FLIGHT TO NIGER

Posted on August 11, 2006 by Eddie

Category: Observations

After the terrorist arrests and disruption to flights yesterday, I anticipated that today's flight to Niamey might be a little stressful. In the end, it wasn't too bad; here's the story of the day.

My flight from London to Paris was at at half past six in the moring, so Sue and I left home around three in order to get to Heathrow in good time for checking in. I got to the check in desk around four - and there was already a queue forming - but Air France didn't open up the check in desks till five. That was an hour extra I could have had in bed! For most of today, Air France have been brilliant, so I don't want to complain, but it does seem pretty bad that when the authorities were telling us to turn up early for check in, Air France didn't open the desks any earlier than usual. In the queue I got talking to the chap ahead of me. He was from the US and had missed his flight to Marakesh in all of the trouble yesterday (he missed today's flight too). He is the chief costume designer on a big Hollywood film which is being filmed in Morocco. Very interesting chap.

No carry on luggage was allowed, so I only had my passport and tickets to take with me. It felt really odd not having my laptop backpack with me. I've spent all day looking for it, and then remembering it was inside my suitcase in the hold - along with my phone and minidisc player. Because of all of the security checks, our flight out of London was delayed, but I was still in time for the Niamey flight in Paris. Actually, the Niamey flight also left late because the aircraft had flown to Paris from Atlanta, where it had aslo been delayed by yesterday's events. It's amazing how these things ripple down through the system (that metaphor might be useful in my workshop next week).

The flight to Niamey was excellent. I managed to sleep a little, watched a good movie (the Inside Man) and had terrific views of the Pyranees and the Sahara desert. I was very impressed with Niamey airport, even though I didn't have a visa and had to leave my passport with the authorities (to be picked up on Monday) I was through all of the formalities in about ten minutes. I wish all airports were that smooth. Then, miracle of miracles: *my case was the first one on the baggage convery belt!* That's never happened before, and will probably never happen again.

Milton and Linda Watt were waiting for me at the airport and drove me to the SIL centre. I met Linda in Nairobi earlier this year and me Milton at Niamey airport today.Â So, I unpacked, joined a group evening meal and now I'm ready for sleep. Rather worringly, my phone (rescued from the hold) says it has an inoperative SIM. I hope this just means that I can't log onto a nework here, not that there is something terminally wrong with it. Humph.