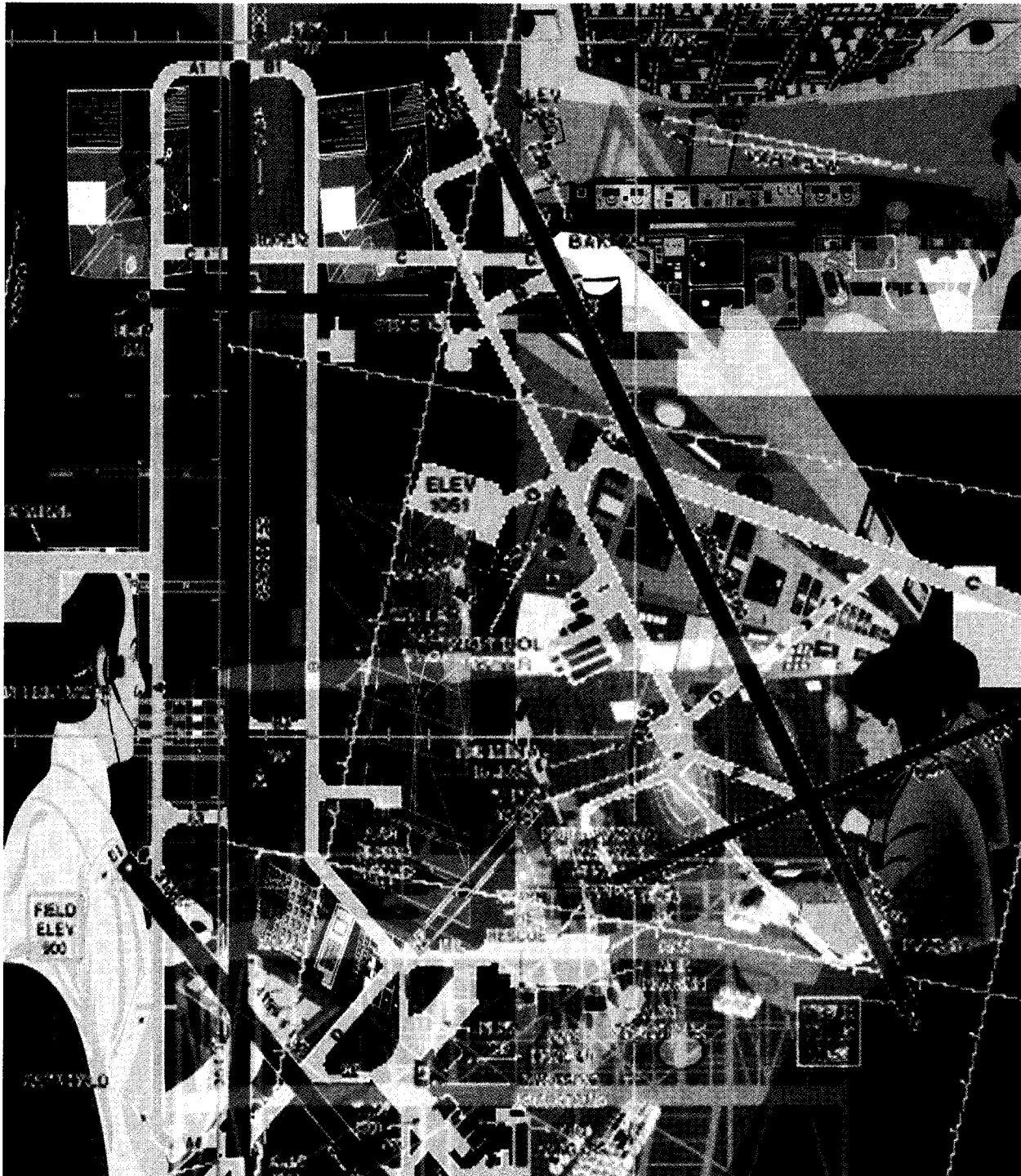


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE
FINAL REPORT OF RTCA
TASK FORCE 4
CERTIFICATION



FEBRUARY 26, 1999

Executive Summary of the Final Report of Task Force 4 Certification

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RTCA, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation formed to advance the art and science of aviation and aviation electronic systems for the benefit of the public. The organization functions as a Federal Advisory Committee and develops consensus-based recommendations on contemporary aviation issues.

The organization's recommendations are often used as the basis for government and private sector decisions as well as the foundation for many Federal Aviation Administration Technical Standard Orders.

Since RTCA is not an official agency of the United States Government, its recommendations may not be regarded as statements of official government policy unless so enunciated by the US government organization or agency having statutory jurisdiction over any matters to which the recommendations relate.

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Executive Summary

Aviation continues to grow world wide in all categories including air transport, general aviation and military. Aviation policies have been established to accommodate different aircraft uses, various types of aircraft, and their different operational objectives and diverse capabilities. These policies include regulatory oversight in the manufacture and equipage of aircraft, in the operation of aircraft within national airspace, across national borders, and within international airspace, and in the provision of aviation services. This oversight is often referred to as “certification,” and the process addresses the approval of operations, procedures, people, aircraft, equipment, and services.

Historically, the Federal Aviation Administration and the respective international regulatory authorities have provided a regulatory framework, which has enhanced safety while simultaneously introducing new products and operational capabilities. However, during the last decade or so, the dynamic growth and globalization of aviation have outpaced the government’s certification policies and regulatory oversight of Communications, Navigation, Surveillance / Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) systems, equipment and procedures. The time and cost of implementing new operational capabilities is increasing and is inhibiting the introduction of safety enhancements. The differences among various countries’ certification processes and criteria add additional time, cost, and effort to obtaining the necessary approvals. Of note, the certification “cycle time” is now longer than the useful life of some components.

This situation has caused many in governments and industry to observe that the current certification process is too lengthy and too costly. In some instances elements of the certification process yield little or no “value added” from either aviation’s or the public’s perspective.

To address these and other challenges, in the Spring of 1998, FAA Administrator Jane Garvey asked RTCA, Inc. to convene a Task Force. The objective of this initiative was to “recommend what changes are needed as well as how and when any recommended changes should be implemented” to make the certification process more responsive to today’s operational environment.

RTCA, Inc. accepted the request and formed the Certification Task Force. This activity was co-chaired by Mr. Anthony Broderick, consultant and former FAA Associate Administrator for Regulation and Certification, and Mr. Ed Stimpson, Vice Chairman of the General Aviation Manufacturers Association. The Task Force convened in June 1998. Participation was open to the public and everyone with an interest in the “aviation certification” process was encouraged to offer his or her views. Over 200 members of the international aviation community participated in the meetings of the Task Force, about 25% of who were members of FAA staff.

It readily became apparent that the review and approval system in place in the United States and throughout the world is very complex, that the various elements of the State’s certification systems are not formally linked and that they often operate independently.