

In sheer numbers or volume on a comparison basis, Mr. Thomas, am I correct in assuming that there are approximately 2,000 commercial aircraft and approximately 100,000, I believe to be the figure that General McKee used, of the general aviation aircraft?

Mr. THOMAS. Yes, sir. I believe the figure for commercial now is about 2,400 or 2,500.

Mr. DEVINE. So for every commercial aircraft there are roughly 50 general aviation aircraft?

Mr. THOMAS. Yes, sir.

Mr. DEVINE. I hope the public recognizes that. They generally think there are more commercials than general aviation aircraft.

Mr. THOMAS. And we might also note that there are another 25,000 military aircraft occupying the same air space.

Mr. DEVINE. In addition?

Mr. THOMAS. In addition.

Mr. DEVINE. I know you are acquainted with Norman Crabtree, the State director of aviation in my State of Ohio.

Mr. THOMAS. Yes, sir.

Mr. DEVINE. He has suggested that a study be made of the desirability of establishing climb and descent corridors for jets departing from and arriving at major airports. I believe at Lockburn, TAC Base, in my district, they have established that in a southwestern direction. The general aviation must stay out of those corridors. Have you pursued that in the past?

Mr. THOMAS. Yes, sir, we have examined that at length. It was one of the solutions that we hoped to apply for the very high performance military aircraft as compared to the performance of the civil jet.

Here we were talking about "afterburner" climbs of very high rates, where the airplane pilot feels like he is on his back. He is not actually, but it is very difficult to see ahead because of the airplane angle. So we did try to protect the high performance operation with the climb corridors.

It hasn't been too successful, despite the fact that the corridors are marked on the maps. People do wander into them.

Another problem is that usually departing aircraft want to go in another direction. The wind is another direction, for example. If we placed them all around each airport, we would completely block the air space. Our own view is that it is better to hold the speed and the performance down and give radar advisories, which would offer more safety than trying to sterilize the air space for two or three operations a day for high performance. That, perhaps, is not necessary.

Mr. DEVINE. I believe, General McKee, you figured that 80 percent of the aircraft is 12,000 feet or under.

Mr. THOMAS. That is correct.

Mr. DEVINE. But all aviation must go through this area in landing and taking off.

Mr. THOMAS. Yes, sir.

Mr. DEVINE. On a personal experience standpoint, I was talking to a physician over the weekend and in his practice he is examining flight tower personnel. He said that he was appalled at the number of flight tower personnel who wouldn't fly for love nor money because they know the situation that is up there.