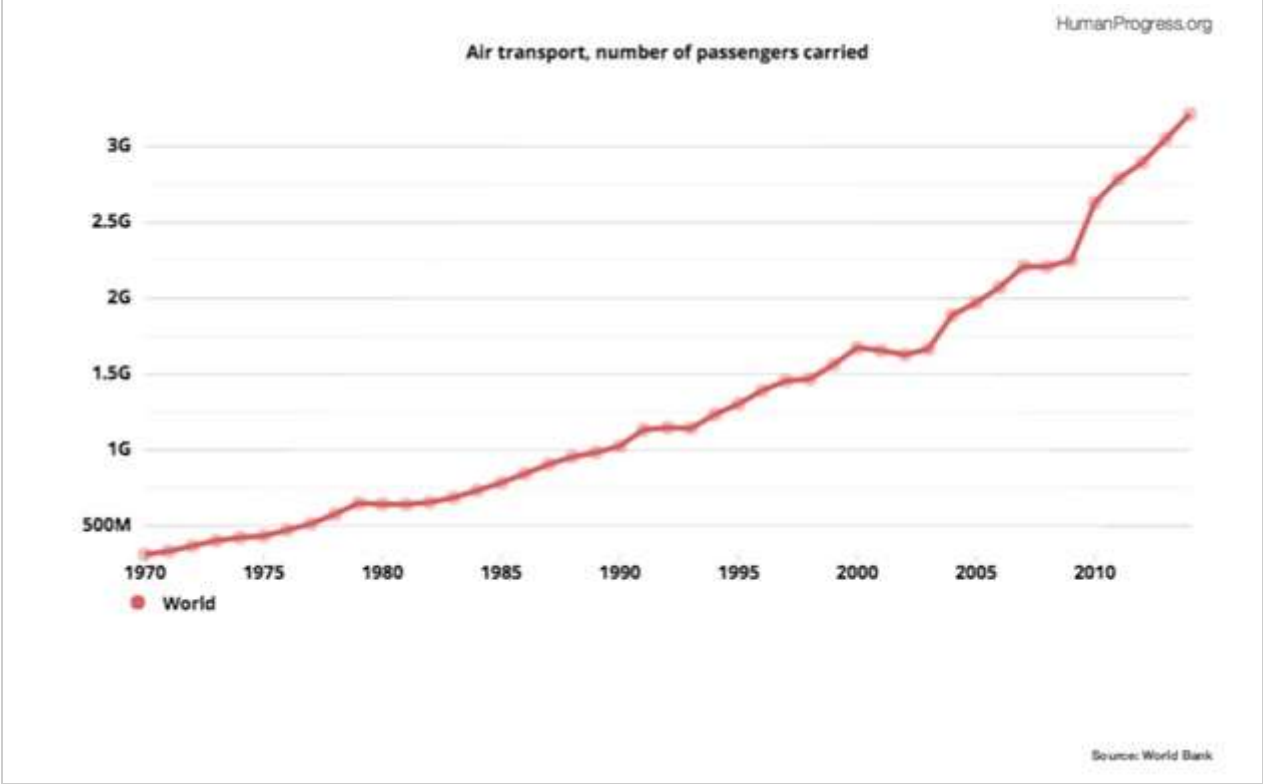# Air Travel Getting Safer, Cheaper

Marian Tupy

December 27, 2016

Last time I wrote about airline safety was in November 2015, when a Russian airliner **crashed** in the Sinai Peninsula. Roughly a year later, another Russian plane has **gone down**—this time into the Black Sea. All 92 people on board, including many members of a famed Red Army Choir, were killed. The safety record of Russian-made and Russian-operated planes such as the **TU-154,** which was involved in this latest accident, is relatively poor. That said, things were much **worse** under communism, when the state-run Aeroflot was notoriously **cavalier** with the lives of its crew and passengers. According to the Aircraft Crashes Record Office, "8,231 passengers have died in Aeroflot crashes. Air France is next on its list, with 1,783, followed by Pan Am (1,645), American (1,442), United (1,211) and TWA (1,077)."

Mercifully, air travel overall is getting safer. Between a high point in 1972 and a low point in 2015, the total number of airline fatalities declined from 2,373 to 186—a reduction of 92 percent. Roughly over the same time period (1970-2014), the number of passengers carried globally increased from 310 million to 3.2 billion. Put differently, the chances of dying in an air crash declined from 1 in 210,000 in 1970 to 1 in 4.63 million in 2014. Today, flying is not only safer, but also cheaper. In the United States for example, average domestic round trip airfare **fell** from $607 in 1979 (the year of deregulation) to $377 in 2014 (both figures are in 2014 U.S. dollars). Between 1990 and 2013, the average international round-trip airfare **fell** from $1,248 to $1,175 (2013 U.S. dollars). In both cases, the average number of miles flown per trip has increased.

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Fatal airliner hull-loss accident fatalities, total number

- World
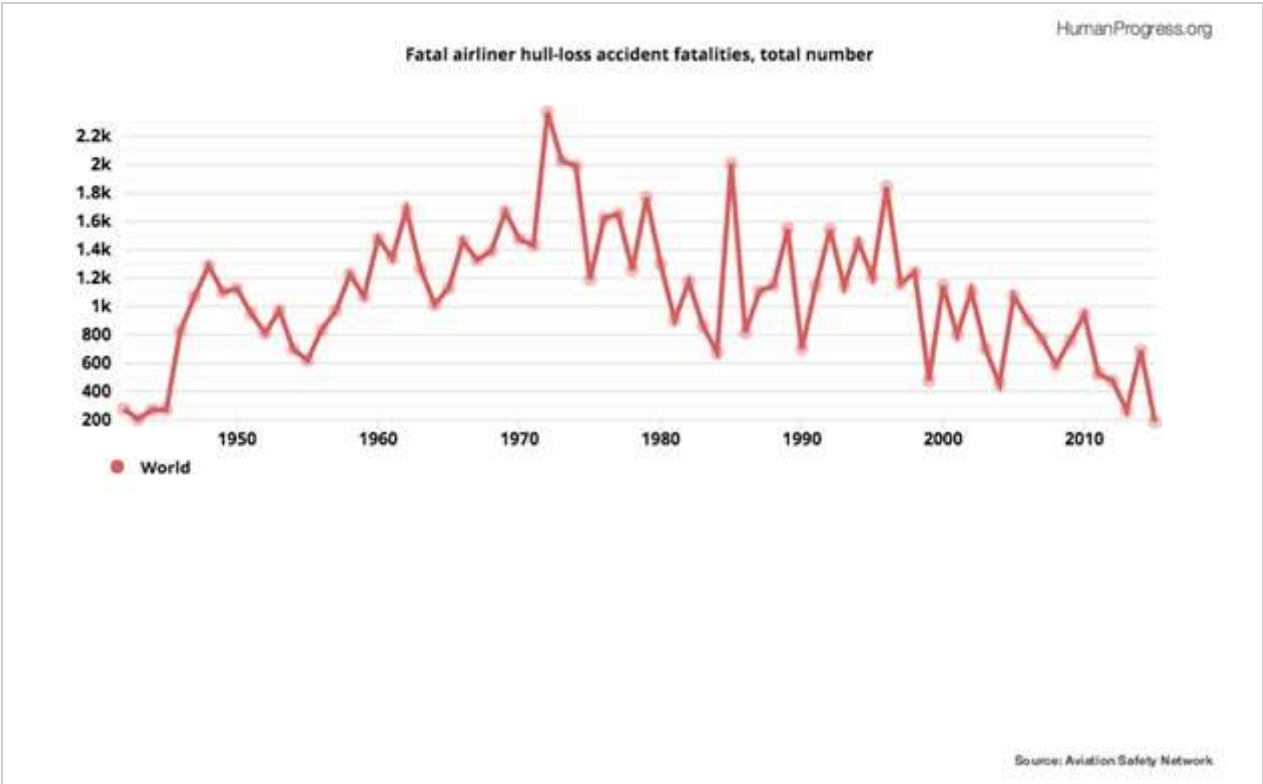
Things are getting better, in other words, but chose your airline carefully

Air transport, number of passengers carried

- World

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