

# Rothman Calls For New Security Restrictions Over New York City Airspace During War

March 20, 2003

Rothman Calls For New Security Restrictions Over New York City Airspace During War  
Restrictions Would Mirror Those Over Washington, DC;  
Would Restrict General Aviation Aircraft At Teterboro

Washington, DC - With the United States at war with Iraq and on high alert for terrorist attacks, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today called for immediate, new restrictions over New York City airspace throughout the duration of the military conflict. The restrictions would mirror those already in place for Washington, DC and would prohibit general aviation aircraft from flying within 15 miles of New York City, including those that operate at Teterboro Airport.

"With this nation at war and faced with possible retaliatory terrorist attacks, it is imperative that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) immediately impose the same flight restrictions on general aviation aircraft in the New York Metropolitan area that are currently in place in Washington, DC," Rothman said. "In addition to the Washington, DC area, TSA has issued restrictions on the airspace around Disney amusement parks. TSA must focus as well on the millions of people in the New York Metropolitan area who experienced the greatest terrorist attack in U.S. history a little more than a year and a half ago."

The ban Rothman called for, which is the same as the one already in place for Washington, DC, would prevent general aviation aircraft from operating within 15 miles of New York City during the war or longer if the restrictions are kept in place in the nation's capital. Planes could request an exemption from the prohibition. If an exemption is granted, those general aviation aircraft would first have to fly into a "gateway" airport that is outside of the restricted zone where the plane, pilot, crew, passengers, luggage, and cargo would be inspected by TSA officials before being allowed to continue on to Teterboro. The regulation that Rothman is calling for would also require the TSA to place its agents at Teterboro to inspect those planes who request an exemption to fly out of the airport.

"While I support President Bush's decision to disarm Saddam Hussein of his weapons of mass destruction after 12 years of unsuccessful diplomatic efforts, I think the Administration needs to be doing more to protect Americans at home and that includes securing the airspace over the New York Metropolitan area," Rothman said. "Government's first responsibility is to protect the people and it would be a national disgrace if we did not learn from September 11 and, when America is engaged in a military conflict in Iraq, impose restrictions on general aviation aircraft flying in one of the top target areas for terrorist attacks."

In a related matter, under guidelines set forth by TSA this week, all aircraft - both commercial and general aviation - must adhere to new rules when within 34.5 miles of New York City. All aircraft must have a flight plan filed indicating the precise course of travel. Pilots also need to be in continual contact with air traffic controllers and the planes would have to be equipped with transponders that would be used to track all plane movements.

"The regulations on flights in the New York Metropolitan area simply do not go far enough," Rothman said. ###

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Admiral James M. Loy  
Administrator  
Transportation Security Administration  
TSA Headquarters  
West Building  
12th Floor, TSA - 1  
400 7th St. SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
March 20, 2003

Dear Admiral Loy,

With the nation today at war, I am writing to respectfully request the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to immediately impose over New York City the same air space restrictions for general aviation aircraft that now exist over Washington, DC.

As you know, currently general aviation aircraft are prohibited from landing at airports within 15 miles of Washington, DC. Aircraft owners can however seek waivers from this policy and if a waiver is granted, an aircraft must first proceed to a "gateway" airport to be inspected by TSA personnel. Once cleared by the TSA, the aircraft is free to proceed to those airports inside the 15 mile perimeter.

I ask you to impose the same policy and 15 mile perimeter around New York City in regard to general aviation aircraft. Under this plan, in addition to the steps I described above, TSA personnel would also be assigned to airports within the perimeter - such as the one in Teterboro, New Jersey - to inspect departing aircraft prior to take-off.

As one of the cities which was a target of terrorists on September 11, the New York metropolitan region must be as highly protected as Washington, DC. While general aviation aircraft are much smaller than large commercial aircraft, were they to be crashed into a facility where large numbers of people are gathered or if such planes were filled with chemical or biological weapons, they could pose a significant danger. With the threat level now on "high" and the nation at war, we cannot afford to wait.

Since this is a national security concern, I ask you to make this change immediately and I look forward to your prompt response. Thank you for your service to our nation at this difficult time and for your review of my request.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Rothman  
Member of Congress, NJ-9

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