just a matter of putting it into the computer; it is a matter of doing the inspection.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you. Over-reliance on system rather than people doing inspections, putting their nose into the work. It is not a matter of going around and demeaning, saying, well, we don't need people going around kicking tires and putting hands on fuselage. That is demeaning of the role of inspector. And you are right about the degree and extent of training.

I will withhold at this point.

Mr. Petri.

Mr. PETRI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am interested in getting a sense of this. It is a very traumatic thing for the agency and for the individuals involved. Is it in part a difference of philosophy, of trying to do things completely by the book, when the book may be outdated, as opposed to creating an ethos of safety and working together for a common end? Is this underlying this at all, a difference in sort of management philosophy here, or is it malfeasance by an individual? I don't know who would like to testify to that. Mr. Mills, you would be in a position, I think.

Mr. MILLS. It is my opinion that there is a necessity that is clear to Washington Headquarters that, based on the ever-increasing airline industry and the failure of the FAA oversight capability to keep up with that, some mechanism needs to be put in place in order to allow the airlines to take a bigger role in their oversight, and I believe that is why ATOS was created, because we simply can't be everywhere to do everything as inspectors.

I do not believe any of the people who run the FAA are opposed to regulatory enforcement. I think perhaps that we may have gone too far toward considering airlines as customers and being customer-friendly. But in an effort to be everywhere and do everything we can, I believe that is why this model was created.

And there are different schools of thought within the FAA. There is the old school of thought that says enforce the regulations and make life difficult for those operators who don't comply with them, and the school of thought that was represented by the Principal Maintenance Inspector was that this was outdated and we needed to secure the cooperation of the operators in order to have some degree of effectivity in our oversight.

In my view, ATOS needs to be a tool. We need to surveill based on risk, but we also can't have the advice that it is the be-all and end-all. I know of some inspectors who believe that, when they are sent out and assigned a task under ATOS, that they can't look at anything else but what they are specifically assigned according to the risk.

There is also the element that it is easy to answer a question yes when a question is raised by ATOS as to whether an airline has a specific thing that it is supposed to have, and it is sometimes hard to say no because it creates a great deal of extra paperwork and it often causes the carriers to display some difficulty with the FAA. So inspectors are human beings; some of them respond poorly to that. I think the model may need to be revised.

Mr. PETRI. Let me just say it clearly is a management problem if you have honest and very hard-working, able inspectors who question the integrity of the framework in which they are oper-

ating, not entirely, but in some respects here, and that is not healthy. If there may be differences in philosophy, then that is management's job to work with people so that they understand what that is and have confidence in it; and if there are differences, that they are treated and dealt with, rather than intimidating people or pushing them under the counter, and this seems to be one of the issues here.

Mr. MILLS. It is a training issue, largely, I believe.

Mr. OBERSTAR. We have a vote in progress, but there is time for further questions, and I will turn to Mr. Costello.

Mr. COSTELLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A question for all of our witnesses. Do any of you have evidence or reason to believe that the issues that have occurred at this CMO is occurring in other parts of the Country? Is this widespread or is it unique to this CMO? Mr. Boutris?

Mr. BOUTRIS. Well, sir, I cannot speak for the other offices because I don't have any experience with the other offices, but the observation that somebody can make, including our CMO, is if our ATOS databases are doing the job they are supposed to do, why do we have all these hundreds of airplanes taken out of service? In my opinion and belief—and I have lived it—management can control the outcome of the ATOS database.

If you are a principal and you send me out to do the job, I will come back with at least several noes, because no airline has all the procedures they are required to be there. So if I came back and put no in the database, then you, as a Principal, will have to do a risk analysis; you will have some red on your dashboard and you have to take action. If you send Inspector B out that is going to give you all the yeses, you can sit back and say my dashboard looks good. So you can manipulate the system and by that have the results you want. And I believe that what I am stating is the result, when you see all these airlines grounding airplanes, they are under ATOS also. Shouldn't the Principal have something on his dashboard saying, hey, we have something wrong here?

Mr. COSTELLO. The other members of the panel, do you have either evidence or reason to believe that this is happening at other CMOs? No?

Mr. COTTI. Mr. Costello, ATOS, or the Air Transportation Oversight System, is based on system safety principles, and those principles dictate that, in order to have appropriate safety measures in place or to have an appropriate level of safety, that you have to have controls in place and that, more than anything, you have to factor out the human being as much as possible from the equation because that is where a lot of the errors occur.

I think, in response to your question, what happened at the Southwest CMO, from my perspective, was unique in that it was so out of line—and I have been to a number of different offices around the Country—it certainly was unique, and it was gross as compared to some of the things I have seen elsewhere. But thinking in terms of system safety and the human element, this could have occurred in any office, because our current design is still pretty heavily dependent on the human being.