

There has been a great deal of rhetoric about how the events of September 11th were able to occur. Prior to 9/11 I don't think anyone in the US had considered the possibility of using hijacked airliners as weapons. Because of that oversight, we were vulnerable to attack. Since 9/11, people are taking security more seriously, especially in aviation. Airline passengers and crew will ever again passively allow hijackers to take control of an airliner. This is now probably the greatest deterrent to hijackers in the US.

I agreed fully with the closing of the United States Airspace back on 9/11. We were dealing with a totally unknown situation which justified taking drastic actions. Since that time, we have been able to assess the risks of both commercial and general aviation.

I have been flying general aviation aircraft in the Washington area for almost fifteen years. I own an aircraft, which is based at College Park Airport, and I am also well acquainted with Hyde and Potomac Airports. These airports are similar to villages, where most of the pilots have known each other for years. Since 9/11 there has been a heightened sense of alertness at all three airports with added vigilance for anything out of the ordinary. While very limited flight operations are permitted, the fixed base operators are still being hurt by low fuel sales and minimal aircraft maintenance. The only thing that is going to save these businesses in the long run is reopening these airports to transient aircraft.

In closing, I'm not going to reiterate the arguments about relative risks from trucks, barges, and cars, versus aircraft. I would just like to say that I believe the added vigilance in every facet of aviation, both commercial and general, have made aircraft much more secure, and probably destroyed their feasibility as a weapon. I hope at the end of the sixty day trial period, the Washington TFR will be eliminated, the three airports within the TFR will be reopened to transient traffic, and we will return to the Class B airspace regulations we had before 9/11. Thank you for your time.