

Session 28: The International Dimension: Issues Relating to Foreign Tourists

Time: 1 hour

Objectives:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students should be able to:

- 28.1 Describe the size and growth of international tourism.
- 28.2 Identify key issues in international tourism.
- 28.3 Discuss how key issues in international tourism affect emergency planning.

Scope:

Examination of key aspects of emergency planning within the context of international tourism.

Readings:

1. Required Student Readings

Michael Oshins and Jacqueline Sonnabend. 1998. "Sonesta International Hotels: Responding to a Crisis." *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 39: 38-45.

Keaton S. Woods. 1991. "When the Tanks Rolled Into Town: A GM's Experience in Kuwait." *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 32: 16-25.

2. Professor Reading

Chuck Y. Gee. 1994. *International Hotels: Development and Management*. East Lansing, Michigan: Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Motel Association. Pp. 371-381.

3. Background References

Chuck Y. Gee and Eduardo Fayos-Sola, eds. 1997. *International Tourism: A Global Perspective*. Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization, pp. 303-319.

C. Michael Hall and Vanessa O'Sullivan. 1996. "Tourism, Political Stability and Violence." Pp. 105-121 in *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues*, edited by Abraham Pizam and Yoel Mansfeld. New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Requirements:

1. The two student readings give vivid accounts of crisis situations in foreign countries. Although they are largely descriptive, careful reading can reveal issues that can be systematically analyzed using the lecture material in this session. It is recommended that the professor conduct the following small group exercise after the lecture portion of this session.
2. The professor should divide the class into four groups. Each group will be given 15-20 minutes for discussion. Then, groups 1 and 2 will meet together, as will groups 3 and 4; these combined groups will have another 10 minutes for discussion. Subsequently, a representative from each combined group will report their findings to the entire class.
3. The assignments for each group are as follows:
 - a) Group 1 will discuss the Oshins and Sonnabend (1998) reading. They are to take the **position of a crisis management team** that has taken control of all operations of the hotel. As noted in the reading, they have many foreign guests in the hotel. Their goal is to ensure the guests' safety and to communicate their status on an ongoing basis to their relatives and friends in their home countries. Group 1 must develop a system to deal with these priorities. The management team must identify its priorities, the parties to whom it will release information, the amount of information they will release, and so forth.
 - b) Group 2 will also discuss the Oshins and Sonnabend (1998) reading. In contrast to Group 1, however, they are to take the **position of the families** of several of the foreign guests in the hotel. Their goal is to find out as much information about their family members as quickly as possible, and from as reliable a source as possible. Group 2 must develop a strategy for obtaining this information, including: the persons or organizations they would contact; the order in which these persons or organizations would be contacted; their expectations of the information provided by these contacts; and the timeliness of the responses they expect.

- c) Group 3 will discuss the Woods (1991) reading. Like group 1, they are to take the **position of a crisis management team** with control of the hotel. Their goal is the same, as is their assignment of developing a system to achieve that goal.
 - d) Group 4 will discuss the Woods (1991) reading, and like group 2, will take the **position as relatives** of the foreign hotel guests. Group 4 must also find out as much information as possible, and develop a strategy for doing so.
4. After meeting individually, groups 1 and 2 and groups 3 and 4 will meet together. They are to compare their strategies, and address the following questions:
- a) Are there needs or requests of the families that are not addressed by the management teams?
 - b) To what extent did the priorities of the two groups for each reading match? That is, did the expectations of the families coincide with strategies of the management teams?
 - c) The groups should then explore the reasons for any discrepancies between the expectations they identified for managers and those for family members.
 - 1) What was the rationale for specific decisions and priorities?
 - 2) What was the rationale for specific expectations?
 - 3) What are the sources of the mismatches between the two?
5. Following the reports by the two representatives of each reading, the professor should take five minutes to summarize the findings of the groups. In particular, the professor should emphasize common assumptions that may have led to mismatches between priorities and expectations.
6. The professor should reproduce copies of the Appendix (“International Symbols for the Hospitality Industry”). This should be distributed and discussed during the lecture under Objective 28.3, paragraph 7.

Remarks:

Objective 28.1
Size of International
Tourism

1. **International travel**—travel to a country other than one’s own country of residence—**has grown tremendously** over the past decades. In 1997, international arrivals numbered some 612 million, generating US \$443 billion in receipts (WTO 1998, p. 2).
2. Since 1950, international tourist arrivals have **increased at an average annual rate** of 7.1 percent, while receipts have grown at an average annual rate of 12.2 percent (WTO 1997, p. 5).
3. Reflecting this growth in tourism, **worldwide lodging capacity** has also grown.
 - a) In 1996, there were approximately 312,000 hotels worldwide with 12.2 million rooms.
 - b) Regionally, Europe accounts for the majority of these lodging facilities, followed by the North America and East Asia and the Pacific. (WTO 1998, p. 14).
4. **International air traffic** has likewise shown great increases.
 - a) In 1997, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) reported that over 411 million passengers were carried on scheduled international routes (this figure does not include private charter flights).
 - b) This figure represents a 6.8% increase over the previous year, continuing a trend of growth in international travel.
 - c) By way of comparison, the 1997 figure for domestic travel was only 3.7% higher than the 1996 figure. (IATA 1998.)
5. The WTO projects that international arrivals will grow to 692 million by the year 2000, to 1.04 billion by the year 2010, and to 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Much of this growth will occur in areas outside of

Europe and the United States, as travelers explore new destinations in less developed countries throughout the world (WTO 1997, p. 8).

Objective 28.2
Key Issues in
International Tourism

1. Perhaps the most important aspect of international tourism is the fact that it is enmeshed in **multiple layers of laws and regulations**.
 - a) These laws and regulations are complex and far-reaching.
 - b) Generally these laws and regulations are visible to travelers only during certain key activities. These include such activities as the following:
 - 1) obtaining a passport
 - 2) making plane reservations
 - 3) purchasing foreign currency
 - 4) obtaining a visa
 - c) Ask students: “Who has had opportunity to complete any of these activities? What difficulties or challenges did you confront?”
2. Behind each of these relatively simple actions, however, are **laws, regulations, and agreements** that may have taken many years to draft and negotiate.
 - a) How easy is it for the tourist to secure a plane reservation to his or her intended destination?
 - b) The sheer availability of flights to a foreign destination, for example, is a function not only of market demand but of extensive negotiations between the country from which the flight originates and that of its destination.
3. At the international level are myriad **agreements and regulations** involving **air transportation**.

- a) At this level, air transportation is closely tied to politics because of the importance of, and prestige attached to, air travel capabilities.
 - b) Air travel between countries is largely controlled through bilateral agreements between two countries.
 - c) These agreements specify the rights and privileges of each country's aircraft in the other country's airspace and airports.
4. Also at the international level, there is the matter of whether the host country (the country receiving, or hosting, the visitor) **has formal diplomatic relations** with the originating country (the country from which the tourist originates).
- a) When formal diplomatic relations exist, tourists automatically possess a certain legal status within the host country.
 - b) There also is a consular framework within which this status can be mediated.
 - c) The availability and restrictions of passports and visas embody these diplomatic relations.
5. Currency exchange rates are subject less often to direct government regulation, but also reflect a complex web of market and policy decisions.
- a) The international market for currency trading can have an enormous effect on the internal politics of a country. This has been vividly demonstrated recently in countries such as Thailand and Indonesia (Thurow 1998).
 - b) Currency values reflect the assessment and expectations of numerous variables, many of which involve government policies. To this extent, the act of purchasing foreign currency is also highly reflective of the kinds of laws, regulations, and agreements that are embodied in passport issuance and flight availability.
6. **Trade agreements** are also important to commerce and economic relations between countries.

- a) Tourism is generally considered to be an export industry, since a host country essentially earns foreign currency by providing tourism services and experiences to visitors.
 - b) This is one of the primary benefits for a country wishing to develop or expand its tourism industry.
7. There are other levels of laws and regulations that complicate the legal framework within which international tourism takes place.
- a) National laws impacting tourism range from economic policies (favoring/discouraging tourism, for example), to land use laws (such as those specifying areas that can and cannot be visited by foreigners.) In many countries where the tourism industry employs a large number of foreign imported workers, national employment-related laws are very crucial to the success of the industry.
 - b) At the local level, tourism is impacted by zoning regulations, taxes (such as sales and room taxes), building design codes, and so forth.
8. Beyond these legal issues there **are other dimensions of international travel.**
- a) Language is a key aspect of international travel.
 - b) To the extent that language differences affect all forms of communication, language impacts virtually every aspect of a foreign visitor's experience.
9. There are also cultural differences between visitor and host that can have a profound effect upon a visitor's experience.
- a) Typically, a foreign visitor comes from a western, industrialized country, and is wealthier, more educated, and less traditional than the residents of the host society.
 - b) Behavior that a visitor considers normal (such as walking around in shorts, or loudly expressing his or her feelings, for example) can upset and alienate his or her hosts.

10. Foreign visitors can also be viewed by the host country from a political perspective.
 - a) Visitors are seen as representatives of their country, a religion, or even an international segment (such as the western world).
 - b) Foreign tourists are particularly vulnerable to politically motivated violence (Hall and O'Sullivan 1996).

Objective 28.3
Implications for
Emergency Planning

1. An emergency involving foreign tourists necessarily **has political implications**. This is true whether or not the emergency is caused by political factors (see Session 4, "The Nature and Types of Political Threats," for further discussion of politically caused emergencies).
2. After safety and security have been restored, among the first and most critical tasks in an emergency is **establishing reliable communication**.
 - a) Communication links must be established between relatives and other parties interested in the foreign tourists from their home country and the relevant authorities in the host country (a hotel general manager, police spokesperson).
 - b) Often, this task is most efficiently mediated through embassy personnel or official bodies (such as a national or local tourism office), who possess the language capabilities, communications infrastructure, and knowledge of the visitor's country that facilitates more reliable dissemination of information.
3. Reliable communication will be especially critical in **political crises** that are (or are perceived to be) directed against foreigners. Knowledge of or suspicion that tourists are targets will create an additional credibility problem for representatives in the host destination.
4. Obtaining **authoritative and reliable** information sources is difficult in all emergency situations.

- a) The problem of information sources is compounded in a situation where victims are tourists from another country.
 - b) As was covered in Session 24 (“The Crisis Plan: Communications Channels”), it is critical that parties who will be the focal point of inquiries from relatives, friends, and so forth (such as the tour company, the hotel, or the airlines) be aware of their position within the communication chain between the emergency and the foreign person making the inquiry.
5. **Language barriers** pose a special difficulty for all phases of emergency situations.
- a) Warnings, advisories, and instructions may not be sufficiently comprehended by the foreign visitor, especially if they are complicated.
 - b) Communication during an emergency may be especially problematic, given the nature of the crisis situation.
 - c) In light of the difficulties posed by language barriers, emergency warnings and instructions should be as simple as possible and utilize a high degree of graphic symbols and diagrams.
6. **International symbols** provide one means of addressing language barriers.
- a) The professor should distribute the “International Symbols for the Hospitality Industry” (Appendix) to the students.
 - b) It is recommended that the professor see how many of these symbols are familiar to the students. Emphasize that unfamiliarity can be very important in emergency situations.
7. When an emergency has political ramifications, it is likely that there will be **wider media attention** than might otherwise be the case.
- a) How the media portray the emergency and its aftermath will be of keen interest to politicians and high ranking officials from both the host country as well as those from which the foreign tourists originated.

- b) Negative media portrayals may have a damaging effect on general perceptions of the destination, the area, or even the host country.
- c) A problem in communications among local law enforcement personnel, for example, may be characterized by the media as a problem among national agencies.
- d) Media relations are exceedingly crucial in emergencies involving foreign tourists.

*Supplemental
Considerations*

- 1. The professor should emphasize that the political-legal context of emergencies involving foreign tourists can be quite complex, even though most of it may be invisible to the average tourist.
- 2. The professor may want to use recent or current media portrayals of emergencies to see how students, as viewers, make connections between the specific emergency itself and the culture, political structure, and society in which it takes place. The students may be surprised at how easily they generalize various aspects of the emergency to the entire country.

*Course Developer
References*

- 1. Chuck Y. Gee. 1994. *International Hotels: Development and Management*. East Lansing, Michigan: Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Motel Association.
- 2. C. Michael Hall and Vanessa O'Sullivan. 1996. "Tourism, Political Stability and Violence." *Tourism, Crime and International Security Issues*, edited by Abraham Pizam and Yoel Mansfeld. New York: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. Pages 105-121.
- 3. International Air Transport Association. 1998. *Annual Report 1998*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.iata.org/ar98/> [1999, Jan. 27].

4. Michael Oshins and Jacqueline Sonnabend. 1998. "Sonesta International Hotels: Responding to a Crisis." *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 39: 38-45.
5. Lester Thurow. 1998. "Asia: The Collapse and the Cure." *The New York Review of Books*. (February 5) [Online]. Available: <http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/WWWfeatdisplay.cgi?1998020522F> [1998, Feb. 12].
6. Keaton S. Woods. 1991. "When the Tanks Rolled Into Town: A GM's Experience in Kuwait." *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 32: 16-25.
7. World Tourism Organization. 1997. *Tourism: 2020 Vision: Influences, Directional Flows and Key Trends. Executive Summary*. Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization.
8. World Tourism Organization. 1998. *Tourism Market Trends: Americas 1988-1997*. Madrid, Spain: World Tourism Organization.

Appendix A
International Symbols for the Hospitality Industry

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| <p>Information</p> <p>Hotel 4056</p> <p>Hotel Information 4028</p> <p>Hotel Reservation 4057</p> <p>Bedrooms 4006</p> <p>Check-in Registration 4130</p> <p>Cashier 4058</p> <p>Ticket Purchase 4025</p> <p>Safe Deposit Boxes 4058</p> <p>Restaurant 4018</p> <p>Coffee Shop 4015</p> <p>Bar 4017</p> <p>Information 4001</p> <p>Lost and Found 4061</p> <p>Meeting Point 4011</p> <p>Room Key Return 4082</p> <p>Bellman Bellwoman 4093</p> <p>Baggage Claim Baggage Check-in 4027</p> <p>Baggage Lockers 4028</p> <p>Keys 4038</p> <p>Telephones 4014</p> <p>Checkroom 4018</p> <p>Elevator 4032</p> | <p>Women's Restroom 4004</p> <p>Men's Restroom 4005</p> <p>Restrooms 4006</p> <p>Handicapped 4007</p> <p>Nursery 4008</p> <p>House-keeping 4008</p> <p>Room Service 4087</p> <p>Ice 4090</p> <p>Vending Machine 4091</p> <p>Drinking Fountain 4092</p> <p>Drinking Water 4093</p> <p>Sales 4024</p> <p>Escalator 4035</p> <p>Escalator Up 4006</p> <p>Escalator Down 4007</p> <p>House Phone 4038</p> <p>Sevens 4095</p> <p>Gymnasium 4051</p> <p>Play Room 4086</p> <p>Play-ground 4087</p> <p>TV Room 4052</p> <p>Conference Room 4099</p> | <p>Swimming 4020</p> <p>Shower 4131</p> <p>Smoking 4012</p> <p>Trash 4013</p> <p>Electric Outlet 4048</p> <p>Light Switch 4105</p> <p>Used Razor Blades 4107</p> <p>Thermometer 4106</p> <p>Kennel 4103</p> <p>Pets on Leash 4104</p> <p>Gas Station 4110</p> <p>Dancing 4102</p> <p>Quiet 4109</p> <p>Text 4041</p> <p>Bus 4042</p> <p>Ground Transportation 4043</p> <p>Air Transportation 4044</p> <p>Heliport 4045</p> <p>Thermal 4046</p> <p>Water Transportation 4047</p> <p>Parking 4040</p> <p>Mail 4021</p> | <p>Mechanics Maintenance 4111</p> <p>Bicycle 4114</p> <p>Walk Bridge 4115</p> <p>Stroller 4117</p> <p>Laundry 4118</p> <p>Car Rental 4028</p> <p>Currency Exchange 4022</p> <p>Marina 4500</p> <p>Sail Boating 4501</p> <p>Motor Boating 4502</p> <p>Water Skiing 4503</p> <p>Shoe Shop Beauty Salon 4030</p> <p>Shoe Shine 4112</p> <p>Floort 4031</p> <p>Shops 4119</p> <p>Movie Theatre 4053</p> <p>Play Theatre 4121</p> <p>Drug Store 4025</p> <p>Ice Skating 4525</p> <p>Snowmobiling 4530</p> <p>Tennis 4550</p> <p>Golf 4551</p> |
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