



TwinAisleFeeders

H52QR : a possible avenue for HQR concept implementation ?

An open-minded re-examination of # Operator strategies in the "757 niche"

There is currently ongoing a web-buzz c/o the professional aviation Blogs (AeroTurboPower, Leeham, VeroVenia, PlaneTalking, Flyprat, Actualités Aéronautiques ...) concerning the fate of world's still flying 757-200 and 757-300, of total some 1030 units : postlife strategies (P2F conversion ? scrapyard ? what else - eyeing residual values) ?; what replacement options ?

The within paper aims to present the views of TwinAisleFeeders in this field :

Sine die, near 90 % = most of the routes flown by 752 or 753 may conveniently be operated by A321 ceo, or in some cases by the 739 NG. In the near future, the A321 NEO or MAX-9 will offer better range capabilities, to efficiently serve even more of the longer/thinner 757 routes. For ER operations on thicker routes (10 % ?), compromising A330/A350 or 787 is OK.

Conclusion : there is not enough demand in the market to support a stand-alone 757R (for Replacement) newbuild project, ie a vector for P2P operations of 190-280 pax over distances up to 4,200 nm : compromising available aircraft types will acceptably cover the "757 niche".

However, the 757 is not dead : those excellent workhorses are still making money for the operators. Two questions arise in the context : one is for airline retail strategists : how best to do away with the infamed "757 syndrome" (a string of in-flight service and airport ground rotation inefficiencies) to increase the 757's pax-appeal ?; then one for Boeing product strategists : how to stop Airbus picking up the Lion's share of the 757 niche with the A321 ?

Indeed, the menace of a quasi-monopoly is there : the A321 (ceo or NEO) is more flexible than 739 (NG or MAX); on top, Airbus may flag up the mirages of H21QR and H22QR... Specially the latter with 3 ACTs would develop three extra flight hours' worth of additional range vs A321, becoming thereby the "natural" successor to the 757. A firm commitment from three of the major 757 operators could swing around a decision to stretch the A321 !

Consequently, our advice to Boeing is this : DO NOT LEAVE THE 757 NICHE UNATTENDED !

The OWE of an H52QR MAX (LEAP-X or PurePower) comes close to 54* m.tonnes (ie some 4 m.tonnes better than the 757-200/RB211); re-engined to "MAX+" (a slightly boosted power setting of say, +4,000 lbf beyond LEAP-1A or PW1133G for A321) an H52QR would perform nicely, with 22 %* better range vs 752/RB211 for the same mission fuel. A Twin Aisle aircraft – with Premium [1+2+1] and Y-class [1+3+1] accomodation – the H52QR has incomparable pax-appeal and much better airport ground rotation efficiency vs A321 or 739 [3+3]. The revamped H52QR MAX would greatly extend the useful commercial life of the 757-200, whilst boosting its Residual Value, with superb ROIC results due to higher 24h productivity, Product Differentiation, better Carry-On vol/pax, better yields (... as for other HQR feeders).

With a MTOW of apprx. 104 m.tonnes, wherefrom [Payload + Fuel] = up to 50* m.tonnes, if applied to typical feeder routes (where A32X Series and 73X Series are commonly deployed), the H52QR would set entirely new service standards in the market, boosting Operator and (airframer + engine) OEMs' Image&Prestige and Notoriety, whilst at zero - because fully controllable - technical risks. The bill for NRD&D costs for the revamp would easily be footed by three major 757 Operators jumping jointly to launch the H52QR sided by the privileged (selected !) engine OEM : the latter will enjoy protected access to an entirely new and so far unsuspected market, of up to some 2,000 additional (PurePower vs LEAP-X ?) powerplant units (+ spares), enough to immediately and irreversibly invest the enviable and very strategic position as Front Runner in the knife-sharp LEAP-X vs PurePower sales competition.

With its high-pitched wing, the 757 will accept the installation of ultra-high BPR engines, as there is no geometric hindrance to optimally expand the nacelle/fan diameters, Boeing (for the H52QR MAX) with the lucky engine OEM (P&W or CFMI, for the selected engine) would take up the position as undisputed Leaders in application of advanced engine technology, correcting the disadvantage so far of MAX vs NEO in this particularly media-sensitive field.

Conclusion :

Intelligently played out NOW by Boeing, H5XQR Series as a strategy could help prevent an early A321 stretch decision by Airbus + protect Boeing's interests vs a pre-emptive campaign by Airbus with A321 aimed to pick up the Lion's share of the 757 niche replacement market.

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(*) subject to review/confirmation by the number-crunchers of Boeing Commercial Aircraft.