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**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1295th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

11 December 2020

**On Human Rights Day – in response to the statement by the Permanent Representative  
of the United States of America**

Mr. Chairperson,

I am compelled to exercise the right of reply in connection with the statement by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United States of America. As we have just said, Russia is committed to international co-operation on human rights. It should be conducted in a constructive and mutually respectful manner. It is this understanding that has prompted us to put this current issue on the agenda. As initiators of the discussion, and taking a responsible approach to the important issue of protecting human rights, we have deliberately avoided touching on the situation in specific countries in order to set a non-confrontational tone for the discussion. This has been achieved for the most part. Almost all of the principal speakers, including the European Union, the United Kingdom and Canada, have found the strength to refrain from sliding into accusatory rhetoric. It is only our US colleague who sets out to lecture and to demonize undesirable States – Washington's familiar signature style.

In the latest report by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the human rights situation in certain countries, more than 30 pages of closely-written text are devoted to gross and massive human rights violations in the United States. We will not read it out now, but we strongly recommend taking a look at this overview, which has also been translated into English and is available on the websites of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Permanent Mission.

We would like to elaborate on an important point raised by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United States, namely the correlation between defending human rights and the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs.

What we have heard from our colleague is a dangerous attempt to revise the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act and to rewrite OSCE commitments to suit his country's national methods, which run counter to international law.

I should like to recall Section VI of this Act: “The participating States will refrain from any intervention, direct or indirect, individual or collective, in the internal or external affairs falling within the domestic jurisdiction of another participating State ... .”

Moreover, the 2010 Astana Commemorative Declaration makes no mention of the permissibility of such intervention. It states merely that “commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.”

There is an attempt here to confuse the key concepts of “legitimate concern” and “intervention”. The first concept is clearly governed by a provision in the 1991 Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE. In that Document, immediately following the reference to “legitimate concern”, the participating States “express their determination to fulfil all of their human dimension commitments and to resolve by peaceful means any related issue ... on the basis of mutual respect and co-operation.”

The second concept, “intervention”, is defined by the Helsinki Final Act as “direct or indirect assistance ... to subversive or other activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another participating State”.

The interest of the United States in substituting one concept for the other is quite understandable, given that intervention in the spirit of the aforementioned definition is precisely the method employed in US foreign policy. There is no shortage of examples. Everyone remembers the US support for the coup d'état in Ukraine in February 2014.

This is why the US Government is so concerned about the measures by Russia to increase the transparency of foreign funding of non-governmental organizations and media, since such sponsorship is a commonly used tool for undermining stability in undesirable countries.

As for “legitimate concern”, it begs the question as to why our US colleagues selectively criticize certain countries “east of Vienna”, whose policies do not please the White House. Why does the US Government turn a blind eye to serious problems with its allies in Europe or its continental neighbours, including the rise of racism, xenophobia, intolerance, neo-Nazism, media bans and the persecution of journalists?

The answer lies in the blatant application of double standards by the United States, flying in the face of the carefully worded provisions of the OSCE Astana Summit document.

We look forward to hearing a response from the distinguished Permanent Representative of the United States.

Thank you for your attention.