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ENGLISH only



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Belarusian Intervention on November 2004 U.S. Elections

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 14, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States would like to reply to the Belarusian Delegation's statement made at the April 7 Permanent Council meeting on the OSCE Election Observation Mission's final report on the November 2004 U.S. general election.

For the record, Mr. Chairman, the United States categorically rejects claims that "numerous irregularities and problematic aspects" occurred during our November 2004 general election.

However, rather than imposing on everyone's valuable time here by going through a point-by-point rebuttal of the Belarusian statement, the United States would highlight that such claims are not at all borne out by the OSCE Election Observation Mission's final report.

Nevertheless, as we have stated previously in a variety of OSCE fora, a genuine democracy seeks to continuously improve its electoral system.

Accordingly, allow me here to repeat what we announced at the April 7 Permanent Council meeting, namely that the United States is inviting ODIHR to conduct a follow-up visit to the United States to discuss the findings and recommendations of the final report with relevant authorities. This includes the findings on the status of election observers.

We hope that all OSCE states will issue similar invitations welcoming ODIHR to send teams to follow-up on election findings.

Moreover, as indicated at the April 7 Permanent Council, we will hold a side event entitled "U.S. Elections: Reform and OSCE Commitments in a Decentralized System" during the upcoming Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting.

In addition to members of the U.S. delegation to the SHDM, Mr. Vulchanov will serve on the side event panel to provide ODIHR's perspective on the final report. Mr. Vulchanov is a deputy in ODIHR's Elections Section who helped organize the Election Observation Mission to the United States.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.