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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Details on Air Crash Killing Chinese Communist Delegates to Afro-Asian Conference

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SOURCE US citizen, foreign representative of a large US company with extensive foreign investments.

He travels continuously on behalf of his US principals to examine and reports on civil and military air activities in the various countries of the Far East. Whenever a major air crash occurs, it is one of his responsibilities to immediately proceed to the scene and learn as much as he can about what happened. He has had many years experience in this type of investigation, we well as a long time acquaintance with influential government and business leaders in the countries of the Far East. He has been a long time source and his reliability is not questioned.

1. I arrived in Singapore at 1500 LT on Saturday, 16 April (just in time to see Chou En Lai board an Indian Airlines DC-4 en route to Djakarta and heavily guarded). Was met at the airport by Capt Vishwanath (Senior Flight Superintendent for Air India International), Mr Raha (Deputy Director General of Civil Aviation for India), Mr Malhotra (Chief Inspector of Accidents, Indian Civil Aviation), and Mr Kaul (AII Station Manager for Singapore). All of them were cordial and pleased to see me, but made it very plain that pending clarification of instructions from India, I was not to question the three survivors of the accident nor would I be given any details. However, Capt Vishwanath, a long time friend, gave me all the information known, on the following day -- with the request that I keep it confidential. The Indian Government was apparently very anxious to keep the accident details quiet and I was so informed on Saturday by Mr Tandon, the Indian High Commissioner for Singapore.
2. Also met Mr Rendle (Dept Civil Aviation, Singapore), and Mr Ford (Airport Manager), neither of whom was able to provide any details of the accident.
3. RJ FAUST LOC Kheeds Field SERVICE
Mr - - - , a manufacturer's technical representative, based in Bombay had arrived in Singapore that same day (Saturday, April 16) via AII service, but did not meet me upon arrival as he had not been informed by AII. We met the following day.
4. The accident occurred in Indonesian waters and Indonesia had, therefore, elected to conduct the investigation, appointing a five to seven man committee. The Singapore Government is grateful, of course, the only connection being the sea and air rescue attempts by the Royal Navy units based in Singapore which was done at the request of the Indonesian Government. Salvage of the wrecked aircraft will be attempted by Indonesia although Royal Navy personnel believe they do not have the necessary equipment. In any case, salvage operations will require at least a month.
5. The three survivors of the accident were Copilot Dixit, Mr Pathak (Navigator), and Mr Karnik (a ground mechanic who flies with the aircraft on charter operations), all of whom suffered injuries. They were brought to the Singapore

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Royal Navy hospital and on Sunday, April 17 were put on board an AII scheduled-service Constellation in Singapore and returned to Bombay. Thirty minutes prior to their departure, a cable was received from the Indonesian accident investigating committee requesting that the survivors be held in Singapore for questioning by the Indonesians. After hectic consultations, it was finally decided to release the survivors despite the request and they departed per schedule.

6. Despite the Indian attempt to maintain secrecy, the Singapore press on Monday morning (April 18) carried articles, date lined Bombay, outlining the details of accident as reported by the survivors which underlined the sabotage possibility. The press story was released by Air India International and is believed to be contrary to the wishes of the Indian Government. At any rate, the Indians in Singapore were most upset, because the press article was, in essence, the story as given in Singapore by the survivors and was meant to be kept confidential.
7. After the survivors departed Singapore, the only reason for our (Raha, Malhotra, Faust and myself) continued stay was the expected arrival here of the Indonesian Committee, but no further word was received from them. Yesterday, Monday, April 18, it was learned unofficially that the Indonesian committee was proceeding directly to Bombay from Djakarta (via the AII Constellation that carried Nehru to Djakarta for the Afro-Asian conference). This was finally confirmed late last night only after receiving the passenger list from Djakarta. Therefore, there is no point in staying any longer in Singapore. Raha, Malhotra and Faust will return to Bombay on the first available (seat space is very difficult from Singapore) and I will be returning to Bangkok tomorrow morning.
8. The details of the accident known so far are based on the survivors accounts. They feel strongly that it was a case of sabotage, but the actual cause will not be definitely known until the aircraft is retrieved from the water and carefully examined. Unfortunately, the press release by Air India has seriously prejudiced the investigation already. Incidentally, it is believed that Indonesia will permit Chinese Communist investigators to examine the wreckage.
9. The story so far, outlined in [00-B-85287_] is approximately as follows:
 - a. Aircraft VT-DEP (LAC S/N 2666) with approximately 14 thousand total aircraft hours was flown from Bombay to Hong Kong (stopping in Bangkok where I met Captain Jatar who was later killed) on a charter flight where it was to pick up eleven communist delegates to the Afro-Asian Conference and to fly them to Djakarta, Indonesia.
10. On departure Bombay, the aircraft returned to the ramp due to a flickering BMEP on No 2 engine. This was corrected and the aircraft flew to Hong Kong with no flight discrepancies noted in the log. The ground mechanic traveling with aircraft changed an ignition distributor on No 2 engine in Hong Kong, reason unknown here.

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11. After picking up the Communist delegates, the aircraft departed Hong Kong with a T O W*of approximately 98,000 lbs. (eleven passenger and eight crew--no radio operator) on a direct flight to Djakarta with approximately 10 hours fuel on board. */TOW: Take Off Weight/
12. At 0915 GMT (still daylight in that area) the aircraft gave a position report while flying at 18,000 feet and reported all was normal. Shortly after the report (matter of couple minutes) the crew heard a "dull thud" or "mild explosion", some of the crew likened it to the sound of gear latching up or down. Karnik (ground mechanic) was dozing in a passenger seat up forward and he came to and went into the cockpit to learn what had happened. All instrumentation was reported to be normal.
13. Karnik then went back into the passenger compartment and noted smoke from the air conditioning overhead outlets. He opened the galley floor hatch into the forward cargo compartment but saw no smoke there. He dashed into the flight station and reported a cargo compartment fire (he naturally assumed it was the rear cargo) and says that he saw the rear cargo compartment fire warning light on. (This is obviously incorrect as there were no smoke detectors installed on this aircraft.)
14. At any rate, Capt Jatar called for release of one CO2 shot into the rear cargo hold and started a rapid descent. It is not known if the recirculating fans were turned off nor what depressurization procedure was used.
15. Karnik then went back into the cabin and found a dense gray smoke filling the cabin but also saw fire along the R H wing trailing edge near the fuselage. He again dashed to the flight station to inform of this which was shortly followed by the zone 2-3 fire warning light on No 3 engine. The fire was then spreading out-board along the R H wing trailing edge.
16. Capt Jatar called for feathering of No 3, although the engine was operating quite normally, and requested the final CO2 shot into No 3 engine.
17. With the feathering, the Flight Engineer turned off all generators (thinking perhaps, to attempt isolation of the smoke source). At about the same time, it was noted that hydraulic pressure was gone. (No details on this, but it is assumed that primary and secondary were gone as the co-pilot turned on the auxiliary elevator and rudder boosters).
18. At this point (approximately 8000 foot altitude) Captain Jatar made his Mayday call and gave a position report with the cockpit filled with smoke and instrument panel visibility almost zero. (shortly before crashing, co-pilot recalls seeing 140 knots on the A S I). With both pilots holding controls full left, the aircraft continued to stay in a shallow right bank and apparently struck the water in that attitude.
19. Jatar 's Mayday call was picked up by Djakarta and Singapore, but neither received his following position report (which was probably due to lack of electrical power with generators off). Djakarta, therefore, made a calculation of his position report (which turned out to be quite accurate) and requested assistance from Singapore and alerted all aircraft and shipping in the area.
20. Prior to crashing, the hostess, Miss Gloria Berry, passed life vests to all passengers and crew. Karnik apparently opened emergency exits in the cabin and navigator's compartment, and both pilots opened their sliding windshields to remove smoke (not known what the sequence was nor the affect it had). The engines were all functioning normally at all times.

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21. After the crash, the copilot recalls evacuating through his sliding windshield opening, under water, and coming to the surface with life vest. The other two survivors do not know how they got out. Karnik reports that there was fire on the surface of the water immediately after the crash and he yelled to one of the survivors to swim away from it. Karnik at that time was clinging to a part of the structure but left it when he found it was sinking.
22. The three survivors were near each other at first and at this time they saw three other people floating at a distance one of whom kept yelling, "Come near me." A bit later, one of the three began flashing a flashlight. The survivors feel that there were other crew members because of their English speech and the possession of a flashlight.
23. Although they were only a little over a mile from the island of Jali, tide carried them away from there onto other islands. Two of them (Dixit and Karnik) landed on the beach of Batu Hillis Island and Pathak landed on the adjacent island of Penganak.
24. Natives helped them on Batu Hillis, Penganak is apparently uninhabited. They all remained on the islands over night and natives rowed them back to the Island of Genting the next morning where they were picked up by an Indonesian coastal freighter, the TAYPE. Later that day they were transferred to a Royal Navy Hydrographic Survey ship the HMS DAMPIER where they were given adequate medical attention. The DAMPIER then made a search of the islands in the area for other survivors but were unable to find any and took the survivors to Singapore. The survivors were given radioed instructions while on HMS DAMPIER, not to give any information to anyone but Indian authorities.
25. Yesterday [18 April], I talked to the Commander of the DAMPIER and his senior diving officers at the Singapore Naval Base. After bringing the survivors to Singapore, the DAMPIER returned to the accident scene and found two Indonesian boats anchored to the wreckage. They were using local skin divers to plot the attitude. DAMPIER sent four line equipped divers down during the course of one day.
26. The aircraft is lying in sheltered clear water 32 feet under on a sand bank. Position is 03-53.2 N, 107-59.7 E. The largest island nearby is Great Natuna. Divers report that visibility is quite good except the sand easily billows into underwater clouds.
27. During the Royal Navy dives, three bodies that had been in the fuselage were disturbed by divers lines and surfaced. Their life vests had been inflated. Two of the bodies have been identified (one was D'Cunha the flight engineer, and the other a steward), the third body, headless, is unidentified. The flight engineer had serious injuries to the left side of the head, no other injuries apparent.
28. Information reached here yesterday that the Indonesian divers had found seven more bodies, one of which is presumed to be another crew member.
29. As for the wreckage, the Royal Navy diver reported that,
- a. The nose section of the aircraft appears to be intact except for the plastic nose tip.
 - b. The R H wing root is still attached but the wing surface is bent upward a "short" distance from the fuselage. He did not notice if Number 3 or 4 engines were still attached.
 - c. The aircraft is lying in approximately level position.
 - d. The L H wing is still attached to fuselage but angling up toward the tip and it appeared to him to be bent forward as well. Again, he did not notice engines.

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- e. A landing gear (dual wheels) is located between L H wing leading edge and the nose.
 - f. He could see daylight (from inside fuselage) through top and R H side of navigator's compartment.
 - g. Found a large hole (torn) in floor of passenger compartment approximately four seats aft of galley bulkhead.
 - h. Did not have time to explore further aft of fuselage either internally or externally.
 - i. They recovered a few broken bits of metal, fwd, cargo compartment floor access door and one cabin heater. Only the cabin heater shows signs of fire. It is not clear whether this is the R H or L H heater. I was not allowed to see the unit as it has been given to the Police Department under strict orders to hold for the Indonesian authorities.
 - j. Royal Navy divers do not believe Indonesia has salvage equipment.
30. The above, I believe, provides all the information accurately as we have been able to determine it up to now.

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