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Statement by Gordon Duguid, Acting Deputy Spokesman:
U.S. to Run for Election to the UN Human Rights Council

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.S. Permanent Representative to the U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice announce that the United States will seek a seat this year on the United Nations Human Rights Council with the goal of working to make it a more effective body to promote and protect human rights.

The decision is in keeping with the Obama Administration's "new era of engagement" with other nations to advance American security interests and meet the global challenges of the 21st century.

"Human rights are an essential element of American global foreign policy" said Secretary Clinton. "With others, we will engage in the work of improving the UN human rights system to advance the vision of the UN Declaration on Human Rights. The United States helped to found the United Nations and retains a vital stake in advancing that organization's genuine commitment to the human rights values that we share with other member nations. We believe every nation must live by and help shape global rules that ensure people enjoy the right to live freely and participate fully in their societies."

"Those who suffer from abuse and oppression around the world, as well as those who dedicate their lives to advancing human rights, need the Council to be balanced and credible," said Ambassador Rice. "The U.S. is seeking election to the Council because we believe that working from within, we can make the council a more effective forum to promote and protect human rights. We hope to work in partnership with many countries to achieve a more effective Council."

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the UN system made up of 47 elected members whose mission is to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights globally. The next round of elections to the Council will be held on May 15th in the UN General Assembly in New York. Members will be elected to a three-year term.

The Council was created in March 2006, and is scheduled to undergo a formal review of its structure and procedures in 2011, which will offer a significant opportunity for Council reform.