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Statement by Ambassador Alejandro Wolff, U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative, in the General Assembly, on the Security Council Report and Security Council Reform

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thank you, Madam President. I would like to thank the Security Council President for the month of November, Ambassador Mayr-Harting, for his introduction yesterday of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly, as required under UN Charter Articles 15 and 24, and Ambassador Rugunda and the Ugandan delegation for their preparation of the annual report during their Presidency of the Security Council in July.

The annual report provides non-Council members with a transparent and comprehensive review of the intensive work of the Security Council. We hope the report does indeed facilitate the exchange of information and enhance the cooperation between these two principal organs of the United Nations.

The United States takes seriously the importance of making sure that all member states are informed of and appropriately involved in the Council's work.

There has been an ongoing effort to hold more formal meetings of the Council which are open to the full membership, as the report highlights. There were 219 such meetings between August 2007 and July 2008 and 228 meetings between August 2008 and July 2009. Regrettably, however, these meetings are not always attended by more than a small percentage of member states, including this very morning. We hope that more members will avail themselves of the opportunity to follow the Council's work first hand on such occasions rather than relying primarily on an annual report.

For those non-Council members who cannot follow the Council's work on a regular basis, I commend to them the Council's website with its wealth of information and meeting summaries for further in-depth reference.

Madam President, turning to our other topic today, we welcomed the President's letter of October 13 announcing his appointment of Ambassador Tanin to chair the intergovernmental negotiations on his behalf. We pledge our full support of Ambassador Tanin's efforts to lead forward the informal plenary of the General Assembly in productive intergovernmental negotiations.

As we stated during the first three rounds of these negotiations and will continue to elaborate in more detail in those negotiations, the United States supports expansion of the Security Council. Such expansion, however, should neither diminish the Council's effectiveness nor its efficiency.

Let me briefly summarize key elements of my government's position:

The United States is open in principle to a limited expansion of both permanent and non-permanent members.

In terms of categories of membership, the United States strongly believes that any consideration of an expansion of permanent members must be country-specific in nature.

In determining which countries merit permanent membership, we will take into account the ability of countries to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the United Nations.

As we have previously stated, the United States is not open to an enlargement of the Security Council by a Charter amendment that changes the current veto structure.

To enhance the prospects for success, whatever formula that emerges for an expansion of Council membership should have in mind Charter requirements for ratification.

We remain committed to a serious, deliberate effort, working with other member states, to find a way forward that both adapts the Security Council to current global realities and enhances the ability of the Security Council to carry out its mandate and effectively meet the challenges of the new century.

Thank you, Madam President.

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