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Contact:
Monica A. Amarelo, (202) 454-4680,
mamarelo@fas.org

Armed Groups Still Using Shoulder-Fired Missiles, Says Matt Schroeder of FAS

WASHINGTON DC – A new study by the Federation of American Scientists finds that terrorists and insurgents continue to acquire and use shoulder-fired, surface-to-air missiles despite international efforts to rein in their proliferation. The study, which appears in the November edition of *Jane's Intelligence Review*, found credible reports of possession or use of surface-to-air missiles by terrorists, criminals and insurgents in at least 17 countries since 2002.

The threat from man-portable air defense systems, or MANPADS, is particularly acute in Iraq, where hundreds of the missiles were looted from Iraqi military stockpiles after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, according to Matt Schroeder, author of the study and manager of the Arms Sales Monitoring Project at the Federation of American Scientists.

The ready availability of first generation, Soviet-designed missiles in Iraq has enabled a steady stream of attacks on US aircraft.

Large, fixed wing aircraft hit by missiles in Iraq include a DHL A300 cargo plane in November 2003, a C-17 cargo plane in December 2003, and a C-4 transport plane in January 2004. While the crews of all three aircraft were able to land the planes successfully, damage to the DHL cargo plane was so extensive that attempts to replicate the landing in simulators have failed.

Attacks on helicopters have been more deadly. All 36 soldiers on board a Chinook transport helicopter were killed or injured when it was hit by a MANPADS near Fallujah in November 2003. Missile attacks have also brought down two UH-60 Black Hawks, two AH-64 Apaches, and a CH-46E Sea Knight.

Other hot spots of MANPADS proliferation include Chechnya and Somalia, where armed groups have access to more sophisticated missiles.

Known as the "terrorist delight"— the portable, guided missiles have become a favorite weapon of terrorists and insurgents. "MANPADS are plentiful, easy to use, and extremely effective," says Matt Schroeder. "Nearly a million missiles have been produced by over 20 countries, and thousands of those missiles are now outside of government control." In the hands of irresponsible government armies, rebel groups, and terrorists, these weapons cause tremendous human suffering.

To schedule an interview with Matthew Schroeder, please contact Monica Amarelo at email mamarelo@fas.org or call 202-454-4680.

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The Federation of American Scientists (www.fas.org) was formed in 1945 by atomic scientists from the Manhattan Project. Endorsed by 68 Nobel Laureates in biology, chemistry, economics, medicine and physics as sponsors, the Federation has addressed a broad spectrum of national security issues in carrying out its mission to promote humanitarian uses of science and technology. Today, FAS projects study nuclear arms control and global security; conventional arms transfers; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; information technology for human health; and government information policy. The FAS Housing Technology Project combines the talents of engineers and energy specialists to develop new materials and design methods that will lead to safe, energy-efficient, affordable homes in the U.S. and abroad. The FAS Information Technologies Project works on strategies to harness the potential of emerging information technologies to improve how we teach and learn.

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