

# Exhibition World

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# Promoting partnerships over politics

US organiser Kallman Worldwide's experience at 2017's Paris Air Show reminds us that national pavilions are an invitation to global cooperation

- Words: Tom Kallman, president and CEO, Kallman Worldwide (pictured right with French president Macron)

I just returned from the Paris Air Show, where it seemed the question on everyone's mind was, "What's new in your country?"

Depending where you're from, and where you stand, you could easily mistake that as a political statement.

Since the last Salon du Bourget in 2015, there have been more than 50 presidential elections around the world. Add parliamentary or legislative contests, appointed posts and related staff turnover, and there's a lot of 'new' happening politically in most of our countries.

Considering the nature and outcomes of some of those elections — notably in the United Kingdom, France, South Korea, the Philippines and the United States — you could even be forgiven for hearing a tinge of exhaustion in the question. For some, the pace of change has been non-stop.

From Kallman Worldwide's perspective (organising US exhibitors at international events since 1963, and at Le Bourget since 1995), the coincidence of the show with political shifts in one direction or another carried a bit of déjà vu.

Over the past 22 years the UK has had five prime ministers, France and the US have each had four presidents, South Korea, six and the Philippines, five. Shifts happen.

Over the same period, global military

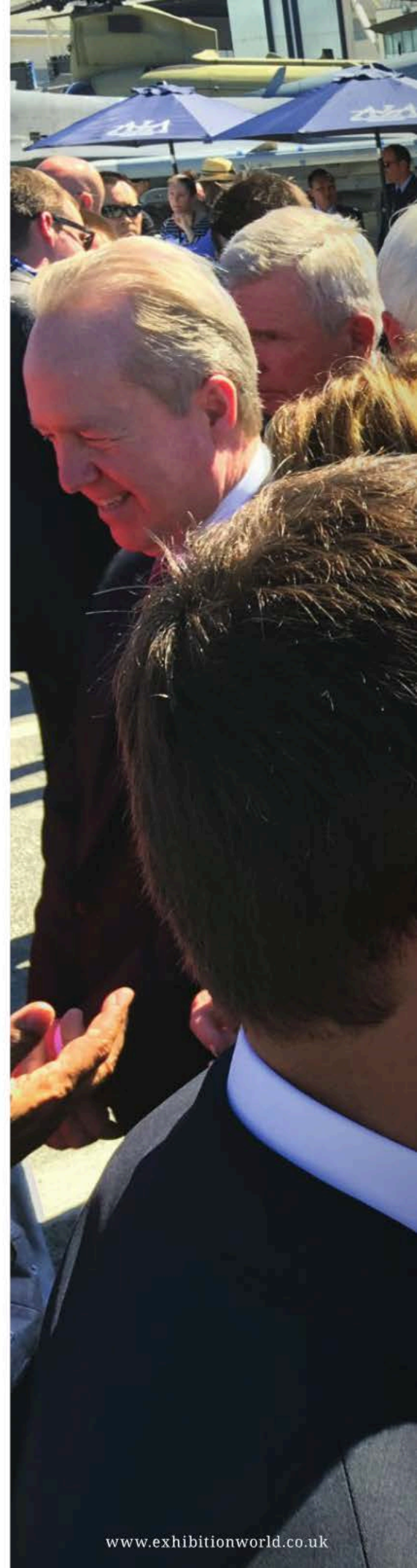
spending has grown from US\$1tn to nearly \$1.7tn, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Deloitte says commercial aircraft production increased 120.5 per cent since 1996 to keep pace with passenger and freight demand.

In other words, palace intrigue may be a perennial conversation starter at the Paris Air Show, but it's not the conversation: the business of Le Bourget would appear to be politics-proof, or at least agnostic.

Thus the question — and more so, the answer — is precisely why America and 26 other countries presented national pavilions this year, and it has nothing to do with politics.

National pavilions are a patriotic expression of collective industry pride, presented in the spirit of global partnership. From nation to nation, they're an invitation: "Come see our country's new equipment, products and services. Show us yours. Let's work together."

National pavilions are also practical. They give participating exhibitors — especially first-time small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) — instant equity and scale. That's why, as emerging economies flex their industry muscles in global supply chains, we're seeing an increase in the number of national pavilions and exhibitors »







**“  
Now more  
than ever, we  
all share in  
each other’s  
successes  
”**





participating in them around the world.

Of the 2,300-plus exhibitors from nearly 50 countries participating in the 2017 Paris Air Show, organisers report more than 1,300 — 55 per cent — exhibited in a national pavilion.

The largest national contingent at the show, besides France, was the US, with more than 350 exhibitors. Nearly 70 per cent — 240-plus — exhibited in the new 4,200-plus sqm “USA Partnership Pavilion,” the centerpiece of the American effort, organised by our company in coordination with numerous government agencies, including the Departments of Commerce, Defense and State.

Our Pavilion exhibitors represented 32 states, including 19 state pavilions. More than 60 per cent were SMEs, 78 were first-time Paris exhibitors and all were there to initiate or strengthen connections that will create new jobs back home by growing exports and/or recruiting overseas partners to establish or participate in US-based operations.

This was Kallman’s 12th consecutive Paris Air Show, the first organising under the

‘Partnership’ banner to communicate that, now more than ever, we all share in each other’s successes. Beyond the dollar value of buy-sell transactions, collaboration and teamwork are the preferred currencies of the global marketplace.

To punctuate the message, the Pavilion celebrated “a century of French and American partnership.” It is a relationship that exemplifies the spirit of bilateral cooperation promoted at Le Bourget since the inaugural show in 1909.

Weeks before the show, inspired by the new French president Emmanuel Macron’s post-election outreach to American industry, particularly science and engineering professions, I invited him to be the first French president to ever tour our Pavilion. He graciously honored that request by visiting US public- and private-sector industry leaders on opening day. Our group included transportation secretary Elaine Chao, US Air Forces Europe and Air Forces Africa commander, general Tod Wolters; Lockheed Martin chairwoman, president

and CEO Marillyn Hewson; Raytheon chairman and CEO Tom Kennedy and Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) CEO David Melcher.

The ‘century of partnership’ was also the topic of a keynote conversation between representatives of AIA and its French counterpart, GIFAS, in our on-site FORUM presentation stage.

Acknowledging the unique bond between French and American aviators, Paris Air Show chairman, Emeric d’Arcimoles, said: “Since the days of the Wright brothers and Blériot, France and the United States have shared a proud history, healthy competition and mutual respect for each other’s pioneering accomplishments in flight.”

Indeed, from OEMs to SMEs, USA Partnership Pavilion exhibitors share those values with France and beyond. Setting politics aside, America’s collective presence at trade events internationally affirms our nation’s commitment to global partnerships that further common business interests and strengthen democratic alliances. **EW**