



International Civil Aviation Organization

First Meeting of the Asia Pacific Accident Investigation Group (APAC-AIG/1)
(Bali, Indonesia, 18-19 September 2013)

Agenda Item 2: Report on recent accident/incident investigation related developments and activities

ASIANA AIRLINES BOEING 777 LANDING ACCIDENT AT SFO

(Presented by the Aviation & Railway Accident Investigation Board of Korea)

SUMMARY

The Aviation and Railway Accident Investigation Board (ARAIB) of Korea presents the progress of the NTSB's investigation into the accident where Asiana Airlines flight 214 crashed at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) on July 6, 2013, about 1128 Pacific daylight time.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 On July 6, 2013, about 1128 Pacific daylight time, Asiana Airlines flight 214, a Boeing 777-200ER, impacted the sea wall then the runway during landing on runway 28L at San Francisco International Airport (SFO), San Francisco, California. There were 3 fatal injuries and 5 serious injuries. The aircraft was destroyed by impact forces and postcrash fire.

* Passengers (291): 77 (Korea), 141 (China), 64 (US), 3 (India), 1 (Japan), 1 (Vietnam), 3 (Canada), 1 (France)

1.2 After the accident, the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) organized an investigation team and forwarded a notification of the accident to Korea. The ARAIB appointed the Accredited Representative (AR) and advisors (AD), who were notified and dispatched to the site on the day of the accident.

1.3 From July 7 to July 14, the NTSB and ARAIB conducted an on-scene investigation then normalized SFO. From July 29 to August 7, the NTSB and ARAIB executed a joint investigation into Asiana Airlines in Korea. From August 26 to August 29, all the related parties had Progress Meeting at the Boeing Company in Seattle with a focus on the aircraft system.

1.4 The accident investigation is expected to take one year to complete. The NTSB and ARAIB have conducted an investigation with no trouble or difficulties on the basis of a cooperative relationship, and this paper aims to share, with Asia-Pacific nations, the investigation progress that has been made for two months after the accident.

2. INVESTIGATION TEAM ORGANIZATION AND AR APPOINTMENT

2.1 Investigation team organization of the NTSB and its activities

- a) The NTSB dispatched its investigation team with Bill English as an investigator-in-charge (IIC) to SFO. NTSB Chairman Deborah Hersman arrived at the scene on the day of the accident.
- b) Between July 7 and 14, the Employee Conference Center of United Airlines at SFO served as an on-site meeting place for accident investigation.
- c) About 30 NTSB staff members were dispatched to the site, and the accident investigation team consisted of the following eight groups: Operations/Human Factors; ATC; FDR/CVR; Performance, Engine, Systems, Survival Factors; and Structure. NTSB investigators were appointed as Group Chairs. Advisors of FAA, Boeing, Honeywell, and ARAIB participated in group activities and prepared field notes together.
- d) Apart from the investigation team, about 200 personnel from the US FBI, Army, airport authorities, FAA, and United Airlines provided support on site.

2.2 Appointment of AR and ADs by the ARAIB

- a) The ARAIB assigned ADs to all eight groups. ADs are composed of ARAIB investigators, KOCA inspectors, and Asiana-related persons, who participated in the NTSB investigation. Currently, a total of 17 ARAIB ADs are assigned to nine groups.
- b) The ARAIB has fulfilled its role as a participating country that has appointed an AR in accordance with the ICAO Annex 13. The NTSB shared, with the ARAIB, all factual information in relation to the accident through its secure workspace and did not place limitations on the ARAIB's participation in investigation activities.

2.3 Observers

- a) After the accident, China, Singapore, Australia, and the UK observed the accident investigation at the joint investigation meeting place at SFO for two to three days.

3. MEDIA HANDLING

3.1 Media handling by the NTSB

- a) NTSB Chairman Hersman gave a total of five press briefings for five days including the day of the accident. Her briefings dealt with the details of factual information such as the interview contents of pilots and cabin attendants and FDR/CVR data.
- b) On the basis of the press briefings, the US media made reports implicating a cause of the accident as pilot errors, and even one cable TV made sarcasm on pilot names and made a caricature of the accident.
- c) In response, US ALPA pointed out that the press briefings of NTSB Chairman were a premature and improper release of partial data. The Chairman finally apologized for the involvement of the NTSB intern in reporting racially offensive fake pilot names and dismissed him accordingly.

3.2 Media handling by the ARAIB

- a) ARAIB Chairman expressed concern that the NTSB unilaterally and publicly released detailed data that were not confirmed by the Korean team and also phoned and sent letters to NTSB Chairman requesting that public releases of investigative information should be coordinated with and reviewed by the Korean team in advance. Two Chairmen also exchanged opinions on maintaining a close and collaborative relationship between the two agencies.
- b) The ARAIB responded actively to premature public releases of data by NTSB Chairman and as a result, about three days later, could receive briefing data in advance and gave a briefing with the NTSB simultaneously.

4. JOINT INVESTIGATION BY THE NTSB AND ARAIB IN KOREA

4.1 From July 29 to August 7, 10 members of the US team from NTSB, FAA, and Boeing visited Seoul, Korea. Operation Group and Maintenance Group conducted an extensive investigation into Asiana Airlines and its supervisory agency.

4.2 The ARAIB and NTSB conducted a joint investigation mainly composed of interviews with Asiana Airlines' pilot instructors and an inspection of its maintenance system.

5. PROGRESS MEETING IN SEATTLE

5.1 From August 26 to August 29, Progress Meeting whose main topic was about the aircraft system was held at the Boeing Company in Everett, Seattle. The meeting was attended by about 50 people composed of NTSB IIC and Group Chairs, ARAIB AR and ADs, and members from Asiana Airlines, Boeing, and Honeywell.

5.2 Aircraft system experts from the Boeing Company gave a detailed explanation about his/her specialty. The NTSB gave a briefing on the progress of the ATC investigation. On the last day, there were breakout meetings for Operation Group, Human Factors Group, Performance Group, and Systems Group.

6. FUTURE INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES

6.1 After close consultation with the NTSB, the ARAIB is expected to dispatch one investigator to the NTSB headquarters in September in order to ensure closer collaboration and more seamless communication between the two agencies.

6.2 NTSB Chairman Hersman is expected to visit the ARAIB in October. As part of the discussions, she wishes to recognize the cooperative efforts of the two agencies and go over the NTSB's future investigative process.

6.3 In early November, Investigative Hearing (IH) will be held, which indicates the completion of the factual information gathering phase of the investigation.

6.4 On the basis of the factual information determined via the IH, each Group Chair will prepare a group report by January 2014 and submit it to the IIC.

6.5 On the basis of group reports, the IIC will prepare a draft of the final report by May 2014 and distribute it to relevant countries/industries to incorporate their comments for 60 days in accordance with the provisions of Annex 13.

6.6 In July 2014, the NTSB Board meeting will be held to review the final report, which will then be released.

7. REFLECTIONS

7.1 The initial response to the accident and on-site investigation were quickly and smoothly made, thereby normalizing the airport just in a week.

7.2 There was initially a little bit of concern about media handling, but the ARAIB responded appropriately to the media by actively exchanging opinions with the NTSB.

7.3 The NTSB uploads all factual data to its secure workspace and shares them with the ARAIB, and the two agencies consult with each other about all matters by e-mail, telephone, etc.

7.4 As of now, three joint investigations by the NTSB and ARAIB have been completed, and on the basis of the spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, the two agencies are proceeding with accident investigation.

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