

## Thoughts from Singapore/Jakarta

I got roped into a trip to Jakarta. Jakarta Indonesia is not the easiest place to get to. After many fits and starts I got on a flight from SEA to Singapore. I'll overnight in Singapore and try to touch base with some of my friends. Funny thing though, as they were announcing the flight they mentioned that the crew included Captain Allen. I sent my business card up and it just so happened that it was Captain Steve Allen (my cousin). He came down later and we yucked it up a bit. I promised (now don't faint Janice) that we would have their family over. He was there doing a check ride. I didn't get to go up into the cockpit (as it is an American flight), but we had a nice chat anyway.

I had a 3 hour layover in Narita (Tokyo), but NW has built a new lounge that was quite nice and roomy. They still had the high-tech beer machine. You put in a glass and a tube descends into it and fills it...guaranteeing a picture perfect head every time. They also had their classic, plastic cheese balls which I seem to enjoy well. The arrival into Changi airport was smooth as always. By the time I went through immigration and changed money, my bag was ready. I didn't get to the hotel until 2:30am though. They upgraded my room and I have a REALLY nice room. Probably the best I've ever had.

Went for a short walk (at 2:30am) and that was very interesting. The bars were closing and all of the "singles" were trying for a last minute matchup out on the sidewalk. I'm going to take it easy today and relax. Tomorrow, I head off to Jakarta...it will be like traveling 30 years back in the past.

And it was. There was a nice 40 minute wait at Immigration in 95 degree/90% humidity. That put me in a fine fettle for getting met by the International Civil Aviation Organization worker who was taking me to the hotel. It was nice though, she got me through Customs quickly. By the time I got money (9100 rupiahs to the dollar, last time it was 5000 to 1). Luckily they have changed their bills and I didn't end up with 10 pounds of notes (like I did once in Moscow). We took the 2 hour (35 km) drive from the airport to the city. The city is still a huge slum. It makes what we saw in Mexico look like Bellevue. The street vendors are still there and come up to the cars whilst they are waiting at the lights. The traffic is still unbelievable, it is great sitting in the midst of cars (most of which are burning oil). Most cars must have to have a quart of oil added every day. The ICAO secretary who met me (Welly) told me that she drives to work everyday (she lives at home) and it takes her 2 hours each way. It must be a trial for her. The road to the city from the airport is surrounded by flooded rice fields and the house (as such) are on stilts and are all falling down. Even in the "nicer" areas, things are nasty. They don't believe in garbage cans here and so they just pile up their garbage outside their walls. Must give the rats a hayday.

I let my buddy (Paul Fennelly [who Jan knows] who talked me into this trip) book me into the place he was had. He has been here 10 weeks working on a modernization plan for their airspace. The room and hotel is interesting. It is really an apartment. I have 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a kitchen, dining room, and living room. One of the bedrooms (with a squatter bathroom) is not air conditioned and it is probably for the nanny. There are 4 air conditioners (all remote controlled). It is clean, but not real nice...but acceptable. It is costing me \$78US a day. Real cheap. I went straight to the bar when I arrived and bought bottled water. That was good because the shower water is a little yellow and I hate to think what might be living there. There is an interesting bunch living here. On one floor, some Saudis have installed their mistresses and they fly in for fun time. The reason we know is that Paul walked by their room (door open) and they were lounging in their negligees watching TV; he asked the hotel manager who gave him the lowdown.

The seminar we are giving is for the Air Traffic Control folks. It is really difficult because they don't speak very good English and their questions are weird. They are also more interested in getting something on the side rather than doing what's right. The reason I came here is that we need to improve some of the traffic flows from Australia to SE Asia and most of them go through

this area. I got hooked into moderating a session and it went okay; tomorrow I give my speech. They gave me a cool computer bag (I'll add it to my collection) and I get a secret speakers gift tomorrow. I'll try to pass it off to Janice as a present when I return.

One other thing. Usually, in this part of the world; coats and ties aren't worn. I had sent a message to Paul and asked him what the dress code was (he knows I don't like ties). He told me I could wear a Batik shirt and that would be dressed up for there. I sent another message telling him that I had Hawaiian shirts (including my famous Big Dog shirt) and he replied that would be just fine. Today I showed up in my "toned down" shirt. I was the only one not in a coat and tie....and I had to moderate a session. Paul thought it was pretty funny. I will get even.

I had planned to stay a little longer and meet up w/ some people in Singapore but I just couldn't work it out. I have a chance to blow early (like tomorrow) and so that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to take a 5pm flight to Singapore and then catch the early morning NW flight to Seattle on the next day. One of the QANTAS captains I know will be there with me and we'll go out for a meal. Just being here reminded me of how I don't really appreciate Jakarta much; the poverty and corruption is just too much.

Things are cheap though. I went down to the hotel store (kind of a minimart) and bought two cans of beer and a bottle of water. Now this is a high price store because it is in a western style residence hotel. It ended up costing me about 14,500 rupiahs (about \$1.45). Not bad, I probably could have gotten it for 90 cents out on the street.

Well, I don't know too much else. My next trip is to the real den of corruption and waste (Washington DC). I'll do that on my way back from taking Jeannette to MIT.  
Dave