

As recently demonstrated by a very sad incident in Tampa, Florida, small aircraft are really no more a risk to cities than a typical automobile. Yet, we have a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) over Washington DC that effectively shuts out small aircraft from the city while allowing large airliners to take off and land as if the terrorism from six months ago never happened.

Were this strictly a technical decision, the FAA clearly should have allowed small aircraft to continue flying over the city while banning large aircraft. Obviously this decision is not technical. In fact, were the FAA truly interested in addressing the risk, it would have kept the ban on large aircraft over the city and allowed all small aircraft below a certain weight to continue flying. This TFR actually makes security WORSE.

In any case, the TFR does nothing to stop a repeat terrorist event like those of last September. By the time an intruder could be discovered there would be no time to deal with the consequences. This is a pointless harrassment of the General Aviation community.

We shouldn't be evaluating the TFR for anything; we should be repealing it. If aircraft are to be considered a threat such that they should be banned from the city, then the Department of Transportation ought to ban every form of truck and SUV from Washington DC as well. After all, truck bombs have been used with terrible effectiveness by many terrorist groups, including Al Qaida.

I've yet to meet anyone in the aviation community who thinks this TFR is the least bit useful in any respect. Pilots don't like it, controllers don't like it, and security experts don't think much of it either. To anyone who actually understands the issues, this is a pointless exercise in bureaucracy that hurts businesses, airports, and individuals while doing absolutely nothing to prevent a future terrorist attack.

Some ideas are so bad that you just can't make them shine in any light. This is one of them. The sooner these flight restrictions are laid to rest, the better.