



Air Force Tanker Fight



AP/World Wide Photo

Outrage across the country erupted over the U.S. Air Force's decision to award the multi-billion dollar refueling tanker contract to Europe's Airbus. A Boeing-built tanker would support more than 44,000 jobs in the United States.

flooded Capitol Hill with letters and phone calls. Lawmakers held hearings questioning the decision. Boeing took out full-page ads in a number of national newspapers across the country and thousands attended rallies protesting the decision.

At a rally at IAM District Lodge 751 in Everett, WA, hundreds of Machinists and family members voiced boisterous opposition as IAM leaders and local lawmakers blasted the decision.

"We need to wake people up to the reality that you – all the



Outrage quickly turned to old-fashioned grassroots activism after the U.S. Air Force announced they were awarding a \$40 billion aerial refueling tanker contract to the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS), the parent company of Airbus.

The decision to outsource the production of vital military equipment was even more puzzling considering the boost a contract award to Boeing would have given the nation's economy. Boeing's KC-767 tanker would be built with over 85 percent domestic U.S. content and would support more than 44,000 U.S. jobs and 300 contractors in over forty states.

"How we could turn over the crown jewel of support for

our nation's Air Force to foreign manufacturers is beyond me," said IAM President Tom Buffenbarger during an appearance on CNN's *Lou Dobbs Tonight*. "We're going to take this on tooth and nail and get this decision overturned. We're going to see that America gets what it deserves in the form of economic justice and fairness for American workers."

And fight is just what opponents of the controversial decision did. IAM members and their supporters

Washington Sen. Patty Murray, left, and Gov. Chris Gregoire join District 751 Secretary-Treasurer Susan Palmer in Everett, WA at a protest of the Air Force decision to let Airbus build a new generation of tankers.

workers at Boeing – are the best trained, most experienced in the aerospace industry,” said Senator Patty Murray (D-WA).

The tanker competition was mandated in 2003, allowing a heavily-subsidized European manufacturer, EADS, to bid against Boeing, a U.S. firm that received no subsidies.

“The Air Force’s decision is a serious blow to a key American industry,” said IAM Headquarters GVP Rich Michalski. “President Bush and his administration decided to create jobs in Toulouse, France rather than support good jobs in communities across America.”

A decision on a formal protest Boeing put before the Government Accountability Office (GAO) was pending when the *IAM Journal* went to press. Go to www.goiam.org to send a message to your legislators to overturn the decision to send aerospace jobs overseas.



IAM members from Local 727P in Palmdale, CA voted overwhelmingly to ratify a three-year agreement with Lockheed Martin. IAM members at seven other Lockheed locations also approved the agreement.

Lockheed Machinists Ratify Historic Contract

As much of the country battles a harsh economic downturn, nearly 6,000 Machinists working for Lockheed Martin bucked the trend, winning a three-year agreement that provides the best pay package in the history of IAM-Lockheed Martin negotiations and big improvements in pension benefits.

“These agreements set a high standard in the aerospace industry for wages and benefits,” said IAM Aerospace Coordinator John Crowdis, who led the negotiating teams from eight IAM locations. “The leadership for each location did an outstanding job, not only for their respective sites, but for the entire union.”

The three agreements covering eight locations across the country include a \$2,000 ratification bonus in addition to

wage increases of four percent in the first year and three percent in the second and third years. The agreements also increase the pension benefit to one of the highest in the aerospace industry. Improvements in health care coverage, insurance and retiree benefits are also included.

The vote marks the first time in nearly twenty years that members ratified the three major agreements on the first vote. Members ratified the Marietta, GA contract, which includes members in Clarksburg, WV and Meridian, MS, by 88 percent; the Palmdale contract by more than 78 percent and the Sunnyvale, CA, contract, which includes Cape Canaveral, FL and Santa Cruz and Vandenberg AFB, CA by nearly 70 percent.

