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**STATEMENT BY MR. OLEG BURMISTROV,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

7 April 2011

On the anti-Islamic excess by an American pastor

Mr. Chairperson,

We should like to express our support for the basic idea contained in the statement by our distinguished Kazakh colleague.

Obviously, what happened in Mazar-i-Sharif was a huge tragedy and very serious signal for the entire international community. Unfortunately, it was by no means the first. We recall the negative consequences of the “caricature war” five years ago, when items offensive to the religious sensitivities of Muslim believers appeared in a number of media publications, causing a wave of indignation in the Muslim world. The lessons from these events have not been learned and now the blood of our fellow diplomats has been spilled.

It goes without saying that nothing can justify the actions of religious fanatics and the crimes in Mazar-i-Sharif. The offenders must be caught and punished.

Our distinguished Kazakh colleague today rightly touched on the reverse side of this act. Yes, we know that the authorities in the United States condemned the burning of the Koran, and we welcome that step. But why was it not actively prevented? It is evident that extremists, whatever their persuasion, speak the same language, the language of provocation. As a consequence, they would now seem to have won new uncompromising rivals, who have provoked a new round of ethno-confessional confrontation. And by not reacting until after the event the international community has once again lost.

This is a very sad fact. On this occasion at least let us draw the necessary conclusions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.