

August 27, 2004

Letters to the Editor
The Boston Globe
P.O. Box 2378
Boston, MA 02107-2378

Dear Editor,

I am shocked by the lack of balance displayed in the Boston Globe's recent article ("Analysts warn of small-plane terrorism threat", Aug.26). As president of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), representing more than 400,000 members nationwide, with almost 8,000 in Massachusetts, I must ask why you made no attempt to present the views of the general aviation (GA) community.

You stated that GA presents an immediate threat to the safety of our nation using a yet-to-be-released study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) as the source for your claim. This is reckless journalism, and it led your newspaper to print a story that's worse than misleading—it's simply untrue. Even CSIS has denounced your coverage calling it "incorrect" and "incomplete" (see enclosed press release from CSIS). In fact, CSIS told AOPA they aren't suggesting that GA presents an overarching threat nor are they calling for onerous legislative or regulatory action.

It is irresponsible to imply that nothing has been done to safeguard general aviation. That is far from the truth. Immediately after the tragic events of Sept.11, 2001, AOPA and the GA community developed and launched security initiatives that were adopted by the government and continue today, addressing airports, airspace, aircraft and pilot licensing. Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, the TSA, and even Congress have recognized AOPA's Airport Watch program, fashioned after the popular neighborhood crime watch programs, as an exemplary action partnering industry and the federal government to protect our nation's aviation infrastructure.

If your writers want to provide fair and accurate coverage on general aviation, consider the world's largest aviation organization as a resource. Don't ignore us next time an issue develops. If your readers want to learn more about how the general aviation community serves America, I encourage them to visit www.gaservingamerica.org.

Sincerely,

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