

Need For the Reforms in the Unsc in the Changing Political and Economic Times

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ABSTRACT: The International Institutions formed to meet the challenges of the post-WWII world are struggling to cope with the dynamics of the post-Soviet Union world order and other changing powers both in terms of economy and politics. During the last 30-35 years the world has seen massive changes. Disintegration of USSR, unilateralism of USA and in between the rise of multilateral institutions such as BRICS, NAM and a number of other institutions gaining their respective importance for playing significant role towards the world society. Now developing nations, including India, play a larger role in both the international economy and politics. But these changes are not reflected in the UN, where all critical decisions are still being taken by the veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council. Besides, the geopolitical rivalry among the permanent members has prevented the UNSC from coming up with effective mechanisms to deal with global crises. Present paper discusses the need to reform the old structure before they become obsolete in their approach and functioning and to pave the way for the inclusion of more members in the security council both as Permanent Member and Non-Permanent Member from the countries which are either more affected by the global issues, or contributing more in terms of UN's agenda so that member countries can have faith in the functioning of UN.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1946 the UNSC was established by the victors of WW II, namely, China, the U.S.S.R., France, the United Kingdom, and the United States by ratifying the UN Charter and they established themselves as its five permanent members with the unique ability to veto resolutions.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, [1] charged with the maintenance of international peace and security[2] as well as accepting new members to the United Nations[3] and approving any changes to its United Nations Charter.[4] Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions. However, from its very early stage of establishment, the Security Council was largely paralyzed by the Cold War division between the US and USSR and their respective allies, though it authorized interventions in the Korean War and the Congo Crisis and peacekeeping missions in the Suez Crisis, Cyprus, and West New Guinea. Though in later years with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, UN peacekeeping efforts increased dramatically in scale, and the Security Council authorized major military and peacekeeping missions in Kuwait, Namibia, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, yet it seems that it is not keeping a track with the changing geo-political and economic orders of the world and perhaps somewhere failing in executing the responsibilities it was entrusted, may be due to the limited number of permanent members that too with vast veto powers. Present day situation of Syria and the UNSC's "no consensus" on the issue of humanitarian tragedy reflects the lopsidedness of the apex body. Figure 1 and 2 below depict the situation with more clarity on the use of veto power of permanent members and the world wide scenario of power centre of UNSC.

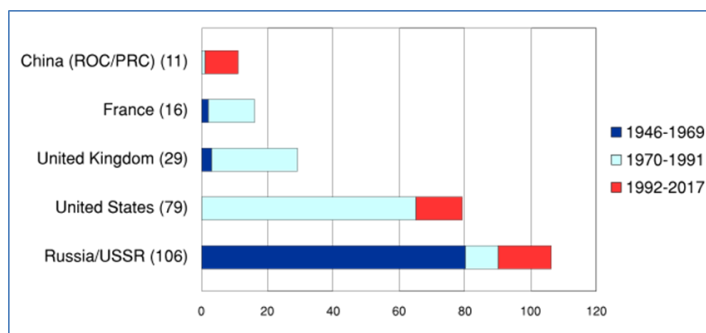


Figure 1: Number of resolutions vetoed by each of the five permanent members of the Security Council between 1946 and 2017.

[Global Policy Forum (2008): "Changing Patterns in the Use of the Veto in the Security Council". Retrieved 25 August 2008]

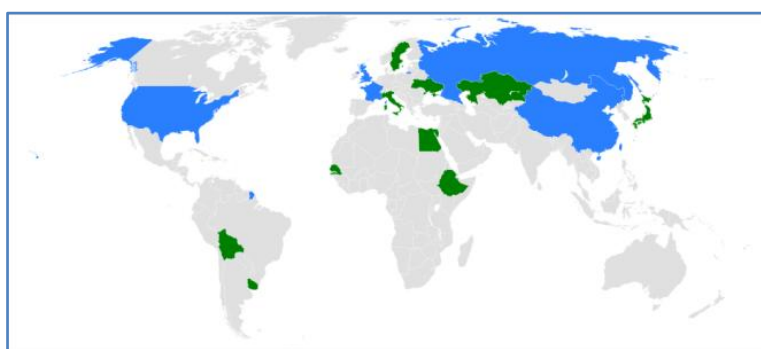


Figure 2: Current permanent and other members of UNSC

The dynamics of world economics and politics is changing at a fast pace. New economies are emerging, developing nations are showing steady growth in terms of the UN riders, hence are playing a crucial role towards the world in general and UNSC in particular. It is the time for the fulfilment of long pending membership reforms in the UNSC to make it more democratic and receptive towards the issues and problems of the world.

II. STRUCTURE

The Security Council consists of fifteen members.[5] The great powers that were the victors of World War II—the Soviet Union (now represented by the Russian Federation), the United Kingdom, France, the Republic of China (now represented by the People's Republic of China), and the United States serve as the body's five permanent members. These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General. The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year term. The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.

III. CRITICISM AND EVALUATIONS

British historian Paul Kennedy stated after examining the first sixty years of the Security Council's existence that "glaring failures had not only accompanied the UN's many achievements, they overshadowed them", identifying the lack of will to prevent ethnic massacres in Bosnia and Rwanda as its particular failures.[6]

It is felt that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, who are all nuclear powers, have created an exclusive nuclear club that predominately addresses the strategic interests and political motives of the permanent members, for example, protecting the oil-rich Kuwaitis in 1991 but poorly protecting resource-poor Rwandans in 1994.[7] Since three of the five permanent members are also European, while four of them are predominantly white Western nations, the Security Council has been described as a pillar of global apartheid by Titus Alexander, former Chair of Westminster United Nations Association.[8]

The Security Council's effectiveness and relevance is questioned by some because, in most high-profile cases, there are essentially no consequences for violating a Security Council resolution. During the Darfur crisis, Janjaweed militias, allowed by elements of the Sudanese government, committed violence against an indigenous

population, killing thousands of civilians. In the Srebrenica massacre, Serbian troops committed genocide against Bosnians, although Srebrenica had been declared a UN safe area, protected by 400 armed Dutch peacekeepers.[9]

The Security Council has been criticized for failure in resolving many conflicts, including Cyprus, Sri Lanka, Syria, Kosovo and the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, reflecting the wider short-comings of the UN. The inaction of the UNSC on Syrian civil war is exceedingly criticized by the New Zealand Prime Minister John Key at the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly. [10]

IV. WHY REFORMS NEEDED

The world is changing, but not the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Today the geo-political and economic scenario of world is quite different from the situation of 1945 when the UNSC was established by 51 countries 70 years ago. Though it is felt for a long time that the present structure is flawed, however, to reach the consensus remains out of reach [6]

The reforms are needed due to following as more number of nations being decolonized and there are sharp contrast between the number of seats and the total number of member states.

- Reform is needed to remove the “Democracy Deficit”.
- It has failed to tackle the recent crisis of Syria, Gaza and Ukraine.
- Need to make it efficient, effective, credible and a legitimate body.

The three key areas of reform can be summarised as below:

- Equitable Representation: Presently there are 10 non-permanent and 5 permanent members in the UNSC. These are not representing the world in a balanced manner, therefore, it is the need of the present day to accommodate various regions e.g. African, Asia Pacific, Latin America etc. in the UNSC.
- Categories of membership: Member states that have demonstrated credibility and capacity to shoulder the responsibilities of the principal UN organ should have a presence to ensure the legitimacy of the council.
- Veto Reforms: The power of veto is frequently cited as a major problem as the P5 members often influence the resolutions making those countries to suffer, which rather need a platform to grow. In this context, the veto must be abolished and by that time the use of veto should be limited in case of vital national security issues.

V. INDIA’S BID TO PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP OF UNSC

India believes that the UNSC does not reflect the geopolitical realities and the emergence of a multipolar world order. India wants a permanent membership to the UNSC for two reasons. First, the veto power, which India could use to defend its interests, says against Pakistan as Russia did recently over the civil war in Ukraine. Second, the permanent membership will be an acknowledgment of India’s rise as a global power, ready to play a key role in the council’s objectives of international peace and security.

There has been discussion of increasing the number of permanent members. The countries who have made the strongest demands for permanent seats are Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan. Japan and Germany, the main defeated powers in WWII, are now the UN’s second- and third-largest funders respectively, while Brazil and India are two of the largest contributors of troops to UN-mandated peace-keeping missions.

The long struggle of India to get into the permanent membership, also supported by UK, Russia and France can be justified on following grounds:

India, being the world’s largest democracy has second largest population in the world.

- Right since its independence, it has become one of the leading contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping missions.
- Today, India has over 8000 peacekeepers, which is more than twice that of the P5 group.
- On the economic side, India has been maintaining the status of World’s 7th largest economy for quite some time.
- Being the 3rd largest active armed force, along with nuclear weapons, India’s candidature is justified.
- ISRO’s successful MOM and placing of indigenous as well as customer satellites including US is another landmark point for its candidature.
- India has consistently supported the purposes and principles of the UN and has made significant contributions to implementing the goals of the UN Charter.

India’s candidature as a potential permanent UNSC member has received support from a vast majority of nations. At several public occasions, four of the five permanent members have supported India’s bid. China is the only permanent member that has been ambiguous in its support for India, owing to its close ties with

Pakistan. Other member states, like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, Malaysia and the whole of the African Union have also endorsed India's bid.

On 21st September 2004, the G4 nations issued a joint statement mutually backing each other's claim to permanent status, together with two African countries. Currently the proposal has to be accepted by two-thirds of the General Assembly (128 votes).

VI. PROBLEMS IN THE REFORM PROCESS

- The road for the reforms is not easy. Three powerful members of the UNSC namely Russia, China, and the U.S. are opposed to any major restructuring of the Council. Though Russia and the U.S. have said they would support India's UNSC bid, however, when it comes to proceedings at the UN their positions represent a far cry from the promises they make at bilateral meetings. The U.S. favours only a "modest expansion" of the UNSC, while Russia doesn't want any change in the veto arrangement. The reform of the Security Council can only take place if two-thirds of UN member states vote in favour, along with an affirmative vote from all the permanent members, who enjoy the veto power. Effectively, even if India secures the support of two-thirds of UN members, who are present and voting, it would still need the five permanent members to not use the veto and thereby, prevent the adoption of the reform process.
- Moreover, the India's bid for the permanent seat in UNSC is being opposed by its nuclear-armed rival Pakistan with other members such as Italy, Mexico Egypt Argentina, South Korea, Spain, Turkey and Indonesia.

VII. CONCLUSION

- A more democratic and representative Security Council would be better-equipped to address global challenges.
- UNSC is neither reflecting the world in a balanced manner in the current format nor the ground realities of the 21st century.
- Since most of the agenda issues are focussed to the Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America/Caribbean states, hence, the regional representation must be enlarged to improve the current makeup, giving more weightage to these regions.
- India clearly meet the criteria to be a member of UNSC being the world's largest democracy, the second most populous and, perhaps, the most diverse nation, the third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity and consistently the fourth largest troop and police contributor to UN peacekeeping missions.
- Further, India's performance as a non-permanent member of the Security Council during 2011-2012 has also significantly strengthened India's claim to permanent membership.

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