

ICAO GLOBAL CIVIL AVIATION
SEARCH & RESCUE FORUM
UAE GENERAL CIVIL AVIATION
AUTHORITY



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By
Captain Enrique “Rick” Valdes
IFALPA representative to ICAO’s PRICE SG

Singapore Airlines flt 006 Taipei



Singapore Airlines flt 006 Taipei

- B747-400 service from Chiang Kai-Shek International Airport to Los Angeles.
 - 3 pilots, 17 FA, and 159 passengers.
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31 October, 2000

- During taxi out the visibility was limited
- At 2316 hours, flt 006 was cleared for TO on rwy 5L, the crew was actually on rwy 5R
- 5R was closed for repairs with construction equipment on the runway. It had within its confines several concrete barriers, two excavators, two vibrating rollers, a bulldozer, an air-compressor cart and a pile of metal reinforced bars. The outcome was nothing less than a disaster.

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- The aircraft fuselage had broken into 2 parts and into over 300 pieces of debris. The fatality outcome showed - **83 perished, 39 had major injuries, and 32 had minor injuries**
- The evacuation was in an extremely harsh and challenging environment due to the typhoon rain showers, strong gusting winds and dark conditions at night. Initially the only light source came from the flames of the burning aircraft

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“In the evacuation segment, fire was engulfing the interiors of the aircraft’s lower deck cabin, while individuals were still trapped inside. As I could still see them alive struggling inflamed somehow through the burnt fuselage skin.

This prompted me to look frantically for airport fire rescuers to move back into the cabin.

At a point where I did manage to `grab hold of' a rescuer (whom I identified from his yellow vest) amidst the chaos, I called out to him in English of the need to get the appropriate equipment and apparatus in order to proceed with a possible re-entry into the cabin for rescue.”

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“I received a response that was (what I could recognize to be) as the local native (Taiwanese) language, of which I do not comprehend.

I somehow was not able to get my intended message across to him nor do I understand what he was trying to communicate to me despite the exchanges in hand signals and gestures that we had in the beating rain showers.”

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“During the evacuation episode, I noticed a man in a cap who seemed to be giving instructions or orders firmly to others. I approached the group and tried to get their attention. I would have thought that they would be engaging me rigorously to seek real time information on the evolving situation.

- **Could there be a possibility that they did not understand me, as I called out in English?”**

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“Briefly described above are the instances that I have shared whereabouts there seemed to be a barrier in communication - a language barrier that had in my view could have provided a more effective rescue effort at the crash site.”

The need for simple and clear communications is a definite requirement, an unchallenged truth, in a plane crash scenario.

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“Would the evacuation that night have turned out differently, if the rescuers were fluent and competent with the same Aviation English requirement as mandated for pilots and controllers? It is indeed a tough question to answer and I have resolved not to present myself with the `ifs' of the tragedy but rather to move forward with positive action. **It is my sincere the hope that this issue shall be addressed in the near future** - for the very sake of flight safety, as air travel traverses a multi-national and multi-lingual landscape.”

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• **The Future is
here**



• **The Time is now!**

Thank you,



Captain Rick Valdes

RV767@AOL.com