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The call for necessary changes to Civil Aviation Safety Standards

An Introduction to in-operable emergency exit doors

Yesterday's emergency with the Qantas A380 is not the first. I have more than one year ago communicated concerns in respect to the A380 to various airline regulatory authorities.

I have highlighted my concerns regarding the A380 below in this document.

It may be said that a breach of fiduciary duty that leads to negligence can be viewed as a breach of criminal law. A breach of such fiduciary duty is evident here and now in respect to the Rolls Royce engines on the A380. The entire consortium connected with the project has neglected to consider passenger safety, and rather focused on corporate profits.

In most western societies the fundamental ideology of any law is its objective to protect life and property from some type of deviant behaviour. It is the trust in this philosophy which governs the common sense of what is the 'norm'. As such it should be a given that a norm is considered a pre-emptive measure or pro-active measures in matters pertaining to exercising safety behaviour that should be without question and expected by airline passengers?

On Sunday 27th September 2009 SA Flight SQ333 took off from Paris to Singapore departing around 25 minutes behind schedule. Around 2 & 1/2 hours after take-off the Captain of the new A380 advised passengers that the plane had developed engine problems and thus was it was decided to return to Paris.

Safety issues concerning the said flight were noticeable prior to takeoff. On the upper deck of the aircraft just behind the left hand side wing an emergency had been tapped off and a

signed depicted its inability to be operated.

I confirmed directly with a Singapore A380 Technician later that the in-operable emergency door had already been in-operable on the aircraft on its previous flight from Singapore, but had not been repaired.

In my opinion safety standards should never be compromised.

As a passenger myself on Flight SQ333 along with other passengers I had reported seeing a disturbing short burst of smoke coming from the front of right hand side wing immediately seconds after takeoff. The burst of smoke was small and lasted only a few seconds. Immediately following this discharge of smoke was the obvious periodical shaking of the plane from left to right. Passengers who were frequent travellers confirmed that the shaking of the aircraft could not be confused with turbulence. It was describe more a rattling of the fuselage. In addition to this passenger stated that the brief discharge of grey smoke could not have been confused with the condensation sling of the front of the wing. It had been noticed that the discharge had come from within part of the front of the wing. The suspicion was there that the flight crew continued with the journey for a further two hours when they knew that the plane was experiencing engine failure immediately after takeoff.

I later confirmed by the same Singapore Airlines Engineer who advised that the in-operable emergency door on flight SQ333 had already been in-operable prior to its previous flight. The source confirmed to me that the SQ333 flight crew confirmed that the engine failure was evident immediately after / during or within minutes after takeoff.

I myself can confirm that the Captain advised passengers that the plane was returning to Paris, I had pointed out to an in flight cabin crew member that there were coloured rings visibly out of place on the right hand side wing. The cabin crew attendant returned with one of the flight crew who looked at the right hand side wing and advised his co worker that the red rings were seals commonly placed where they were, but he added that he noticed that the flaps were not working properly.

Now it is right to conclude that an in-operable emergency door cannot not or highly unlikely would cause the engine failure or any other mechanical problems the aircraft might have or did experience during the flight. However the significance is clear. The safety of the passengers on flight SQ333 was now further compromised due to the mechanical problems.

Flight SQ333 did make it safety some two hours and twenty so minutes later. However the passengers all noted three major things upon landing. That the landing runway was guarded by emergency rescue deployment, such as fire trucks and so on. That the plane was seriously under adverse operating pressure due to the engine mechanical failure, and that the emergency door was in-operable.

The question remains, why Singapore Airlines would assume such a risk, to takeoff with 2 inoperable emergency doors. What if there were complications upon the emergency landing and thus passengers being needed to be evacuated. Then that one in-operable emergency door would have certainly been the cause of panic and possible loss of life. In this day and age that is an unacceptable assumption of risk.

There are many horror stories already in existence about terrible flights which ended in disas

or close calls. The confidence in the new A380 is already diminished. Even if not, additional precaution on flights should at all times be exercised, no matter what.

The A380 is a new aircraft which has had numerous problems which could and may even in future require the aircraft to make emergency landings. Some examples are clearly evident in following press articles.

My concern is, that yesterday's engine problem on the A380 is not the first, I had written Singapore Airlines, Air safety regulator bodies and also the manufacturers, all who choose to that the incident did not warrant an investigation. How wrong they are. Their combined acts criminally negligent. Maybe now with the news coverage they will do what needs to be done MAINTAIN SAFETY FIRST and rely on profits secondly.

Spiegel Online (16th March 2009). Loss of confidence in the A380 by Emirate Airlines
<http://www.spiegel.de/international/business/0,1518,613773,00.html>

ABC Online (20th February 2008) Singapore Airlines cancels A380 Airbus Flight to Sydney because a fuel pump was defective.
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/20/2167250.htm>

Xinhua News Agency (February 11, 2008) Technical problem with its emergency evacuation chute
<http://www.china.org.cn/english/business/242483.htm>

Sydney Morning Herald Online (27th March 2008) A380 from Sydney to Singapore experienced brake failure. An previous month there was a problem with electrical relay powering the pump, which also prompted the cancellation of a flight
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/news/mechanical-defect-grounds-singapore-a380/2008/03/27/1206207260765.htm>

Seattle Times Online (5th October 2005)
http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/boeingaerospace/2002534201_airbuswhistleblower02.html

A former employee turned whistle-blower told European aviation authorities that there was a problem with a computer chip on the Airbus A380. The flaws in a microprocessor could cause the valves that maintain cabin pressure on the A380 to accidentally open during flight, allowing oxygen to leak out so rapidly that everyone aboard could lose consciousness within seconds.

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