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

15 September 2011

Regarding the situation in Kosovo

Mr. Chairperson,

We are seriously concerned at the statements we have heard from Pristina regarding its intention to carry out in the days immediately ahead unilateral actions involving the use of force against the Serbian population in the north of Kosovo under the pretext of a need to establish Pristina's control along the administrative border with Serbia. A similar attempt undertaken in July of this year by the Pristina authorities to resolve "customs issues" by force of arms resulted in a dangerous crisis that threatened the lives of hundreds of people.

In that connection, we cannot but be alarmed at the reports – incidentally, contained also in yesterday's report by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo – to the effect that this operation will be carried out with the support of the Kosovo Force and the European Union Rule of Law Mission, something that clearly exceeds their mandate and is incompatible with their neutral status. This would be an overt act of abetting the adventures of the Kosovo Albanian authorities in their use of force and would damage the authority of the aforementioned international presences.

We are convinced that any questions concerning stability and security in Kosovo must be resolved through negotiations, relying on the standards of international law and the fundamental decisions of the United Nations, above all Security Council resolution 1244, which provides the basis for a settlement in the territory, and also through dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

It is our view that all the authorized international presences in the territory, including the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, the Kosovo Force, the European Union Mission and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, are obliged in accordance with their mandates to resolutely prevent similar provocations and to act more vigorously and firmly to avert an escalation of tension and prevent the use of force against the peaceful Serbian population. Responsibility for a possible outburst of violence will be shared also by those who proved unable to prevent it.

We should like, in this same connection, to ask the question: What concrete preventive measures do the Chairmanship, the Conflict Prevention Centre and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo intend to take so as to avert a new conflict with the threat of destabilization in the region? How will the “early warning” signals be transformed into “early action”?

Thank you for your attention.