

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP AIR NAVIGATION SERVICES

WHAT DO WE OWE THE PAYING PASSENGER ?

by
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ANSA

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Ladies and Gentlemen!

My name is Fischer.

I represent ANSA.

ANSA stands for International Advisory Group Air Navigation Services.

We are no manufacturers.

Therefore, this is not a technical presentation.

I myself am an ATC consultant, an air traffic controller and a private pilot.

Now, it is a known fact that human beings come in different versions.

For the sake of my presentation, please consider yourselves as being air transportation providers; that means airline managers, civil aviation directors, airport operators, air traffic controllers, pilots, and the like.

I myself will be the paying passenger.

Why ?

Because the passengers are part of the air transportation system.

But they are an active part of it only for the moment, when they pay for their ticket.

Thereafter they are condemned to be passive.

Some of them guess that there is a transportation system and believe in its proper functioning at all times and therefore relax.

Others do not and are often frightened.

Travelling by air since 1957, I belong to the latter group.

Now, what do all of you do to justify the good believe and what do you owe me, the paying passenger?

The answer is simple, RESPECT !

But all too often, I, as a paying passenger, lack your respect.

This respect, that to me, is pronounced as SAFE TRANSPORT.

Let me tell you what I think you owe me for the fare that I paid; my fare, which creates the demand for all your professions and which pays for most of your salaries.

You owe me safe transport from place A to place B at all times, because the safety of my life totally depends upon your proper functioning.

And I, therefore, define SAFE TRANSPORT as

- the transportation of my body in an aircraft
- that has been certified to be and is airworthy
- that is being maintained and operated on the ground and in the air
in accordance with all existing national and international regulations
of ICAO and of the various national authorities
whose territories are overflowed
- that is being operated in controlled airspace under air traffic control service
which means standard separation from other aircraft
without endangering my life
- and all of that at all times !

From my point of view, this should not be difficult.

It should be normal and not worth mentioning, because I am not looking for adventure.

ANYTHING ELSE, TO ME, IS NOT SAFE TRANSPORT !

Let me give you a few facts and thoughts.

The passenger of today does not plainly believe a pilot, who always blames ATC for his departure delay.

Passengers nowadays are much more interested in reaching their destination safely, than in free champagne onboard or the outside air temperature. It always seems to be minus 56 degrees anyhow.

He, however, is becoming very interested in a pilot's traffic information radio broadcast on another possibly conflicting flight while over Africa and in his airplane's flight through uncontrolled airspace.

He also does not want to be endangered by ad hoc provisions of air traffic control service by the military to his civil flight in times of industrial unrest and strike.

Further, I refuse to believe in the aircraft industry's and the aviation authorities reluctant attitude on installing an urgency VHF radio override receiver in every aircraft, so that also my aircraft can be reached by controllers everywhere and at any time in transmitting on 121,5 MHz or another common frequency.

At the same time, I am more than astonished about the lack of air/ground and ground/ground communication equipment in many countries. If we cannot talk to each other, how shall we co-ordinate our intentions at 500 to 800 miles per hour ?

The same applies to so-called language barriers between controllers or between controllers and pilots. Simply fire the incapable and hire the capable, and pay them appropriately.

I am also not interested at all in airline company regulations that allow the conduct of a flight in marginal conditions and I consider it very risky by airlines and aviation authorities to allow visual or VMC approaches on IFR flights at destination, because all too often I can see the uncoordinated pile-up of IFR flights on final approach, fighting for airspace to manoeuvre.

And then, when I listen to the daily airline propaganda of super-safe flying, I cannot believe that the use of standard ATC radiotelephony phraseology was not mandatory for pilots for over 40 years, the world over.

I doubt the completeness and correctness of many preflight preparations due to the often lacking provision of up-to-date, correct and conclusive aeronautical information to aircrews by aviation authorities.

And I also do not believe in the unsure separation between known aircraft only, under the provision of air traffic advisory or flight information service. I believe in air traffic control service to IFR flights in positive controlled airspace only. TIBA is a four letter word to me.

I therefore ask all of you to rather delay me, than to endanger my safe flight.

Believe me, in telling you all this, I see the requirement for the existence of controller and pilot associations in all countries of this world, because they at least guarantee the

publication of problems to be solved; because it is a duty of the professional organisations to fight for required improvements; and I shall support you!

The traveller, nowadays, is aware of the fact that he moves through constantly changing environments during the course of only one flight, different environments of culture, religion, mentality, motivation, welfare respectively poverty, capacity, capability and technology, in crossing national borders almost hourly.

This traveller, therefore, often takes it for granted that his international flight is being handled in a uniform manner according to international standards by ATC units on the ground, who are equally capable than his proficient flight crew.

The fact is, there is no uniform application of agreed ATC standards; and as we all know, the innocent passenger's impression is a big lie.

This is why I also wish to see the control of flights in international airspace be performed by internationally manned multi-national ATC units; be it ICAO, EUROCONTROL, or whoever. I then would feel much more comfortable, because this has the good smell of forced co-ordination, regulation and standardisation.

And finally, I hate pilot / controller controversies, because to me,

YOU ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT.

Air transportation providers, for whatever reasons you might have for any improper functioning, I, the paying passenger, do not care, because you and I, as insiders, know of your obligation and of many more other ways of unsafe air transport.

I, the paying passenger, also do not care, who of you is to blame for incidents and accidents:

NO, I just do not want them to happen. And I only do care that all of you do your best to avoid them. And the utmost, to my understanding, still it not being done.

I AM ONE OUT OF MANY MILLION. And as a paying passenger I insist on better treatment safety-wise. Remember some of the accidents of the past that were caused by "Human Failure":

- over the Grand Canyon, due to lack of rules and regulations,
- on Mount Erebus, due to wrong navigation,
- at Zagreb, due to managerial system failure and controller misconduct,
- at Nantes, due to military presumption,
- at Tenerife and Madrid, in fog and due to pilot error,
- at Sakhalin, due to lack of communication and co-ordination,
- at Tenerife North and Zürich due to pilot ignorance
- near Bombay due to language problems
- at Milano, San Diego, and many other places in the world, including
- Überlingen due to disobedience of basic ATC operating rules and procedures
- and so on and so on

The real list seems almost endless to me, will get longer and longer and I am scared.

And still, flight safety records are being made up by passenger kilometres flown versus the number of accidents, instead of the number of flights versus operational incidents.

Therefore, please remember that I am not only a blip on your radar scope or a flight number on your flight progress strip, a paid ticket, or the reason for a delayed departure or a figure in the accident file.

NO, I AM LIKE YOU and wish to reach my destination alive.

Controllers, pilots, airline managers, aviation directors! Please do not forget that also you have to fly once in a while and that also your life is at stake. Also, almost all of you know that near mid-air collisions, air proximity incidents and level busts do not only go into the hundreds world-wide, but into the thousands!

So, do not only talk about problems, SOLVE THEM!

Because, I, the paying passenger, do not care for finances or politics in your business, because I cannot see any borders. I also know that not all of you can be responsible for everything.

BUT ALL OF YOU TOGETHER ARE ALWAYS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MY SAFETY.

So, if you know about a problem, tell it. Don't hide and accept things that are dangerous to me. Refuse incorrect and unsafe action. Apply available technology and use available equipment.

For, to me, today's air transport is still not safe enough, unnecessarily, because technology is available and all the required equipment is on the market.

The risks involved in present day operations are still much too high and are invisible to the travelling public, which can neither see nor change them.

However, all of you together CAN! So, go and stop risky operations and impose change. Otherwise, I shall blame and claim.

And if you do not have the power to change this situation, you certainly have the authority. Authority, as you know, goes with responsibility. And having the responsibility requires you to always provide a safe service to me.

Thank you.