



International Civil Aviation Organization

The Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Afghanistan Contingency Group Meeting (AHACG/2)

Istanbul, Turkey, 17-19 November 2014

Agenda Item 3: Europe- Southeast/South Asia Contingency Planning (scenarios, procedures)

FLIGHT AVOIDANCE THROUGH THE KABUL FIR

(Presented by IATA)

SUMMARY

This paper addresses recent events involving airlines' determination to circumvent Flight Information Regions (FIRs) in event of partially or total disruption of air traffic services and or safety concerns due to political events that do not constitute the formal activation of the ICAO ATM Contingency Route Plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In the event of discontinuance of ATS services or airline specific safety concerns airline contingency arrangements will be utilized to circumvent the effected airspace. Due to length of flight and or location of a particular FIR some contingency arrangements may not be confined to an individual region.

2. DISCUSSION

Overflights

2.1 The AHACG meeting may wish to use the opportunity to review state challenges and action plans as it relates to the possibility of an increase in historical overflight traffic due to flight planning around the Afghanistan FIR 'avoidance' due to safety/security concerns and or lack of ATS services.

2.2 Absence of en-route ATS services within the Afghanistan FIR and lack of a state published contingency plan, airline internal safety and security assessments could result in flight avoidance route planning. With this example, the estimated volume of flights utilizing avoidance routes has yet to be determined. Based on the data provided at the AHACG/1 the number of flights per 24 hours is estimated to be between 250 and 300. Airline avoidance Flight Planning will take into consideration existing ATS routes, state published contingency routes (when available) winds, weather, infrastructure, possible Traffic management initiatives (i.e.: Flight Level Allocation Schemes - FLAS, Miles/minutes in-trail etc.) as well as overall cost implications per route.

2.3 Airlines and IATA have already started the evaluation of possible avoidance scenarios for Afghanistan. These evaluations include ATS Routes, volume, wind and cost implications. The results, when available, are intended to be shared within the ATM community.

EUROCONTROL Modeling Scenario Evaluation

2.4 The EUROCONTROL Evaluation presented at AHACG/1 provided States with possible route impacts based on current published ATS routes with flights avoiding the Afghanistan FIR. This example of re-routing possibilities would have an impact on the current ATS route structure with regard to volume. The increase in volume might have safety implications due to existing ATC and Infrastructure capabilities.

2.5 The evaluation concentrated on 'Long Haul' flights, but the same premises apply to all flights currently utilizing the Afghanistan FIR as would with the avoidance of any FIR.

2.6 The evaluation identifies the impact of fuel burn including environmental implications, track miles and flight time due to circumventing the FIR. It does not include impacts that will be generated due to flight delays, FLAS, Miles/Minutes in-trail, tactical restriction, winds and/or charges etc. Nevertheless, these impacts can be considered by airlines when developing avoidance routing.

2.7 States should consult with all stakeholders (i.e.: adjacent states, airlines/IATA) when developing contingency routing as a result of a FIR avoidance that would create a direct impact on their current operations. This consultation will provide states with valuable feedback and recommendations to overcome these challenges.

Negative Impact of Other Regions Contingency Planning Affecting Adjacent Regions

2.8 The possible closure of airspace such as Afghanistan may result in traffic being forced to route through the adjacent regions. In the case of European / SE Asian traffic flow, if Afghanistan airspace is avoided or closed for overflying, these flights will be forced over either China or Iran.

2.9 The Meeting may wish to discuss the impact of additional traffic into FIR's that might already be saturated within the MID and adjacent regions. In the circumstances where other regions have options, discussions should be initiated to ensure any additional traffic can be safely and efficiently managed.

2.10 The Meeting is encouraged to discuss the formulation of processes to ensure regional contingency arrangements are not developed in isolation of surrounding regions. Considering the many reasons that may cause additional contingency measures to be put into effect. Including but not limited to:

- airspace closure;
- severe weather; and
- significant reduction in capacity due to equipment outages, labour disputes.

2.11 The above mentioned catalysts may lead to the implementation of contingency arrangements in the MID region or neighbouring regions, which have an ability to create a regional and inter-regional effect.

2.12 IATA will support States as well as international organisations to meet these challenges as to provide a safe and secure environment for all stakeholders. IATA would like to propose the following notification/coordination process to facilitate these challenges.

2.13 **Table 1** presents a proposed notification/coordination process.

Airspace Avoidance				
Airlines	Airline Actions	IATA Actions	Contingency Coordination Team (CCT)	States/ ANSP
Monitor global activities that have an effect on flight operations. (currently in place)	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE
Review state activity that requires airline safety and security review (currently in place)	Notify IATA as to effected FIR' and factors under review. (security and or safety)	When more than (%) of airlines reporting, notify CCT of pending review	NONE	NONE
Identify specific Factors and pending trigger events (currently in place)	inform IATA on review findings and possible trigger events	Inform CCT on findings and number of airlines reporting	Notify effected states/ANSP on number of airlines reviewing current activity	NONE
Event triggered: reviewing avoidance options and select avoidance scenario	inform IATA of selected scenario and volume/initial timelines.	Inform CCT	Notify effected States/ANSP scenario and volume/timelines	Review scenario and give feedback on feasibility
48 Hours prior to activation of planned avoidance re-routes	Notify IATA	Notify CCT	Notify effected states/ANSP	Prepare NOTAMS and avoidance scenario
24 Hours prior to activation of planned avoidance re-routes	Notify IATA	Notify CCT	Notify effected states/ANSP	Publish NOTAMS

Table 1: Proposed IATA Notification/Coordination Process

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) discuss the notification/coordination process proposed; and
- c) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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