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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 January 2011

In response to the statement by the representative of Georgia

Mr. Chairperson,

In response to the statement by the representative of Georgia regarding information on the deployment on the territory of the Republic of South Ossetia of an operational-tactical “Tochka-U” missile-complex division, we should like to make the following statement.

First of all, we have no confirmed official information on this subject. In any case, however, the presence in South Ossetia of Russian military servicemen is for purely defensive purposes and is intended exclusively to protect the population of that country against possible new military adventures on the part of Tbilisi. The Russian military presence in the Republic of South Ossetia represents no threat to Georgia itself.

We should also like to respond to remarks made by the Georgian representatives referring to a statement published on 24 January by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, in which mention is made in particular about Russia’s pursuit of a policy allegedly aimed at “destroying Georgian statehood” and at “large-scale destabilization in the Caucasus and the Black Sea region as a whole”. It is even difficult to comment on such absurd assessments. And still, persistent attempts to portray Russia as a potential aggressor totally turns the situation inside out, in line with the expression “to turn something on its head”. Russia has never attacked Georgia, has not opened fire on its peacekeepers and has not used multiple rocket launchers to shell the peaceful population. All of this was exactly the other way around.

And there is yet another point of principle. Our Georgian partners constantly use the term “occupation” with respect to Abkhazia and South Ossetia and call for the “the need to end the occupation”. Laments of this kind have nothing at all in common with reality or with international law. And in this matter serious international players should not take their cue from Georgia. Let me explain: in international law (The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1949) occupation refers to the temporary presence of the armed forces of one State on the territory of another State under the conditions of a state of war between them. In this situation, authority over the occupied territory is exercised by the military command of the occupying State.

Yet it is a fact that there is currently not a single Russian serviceman on the territory of Georgia. There are Russian military contingents in the region, but they are present on the territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which separated themselves from Georgia as a result of the aggression unleashed by the Saakashvili regime, and they are there in accordance with bilateral agreements with those independent republics. Moreover, each country's own democratic legislative, executive and judicial authorities are in full operation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and political parties are actively at work.

People in Tbilisi and indeed in other capital cities cannot but be aware of this. In that connection, a legitimate question arises: why speculate time after time on this account and why draw respectable international bodies into this dubious discussion?

The answer is more than obvious, and let us not succumb to insinuations of this kind. This merely distracts us from the task at hand, namely that of ensuring peace and stability in the Trans-Caucasus.

We trust that our partners, if we are truly interested in a normalization of the situation in the South Caucasus as soon as possible, will take into account the objective realities and will not encourage Tbilisi's propagandistic ploys.

Thank you for your attention.