

Qatar Airways open to cooperation with Delta Air Lines

Interview: Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker on competition and cooperation with the U.S. airlines, the future of the Airbus A380 and his view on the Boeing 797.

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, May 15, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker plans to grow his airline's business despite a heavy loss in the last fiscal year - but not by acquiring more Airbus A380s. That plan would only change should Airbus offer a product that is 15 to 20 percent more efficient than the current version, the manager said in an exclusive interview with the aviation newssite [aeroTELEGRAPH](http://aerotelegraph.com). "They are currently offering changes that would bring an improvement of 4 to 5 percent. This is not enough."

There has also been a shift in Qatar's single-aisle-strategy. Instead of a mix of A320 Neo and A321 Neo Qatar now only holds pending orders for the A321 Neo - some of which will be converted to orders for the A321 LR. "We are still looking at how many, but it will be between 10 and 15." At the moment, Al Baker is not interested in a possible alternative from Boeing, should the US-manufacturer decide to build a new jet that has been dubbed the 797. He has not been contacted about that.

Al Baker says he gets a lot of requests from airports who "ask us to serve their destination." Also many U.S. airports are among those who sent requests. Al Baker is open to cooperation in America. "Delta will at some point realize that we can help them. We are flying to their hub Atlanta and there is an opportunity to work together there."

Despite the blockade by neighbouring states Al Baker states that Qatar has no overcapacity. "As you can see when you look out of my office window, we are not parking any airplanes like other airlines might have to do", said Al Baker, referring to his gulf competitor Emirates. Despite that, his airline provides British Airways wet-leased aircraft to help with bottlenecks due to problems with BA's Dreamliners. "For that, we will reduce capacities in certain markets. I would not do this for any (other) airline." Qatar Airways is the biggest shareholder of BA parent IAG.

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