

I own a logistics consulting business and use my own airplane to conduct business in the Southeastern U.S. My aviation experience includes more than 600 hours in airplanes and helicopters with commercial and instrument ratings in both aircraft categories. The Army provided most of my helicopter training. My last Reserve assignment (as a Major) before retiring was as a Medevac Section Leader. I am in the process of obtaining certified flight instructor ratings for both airplanes and helicopters.

If it were not for the tragic events of 9/11 I do not believe I would have gotten back into aviation. When the FAA imposed flight restrictions following the terrorist attacks, it was the first time in my life I felt I lost part of my freedom. I am not trying to be theatrical - I was really shaken to the core by the government's actions. After enduring long lines and poorly trained security people on my frequent trips to the airport, I was ready to explode with frustration. My solution was to buy a plane and use general aviation to help me conduct business. When we drive our cars, not every trip takes us on the interstate, so I resolved to apply the same logic to flying for business.

I would like to share my thoughts on the creation of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in Washington, DC:

First, I oppose an ADIZ creation because it will make it difficult to conduct business travel within the Washington, DC area or any other area in which an ADIZ is implemented. The processes needed for an ADIZ will likely impose inefficiencies that will rule out general aviation as a transportation option. Using my interstate analogy, the effect is to make local pilots "take the interstate" to go a couple blocks. It often makes sense to make a flight under visual flight rules to go a few miles rather than filing an instrument flight plan. With an ADIZ in place, even short trips inside or through the ADIZ would require clearances that have the same coordination requirements and inefficiencies associated with instrument flights.

My second point is that although there have been about 3,400 restricted airspace violations between September 11 and the end of 2004, these penetrations have not been malicious or intentional. I believe that much of the responsibility for violations lies at the feet of their flight instructors. For that reason, I have made a personal commitment to train pilots as an ongoing project. Many instructors teach early in their aviation careers as a way to build hours but I believe most pilots do not have the necessary teaching tools until they reach the end of their careers. Aviation is a complex field, so a big part of the solution must come from improved selection and training of pilots.

Finally, the ADIZ solution will create the perception of improved security with a load of additional costs. At a time when our government is trying to find money to conduct a war and fund basic social services, I bristle at the thought of throwing resources at a plan with more PR value than substance. There are rational solutions to building a defense plan for our capital that do not include driving general aviation out of the region. I hope you will consider a more deliberate and creative approach in the development of a solution. If I can assist in any way, please feel free to contact me.

The terrorists are not supermen and they do not have a record of attacking with small aircraft, but they have succeeded in creating an irrational fear of aircraft in general. I hope that we can educate the public on the realities of general aviation and design a solution that will provide real security to the Washington, DC area without doing damage to the economy.