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United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Belarus Statement on SALW and Human Security

As delivered by Charge d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 2, 2011

We note that this item is not raised as a specific concern about the U.S., but as a general topic of concern about a threat to human security. However, since half of the statement – which we did not receive until 10 a.m. this morning in Russian – refers to the U.S., I have just a brief response.

We appreciate the interest in the U.S. democratic debate on the proper application of the Second Amendment to our Constitution. The issue of U.S. laws on the possession of firearms is an important topic of debate within the United States at the federal level and among the 50 States as well.

We see this open and free debate as a critical part of our own development as a free and open nation.

Nonetheless, while we fully recognize the tragedies that occur in our country of 310 million people, and acknowledge the unique history of the American people and its development as a nation – as was clearly pointed out by the distinguished Belarusian Ambassador, since the promulgation of the U.S. Constitution as we approach our 222nd birthday – this issue has no relevance to the OSCE Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Document. That document focuses on appropriate measures regarding “small arms and light weapons manufactured or designed for military use.”

Perhaps, however, the concept of norm, principles and measures could be best explored in the FSC's session on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security that will be held on June 22.

Thank you, Chair.