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Belarus Delegation Visits UNH as Part of 'Democracy 101' Initiative

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Editors: Reporters are invited to attend any of the presentations in the Piscataqua Room of Holloway Commons, the GPS mapping demonstration in Morse Hall room 301 between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., or a reception from 4:45-6:40 p.m. in the Oak Room in Huddleston Hall. After the reception, the delegation will attend the annual Town Meeting In Madbury.

DURHAM, N.H. – A delegation of 15 civil and military leaders from the (former Soviet) Republic of Belarus will participate in Civil-Military Emergency Preparedness – New Hampshire 2004, a transitioning democracy education initiative focused on emergency planning and response in the event of a natural disaster. The delegation will participate in a series of workshops throughout the Granite State March 6-14, 2004, and will visit the University of New Hampshire Tuesday, March 9.

The program is part of a joint undertaking by the UNH, the N.H. National Guard, the U.S. Department of Defense, NATO and USA Group International to demonstrate to leaders of countries in transition to democracy New Hampshire's unique approach of how government, non-profit organizations and the private sector respond and cooperate in planning emergency responses to a wide range of emergency situations. The program was organized by George Bruno, managing director of USA Group International, a Manchester-based international consulting company.

“It is a democracy strengthening program,” said program sponsor Ted Howard, director of the Center for International Education at UNH, “and we are grateful for the leaders and organizations throughout New Hampshire who have volunteered to be part of the program.”

The Belarus delegation is led by Colonel Enver Bariev, the Deputy Minister of Emergencies, and includes officials of the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Health, Transportation and Civil Protection.

While at UNH, the delegation will participate in a series of workshops led by UNH faculty and staff and have an informational lunch with students. Workshops include GPS Mapping systems with Barry Rock, director, Complex Systems Research Center; UNH emergency procedures and chemical waste removal with Brad Manning, director, Environmental Health and Safety; HAZMAT classification, safety, and emergencies with Ihab Farag, professor of chemical engineering; and the relationship between government, civil service, and military structure with

Tom Trout of professor of political science.

While in New Hampshire, the delegation will also attend a town meeting in Madbury, observe proceedings of the General Court, speak to police officers and firefighters about how they respond to emergencies, participate in an emergency simulation at Elliot Hospital, attend a hockey game at the Verizon Center, walk parts of the Freedom Trail in Boston, and be hosted at a dinner by community leaders in Nashua.

The New Hampshire program, conducted in Russian and English, is now in its third year with prior delegations coming from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Tajikistan. According to Bruno, a similar program is planned for a delegation from FYR Macedonia in May.