



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the (Draft) Decision on Belarus SALW

As delivered by Acting Deputy Representative James Cox
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 8, 2004

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Also very briefly, the United States welcomes the Decision on Projects to Assist Belarus to Resolve Small Arms and Light Weapons Problems, which demonstrates the willingness of the OSCE to take action in this important area. We would like to note, however, that the list of recommendations in the report from the initial assessment visit includes several actions which Belarus can - and should - respond to in the near term, including determining an appropriate amount of MANPADS in excess of defense needs that should be destroyed and focusing security improvements in buildings where MANPADS are stored. The team also recommended that Belarus explore other possible methods of destruction for excess SA/LW that would take advantage of existing facilities. Belarus has presented to the OSCE a cost estimate for the central destruction facility, but not for other activities associated with the project such as security upgrades. That said, we appreciate the Decision and ask Belarus to keep the OSCE informed of any pertinent activities as the SALW project plans are being developed by the OSCE.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.