

Research Report

Security Council

Question of the Reform of Security Council



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Forum	Security Council
Issue:	Question on the reform of Security Council
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Introduction

The Security Council is one of the leading forces of the United Nations. As the only forum of the United Nations that can force nations to adopt their resolutions the Security Council is arguably the most powerful committee of the United Nations. However the committee is not without its faults. There is a growing demand to reform the Security Council to better fit the changing world we live in. The main changes being brought up are updating the permanent members, reforming the use of veto power, and increasing the number of members, permanent and non-permanent.

Definition of Key Terms

P5 Member

The five permanent members of the Security Council with veto power, the five countries are: China, United States of America, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, France

Veto Power

The ability held by P5 members to fail a clause or resolution by voting against

G4

A group of four nations challenging to be added as permanent members without veto power, the four nations are: India, Brazil, Japan and Germany

Permanent Member

A member nation who has a seat at every Security Council meeting, currently this group is only made up of the P5 member nations

Non-Permanent Member

Member states that are voted in by the General Assembly to serve a two-year term in the Security Council, current non-permanent members are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa



General Overview

Before trying to reform the Security Council it is important to first understand how the Security Council works and what its main flaws are.

History

The Security Council was formed along with the UN after World War II and was given the highest power in the UN as the only committee that could force nations to abide by its resolutions. To lead this committee power was given to the 5 largest powers of the time, China, USA, UK, Russia, and France. These 5 nations would have the ultimate power of veto.

Current Situation

As it now stands the Security Council is made up of 15 member states, 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent member states. The 5 permanent members have the power of veto which allows them to fail a clause or an entire resolution by voting against it. The 10 non-permanent members are voted in by the General Assembly every year. Each year the General Assembly votes in five member states into the Security Council to serve for two years. This means that every year five member nations leave the Security Council and five new member nations enter. This voting system is to ensure that many nations, areas, and levels of development are given a voice in the Security Council. This voting system also allows new world powers to have their voices heard.

Main Flaws

There are many main flaws voiced by the public and UN officials. Some of which include the underrepresentation of all areas, the abuse of veto power, the lack of non-P5 permanent members, and the failure to adjust to new world powers.

The first major issue is the underrepresentation of all major areas of the world in the Security Council. The P5 cover Europe, Asia, and North America. This leaves no permanent representation of Africa, South America, Oceania, or the Middle East (although this is not a continent). There is non-permanent representation however many believe that an area as large as Africa and South America should have permanent representation. They also believe that a place as influential on modern politics as the Middle East needs permanent representation. The counter to this is that adding too many permanent members causes the Security Council to be too large and bureaucratic making them unable to respond to issues quickly, something they are relied on to do.

The next issue is the abuse of veto power. The veto power was given to the P5 as a tool to make sure that the resolutions being passed were truly agreed upon. They were given this power with the responsibility to not abuse it. Unfortunately, as many see it the P5 have abused the veto power. Whether to fail a resolution that went against their government or one of their allies governments. The other issue is the claim that the veto power was given to the nations who at the time were the most stable and peaceful. The argument is that the P5 are no longer the most stable and peaceful nations in the world. However the issue the United Nations faces is convincing the P5 to give up their veto power, an almost impossible task.

Another issue is the lack of non-P5 permanent members. In the "Report of the Secretary-General's High-Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change" the Panel outlines a



plan to add 6 new permanent members to the Security Council, this plan has yet to be passed. The idea of the plan was to add permanent representation from Africa and Asia to equal the ratio of member nations to Security Council representatives in each of the four outlined areas: Americas, Europe, Asia and Pacific, Africa. This plan to add more permanent members helps solve the issue of underrepresentation of certain areas as well as take away some of the power the P5 have to reduce the threat of veto.

There is also a call from other member nations that the Security Council does not represent the current balance of economic and political power in the world. Some believe that the UK and France no longer hold the power they once did. With the failing economy of the US it is easy to see a future where a claim is made the same about the US. A new power is rise as the G4: India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan. These 4 new powers believe that they are the world's future super powers. It is hard to argue with the fact that Germany and Japan are economic powerhouses. India and Brazil are quickly developing nations that must first overcome social issues to become true powers, but with the economic power each nation is developing it is hard to see a future where these problems would not have been solved. The push by these four nations to add themselves and two African nations as the six new permanent members without veto power failed.

Major Parties Involved

P5

The permanent five nations who holding veto power. This group is the group that must be appeased in the reform of the Security Council, as they are the nations who can decide what passes and what doesn't, including resolutions on the reform of the Security Council. Their goal is to give up as little of their power as possible while still trying to improve the Security Council. They will allow for the adding of nations, however in the past have been against the adding of more permanent members, even without veto power.

G4

As the four nations trying to add themselves to the Security Council, most have had the chance to serve as non-permanent nations in the Security Council and believe that they are stable and peaceful enough to become permanent members. Many outsiders and member nations agree that the G4 are the up and coming powers in the next few years. They represent the greatest chance of adding permanent members to the Security Council, however slim the chance.

Secretary General

Kofi Annan has called for the reform of the Security Council. In his High-Panels report they outline the two main plans of approach they have for the reform of Security Council. These plans include adding permanent members or longer length terms, which are renewable.



Timeline of Key Events

1949 – First Security Council session with five permanent members and six non-permanent members.

1965 – Security Council expanded as four new non-permanent members are added. There are now 15 members, five permanent members and 10 non-permanent members

1994 – After failing to stop the Rwandan Genocide the Security Council establishes a International Criminal Tribunal to bring those behind the genocide to justice

2001 – after September 11, 2001 the Security Council calls for an increase in international cooperation against terrorism including aggressive actions

2002 – The Security Council excludes the United Nations Peacekeeping Force from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been many attempts to reform the Security Council. In 2004 the General Assembly wrote a report on how the United Nations could improve to adapt to changes in the modern world. A section was dedicated to the reform of the Security Council. The report stated that the Security Council “should bring into the decision making process countries more representative of the broader membership, especially, of the developing world” and that “a decision on the enlargement of the Council satisfying these criteria, is now a **necessity**”. In the plan they outline two plans to reform Security Council to successfully complete their goals. The first plan or Model A says to create six new permanent seats without veto power and three new two-year term non-permanent seats. The new plan, designed to better diversify the Security Council would look like this:

<i>Regional area</i>	<i>No. of States</i>	<i>Permanent seats (continuing)</i>	<i>Proposed new permanent seats</i>	<i>Proposed two-year seats (non-renewable)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Africa	53	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pacific	56	1	2	3	6
Europe	47	3	1	2	6
Americas	35	1	1	4	6
Totals model A	191	5	6	13	24



The second plan, or Model B, planned to add longer serving non-permanent members who could be voted in again the same year they ended. The plan would look like this:

<i>Regional area</i>	<i>No. of States</i>	<i>Permanent seats (continuing)</i>	<i>Proposed four-year renewable seats</i>	<i>Proposed two-year seats (non-renewable)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Africa	53	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pacific	56	1	2	3	6
Europe	47	3	2	1	6
Americas	35	1	2	3	6
Totals model B	191	5	8	11	24

These models were used as the basis of most resolutions on the reform of the Security Council. The G4 went with Model A as they proposed themselves and two African nations to be the six new permanent members without veto power. Although they fulfilled the requirements outlined in the plans with two new African, two more Asian members (India and Japan), one European (Germany) and one new member from the Americas (Brazil) as well as new non-permanent members the rest of the UN and the Security Council wished to pursue the passing of a resolution that more mimicked the plan in Model B.

All African nations called for two African permanent seats with veto power and two non-permanent seats for the continent. This plan was far too optimistic, it showed the UN how little the P5 were willing to add more veto power and therefore lose some of the effectiveness of their veto power.

Possible Solutions

Unfortunately the main way to pass a resolution on the reform of the Security Council is to appease the P5. As they hold the veto power, anything that goes against their best interest will most likely be vetoed. The past has shown that this means the plan must focus on adding more non-permanent members which represent the changing global political climate, whether that be for 2 or 4 terms and whether those are renewable or not. The idea of adding new permanent members is a line that must be dealt with very carefully. Adding too many permanent members draws away from the P5's power and therefore is hard to achieve. However if the proposed permanent nations have strong ties to the P5 they may just be accepted, it is up to you however to find nations that both fit that description and represent the changing global politics. The idea of taking away veto power is bordering on completely useless as none of the P5 have shown any willingness to handover or lose their veto power. This situation is one that requires the agreement of the P5 more than any other issue and is the hardest to get them to agree on.



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