

Document 1850

[21850001]

Japan Air Lines , Lufthansa German Airlines and Air France reportedly plan to form an international air-freight company this year , a move that could further consolidate the industry .

[21850002]

Japanese newspaper Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported that the three giants plan to integrate their cargo computers and ground-cargo and air-cargo systems .

[21850003]

They reportedly will invest a total of 20 billion yen ( \$ 140 million ) in the venture , whose headquarters would be in France or West Germany .

[21850004]

The action follows Federal Express Corp. 's acquisition of Flying Tiger Line Inc. in August .

[21850005]

After that , " it would make sense for airlines to talk about doing things jointly , " said Cotton Daly , director of cargo services for New York consulting firm Simat , Hellesen & Eichner Inc .

[21850006]

Mr. Daly said such discussions are motivated by the competitive threat posed by Federal Express , United Parcel Service of America Inc. and other fast-growing air-freight companies .

[21850007]

Many airlines are talking about cargo ventures , and there have been rumors about such a tie between JAL and European airlines .

[21850008]

In Tokyo , a JAL spokesman said he could n't confirm or deny the latest Japanese report .

[21850009]

But he said JAL is talking to Lufthansa and Air France about some sort of cargo venture .

[21850010]

" It is just one of a number of strategies JAL has embarked upon to come to terms with the situation in Europe after 1992 , " the deadline for ending trade barriers in the EC , he said .

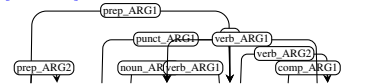
[21850011]

In Frankfurt , a Lufthansa spokesman confirmed talks are under way , but declined to comment .

[21850012]

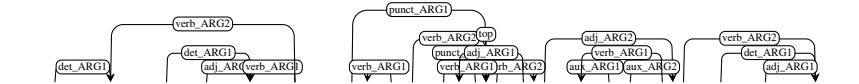
A Lufthansa spokeswoman in Tokyo said the head of Lufthansa 's cargo operations had been in Tokyo last week for talks with JAL .

[21850013]



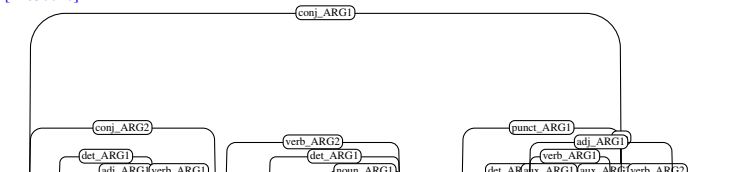
In Paris, Air France declined to comment.

[21850015]



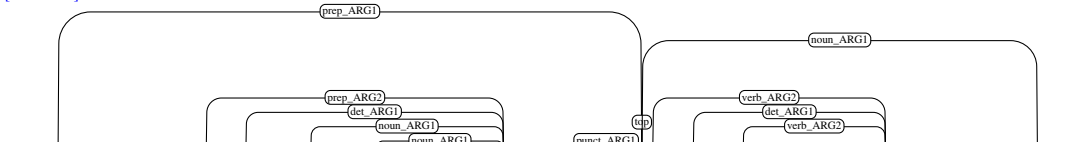
Whatever accord the three carriers reach , he said , he is skeptical it would create a separate airline .

[21850016]



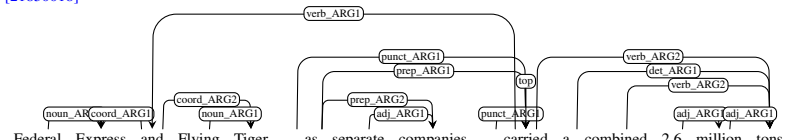
If the three companies pool their air-freight businesses, their clout would be considerable.

[21850017]



According to figures from the International Air Transport Association, they carried a combined 1.8 million tons of freight last year

[21850018]

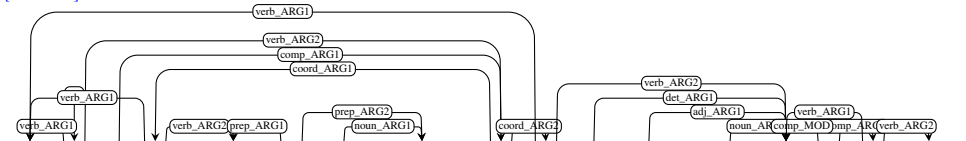
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[21850019]



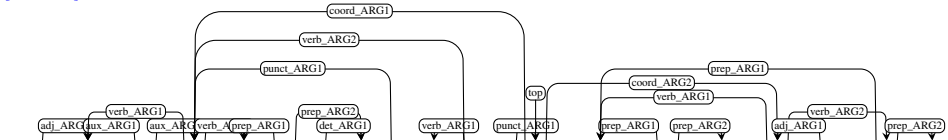
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[21850020]



They plan to increase cooperation in freight ground-handling and create a world-wide computer system to process cargo.

[21850021]



Other airlines would have access to the system, they said, and negotiations with partners were already under way

[21850022]



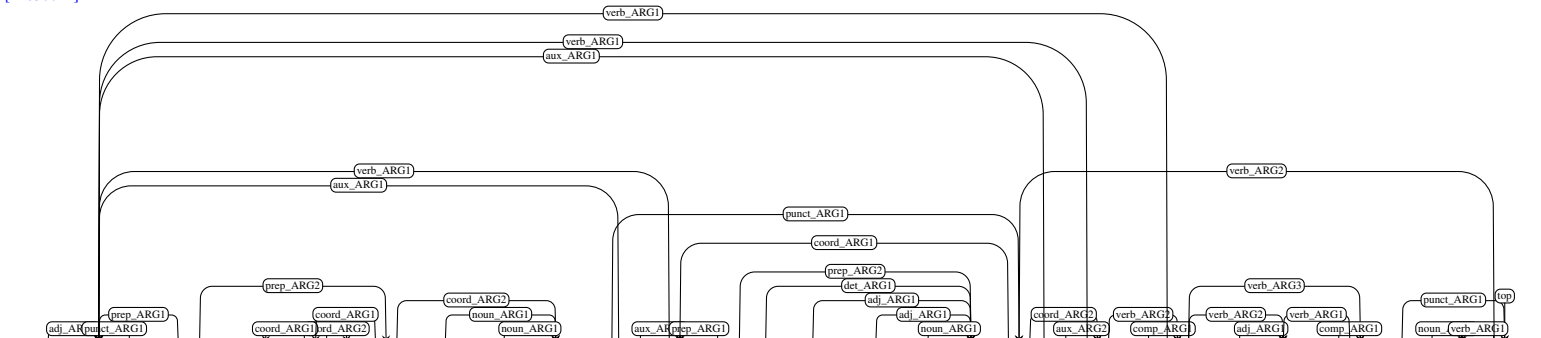
Both European airlines operate extensive fleets of Boeing 747 freighters and 747 Combi's, aircraft that carry both freight and passengers on the main deck.

[21850023]



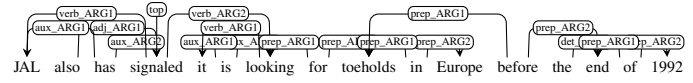
(21850024)

[21850024]



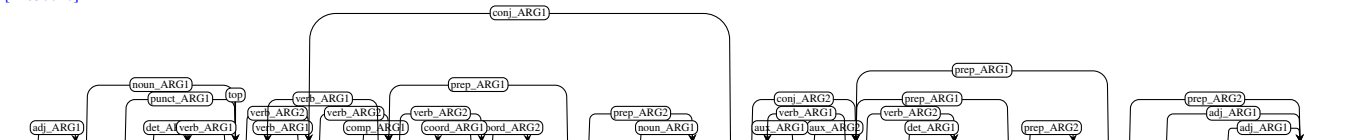
Several airlines , including Lufthansa , JAL and Cathay Pacific Airways , are working on a so-called global cargo system and are trying to attract other carriers to join , Mr. Daly said .

[21850025]



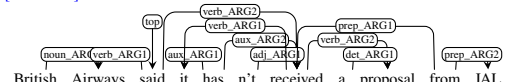
[21850026]

[21850026]



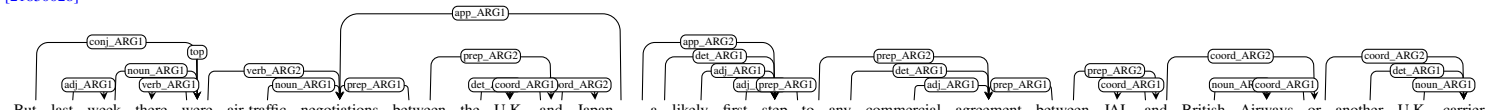
Last month, the carrier said it wanted to lease crews and planes from British Airways so it could funnel its passengers from London to other European destinations.

[21850027]



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[21850028]



But this week there were no trade negotiations between the U.K. and Japan, a nearly first step to any commercial agreement between the British Airways of another U.K. carrier.