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United States Mission to the OSCE



**Response to Russian Federation Regarding
Freedom of Media in the United States**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Casey Christensen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 4, 2010

I'd like to thank the distinguished Russian ambassador for his statement on this most important issue of media freedom. This kind of peer review is what OSCE exists for. We value an open debate, both in this forum and in the media, and are actively engaged in protecting the right of free expression, even when it's critical of us. We will provide a written response to the specific incidents raised by our Russian colleague – some of which we've previously addressed in this forum. And in this regard, I would refer you to document PC.DEL/357/09 from the May 14, 2009 Permanent Council.

We deplore the targeting of journalists, wherever it may occur. The United States deeply values freedom of expression, including in time of war, and defends the right of journalists to express their opinions, even when critical. The Iraq examples that were cited by the distinguished Russian ambassador stem from the period of 2003-2008, when, as we all recall, there was an open and unfettered debate, both in multi-lateral fora and in the media in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere about the war in Iraq.

Our distinguished colleague also cites the death of journalists in Iraq. The U.S. deplores any targeting of journalists anywhere and deeply regrets the deaths of any non-combatants in a war situation; all incidents are investigated fully.

Regarding the detentions at Guantanamo, President Obama remains committed to closing the facility at Guantanamo Bay and we are engaged in strenuous efforts to that effect. The U.S. categorically rejects the use of torture and supports a transparent judicial process that reflects our values and our common values.

And we welcome further in-depth discussion in the OSCE on media freedom. We have all agreed that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law is at the core of OSCE's concept, its comprehensive concept of security. And I would add that the real answer to any question of allegations of double standards or even-handedness on freedom of the media is for each participating State to fulfill media freedom commitments equally.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.