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## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Response to the Address by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter Terrorism Office Mr. Vladimir Voronkov**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Gregory Macris  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 4, 2018

We appreciate the summary of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's (UNOCT) activities and priorities. We value the efforts of Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and his staff to address the continuing – and evolving – threat of global terrorism within the parameters of the UN's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The United States is committed to countering terrorism and to working with our allies and partners across the globe to prevent terrorist acts and holding accountable those responsible for planning and committing them. Furthermore, diplomacy plays a central role in counterterrorism by helping us develop a common understanding of the most effective ways to prevent and counter violent extremism and to promote stability and freedom worldwide.

We welcome the opportunity for deeper engagement between the OSCE and UNOCT, and look forward to sharing our organization's strength in working with civil society.

As UNOCT and the OSCE continue their important work, we must avoid duplication and instead focus on activities that bring real, added value and complementarity to countering terrorism. Mr. Chair, our counterterrorism strategies and projects here at the OSCE have a significant focus on preventing and countering violent extremism (or violent extremism and radicalization that leads to terrorism – VERLT). Given his desire for UN Counter-Terrorism Center programming to have a greater impact, we hope that the Under-Secretary-General's visit to the OSCE today serves as an opportunity to learn more about OSCE VERLT programming. We believe this engagement will encourage a deeper focus at UNOCT on VERLT, particularly in the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action. Connecting with local communities and helping build resilience against radicalization to violence is a key component of a comprehensive and effective counterterrorism approach.

As we consider the evolving phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), we welcome UNOCT taking a closer look at ways in which we can implement the obligations and provisions of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2396 to address the threat of returning and relocating FTFs. This includes strengthening aviation security, border security, and information sharing, including the requirement to use Passenger Name Record (PNR), Advanced Passenger Information, and biometric data, as well as watchlists of known and suspected terrorists to detect and thwart their travel. It also includes measures to prosecute,

rehabilitate, and reintegrate FTFs and their accompanying family members and to work with the private sector to protect public spaces and soft targets from terrorist attacks as a complement to UNSCR 2341.

We welcome the Netherlands' contribution of its own PNR software to the UN and of UNOCT's anticipated role in providing technical assistance to member states that could most benefit from having such a system. The United States has provided funding to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's Terrorism Prevention Branch for global technical assistance training related to PNR, and a U.S. PNR system is also available bilaterally or through the World Customs Organization. We understand UNOCT has created a matrix of projects for a plan to implement global obligations to address FTFs and prevent violent extremism.

We believe it would be fruitful for Ambassador Voronkov to share with the OSCE how UNOCT based the matrix on the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate's country assessments. We are eager to learn of UNOCT's next steps for implementation.

The United States believes in the importance of upholding and promoting balanced implementation of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. This includes the promotion of human rights and rule of law, which is one of the Strategy's pillars. The same universal human rights people have offline must also be protected online. That is why the UN should avoid promoting Internet censorship. Rather, the UN best serves member states when it advocates for Internet freedom and the use of online counter-messaging. These initiatives are helping build resistance to the narratives of violent extremists and terrorists.

The United States supports building synergies between the OSCE and UNOCT and sees potential in further aligning and elevating counterterrorism issues globally. We ask the Under-Secretary-General and OSCE Secretary General to focus on disrupting FTFs and preventing violent extremism, while engaging civil society and protecting human rights.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.