



United States Mission to the OSCE

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Right of Reply Working Session IV: Countering Terrorism–Transnational Threats in the OSCE Area

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
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I wanted to reply to the request from the CSTO for a speaking role at ministerials, and to just emphasize that there is a long-standing practice that organizations that both have a founding philosophy and approach that overlaps with that of the OSCE, as well as have over a third or 40 per cent of OSCE States as members, are often given the chance to speak. But the CSTO doesn't meet either of these prongs.

With respect to the statement made by our distinguished Russian colleague in response to the Ukrainian statement, I think the point about foreign terrorist fighters is one that has been made before, as our distinguished Russian colleague said. And I was glad to hear that our distinguished Russian colleague did not dispute the fact that these are 'foreign' fighters. What he disputed was whether they fit the qualification of a 'terrorist,' and I think that while there can be discussion over terminology in terms of whether 'terrorist' applies, I'm glad to hear the Russian Federation acknowledge that these are foreign fighters that are carrying out the attacks in eastern Ukraine.

That leads to the final point, which I think has been emphasized by our Russian colleague as well as others, which is that trust is fundamental to be able to cooperate on all of these activities; On the practical activities, on setting a framework for addressing terrorism – we have to have trust. And undermining any aspect of international rule of law damages the trust that is necessary in order to work together to counter terrorism and counter violent extremism, and I think it's really important that we understand that the contravention of the Helsinki Final Act, and the violation of international law doesn't just cause the initial harm that it causes, it also damages the trust between our participating States that allows us to effectively work together to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.