

There is no evidence that general aviation is a greater threat to national security than an uncountable number of other activities that occur in this country daily. We must realize that the use of general aviation as a political example, by continuing to limit operations at the airports within the Washington TFR, is resulting in a real and dramatic cost to our national symbols and to the principles underlying our way of life.

The limitations currently placed on the College Park, Potomac, and Hyde fields have an important personal impact on local and transient pilots. For example, with the lack of transient traffic and loss of on-field businesses, the Freestate Flying Club's costs have significantly increased and our future as a viable club is much less certain.

More importantly, however, is the symbolic significance of continuing to limit operations at these fields. The FAA must support and encourage operations for all pilots at these airports for this reason.

The United States stands as an example of the protection of rights for the individual, of opportunity, for openness, and for freedom. These are the principles upon which this nation was founded. We are all fighting to protect those rights, and the administration is sworn to uphold them. The restriction of access to these three airports is of great symbolic importance in this regard. The FAA, TSA, and Secret Service, by doing all they can to restore and support those freedoms and opportunities, will demonstrate their dedication to upholding the principles of the Constitution and to protecting all people of the United States.

All of the airfields within the Washington TFR are of historic importance. We have great pride in our ability to operate off of the same ground as have so many of our colleagues, including Wilbur and Orville Wright, since 1909. It is a thrill to taxi our aircraft past the foundations of their hangars and past their compass rose that they built to train the very first military aviators, especially when we now rely so heavily upon those aviators to protect us. This experience is a uniquely American one. To deny this experience to the majority of American citizens is a crime against our citizens and against our founding principles, and to endanger the viability of these grounds is an even greater crime.

The repeated use of passive voice - "It has been determined that..." in this SFAR reinforces the impression that the decisions have been arbitrary and therefore unlawful. The SFAR, if restrictions are not lifted entirely, must state specifically who is making these determinations and state the specific justification for denying normal rights to the majority of United States citizens.

The continuing restriction of access to these fields is an example of how terrorism works. Terrorism has helped create an atmosphere of fear, and our reaction to that fear - and not to risk - has been to give up the principles for which we stand. Time and logic have shown that there is little to fear from general aviation operations, and the symbolic price we are paying by continuing the restriction of operations at these airports simply is not justified by any small degree of additional security which it might afford. Let's stop accommodating terrorism and restore transient access to these fields.

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