



# Sen. John McCain:

## CONCENTRATING ON CONCENTRATION

**AAAE:** What are your top priorities as ranking Republican on the aviation subcommittee?

**Sen. McCain:** One thing about aviation issues is that they affect so many Americans. They can be very high-visibility topics, such as airport security, which is a continuing problem, or they can be less visible issues that have long-term impact, such as concentration of the airlines, which can lead to de facto re-regulation.

So if I had to prioritize, I would probably say that the long-term effect of airline concentration is perhaps the most challenging issue in the future. The committee has been looking at this issue and is waiting for the next General Accounting Office (GAO) report on hub concentration.

**AAAE:** You mentioned security, which is obviously a top concern for airports. AAAE believes that the Defense Department (DOD) is better suited to fight the terrorism battle than are the airports and airlines. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, do you think DOD has some reserves to carry on the battle against terrorists?

**McCain:** Yes. I have proposed an amendment on this year's DOD authorization bill that will order DOD to do a study on airport security, on ways we can utilize defense technology to enhance secu-



Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) during interview with *Airport Magazine* Editor Joan Lowden

rity and avoid redundancy. There is no sense in reinventing the wheel in areas where DOD is already involved. If the department has developed anti-terrorist capabilities, we should be using them.

**AAAE:** Do you have any ideas on how the U.S. should solve its capacity problems?

**McCain:** Obviously, the long-term answer is more runways and places to land. In fact, that is the long-term solution to most of the problems we have. We would not have a problem with slots if we had enough places to land. We would not have a problem with hub concentration if we had enough airports. You would not have a problem with congested Terminal Control Areas if we had more airports.

But, in my view, that is not going to happen any time soon. The Denver project is the first since Dallas/Fort Worth. I believe that we in Arizona very badly need to look carefully at a metro-re-

gional jetport, one that is international in nature. I think other metropolitan areas have a need for these so-called wayports.

**AAAE:** So you favor wayports?

**McCain:** Absolutely. We are going to have to build them, particularly those of us that are next to the West Coast, because California is clearly becoming saturated, as is the East Coast.

**AAAE:** How many new airports do you think are needed in the U.S.?

**McCain:** History shows that areas prosper economically that are at transportation hubs, whether they be railroads, highways or airports. When we see what has happened at Atlanta and D/FW, where major airports were built, the impact they had on the surrounding communities has been phenomenal. State and local leaders should learn that airports have an enormous impact on their economy.

When you ask how many more we will need, I would suggest to you that we need far more than we can possibly contemplate building. I could see one in Utah, I could see one in Arizona, one in Denver. I understand Ross Perot is involved in one outside Dallas. I see then that as soon as these hubs are built, places like Charlotte and Raleigh/Durham are at capacity in such a