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**STATEMENT BY MR. VALERY VORONETSKY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE, AT THE 907th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 March 2012

**Regarding the expansion of the powers of the security agencies in the
United States of America and Canada**

Mr. Chairperson,

Our delegation has at meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council already touched on the subject of the expanded powers of the security agencies of the United States of America in the context of the situation at Guantánamo.

We are disturbed at the continuation of this trend, which has recently led to the introduction of a number of additional provisions to United States legislative instruments dealing with the relevant functions of the President and the country's security agencies.

According to the information available, the President of the United States is today authorized to order the murder or detention for an unspecified period of time of anyone suspected of terrorism.

The President of the United States has also been given the right to determine whether a particular case involving terrorism will be heard by a federal court or by a military tribunal.

The President of the United States can order surveillance without an official decision to that effect, in addition to which he can require of companies and organizations that they provide information on the finances, contacts and public activities of citizens and can prohibit the informing of these citizens of the fact that this information has been divulged.

A legal basis has been provided for the use of secret testimony and the holding of secret trials. Along with this, the initiation of the investigation and punishment of CIA agents involved in torturing persons suspected of terrorism has been prohibited.

Greater use is being made of secret courts to hear cases involving surveillance of foreign intelligence agencies in respect of persons regarded as agents of the secret services of unfriendly States.

The use of GPS devices to track citizens without a special court order has been made legal.

There is provision for the relocation of United States citizens and non-citizens to third countries (so-called “extraordinary rendition”), where persons under suspicion are subsequently tortured.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have also called attention to the fact of the enshrinement in law of the right of the Canadian security agencies to resort to torture. The reference here is to a directive issued in 2010 regarding the use of torture by Canadian security and intelligence services. In line with this directive, that country’s intelligence services can draw on information obtained through the use of torture if the safety of Canadian citizens depends on that information.

Quite remarkable also is the recent reaction to this fact by the Minister of Public Safety of Canada, who officially stated that (I quote): “Canada does not justify the use of torture but permits it in exceptional circumstance for the purpose of ensuring the safety of its residents” (end of quotation).

Mr. Chairperson,

The aforementioned amendments to the laws of the United States of America and Canada contradict key documents in the area of human rights, specifically the International Covenant on Civil and Human Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture.

The use by the intelligence services of the United States and Canada of these powers poses a threat to the right to life, to protection under the law, to decent treatment, to protection from arbitrary arrest and detention and to a fair trial, in addition to which it violates the principle of presumption of innocence,

All of this calls into question the observance by these countries of their OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.