

## WILL AMERICAN AIRLINES FLY ON US AIRWAYS WINGS: WORKERS WAIT WITH BATED BREATH



Exasperated by delays and ever-changing reports and alarmed by the prospects of unemployment, three unions, that represent around 55,000 American employees, have announced their support of the merger that could provide them with some semblance of security for their future. American Employees staged a worker's revolt on Friday, to put pressure on the parent company AMR Corp. to let US Airways Group, buy them out of their bankruptcy. The unions on their own cannot persuade a merger, but the employees have proposed labor contracts with US Airways group to influence and hasten their executives' decision. The pressure that the unions are applying is a clear signal that they are fed up and are actually seeking an alternative. They are sick and tired of the constant compromises, discussions, the dithering and the bickering and washing off dirty linen in public. The Airlines inability to come out of its losses and continual shrinking of its networks has blown into a full rebellion that only a merger will quell. US Airways, has been in constant touch with bankers, finances and advisors, chalking out how best to acquire the bankrupt airline. Acquiring it, will be a masterstroke, for it would make it the biggest airline in America and augment its own network and consolidate its position as the leading airline of the country. Analysts say, a merger would generate for US Airways \$1.5 billion in revenue gains and cost savings each year. US Airways CEO Doug Parker, in a letter to his employees wrote, that a "total of 48,000 pilots, flight attendants, and mechanics at AMR "have agreed to terms that would govern collective bargaining agreements for their members at the merged airline." Parker in his letter clarified, that the proposed buyout, if it went through, would be advantageous to the workers. As against American's statement that they would have to lay off 13,000 jobs, later raising it to 14,200, the merger would mean that only 6,800 unionized workers would lose their jobs. American workers are very pleased with the way their negotiations with US Airways are going on. Allied Pilots Association president Dave Bates wrote, "Working with US Airways, APA was able to achieve in just over a week far more than we had been able to achieve in more than five years of trying to bargain with AMR management. Our interaction with US Airways was in stark contrast to what we have been experiencing with AMR." AMR is under bankruptcy-protection and is seeking concessions from union members. Till now it has refused to give in to US Airways overtures. It says that it will trim its union expenses by \$1.25 billion a year through annulling contracts. A spokesman for the airlines said Sunday, "We are confident that our business plan provides for real growth and real opportunity for our employees, especially for our pilots—opportunities that are not based on hollow promises with no foundation in reality." US Airline Pilot Association, which represents both groups, said on Friday that it was buoyed by US airways Chief Executive Doug Parker's declaration that all workers would receive higher wages and compensation. Capt. James Ray, a union spokesman said, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander. There has to be an upside for the pilots at US Airways.