

does not warrant preparation of a regulatory evaluation as the anticipated impact is so minimal. Since this is a routine matter that only affects air traffic procedures and air navigation, it is certified that this rule, when promulgated, does not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

**Environmental Review**

The FAA has determined that this airspace action of amending RNAV Route Q-83 qualifies for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations at 40 CFR part 1500, and in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures, paragraph 5-6.5a, which categorically excludes from further environmental impact review rulemaking actions that designate or modify classes of airspace areas, airways, routes, and reporting points (see 14 CFR part 71, Designation of

Class A, B, C, D, and E Airspace Areas; Air Traffic Service Routes; and Reporting Points); and paragraph 5-6.5b, which categorically excludes from further environmental impact review "Actions regarding establishment of jet routes and Federal airways (see 14 CFR 71.15, *Designation of jet routes and VOR Federal airways*). . .". As such, this action is not expected to result in any potentially significant environmental impacts. In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, paragraph 5-2 regarding Extraordinary Circumstances, the FAA has reviewed this action for factors and circumstances in which a normally categorically excluded action may have a significant environmental impact requiring further analysis. Accordingly, the FAA has determined that no extraordinary circumstances exist that warrant preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

**List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 71**

Airspace, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).

**Q-83 JEVED, GA to Greensboro, NC (GSO) [Amended]**

JEVED, GA	WP	(Lat. 31°15'02.60" N, long. 081°03'40.14" W)
ROYCO, GA	WP	(Lat. 31°35'10.38" N, long. 081°02'22.45" W)
WURFL, SC	WP	(Lat. 32°31'46.59" N, long. 081°01'08.07" W)
EFFAY, SC	WP	(Lat. 34°15'30.67" N, long. 080°30'37.94" W)
WHTTL, NC	WP	(Lat. 35°23'30.04" N, long. 080°17'52.25" W)
Greensboro, NC (GSO)	VORTAC	(Lat. 36°02'44.50" N, long. 079°58'34.94" W)

\* \* \* \* \*

Issued in Washington, DC, on September 27, 2024.

**Brian Eric Konie,**

*Acting Manager, Rules and Regulations Group.*

[FR Doc. 2024-22610 Filed 10-2-24; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

**14 CFR Part 91**

[Docket No. FAA-2020-0874; Amdt. No. 91-359B]

**RIN 2120-AL98**

**Extension of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX)**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This action extends the prohibition against certain flight operations in the Tehran Flight

Information Region (FIR) (OIIX) 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, for an additional three years, from October 31, 2024, to October 31, 2027. The FAA finds this action necessary to address significant unacceptable safety-of-flight risks to U.S. civil aviation operations that continue in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) during periods of heightened regional tensions and increased military activities. 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.

**DATES:** This final rule is effective on October 3, 2024.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bill Petrak, Flight Standards Service, through the Washington Operations Center, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence

**The Amendment**

In consideration of the foregoing, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 14 CFR part 71 as follows:

**PART 71—DESIGNATION OF CLASS A, B, C, D, AND E AIRSPACE AREAS; AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE ROUTES; AND REPORTING POINTS**

■ 1. The authority citation for 14 CFR part 71 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 106(f), 106(g); 40103, 40113, 40120; E.O. 10854, 24 FR 9565, 3 CFR, 1959-1963 Comp., p. 389.

**§ 71.1 [Amended]**

■ 2. The incorporation by reference in 14 CFR 71.1 of FAA Order JO 7400.11J, Airspace Designations and Reporting Points, dated July 31, 2024, and effective September 15, 2024, is amended as follows:

*Paragraph 2006 United States Area Navigation Routes.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20591; telephone (202) 267-3203; email [9-FAA-OverseasFlightProhibitions@faa.gov](mailto:9-FAA-OverseasFlightProhibitions@faa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**I. Executive Summary**

This action extends the expiration date of SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), from October 31, 2024, to October 31, 2027. SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, prohibits certain flight operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) 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 unacceptable safety-of-flight risks to U.S. civil aviation that continue in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) during periods of heightened regional tensions and increased military activities, conditions that led to the January 2020 accidental shootdown of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (PS 752) by Iranian air defense

forces. The FAA also republishes the approval process and exemption information for this flight prohibition SFAR, consistent with other recently published flight prohibition SFARs.

## II. Authority and Good Cause

### A. 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. Section 106(f) of title 49, U.S. Code (U.S.C.), subtitle I, establishes 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 rule 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 U.S. 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. 117, § 91.1617, from conducting flight operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) due to the continuing significant hazards to the safety of U.S. civil flight operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) as described in the preamble to this final rule.

### B. Good Cause for Immediate Adoption

Section 553(b)(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." Also, section 553(d) permits agencies, upon a finding of good cause, to issue rules with an effective date less than 30 days from the date of publication. In this instance, the FAA finds good cause to forgo notice and comment and the delayed effective date because they would be

impracticable and contrary to the public interest.

Providing notice and the opportunity for the public to comment here would be impracticable. The FAA's flight prohibitions, and any amendments thereto, need to include appropriate boundaries that 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 over-restricting or under-restricting U.S. operators' routing options. However, the risk environment for U.S. civil aviation in airspace managed by other countries with respect to safety of flight is fluid in circumstances involving fighting, violent extremist and militant activity, or periods of heightened tensions, particularly where weapons capable of targeting or otherwise negatively affecting U.S. civil aviation are or may be present. This fluidity, and 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. The delay that would be occasioned by providing an opportunity to comment on this action would significantly increase the risk that the resulting final action would not accurately reflect the current risks to U.S. civil aviation associated with the situation and thus would not establish boundaries for the flight prohibition commensurate with those risks.

While the FAA sought and responded to public comments, the boundaries of the area in which unacceptable risks to the safety of U.S. civil aviation existed might change due to: evolving military or political circumstances; violent extremist and militant group activity; the introduction, removal, or repositioning of more advanced anti-aircraft weapon systems; or other factors. As a result, if the situation improved while the FAA sought and responded to public comments, the rule the FAA finalized might be over-restrictive, unnecessarily limiting U.S. operators' routing options and potentially causing them to incur unnecessary additional fuel and operations-related costs, as well as potentially causing passengers to incur unnecessarily some costs attributed to their time. Conversely, if the situation deteriorated while the FAA sought and responded to public comments, the rule the FAA finalized might be under-restrictive, allowing U.S. civil aviation to continue operating in areas where unacceptable risks to their safety had developed. Such an outcome would endanger the safety of these aircraft, as

well as their passengers and crews, exposing them to unacceptable risks of death, injury, and property damage that could occur if a U.S. operator's aircraft were shot down (or otherwise damaged) while operating in the Tehran FIR (OIIX).

Alternatively, if the FAA made changes to the area in which U.S. civil aviation operations would be prohibited between a notice of proposed rulemaking and a final rule due to changed conditions, the version of the rule the public commented on would no longer reflect the FAA's current assessment of the risk environment for U.S. civil aviation.

In addition, seeking comment would be contrary to the public interest because some of the rational basis for the rulemaking is based upon classified information and controlled unclassified information not authorized for public release. In order to meaningfully provide comment on a proposal, the public would need access to the basis for the agency's decision-making, which the FAA cannot provide. Disclosing classified information or controlled unclassified information not authorized for public release in order to seek meaningful comment on the proposal would harm the public interest. Accordingly, the FAA meaningfully seeking comment on the proposal is contrary to the public interest.

Therefore, providing notice and the opportunity for comment would be impracticable as it would hinder the FAA's ability to maintain appropriate flight prohibitions based on up-to-date risk assessments of the risks to the safety of U.S. civil aviation operations in airspace managed by other countries, and contrary to the public interest, as the FAA cannot protect classified information and controlled unclassified information not authorized for public release and meaningfully seek public comment.

For the same reasons discussed above, the potential safety impacts and the need for prompt action on up-to-date information that is not public would make delaying the effective date impracticable and contrary to the public interest.

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

## III. Background and Discussion of the Final Rule

The FAA originally issued a prohibition on U.S. civil aviation operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) after Iran conducted retaliatory ballistic missile strikes targeting U.S. air bases in

Iraq on January 7, 2020, following the death of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. airstrike.<sup>1</sup> Due to the heightened military activities in the region at that time, including the heightened alert status of Iranian military forces, and increased political tensions in the Middle East, which included the potential for further escalation, the FAA determined an unacceptable risk to U.S. civil aviation existed in the Baghdad FIR (ORBB), the Tehran FIR (OIIX), and the overwater areas of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman due to the potential for miscalculation or misidentification.<sup>2</sup>

To address these immediate safety-of-flight hazards, on January 7, 2020, UTC, the FAA issued Notices-to-Airmen (NOTAMs) KICZ A0001/20, A0002/20, and A0003/20, which prohibited U.S. civil flight operations in the Baghdad FIR (ORBB), the Tehran FIR (OIIX), and the overwater airspace above the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, within hours after the FAA issued NOTAM KICZ A0002/20, Iranian air defense forces accidentally shot down PS 752 shortly after its departure from Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport (OIIE).<sup>4</sup> These forces apparently misidentified the aircraft, which was conducting a regularly scheduled passenger flight, as a missile threat.<sup>5</sup> There were no survivors out of the 176 passengers and crew.

Following this tragedy, there was uncertainty about how long the hazards to civil aviation in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) would persist; whether Iran would be transparent in its investigation into the downing of PS 752; and whether Iran would implement changes in its air defense command and control procedures, airspace de-confliction processes, and rules of engagement for air defense engagements to reduce the risk of further tragedies sufficiently to allow for safe U.S. civil aviation operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX). The FAA was also concerned about the risks to U.S. civil aviation associated with the wide array of military activities then occurring in, emanating from, or transiting the Tehran FIR (OIIX), in an environment of heightened regional tensions and the potential inadvertent risks from Iranian-fielded GPS and

communications jammers.<sup>6</sup> Due to the unacceptable risk environment for U.S. civil aviation in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) created by this confluence of circumstances, on October 29, 2020, the FAA published SFAR No. 117, 14 CFR 91.1617, in the **Federal Register**, incorporating the flight prohibition for the Tehran FIR (OIIX) contained in NOTAM KICZ A0002/20 into the Code of Federal Regulations.<sup>7</sup>

On September 20, 2022, the FAA published a final rule in the **Federal Register** extending SFAR No. 117, 14 CFR 91.1617, for an additional two years due to continued concerns, described in more detail in the preamble to that final rule, regarding the potential for unannounced Iranian ballistic missile fire, as well as UAS activity, originating from western Iran and targeting sites in the region.<sup>8</sup> The FAA was concerned about the safety-of-flight hazards to civil aviation and airspace de-confliction challenges posed by such activity.<sup>9</sup>

The FAA continues to assess the situation in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) as presenting an unacceptable risk to the safety of U.S. civil aviation. Since the early October 2023 Hamas attack on Israel and the initiation of Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, which remain ongoing, regional tensions have further escalated, resulting in increased Iranian military activities and heightened alert status of Iranian military forces posing safety-of-flight risk concerns similar to those that led to the tragic shootdown of PS752. The FAA also has not observed any transparent sustained changes to Iran's air defense command and control procedures, airspace de-confliction procedures, and rules of engagement that would sufficiently diminish the risk of another accidental shutdown of a civil aircraft by Iranian air defense units in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) during future periods of heightened tensions for U.S. civil aviation operations to resume safely.

The FAA acknowledges Iranian authorities proactively issued a series of NOTAMs to deconflict and mitigate risks to civil aviation operations prior to the April 13, 2024, retaliatory operations emanating out of western Iran, which represented some level of improved civil-military coordination. Additionally, Iranian authorities took actions to mitigate risks to civil aviation

operations during the April 19, 2024, strikes in Isfahan, Iran. However, the FAA continues to closely monitor Iranian activities for indications of sustained and consistent improvements in Iran's ability to proactively mitigate risks to civil aviation operations during periods of heightened regional tensions and increased military operations in, or emanating out of, the Tehran FIR (OIIX).

Additionally, the FAA has continued concerns regarding the potential for unannounced Iranian ballistic missile launches and weaponized UAS activity originating from Iran and targeting sites across the region. For example, in January 2024, Iran conducted uncoordinated cross-border attacks on targets in Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan, using weaponized UAS and missile strikes. These military operations presented airspace deconfliction challenges and safety-of-flight hazards to civil aircraft, including those operating on international air routes in the region. Additionally, the FAA has concerns with the increased level of Global Positioning System (GPS) and communications jamming in the region, which poses additional safety concerns for flight operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX). In April 2024, Iranian authorities issued a NOTAM to advise operators of the potential for GPS/Global Navigation Satellite System interruptions in the Tehran FIR (OIIX). The FAA acknowledges Iran's provision of safety information to the international civil aviation community in this particular instance; however, the FAA reiterates the need for sustained and consistent improvements in Iran's ability to proactively mitigate risks to civil aviation operations during periods of heightened regional tensions and increased military operations in, or emanating out of, the Tehran FIR (OIIX).

Therefore, as a result of the significant continuing unacceptable risks to the safety of U.S. civil aviation operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX), the FAA extends the expiration date of SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, from October 31, 2024, until October 31, 2027.

Further amendments to SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, might be appropriate if the risk to U.S. civil 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX).

The FAA also republishes the details concerning the approval and exemption processes in Sections IV and V of this preamble, consistent with other recently published flight prohibition SFARs, to enable interested persons to refer to this

<sup>1</sup> *Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX)* final rule, 85 FR 68435 (Oct. 29, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* SFAR No. 117, 14 CFR 91.1617, and this rulemaking action are limited in scope to the Tehran FIR (OIIX).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Extension of the Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIX)* final rule, 87 FR 57379 (Sept. 20, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

final rule for comprehensive information about requesting relief from the FAA from the provisions of SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617.

#### IV. 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX). If a department, agency, or instrumentality of the U.S. Government determines that it has a critical need to engage any person described in paragraph (a) of SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, including a U.S. air carrier or commercial operator, to transport civilian or military passengers or cargo or conduct other operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX), that department, agency, or instrumentality may request the FAA to approve persons described in paragraph (a) of SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, to conduct such operations.

The requesting U.S. Government department, agency, or instrumentality 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.<sup>10</sup> The FAA will not accept or consider requests for approval from anyone other than the requesting U.S. Government department, agency, or instrumentality. In addition, the senior official signing the letter requesting FAA approval must be sufficiently positioned within the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality to demonstrate that the organization's senior leadership supports the request for approval and is committed to taking all necessary steps to minimize aviation safety and security 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, requesting U.S. Government departments, agencies, or instrumentalities must submit requests for approval to the FAA no less than 30 calendar days before the date on which the requesting department, agency, or instrumentality wishes the operator(s) to commence the proposed operation(s).

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 request for approval. If a requestor wishes to make an electronic submission to the FAA, the requestor should contact the Washington Operations Center by telephone at (202) 267-3203 or by email at [9-FAA-OverseasFlightProhibitions@faa.gov](mailto:9-FAA-OverseasFlightProhibitions@faa.gov) for submission instructions. The requestor must not submit its letter requesting FAA approval or related supporting documentation to the Washington Operations Center. Rather, the Washington Operations Center will refer the requestor to an appropriate staff member of the Flight Standards Service for further assistance.

A single letter may request approval from the FAA for multiple persons described in SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, 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 the person(s) covered by the SFAR will provide;
- To the extent known, the specific locations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX) and the airports, airfields, or landing zones at which the aircraft will take off and land; and
- The method by which the requesting 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX). The requestor may identify additional 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX). The approval conditions discussed below apply to all operators. Requestors should contact the Washington Operations Center by telephone at (202) 267-3203 or by email at [9-FAA-OverseasFlightProhibitions@faa.gov](mailto:9-FAA-OverseasFlightProhibitions@faa.gov) for instructions on how to submit the names of additional operators the requestor wishes to add to an existing approval to the FAA. The requestor must not submit the names of additional operators it wishes to add to an existing approval to the Washington Operations Center. Rather, the Washington Operations Center will refer the requestor to an appropriate staff member of the Flight Standards Service for further assistance.

If an approval request includes classified information or controlled unclassified information not authorized for public release, requestors may contact the Washington Operations Center for instructions on submitting it to the FAA. The Washington Operations Center's contact information appears in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this final rule.

FAA approval of an operation under SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617, 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, agencies, or instrumentalities that may apply to the proposed operation(s), including, but not limited to, regulations issued by the Transportation Security Administration.

<sup>10</sup>This 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 in the area in which this SFAR would prohibit their operations in the absence of specific FAA approval.

### B. Approval Conditions

If the FAA approves the request, the FAA's Aviation Safety organization will send an approval letter to the requesting U.S. Government 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX); 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 out of or related to the approved operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX).

(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 and any operators the requestor subsequently adds to the approval, authorizing them to conduct the approved operation(s). In addition, as stated in paragraph (3) of this section V.B., the FAA notes that it may include additional conditions beyond those contained in the approval letter in any OpSpec or LOA associated with a particular operator operating under this approval, as necessary in the interests of aviation safety. U.S. Government departments, agencies, and instrumentalities requesting FAA approval on behalf of entities with which they have a contract or subcontract, grant, or cooperative agreement should request a copy of the relevant OpSpec or LOA directly from the entity with which they have any of the foregoing types of arrangements, if desired.

### V. 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. 117, § 91.1617. A petition for exemption must comply with 14 CFR part 11. The FAA will consider whether exceptional circumstances exist beyond those described in the approval process in the previous section. To determine whether a petition for exemption from the prohibition this SFAR establishes fulfills the standards described in 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX) 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX) 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 support the relief sought and demonstrate that granting such relief 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 that may be affected by SFAR No. 117, § 91.1617. 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. 117, § 91.1617.

If a petition for exemption includes information that is sensitive for security reasons or proprietary information, requestors may contact the Washington Operations Center for instructions on submitting it to the FAA. The Washington Operations Center's contact information is listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this final rule. Requestors must not submit their petitions for exemption or related supporting documentation to the Washington Operations Center. Rather, the Washington Operations Center will refer the requestor to the appropriate staff member of the Flight Standards Service or the Office of Rulemaking for further assistance.

### VI. Severability

Congress authorized the FAA by statute to promote safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing, among other things, regulations and minimum standards for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce and national security. 49 U.S.C. 44701. Consistent with that mandate, the FAA is prohibiting certain persons from conducting flight operations in the Tehran FIR (OIIX) due to the continuing hazards to the safety of U.S. civil flight operations. The purpose of this rule is to operate holistically in addressing a range of hazards and needs in the Tehran FIR (OIIX). However, the FAA recognizes that certain provisions focus on unique factors. Therefore, the FAA finds that the various provisions of this final rule are severable and able to operate functionally if severed from each other. In the event a court were to invalidate one or more of this final rule's unique provisions, the remaining provisions should stand, thus allowing the FAA to continue to fulfill its Congressionally authorized role of promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce.

### VII. Regulatory Notices and Analyses

Federal agencies consider the impacts of regulatory actions under a variety of executive orders and other requirements. First, Executive Order 12866, Executive Order 13563, and Executive Order 14094 ("Modernizing Regulatory Review"), 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 amended by Executive Order 14094. 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX) for an additional three years due to the significant, continuing risks to U.S. civil aviation detailed in the preamble of this final 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 to 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX).

#### 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 Tehran FIR (OIIX), 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 \$183 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), the 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. The agency has determined this action will 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. 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 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.

### IX. Additional Information

#### A. Electronic Access

Except for classified and controlled unclassified material not authorized for public release, 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.

Those documents may be viewed online at <https://www.regulations.gov> using the docket number listed above. A copy of this rule will be placed in the docket. Electronic retrieval help and guidelines are available on the website. It is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. An electronic copy of this document may also be downloaded from the Office of the Federal Register’s website at <https://www.federalregister.gov> and the Government Publishing Office’s website

at <https://www.govinfo.gov>. A copy may also be found on the FAA’s Regulations and Policies website at [https://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies](https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies).

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

#### 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 the 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/](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, Iran.

#### The Amendment

In consideration of the foregoing, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 91 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 § 91.1617 by revising paragraph (e) to read as follows:

**§ 91.1617 Special Federal Aviation Regulation No. 117—Prohibition Against Certain Flights in the Tehran Flight Information Region (FIR) (OIIIX).**

\* \* \* \* \*

(e) *Expiration.* This SFAR will remain in effect until October 31, 2027. 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), 40101(d)(1), 40105(b)(1)(A), and 44701(a)(5).

**Michael G. Whitaker,**  
Administrator.

[FR Doc. 2024-22731 Filed 10-2-24; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-13-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Office of the Secretary

#### 32 CFR Part 49

[Docket ID: DoD-2024-OS-0054]

RIN 0790-AL61

#### Implementation of HAVANA Act of 2021

**AGENCY:** Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)), Department of Defense (DoD).

**ACTION:** Direct final rule with request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This rule implements within DoD (the Department) amendments made by the Helping American Victims Afflicted by Neurological Attacks (HAVANA) Act of 2021, which provide authority for the Secretary of State and other agency heads to provide payments to certain individuals who have incurred qualifying injuries to the brain. This rule covers current and former DoD employees, and dependents of current or former DoD employees and is vitally important to those who have experienced such injuries.

**DATES:** This rule will be effective on November 18, 2024 unless comments are received that would result in a contrary determination. If significant adverse comments are received, the Department will publish a timely withdrawal of the rule in the **Federal Register**. Comments will be accepted on or before November 4, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested parties may submit comments, identified by docket number and/or regulatory identifier number (RIN) and title, by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency, Regulatory Directorate, 4800 Mark Center Drive, Attn: Mailbox 24, Suite 08D09, Alexandria, VA 22350-1700.

*Instructions:* All submissions received must include the agency name and docket number or RIN for this **Federal**