Beat: News

U.S. bans all carry-on liquids on flights to and from Russia

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USPA News - The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on Thursday placed a temporary ban on carry-on liquids, gels, powders, and aerosols for flights between the United States and the Russian Federation, responding to concerns of potential terrorist attacks during the Winter Olympics. The measures came just a day after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) warned U.S. airlines with routes to Russia that terrorists may attempt to conceal explosives in toothpaste containers or cosmetic tubes in an attempt to carry out an attack during the Sochi Winter Olympics, which are set to begin this Friday. House Homeland Security Chairman Mike McCaul told CNN on Wednesday that a new threat emerged earlier this week, although the U.S. government has said it is not aware of any specific plot. "The terror threat has been around for several days. I find it to be very specific and credible," McCaul told CNN.

DHS and TSA declined to answer questions regarding Thursday`s security measures, but a notice to passengers from Delta Air Lines said online and mobile check-in had also been suspended for flights between Russia and the U.S. "Customers traveling between the U.S. and the Russian Federation will need to personally check in with a Delta representative at the airport. Online, mobile and kiosk check-in will be unavailable," the notice said, advising passengers traveling to and from Russia to arrive at the airport at least two hours before departure. It was not immediately known whether the enhanced security measures would remain in place for a short time or throughout the Winter Olympics. "We will keep with it until we hear otherwise from the TSA. We follow them on security measures," said Delta Airlines spokeswoman Lindsey McDuff. Concerns about security and the potential for terror attacks have dominated media coverage surrounding the Winter Olympics, spiked by public threats of attacks and two back-to-back suicide bombings on mass transit in Volgograd - northeast of Sochi - in late December, killing 32 people in total. Rebel leader and Chechen Islamist Dokka Umarov urged his fighters last year to do everything possible to derail the upcoming Sochi Olympics, but it is unclear whether his group was behind the recent attacks in Volgograd, which also includes a deadly October 21 suicide bombing on board a Moscow-bound bus. The Winter Olympics are scheduled to take place from 7 to 23 February in Sochi, a city on the Black Sea coast of Russia. Umarov previously claimed responsibility for ordering the suicide bombing that killed 37 people and injured approximately 200 more at Moscow`s Domodedovo airport in January 2011. It followed a twin suicide bombing on the Moscow subway in March 2010, killing 40 people and injuring 120 others.

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