wooing and subtle messaging of President Daddah.¹²⁶ Towards the end of 1966, the Guinean president revoked Pan Am's landing rights and ordered its Conakry offices closed.¹²⁷ In 1967, a Nigerian Government inquiry probed Pan Am while scrutinising the probity of Nigerian Airways.¹²⁸ In 1968, as anti-apartheid action, it was rumoured that Liberia was threatening to suspend Pan Am from Roberts Field if it continued to fly to Johannesburg.¹²⁹

Five years of internecine violence and Cold War face-offs in the Congo between 1960 and 1965,¹³⁰ may have disrupted Pan Am's schedules through Leopoldville at times. Notable moments were the rebels' armed assault on the city's year-old international airport just days after independence in mid-1960, and the UN closure of Congo airspace a few months later. More positively, to do with presence rather than absence, the US Agency for International Development chartered Pan Am to fly twice-daily relief flights from January 1966: its freighters carried some 864 barrels of oil daily from Leopoldville to help Zambia circumvent Rhodesian sanctions which cut its previous fuel supply routes. The US airlift until the end of April 1966

¹²² PAA, 1/88(6): 1960 Adventures in Education: a Scholar's Guide to Study and Educational Travel Abroad via Pan American.

¹²³ PAA, 2/611(9): Guidebooks and ephemera; Charles A. Cabell and David St. Clair, *Safari: Pan Am's Guide to Hunting with Gun and Camera Round the World* (New York: Pan American Airways, 1968).

¹²⁴ PAA, 2/723(2): Russell B. Adams to Philip H. Trezise, US Acting-Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, 9 May 1962.

¹²⁵ PAA, 2/420(2): Memo from Norman P. Blake on visit to East Africa, 18 October–5 November 1964.

¹²⁶ Philip M. Kaiser, *Journeying Far and Wide: A Political and Diplomatic Memoir* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1992), 204–205.

¹²⁷ Dierikx, *Clipping the Clouds*, 81–82. *New York Times*, 10 November 1966.

¹²⁸ PAA, 2/501(19): Memorandum on Nigeria Airways – Tribunal of Inquiry, 14 February 1967.

¹²⁹ PAA, 2/723(3): Tom Carter, Civil Air Attaché (Lagos) to B. B. Reece, 12 July 1968.

¹³⁰ For a recent study see Lise Namikas, *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960–1965* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013). On Soviet Bloc aviation and the Congo see Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), 163–167.



was a stop-gap measure to ease bottlenecks on overland supply routes; British and Canadian airlifts were on the same scale.¹³¹

Notwithstanding wobbles in Africa, in 1967 the venerable National Geographic Society in Washington D.C. awarded Juan Trippe its Hubbard Medal in recognition of his contribution to the development of US overseas air routes.¹³² Electors would have counted Pan Am's Africa enterprise in his favour. The timing was opportune: aged seventy, Trippe retired in May the next year, and his airline's fortunes waned in the next two decades.

Sticking

Three years of financial losses nearly ruined Pan Am as a whole in the early 1970s. The causes were global recession, the 1974 oil crisis, badly timed purchase of widebody jets, overstaffing, managerial disruption, and an organisational culture of indestructibility.¹³³ Then, after Pan Am had fought its way back from bankruptcy in 1976, the 1978 Airline Deregulation Act in the USA increased airline competition across the Atlantic. Any cross-subsidy of African services by revenue earned on lucrative routes between the USA and Europe would have been reduced by competition from scheduled and charter airlines. And Pan Am was still not allowed to fly domestically within the USA to collect traffic from, or feed traffic to, its overseas services.

In challenging and unpredictable operating and planning circumstances, a severely slimmed Pan Am continued to 'wing it' over Africa, flying with and against the gales and gusts. In deteriorating conditions, some published timetables may have become only rough approximations, and statements of intentions. The steady persistence in Africa of the well-rooted, higher-frequency, flag-carrying airlines of Belgium, Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Portugal, among others, continued to siphon trans-Atlantic traffic via European capitals. Business traffic pickings were slim anyway, as sub-Saharan Africa continued to count for a tiny share of US private investment overseas, and of US trade—in each case, less than five per cent in 1973.¹³⁴ Between 1970 and 1988, US exports to Africa were between one and three per cent of the US total; for US imports the range was between two and eight per cent, Nigeria and South Africa dominant in both cases. In the period, no African

¹³¹ *Chicago Tribune*, 31 December 1965; NA, FO 1100/48: UK Department of Economic Affairs, P.O.L. Supplies–Zambia, 1 April 1966; FO 1100/49: Ibid, British Airlifts into Zambia, 29 April 1966. Pan Am's great rival, TWA, also participated.

¹³² Joseph F. Hood, *Skyway Round the World: The Story of the First Global Airway* (New York: Chares Scribner, 1968), 177.

¹³³ Simon Bennett, 'Victim of History? The Impact of Pan Am's 'Imperialistic' Past on Its Capacity to Adjust to Deregulation', *Risk Management* 4, no. 4 (2002): 23–43; Gabrielle Durepos, Jean Helms Mills, and Albert J. Mills, 'Flights of Fancy: Myth, Monopoly and the Making of Pan American Airways', *Journal of Management History* 14, no. 2 (2008): 116–127; Mayo, Nohria, and Rennella, *Entrepreneurs, Managers, and Leaders*, 85–107.

¹³⁴ Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 382.



country ranked among the top twenty US investment destinations.¹³⁵ US trade missions and business visits to other continents had higher priority.

For much of the 1970s and 1980s, Pan Am as a whole was on life support. Whether or not it trimmed service frequencies, or jettisoned the least lucrative routes, it did not abandon Africa. This was so even after the departure of its autocratic and audacious leader.¹³⁶ From 1971 Pan Am operated five different return flights each week out of New York to African destinations, two via Casablanca, three via Dakar. Inertia, deflection of management energies at Pan Am's New York headquarters, and/or residual pride and prestige, may have kept Pan Am in Africa. Savings from abandoning Pan Am's relatively minor trans-Atlantic operations to and from Africa would not have resolved the recurrent crises at the airline. They were not of Africa's making.

Pan Am stuck to its Africa routes amidst challenges. It compromised over racism on the South Africa leg. Amid earnest but ineffective African American protest in 1969 about South African Airways starting flights between Johannesburg and New York, in 1970 Pan Am stopped on-board screening of a Sidney Poitier film about which some South African passengers complained.¹³⁷ Then, in 1971–1972, the Chair of the Congressional Subcommittee on Africa, Charles Diggs, queried and publicised Pan Am's discriminatory practice of disallowing African American cabin crew on its flights into Johannesburg. The airline backed down, but capitulated also by notifying the apartheid government that it would manage the presence of African American crew in Johannesburg so as to observe local Jim Crow custom.¹³⁸

Pan Am hung on amidst uncertainty. It even hatched new ventures. It ran its Technical Assistance Programme in Liberia and Zaire. It worked around tensions between Gabon and Air Afrique when invited to consider a Technical Assistance Programme for Gabon.¹³⁹ It opened a cargo terminal in Accra.¹⁴⁰ It opened an Inter-Continental Hotel in Kinshasa in 1971, adding to those in Abidjan, Livingstone, Lusaka, Monrovia and Nairobi—locally owned, Pan Am held a minority stake and the management contract.¹⁴¹ In the mid-1970s, Pan Am's Marketing Division proposed a tourism development project in Egypt that would cost between US\$382,000 and US\$809,000 depending on specifications.¹⁴² Pan Am launched a bi-weekly South Atlantic service from New York to Johannesburg via Rio de Janeiro in 1976. It was a geographical diversion during increasingly strident African American

¹³⁵ Clough, *Free at Last?*, 16.

¹³⁶ Bender and Altschul, *Chosen Instrument*, 15.

¹³⁷ Joanna L. Grisinger, "'South Africa is the Mississippi of the World': Anti-Apartheid Activism through Domestic Civil Rights Law', *Law and History Review* (2019): 1–39.

¹³⁸ Howard University, Manuscript Division, Charles Diggs Collection, 201/17; 208/36; 224/9; 357/22.

¹³⁹ PAA, 2/766(11): Thomas J. Flanagan to W. T. Seawell et al, 12 & 26 August 1976; Edward D. Perkins to Erskine Rice, 12 August 1976; Meeting note by Erskine Rice, 21 September 1976.

¹⁴⁰ Pan Am Press Release #120370.

¹⁴¹ PAA, 1/208(6): various items.

¹⁴² PAA, 2/766(10): Charles. G. Gilbert, Marketing Director, to Vice-President, Airline Service, 5 March 1974; 'Proposal to the Government of Egypt for the Development for a Master Plan for the Expansion of the Hospitality Industry, Egypt, 1974–1975'; Erskine Rice to Flanagan, Senior Vice-President, International Affairs, 6 February 1975.



activism against state and corporate collusion with apartheid.¹⁴³ After the June 1976 Soweto riots in Johannesburg, in American eyes the apartheid state's anti-communism finally became less of a counterweight to its racism. Briefly, in 1981–1982, Pan Am operated an all-freight service into Johannesburg.

Widening its Africa portfolio by scattergun activity did nothing to staunch corporate decay at Pan Am. After last gasps, Johannesburg operations were terminated in 1985 (before the US Government imposed an anti-apartheid embargo on the Republic). In the same year, Pan Am stopped managing Roberts Field. Its West African routes closed in 1987. By 1991, the once iconic airline (whose global brand recognition vied with Coca Cola and Ford) had ceased trans-Atlantic service to Africa. In the embers of the Cold War, when the USA exercised 'exceptional influence in Africa',¹⁴⁴ the airline which had facilitated and projected that power and influence on the continent disappeared.

Conclusion

Pan Am flew the Atlantic between North America and Africa for half-a-century. It was a loud and, in every sense, a moving emblem of the USA. It represented the world's superpower abroad. It was one of the world's best known airlines. But it never exceeded its badging: Pan Am was never also pan-African. British fears that the US newcomer would displace erstwhile colonial airlines were misplaced. Pan Am was privileged, emboldened and strengthened by its contribution to the Allied war effort in Africa in 1941–1942, but, in the long term, only US-manufactured airliners became dominant on the continent. Pan Am's entry into Africa did not give it the lasting aeronautical advantage that its founding leader may have sought and anticipated. Equally however, he did not set out into Africa with a pre-ordained set of immovable targets. He did not commit Pan Am to Africa irrevocably. He did not stipulate business review intervals or thresholds for continued participation. Simply being there was enough. But being there was also tough: regulation, competition and resentment ruled.

Pan Am's trans-Atlantic ventures into Africa were layered and intricate. They were not guided by any single, unchanging principle or programme. There had been no uncompromising grand plan arrived at by an elaborate survey of continental traffic potential. Pan Am's pre-positioning took risks. Its flights, infant airline development initiatives and hotel projects were business propositions that were experimental, speculative and opportunist. They anticipated markets. Under wily leadership, Pan Am leveraged US Government assistance as needed, but also bent to political pressure. For its part, the US Government would have been conscious of enabling and protecting Pan Am, a shareholder-backed business which, to onlookers, exuded unaided American private enterprise. It was also desirable to avoid any impression

¹⁴³ See Nesbitt, *Race for Sanctions*.

¹⁴⁴ Herman J. Cohen, *Intervening in Africa: Superpower Peacemaking in a Troubled Continent* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 218.



of American imperialism, and not to ruffle the feathers of government-owned European and African airlines operating in the continent. This airline politics was a perennial but low-order consideration, never a red line in US foreign policy or business.

Metaphorically, Pan Am winged its way across the Atlantic to Africa in the sense of feeling its way, learning as it went. The carrier adapted to political and economic conditions and used various state and corporate instruments to protect and promote its interests. In the 1950s, before the US Government had formulated African foreign policies, and when Presidential and Congressional engagement with Africa was extremely weak, Pan Am flew relatively freely. It trialled different jumping-off points in North and South America, and mid-Atlantic. The airline edged its way across Africa by experimenting with various configurations of routes and services. During decades of Cold War, and the parallel emergence of new crises, dependencies and clientelism after decolonisation, the American airline's African wings had to flap harder. Mimicking the generally low-rank status of Africa in US foreign affairs, the continent was the step-child in Pan Am's Atlantic management division. It attracted less attention than it might have when Pan Am was buoyant; impetus and benign neglect kept it aloft when the parent faltered.

Acknowledgements A Research Incentive Grant from the National Research Foundation of South Africa enabled work in the Pan Am archives at the University of Miami Library and in the African Studies and Transportation libraries at Northwestern University. The Miami research was also supported by a Dave Abrams and Gene Banning Grant from the Pan Am Historical Foundation. The research also drew on the excellent holdings of the British Library and the Senate House Library at the University of London. Marc Dierikx read two drafts closely and gave incisive comments. Nicholas Grant generously shared his material from the Charles Diggs Collection and raised intriguing questions after reading the typescript.

References

- Anderson, R. Earle. 1952. *Liberia: America's African Friend*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Anon. 1944. The Sudan's service in a global war: the story of a section of the trans-African Air Ferry Route'. *Journal of the Royal African Society* 43 (170): 16–20.
- Bender, Marilyn, and Selig Altschul. 1982. *The Chosen Instrument: Pan Am, Juan Trippe, the Rise and Fall of an American Entrepreneur*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bennett, Simon. 2002. Victim of history? The impact of Pan Am's 'imperialistic' past on its capacity to adjust to deregulation. *Risk Management* 4 (4): 23–43.
- Benson, Erik. 2004. The chosen instrument? reconsidering the relationship between Pan American and the government. *Essays in Economic and Business History* 22: 97–110.
- Borstelmann, Thomas. 1993. *Apartheid's reluctant uncle: the United States and Southern Africa in the early Cold War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brady, Matthew F. 2012. *War Plan Juan: the strategy of Juan Trippe and Pan Am in Latin America and Africa before and during World War 2*. Montgomery: Air University School of Advanced Air and Space Studies.
- Brock, Horace M. 1978. *Flying the oceans: a pilot's story of Pan Am*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Cabell, Charles A., and David St. Clair. 1968. *Safari: Pan Am's Guide to hunting with gun and camera round the world*. New York: Pan American Airways.
- Carter, John D. 1958. Airway to the Middle East. In *Army Air Forces in World War II. Vol. 7: Services around the World* edited by Frank Craven Wesley and James Lea Cate, 46–62. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cave, Hugh B. 1945. *Wings across the world: the story of the air transport command*. New York: Dodd Mead.



- Cleveland, Reginald M. (ed.). 1947. *The aviation annual of 1947*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Clough, Michael. 1992. *Free at Last? U.S. Policy toward Africa and the End of the Cold War*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press.
- Clower, Robert Wayne, George Dalton, Mitchell Harwitz, and A. A. Walters. 1966. *Growth without development: an economic survey of Liberia*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Cohen, Herman J. 2000. *Intervening in Africa: superpower peacemaking in a troubled continent*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Culbert, Tom, and Andy Dawson. 1998. *PanAfrica: across the Sahara in 1941 with Pan Am*. McLean: Paladwr Press.
- Daley, Robert. 1980. *An American saga: Juan Trippe and his Pan Am empire*. New York: Random House.
- Deal, Nicholas Mark. 2019. History in the making: following the failed attempt of Wolfgang Langewiesche in Pan American Airways history project. Translated by Gabrielle Durepos. In *Connecting values to action: non-corporeal actants and choice*, edited by Albert J. Mills and Christopher M. Hartt, 37–51. Bingley: Emerald.
- Dierikx, Marc. 2008. *Clipping the clouds: how air travel changed the world*. Westport: Praeger.
- Dobson, Alan P. 1991. *Peaceful air warfare: The United States, Britain, and the politics of international aviation*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Dobson, Alan P. 2011. *FDR and civil aviation: flying strong, flying free*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Durepos, Gabrielle, Jean Helms Mills, and Albert J. Mills. 2008. Flights of fancy: myth, monopoly and the making of Pan American Airways. *Journal of Management History* 14 (2): 116–127.
- Durepos, Gabrielle, Jean Helms Mills, and Albert J. Mills. 2008. The Pan American dream and the myth of the pioneer. In *Organizational Epics and Sagas: Tales of Organizations*, edited by Monika Kostera, 156–168. London: Routledge.
- Durepos, Gabrielle, Albert J. Mills, and Jean Helms Mills. 2008. Tales in the manufacture of knowledge: writing a company history of Pan American world airways. *Management & Organizational History* 3 (1): 63–80.
- Engel, Jeffrey A. 2007. *Cold War at 30,000 feet: the Anglo-American fight for aviation supremacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gleijeses, Piero. 2002. *Conflicting missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Gormly, James L. 2015. Opening and closing doors: US Postwar aviation policy, 1943–1963. *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 13 (3): 251–262.
- Great Britain (Ministry of Information). 1946. *Merchant Airmen*. London: HMSO.
- Grisinger, Joanna L. 2019. South Africa is the Mississippi of the world: anti-apartheid activism through domestic civil rights law. *Law and History Review*: 1–39.
- Gunther, John. 1955. *Inside Africa*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Haglund, David. 1983. ‘De-lousing’ SCADTA: the role of Pan American Airways in U.S. Aviation Diplomacy in Colombia, 1939–1940. *Aerospace Historian* 30 (3): 177–188.
- Heymann, Hans. 1962. Air transport and economic development: some comments on foreign aid programs. *American Economic Review* 52 (2): 386–395.
- Heymann, Hans. 1964. *Civil Aviation and U.S. Foreign Aid: Purposes, Pitfalls, and Problems for U.S. Policy (Report No. R-424-RC)*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Hood, Joseph F. 1968. *Skyway round the world: the story of the first global airway*. New York: Chares Scribner.
- Josephson, Matthew. 1944. *Empire of the air: Juan Trippe and the struggle for world airways*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- Kaiser, Philip M. 1992. *Journeying far and wide: a political and diplomatic memoir*. New York: Charles Scribner.
- Kent, John. 2000. The United States and the decolonization of black Africa. In *The United States and decolonisation: power and freedom*, ed. David Ryan and Victor Pungong, 168–187. London: Palgrave.
- Kent, John. 2005. United States reactions to empire, colonialism, and cold war in black Africa, 1949–57. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 33 (2): 195–220.
- Lambie, Margaret. 1934. Aviation arrangements between the United States and the Union of South Africa. *The Journal of Air Law and Commerce* 5 (2): 316–321.
- Lee, J.M., and Martin Petter. 1982. *The Colonial Office, War, and Development Policy: Organisation and the Planning of a Metropolitan Initiative, 1939–1945*. London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies.



- Lerner, Mitch. 2011. Climbing off the back burner: Lyndon Johnson's soft power approach to Africa. *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 22 (4): 578–607.
- Leyson, Burr W. 1948. *Wings around the world: the story of American international air transport*. New York: E. P. Dutton.
- Lief, Alfred. 1951. *The Firestone story. A history of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company*. New York: Whittlesey House.
- Loy, Frank E. 1964. *The United States program of aviation assistance to less-developed countries*. Washington: Department of State, Agency for International Development.
- Marte, Fred. 1994. *Political cycles in international relations: the Cold War and Africa 1945–1990*. Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit Press.
- Mayo, Anthony J., Nitin Nohria, and Mark Rennella. 2009. *Entrepreneurs, managers, and leaders: what the airline industry can teach us about leadership*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mazov, Sergey. 2010. *A distant front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- McCormack, Robert Lewis. 1989. New Dimension: air transport as development in British West Africa, 1942–1950. Paper presented at the Canadian Association of African Studies Conference, Carleton University, Ottawa, 10–13.
- McKinley, Edward H. 1974. *The Lure of Africa: American Interests in Tropical Africa, 1919–1939*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Meriwether, James Hunter. 2002. *Proudly we can be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935–1961*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Muehlenbeck, Philip E. 2012. *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Muehlenbeck, Philip E. 2016. *Czechoslovakia in Africa, 1945–1968*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Namikas, Lise, and Battleground Africa. 2013. *Cold War in the Congo, 1960–1965*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Nesbitt, Francis Njubi. 2004. *Race for sanctions: African Americans against apartheid, 1946–1994*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ovendale, Ritchie, and The English-Speaking Alliance. 1985. *Britain, the United States, the dominions and the Cold War 1945–1951*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Pearce, Robert Desmond. 1982. *The turning point in Africa: British colonial policy, 1938–1948*. London: Frank Cass.
- Ragatz, Lowell. 1944. *Africa in the Post-War World*. New York: Proceedings No. 2, Research Bureau for Post-War Economics.
- Randall, Stephen James. 1972. Colombia, the United States and Interamerican Aviation Rivalry, 1927–1940. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 14 (3): 297–324.
- Ray, Deborah Wing. 1973. *Pan American Airways and the Trans-African base programme of World War II*, PhD. New York: New York University.
- Ray, Deborah Wing. 1975. The Takoradi Route: Roosevelt's Pre-War Venture Beyond the Western Hemisphere. *Journal of American History* 62 (2): 340–358.
- Ruano de la Haza, Jonathan. 2012. The Rise of the United States' Airfield Empire in Latin America, North Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia (1927–1945). PhD, University of Ontario.
- Schmidt, Elizabeth. 2013. *Foreign intervention in Africa: from the cold war to the war on terror*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Henry Ladd. 1950. *Airways abroad: the story of American world air routes*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Stanley, William R. 1994. Trans-South Atlantic air link in world war II. *GeoJournal* 33 (4): 459–463.
- Svik, Peter. 2015. East–West relations in the civil aviation sector between 1945 and 1963. *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 13 (3): 263–278.
- Tedder, Arthur W. 1966. *With Prejudice: the war memoirs of Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Tedder*. London: Cassell.
- Thomas, Martin C. 2008. Innocent Abroad? Decolonisation and US Engagement with French West Africa, 1945–56. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36 (1): 47–73.
- Trippe, Betty Stettinius. 1982. *The diary and letters of Betty Stettinius Trippe, 1925–1968*. Privately published.
- United States. 1944. *Department of Commerce, 'Air Cargo Potentials between the United States and South Africa'*. Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce.
- United States. 1960. *World Survey of Civil Aviation: Africa*. Washington, DC.



- Van Vleck, Jenifer. 2009. An airline at the crossroads of the world: Ariana Afghan Airlines, modernization, and the global cold war. *History and Technology* 25 (1): 3–24.
- Van Vleck, Jenifer. 2013. *Empire of the air: aviation and the American Ascendancy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Weeks, George. 1965. Wings of change: a report on the progress of civil aviation in Africa. *Africa Report* 10 (2): 14–40.
- Williams, Susan. 2016. *Spies in the Congo: the race for the ore that built the atomic bomb*. London: Hurst.
- Wilson, John. 2012. Pan American Airways Route 6. *Air Post Journal*.
- Wingent, Peter. 2010. *Extracts from the Air Ministry civil aviation intelligence report summaries, 1939–1945*. Dronfield: West Africa Study Circle.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Gordon Pirie was Professor and Deputy Director in the African Centre for Cities at the University of Cape Town, where, in retirement, he is an Honorary Research Associate. His publications include monographs on British imperial aviation; papers on British air charter policy and services to late colonial Africa; research on Persian Gulf airline operations in Africa, and Chinese airport construction there. He is presently working on the financing of trunk air route facilities across Africa after the Second World War, and the concurrent planning of Nairobi's international airport. Gordon edited the *Journal of Transport History* for 6 years from 2011 to 2016.

