

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage; 57, Wings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by reports of cracking at hole location #10 on the left-hand side of frame 4. The FAA is issuing this AD to address fatigue cracking, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Requirements

(1) For airplanes identified in paragraph (c)(1) of this AD: Except as specified in paragraphs (h)(1) and (3) of this AD, comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0110R1, dated May 27, 2020 (“EASA AD 2020-0110R1”).

(2) For airplanes identified in paragraph (c)(2) of this AD: Except as specified in paragraphs (h)(2) and (3) of this AD, comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2020-0111R2, dated June 16, 2020 (“EASA AD 2020-0111R2”).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2020-0110R1 and EASA AD 2020-0111R2

(1) Where EASA AD 2020-0110R1 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2020-0111R2 refers to June 3, 2020 (“the effective date of this [EASA] AD at original issue”), this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(3) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2020-0110R1 and EASA AD 2020-0111R2 does not apply to this AD.

(i) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or responsible Flight Standards Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer*: For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or

EASA; or Airbus SAS’s EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) *Required for Compliance (RC)*: Except as required by paragraph (i)(2) of this AD, if any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator’s maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(j) Related Information

For more information about this AD, contact Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3225; email Dan.Rodina@faa.gov.

(k) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0110R1, dated May 27, 2020.

(ii) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0111R2, dated June 16, 2020.

(3) For EASA AD 2020-0110R1 and EASA AD 2020-0111R2, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADS@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

(4) You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. This material may be found in the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0788.

(5) You may view this material that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email fedreg.legal@nara.gov, or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on November 4, 2020.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 91**

[Docket No.: FAA-2017-0768; Amdt. No. 91-348C]

RIN 2120-AL55

Extension of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Damascus Flight Information Region (FIR) (OSTT)

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This action extends the prohibition against certain flight operations in the Damascus Flight Information Region (FIR) (OSTT) by all: U.S. air carriers; U.S. commercial operators; persons exercising the privileges of an airman certificate issued by the FAA, except when such persons are operating U.S.-registered aircraft for a foreign air carrier; and operators of U.S.-registered civil aircraft, except when the operator of such aircraft is a foreign air carrier. The FAA finds this action necessary to address significant, continuing hazards to U.S. civil aviation associated with the ongoing and complex conflict in Syria. The FAA also republishes the approval process and exemption information for this Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR), consistent with other recently published flight prohibition SFARs, and makes minor administrative revisions.

DATES: This final rule is effective on November 27, 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephen Moates, Air Transportation Division, Flight Standards Service, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591; telephone 202-267-8166; email Stephen.moates@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Executive Summary**

This action extends the expiration date of the prohibition against certain U.S. civil flight operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) by all: U.S. air carriers; U.S. commercial operators; persons exercising the privileges of an airman certificate issued by the FAA, except when such persons are operating U.S.-registered aircraft for a foreign air carrier; and operators of U.S.-registered civil aircraft, except when the operator of such aircraft is a foreign air carrier. Specifically, this amendment extends the expiration date of SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609 of title 14, Code of Federal

Regulations (CFR), from December 30, 2020, to December 30, 2023, due to the significant, continuing hazards to U.S. civil aviation operation in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) associated with the ongoing and complex conflict in Syria, as described in the preamble to this final rule. This action also republishes the approval process and exemption information for this SFAR, consistent with other recently published flight prohibition SFARs, and makes minor administrative revisions.

II. Legal Authority and Good Cause

A. Legal Authority

The FAA is responsible for the safety of flight in the U.S. and for the safety of U.S. civil operators, U.S.-registered civil aircraft, and U.S.-certificated airmen throughout the world. Sections 106(f) and (g) of title 49, U.S. Code (U.S.C.), subtitle I, establish the FAA Administrator's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle VII of title 49, Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority. Section 40101(d)(1) provides that the Administrator shall consider in the public interest, among other matters, assigning, maintaining, and enhancing safety and security as the highest priorities in air commerce. Section 40105(b)(1)(A) requires the Administrator to exercise this authority consistently with the obligations of the U.S. Government under international agreements.

The FAA is promulgating this rulemaking under the authority described in 49 U.S.C. 44701, General requirements. Under that section, the FAA is charged broadly with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing, among other things, regulations and minimum standards for practices, methods, and procedures that the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce and national security.

This regulation is within the scope of the FAA's authority because it continues to prohibit the persons described in paragraph (a) of SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, from conducting flight operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) due to the significant, continuing hazards to the safety of U.S. civil flight operations, as described in the preamble to this final rule.

B. Good Cause for Immediate Adoption

Section 553(b)(3)(B) of title 5, U.S. Code, authorizes agencies to dispense with notice and comment procedures for rules when the agency for "good cause" finds that those procedures are "impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary

to the public interest." Section 553(d) also authorizes agencies to forgo the delay in the effective date of the final rule for good cause found and published with the rule. In this instance, the FAA finds good cause exists to forgo notice and comment because notice and comment would be impracticable and contrary to the public interest. In addition, it is contrary to the public interest to delay the effective date of this SFAR.

The risk environment for U.S. civil aviation in airspace managed by other countries with respect to safety of flight is fluid due to the risks posed by weapons capable of targeting, or otherwise negatively affecting, U.S. civil aviation, as well as other hazards to U.S. civil aviation associated with fighting, extremist or militant activity, or heightened tensions. This fluidity and the need for the FAA to rely upon classified information in assessing these risks make issuing notice and seeking comments impracticable and contrary to the public interest. With respect to the impracticability of notice and comment procedures, the potential for rapid changes in the risks to U.S. civil aviation significantly limits how far in advance of a new or amended flight prohibition the FAA can usefully assess the risk environment. Furthermore, to the extent that these rules and any amendments to them are based upon classified information, the FAA is not legally permitted to share such information with the general public, who cannot meaningfully comment on information to which they are not legally allowed access.

Under these conditions, public interest considerations favor not providing notice and seeking comment for this rule. While there is a public interest in having an opportunity for the public to comment on agency action, there is a greater public interest in having the FAA's flight prohibitions, and any amendments thereto, reflect the Agency's current understanding of the risk environment for U.S. civil aviation. This allows the FAA to protect the safety of U.S. operators' aircraft and the lives of their passengers and crews without overrestricting U.S. operators' routing options.

The FAA has determined extending the expiration date of SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, is necessary due to safety-of-flight hazards associated with the ongoing and complex conflict in Syria. These hazards continue to present significant risks to U.S. civil aviation operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT), as described in the preamble to this rule. Therefore, the FAA's flight prohibition for U.S. civil aviation

operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) must continue, without interruption.

Accordingly, the FAA finds good cause exists to forgo notice and comment and any delay in the effective date for this rule.

III. Background

On December 10, 2018, the FAA amended SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, to extend the expiration date of the rule from December 30, 2018, to December 30, 2020.¹ In issuing the 2018 final rule, the FAA stated the situation in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) remained hazardous for U.S. civil aviation due to a variety of aviation safety risks associated with the ongoing conflict in Syria.²

IV. Discussion of the Final Rule

The situation in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) continues to present an unacceptable level of risk for U.S. civil aviation safety. The conflict in Syria between pro-Assad regime forces, third country military forces, as well as opposition groups, and extremist elements, is extremely complex.

The presence of third parties conducting independent military operations in Syria against pro-Assad regime forces, opposition groups, and extremist elements, exacerbates the situation. Third-party airstrikes in Syria often result in Syrian military air defense responses. Syrian authorities do not adequately de-conflict these air defense activities, which include indiscriminate surface-to-air missile (SAM) fire, with civil aviation operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT), including, but not limited to, civil flight operations in close proximity to international airports in Syria. For example, in late February 2020, Syrian air defense activities forced a commercial Cham Wings Airbus 320 passenger flight on final approach to Damascus International Airport to divert to an alternate airfield in Syria.

The lack of de-confliction of Syrian air defense activity with civil air traffic is just one of the risks to U.S. civil aviation operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) emanating from third-party involvement in Syria. Russia, Iran, and the Lebanese terrorist organization, Hizballah, all of which are Syrian regime allies, continue to conduct military operations in Syria and have deployed significant air defense and electronic warfare capabilities, including Global Positioning System

¹ Extension of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Damascus Flight Information Region (FIR)(OSTT) final rule, 83 FR 63410, December 10, 2018.

² Id. at 63411.

(GPS) jammers, which present a risk to U.S. civil aviation operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT). In March 2020, Russian, Turkish and Syrian forces clashed in Idlib Province. During these clashes, fighter aircraft and possible SAMs shot down several manned and unmanned aircraft.

In addition to the hazards associated with third-party involvement in the Syrian conflict, extremist threats to civil aviation safety continue to exist in Syria. Terrorist groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) and al Qaida-aligned entities possess, or have access to, a wide array of anti-aircraft weapons that pose a risk to civil aviation operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT). Anti-regime forces, extremists, and militants have successfully shot down multiple military aircraft using man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) during the Syrian conflict. Additionally, various elements have successfully targeted military aircraft using advanced anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs). ATGMs primarily pose a risk to civil aircraft operating near, or parked at, an airport. Finally, various groups employ unmanned aircraft systems to surveil and attack Syrian and Syrian-allied fielded forces and airfields.

As a result of the ongoing military activities by multiple actors and the lack of progress towards ending the conflict, the FAA expects significant hazards to the safety of U.S. civil aviation in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) will endure. Therefore, as a result of the significant, continuing risk to the safety of U.S. civil aviation in the Damascus FIR (OSTT), the FAA extends the expiration date of SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, from December 30, 2020, to December 30, 2023.

Amendments to SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, could be appropriate if the risk to aviation safety and security changes. In this regard, the FAA will continue to monitor the situation and evaluate the extent to which persons described in paragraph (a) of this rule might be able to operate safely in the Damascus FIR (OSTT). The FAA may amend or rescind SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, as necessary, prior to its expiration date.

The FAA also republishes the details concerning the approval and exemption processes in Sections V and VI of this preamble, with clarifications for consistency with other recently published flight prohibition SFARs. Lastly, the FAA makes minor administrative revisions, including updating the applicability paragraph of the regulatory text to make it consistent

with other recently published flight prohibition SFARs.

V. Approval Process Based on a Request From a Department, Agency, or Instrumentality of the United States Government

A. Approval Process Based on an Authorization Request from a Department, Agency, or Instrumentality of the United States Government

In some instances, U.S. Government departments, agencies, or instrumentalities may need to engage U.S. civil aviation to support their activities in the Damascus FIR (OSTT). If a department, agency, or instrumentality of the U.S. Government determines that it has a critical need to engage any person described in SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, including a U.S. air carrier or commercial operator, to transport civilian or military passengers or cargo or conduct other operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT), that department, agency, or instrumentality may request the FAA to approve persons described in paragraph (a) of SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, to conduct such operations.

The requesting department, agency, or instrumentality of the U.S. Government must submit the request for approval to the FAA's Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety in a letter signed by an appropriate senior official of the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality.³ The FAA will not accept or consider requests for approval from anyone other than the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality. In addition, the senior official signing the letter requesting FAA approval on behalf of the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality must be sufficiently positioned within the organization to demonstrate that the senior leadership of the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality supports the request for approval and is committed to taking all necessary steps to minimize operational risks to the proposed flights. The senior official must also be in a position to: (1) Attest to the accuracy of all representations made to the FAA in the request for approval, and (2) ensure that any support from the requesting U.S. Government department, agency, or

instrumentality described in the request for approval is in fact brought to bear and is maintained over time. Unless justified by exigent circumstances, requests for approval must be submitted to the FAA no less than 30 calendar days before the date on which the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality wishes the proposed operation(s) to commence.

The requestor must send the request to the Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591. Electronic submissions are acceptable and the requesting entity may request that the FAA notify it electronically as to whether the FAA grants the approval request. If a requestor wishes to make an electronic submission to the FAA, the requestor should contact the Air Transportation Division, Flight Standards Service, at (202) 267-8166, to obtain the appropriate email address. A single letter may request approval from the FAA for multiple persons described in SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, or for multiple flight operations. To the extent known, the letter must identify the person(s) the requester expects the SFAR to cover on whose behalf the U.S. Government department, agency, or instrumentality seeks FAA approval, and it must describe—

- The proposed operation(s), including the nature of the mission being supported;
- The service that the person(s) covered by the SFAR will provide;
- To the extent known, the specific locations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) where the proposed operation(s) will occur, including, but not limited to, the flight path and altitude of the aircraft while it is operating in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) and the airports, airfields, or landing zones at which the aircraft will take off and land; and
- The method by which the department, agency, or instrumentality will provide, or how the operator will otherwise obtain, current threat information and an explanation of how the operator will integrate this information into all phases of the proposed operations (*i.e.*, the pre-mission planning and briefing, in-flight, and post-flight phases).

The request for approval must also include a list of operators with whom the U.S. Government department, agency, or instrumentality requesting FAA approval has a current contract(s), grant(s), or cooperative agreement(s) or its prime contractor has a subcontract(s) for specific flight operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT). The requestor may identify additional

³This approval procedure applies to U.S. Government departments, agencies, or instrumentalities; it does not apply to the public. The FAA describes this procedure in the interest of providing transparency with respect to the FAA's process for interacting with U.S. Government departments, agencies, or instrumentalities that seek to engage U.S. civil aviation to operate within the area in which this SFAR prohibits their operations.

operators to the FAA at any time after the FAA issues its approval. Neither the operators listed in the original request, nor any operators the requestor subsequently seeks to add to the approval, may commence operations under the approval until the FAA issues them an Operations Specification (OpSpec) or Letter of Authorization (LOA), as appropriate, for operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT). The approval conditions discussed below apply to all operators, whether included in the original list or subsequently added to the approval. Requestors should send updated lists to the email address they obtain from the Air Transportation Division by calling (202) 267-8166.

If an approval request includes classified information, requestors may contact Aviation Safety Inspector Stephen Moates for instructions on submitting it to the FAA. His contact information appears in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this final rule.

FAA approval of an operation under SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, does not relieve persons subject to this SFAR of the responsibility to comply with all other applicable FAA rules and regulations. Operators of civil aircraft must comply with the conditions of their certificates, OpSpecs, and LOAs, as applicable. Operators must also comply with all rules and regulations of other U.S. Government departments or agencies that may apply to the proposed operation(s), including, but not limited to, regulations issued by the Transportation Security Administration.

B. Approval Conditions

If the FAA approves the request, the FAA's Aviation Safety organization will send an approval letter to the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality informing it that the FAA's approval is subject to all of the following conditions:

(1) The approval will stipulate those procedures and conditions that limit, to the greatest degree possible, the risk to the operator, while still allowing the operator to achieve its operational objectives.

(2) Before any approval takes effect, the operator must submit to the FAA:

(a) A written release of the U.S. Government from all damages, claims, and liabilities, including without limitation legal fees and expenses, relating to any event arising out of or related to the approved operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT); and

(b) The operator's written agreement to indemnify the U.S. Government with respect to any and all third-party damages, claims, and liabilities,

including without limitation legal fees and expenses, relating to any event arising from or related to the approved operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT).

(3) Other conditions the FAA may specify, including those the FAA might impose in OpSpecs or LOAs, as applicable.

The release and agreement to indemnify do not preclude an operator from raising a claim under an applicable non-premium war risk insurance policy the FAA issues under chapter 443 of title 49, U.S. Code.

If the FAA approves the proposed operation(s), the FAA will issue an OpSpec or LOA, as applicable, to the operator(s) identified in the original request authorizing them to conduct the approved operation(s). In addition, the FAA will notify the U.S. Government department, agency, or instrumentality that requested the FAA's approval of any additional conditions beyond those contained in the approval letter.

VI. Information Regarding Petitions for Exemption

Any operations not conducted under an approval the FAA issues through the approval process set forth previously may only occur in accordance with an exemption from SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609. A petition for exemption must comply with 14 CFR part 11. The FAA will consider whether exceptional circumstances exist beyond those the approval process described in the previous section contemplates. To determine whether a petition for exemption from the prohibition this SFAR establishes fulfills the standard of 14 CFR 11.81, the FAA consistently finds necessary the following information:

- The proposed operation(s), including the nature of the operation;
- The service the person(s) covered by the SFAR will provide;
- The specific locations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) where the proposed operation(s) will occur, including, but not limited to, the flight path and altitude of the aircraft while it is operating in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) and the airports, airfields, or landing zones at which the aircraft will take off and land;
- The method by which the operator will obtain current threat information and an explanation of how the operator will integrate this information into all phases of its proposed operations (*i.e.*, the pre-mission planning and briefing, in-flight, and post-flight phases); and
- The plans and procedures the operator will use to minimize the risks, identified in this preamble, to the proposed operations, to establish that

granting the exemption would not adversely affect safety or would provide a level of safety at least equal to that provided by this SFAR. The FAA has found comprehensive, organized plans and procedures of this nature to be helpful in facilitating the agency's safety evaluation of petitions for exemption from flight prohibition SFARs.

The FAA includes, as a condition of each such exemption it issues, a release and agreement to indemnify, as described previously.

The FAA recognizes that, with the support of the U.S. Government, the governments of other countries could plan operations SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609, affects. While the FAA will not permit these operations through the approval process, the FAA will consider exemption requests for such operations on an expedited basis and in accordance with the order of preference set forth in paragraph (c) of SFAR No. 114, § 91.1609.

If a petition for exemption includes security-sensitive or proprietary information, requestors may contact Aviation Safety Inspector Stephen Moates for instructions on submitting it to the FAA. His contact information appears in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this final rule.

VII. Regulatory Notices and Analyses

Changes to Federal regulations must undergo several economic analyses. First, Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct that each Federal agency shall propose or adopt a regulation only upon a reasoned determination that the benefits of the intended regulation justify its costs. Second, the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (Pub. L. 96-354), as codified in 5 U.S.C. 603 *et seq.*, requires agencies to analyze the economic impact of regulatory changes on small entities. Third, the Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (Pub. L. 96-39), as codified in 19 U.S.C. Chapter 13, prohibits agencies from setting standards that create unnecessary obstacles to the foreign commerce of the United States. In developing U.S. standards, the Trade Agreements Act requires agencies to consider international standards and, where appropriate, that they be the basis of U.S. standards. Fourth, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-4), as codified in 2 U.S.C. Chapter 25, requires agencies to prepare a written assessment of the costs, benefits, and other effects of proposed or final rules that include a Federal mandate likely to result in the expenditure by State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$100 million or more annually (adjusted

for inflation with base year of 1995). This portion of the preamble summarizes the FAA's analysis of the economic impacts of this final rule.

In conducting these analyses, the FAA has determined this final rule has benefits that justify its costs. This rule is a significant regulatory action, as defined in section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866, as it raises novel policy issues contemplated under that Executive Order. This rule also complies with the requirements of the Department of Transportation's administrative rule on rulemaking at 49 CFR part 5. As 5 U.S.C. 553 does not require notice and comment for this final rule, 5 U.S.C. 603 and 604 do not require regulatory flexibility analyses regarding impacts on small entities. This rule will not create unnecessary obstacles to the foreign commerce of the United States. This rule will not impose an unfunded mandate on State, local, or tribal governments, or on the private sector, by exceeding the threshold identified previously.

A. Regulatory Evaluation

This action extends the expiration date of the SFAR prohibiting certain flight operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) for an additional three years due to the significant, continuing hazards to U.S. civil aviation detailed in the preamble of this final rule. U.S. Government departments, agencies, and instrumentalities may take advantage of the approval process on behalf of U.S. operators and airmen with whom they have a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement, or with whom their prime contractor has a subcontract. U.S. operators and airmen who seek to conduct operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT) without any of the foregoing types of arrangements with the U.S. Government may petition for exemption from this rule.

The FAA acknowledges this flight prohibition might result in additional costs to some U.S. operators, such as increased fuel costs and other operational-related costs. However, the FAA expects the benefits of this action exceed the costs because it will result in the avoidance of risks of fatalities, injuries, and property damage that could occur if a U.S. operator's aircraft were shot down (or otherwise damaged) while operating in the Damascus FIR (OSTT).

B. Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), in 5 U.S.C. 603, requires an agency to prepare an initial regulatory flexibility analysis describing impacts on small entities whenever 5 U.S.C. 553 or any

other law requires an agency to publish a general notice of proposed rulemaking for any proposed rule. Similarly, 5 U.S.C. 604 requires an agency to prepare a final regulatory flexibility analysis when an agency issues a final rule under 5 U.S.C. 553, after that section or any other law requires publication of a general notice of proposed rulemaking. The FAA concludes good cause exists to forgo notice and comment and to not delay the effective date for this rule. As 5 U.S.C. 553 does not require notice and comment in this situation, 5 U.S.C. 603 and 604 similarly do not require regulatory flexibility analyses.

C. International Trade Impact Assessment

The Trade Agreements Act of 1979 (Pub. L. 96-39) prohibits Federal agencies from establishing standards or engaging in related activities that create unnecessary obstacles to the foreign commerce of the United States. Pursuant to this Act, the establishment of standards is not considered an unnecessary obstacle to the foreign commerce of the United States, so long as the standard has a legitimate domestic objective, such as the protection of safety, and does not operate in a manner that excludes imports that meet this objective. The statute also requires consideration of international standards and, where appropriate, that they be the basis for U.S. standards.

The FAA has assessed the potential effect of this final rule and determined that its purpose is to protect the safety of U.S. civil aviation from risks to their operations in the Damascus FIR (OSTT), a location outside the U.S. Therefore, the rule complies with the Trade Agreements Act of 1979.

D. Unfunded Mandates Assessment

Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-4) requires each Federal agency to prepare a written statement assessing the effects of any Federal mandate in a proposed or final agency rule that may result in an expenditure of \$100 million or more (in 1995 dollars) in any one year by State, local, and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector; such a mandate is deemed to be a "significant regulatory action." The FAA currently uses an inflation-adjusted value of \$155 million in lieu of \$100 million.

This final rule does not contain such a mandate. Therefore, the requirements of Title II of the Act do not apply.

E. Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507(d)) requires the FAA to

consider the impact of paperwork and other information collection burdens it imposes on the public. The FAA has determined no new requirement for information collection is associated with this final rule.

F. International Compatibility and Cooperation

In keeping with U.S. obligations under the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the FAA's policy is to conform to International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices to the maximum extent practicable. The FAA has determined no ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices correspond to this regulation. The FAA finds this action is fully consistent with the obligations under 49 U.S.C. 40105(b)(1)(A) to ensure the FAA exercises its duties consistently with the obligations of the United States under international agreements.

While the FAA's flight prohibition does not apply to foreign air carriers, DOT codeshare authorizations prohibit foreign air carriers from carrying a U.S. codeshare partner's code on a flight segment that operates in airspace for which the FAA has issued a flight prohibition for U.S. civil aviation. In addition, foreign air carriers and other foreign operators may choose to avoid, or be advised or directed by their civil aviation authorities to avoid, airspace for which the FAA has issued a flight prohibition for U.S. civil aviation.

G. Environmental Analysis

The FAA has analyzed this action under Executive Order 12114, Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions, and DOT Order 5610.1C, Paragraph 16. Executive Order 12114 requires the FAA to be informed of environmental considerations and take those considerations into account when making decisions on major Federal actions that could have environmental impacts anywhere beyond the borders of the United States. The FAA has determined this action is exempt pursuant to Section 2-5(a)(i) of Executive Order 12114 because it does not have the potential for a significant effect on the environment outside the United States.

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures, paragraph 8-6(c), FAA has prepared a memorandum for the record stating the reason(s) for this determination and has placed it in the docket for this rulemaking.

VIII. Executive Order Determinations**A. Executive Order 13132, Federalism**

The FAA has analyzed this rule under the principles and criteria of Executive Order 13132, Federalism. The Agency has determined this action would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, or the relationship between the Federal Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, this rule will not have federalism implications.

B. Executive Order 13211, Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use

The FAA analyzed this rule under Executive Order 13211, Actions Concerning Regulations that Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use. The Agency has determined it is not a “significant energy action” under the executive order and will not be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the supply, distribution, or use of energy.

C. Executive Order 13609, Promoting International Regulatory Cooperation

Executive Order 13609, Promoting International Regulatory Cooperation, promotes international regulatory cooperation to meet shared challenges involving health, safety, labor, security, environmental, and other issues and to reduce, eliminate, or prevent unnecessary differences in regulatory requirements. The FAA has analyzed this action under the policies and agency responsibilities of Executive Order 13609 and has determined that this action will have no effect on international regulatory cooperation.

D. Executive Order 13771, Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs

This rule is not subject to the requirements of Executive Order 13771, Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs, because the FAA is issuing it with respect to a national security function of the United States.

IX. Additional Information**A. Availability of Rulemaking Documents**

An electronic copy of a rulemaking document may be obtained from the internet by—

- Searching the docket for this rulemaking at <https://www.regulations.gov>;
- Visiting the FAA’s Regulations and Policies web page at https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies; or

- Accessing the Government Publishing Office’s website at <https://www.govinfo.gov>.

Copies may also be obtained by sending a request (identified by amendment or docket number of this rulemaking) to the Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Rulemaking, ARM-1, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591, or by calling (202) 267-9677.

Except for classified material, all documents the FAA considered in developing this rule, including economic analyses and technical reports, may be accessed from the internet through the docket for this rulemaking.

B. Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA) (Pub. L. 104-121) (set forth as a note to 5 U.S.C. 601) requires FAA to comply with small entity requests for information or advice about compliance with statutes and regulations within its jurisdiction. A small entity with questions regarding this document may contact its local FAA official, or the persons listed under the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** heading at the beginning of the preamble. To find out more about SBREFA on the internet, visit http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/rulemaking/sbre_act/.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 91

Air traffic control, Aircraft, Airmen, Airports, Aviation safety, Freight, Syria.

The Amendment

In consideration of the foregoing, the Federal Aviation Administration amends chapter I of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, as follows:

PART 91—GENERAL OPERATING AND FLIGHT RULES

- 1. The authority citation for part 91 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(f), 106(g), 40101, 40103, 40105, 40113, 40120, 44101, 44111, 44701, 44704, 44709, 44711, 44712, 44715, 44716, 44717, 44722, 46306, 46315, 46316, 46504, 46506-46507, 47122, 47508, 47528-47531, 47534, Pub. L. 114-190, 130 Stat. 615 (49 U.S.C. 44703 note); articles 12 and 29 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (61 Stat. 1180), (126 Stat. 11).

- 2. Amend § 91.1609 by revising paragraphs (a)(2), (3), and (e) to read as follows:

§ 91.1609 Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 114—Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Damascus Flight Information Region (FIR) (OSTT).

- (a) * * *
- (2) All persons exercising the privileges of an airman certificate issued by the FAA, except when such persons are operating U.S.-registered aircraft for a foreign air carrier; and
- (3) All operators of U.S.-registered civil aircraft, except when the operator of such aircraft is a foreign air carrier.

(e) *Expiration.* This SFAR will remain in effect until December 30, 2023. The FAA may amend, rescind, or extend this SFAR, as necessary.

Issued in Washington, DC, under the authority of 49 U.S.C. 106(f) and (g), 40101(d)(1), 40105(b)(1)(A), and 44701(a)(5), on November 16, 2020.

Steve Dickson,
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2020-25970 Filed 11-25-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**28 CFR Part 0**

[AG Order No. 4917-2020]

Delegation of Defense Production Act Authority

AGENCY: Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule authorizes the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division to perform, as the delegate of the Attorney General, all functions that the Attorney General is required or authorized to perform by section 708 of the Defense Production Act (“DPA”).

DATES: Effective Date: November 27, 2020.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David G. B. Lawrence, Chief, Competition Policy & Advocacy Section, Antitrust Division, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC 20530; telephone (202) 532-4698.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the DPA, upon finding that conditions exist which may pose a direct threat to the national defense or its preparedness programs, the President or his designee may consult with representatives of industry, business, financing, agriculture, labor, and other interests in order to provide for the making by such persons, with the approval of the President or his designee, of voluntary agreements and plans of action to help