

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE AT THE 956th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

13 June 2013

**Regarding the violation of the right to privacy by the
United States of America**

Madam Chairperson,

Serious and worrying events that are directly within the OSCE's writ have been occurring all too often in the OSCE region of late, but unfortunately – and this is already symptomatic – they do not receive due attention from our Organization.

One such fresh and clear example is the scandal that has unfolded regarding the violation by the United States of America of the right of citizens to privacy and interference with correspondence.

Information that has appeared in the public domain regarding the clandestine PRISM programme is striking in terms of the scale and aggressive nature of the activities of United States intelligence agencies in cyberspace, including Internet surveillance and access to email servers and telephone conversation data.

According to reports, the intelligence services obtained access to information on telephone calls made by clients of the largest mobile network operator in the United States. They also have access to the servers of at least nine major Internet companies, including Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, Google, Yahoo, Skype, YouTube and AOL. The intelligence services gather audio and video files, photographs and electronic correspondence via email and chat rooms, and other documents and data on particular online resources accessed by users. This allows them to monitor online correspondence content, contacts and people's movements.

It seems that the ECHELON global wiretapping system, which in addition to the United States is also supported by a number of other OSCE participating States, is now also supplemented by a total surveillance system to monitor the Internet.

The assurances by the head of the United States national intelligence service that this activity concerns users in third countries only heightens our concern as to what is happening.

As chance would have it, the latest scandal involving the leaking of classified information coincided with the start of the closed trial in the United States of the former American serviceman Bradley Manning, who made public horrific details about the activities of United States military personnel in Iraq and the inhumane interrogation methods and detention of prisoners at Guantánamo among other things. And for this he has been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment by the United States authorities.

Given that the name of the person who provided the press with fresh alarming information about the latest activities of the United States intelligence services is already known, the fears of politically motivated prosecution and possible punitive measures against him, as was the case with Bradley Manning and Julian Assange, are well founded.

We are also seriously concerned about the information that has emerged regarding the United States administration's current efforts to draw up a draft law designed to enable the United States law enforcement agencies to monitor any digital communications in real time.

While we are awaiting clarification from the United States as regards their unlawful activities concerning the Internet, according to some sources the United States National Security Agency is building a huge data centre in the remote state of Utah, which in all likelihood will also be used to store millions of terabytes of data from around the world.

This entire chain of events compels us to ask why the "most democratic country in the world" is allowing itself to unceremoniously interfere in the private lives of people around the world, to violate their fundamental rights while at the same time wagging its finger at others and lecturing them on to how to ensure human rights. It is difficult to imagine a more hypocritical example of double standards.

All this makes us doubt the sincerity of United States foreign policy as regards promoting fundamental human rights and freedoms.

We believe that it would be of the utmost importance for the Permanent Council to receive official, substantiated and detailed information from the United States regarding the questions raised today.

We also trust that our OSCE partners, including European Union countries, will give consideration to this matter, because the unlawful activities of the United States could have the most serious negative consequences for security and co-operation throughout the Euro-Atlantic area.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.