

The MIRCE Akademy 2011 Annual Lecture



18.30, Colin Chapman Suite, Woodbury Park, Exeter, UK, 5th December 2011

The Last AF447 Flight - Mirce Mechanics Perspective

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On 1st June 2009, Airbus A330 on Air France Flight 447 disappeared in the mid-Atlantic Ocean.

Now, with the release of a third interim report by the French BEA (accident investigation bureau) is pretty clear what happened. On 16th August 2011 Peter Garrison wrote in Los Angeles Times *“The big twin jet was inadvertently mishandled by the pilot who was flying it. He got it into an extremely unusual position, and neither he nor the other two pilots with him could figure out what was happening or how to fix it. For the next three minutes the airplane, its fuselage slightly nose-high as though approaching a landing, dropped toward the sea while the baffled and terrified pilots struggled to make sense of the indications on their instruments. But they never did what they needed to do — get the nose down, so that the airplane would be pointing in the direction it was going — to allow the Airbus, which was perfectly sound and intact, to recover and continue on its flight from Rio de Janeiro to Paris.”*

Complex and continuously changing relationships between: aircraft technical capabilities, existing flying conditions, human ability to fly and “to see the whole picture”, named as functionability in Mirce Mechanics. is the main subject of this Lecture. However, the impact of the transition from mechanical to digital flight controls on ability of pilots to “feel the aircraft” in the conditions when functionability phenomena go beyond ability of aircraft to fly itself by computers is the main focus of this Lecture. Thus the question of effectiveness of training programmes on ability of pilots to “intuitively” deal with these low probability functionability events will be discussed here.

The Lecture is dedicated to the memory of all 228 people whose lives have ended with the last, uncontrolled touchdown, of flight AF 447. They were citizens of: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Gabon, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey UK and USA.

Admission Free, all welcome, R.S.V.P. by 1st December

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