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Interview transcript

Interviewer: Farah El Shiaty

Interviewee: Hafez El Shiaty

Place: Interviewee's home,

Villa 834.Compound Loloat El-Shorouk, Shorouk City.

University: The American University In Cairo

Professor: Dr, Kim Fox

Date completed: 9 March, 2011

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My interviewee is my father, Hafez El Shiaty .He was born in 14th of October. He is a pilot and the General Manager of The Network planning department in Egypt Air Company. He is married and has two daughters.

I felt that this person was worth interviewing because he knew a lot about this topic. I believe that his experience during the revolution was different from most of the people. My interviewee had information about one of the major sectors in Egypt that was greatly affected by the revolution which is the aviation in Egypt. Moreover, He is not only from the airline crew in the Company but also from the top managers of the company; therefore, we were able to discuss the topic from different point of views.

List of interests touched on by the narrator:

1) A great Experience in Aviation

2) Great amount of information about the impact of the revolution on the aviation process and on the Egypt Air Airlines company.

3) Great amount of information about the Effects of the revolution on the aviation process and on the company in the future.

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Persons Present: Farah El Shiaty

Hafez El Shiaty

Farah: Good morning, this is Farah El Shiaty, and I am going to interview my father Hafez el shiaty .He is 44 years old; He is a pilot and the general Manager of Network Planning Department in Egypt Air Airlines. We are going to ask know more from him about how Cairo's' International airport and Egypt Air company had been working during the hard times of the Egyptian revolution and how it was affected by the revolution. Can you tell us about the traffic flow of passengers during the first days of the revolution?

Shiaty: The traffic flow was only in one direction which was outbound only from Cairo airport and all domestic airports as Sharm El-Sheikh and Hurghada. Because the Embassies in Egypt wanted to evacuate their people as soon as possible due to the recent political instability as we all know and the absence of security in Egypt . Also there was a huge cancelation from the incoming passengers to Egypt, as we know that tourism a sensitive market and cannot exist in a market which is not stable.

Farah: You said that the embassies wanted to evacuate their people as soon as possible, so how did you deal with the process of the evacuation of passenger when the curfew started from 3 pm till 8 am?

Shiaty: We had of course to retime the schedule to match with the curfew and this was a huge problem.

Farah: So by retiming and changing the schedule, did you face any problems?

Shiaty: Of course we faced a huge problem as I mentioned before because during this short time of operation we had to retime and change the schedule .Also we couldn’t start the first flight before 10 or 11 am and this time was not enough for the passengers to arrive to the airport and finish all the requirements for departure on time. This resulted in many delays of flights departing from Cairo airport and also there was a huge congestion of people who want to travel from Cairo airport without booking on flights.

Farah: So we want also to know from you if the airline crew was affected by the curfew?

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Shiaty: We as an airline, many people serve flights until it departs like flying crew, ground staff and maintenance people. So actually we faced the same problem that the crews sometimes were delayed because of the traffic. Also sometimes the flight comeback to Egypt during the curfew and they were not able to return to their homes because the roads were not secured and due to the absence of police in the streets .So the company had to rent for them rooms in the hotel at the airport; this added new costs to our company and increased our losses.

Farah: Many people actually reserve their tickets through the internet; however in the first days of the revolution there was no internet, so did this worsen the situation more?

Shiaty: (Ummmm) actually this did not worsen the situation directly because few people use the internet booking system in Egypt. However, the major problem was that most of the ticketing offices were closed and the people who want to reserve tickets had to go to the airport because it was the only ticketing office that opened 24 hours .However, this resulted in the increase of number of people inside the airport ticketing office.

Farah: There was no police in streets of Egypt, so did the airport also faced this problem of the lack of security people who stands beside the x-rays or stamp the passports, or did you have enough of them?

Shiaty: This problem also arise in Cairo airport as there was limited number of police officers standing in the x-rays and stamping the passports for the departing passengers and this increased the delay of passengers to finish the requirements for departure and worsen the scenario more.

Farah: We also want to know if these events affected the number of flights in the company.

Shiaty: Our flights before these events were around 120 flights per day but during the revolution the flights decreased and we had 40 flights in the whole day. This made a huge loss for the company and also these 40 flights were only carrying passengers in one way direction which is out of Egypt. But now we are beginning to have more flights again.

Farah: With all of these problems, how did you deal with these losses?

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Shiaty: We began to shrink our network and frequency of flights. We also began to concentrate more on the roots which have maximum profit and at the same time we see access fleet we have and rent it to other company outside Egypt with the crew which we call it Wet Lease .We also stopped opening many destinations which was planned to open in the summer like Washington and Toronto. Also we closed other destinations.

Farah: We would also want to know if the salaries were affected of the employees of these current events and these losses.

Shiaty: Most employees actually were not affected .The ones who were affected is the crew because their salaries decreased by 35 to 40 % because their salaries depend on flying hours, which of course decreased.

Farah: We had been listening all over Egypt that there were protests by the workers in order to increase their salaries or move their directors, so did Egypt Air face this problem?

Shiaty: Of course, we are part of Egypt and this happened in our company. All our top managers are looking in the protester's demands and they are looking in their demands

Farah: Did the department do any of the protesters' demands?

Shiaty: Actually till now they are seeing the demands. We were able to meet some of the demands and finish it. But some of them we will not be able to do their demands because they want an increase in their salaries and we can't increase all the employees' salaries during these events.

Farah: So in your opinion when can the aviation in Egypt recover from these losses?

Shiaty: I expect the aviation to recover not before winter 2012 and it also depends on the political situation in Egypt; if it will going to be stable by the end of this year or not.

Farah: Finally, in your opinion how could we improve Egypt in the future?

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Shiaty: First, I advise all people to go to their work, stop protesting and work hard to be able to improve our country .Also I would like us to take the right steps toward democracy and to have economic growth in order to be one of the richest countries in the world. Also I would like to choose the parliament and the president in a democratic, civilized ways .I urge all to go to the election and choose their president.

Farah: Thank you