Boeing Responds to Al Jazeera English Documentary on 787

Boeing issued the following statement prior to the airing of the television program on Al Jazeera English. The company will not be providing any further comment.

We have not been afforded the opportunity to view the full program, but the promotional trailer and published media reviews suggest that what has been produced is as biased a production as we have seen in some time. It is unfortunate that the producers of this television program appear to have fallen into the trap of distorting facts, relying on claims rejected by courts of law, breathlessly rehashing as “news” stories that have been covered exhaustively in the past and relying on anonymous sources who appear intent only on harming The Boeing Company.

When first contacted by the producers, we accommodated them in order for them to produce a fair and objective report including facilitating factory access, interviews and providing full and open responses to their questions. The 787 is an outstanding airplane delivering value to our customers, but we have also talked candidly in public about its challenging development process. There are no tougher critics about our early performance than Boeing. Unfortunately, the reporting team appears to have chosen to take advantage of our trust and openness and abused their position from the outset by deliberately misrepresenting the purpose, objective and scope of their planned coverage.

This specious production appears to have ignored the factual information provided by Boeing and instead based the majority of its reporting on unnamed sources pursuing their own agendas and a disgruntled former employee engaged in a legal dispute with Boeing. In one instance, the producers resorted to ambush tactics normally seen only in tabloid-style TV news. The anonymous sources the TV program depends on are clearly working with those who seek to harm Boeing and its workers. They appear to have no real interest in truth, safety or better informing the public.

Even on-the-record sources seem to have changed their stories for the producers. For example, former Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA) President Cynthia Cole said this about the 787’s first flight in 2009: “Today’s flight is a testament to the skill, hard work and diligence Boeing employees put in to get this airplane ready to fly,” SPEEA President Cynthia Cole said in a news release. “Boeing returned to engineering, and that’s what made today possible and successful.” Now, she states in the documentary trailer that Boeing “shortchanged the engineering process.”

Instead of an objective view of the 787’s development, viewers and our employees will see a television program that is neither balanced nor accurate in its portrayal of the airplane, our employees, or our suppliers. This program and those involved with it do a disservice to the hard-working men and women of Boeing and our supplier partners who designed and build the 787.

Furthermore, the program presents a false impression of Boeing South Carolina and the quality of work performed there. Airplanes, whether delivered from South Carolina or Washington, meet the highest safety and quality standards that are verified through robust test, verification and inspection processes. Our data of the current 787 fleet in service show parity in the quality and performance of airplanes manufactured in both locations.