

To: Bob Boja

Safety Report Debrief

6/16/2012

Flight: JAL 6589

Aircraft: N744AX

Dept: RJBB to ZSPD

Scdl Dept. 1620 Z. Scdl Arrival 2245

Act: Dept. 1617 Z. Act: 1834

Captain: Morten ' Chip' Homme

FO: Martin Robert Joseph

Safety Issues:

Primary Issue:

Flight 6589 was planned to be dispatched using an Alternate airport RJFR. RJFR was not in the FMC data base. I discovered this when programming the alternate airport routing into the route 2 page. I do this when unfamiliar with the geographical area and or foreign communication understanding is difficult. About 50 minutes before departure, during initial discussion with the Flight control dispatcher, my concern over safety was expressed. The dispatcher informed me they were told RJFR was in the data base, they did not know it was not. He advised me RJFR is what JAL wanted to use as an alternate due to ground services available and they did not want to bump freight using RJBB. (RJBB was used as the alternate the previous nights.) I inquired if other airports were acceptable to JAL such as RJFF or RJFU as these were about the same distance as RJFR, if not closer. With no answer to my question, I was put though to Captain Ezel. Captain Ezel told me how he had just done this in Europe. When I expressed concern over this not being my backyard and I was concerned with the safety he soon stated all he wanted to know is if I were refusing to use RJFR as my alternate. I expressed several times that I wanted to know if RJFF or RJFU would be acceptable to JAL so we would not have to bump freight, if that was the issue, so then we would have an alternate airport that is in the data base. Captain Ezel again asked if i was refusing to accept RJFR, when Captain Ezel could not help with checking if other airports would be acceptable, I requested to be transferred back to dispatch.

Attachment B

When transferred back to dispatch, I asked if JAL had a payload figure, dispatch did not know, I asked if we had to bump freight, dispatch did not know. A few moments later dispatch advised me JAL wanted to RJBB as the alternate. I advised the dispatcher if that was JAL's choice, that was fine with me.

Although I do not know for certain, there did not appear to be any need to change or take off planned freight when the decision was made to use RJBB. When the weight and balance sheet was crosschecked the flight was about 16,000 pounds under the aircraft's allowable payload. It did not appear we would have been close to needing to bump freight.

Regional and Communication Issues:

I have flown to an airport that was not in the FMC Data Base. Being able to do it legally was not the issue for me, but I had many questions and concerns with intentionally doing so on this flight without the time necessary to prepare and review. Some of the questions, and concerns were.

I have limited flight experience in this region.

Understanding ATC communications are difficult.

I am not very familiar with most of Japan's airways, fix names, nav aids, locations, nor how they are pronounced by the local ATC.

I was not familiar with what radar services would be available at RJFR.

It would take more time than we had, to complete our normal duties and then review the routing and meas and airport procedures that would be necessary to properly prepare for diverting using a non FMC data base airport in Japan.

It looked like some of the alternate routing was direct, it did not look like our routing overlaid airways with mea information for descent and arrival. If radar vectoring was not available this information was necessary to find and know.

Would we need to hold over the airport and descend in holding?

Was there an IAF from overhead the last VOR.

Japan airports have steep mountains and terrain around the coastal airports, could I locate the mea information, if needed?

Would there be other nav aids, fixes, that are not loaded in the data base that ATC may be expecting us to use as an RNAV equipped aircraft?

This was a nighttime flight in IFR weather.

Aircraft issues:

The right fuel quantity gauge was deferred along with the total fuel quantity gauge, we were needing to use calculated fuel quantity values only, Master Caution, Low Fuel messages alerted throughout flight and were not valid.

RJFR airport issue:

RJFJ has one runway surface and approaches in one direction only, with an ILS runway 18 and VOR circle to land runway 18. There are no approaches to runway 36.

Weather issue:

The weather listed on dispatch paper work reported weather was RJFR weather 15300Z 12019G29 9999 -SHRA FEW 006 SCT 015 BKN 045 22/20 Q1005

The weather there was such that with a wind shift , runway 18 would be unusable and no landing would be possible at RJFR. Although legal, If that event occurred I would now be at an airport not in the data base, in a foreign land I am unfamiliar with, needing to find another airport, routing and mea's to divert safely while low on fuel, in an aircraft with the fuel quantity gauge inop.

I did not have the time to properly review the routing, charts and plates necessary without taking a delay. Had I been given advance notice and charts to review, prepare, and get questions answered, although I would not prefer to fly using a non data base alternate airport, I could have been prepared to do so if necessary. Although the weather, possible divert and Inop fuel gauge would still need to be considered.

All factors considered, I believe I was trying to be aware of our customers needs as well as exercising good judgement in trying to find an alternate airport that was acceptable to JAL, that was in our data base.

It is my understanding JAL has been wanting to use this airport as an alternate airport for some time but was not acceptable to ABX until now or recently. Maintenance had a data base to load for about 10 days but was not instructed to load it immediately and it was not done. This may be why flight dispatch was told it was loaded in the data base when it was not.

Sincerely,

Chip Homme
B767 Captain