Suicide Terrorism on the Rise

COLLEGE PARK, MD – The frequency of suicide terrorism has increased in recent years, with over 90% of all suicide attacks from 1970-2008 occurring between 2000 and 2008. Following a suicide bombing at Domodedovo Airport in Moscow, START has compiled background information on related terrorist activity.

KEY FINDINGS FROM START’S GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE (GTD), COVERED IN THE BACKGROUND REPORT:

• Russia: From 1991-2008, Russia ranks 26th in terms of total attacks and 18th in terms of total fatalities among all countries. Moscow has been the location of a number of highly lethal terrorist attacks in the past decade.
• Perpetrators: Chechen-associated terrorist groups, as well as individuals advocating the Chechen cause are responsible for over 90% of those attacks for which a perpetrator was identified.
• Airports: Worldwide between 1970 and 2008 there have been 777 attacks against airports and airline targets that were not hijackings. Of these attacks, 337 targeted airline offices, 111 targeted aircraft, and 329 targeted the airports themselves. Attacks on airports are not typically highly lethal, causing zero fatalities in over 70% of all cases.
• Suicide Attacks: Since 2000, suicide terrorism accounts for 7.3% of all terrorist attacks

START Director Gary LaFree cautions, “Aerial hijackings have long received a lot more attention than attacks on airports themselves--the Moscow Airport bombing provides a dramatic wake up call for airport security outside of aircraft.”

START BACKGROUND REPORT
The background report is available at http://www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/br/Background_Report_2011_January_Moscow_Airport.pdf and includes information on:

• Suicide Terrorism
• Terrorist activity in Russia
• Airport attacks worldwide

These data were collected and compiled from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD, www.start.umd.edu/gtd). The GTD contains information on more than 87,000 terrorist
incidents that have occurred around the world since 1970. An updated version of the database, with information on incidents through 2008, was released in May 2010.

GTD is a project of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence. START, based at the University of Maryland, College Park, aims to provide timely guidance on how to disrupt terrorist networks, reduce the incidence of terrorism, and enhance the resilience of U.S. society in the face of the terrorist threat. The material presented here is the product of START and does not express the official opinion of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Additional information on START is available at: www.start.umd.edu.

For additional information on this release or the GTD, please contact START at 301.405.6600 or gtd@start.umd.edu. For more urgent media requests, please use www.start.umd.edu/start/media/contact/.