

Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg forced to resign

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Aerospace giant Boeing announced on Monday that Dennis Muilenburg has resigned from his position as president and CEO and will be replaced by current company chairman David Calhoun on January 13, 2020. Muilenburg will forever be remembered as the corporate head who oversaw the development and certification of the deadly 737 Max 8 aircraft, which crashed twice in the last 14 months, killing a total of 346 passengers and crew.

Muilenburg was fired days after the company's Starliner spacecraft failed to reach the proper Earth orbit, a week after Boeing suspended production of the Max 8, and two weeks after ex-employee Ed Pierson testified before the House Transportation Subcommittee that senior corporate management were aware that their flagship jet was unsafe prior to the two disasters. In its press release, Boeing stated that a "change in leadership was necessary to restore confidence in the Company moving forward."

In other words, the airplane manufacturer is casting Muilenburg aside, no doubt with a huge golden parachute to insure his continued loyalty, in an attempt rebrand itself and its best-selling airplane and to minimize the already considerable economic fallout. Since the Max 8 was grounded, Boeing has lost an estimated \$9 billion to suits from families, airlines, unions and others related to the two crashes and the subsequent grounding of the Max 8 in March.

The company's shareholders, however, remember well that the company's stock increased by \$200 billion from when the Max 8 was first announced in 2011 to when it was grounded. They are eager to see such gains continue and view the 346 human lives lost as the cost of doing business.

To be clear, Muilenburg was not removed as punishment for making faulty aircraft. If that had been

the case, he would have been removed after the first crash in October 2018 or after the second this past March. The change in leadership is occurring because for the past nine months, Muilenburg has been unable to convince the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and international aviation safety agencies that the Max 8 is safe to fly.

This period has also exposed the rotten inner workings of the company as a whole, which in turn is a microcosm of the entire capitalist mode of production. Numerous leaks and congressional testimonies have conclusively shown that senior Boeing leadership were aware that they were putting an unsafe aircraft into service. A sample of these include:

- Two requests from manager Ed Pierson to shut down the Max 8 production line in order to correct the "deteriorating factory conditions" at the Renton, Washington, Boeing 737 production facility.

- Boeing's decision to attach newer and bigger engines to a five-decade-old airframe in order to cut costs, speed up production, and rush certification. This resulted in a plane that tended to stall and forced Boeing engineers to install corrective software, the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), which has been determined to be the immediate cause of both crashes.

- The omission of the MCAS from flight training manuals, even though Boeing drastically expanded the scope and power of the software shortly before the Max 8's launch without any notification to the FAA, other regulatory agencies, pilots, airlines or the flying public.

- The admission by Muilenburg himself that he was aware of various red flags around the safety of the MCAS and presented the plane as safe anyway.

All of these are crimes of commission or omission that led directly to the two crashes and the 346 deaths.

To date, however, neither Muilenburg nor his cohorts have been prosecuted or even charged for the murder of hundreds of human beings.

Calhoun is only the first among many who are also culpable. They include Chief Financial Officer Gregory Smith, Executive Vice President John Keating and General Counsel Michael Luttig, who all made a fortune selling stocks in the month before the second crash worth \$9.5 million, \$10.1 million, \$9.5 million and \$6.5 million, respectively.

Other Boeing directors include Admiral Edmund Giambastiani, Admiral John Richardson, former US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley and former US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy (daughter of President John F. Kennedy). Their presence makes clear that there will be no serious attempt to bring charges against Boeing because the company and the US government are not adversaries. Instead, there is a coming together of the giant corporation, the financial aristocracy and the military-intelligence apparatus that defends it.

It also makes clear the role of the FAA, which has also been discredited in the aftermath of the Max 8 crashes. Not only did it not ground the plane after the first crash, it refused to ground it after the second crash until virtually every other authority in the world had done so.

Moreover, congressional testimony revealed that the agency calculated the month after the first crash that the Max 8 was such a faulty aircraft that it would average one fatal crash every two or three years—another 15 large-scale disasters during its expected lifespan—well above what it or any regulatory agency considers safe for a commercial airplane. This report was suppressed for a year and is one of many instances in which the FAA has aided an abetting Boeing's criminal pursuit of private profit at the expense of human lives.



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