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Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEKSANDR OPIMAKH,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BELARUS TO THE OSCE,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 December 2005

Concerning the human rights situation in the United States of America

Mr. Chairman,

The Belarusian delegation would like to draw the attention of the OSCE Permanent Council to the problem of observation of human rights in the United States of America in the light of the increasingly frequent reports recently of enhanced surveillance of American citizens by United States intelligence agencies.

What causes alarm, in particular, are reports of the shadowing of civilian political activists by United States military intelligence services, covering among other things the activities of anti-war activists. This shadowing is carried out in violation of United States legislation which limits the rights of the military to collect information on American citizens.

Even greater concern is caused by an order of President George Bush authorizing the National Security Agency to tap telephone conversations and examine the e-mail correspondence of American citizens without obtaining court authority to do so.

We are also concerned by the evidence that the Central Intelligence Agency is establishing, in a number of countries of Central and Eastern Europe, a network of concealed sites where foreign citizens are illegally confined — people whose guilt has never been established by a court. We are going to follow very attentively the investigations which have been initiated in this connection by the Council of Europe.

If this information is confirmed it would indicate that the United States intelligence agencies are violating not only domestic legislation but also a series of international commitments undertaken by the United States in the area of observation of human rights, for example freedom of assembly, non-interference in the private lives of other persons, as well as protection against arbitrary arrest and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.

These rights are laid down in particular in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the United States has itself subscribed. The United States has also

violated a whole series of commitments to the OSCE, among other things in connection with respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism.

We would ask the United States delegation to give us further information on the questions we have raised here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.