

Ferdinand Marcos...and the Mystery Plane

Hemmeter Aviation

January 1987

I found this event to be very interesting so I thought I would share this story with you today.

Brief History

1986 - After a embattled election and subsequent revolution Corazon Aquino became the 11th President of the Philippines, and first women to hold that office.

Ferdinand Marcos was exiled in Hawaii.

Aquino faced several coup attempts against her government which Marcos had personal involvement.

Brief History

Local and National news followed this story for a few days..... I'll run a quick clip to maybe refresh your memory or give you an overview.



Local and National news followed this story for a few days..... I'll run a quick clip to maybe refresh your memory or give you an overview.

Unknown ...now the rest of the story



Unknown... now the rest of the story.

The Arrival

A cast of characters that may seem unbelievable...but it happened this way



The Arrival – They did not make advance arrangements, they called in route to advise that they would be arriving just before midnight and someone would arrive to pick them up.

This Boeing 707 was configured in an executive interior with living room, dinning room, bedrooms and larger galley for servicing its passengers. It arrived just before midnight



Sarkis
Soghanalian

The first passenger to disembark... Sarkis Soghanalian I was not familiar with him on arrival but became aware over the course of the days to follow.



Sarkis Soghanalian - Armenian

Nicknamed **Merchant of Death**, was an international private arms dealer who gained fame for being the "Cold War's largest arms merchant" and the lead seller of firearms and weaponry to the former government of Iraq under Saddam Hussein during the 1980s.

Then a permanent resident living in Florida, was hired on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency to sell arms to help Iraq in the midst of the Iran–Iraq War. With the encouragement of the Reagan Administration and the backing of US intelligence agencies, he coordinated the transaction of several crucial arms deals.



Sarkis
Soghanalian



Long-legged
twenty something
with teddy bear



One - very
animated chef /
man servant

Following Sarkis... A ,Long-legged twenty something with teddy bear and one very animated chef man servant



Flight crew – multinational

As the limousine with the 3 passengers departed, I went up the boarding stairs to review operation requirements with the flight crew. As I approached the cockpit I heard a heated argument that then turned to a shoving match. I shouted out “Gentleman” they turned, calmed down and the captain (American) refocused on operations. The co-pilot and flight engineer were both foreigners possibly mid-eastern and didn’t speak English well. They requested aircraft parking for a day or so and would keeps us advised. They requested a ride to Waikiki and I explained that we could arrange a rental car or call for a cab. The three got together and could not come up with enough cash to pay for a cab. We prepaid the cab and sent them off. As we closed the facility at midnight....we thought now that was an unusual arrival.

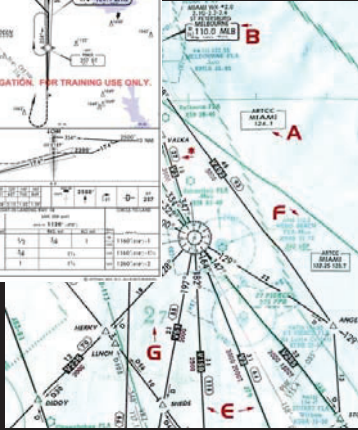
The following morning the flight crew returns...

Crew arrives late morning.

Approach charts



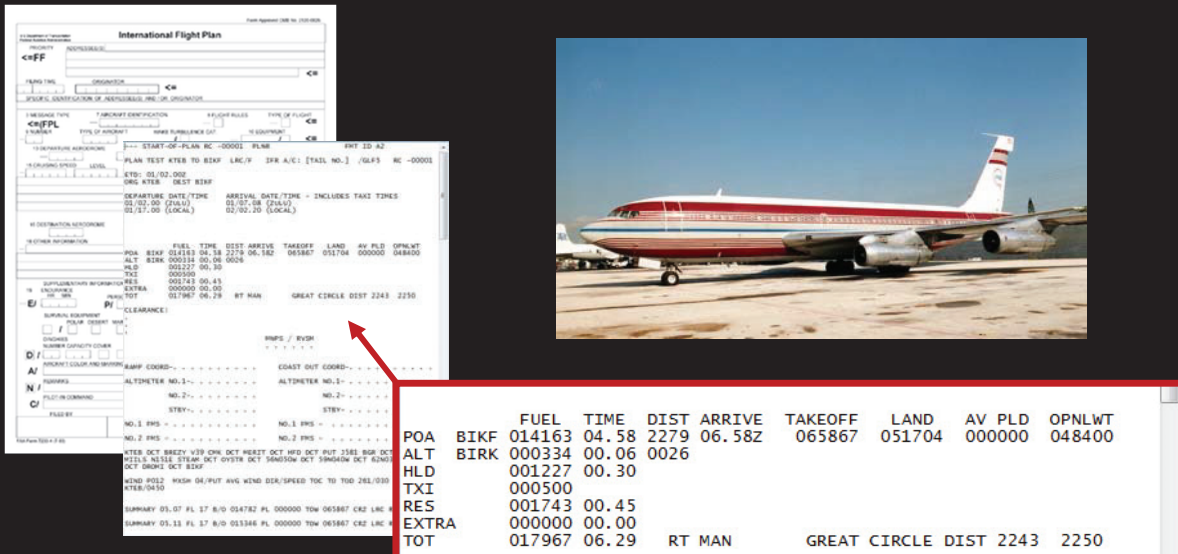
Enroute charts



Preparing for Departure ?

- Fueling ?
- Destination ?
- Navigation Charts ?
- Weather Briefings ?

The crew wanted to start preparations for departure. Fueling was their first priority. They requested the aircraft be topped off. I asked what form of payment will be provided. They requested that we invoice to a Miami address. I informed them that we would not be extending credit and cash or approved credit card would be required. They were quite upset and demanded credit. They had a Miami manager call me to continue their request for credit using a new tactic... yelling, cursing and threats. The new tactic was not working. The crew did not have cash or credit card. I requested that we approach this a little different. Let's determine the exact amount of fuel required to get you to your destination. Once determined I could place an exact cost of fuel so we knew the approval limit on an approved card. WHAT IS YOUR DESTINATION? The three crew members all looked at each other when asked that question. They finally stated that Taiwan was their destination but would like to review aeronautical charts (enroute / approach) which they had none on board the aircraft. They asked if we had any? We maintained a worldwide library of current charts. They asked if they could take them with them with them. Negative! Let's us move on to flight plans.



International Flight Plan

FLIGHT PLAN NO. 12345678

PLANE: 747-400

FROM: LAX

TO: ORD

DEPARTURE DATE/TIME: 01/01/00 01:00:00 (LOCAL)

ARRIVAL DATE/TIME: 01/01/00 02:00:00 (LOCAL)

FUEL: 014163

TIME: 04.58

DIST: 2279

ARRIVE: 06.58Z

TAKEOFF: 065867

LAND: 051704

AV PLD: 000000

OPNLWT: 048400

	FUEL	TIME	DIST	ARRIVE	TAKEOFF	LAND	AV PLD	OPNLWT
POA	BIKF	014163	04.58	2279	06.58Z	065867	051704	000000
ALT	BIRK	000334	00.06	0026				
HLD		001227	00.30					
TXI		000500						
RES		001743	00.45					
EXTRA		000000	00.00					
TOT		017967	06.29		RT MAN			

GREAT CIRCLE DIST 2243 2250

Flight Plan and Fueling

Flight plans would come from an approved aviation scheduling and dispatch company which there we a number to chose from. The flight plan is an approved FAA licensed dispatch document that will include completed information to get from point A to point B. The fuel includes fuel to destination, alternate location, holding fuel, taxi fuel and any additional that crew or company may require. It recognizes type aircraft and engine fuel burn per hour to monitor fuel remaining onboard. The flight plan will give precise navigation parameters . When I notified Lockheed Data Plan and requested flight plans they informed me that this company had not paid for previous plans. They would provide only if they paid for what was owed and for new flight plans in advance with cash to me. Once again, arguments all around. This has now taking a number of hours to get to this point so it was determined that the crew would check with someone on how to proceed. They left to return the next morning.



The following day the crew returns and stated that someone will be coming to pay for flight plans. Within an hour a late 50's Chevy Impala (beautiful condition) with California plates drove through the gate and a gentleman which I believed to be of Philippine decent carrying a brief case entered our facility. Opening the case revealed it was full of cash... lots of cash. He counted out hundred dollar bills sufficient for all the flight plans and left.

We proceeded to acquire the flight plans. Once in hand the crew spent a great deal of time with my charts and flight plans and requested privacy while doing so. After an hour or so they stated that they didn't like the flight plans. "WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE FLIGHT PLANS" I asked. They stated they wanted to get closer to Manila! Are you going to Manila...in unison the crew said NO! They decided to stay with what they got. We are now going to fuel the aircraft based on exact gallons required for flight. Okay Gentleman I now need \$19,785 before we start. They gave me Sarkis Soghanalian's Platinum Am Ex card which was declined which moved into further arguments. They put Sarkis on the phone with me so he could yell, scream and threaten to kill me if I didn't accept the card. I never raised my voice, never got caught up in their unprofessional antics or deterred from my clear position each step of the way. I suggested that we might see that Chevy Impala again. They left the facility once again. Over the course of almost two days I have been witnessing something very unusual.

I was aware of current world news and we knew that trouble was brewing in the Philippines with Marcos loyalist against the Aquino government. It was not difficult to see through this diabolical plan.



I informed Dianne Plotts and Chris Hemmeter my belief of intent of this aircraft. I did not want Hemmeter Corp to be exposed to possible negative outcome. We notified the State Department. They came to my office and reviewed my suspicions. The Philippine Consul General, Buddy Gomez was informed by the State Department and he intern came to my office for a briefing. Both the FBI and the Philippine Consulate put undercover personnel at our facility to monitor the situation while they proceeded to communicate with Marcos. Buddy Gomez ...He may have cried uncle but did not blow any whistle but I was glad that he and others were taking credit...less questions came our way.



I took it upon myself to relocate the aircraft away from our facility to a more remote location on the field. I knew that it was only a matter of time before the media would be arriving in force. The remote location would allow us to isolate whatever was going to happen next. We had other professional customers to assist and we initiated a plan to provide security and service without interruption.

"We understand on good authority that you are seeking to return to the Philippines.

As we have told you, an attempt to return to the Philippines without the approval of the Government of the Philippines would violate the conditions under which you are here as a guest.

If you go to the airport, you will not be permitted to leave Hawaii.

To avoid personal embarrassment and misunderstanding, I strongly urge you to stay here, as you have indicated in our previous conversations you would.

What I am telling you is conveyed on instructions from the highest levels of the U.S. Government."

The State Department notified Marcos at his residence in Makiki Heights with a typed document, no letterhead, no signature stating the following.

Once Marcus was notified the media blitz began.



Notified crew of new direction - Return to Miami

U.S. Government Agencies gave them the Royal send off.

The following day I was notified by crew of new direction - Return to Miami ...Yes we needed a new flight plan, yes we need the Chevy to come back.

Normally a domestic departure would only require a Federal Agriculture inspection but U.S. Government Agencies thought they would show their hospitality as well.

They gave them the Royal send off.

The FBI did a through search of entire aircraft before closing doors. Just as the aircraft started to taxi our U.S. Customs team came in force surrounded the aircraft, boarded and proceeded an additional search of crew, passengers and aircraft before they departed for Las Vegas for final fuel to Miami. When in Las Vegas

the same agencies thought they would show their skills once again.