

Affirmative Evidence

Fairness

Disproportionate

Permanent membership gives outsize negotiating power to a small number of countries

Mendel 92

Toby Mendel (3L, Dalhousie University). "Restructuring the Security Council." 1 Dalhousie J. Legal Stud. 161 (1992). JDN.
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/dalhou1&div=12&id=&page=>

This political organization thus concentrates power in the Security Council and then gives five of the 160 members extraordinary veto powers. At face value these powers would seem to operate only negatively, that is, only in a way that would prevent action being taken. In practice, however, the ability to stymie any action also carries enormous negotiating power which may effectively be used to advance policies advocated by a permanent member. The arrangement at the Security Council thus increases the power of the permanent members in respect to decisions and strategies of all the United Nations bodies.

UNSC representation is deeply disproportionate

TCD 22

Turkish Communications Directorate (Official communications organization of the government of Turkey). UN Reform: A New Approach to International Cooperation. September 2022. JDN.

When the UN was founded, it had 51 members. On the other hand, the Security Council initially consisted of 11 members, five permanent and six temporary. The Security Council's composition was altered for the first and final time in 1965, increasing the number of temporary members to 15 while maintaining the number of permanent members. In the years that followed, the organization successfully gained membership from nearly all of the world's sovereign states and currently has 193 members. The representation rate of the UNSC among the current members is approximately one in thirteen. The representation rate today is significantly low when compared to the rate in the UN Charter's original form. While Europe is represented by two countries in the permanent memberships of the Security Council, there is not a single permanent member from South America and Africa. Nonetheless, the entire European population corresponds to only five per cent of the world's population. South America's population of over 600 million is not represented by a permanent member on the Security Council. A permanent member representing 1,2 billion individuals from Africa and the Islamic world is absent from the Council. Another aspect that hinders representational justice is its failure to reflect multiculturalism.

Arbitrary

There is no principled basis for the P5 being the most important countries

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Are the Right Nations Permanent Members? It is hard to justify the current permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council no matter which criteria are used: gross national product or other economic indicators; population; military prowess; geography, either in terms of size or regional distribution; and/or general international influence. France and the United Kingdom are obvious candidates for exclusion. Japan, Germany, and India have among the most compelling reasons for inclusion. The fate of the Soviet Union's seat is not clear. As of this writing, Russia was 'volunteering' to take over the Soviet Union's role, but it seems clear that they have no right to unilaterally take over a position which members of the United Nations gave to another, quite different, political entity. It seems, however, that some of the remaining permanent members have accepted this arrangement, at least in principle.

Unequal

P5 status undermines the political equality of nations

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Permanent membership on the Security Council runs contrary to one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations, the idea of equality.¹⁰ In practice, those states with greater resources will tend to wield a disproportionate amount of power irrespective of the formal structure used. To formally accord them this power, however, seriously undermines the goal of equality and no longer serves the objectives for which the power was originally granted. The potential for abuse of the veto power and its use to further goals other than those for which it was intended have been discussed with respect to acts of aggression above. It would be very difficult to institute controls to prevent misuse of these powers. The ability of permanent members to influence even non-Security Council affairs through their extraordinary power further erodes the principle of equality of members of the United Nations.

Developing Nations Underrepresented

The Security Council under-represents developing nations

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The most important reason to abolish permanent members of the Security Council is the profound structural change in international relations that has occurred since the Charter was signed. On one hand, the tension between the communist bloc and the Western European nations no longer exists. On the other hand, the end of colonialism has brought about a rise in prominence of less developed countries. This has shifted the focus in international relations from an East-West bias to a North-South one. Unfortunately, the composition of the Security Council does not reflect these changes. For example, the developed countries represent approximately twenty per cent of the world's population but occupy eighty per cent of the permanent positions on the Security Council.

Developing nations have often found themselves caught between two superpowers hungry to increase their international influence. While this was not a fortunate position for less wealthy nations to be in, the tension between competing superpowers helped prevent some of the worst abuses. Many developing countries are now worried that, without hindrance from the defunct communist bloc, the United States will be able to pursue its international goals to the detriment of their sovereignty and self-determination. Using its position on the Security Council and its economic and military clout, the United States is now able to 'promote' its values and ideas with less international opposition than ever before. Very few states supported the actions of Iraq in the summer of 1990, but many developing countries were apprehensive of the ease with which the United States was able to achieve its objectives at the Security Council. It is essential that developing nations, who now seriously lack adequate representation on the Security Council, be given a greater say.

Colonialism

The current Security Council is not representative of UN members, only its colonial history

Ryder et al. 20

Hannah Ryder (Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China), Anna Baisch (International relations researcher at Development Reimagined) and Ovigwe Eguegu (policy advisor at Development Reimagined and columnist for the China Africa Project). "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five." Foreign Policy. 17 September 2020. JDN. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>

The roots of the U.N. are deeply colonial. Back in 1945 four out of the five members of the P5 were colonial states. Over the 75 years of the U.N.'s existence, 80 former colonies have gained independence, from India to Kenya, to Nigeria and Kazakhstan.

This has meant a significant shift in population terms. In 1945 the P5—China, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Russia—accounted for 10 percent of member states and over 50 percent of the world's population, within their empires. Now, the P5 account for 26 percent of the world's population, and just 3 percent of the U.N. member states.

Even with the 10 additional nonpermanent members of the Security Council—who have to compete to be elected to sit on the council for two years, which costs millions of dollars in lobbying—Security Council seats are distinctly Eurocentric. As our research shows, the Western European and Others Group and the Eastern European Group combined represent just 17.1 percent of the global population, but they have held 47 percent of Security Council seats.

And within these groups, the big countries almost always win. Japan has spent 22 years on the Security Council. Brazil 20 years. Within African countries, only Nigeria, with 10 years, comes close.

This poorly distributed allocation is reflected in other parts of the U.N.—in particular the secretary-general position itself. Since 1945, four out of the nine secretaries-general have been white European men. There has never been a Muslim secretary-general.

Africa Excluded

Africa is structurally excluded from the P5

Patrick 23

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"UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Africa faces a moment of truth. The Security Council's composition is particularly archaic and unjust from the vantage point of Africa. The continent occupies most of the council's substantive agenda and hosts the vast majority of UN peacekeeping operations, yet it lacks a single permanent seat to shape council deliberations. Ironically, while the Ezulwini Consensus gives the AU unmatched leverage in UN negotiations, this very unanimity inhibits progress on council reform because the bloc has failed to specify which countries should occupy its two proposed permanent seats. Ending this impasse, as Sithembile Mbete concludes, will require the AU to "get its own house in order."

P5 Unjust (India)

India views the P5 as an inherently unjust institution

Mukherjee 23

Rohan Mukherjee (Assistant professor of international relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

The UN Security Council's paralysis over Russia's invasion of Ukraine has revived calls to reform the institution. India has joined the chorus, urging action on what it has called a "Sisyphean struggle" and, without officially condemning Russia, calling for a "reformed multilateralism." Although this stance may appear opportunistic to the West, it is a position India has held consistently for decades and expressed in previous times of crisis. In the aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, for example, then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee argued that "until the UN Security Council is reformed and restructured, its decisions cannot reflect truly the collective will of the community of nations."

From India's perspective, the current international order is inherently unjust. It is dominated by a great power club comprising the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council—who often flagrantly violate the very rules and standards to which they hold all other countries. It is also obsolete, privileging a group whose claim to centrality—being the victors of World War II—is outdated. For India, the distribution of power and moral authority in the world has shifted substantially since 1945. The core issue, then, is one of equity, a vital precondition for the Security Council's continued legitimacy in the eyes of those who aspire to join the great power club.

Resource Inequality

The P5 has led to an inequitable distribution of economic resources

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U.N. leaders have sought to address this by diversifying heads of agencies or undersecretaries-general, but individuals are not the answer. Take COVID-19. Despite an Ethiopian head of the WHO, who might be expected to advocate for the poorest countries in the world, the only resolution the P5-led Security Council has unanimously adopted referring to COVID-19 this year is resolution 2532—supporting a call made by the secretary-general in March for a global cease-fire to focus on efforts to fight COVID-19. This is important but hardly influential, and it's largely irrelevant to the thousands of people who have since died prematurely due to lax COVID-19 responses and lack of international finance to manage the impacts of required lockdowns in the poorest countries. Instead, African leaders have turned closer to the African Union's Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention for COVID-19 advice, and to the unrepresentative yet powerful G-20 and IMF for financial support, not the U.N.

Why does this distribution matter? The shift in postcolonial (and post-Cold War) membership is essentially the U.N.'s only major shift in composition in 75 years.

Contrary to what many observers—especially economists like ourselves—might have us believe, there has not been a great economic rebalancing. Our calculations suggest—again including former colonies—that the P5's share of global GDP in 1940 was around 47 percent. Today, the P5 accounts for just 2 percentage points more of GDP—49 percent of the global total.

Yes, China's economic rise within the P5 has been notable—in fact, doubling in economic importance from accounting for 14 percent to 33 percent of the P5's total wealth. But for the rest of the world, their economic relationship with the P5 has hardly changed over the U.N.'s 75 years. Global economics and the U.N. structure remain rooted in the power structures of 1945, despite the political independence.

Has the P5's U.N. status helped to maintain economic imperialism, or has their economic might helped them to maintain their powerful U.N. positions? In some ways it is only the correlation that matters. The U.N.'s structural inability to compel the P5 countries themselves to act decisively for the greater good is often acknowledged as a key justification for change, but this is often countered with economic arguments that we are all better off now. This counter does not hold water. The P5's failure to distribute economic benefits to the rest of the world despite decolonization is also a structural problem that justifies change.

Abolition is Most Fair

There are no countries that deserve permanent membership

Ryder et al. 20

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The answer lies in the geopolitical ideals leaders set out back in 1945. The Security Council was conceived on a basis of responsibility and capacity of working collaboratively, rather than on the principle of representation. At that time, after emerging from World War II and meeting in San Francisco, the leaders of the P5 felt themselves to be responsible and capable, despite their colonial pursuits.

While the economics might be the same, the potential member states that might be deemed responsible or capable in 2020 are very different to those in 1945. And they will likely be different in 2030, 2045, or another 75 years ahead. With climate change, it's likely that our global crises will only become more complex over the next 75 years.

There is no country in the world that deserves a permanent seat. Veto-based decision-making on behalf of others, as the Security Council does, should be earned, and criteria for responsibility and capability transparently demonstrated and rewarded.

A reimagined structure for a Security Council would see all 15 seats being made temporary, for periods of five years to provide more continuity, with wide, nonregional open competition for each seat, alongside clear, monitored restrictions on lobbying expenses and two-term limits within a cycle of 30 years to reward excellence while avoiding domination.

Fairness Key to Effectiveness

Establishing a fair system is key to UN effectiveness

TCD 22

Turkish Communications Directorate (Official communications organization of the government of Turkey). UN Reform: A New Approach to International Cooperation. September 2022. JDN.

The dilemmas of the global system and the problems caused by international terrorism are not the only challenges facing the United Nations. The UN's problem of functionality and effectiveness involves an even deeper problem of global governance. As the problems of the global system grow, the UN continues to serve as one of the fundamental dynamics of global governance. All international organizations must contribute sufficiently to the development of effective global governance. As a result, addressing issues such as injustice and dysfunction has become essential. For the solution to be effective, it is first necessary to establish a fair system for global peace and stability. The status quo, which persists strongly in the United Nations Security Council and is a relic of the bipolar world, cannot meet the present needs.

Representation Key to Effectiveness

An unrepresentative UNSC can't respond effectively to major global threats

Mbete 23

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Second, the nature of global threats and the definition of international security have changed dramatically since 1945. The Security Council must be adapted to respond to new and evolving challenges like climate change, novel pandemics, and global terrorism. Such threats can only be resolved, African leaders argue, by an institution that represents the interests and perspectives of all of humanity. African states have long lobbied the council to include development and poverty reduction, as well as controlling the flow of small arms, as essential strategies for conflict prevention, rather than focusing on only traditional big power priorities like peacekeeping and nuclear nonproliferation. During its presidency of the Security Council in February 2023, for example, Mozambique convened an open debate on "Peace and Security in Africa: The Impact of Development Policies in the Implementation of the Silencing the Guns Initiative." The aim of the event was "to facilitate a deeper understanding of the contribution that socio-economic factors can make in promoting social cohesion, peace, and stability, or, conversely, in triggering conflict, including the resurgence of unconstitutional change of governments in Africa and beyond."

Fair representation is a prerequisite to effectiveness

Mukherjee 23

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If the only issue at stake was the council's net contribution to global security, most countries might give it a passing grade. India's claim, however, is that Security Council reform is necessary not only to improve its performance but also to sustain its legitimacy. A wealth of social science research demonstrates that institutional legitimacy depends less on performance than on inclusivity and fairness. Moreover, institutional performance declines as legitimacy diminishes, because members gradually reduce their participation and compliance with rules they find exclusionary and unfair.

In other words, representational legitimacy is a necessary condition for good institutional performance—particularly when the objects of an institution's decisions have little say in the decisionmaking process itself. India has made this argument with respect to African countries, which occupy most of the council's agenda yet have no representation in its permanent membership. Including African countries, India argues, would produce better outcomes by enhancing the council's legitimacy on the continent.

Effectiveness

Reform is Pragmatic (Competition)

Rising great power competition has made reform more possible

Patrick 23

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Geopolitical competition could again add momentum for reform. Resurgent strategic rivalry between the council's democratic and authoritarian powers could help break the logjam on Security Council reform, as current P5 members seek to cultivate relationships with nations from the developing world. As Richard Gowan notes, the 2023 British national security posture identifies council reform as one way to nurture better relations with middle powers like India and Brazil. There is at least a partial precedent here. The council's sole previous expansion occurred in the context of decolonization and the Cold War, as the world's East and West factions jockeyed for support from newly independent states in a burgeoning "third world." Something similar is at play today, with P5 states seeking to curry favor in the so-called Global South. It is worth noting, however, that the 1965 expansion involved only elected rather than permanent members.

Reform is Pragmatic (Ukraine)

The Ukraine war has sparked new momentum for reform

Mbeti 23

Sithembile Mbeti (director of programs at Futurelect, a Johannesburg-based nongovernmental organization that seeks to empower a new generation of ethical government and political leaders in Africa). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

This stubborn status quo suggests that reform cannot be achieved by moral appeals to principles like democracy or legitimacy. To advance reform, any diplomatic effort must tackle head-on the power relations embedded in the structure of the Security Council. In this regard, the current realignment of global power, triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, presents a potentially historic opportunity to recalibrate global governance institutions to meet the challenges of this new era.

Now Key

Now is key; Ukraine has opened a window for reform that could close Mukherjee 23

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Although the war in Ukraine has created fresh impetus for Security Council reform, the IGN process remains mired in the restatement of ossified positions and the absence of a rolling text for countries to negotiate. If momentum is lost once again and the decades-long saga of only talking about reform continues, India is likely to become increasingly disenchanting. Signs of frustration have begun creeping into official statements, which claim that the IGN is "voiding its own purpose through a lack of activity" and that the persistence of "false promises" may compel India to "look outside the IGN . . . for a process towards genuine reform." In the absence of near-term reform, India's main recourse will be to lobby the General Assembly to dilute the Security Council's authority and power.

A deeper and more dangerous cost of failed reform would likely be India's eroding faith in the international order itself. The recent diplomatic sparring between the West and India over condemning and sanctioning Russia has exposed a rift on fundamental questions of inclusion and equity. Beyond its historic diplomatic and defense ties to Moscow, India has proved unwilling even rhetorically to defend an order that will not accommodate its aspirations for global leadership. India is also hedging its bets by joining Chinese-led institutions such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Many Western observers have viewed India's fence-sitting as evidence of its unsuitability for global leadership, presenting further obstacles to its aspirations. As India's power and self-confidence on the world stage grow, this impasse will only deepen in the absence of progress on Security Council reform.

There are rising calls for abolition Izquierdo 23

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Deeply frustrated by the Security Council's incapacity to do anything about a major war in Europe, proponents of action resorted to unusual tactics. A procedural resolution in the Security Council called for an emergency special session of the General Assembly. On March 2, 2022, 141 member states passed a resolution that "reaffirms [the General Assembly's] commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine," "deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine," and "demands that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders." Out of 193 member states, thirty-five abstained and only five voted against the resolution.

Overall, Russia's actions in Ukraine and its ability to block any response by the Security Council have contributed to an increasingly radical set of demands for reform. Many states are now urging a complete abolition of veto rights, as well as more frequent recourse to the General Assembly to circumvent the use of the veto in the Security Council. For its own part, Russia has portrayed itself as being broadly sympathetic to Security Council reform, declaring its general support but remaining vague and cautious on the details. At the opening of the 77th UN General Assembly in September 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke in favor of more representation from Africa, Asia, and Latin America on the Security Council, naming India and Brazil as "worthy candidates for becoming permanent Council members."

AT: P5 Will Leave

P5 status isn't key to ensuring participation; the Gulf War proves Mendel 92

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One might argue, as a practical matter, that non-members would be reluctant to participate in Security Council mandated activities to prevent aggression. It is, therefore, necessary to preserve permanent membership of the most powerful nations to ensure their participation in such activities. The one true example of Security Council cooperation in this area, the military operation against Iraq in 1991, exposes the fallacy of this argument: many nations neither within the area directly affected by the conflict nor on the Security Council were represented militarily and it is hard to imagine that mere exclusion from the Security Council would have deterred American enthusiasm.

Differential Voting Solves

Assigning differential voting weights would give an incentive for P5 members to comply **Singh 23**

Priyal Singh (Senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

The proposal also calls for the introduction of a system of differentiated voting weights. Countries that occupy the seats of top-tier global powers and global coalitions would count for three votes, while other rotational seats would count for a single vote. To incentivize P5 support for gradual council reform, the scheme envisions an eighteen-year transition phase. Each P5 vote would initially count for five votes (during the first six years), then four (for years seven through twelve) and eventually three (years thirteen through eighteen). The proposal also envisions regular reviews of the Security Council's structure, procedures, and working methods.

Such a shift toward proportional representation may seem like a radical departure from other ongoing efforts to reform the council's composition and rules. But it may be an idea worth entertaining, given the longstanding deadlock within the IGN process, the growing demands placed upon the Security Council, and the body's failure to reinvent itself to match new global realities.

This proposed multiyear reform process provides a gradual pathway toward a much more representative Security Council. The current IGN process, by contrast, is likely to perpetuate existing concerns about the council's credibility and legitimacy, as global power dynamics continue to shift in coming decades. Greater proportional representation, encompassing distinct categories of states, offers a potential breakthrough. Irreconcilable national differences over which states may be best suited to have a seat at the high table can only be overcome if all states have the opportunity to assume a seat and contribute to international peace and security.

To be sure, a more representative Security Council is no cure-all. Member states will still need to consider trade-offs between greater representation and administrative efficiency, for instance. Still, differentiated voting weights for different categories of states may help alleviate these concerns. It could also provide a basis for global powers to collaborate with regional powers, small states, and global power coalitions to amend the UN Charter and create a more democratized Security Council. For this proposal to get diplomatic traction, a broad coalition of like-minded states will need to directly challenge not only existing council reform proposals (including the G4 plan and the Ezulwini Consensus) but also the formal IGN process. Senior leadership in the UN Secretariat itself may be well positioned to initiate thinking on such a radical reform process—one that overcomes the limitations of the IGN and offers an alternative pathway for member states to realize a democratized council.

Realignment

Radical reform is necessary to re-align the UNSC with the interests of humanity

TCD 22

Turkish Communications Directorate (Official communications organization of the government of Turkey). UN Reform: A New Approach to International Cooperation. September 2022. JDN.

Problems encountered in any part of the world can quickly lead to consequences that affect all humanity. Issues such as climate change, global warming, famine, thirst, irregular migration movements, and terrorism pose serious threats to global peace and stability. As a result, it is essential to find global solutions to global issues in collaboration using a fair and realistic approach. In the current international system, which only protects and grants privileges to developed countries, disadvantaged countries are crushed under the weight of an unfair price imposed on their shoulders by an unjust global structure, particularly because the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council use their veto power for their own interests. To leave a liveable world for future generations, the entire world must not turn its back on disadvantaged regions; to ensure justice, it must act in coordination with voluntary cooperation. As a result, the United Nations, the world's most important institution for maintaining peace and ensuring security, must implement a system where all of humanity is prioritised and where the right is strong rather than the strong is right. A UN Security Council that acts on the priorities of only five permanent members cannot prevent conflicts and establish peace, stability, and security. We regard insisting on a system that is incapable of creating a fairer world for the present and the future as complicity in a crime against humanity. Türkiye has been repeatedly and explicitly stating that a radical reform is required for the United Nations to fulfil its mission and address the conditions, threats, security concerns, and needs of today. The principles we shared with the international community on every platform for the restructuring of the UN, based on the mottos "The world is bigger than five" and "A fairer world is possible," have become the feelings of not only us, but also of the majority of countries under the umbrella of the UN.

Elected Councils More Effective

An elected Council would be better positioned to handle major geopolitical threats Singh 23

Priyal Singh (Senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Despite these challenges, Security Council reform remains desperately needed. Major challenges to international peace and security—including those related to climate change, armed conflict, violent extremism, and geopolitical tensions among the great powers—necessitate a more representative, credible, and transparent system of collective security that better reflects the contemporary international system and the evolving locus of power among states in the Global South.

In response to these demands, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), a pan-African policy research institute, undertook wide-ranging consultations between 2015 and 2017 with various international state representatives, think tanks, and civil society organizations to explore an alternative pathway to Security Council reform. These informed the development of a reform campaign, Elect the Council, which provides a detailed proposal to circumvent an IGN process that remains mired in competing and ultimately irreconcilable national positions.

As its name suggests, Elect the Council advocates amending the UN Charter to produce a Security Council that is entirely elected. This scheme would eliminate permanent seats and the vetoes that go with them. Instead, the entire UN membership would elect a new council every three years, comprising twenty-six or twenty-seven members in total. These would be drawn from four categories: (1) top-tier global powers, as measured by certain objective criteria, such as the size of their respective populations, economies, and contributions to the UN system; (2) coalitions of states that collectively meet the objective criteria of the top-tier global powers (such as the European Union, for example); (3) regional powers; and (4) other countries that do not fit into these prior categories, whose rotational seats on the council would not be immediately renewable (and for which countries in the prior categories would not be eligible to vote).

The Security Council could function effectively with only rotating members

Ryder et al. 20

Hannah Ryder (Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China), Anna Baisch (International relations researcher at Development Reimagined) and Ovigwe Eguegu (policy advisor at Development Reimagined and columnist for the China Africa Project). "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five." Foreign Policy. 17 September 2020. JDN. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>

Such a structure would not be a toothless democratic body like the U.N. General Assembly, where every country has one vote, regardless of its record, wealth, population, or military might, and no country has a veto. Nor would it be an easy and potentially diverse yet unaccountable "coalition of the willing," nor a supposedly elite and powerful grouping of countries such as the G-7, BRICS, or G-20, subject to groupthink and hiding behind each other.

These 15 countries, just as nonpermanent members have established precedent for doing now, would need to be elected by others—they would need to prove their worth to others. They would need to build allies within the U.N., for instance within their groupings, and campaign to show they are indeed responsible and capable to be trusted to help the world tackle issues from poverty and climate change to pandemics and financial crises. P5 members could thus arguably remain on the council, but they would need to compete and pitch to do so.

While a 15-seat Security Council might initially seem large, a council that aimed to be effective in decision-making while embedding the principle of collaboration would also implement a rule that veto power can only be exercised by two members together—i.e., any country would need to find another supporter to oppose a decision. Preserving the veto would also maintain its distinction from the General Assembly and from the pre-World War II League of Nations, the U.N.'s failed predecessor.

P5 Not Key

The UN doesn't need to cater to the P5 to be useful; the ICC proves Ryder et al. 20

Hannah Ryder (Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China), Anna Baisch (International relations researcher at Development Reimagined) and Ovigwe Eguegu (policy advisor at Development Reimagined and columnist for the China Africa Project). "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five." Foreign Policy. 17 September 2020. JDN. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>

Detractors will immediately contend that the P5 will not accept this. Nor would they submit to decisions made by others. Indeed, some P5 members have remained out of certain U.N.-based mechanisms for this reason. Three out of the five permanent members do not recognize the U.N. General Assembly-endorsed International Criminal Court (ICC) decisions. Yet the ICC has made important contributions to justice for thousands, if not millions of people. The U.N. can and does still play a guardian role, even if P5 members remain outside. The world cannot take another 75 years of unaccountability and inequality. A reimagined, stronger structure has a chance of creating a more fit-for-purpose and adaptive U.N., ready to face the challenges of the future.

Legitimacy Low Now

Legitimacy is low now, but salvageable

Patrick 23

Stewart Patrick (senior fellow and director of the Global Order and Institutions Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).
"UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

The health of the Security Council is poor but not yet terminal. Most contributors believe the council's performance and legitimacy have declined, particularly since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To be sure, its effective functioning has always been contingent on trust among the P5 and their willingness to withhold the veto. In the benign post-Cold War context of the 1990s, optimism ran high that the council might finally fulfill the aims of the UN Charter. Such optimism gradually faded. Tensions between the P5's democratic and authoritarian members reasserted themselves, exacerbated by the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, the NATO-led intervention in Libya and its chaotic aftermath, the breakdown of UN diplomacy over the war in Syria, and the fallout from Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014, among other disputes. Even so, the council managed to insulate much of its business from these frictions. It continued, for example, to reauthorize peace operations in many conflict areas. Such compartmentalization still occurs but has become more difficult since February 2022, threatening the council's ability to serve as a clearinghouse for the P5 to compromise in a divided world. East-West tensions now intrude on its everyday deliberations, including the release of basic presidential and press statements. As the International Crisis Group warns, "worse may lie ahead."

Reform Key to Legitimacy

Reform is inevitably required to confront the UNSC's rising illegitimacy

Patrick 23

Stewart Patrick (senior fellow and director of the Global Order and Institutions Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).
"UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Yet, pressure for Security Council expansion and veto reform will surely grow as the distribution of power and the nature of security threats shift ever further from what they were in 1945. Absent structural changes, the council's performance and legitimacy will inevitably suffer. Given these stakes, the world requires fresh thinking on reform pathways that will help the council meet the moment.

Symbolic Value

Reform itself is symbolically valuable regardless of its impact on effectiveness

Patrick 23

Stewart Patrick (senior fellow and director of the Global Order and Institutions Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace). "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Security Council reform is about values as well as power. The topic of council reform is highly charged because it has normative as well as material implications for world order. Zhang Guihong notes that altering the council's composition will not only advance some national interests over others but also influence how the world defines and chooses to defend the concept of security itself. Such considerations help explain the United States' historic ambivalence toward extending permanent membership to large developing-country democracies, given their proclivity in UN settings to adopt nonaligned stances at odds with Washington's preferences. During U.S. president Barack Obama's first term, U.S. officials observed Brazil, India, and South Africa in action as elected council members. What they witnessed, former U.S. ambassador to the UN Susan Rice dryly observed, was "not . . . frankly, encouraging." More than a decade later, the United States has been similarly frustrated by the inclination of emerging democracies to sit on the fence rather than move to isolate Russia.

Russia/China Gridlock

The P5 structure allows Russia and China to block all progress

Huesgen 23

Christoph Heusgen (Chairman of the Munich Security Conference. He served as Germany's ambassador to the UN from 2017 to 2021, and from 2005 to 2017 he served as diplomatic adviser to then chancellor Angela Merkel). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Security Council reform is one of the most frustrating issues at the United Nations. A large majority of member states want to reform the Security Council. Yet countries opposing it have held the upper hand for decades, helped by bitter infighting among those in favor of reform but on different terms. As a consequence, a fruitless diplomatic merry-go-round repeats itself every year at the annual opening of the UN General Assembly in New York. The assembled diplomats formally restart the so-called intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) process, with one or more facilitators appointed by the president of the General Assembly. The IGN, made up of representatives from blocs with differing opinions on Security Council reform, heatedly debates different proposals, themes, and texts without tangible results. Critics have said that IGN stands for "it goes nowhere"—and that sums it up quite well.

The basic flaw of the present IGN is that it allows China and its junior partner Russia, supported by other members who are afraid that they may be losers in any reform, to block any substantial progress. This has to stop. The IGN must be replaced by a more promising way forward. In recent years, the General Assembly has become more assertive. Rather than delegating this critical topic to fruitless IGNs, it should take matters into its own hands. What might this mean in practice?

The first step is recognizing the paramount role that China plays. Beijing obstructs Security Council reform out of fear that Japan and India, its main rivals in Asia, would become permanent members and thereby end China's privileged position. Every year, China successfully prevents the General Assembly from considering and debating Security Council reform in one single document that outlines options for each of the main issues, including the total number of members on a reformed council, their continental distribution, the addition of any permanent members, and the extension of additional veto powers. Given the limited number of issues and options, compromises can well be imagined. From a Chinese perspective, so-called text-based negotiations would be the beginning of the end. Thus, Chinese representatives put every effort into preventing such bargaining.

Outdated

The UNSC needs to be updated for the modern security environment

TCD 22

Turkish Communications Directorate (Official communications organization of the government of Turkey). UN Reform: A New Approach to International Cooperation. September 2022. JDN.

Seventy-seven years have passed since the establishment of the United Nations, but no change has been made in the five permanent members and the veto power. Despite the dynamic nature of the power balances in the international arena, it is clear that the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) do not reflect the changes in this balance of power. Security problems in the world now appear in a much different dimension than in the second half of the 20th century. While developing technology, global warming, cyber wars, scarcity of resources, and irregular migration movements trigger the search for basic resources for both energy and survival in the world in terms of human security; Many factors such as mass migrations, population policies, hybrid wars, proxy wars create great problems, especially in terms of regional security. For all these reasons, the need for reform in the UN Security Council has been on the agenda for a long time. The basis of the need for reform is the necessity of establishing a common security system that will operate more effectively in line with ever-changing global requirements. The changing nature of international problems highlights that it is inevitable that a structure designed according to the conditions of the world in 1945 needs a change to solve problems. The General Assembly, in which the UN members are represented as a whole, only gives advice under the shadow of the UNSC with limited representation, and in parallel, the views of the developing countries where the humanitarian security needs are quite intense, and the conflicts that require UNSC action arise are not represented adequately; this is one of the areas that require regulation.

Gridlock

The very design of the P5 ensures gridlock in the UNSC

Dayal & Dunton 23

(Anjali Dayal - Anjali Kaushlesh Dayal is an assistant professor of international politics at Fordham University. Caroline Dunton - completed PhD at the University of Ottawa in August 2022, with completed fields in International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Public Policy. The Skelton-Clark Post-Doctoral Fellow in Canadian Affairs at Queen's University Caroline was previously a research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies (CIPS).), "The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?," United States Institute of Peace, 3-1-2023, accessed — 3-12-2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>, NCS

Gridlock Is the Point

The UNSC is the international body charged with maintaining international peace and security. Under international law, it is the sole global body that can authorize force, but each of its permanent five members — the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and France (known as the P5) — wields a veto that allows it to unilaterally thwart any action.

By design, the UNSC cannot address some of the biggest issues of war and peace in the world: it cannot act to address, mitigate or stop human suffering in conflict when one of its permanent members is a party to the conflict. It was explicitly built to be unfair, giving the victors of the World War II an outsized role in international peace and security, marginalizing whole regions and continents — particularly former colonies that gained independence after 1945 — and it was explicitly structured to be easily deadlocked, with any of the P5 able to unilaterally grind its work to a halt.

Everyone from U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, to the Biden administration, to voices from the Global South have called for fundamental, formal revisions to the UNSC's membership and powers, with ideas ranging from expanded permanent membership to finding ways to strip the P5 of their veto. Some have even invoked Article 109, the formal procedure for rewriting the Charter via a general conference that the Charter itself lays out. But in an era of waning multilateralism, efforts to revise the U.N. Charter are more likely to kill most existing structures of multilateral cooperation than to produce a more just institution. As Natalie Samarasinghe wrote this fall, "there is little chance of a successor organization rising from the current geopolitical ashes."

Indeed, significant reforms would require both a complete revision of the U.N. Charter and true political will and agreement from the same powerful member states who benefit enormously from the status quo. The one major reform of the UNSC, in 1963, cost the P5 little at the time: they agreed to increase the number of non-permanent members at the UNSC, following pressure from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), but ceded none of their power.

We know the UNSC can continue to work amid internal fractures, and that the P5 want it to continue working in many cases. And even if formal reforms are unlikely, we know the UNSC can change because it has changed in the past. The UNSC's one formal reform allowed more member states to sit on the council, and these states, in turn, have used the chamber in creative, innovative and new ways, opening up new possibilities for multilateral action via small shifts: meaningfully coordinating with groups outside the UNSC, meaningfully coordinating with each other, transforming the practice of penholding, and drawing on the rotating UNSC presidency to advance new agendas and procedures.

While these changes are seemingly small and clearly insufficient to fix the UNSC's fundamental problems, they make today's UNSC markedly different in practice from even a few decades ago. They may not formally shift power away from the P5, but they empower other members to take up new tasks, and in doing so, change how the chamber works, change which tools are available to diplomats trying to navigate the P5's conflicts, and form part of a suite of ideas to advance multilateral action on pressing conflicts in the face of P5 obstruction.

Reforming the UNSC is key addressing the crisis of credibility that it currently faces.

Saran 23

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We can all agree today that this has been a very long decade; and it's only just begun. The fabric of internationalism has been ripped in the last three years, and the ability to forge consensus on many vital questions that can enrich peace and strengthen security is at its lowest in nearly a century. There is a clear need to reform and reshape key institutions of global governance. Certainly, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in particular, needs an urgent overhaul. Yet, we are all aware that the United Nations (UN) process as well the UNSC reform process are going nowhere. It is a fact that only once in the nearly eight decades of the UN's existence has there been some semblance of reform—when the non-permanent seats of the UNSC were increased from six to 10. Since then, all efforts have largely been exercised in hollow statement-making. Tragically, these statements come with no timelines and are, of course, devoid of any content. Perhaps, this is the right time for this debate. Hence, the idea of bringing in new voices and opening this issue up for debate and discussion to the larger public—to the research community and to academia—must be lauded. We hope that the curious mix of practitioners and thinkers from the Global South can produce some breakthrough solutions that can take this debate forward. The fabric of internationalism has been ripped in the last three years, and the ability to forge consensus on many vital questions that can enrich peace and strengthen security is at its lowest in nearly a century.

Decades of inaction have also resulted in the prevention of reforms becoming an ideal and an objective in itself. We have seen obstructive tactics, the emergence of a number of clubs and groups on this topic, and a myriad ways of stalling, delaying, and preventing progress. This, now, has become an end goal, and, perhaps, even a key responsibility area for diplomats posted to the hallowed institution that is the UN. That must change. We need to talk about progress in real terms. What should be the new format for engagement? There can be many answers to this question. What diplomats like Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj and academics like Matais Spektor say may not be the only solution. The solution may, in fact, lie in very different viewpoints and voices, and it is imperative that we hear them. Most importantly, we must all agree that status quo is not an answer.

The UN is facing a crisis of credibility as a global institution; and the lack of progress in the reform of the UNSC is going to create complete disenchantment. The future of the UN and its role is intimately linked to the progress made on this subject. Therefore, we must recalibrate our efforts as a global community and make sure that discussions on the reforms are infused with fresh voices and perspectives from geographies that are likely to contribute significantly to a stable and prosperous future. These are also the same nations that are likely to be most affected by a dysfunctional international institution.

The P5's veto power freezes action – it can't engage in key conflicts.

Narvaez, 23 – Writer at IE Insights

[Sabina, "Veto Power In The Security Council Should Be Abolished," Stork, 1-5-2023, <https://www.iestork.org/veto-power-in-the-security-council-should-be-abolished/>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

However, there has been a lot of controversy about how it operates. The Security Council consists of 15 members, five of which are permanent. These five are the victors of the second world war: the UK, the US, China, the Soviet Union (now Russia), and France. As well as having a permanent seat, they have the additional privilege of being able to exercise a veto. This means that any of these five states can unilaterally block any resolution, even if all other members support it.

This has significantly impacted the UNSC's ability to function in the past. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union rarely agreed on international security issues. Each world power was able to use its veto to block resolutions, rendering the UNSC ineffective in a context full of crises and threats to international peace. The Security Council is now more effective. After the Cold War ended, it authorised more peace-keeping missions in a decade than it had in the previous 40 years. However, this wasn't due to reforms but to a change in the global order. If there was ever another Cold War between any of the five permanent members, the Council would be completely blocked again.

Furthermore, even now, there are key conflicts that the UNSC can't intervene in because of the veto. For example, the US has used its veto to block action on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict 43 times, including resolutions calling for Israel to respect Muslim places of worship and abide by the Geneva Conventions in its military occupation of Palestinian territory. Meanwhile, Amnesty International has accused Russia and China of abusing their veto power during the Syrian war. This includes preventing the UNSC from holding the Syrian government accountable for illegal chemical attacks. Clearly, the veto is still being used by world powers to protect allies who have committed crimes against humanity.

History proves that the Security Council is powerless due to Russia's veto power.

Paige, 23 -- Senior Lecturer at Deakin University

[Tamsin Phillipa, "Stripping Russia's veto power on the Security Council is all but impossible. Perhaps we should expect less from the UN instead," Conversation, 9-20-2023, <https://theconversation.com/stripping-russias-veto-power-on-the-security-council-is-all-but-impossible-perhaps-we-should-expect-less-from-the-un-instead-213985>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has lambasted the UN Security Council yet again, saying in a speech this week that as long as Russia has veto power on the body, it will remain powerless to do anything to stop the war in Ukraine – or any other conflict.

Ukrainian soldiers are doing with their blood what the UN Security Council should do by its voting. [...] Veto power in the hands of the aggressor is what has pushed the UN into deadlock.

Every time a member of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – the US, Russia, France, the UK and China – engages in abhorrent actions, we see a wave of voices decrying the powerlessness and failure of the UN to stop conflict and atrocities.

Most recently, this has been focused on the Russian war in Ukraine. We also saw this criticism in relation to the US- and UK-led invasion of Iraq in the early 2000s.

The central part of this criticism is that the five permanent members of the Security Council (commonly referred to as the "P5") have a veto power, which can prevent UN action when they have engaged in wrongdoing. The other 10 rotating members of the Security Council do not.

This veto power is what has prevented Russia from being expelled from the UN, as Zelensky has repeatedly called for, because suspension or expulsion of a member from the UN requires action from the Security Council.

This criticism is entirely reasonable – the P5 shouldn't be able to prevent the UN from acting against them. However, this isn't a failure of the UN itself, but rather a design feature baked in to the whole UN system.

And reform of the UN is functionally impossible, which is why we need to stop expecting so much from the global body.

The presence of a veto allows gives world powers the incentive to operate without Security Council approval.

Narvaez, 23 – Writer at IE Insights

[Sabina, "Veto Power In The Security Council Should Be Abolished," Stork, 1-5-2023, <https://www.iestork.org/veto-power-in-the-security-council-should-be-abolished/>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

Arguably, the presence of a veto can also provide an incentive for world powers to operate without Security Council approval. A good example of this is the US and UK invasion of Iraq in 2003. There are two legal ways of using force according to the UN Charter; self-defence and collective enforcement, which require UN approval. Unable to use self-defence as an argument, the US and UK attempted to get the Security Council to pass a resolution authorising a war in Iraq. Unfortunately, France was strongly opposed and indicated that it would use its veto if necessary. Instead of waiting for their resolution to be voted down, the US and UK proceeded to invade Iraq without UN approval, leading to an illegal war that lasted nearly a decade. Whether a veto is or isn't in place, world powers will always be tempted to undermine the Security Council when their interests are threatened.

General

The world is bigger than five

TCD 22

Turkish Communications Directorate (Official communications organization of the government of Turkey). UN Reform: A New Approach to International Cooperation. September 2022. JDN.

The statement "The World is Bigger than Five" expresses that the world is much bigger than the five permanent countries that want to direct the world in line with their own interests and prevent the formation of a fair system. At the same time, Türkiye, in search of a fairer system, calls for the UN Security Council to be restructured and undergo a radical change to have a fairer representation structure. Although the UN describes itself as "a global organization that seeks to provide justice and security, economic development and social equality to all countries", it is ineffective in fulfilling its requirements.

Our principle is to put forward and defend a revolutionary position that will radically change the privilege provided by the veto power, stating emphatically that the new dynamics of the current global system make it impossible to continue with the old order. In the pursuit of common peace, building peace in a world where the powerful are "right" is impossible. The world that Türkiye defends with the statement "The World is Bigger Than Five" is one where the righteous are powerful. With famines, wars, occupations, climate changes, and mass migrations increasing the need for building a new order in accordance with the realities of the new world, it is imperative to reduce the powers of the Security Council and increase the powers of the General Assembly for a fairer and more effective United Nations. At this point, the majority of the world should agree on the following statement: "The world is bigger than five."

Minor Reform Fails

Minor reforms fail; only full abolition reflects the profound global changes since 1945 Ryder et al. 20

Hannah Ryder (Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China), Anna Baisch (International relations researcher at Development Reimagined) and Ovigwe Eguegu (policy advisor at Development Reimagined and columnist for the China Africa Project). "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five." Foreign Policy. 17 September 2020. JDN. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>

The typical responses to the U.N.'s failure have been to enlarge the P5, the five permanent members of the Security Council who represent the chief victors of World War II. Bring in other global powers such as India or Turkey. Move around the representational seats and create new categories. Create more seats for Africa. Dilute the veto power exercised by the P5. But all of these measures are tinkering. None are adequate. The only way forward is to acknowledge the key difference between 1945 and 2020, decolonization, and abolish the permanent members of the Security Council altogether. Here's why and how.

Minor Reform Backfires

Current reform proposals are perceived as too hollow by African nations

Singh 23

Priyal Singh (Senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

A diplomatic path toward Security Council reform seems particularly improbable if leading African states—including Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa—continue their business-as-usual approach. Curiously, U.S. President Joe Biden's endorsement in his September 2022 General Assembly speech of expanding the Security Council's permanent membership beyond Japan, Germany, or India stirred almost no discernible foreign policy reaction from Pretoria. Indeed, remarks on council reform by senior South African government officials after the opening of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly almost exactly mirror those they offered beforehand. At best, this indicates the continent's general disillusionment with the reform process and prospects for altering the status quo. At worst, it suggests a cynical mistrust of U.S. rhetorical commitments to the Global South—grounded in suspicions that Washington only offers such symbolic pledges when it suits its geopolitical interests.

Token reforms only breed further cynicism among the developing world

Darnal 22

Aude Darnal (Research Analyst and Project Manager for the Stimson Center). "Biden and the United Nations Security Council reform: true commitment or tokenism?" The Stimson Center. 5 October 2022. JDN. <https://www.stimson.org/2022/biden-and-the-united-nations-security-council-reform-true-commitment-or-tokenism/>

To be sure, the expansion of the UNSC faces acute challenges. The lack of consensus—including among the Global South—on the need for such a reform, on what countries should accede to the new permanent and non-permanent seats, on the potential new structure of the body, and on the reform of the veto, are all thorny topics.

Unless the new move by the Biden administration is backed up by specific policies, it could reinforce the sentiment that the United States commits to partnering with countries from the Global South only when it suits US efforts to counter Russia (or China). But engaging with developing countries primarily through the lens of great power competition means adopting a reactive posture, seeking to scale up relations with the Global South in response to adversaries' policies. It is a shortsighted and hypocritical strategy that is unlikely to produce the desired effects of weakening relations between US competitors and their developing country partners. Countries from the Global South are not naïve or easily duped. As a recent Foreign Policy article stressed, "African leaders view the renewed engagement with some degree of cynicism, knowing that both U.S. and Russian interest in the continent is more about great-power rivalry than equal friendship."

Whether or not the Biden administration is committed to making UNSC expansion work is yet to be seen. Reforming the UNSC will require political will and long-term efforts from all parties, which seems unrealistic in the current context. The Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on September 8, 2022, on the modalities for the Summit of the Future, "has an important role to play in reaffirming the Charter of the United Nations, reinvigorating multilateralism [and] agreeing on concrete solutions to challenges and restoring trust among Member States" should be an opportunity for UN member states to further advance the efforts that the Intergovernmental Negotiations framework, which advocates for reforming the UNSC, has undertaken during the past 14 years. Change needs to happen, but President Biden should not merely engage in lip service about UN reform. Instead of making bold statements that are unlikely to translate into action, in the hope of strengthening its ties with smaller nations and bolstering its leadership in a time of crisis, the United States should adopt concrete policies of investment, exchange, and other win-win partnerships with developing countries. It should not do so merely to counter adversaries, but because Global South countries are relevant diplomatic, economic, and security partners in their own right. If the US government realizes that only in times of crisis, it's likely already too late.

Crimes Against Humanity

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

Zinevich 24

Benjamin Zinevich (Administrative Associate at 3C Strategies). "Abolish U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council!" Liberation News. 7 March 2024. <https://www.liberationnews.org/abolish-u-s-veto-power-in-the-un-security-council/>

Yet throughout the existence of the UN, the U.S. Mission has continually exploited its veto power to assert its dominance over the world. Below are six other key moments the United States used its UN veto to either reject the sovereignty of oppressed peoples or otherwise protect the most reactionary and oppressive regimes from international accountability.

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

Zinevich 24

Benjamin Zinevich (Administrative Associate at 3C Strategies). "Abolish U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council!" Liberation News. 7 March 2024. <https://www.liberationnews.org/abolish-u-s-veto-power-in-the-un-security-council/>

1-Ceasefire resolution in Gaza

More than 150 days into Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, UN member states have made three separate efforts to put forward a ceasefire resolution to a vote: once through the General Assembly and twice through the Security Council.

At every instance, and even when its closest Western partners have either voted for or abstained, the United States has vetoed each effort calling for a permanent suspension of violence in Gaza.

UN General-Secretary Antonio Guterres has criticized the U.S. Mission's usage of their veto as "paralyzing" the international body from taking any meaningful action on the crisis in Gaza. Guterres also invoked a rarely-used Article 99 of the United Nations Charter, which confers on the Secretary-General the power to "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his [her] opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security." Days after blocking the second post-Oct. 7 ceasefire vote on Dec. 8, the Biden State Department declared it would bypass Congress to rush through 45,000 tank shells to the Israeli military so it could further its genocide, making it clear that Washington plays a direct role in continuing the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

Zinevich 24

Benjamin Zinevich (Administrative Associate at 3C Strategies). "Abolish U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council!" Liberation News. 7 March 2024. <https://www.liberationnews.org/abolish-u-s-veto-power-in-the-un-security-council/>

2-Panama's sovereignty over its canal

On March 21, 1973, the United States used its veto power for the third time since the foundation of the Security Council. The question that the resolution sought to resolve was a new Panama Canal treaty that would offer greater and meaningful sovereignty to Panama over its canal. It was intended to replace the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903, which granted Washington the right to build and operate "in perpetuity" a canal across the Panamanian Isthmus. The then-Ambassador John Hay, who negotiated the eponymous 1903 treaty, was a fervent supporter of the racist and colonial Monroe Doctrine. Hay infamously described the Spanish-American War, which saw the early imperial claims by Washington on Cuba and the Philippines, as a "splendid little war".

While the U.S. Mission to the UN described the resolution as "unbalanced and incomplete and therefore subject to serious misinterpretation," the resolution was supported by all other members of the Security Council at the time, including U.S. allies Australia and France, the latter being a permanent member of the Security Council.

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

Zinevich 24

Benjamin Zinevich (Administrative Associate at 3C Strategies). "Abolish U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council!" Liberation News. 7 March 2024. <https://www.liberationnews.org/abolish-u-s-veto-power-in-the-un-security-council/>

3-Condemning Israeli occupation of Palestine

While the United States has used its veto power more in the last five months than the first two decades of the UN's existence, its exploitation of the veto has largely been a tool used to specifically defend Israel's aggression throughout the decades. As of the Feb. 20 ceasefire resolution vote in the Security Council, the United States has used the veto power to defeat resolutions critical of Israel 45 times. That is exactly half of the times they have used this power since the 1945 creation of the UN. Thirty three of the vetoed resolutions were related to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Prior to 1972, the veto was used rarely by the United States, but that pattern was broken by that year after the Security Council attempted the passage of a resolution that condemned Israel's unprovoked bombings of Syria and Lebanon in September 1972, put forward by Guinea, Somalia and Yugoslavia. After this, it became common for the United States to disrupt any international efforts to hold Israel accountable for illegal aggression on Palestine, Lebanon and others within the region. Between 1982-1990, Washington utilized its veto in support of Israel 21 times, and 14 times since just 2001.

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4-Expelling apartheid-era South Africa from UN

Similar to its present-day support of apartheid Israel, the United States long held its support for the apartheid system in South Africa, and found the government in Pretoria to be a chief ally and imperial outpost in quashing the anti-colonial and liberation movements sweeping the African continent from the 1970s to the 1980s.

Between 1974 and 1988, the U.S. government vetoed resolutions relating to South Africa's apartheid system and military aggression towards African countries 15 times. On Oct. 30, 1974, the United States, along with former colonial forces in Africa, France and Britain, vetoed a resolution in the Security Council to expel South Africa from the UN, due to its apartheid policies. The resolution cited South Africa's "constant violation ... of the principles of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," as well as its refusal to withdraw military forces from sovereign Namibian lands as grounds for South Africa's expulsion. Put forward by Kenya, Mauritania and Cameroon, it was supported by the broad majority of Security Council members, including permanent members the Soviet Union and China.

In an attempt by Benin, Libya and Mauritius in October 1977 to impose economic sanctions and a global arms embargo on South Africa, once again the United States joined France and Britain to strike down these efforts. This resulted in the end of the United States shipping enriched uranium for South Africa's SAFARI-1 research nuclear reactor. Notably however, this resulted in covert weapons transfers and cooperation with the fellow apartheid regime of Israel. In 1979, Tel Aviv helped test a low-yield nuclear device off the coast of South Africa, and began secretly building Israeli Sa'ar 4-class missile boats domestically within South Africa after the 1977 Security Council resolution publicly canceled a direct purchase of the boats between the two regimes.

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

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Benjamin Zinevich (Administrative Associate at 3C Strategies). "Abolish U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council!" Liberation News. 7 March 2024. <https://www.liberationnews.org/abolish-u-s-veto-power-in-the-un-security-council/>

5-Admission of post-war Vietnam to UN

In 1977, after a long and hard-won struggle for national liberation against colonial and imperial forces of Japan, France and the United States, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was admitted to the UN. Yet after experiencing a resounding defeat by the Vietnamese people, the United States went out of their way to thwart several efforts to admit the country into the UN body.

The first Security Council draft resolution initiated by the missions of Belarus, China, Guyana, Iraq, Mauritania, Sweden, the USSR, Cameroon, and Tanzania, was put forward in early August 1975, several months after the People's Army of Vietnam and National Liberation Front took control of then-Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). The U.S. Mission utilized a veto to withhold Vietnam's access to the UN, and continued to do so the following month and the following year, eventually with the Carter administration relenting in this crusade.

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

Zinevich 24

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6-Sanctioning Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)

The colonization of Zimbabwe from the indigenous African population was led by Cecil Rhodes in 1889, when Queen Victoria granted Rhodes's company, the British South Africa Company, full mineral rights to the region. For nearly the next century, racist white-minority rule reigned in the country, largely supported by the British empire. Shortly after white-minority regime of Ian Smith declared Rhodesia's independence from Britain officially in 1965, a national liberation struggle among the majority Black population was launched by leading organization Zimbabwe African National Union, led by Robert Mugabe.

In March of 1970, the governments of Burundi, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Syria and Zambia put forward a resolution condemning the existence of the racist minority regime, declaring it null and void. Further, it called on all UN member states to void their recognition of white-ruled Rhodesia, severing all diplomatic, consular, economic and military relations with the regime. The United States took this moment to cast its first ever veto in the Security Council, claiming they "found it an impractical step to restrict relations to that extent."

US veto power has led to inaction on crimes against humanity

Zinevich 24

Benjamin Zinevich (Administrative Associate at 3C Strategies). "Abolish U.S. veto power in the UN Security Council!" Liberation News. 7 March 2024. <https://www.liberationnews.org/abolish-u-s-veto-power-in-the-un-security-council/>

U.S. veto power: Undemocratic and neo-colonial

The U.S. use of its Security Council veto in practice has been one of the sources, if not the leading source, of inaction towards war crimes and crimes against humanity — Israel's genocide of Gaza and subsequent vetoes by the United States being the most pronounced example. It is time to recognize the undemocratic nature of the Security Council and abolish U.S. veto power.

Alternatives

Alternatives to permanent membership exist – like a fifteen-seat nonpermanent Security Council.

Ryder et al, 18 -- CEO of Development Reimagined, Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program, and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China

[Hannah Ryder, Anna Baisch, Ovigwe Eguegu, "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five," Foreign Policy, 11-26-2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

A reimagined structure for a Security Council would see all 15 seats being made temporary, for periods of five years to provide more continuity, with wide, nonregional open competition for each seat, alongside clear, monitored restrictions on lobbying expenses and two-term limits within a cycle of 30 years to reward excellence while avoiding domination.

Such a structure would not be a toothless democratic body like the U.N. General Assembly, where every country has one vote, regardless of its record, wealth, population, or military might, and no country has a veto. Nor would it be an easy and potentially diverse yet unaccountable “coalition of the willing,” nor a supposedly elite and powerful grouping of countries such as the G-7, BRICS, or G-20, subject to groupthink and hiding behind each other.

These 15 countries, just as nonpermanent members have established precedent for doing now, would need to be elected by others—they would need to prove their worth to others. They would need to build allies within the U.N., for instance within their groupings, and campaign to show they are indeed responsible and capable to be trusted to help the world tackle issues from poverty and climate change to pandemics and financial crises. P5 members could thus arguably remain on the council, but they would need to compete and pitch to do so.

While a 15-seat Security Council might initially seem large, a council that aimed to be effective in decision-making while embedding the principle of collaboration would also implement a rule that veto power can only be exercised by two members together—i.e., any country would need to find another supporter to oppose a decision. Preserving the veto would also maintain its distinction from the General Assembly and from the pre-World War II League of Nations, the U.N.’s failed predecessor.

Detractors will immediately contend that the P5 will not accept this. Nor would they submit to decisions made by others. Indeed, some P5 members have remained out of certain U.N.-based mechanisms for this reason. Three out of the five permanent members do not recognize the U.N. General Assembly-endorsed International Criminal Court (ICC) decisions. Yet the ICC has made important contributions to justice for thousands, if not millions of people. The U.N. can and does still play a guardian role, even if P5 members remain outside.

The world cannot take another 75 years of unaccountability and inequality. A reimagined, stronger structure has a chance of creating a more fit-for-purpose and adaptive U.N., ready to face the challenges of the future.

AT: War

Maintaining the P5 doesn't prevent war

Mendel 92

Toby Mendel (3L, Dalhousie University). "Restructuring the Security Council." 1 Dalhousie J. Legal Stud. 161 (1992). JDN.

<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/dalhou1&div=12&id=&page=>

Prevention of war remains an important role of the United Nations and delegation of power to take action on behalf of the United Nations to the Security Council is practical. This requirement cannot justify the concept of permanent membership on the Security Council. The permanent members have been active in many of the wars the United Nations should have been trying to prevent or, at least, to mitigate. Clearly, permanent membership makes it extremely difficult for the United Nations to take an active role in such disputes. In addition, the pervasive influence of the permanent members often discourages members of the General Assembly from being as critical as they might otherwise be, thus reducing attempts to discourage acts of violence through channels normally available to the General Assembly. There is simply no mechanism to prevent abuse of power by permanent members in a conflict of interest situation.

Colonialism

General

Permanent membership on the Security Council has colonial underpinnings that make its composition unrepresentative of our present realities.

Ryder et al, 18 -- CEO of Development Reimagined, Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program, and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China

[Hannah Ryder, Anna Baisch, Ovigwe Eguegu, "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five," Foreign Policy, 11-26-2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

But all of these measures are tinkering. None are adequate. The only way forward is to acknowledge the key difference between 1945 and 2020, decolonization, and abolish the permanent members of the Security Council altogether. Here's why and how.

The roots of the U.N. are deeply colonial. Back in 1945 four out of the five members of the P5 were colonial states. Over the 75 years of the U.N.'s existence, 80 former colonies have gained independence, from India to Kenya, to Nigeria and Kazakhstan.

This has meant a significant shift in population terms. In 1945 the P5—China, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Russia—accounted for 10 percent of member states and over 50 percent of the world's population, within their empires. Now, the P5 account for 26 percent of the world's population, and just 3 percent of the U.N. member states.

Even with the 10 additional nonpermanent members of the Security Council—who have to compete to be elected to sit on the council for two years, which costs millions of dollars in lobbying—Security Council seats are distinctly Eurocentric. As our research shows, the Western European and Others Group and the Eastern European Group combined represent just 17.1 percent of the global population, but they have held 47 percent of Security Council seats.

And within these groups, the big countries almost always win. Japan has spent 22 years on the Security Council. Brazil 20 years. Within African countries, only Nigeria, with 10 years, comes close.

This poorly distributed allocation is reflected in other parts of the U.N.—in particular the secretary-general position itself. Since 1945, four out of the nine secretaries-general have been white European men. There has never been a Muslim secretary-general.

U.N. leaders have sought to address this by diversifying heads of agencies or undersecretaries-general, but individuals are not the answer. Take COVID-19. Despite an Ethiopian head of the WHO, who might be expected to advocate for the poorest countries in the world, the only resolution the P5-led Security Council has unanimously adopted referring to COVID-19 this year is resolution 2532—supporting a call made by the secretary-general in March for a global cease-fire to focus on efforts to fight COVID-19. This is important but hardly influential, and it's largely irrelevant to the thousands of people who have since died prematurely due to lax COVID-19 responses and lack of international finance to manage the impacts of required lockdowns in the poorest countries. Instead, African leaders have turned closer to the African Union's Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention for COVID-19 advice, and to the unrepresentative yet powerful G-20 and IMF for financial support, not the U.N.

The P5 hasn't distributed economic benefits to the rest of the world despite decolonization – that indicates a structural problem that justifies change.

Ryder et al, 18 -- CEO of Development Reimagined, Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic International Studies Africa Program, and former Head of Policy and Partnerships for UNDP in China

[Hannah Ryder, Anna Baisch, Ovigwe Eguegu, "Decolonizing the United Nations Means Abolishing the Permanent Five," Foreign Policy, 11-26-2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/09/17/decolonizing-united-nations-means-abolish-permanent-five-security-council/>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

Why does this distribution matter? The shift in postcolonial (and post-Cold War) membership is essentially the U.N.'s only major shift in composition in 75 years.

Contrary to what many observers—especially economists like ourselves—might have us believe, there has not been a great economic rebalancing. Our calculations suggest—again including former colonies—that the P5's share of global GDP in 1940 was around 47 percent. Today, the P5 accounts for just 2 percentage points more of GDP—49 percent of the global total.

Yes, China's economic rise within the P5 has been notable—in fact, doubling in economic importance from accounting for 14 percent to 33 percent of the P5's total wealth. But for the rest of the world, their economic relationship with the P5 has hardly changed over the U.N.'s 75 years. Global economics and the U.N. structure remain rooted in the power structures of 1945, despite the political independence.

Has the P5's U.N. status helped to maintain economic imperialism, or has their economic might helped them to maintain their powerful U.N. positions? In some ways it is only the correlation that matters. The U.N.'s structural inability to compel the P5 countries themselves to act decisively for the greater good is often acknowledged as a key justification for change, but this is often countered with economic arguments that we are all better off now. This counter does not hold water. The P5's failure to distribute economic benefits to the rest of the world despite decolonization is also a structural problem that justifies change.

The answer lies in the geopolitical ideals leaders set out back in 1945. The Security Council was conceived on a basis of responsibility and capacity of working collaboratively, rather than on the principle of representation. At that time, after emerging from World War II and meeting in San Francisco, the leaders of the P5 felt themselves to be responsible and capable, despite their colonial pursuits.

While the economics might be the same, the potential member states that might be deemed responsible or capable in 2020 are very different to those in 1945. And they will likely be different in 2030, 2045, or another 75 years ahead. With climate change, it's likely that our global crises will only become more complex over the next 75 years.

There is no country in the world that deserves a permanent seat. Veto-based decision-making on behalf of others, as the Security Council does, should be earned, and criteria for responsibility and capability transparently demonstrated and rewarded.

The UNSC must be reformed to combat furthering the colonization project.

Saran 23

(Samir Saran -Samir Saran is the President of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India's premier think tank, headquartered in New Delhi with affiliates in North America and the Middle East. His research focuses on issues of global governance, climate and energy policy, technology policy, and India's foreign policy. Samir completed his doctoral studies at the Global Sustainability Institute, UK. He holds a Masters degree in Media Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science, UK, and a Bachelors in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Manipal Institute of Technology, India.), "The United Nations Security Council is constituted to further the colonisation project", orfonline.org, 6-2-2023, accessed — 3-12-2024, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-united-nations-security-council-is-constituted-to-further-the-colonisation-project>, NCS

Why UNSC reform in particular

First, the current structure of the UNSC is perverse and immoral. For many in the Global South, it is a perpetuation of the colonisation project. The burden of the two World Wars was borne by the colonies, while the privileges of peace benefited the colonisers and their allies. Today, that is something that is being questioned by many; and it is increasingly going to become an important aspect of future debates as the world gets impatient with lack of progress in institutional reform. Second, the reform is important because, currently, the UNSC is inefficient and does not serve the purpose it was installed for. In the past decades, we have seen how the will of the comity of nations has been negated by one or more of the permanent members. More recently, the crisis in Ukraine presents a classic example of the Security Council's failure to deliver, and it is a stark reminder of why status quo is untenable. The voting patterns and the abstentions on the Ukraine conflict clearly point to the need to bring in others who can contribute to the global efforts around peace and stability.

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We are struggling to reform the UNSC due to the nature of the inter-governmental negotiation (IGN) process itself.

Finally, the UNSC is undemocratic and non-representative. How can we accept a structure that shuts out Africa, Latin America, and democratic Asia, including the world's largest democracy? The Permanent Five (P5) was configured to disproportionately include three European nations. Even having three nations in the P5 could not keep peace in the Old Continent. Clearly, here, three is a crowd. We need to reconfigure how we have structured the P5. But this may not be the only viewpoint that is valid. There are others as well, and we must respond to and engage with them. For example, Uniting for Consensus argues that there cannot be any permanent membership of the UNSC for new members. This is a viewpoint against permanency and it must be put on the table. But, we must ask, if there is no permanency, why is it not applicable to the P5 as well? Why is it that all UN member states who want to be sitting as credible actors in the UNSC should not gain favour of 129 votes and assume a permanent role? These debates must not be cast aside or shut off. In fact, different groups and different viewpoints must be brought into the same room. And we hope that through this academic track, we can actually bring these varied perspectives together and come up with a mosaic of ideas and, thereafter, a symphony of solution. To conclude, two points must be highlighted. First, we are struggling to reform the UNSC due to the nature of the inter-governmental negotiation (IGN) process itself. The fact that the IGN process, unlike any other in the UN, needs consensus for both process and outcomes makes it a nonstarter. In no UN negotiation is consensus a precondition for commencement. This is a fatal flaw in the way the process has been stitched together and no progress is possible unless we revisit this core element. Second, what is imperative is a concrete timeline as well. The 2024 Summit of the Future is being touted as a platform where productive discussions about UNSC reforms may finally take place. But the 2024 Summit cannot be regarded as a cure all and a one-stop-shop for everything. We must agree to a two-year timeframe, or a timeframe that others may suggest to be more viable, and we must rigorously adhere to it. By the time the UN turns 80 in 2025, UNSC reforms must be well underway. Let us make this target a common agenda for all of us, with all our different viewpoints. Let us unite our energies to transform the UN into a multilateral institution that truly recognises the sovereign equality of all member states, and undertakes an operating systems upgrade that will bring it— with the rest of us—into the third decade of 21st century.

France

P5 member France has a history of neocolonial actions and justifications.

Ruehl 23

(John P Ruehl - John P Ruehl is an Australian-American journalist living in Washington, DC. He is a contributing editor to Strategic Policy and a contributor to several other foreign-affairs publications.), "A neocolonial history of the UN Security Council permanent five", Asia Times, 8-10-2023, accessed — 3-12-2024, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/08/a-neocolonial-history-of-the-un-security-council-permanent-five/>, NCS

In response to comments made by Russia's Foreign Ministry in February, which singled out France for continuing to treat African countries "from the point of view of its colonial past," the French Foreign Ministry chastised Russia for its "neocolonial political involvement" in Africa.

The previous June, French President Emmanuel Macron had accused Russia of being "one of the last colonial imperial powers" during a visit to Benin, a former French colony that last saw an attempted coup by French mercenaries in 1977.

Independence movements in European colonies grew substantially during World War II, and Paris granted greater autonomy to its possessions, most of them in Africa, in 1945. Yet France was intent on keeping most of its empire, and became embroiled in independence conflicts in Algeria and Indochina.

Growing public sentiment in France, since referred to as "utilitarian anti-colonialism," meanwhile promoted decolonization, believing that the empire was actually holding back France economically and because "the emancipation of colonial people was unavoidable," according to French journalist Raymond Cartier.

France left Indochina in defeat in 1954, while in 1960, 14 of France's former colonies gained independence. And after Algeria won its independence in 1962, France's empire was all but gone.

But like other newly independent states, many former French colonies were unstable and vulnerable to or reliant on French military power. France has launched dozens of military interventions and coups since the 1960s in Africa to stabilize friendly governments, topple hostile ones, and support its interests.

French military dominance has been able to secure a hospitable environment for French multinational companies and preferential trade agreements and currency arrangements. More recently, the French military has consistently intervened in Ivory Coast since 2002, as well as in the countries of the Sahel region (particularly Mali) since 2013, and the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2016.

The French-led campaigns have received significant US help. Speaking in 2019 on the French deployments, Macron stated that the French military was not there "for neo-colonialist, imperialist, or economic reasons. We're there for our collective security and the region."

But growing anti-French sentiment in former colonies in recent years has undermined Paris' historical military dominance. Closer relations between Mali and Russia saw France pull the last of its troops out of the country in 2022, with Russian private military company (PMC) forces replacing them.

A similar situation occurred in the CAR months later, and this year, French troops pulled out of Burkina Faso, with Russian PMC liaisons having reportedly been observed in the country.

Frustration with the negative effects of France's ongoing influence in former colonies has also been directly tied to problems in immigrant communities living in France. The fatal shooting of a North African teenager by police in the suburbs of Paris this June caused nights of rioting, with Russia and China accusing France of authoritarianism for its security forces' response.

UK

P5 member the UK has a history of neocolonial actions and justifications.

Ruehl 23

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Shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the UK's prime minister at the time, Boris Johnson, denounced the Russian president for still believing in "imperial conquest." Yet like France, the UK has often been accused of using military force to help promote British interests in its former empire, including the dominant role of British banks and financial services and other firms, for decades.

As the only European colonial power not defeated by Nazi Germany, British forces were sent to secure Indochina and Indonesia before French and Dutch forces could return after World War II. But London's focus soon turned to protecting its own empire and emerging independent states.

British forces helped suppress a communist insurgency in Malaya from 1948-1960, fought in the Kenya Emergency from 1952-1960, and intervened across former colonies in Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Pacific islands.

Additionally, British, French and Israeli forces invaded Egypt in 1956 after the Egyptian government nationalized the Suez Canal, before diplomatic pressure from the US and the Soviet Union forced them to retreat.

Over the next few decades, almost all former British colonies were steadily granted independence, and by 1980 the rate of British military interventions abroad had slowed.

Nonetheless, the 1982 Falklands War somewhat reversed the perception of the UK as a declining imperial power. The successful defense of the Falkland Islands' small, vulnerable population against Argentine aggression enhanced the perception of the UK as a defender of human rights and champion of self-determination.

Additionally, Britain's focus on naval power "was important to the self-image of empire," as naval strength is often perceived as less threatening than land armies. Prominent British politicians such as former prime minister David Cameron have similarly restated Britain's commitment to protecting the Falklands from Argentine colonialism.

More recently, the British military intervened in the Sierra Leone Civil War in 2000 and was also a crucial partner for the US-led wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. And alongside ongoing official deployments, British Special Forces have been active in 11 countries secretly since 2011, a report by Action Against Armed Violence revealed.

The residual presence of the British military has often made it difficult to embrace the "new and equal partnership" between Britain and former colonies, championed by former British foreign minister William Hague in 2012.

The domestic perception of Britain's colonial legacy continues to play a divisive role in British politics and society. Winston Churchill, the winner of a 2002 BBC poll on the top 100 Great Britons, was "cited as a defender of an endangered country/people/culture, not as an exponent of empire." Yet during anti-racism protests in the UK in 2020, a statue of the former prime minister was covered up to avoid being damaged by protesters.

Believing him to be a figurehead of the cruelty of British colonialism, the covering up of Churchill's statue shows the contrasting and evolving domestic views of British imperialism.

Soviet/Russia

P5 member Russia has a history of neocolonial actions and justifications.

Ruehl 23

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After 1945, Soviet troops were stationed across the Eastern Bloc to deter the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and suppress dissent. Several military operations in support of communist governments against "counterrevolutionary" protesters were approved in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), and Czechoslovakia (1968).

Soviet forces also took part in a decade-long conflict to prop up Afghanistan's government from 1979-1989.

In Asia, Africa and Latin America, however, the Soviet Union presented itself as the leading anti-colonial force. It proclaimed an ideological duty financially, politically, and militarily to support numerous pro-independence/communist movements and governments, tying these efforts to confronting the colonial West.

The collapse of the USSR forced Moscow to prioritize maintaining Russia's influence in former Soviet states. But even today, many Russians do not see the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire as empires, as Russians insist that they lived alongside their colonized subjects through a "Friendship of Peoples," unlike the British or French.

This sentiment drives much of the rhetoric defending Russia's ongoing dominance across parts of the former Soviet Union. On the eve of the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin once again called into question Ukrainian statehood. Ukraine, like other former Soviet states, has often been labeled an artificial creation by Russian politicians.

Alongside the necessity of military force to protect Russian speakers/citizens, Russian officials have justified conflict and exploitation of fragile post-Soviet borders in separatist regions of Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia/Azerbaijan since the early 1990s.

Russia has also worked to maintain a dependency on its military power in former Soviet states. The Kazakh government's reliance on the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization military alliance was clearly demonstrated during the CSTO intervention amid protests in January 2022.

Prominent Russian politicians such as Sergey Lavrov have consistently compared the CSTO favorably to NATO, but the lack of support from CSTO member states (except for Belarus) for Russia in its war with Ukraine has demonstrated its limitations.

The Russian military has also been active in Syria since 2011, while dozens of Russian PMCs have increased operations across Africa over the past decade. The Kremlin is increasingly tying these conflicts, as well as Russia's war in Ukraine, to reinforce Moscow's traditional role as an anti-colonial power.

Russia has performed significant outreach to Africa since the start of the war, and at the annual St Petersburg Economic Forum this year, Putin declared the "ugly neocolonialism" of international affairs was ending as a result of its war.

By amplifying criticism over the domination of global affairs by the "Golden Billion" in the West, the Kremlin believes it can blunt foreign and domestic criticism over its war in Ukraine, as well as over its approach to other post-Soviet states.

US

P5 member the US has a history of neocolonial actions and justifications.

Ruehl 23

(John P Ruehl - John P Ruehl is an Australian-American journalist living in Washington, DC. He is a contributing editor to Strategic Policy and a contributor to several other foreign-affairs publications.), "A neocolonial history of the UN Security Council permanent five", Asia Times, 8-10-2023, accessed — 3-12-2024, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/08/a-neocolonial-history-of-the-un-security-council-permanent-five/>, NCS

The USA, born out of an anti-colonial struggle, has naturally been wary of being perceived as a colonial power. US presidents voiced support for decolonization after World War II, particularly John F Kennedy. But because "anti-communism came before anti-colonialism," Washington often supported neocolonial practices by European powers to prevent the spread of Soviet influence and secure Western interests.

The US has also been criticized for its own imperial behavior toward Latin America since 1823, when the Monroe Doctrine was first proclaimed. The United States' sentiment that it had a special right to intervene in the Americas increased during the Cold War as Washington grew wary of communism.

US military forces intervened in Guatemala in 1954, Cuba in 1961, the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989 to enforce Washington's political will.

The US war on drugs, launched in 1969, also destabilized much of Latin America, while other instances of covertly fostering instability have prevented the emergence of strong sovereign states in the region.

Major foreign conflicts involving US forces since 1945 include the Korean War (1953-1953) the Vietnam War (1955-1975), the Gulf War (1991), intervention in the Yugoslav wars (1995, 1999), and the "war on terror" (2001-present).

US forces also intervened in Haiti in 1994-1995 during "Operation Uphold Democracy" and again in 2004, while leading international interventions in Libya (2011) and Syria (2014). These interventions have often been criticized for perpetuating instability and weakening local institutions.

Nonetheless, the global US military presence has continued to grow. Since 2007, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) has seen the US expand its military footprint across Africa and today, 750 known military bases are spread across 80 countries.

US special operations forces are estimated to be active in 154 countries. The US global military presence also gives Washington considerable control over transportation routes, with the US Navy routinely seizing ships violating trade restrictions.

US officials have continued to lean on the country's history as a former British colony to highlight solidarity with other countries and propose greater cooperation. In 2013, for example, then-secretary of state John Kerry said the Monroe Doctrine, which allowed the US "to step in and oppose the influence of European powers in Latin America," was over.

And in an address this year from the White House briefing room proclaiming the start of Caribbean-American History Month, President Joe Biden noted how the US and Caribbean countries are bound by common values and a shared history of "overcoming the yoke of colonialism."

But domestic divides over Washington's role in global affairs have increased calls for the US to return to its early foreign policy of isolationism. While this will not be enough for the US to retreat on the global stage, it has helped prevent its military from committing to new major conflicts in recent years.

China

P5 member China has a history of neocolonial actions and justifications.

Ruehl 23

(John P Ruehl - John P Ruehl is an Australian-American journalist living in Washington, DC. He is a contributing editor to Strategic Policy and a contributor to several other foreign-affairs publications.), "A neocolonial history of the UN Security Council permanent five", Asia Times, 8-10-2023, accessed — 3-12-2024, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/08/a-neocolonial-history-of-the-un-security-council-permanent-five/>, NCS

The conclusion of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 marked the end of China's "Century of Humiliation" at the hands of European powers, the US, and Japan. The victory of the Communist Party of China (CPC) allowed Beijing to consolidate power and look toward expanding China's borders.

This included launching the "peaceful liberation" of Xinjiang in 1949 and Tibet in 1950, steadily bringing these regions under China's control – though China only took Taiwan's seat at the UN in 1971.

China's history of exploitation by foreign powers has frequently been cited by Beijing to increase solidarity with other countries that suffered from Western imperialism.

Key to this messaging was fighting against US-led forces in the Korean War, as part of a "Great Movement to Resist America and Assist Korea" and opposing wider Western neocolonialism, while Chinese forces also engaged in border clashes with the Soviet Union as relations between Moscow and Beijing soured in the 1960s.

But Chinese forces have also been involved in clashes with former European colonies. This includes confrontations with India, as well as China's launch of a major invasion of northern Vietnam in 1979.

Tens of thousands of casualties were recorded on both sides during the month-long operation, while continued border clashes between Chinese and Vietnamese forces continued until relations were normalized in 1991.

Since 2003, Chinese officials have instead placed great emphasis on China's "peaceful rise," which has seen the country drastically increase its power in world affairs without having to resort to military force.

But while large-scale Chinese military operations have not materialized, China has rapidly increased the construction of ports, air bases, and other military installations to enforce its territorial control over the South China Sea over the past decade, at the expense of several Southeast Asian countries.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has justified these developments because the islands "have been China's territory since ancient times."

China's extensive maritime militias and civilian distant-water fishing (DWF) fleets have also been accused of asserting Chinese maritime territorial claims while blurring the lines between civilian and military force.

Additionally, there is fear that China's growing economic and military might will be enough to force countries in Central Asia to accept the Chinese position on various territorial disputes.

While China has avoided any major military operations this century, it has used its growing economic and military might to pressure other countries into accepting its territorial claims. To offset criticism, Chinese officials have turned their attention toward ongoing and historical imperialism by the West.

After British criticism over Beijing's handling of pro-democracy protests in 2019, China criticized the UK for acting with a "colonial mindset," and, in support of Argentina, accused the UK of practicing colonialism in the Falklands in 2021.

These claims help sustain domestic support for China's policies, help to increase solidarity among other countries which have suffered from Western imperialism, and put China's geopolitical rivals on the defensive.

Undemocratic

General

The P5's veto power is undemocratic and saps the influence of non-permanent members.

Fiemotongha et al, 21 -- Department of Political Science, Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education Sagbama, Bayelsa

[Christopher Fiemotongha, Nein Godknows, Isaac E. Uki, Ogbotubo L. Seaman, Edoni H. Harcourt, "The UN Security Council Permanent Membership: The Troubling Trend of Expansion and Hegemony," Open Journal of Political Science, Vol.11 No.2, April 2021, <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=108678>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

The exercise of veto by the permanent members of the Security Council (the highest decision making organ) distinguishes them and the Security Council from other members and organs of the United Nations. The right of veto was introduced from inception of the UN by the Allied forces (USA, Russia China, France and Britain) who initiated and championed its (UN) formation. Akindele and Bassey (2011) explains the importance of the Security Council and the right of veto, of the permanent members thus: its crucial roles and enormous powers, in fact, explain why the major victorious allied powers in 1945 imperially sponsored and pre-emptively insisted on their being its permanent members, along with the special privilege of the veto power attached to it. This position of the permanent members was further buttressed by US senator Tom Cornnally when he stated in reference to those opposed to the veto power that "they could go home from San Francisco if they wished and report that they had defeated the veto but they could also report that they had Tom up the charter". Though, the permanent and non-permanent members of the security council are all entitled to a vote each, this is only applicable to procedural matters, where a majority of the fifteen members in the security council is allowed to prevail.

The UN charter, empowers the permanent members to apply their "veto" power in every substantive matter, which means that in every real and important matter, (aside procedural matters) the decision of the permanent members will prevail, in such a way that, all five permanent members must support a matter, for it to scale through, otherwise one contrary vote from a permanent member on a substantive issue, nullifies the whole process. Thus, the Security Council members collectively have the power to block any substantive recommendation of the general Assembly by their veto, while any of the five permanent members can block any substantive decision of the Security Council by her veto. Consequently, the United Nations collective security system can only work if there is full agreement among members (Edmund, 2006). The veto provision in the Security Council has attracted criticism both from scholars and member states. The veto power provision contradicts the sovereign equality provision and is incompatible with the ethics of democracy, championed by the west as the best form of government. Though several scholarly arguments have been put forward either for expansion or replacement, of the permanent members, the provision is undemocratic and negates the essence of democracy. The clandestine motive of the veto power provision was made known by the then US Secretary of state hull, when he asserted that the veto principle was incorporated into it primarily on account of the united states, and with respect to the proposed security council that "our government would not remain there a day without retaining its veto power" (hull in Obi & Ozor, 2009).

Though there has been consistent calls for the reform of the UN especially the Security Council and its veto, the permanent members and those who support the veto have also always responded to the heated debate of the reform of the Security Council, with reference to UN resolution 337. As Saleh (2018) argues, the veto and the threat of its use which has the potential to paralyze the ability of the Security Council in taking any action could be dealt with by utilizing the “uniting for peace” resolution for the purpose of fulfilling the duty of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security when it fails to perform such duties.

The veto power provision does not give credence to the principles of democracy, when decision making power is disproportionately and unevenly distributed; it contradicts the sovereign equality principle of the UN charter, which is conceptually compatible with democratic ethics. Why is it that the charter recognizes the principle of majority rule on procedural matters but declines to do so on substantive matters? This alone is a clear indication of the charter's intent to strategically position the “big five” for decision making of the organization. The structure and voting pattern in the Security Council flagrantly renders the principles of majority rule, popular sovereignty and political equality impotent, therefore killing the zeal of other member states, who have long registered their resentment.

The P5 only addresses its own strategic interests to the exclusion of other parts of the world.

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[Christopher Fiemotongha, Nein Godknows, Isaac E. Uki, Ogbotubo L. Seaman, Edoni H. Harcourt, "The UN Security Council Permanent Membership: The Troubling Trend of Expansion and Hegemony," Open Journal of Political Science, Vol.11 No.2, April 2021, <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=108678>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

Several arguments and positions have been advanced by scholars and member states of the UN in a bid to correct the inequity and anomaly in relation to voting rights and permanent membership of the Security Council. Explicitly, these propositions are advanced in order to structure the international organization in such a way that truly reflects an equitable representation of all sovereign states of the world. Some scholars are of the position that, the number of permanent members currently in the security council be increased to accommodate new powers or that the seats of France and Britain be vacated for Japan, Germany or India, while others have argued that the seats of Britain and France be made available for rotation among members, like that of the non-permanent members. As Ojo and Sesay (2002) contends that the seats presently occupied by France and Britain could rotate among the prospective candidates just like the temporary members of the council, the difference being that each of the “revolving” permanent members would wield a veto while it occupies its seat at the council. Having put forward these lofty ideas for restructuring of the Security Council and for an equitable representation, the present permanent members seem not to be ready for any alteration of the present structure, as the argument for the expansion or adjustment of the security council intensifies. Support has been given to Germany and Japan for their inclusion in the security council, perhaps because of their economic strength and what they contribute to the UN budget.

Since economic and financial strength is an indication of the capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, economic giants and financial superpowers like Germany and Japan

are often mentioned to deserve high consideration for permanent seats in the Security Council (Akindele & Basse, 2011). If economic and financial strength are necessary credentials to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and a prerequisite to qualify for permanent membership position of the UN Security Council, then the equitable geographical distribution of seats principle should be stressed to accommodate potential members like the regions of Latin America, Africa and Asia respectively. It could be construed from examinations of various arguments in relation to the expansion or replacement of permanent members of the Security Council that, none of the permanent members would be ready to give up their position to accommodate potential permanent members of the council, due to the importance they attach to the exercise of "veto power" evident in the use of veto power in the past where the Eastern and Western blocs have used it to block perceived opposing candidates for the position of secretary general. In 1953, the Soviet Union vetoed the election of Mr. Lester Pearson of Canada who was sponsored by the commonwealth and Western Europe, the Soviet Union was confident Mr. Pearson would invariably enhance the course of the Western Bloc. In consequence, the Security Council gave its unanimous approval to a comprised candidate, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld who was a Swedish Foreign Minister. In November 1996 the United States also vetoed the re-election of Boutros Boutros Ghali for a second term for opposing US interest, although the US claim it was because of Ghali's failure to affect much needed reforms in the organization (Obi, Ozor, & Agari, 2008). As at 2012, 269 vetoes had been cast since the security council's inception in this period, China used the veto 9 times, France 18, Russia 128, the UK 32 and the US 89 times. Roughly, two-third of Russian vetoes were in the first ten years of the Security Council's existence (Security Council Reform, 2013).

Having ruled out a possible replacement for Britain and France, the option of possible expansion of the Security Council could be achieved if pursued consistently with unanimity from the regions or power centers agitating for permanent membership of the Security Council and also if renewed pressure is put on the big five from the general assembly in a way of protest.

There has been criticism that the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, who are all nuclear powers, have created an exclusive nuclear club whose powers are unchecked unlike the General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council does not have true international representation. This has led to accusation that UNSC only addresses the strategic interest and political motives of the permanent members, especially in humanitarian intervention for examples, protecting the oil-rich Kuwaitis in 1991 but properly protecting resource-poor Rwanda in 1997 (Rejan, 2006).

Permanent membership makes some countries more equal than others.

Paige, 23 -- Senior Lecturer at Deakin University

[Tamsin Phillipa, "Stripping Russia's veto power on the Security Council is all but impossible. Perhaps we should expect less from the UN instead," Conversation, 9-20-2023, <https://theconversation.com/stripping-russias-veto-power-on-the-security-council-is-all-but-impossible-perhaps-we-should-expect-less-from-the-un-instead-213985>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

Some are more equal than others

Article 2(1) of the UN Charter says the UN is based on the principle of sovereign equality. This, in principle, should mean all nations are equal under international law.

In reality, even when just considering the rest of the UN Charter, it is clear this is not the case. Yes, all nations in the UN General Assembly have one vote and all those votes have equal weight, but this is somewhat insignificant because the work of the General Assembly isn't legally binding.

The only UN body that has the power to make binding international law is the Security Council. And this only happens when it is acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security. In order for a resolution to pass in the Security Council, it must have the support of at least nine members – and, critically, no opposing vote from a member of the P5. This is what is meant by the P5 veto power.

When the UN Charter was being drafted at the end of the second world war, the allied powers and France agreed to enshrine themselves into the document as the P5.

Notably, the group included the “Republic of China”, the government led by Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan, which held the Security Council seat until the General Assembly expelled Taiwan and gave the seat to the People's Republic of China in 1971. And when the Soviet Union disbanded in the early 1990s, Russia inherited its seat on the Security Council through the Alma-Ata Protocol.

The charter gave the P5 the ultimate responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, while also functionally removing them from scrutiny because they possess veto power.

This wasn't a design oversight or failure, it was an intentional decision. This is clearly seen when you examine the wording of Article 27(3). This article requires a Security Council member to refrain from voting on a matter if they are party to a dispute – but it does not apply to resolutions invoking Chapter VII (that is, a legally binding resolution).

The fact the charter includes a restriction on the veto but only in relation to non-binding resolutions demonstrates an intention to place the P5 beyond scrutiny.

So, what about veto reform?

If the existence of the veto prevents any Security Council action from being taken against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine (or against any other P5 state when they engage in similar conduct), why don't we just reform it?

Well, this can't be done because the drafters of the UN Charter made reform incredibly difficult. Namely, the P5 ensured they have a right to veto any proposed reforms to the UN structure by requiring all charter amendments to be ratified by each of them, in addition to getting a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly.

In essence, this means reforming the UN Charter is off the table because the P5 would be able to veto a reduction of their veto power.

The only avenue left for reform is to dissolve the UN Charter and reform the UN under a new treaty that limits or abolishes the power of the veto.

Given the state of global solidarity is very different today compared to the end of WWII when the UN was established, I'm loathe to test this approach. A P5 that is restrained by the Charter when it suits them is less dangerous than a P5 that opts out of international law entirely, leaving them completely unrestrained in their aggression.

Veto power guts UN legitimacy and prevents other states from checking the P5's power.

Lopez-Carlos, 22 -- Executive Director of the Global Governance Forum

[Augusto, "The Origins of the UN Veto and Why it Should be Abolished," Global Governance Forum, 4-28-2022, <https://globalgovernanceforum.org/origins-un-veto-why-it-should-be-abolished/>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Related to concerns over the voting mechanism, was the perception that a Security Council in which the five permanent major power members had veto power—France was included in 1945—and that the UN would turn into an imperialistic organization in which the permanent members of the Council would be, de facto, running the world. The veto itself was perceived by many as undermining the democratic legitimacy of the organization, a practice that could not be defended on the basis of any principle of just governance. Non-permanent members of the Security Council accepted to be limited by a two-thirds majority, whereas the permanent members accepted no such constraints. More importantly—and with huge practical and political implications—some argued that a system was being created in which the organization would not be able to deal with problems and/or conflicts between the major powers or between a major power and a smaller country.

Since most major security problems in the future were likely to involve, directly or indirectly, one of the major powers, this gave rise to the concern that, given the strategic importance, economic size, and large geographic footprint of the Soviet Union, China, the United States and the British Commonwealth, the United Nations, as conceived, would be largely useless at doing what it was created to do, namely, “maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.” (Article 1.1) The kinds of collective security interventions envisaged in Article 43 would inevitably clash with the principle of the “sovereign equality of states,” as opposed to an order based on principles of international law, as made tragically clear in recent weeks with Russia’s unprovoked attack on Ukraine.

The UNSC does not reflect the current geopolitical realities of the world

CFR Editors 24

(Cfr.Org Editors - CFR.org Editors, The Council on Foreign Relations is an American think tank specializing in U.S. foreign policy and international relations. Founded in 1921, it is an independent and nonpartisan nonprofit organization. CFR is based in New York City, with an additional office in Washington, D.C.), “The UN Security Council”, Council on Foreign Relations, 2-26-2024, accessed — 3-12-2024, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>, NCS

What criticisms has the Security Council faced?

Many critics, including member states from the developing world, charge that the Security Council’s structure does not reflect current geopolitical realities. Its membership was expanded from six elected members to ten in 1965, and, in 1971, the People’s Republic of China took the permanent seat previously occupied by the Republic of China (Taiwan). Since then, the body’s composition has remained unchanged.

Regional powers such as Brazil, Germany, India, Japan, Nigeria, and South Africa have sought to enlarge the Security Council or secure permanent seats of their own. Others have called for France to cede its permanent seat to the European Union in the wake of Brexit, especially after France and Germany decided to share the presidency of the Security Council for two months in 2019. In 2021, Britain announced its support for Germany receiving a permanent seat. And in early 2023, China, France, and Germany called for two permanent seats for Africa on the Security Council. So far, calls for reform have not been heeded, with many countries instead seeking to diversify their diplomatic efforts through increased involvement with coalitions outside of the United Nations, such as the Group of Twenty (G20), a bloc of many of the world’s largest economies. The debate about expansion is often framed as a trade-off between legitimacy and efficacy. Saudi Arabia took the unprecedented step of declining a nonpermanent Security Council seat in 2013, announcing a day after it was elected to a 2014–15 term that it would not serve in the absence of institutional reform.

Negative Evidence

Veto Good

Veto Good---General

The use of the veto has declined AND the P5 is necessary for the existence of the Security Council.

Bosco, 12 -- Professor at Indiana University's Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies

[David Bosco, "In defense of the veto power," Foreign Policy, 1-31-2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/01/31/in-defense-of-the-veto-power/>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

That said, there are a few things worth noting about the veto power and its use. First, contrary to the conventional wisdom, Russia and China are not the most profligate in their use of the veto. Since the 1970s, that distinction has belonged to the United States (usually on draft resolutions containing criticism of Israel). Second, overall use of the veto has declined markedly since the end of the Cold War. The threat of the veto has important shadow effects on Council deliberations, of course, but the historical trajectory is toward greater consensus on the Council and against the casual use of the veto.

Perhaps the most fundamental point about the veto is that you could not have a Security Council without it. Major powers will simply not grant an international body binding legal authority on matters of peace and security unless they are certain that it will not prejudice their interests. So the alternative to the Security Council veto is really no Security Council, or at least not in a recognizable form. As maddening as the likely Russian nyet will be, that's a tradeoff that few would be willing to make. As frustrating as it is, the Security Council is still an enormously useful body, not least because it institutionalizes the practice of great-power security consultations.

If jettisoning the veto power is both impractical and ill-advised, there is an alternative for those convinced that the world must put an end to the Syria violence, through forceful means if necessary: pretending that the veto power doesn't exist. There's ample precedent for that route just in the last couple decades, from Kosovo to Iraq. Brilliant and inventive international lawyers have periodically tried to argue that the "responsibility to protect" has somehow—through the mysterious workings of customary international law—rendered the veto power inapplicable in cases of mass atrocities. Whether taking that route is advisable in the case of Syria really depends less on the legal viability of that argument and more on the likely political effects. How would Russia react? How might reinforcing that precedent come back to bite those employing it? Is there a feasible intervention plan? Is anyone actually willing to commit forces?

My guess is that the answers to those questions will militate against international intervention. And that points to another benefit of the veto power: it can be quite convenient in maintaining the fiction that someone else is keeping you from doing something you have no intention of doing in the first place.

The veto prevents escalation and enables focus.

Davies & Bellamy 14, *ARC Future Fellow, Griffith University, **Professor of International Security, Griffith University (Sara Davies & Alex Bellamy, 8-12-2014, "Don't be too quick to condemn the UN Security Council power of veto," Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/dont-be-too-quick-to-condemn-the-un-security-council-power-of-veto-29980>)

There are also grounds for thinking that the veto might inhibit the escalation of local or regional crises – one of the purposes for which it was intended. Given the radicalisation of elements of Syria's opposition, manifested in the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), it is at least plausible to argue that tougher one-sided measures against the Assad regime might only have made the situation worse by strengthening the hands of groups even more callous than Assad.

The veto allows Security Council members to set aside those issues on which they cannot agree but to remain engaged on those others – the great majority of cases – where they can.

Absence of the veto would alienate great powers.

Davies & Bellamy 14, *ARC Future Fellow, Griffith University, **Professor of International Security, Griffith University (Sara Davies & Alex Bellamy, 8-12-2014, "Don't be too quick to condemn the UN Security Council power of veto," Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/dont-be-too-quick-to-condemn-the-un-security-council-power-of-veto-29980>)

It is useful in situations when we despair over the deliberative processes of the Security Council to think through the alternative: a Security Council with no veto.

International peace and security would not be well served if no veto had existed and Russia was able to influence eight other members to validate the annexation of Crimea; if the US was able to persuade eight other states that no Palestinian state should ever exist; or if nine states agreed that Israel did not have a right to exist.

The Security Council's lack of action can sometimes be frustrating and devastating. But, on balance, history has taught us that the world order is better served by working through the great powers rather than by alienating them.

The veto is necessary to make the world a more governable place.

Krastev 15, Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, Bulgaria; Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, Austria (Ivan Krastev, 7-10-2015, "UN Security Council: Veto Option Does More Good Than Bad," Valdai Club, <https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/un-security-council-veto-option-does-more-good-than-bad/>)

As he retreated from Moscow in 1812, huddled in his carriage with his army collapsing around him, Napoleon Bonaparte asked his foreign minister why Europe's rulers resisted him so fiercely. "It's your majesty they fear", the minister told him. "The governments are afraid of universal monarchy". And they still are. Uncontested power is disliked around the world.

So, it is not surprising that Article 27 of the UN Charter allows the permanent members of the Security Council to quash any non-procedural draft resolution with their negative votes, irrespective of the level of international support and popularity it may have. In his fascinating book "Governing the World" Columbia University historian Mark Mazower has powerfully demonstrated that international institutions have been only as effective as the Great Powers of the age have allowed them to be. So, should we hope that the world be a better place if the Permanent Five are stripped of their veto power? My answer is "no". The world will not be a better place, it will be more unstable place and while we can legitimately ask the question if the current permanent members of the Security Council are indeed still the great powers of our age, the question about their veto powers should be treated separately.

In a paradoxical way the debate on the veto power of P5 resembles the discussion on the elimination of the nuclear weapons. Everybody is going to agree that the existence of the nuclear weapons and the status of some countries to be more equal than other in the international system is an awful thing but many will argue that both nuclear weapons and the veto power of the P5 make the world a more governable place.

The use of the veto is declining AND it helps maintain international stability.

Krastev 15, Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies, Sofia, Bulgaria; Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, Austria (Ivan Krastev, 10-23-2015, "UN Security Council: Veto Option Does More Good Than Bad," Russia in Global Affairs, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/un-security-council-veto-option-does-more-good-than-bad/>)

The analysis of the recent uses of veto power in the UN Security Council will reveal some interesting trends. First, the use of veto has dramatically declined after the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union was the first one to cast veto in February 1946. And in the days of the Cold war permanent members of the UN Security Council have used their veto right 240 times. In striking contrast in the first post-Cold war decade only nine draft resolutions were vetoed. In the recent years the veto was used more actively and Russia ended up being the one most ready to veto while France and Britain never used their veto right after 1989. But what is more important, the "pocket veto" (the explicit or implicit threat of veto) was an important incentive for finding solutions in the face of some of the most difficult crises the world has been facing. So, we can see that when veto power is exercised, it comes at a high cost for the respective country while at the same time the threat of veto forces cooperation.

In the post-Cold war period any time when a single member of the Security Council has decided to use its veto unilaterally this was not so much a demonstration of power but a manifestation of defeat when it comes to winning the support of international public opinion. This is true in the 13 cases when the US has unilaterally vetoed resolutions related to Israel and it is true in the case of the latest Russia's resolutions related to the Ukrainian crisis. In the case of the US, the permanent use of Washington's veto in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dramatically hurts US's attempts to present itself as an honest broker in the Middle East conflict. In a similar vein, Moscow's decision to veto the establishment of the UN tribunal for investigating the crash of the Malaysian airplane in Ukraine made many believe that the military units of the rebels in Donetsk had something to do with the accident. It is symptomatic that even majority of the Russians were in favor of the establishment of the Tribunal, according to the Levada opinion polls.

Those who argue that the rising power of the international public opinion is the strong argument against the preservation of the veto power are in fact wrong. It is exactly the fact that people around the world are better informed and ready to take position on the world crises that makes me believe that the veto option does more good than bad. In the interconnected world in which the most important actors are in fierce competition for the hearts and minds of the global public using UN Security veto could not be an easy decision. Publics could be indifferent in the cases of China using its veto power in order to punish any country that has dared to recognize Taiwan as was the case twice in the last 25 years. But when it comes to major conflicts involving a lot of human tragedy states can veto only at the cost of losing much of their soft power.

A kind of 'checks and balances' of our time, P5's veto option remains an instrument of last resort in the resistance against uncontested power.

Veto Good---Nat'l Interests

The veto is key to promoting national interests.

UCR 24 (Security Council Report, 2-13-2024, "The Veto : UN Security Council Working Methods : Security Council Report," UN Security Council Working Methods, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-security-council-working-methods/the-veto.php>)

Beyond permanency itself, the veto power is probably the UN Charter's most significant distinction between permanent and non-permanent members. Article 27 (3) of the Charter establishes that all substantive decisions of the Council must be made with "the concurring votes of the permanent members". The veto has been addressed regularly during the annual working methods debates and is among the topics most frequently raised in the context of almost all discussions of Council working methods.

Permanent members use the veto to defend their national interests, to uphold a tenet of their foreign policy or, in some cases, to promote a single issue of particular importance to a state. Since 16 February 1946—when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) cast the first veto on a draft resolution regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon and Syria (S/PV.23)—the veto has been recorded 293 times.

The veto allows the P5 to safeguard their core national interests.

Apte 20, Former Senior Editor at Statecraft, a B.A. in International Studies from FLAME and an M.A. in International Affairs from The George Washington University (Janhavi Apte, 1-10-2020, "UN Security Council Veto—Safeguard or Spoiler?," Statecraft, <https://www.statecraft.co.in/article/un-security-council-veto-safeguard-or-spoiler>)

Seventy-four years later, new and more complex challenges have emerged, as conventional threats are often linked to unique issues with varying levels of precedence, such as climate change, food and economic insecurity, human rights violations, and gender-based violence and discrimination. In an evolving and unpredictable world, the veto serves as an effective safeguard for the interests of the P5, while also allowing them an avenue for influencing the international policy agenda or for limiting the Council's actions based on their national objectives. This then begs the question—should a select group of states be given such disproportionate power?

Veto Good---US Interests

The veto is critical to advancing US interests.

Abrams 22, Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies (Elliott Abrams, 9-23-2022, “Why “Reforming” the United Nations Security Council Is a Bad Idea,” Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/why-reforming-united-nations-security-council-bad-idea>)

The veto is a critical tool of self-defense for the United States in the UN, and for the defense of U.S. allies. The president says we should “refrain from the use of the veto, except in rare, extraordinary situations.” Between 1973 and 2021 we used the veto 53 times to protect Israel from unfair, unbalanced, hostile resolutions. Are all those “rare” and “extraordinary” situations—or par for the course in the UN? And how does permitting the passage of bad resolutions that undermine U.S. interests make the Council “credible and effective?”

Without the veto, the UNSC would strip the US of its sovereignty and damage US national interests.

Abrams 22, Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies (Elliott Abrams, 4-19-2022, “The Biden Administrations Flirts With Dangerous Moves to Weaken U.S. Veto Power in the United Nations,” Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/biden-administrations-flirts-dangerous-moves-weaken-us-veto-power-united-nations>)

A moment’s thought shows how damaging this might be to U.S. interests. The United States is a global power that has been involved in military activities repeatedly. Without our veto power, the Security Council could do literally anything: subject American troops to International Criminal Court jurisdiction; subject the United States to new international treaties or agreements that impose standards to which we object and outlaw military activities we consider vital to our national security; and outside the area of national security, adopt standards relating to parents, children, family law, and gender rules that we find objectionable, or impose rules against “insults to religion” that clearly violate the First Amendment. Without the veto there is simply no way to protect against limitless actions against our national interest.

AT: Veto Overpowered

The veto isn't omnipotent---consensus is more common.

Davies & Bellamy 14, *ARC Future Fellow, Griffith University, **Professor of International Security, Griffith University (Sara Davies & Alex Bellamy, 8-12-2014, "Don't be too quick to condemn the UN Security Council power of veto," Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/dont-be-too-quick-to-condemn-the-un-security-council-power-of-veto-29980>)

Although a veto is undoubtedly frustrating to those on the receiving end, the omnipotence of the veto is greatly exaggerated. Agreement in the Security Council is, and always has been, much more common. Even at the height of the Cold War – when the Security Council was divided along ideological lines – the number of vetoes never went beyond 20 in one calendar year.

Although recent media attention on the gridlock in the Security Council in the cases of Syria and Israel/Palestine paint a bleak picture of the divisions, the council has achieved noteworthy consensus.

Unity exists now---a slew of high-profile cases prove.

Davies & Bellamy 14, *ARC Future Fellow, Griffith University, **Professor of International Security, Griffith University (Sara Davies & Alex Bellamy, 8-12-2014, "Don't be too quick to condemn the UN Security Council power of veto," Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/dont-be-too-quick-to-condemn-the-un-security-council-power-of-veto-29980>)

The veto does mean, however, that in some instances the Security Council can be paralysed, but today it has a much broader agenda than at any other time in its history. As well as the high-profile cases such as Syria, its agenda includes:

Timely and decision action (including the use of force) to protect populations from atrocities and chronic instability (in the Ivory Coast, Libya, Mali and the Central African Republic);

Intervention brigades to restore order and protect civilians (in the Democratic Republic of Congo);

Referring individuals and situations suspected of committing war crimes and/or crimes against humanity to the International Criminal Court (in cases such as Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony and Sudan's Darfur region);

Implementing peace agreements (in Lebanon, Liberia and Burundi) and assisting fragile states (Haiti);

Monitoring truces (in the Middle East, Kashmir and Cyprus); and

Nuclear and chemical disarmament (in Syria, North Korea and Iran) and counter-terrorism.

The Security Council has found sufficient unity to act on most of these issues. This is remarkable given the breadth of its deliberations has never been so broad nor its agenda so comprehensive.

Effectiveness

P5 Say No

There is absolutely no willingness among the P5 to give up veto power

Izquierdo 23

Miguel Ruiz Cabañas Izquierdo (Ambassador and former undersecretary for multilateral affairs of Mexico; professor of International Affairs and Director of the SDGs Initiative at Tec de Monterrey, the largest private university in Mexico). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

The P5 vehemently defend their veto power in the council. Since the 1945 Yalta Conference—where Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin agreed to the veto mechanism—they have regarded the veto as a sine qua non of their participation in the UN. And they are not likely to share their exorbitant privilege with anyone else.

Since the Security Council—authorized intervention in Libya in 2011, led by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, the council has been semiparalyzed due to Russia's and sometimes China's prodigious use of the veto power. That situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The immoderate use of the veto suggests that extending it to other nations would only contribute to further paralysis. Under current circumstances, reforming the Security Council by adding new permanent members or by making substantive changes to the P5's veto power seems impossible.

Dramatic changes in the Security Council are an impossible sell to its members

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

The call for a dramatic change in the Security Council, like much else, has been placed on the back burner since September 11th. The HLP' report is an attempt to put an assessment of new threats, and hence of new UN institutional ways to address them, more in the limelight. And the lead-up to the report's publication in late November 2004 was visible indeed. The panel's recommendations will be considered at a world summit at the UN's New York headquarters just before the General Assembly convenes in September 2005 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary. Also on the agenda will be a comprehensive evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The "grand bargain" supposedly made possible by placing something on the table for every country is intended to make it possible to revisit proximate and longer-range changes in the Security Council. Indeed, and whatever the plausibility, the HLP's report had to contain such a reference or it would have been impossible to "sell" its findings. The 2001 report from the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), for instance, made similar obligatory references to the Council's membership that was not "representative of the modern era" and to the "capricious use of the veto".¹⁰⁰ While they were part of getting commissioners to agree to the politically correct packaging, they were largely irrelevant to follow up on "the responsibility to protect". Everyone can agree that the Council's decisions should have greater political clout based on greater legitimacy. How to get there from here has always been the problem.

P5 definitely say no to abolition

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

In the interest of truth in packaging, my own views on these questions should be made clear at the outset.⁶ While altering the membership is conceivable, at least on paper, and dramatic alterations in historical trends are always conceivable, the politics behind agreeing to specific changes in the Charter make it more than unlikely; and there is no chance that the P-5 will agree to altering the procedures.⁷ Moreover, the various changes under consideration would undoubtedly improve legitimacy but certainly not effectiveness. The best hope for meaningful change in the Security Council in the next decade lies in reinforcing pragmatic adaptations in working methods and in exploring new ones.

Surveys show that actual UN officials are more skeptical of reform than academics

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

Before addressing recommendations and evaluations of the two types of reforms, we surveyed respondent affiliation as diplomat, academic, United Nations official, or representative of a non-governmental organization. The survey reached some 70 individuals, with an even mix of the above affiliations. The respondents of the survey, however, were less diverse, though they do represent an informed and involved population on the issue. Who better to ask about the use of the Arria formula than former Venezuelan Ambassador Diego Arria, or about Germany's bid for a permanent seat on the Council than Ambassador Gunter Pleuger? Thirty responded, but the majority (18) identified themselves as academics, even though some of them have experience as practitioners. Also, many UN officials, diplomats, and NGO representatives have had careers spanning public service as well as research and teaching, which could explain how self-identification may vary from current occupation. Three respondents identified themselves as diplomats, four as UN officials and one as an NGO representative. Four respondents chose not to answer the question, and it is likely (confirmed through informal conversations) that these were diplomats who are reluctant to take public positions, however anonymous.

There was significant division among respondents regarding the possibility of reform of Security Council membership and veto privileges in the near future. Regarding membership reforms, a third of the respondents thought reform likely in the short-term, while another third disagreed completely about the possibility of reform. The remaining third argued that membership reform might be possible in the next five years, rather than three. More interestingly, this same division appeared across and within affiliated groups. For example, among academic respondents, one-third saw no possibility for reforms, while two-thirds saw reforms as possible in either a three- or five-year period. Three out of four UN officials saw no possibility of membership reforms. Among diplomats, of course, two out of three saw membership reform as a clear possibility within three years. Figure A.1 depicts these findings, which do nothing to dispel the argument in the preceding pages that there is little meeting of minds about the details, and hence the feasibility, of reforms.

US Key

The Security Council is useless if it can't keep the US on board

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

The United States is a Security Council member like no other for the foreseeable future. Arguably, the U.S. is the member of the exclusive club of the P-5 that has the least to lose with any reform of the Council; its participation is a sine qua non for any major effort in the field of international peace and security. The absence of a challenger increases this perception, as only China is a possible future rival to the U.S. in the view of many academic and political analysts. Washington's domestic and foreign policy, in many ways, directs the action and agenda of the Security Council. This "instrumental approach"⁵⁸ to multilateralism, or "ambivalent multilateralism"⁵⁹ as it is also phrased, might be the most effective use of the Council. As Malone argues, "A Council that is not an instrument of U.S. foreign policy would probably be as ineffective as the League of Nations."⁶⁰

A Security Council without the US couldn't enforce its decisions

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

If the purpose of the Security Council is to enforce its decisions, U.S. participation is a sine qua non. While European gloating over the turn of events in Iraq is perhaps understandable as a visceral reaction, the idea that the remaining superpower will continue to participate, politically or financially, in an institution whose purpose would be to limit its power has no precedent. This will be as true for the second administration of George W. Bush as it was for the first one. One reason to create the HLP was the reality that the U.S. has to remain attracted by, or at least tolerate, UN initiatives. If the Security Council materially disagrees with U.S. foreign policy with any frequency over critical issues, the United Nations could come to resemble its defunct predecessor. In this, President George W. Bush was on target in his September 2002 address to the General Assembly: "We created the United Nations Security Council, so that, unlike the League of Nations, our deliberations would be more than talk, our resolutions would be more than wishes."⁶⁸ The Bush administration's National Security Strategy of the United States of America was published later that same month and could not be clearer: "We will be prepared to act apart when our interests and unique responsibilities require.

Great Powers Key

Global power is inseparable from military capacity

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

The current calls for Charter amendments ring hollow and overlook a harsh reality. There are two "world organizations": the United Nations, which is global in membership, and the United States, which is global in reach and power. Indeed, the jostling about Charter reform is, quite frankly, a distraction from dealing with the realities of U.S. power and UN frailty. While critics of American hegemony want power to be based on authority instead of capacity, the two are inseparable. As the world organization's coercive capacity is always on loan, UN or UN-approved military operations only occur when Washington signs on. The value added of other militaries is mainly political and not operational in any meaningful way for enforcement (as opposed to traditional peacekeeping.) This reality will not change until Europeans spend considerably more on defense and have an independent military capacity. There is little evidence, however, that European parliaments or people are willing to support substantially higher defense expenditures, despite the fact the European Commission budget provides some € 300 million per year for UN development and humanitarian assistance. When combined with national contributions from member states, the EU is the largest contributor to UN operations.⁶¹ The official European Union policy on security, A Secure Europe in a Better World, a European Security Strategy, was adopted by the European Council in December 2003. It identifies major objectives (terrorism, organized crime, regional conflicts, Arab-Israeli solution) and emphasizes ties to NATO and the United States.⁶² With more than € 160 billion in defense spending, the twenty-five members of the European Union have the economic capacity, if not the will, to develop a more active and interventionist military.

AT: P5 Hurts Efficiency

Changes don't improve efficiency

Novosseloff 23

Alexandra Novosseloff (Research associate at the Centre Thucydide, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Despite the lack of consensus on a way forward, reform is widely understood as imperative to reinforce the Security Council's legitimacy and authority. This outlook includes France, which believes in the enlargement of the council, the responsible use of the veto in situations of mass atrocities, and the possibility of such reform based on a text and a calendar. It supports new nonpermanent as well as permanent members, envisioning "a greater African presence" in both categories, as well as permanent seats for the so-called G4 nations (Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan).

The assumption, however, that a reformed council would be necessarily more efficient, less divided, and more prone to actually address the security challenges of the twenty-first century is flawed for at least two reasons. First, the goals of representativeness and efficiency are in tension. Second, reforms to international institutions rarely impact states' behaviors or interests.

UNSC Effective

The SC does successfully influence state decisions

Voeten 5

Erik Voeten (the Peter F. Krogh Professor of Geopolitics and Justice in World Affairs at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service). "The Political Origins of the UN Security Council's Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force." *International Organization*. 2005;59(3):527-557. JDN. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/abs/political-origins-of-the-un-security-councils-ability-to-legitimize-the-use-of-force/AEDAAD98A5CD3812152012E19F6B0697>

Governments outside the United States have also placed considerable weight on SC decisions. SC authorization was crucial to Australia's willingness to intervene in East-Timor. 25 India has since 1992 committed to a "pro-active" approach toward UN peacekeeping missions, providing generous troop contributions across the globe to UN-approved missions while refusing to supply to troops for non-UN approved missions. 26 New interpretations of Basic Law provisions that restrict German military activity abroad have made exceptions for German participation in UN peacekeeping and peacemaking missions, as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and West European Union (WEU) operations directed at implementing SC resolutions. 27 Japan has adopted a law that makes military contributions of most kinds conditional on SC authorization. 28 Thus even for these powerful states that lack permanent membership, SC approval has become almost imperative for participation in cooperative military endeavors.

The increased significance of SC authorization is also apparent in public opinion, both in the United States and elsewhere. There is a wealth of evidence that Americans consistently prefer UN actions to other types of multilateral interventions and even more so to unilateral initiatives. For example, in a January 2003 poll, the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) asked respondents whether they "think the UN Security Council has the right to authorize the use of military force to prevent a country that does not have nuclear weapons from acquiring them." Of all respondents, 76 percent answered affirmatively to this question, whereas only 48 percent believes the United States without UN approval has this right. 29 What is impressive about these findings is their consistency across interventions, question formats, and time. 30 Public opinion outside the United States tends to insist even more strongly on UN authorization. 31 This suggests that SC authorization may facilitate foreign leaders to participate in military actions.

AT: UNSC Fails

Successful UNSC action is possible

Kelly 1

Michael J. Kelly (Director of Legal Research, Writing, and Advocacy at Michigan State University; JD, Indiana University). "U.N. Security Council Permanent Membership: A New Proposal for a Twenty-First Century Council." 31 Seton Hall L. Rev. 319 (2000-2001). JDN.
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/shlr31&div=21&id=&page=>

Indeed, it is generally the British view that successful multinational U.N. military interventions like those in Korea and Iraq indicate that the UNSC can work as designed;⁵⁵ only the happenstance of the Cold War stymied these efforts for forty years. The sixteen nations comprising the Korean War coalition represented about twenty-six percent of U.N. member states in 1950, and the twenty-one nations comprising the Gulf War coalition represented approximately thirteen percent of U.N. member states in 1990.⁵⁶ Consequently, the argument goes, whether the world community represented in the U.N. consists of 62 states, as it did in 1950,⁵⁷ or 159 states, as it did in 1990,⁵⁸ the UNSC can still respond militarily, effectively and efficiently. Therefore, any significant increase in the membership of the UNSC would negatively affect both its "efficiency and effectiveness." ⁵⁹

AT: UNSC Declining

Predictions about the decline of the UN have been repeatedly empirically denied

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

In the next decade, the Security Council will retain, in the Charter's original words, "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". Yet, the Council will also retain the same permanent members with vetoes and, in all likelihood, the same number of elected members. In short, the HLP's recommendations will remain a dead letter. "Rarely have such dire forecasts been made about the UN", Kofi Annan lamented in his 2003 report on the work of the organization.¹⁰⁴ He was referring to a veritable din of criticism which suggested that without a more effective and less anachronistic Security Council the world organization could not survive. Such ominous predictions have come and gone with great regularity over the last 60 years, and the lack of real change in the Council in the foreseeable future will neither confirm nor deny the latest batch, including those by the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change.

Effectiveness Outweighs Representation

The main goal of the UNSC is effectiveness, not representation

Novosseloff 23

Alexandra Novosseloff (Research associate at the Centre Thucydide, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

The global debate over Security Council enlargement is heavily informed by concerns over its representativeness, particularly the lack of any permanent members from Africa or Latin America. Most member states, including France, regard this situation as unfair. It should be underlined, however, that representativeness is not in the DNA of the Security Council, which has been structured with effectiveness foremost in mind. Under the UN Charter, the General Assembly is the organ that represents all nations, while the council "acts on the behalf" of all UN member states "to ensure prompt and effective action" when peace is threatened. Despite this international legal mandate, an increasing number of UN members question the council's legitimacy on representational grounds because it has failed to expand since 1965 despite the addition of seventy-five new member states. On closer examination, however, the council's legitimacy crisis owes less to its lack of representativeness than to the unevenness with which its resolutions are implemented and to the tendency of its most powerful members to bypass the council entirely in favor of unilateral action (for example in Kosovo in 1999, Iraq in 2003, or Ukraine in 2022).

Representation Focus Bad

Fights over UNSC representation inflame regional rivalries

Novosseloff 23

Alexandra Novosseloff (Research associate at the Centre Thucydide, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Although the debate over representation in the Security Council has been driven by the main aspirants to permanent membership, it has also increased regional rivalries on all continents. Opponents lobby against major candidates—Pakistan against the candidacy of India, Argentina and Mexico against Brazil, Italy and Spain against Germany, Algeria against Egypt, Kenya against Nigeria or South Africa, and so on. Such competition has undermined the political cohesion of regions and regional organizations. This is true even of the African Union (AU). Although the AU has adopted a common position, known as the Ezulwini Consensus, its members have still been unable to agree on which two countries should serve as permanent Security Council members.

Representation Irrelevant

Regional representation is irrelevant; states in the UN inevitably prioritize their own national interest

Novosseloff 23

Alexandra Novosseloff (Research associate at the Centre Thucydide, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Second, some member states have proposed that the Security Council be adjusted to include regional seats. The council, however, like the UN more generally, is not composed of regional organizations but member states that represent their own national interests first and foremost. Accordingly, the idea of creating a consolidated seat for the European Union, a proposal regularly suggested by some, is nonsense—all the more so in the absence of a truly independent European foreign and defense policy. It is equally absurd to imagine African states on the council voting according to positions decided by the AU. Adjusting the Security Council's composition to reflect regional bodies would not only be against the spirit of the UN Charter but also a recipe for disastrous decisionmaking.

Representation Harms Effectiveness

Greater representation inevitably trades off with effectiveness

Novosseloff 23

Alexandra Novosseloff (Research associate at the Centre Thucydide, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

More generally, prioritizing representativeness risks making a reformed Security Council unmanageable. A large expansion would complicate decisionmaking. While moving from eleven to fifteen members was feasible in the 1960s, a council of twenty—to say nothing of twenty-five or more—would be increasingly unwieldy. As all five permanent members (P5) surely recognize, any plausible reform will inevitably create an organ that is more diverse, more difficult to manage, and often more divided. An enlarged Security Council will result in more various and less stable or predictable alliances. While the P5 will be less dominant, they will still remain without peers if they deny the extension of the veto to any new permanent members—something they have the power to do and almost assuredly will. Any reformed Security Council would thus likely have three categories of members: the original P5, the new permanent members without veto rights, and the nonpermanent elected members. Ultimately, the shape of council reform will reflect what the incumbents are willing to accept, not what the candidates would like to achieve.

No Gridlock

Iraq proves that vetoes don't inevitably gridlock action

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

The use of the veto waned after the Cold War – only 17 vetoes were invoked between January 1990 and July 2004, in contrast to the 193 over the preceding 45 years.³⁸ As David Malone points out, only nine vetoes were cast in the entire decade of the 1990s: two by China – over Guatemala and Macedonia, but both relating to ties with Taiwan by these two governments; two by Russia – over Cyprus and the former Yugoslavia; and five by the United States – one with regard to Panama and the remaining to the Israeli-Arab conflict.³⁹

The shift in the logic of the veto thus is remarkable given the change in the nature and the increasing work of the Security Council, as measured in its ability to produce cooperative resolutions. From 1990 to 2004, matters relating to Iraq have resulted in 75 Council resolutions, amounting to more than 9 percent of all resolutions, and more than 25 percent of Chapter VII resolutions in this period.⁴⁰ More than 93 percent of all Chapter VII resolutions passed from 1946 to 2004 were adopted after 1989. From 1946-1989, the annual average number of resolutions was fifteen; since the end of the Cold War the average is closer to sixty.

Even more telling is the content of these resolutions. Before 1989, Chapter VII resolutions made up five to ten percent of the Council's work. Since 1989, the percentage of Chapter VII resolutions has increased to over twenty-five percent. In 2002 alone, forty-seven percent of Council resolutions involved enforcement mechanisms.⁴¹ As cooperation has increased, so has the weight of the Council's enforcement decisions and interventions. The increase in the invocation of Chapter VII illustrates how the authority of decision-making matters in concrete terms to members of the Council.

No Gridlock Impact

The UNSC effectively promotes diplomacy even when the result is a veto Dayal and Dunton 23

Anjali Dayal (senior scholar in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an associate professor of international politics at Fordham University) and Caroline Dunton (research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa). "The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?" United State Institute of Peace. 1 March 2023. JDN.
<https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>

In fact, the body remains an active site for diplomacy even on conflict cases that divide the P5, and even when one of the P5 members is a key obstacle to collective action. Many scholars have asked why the P5 turn to the UNSC at all, when in most cases they could simply bypass it altogether, and when in all cases the UNSC cannot keep powerful states from breaking international law. Some scholars have argued the UNSC is a place where powerful states can work together to check other states' military ambitions, each member investing the chamber and its decisions with importance so every other powerful state will also invest the chamber with importance, and a place where powerful states can offer their own populations and the international community information about their plans and intentions, making the body a vital part of diplomatic and foreign policy projects even when it can't stop P5 members from breaking the U.N. Charter.

Although gridlock at the UNSC draws the most headlines and external attention, the bulk of the UNSC's work is on wars and crises where no permanent member has a primary national interest in the outcome of the conflict. Here, the P5 have an incentive to keep the focus of international decision-making within UNSC chambers. The status and rank that a permanent seat on the UNSC provides can incentivize the P5 to continue to work with one another on some issues even when their foreign policy goals and interests are wildly divergent. This willingness is a space for diplomatic action by other concerned states.

Gridlock Good

The UNSC was designed to be easily gridlocked because it's the only UN body that can authorize force

Dayal and Dunton 23

Anjali Dayal (senior scholar in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an associate professor of international politics at Fordham University) and Caroline Dunton (research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa). "The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?" United State Institute of Peace. 1 March 2023. JDN.
<https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>

Gridlock Is the Point

The UNSC is the international body charged with maintaining international peace and security. Under international law, it is the sole global body that can authorize force, but each of its permanent five members — the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China and France (known as the P5) — wields a veto that allows it to unilaterally thwart any action.

By design, the UNSC cannot address some of the biggest issues of war and peace in the world: it cannot act to address, mitigate or stop human suffering in conflict when one of its permanent members is a party to the conflict. It was explicitly built to be unfair, giving the victors of the World War II an outsized role in international peace and security, marginalizing whole regions and continents — particularly former colonies that gained independence after 1945 — and it was explicitly structured to be easily deadlocked, with any of the P5 able to unilaterally grind its work to a halt.

Elite Pact Theory

Elite Pact (General)

The P5 dominate the UNSC by design; its primary function is as an elite pact among great powers

Voeten 5

Erik Voeten (the Peter F. Krogh Professor of Geopolitics and Justice in World Affairs at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service). "The Political Origins of the UN Security Council's Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force." *International Organization*. 2005;59(3):527-557. JDN. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/abs/political-origins-of-the-un-security-councils-ability-to-legitimize-the-use-of-force/AEDAAD98A5CD3812152012E19F6B0697>

Given its lack of enforcement capabilities, the SC's leverage resides almost entirely in the perceived legitimacy its decisions grant to forceful actions. 2 Governments across the globe appear more willing to cooperate voluntarily once the SC has conferred its blessing on a use of force. Why has the SC become the most impressive source of international legitimacy for the use of military force? That it would be so is far from obvious. Claude, for instance, thought of the UN General Assembly (GA) as the ultimate conferrer of legitimacy. 3 Franck argued in his influential 1990 treatise on legitimacy that if one were interested in identifying rules in the international system with a strong compliance pull, the provisions in the UN Charter that grant the SC military enforcement powers (Chapter VII) should be set aside. 4 Since then, these provisions have been invoked with great regularity to legitimize uses of force. The development is also puzzling from a theoretical perspective. Most theorists seek the origins of modern institutional legitimacy in legal or moral principles. However, the SC has been inconsistent at best in applying legal principles; its decision-making procedures are not inclusive, transparent, or based on egalitarian principles; its decisions are frequently clouded by the threat of outside action; and the morality of its (non-) actions is widely debated. Hence, it is unlikely that the institution has the ability to appear depoliticized, an argument that motivates most constructivist accounts of institutional legitimacy in the international arena. 5

On the other hand, scholars who study the strategic aspects of international politics have largely dismissed the UN from their analyses. 6 This article provides a firmer base for the role of the SC in strategic interactions. I argue that when governments and citizens look for an authority to legitimize the use of force, they generally do not seek an independent judgment on the appropriateness of an intervention; rather, they want political reassurance about the consequences of proposed military adventures. The rationale is based on an analysis of the strategic dilemmas that impede cooperation in a unipolar world. In the absence of credible limits to power, fears of exploitation stifle cooperation. Because no single state can credibly check the superpower, enforcing limits on the superpower's behavior involves overcoming a complex coordination dilemma. A cooperative equilibrium that implies self-enforcing limits to the exercise of power exists but is unlikely to emerge spontaneously given that governments have conflicting perceptions about what constitute legitimate actions and fundamental transgressions by the superpower. The SC provides a focal solution that has the characteristics of an elite pact: an agreement among a select set of actors that seeks to neutralize threats to stability by institutionalizing nonmajoritarian mechanisms for conflict resolution. The elite pact's authority depends on the operation of a social norm in which SC approval provides a green light for states to cooperate, whereas its absence triggers a coordinated response that imposes costs on violators. The observance of this norm allows for more cooperation and restraint than can be achieved in the absence of coordination on the SC as the proper institutional device. Hence the extent to which the SC confers legitimacy on uses of force depends not on the perceived normative qualities of the institution, but on

the extent to which actors in international politics believe that norm compliance produces favorable outcomes.

The attractiveness of the elite pact account resides partly in its ability to explain the emergence of a limited degree of governance in the international system without assuming the existence of a collective global identity that generates an ideological consensus over appropriate forms of global governance. There is little evidence that such a consensus exists. Thus accounts that require only a limited set of a priori common values appear more plausible. Furthermore, the elite pact model better fits the SC's institutional design than alternative accounts and provides a plausible explanation for the sudden surge in authority following the Gulf War. Finally, the model stresses that elite pacts need to be self-enforcing. This opens a more promising avenue for analyzing norm stability than the constructivist assumption that norms are internalized.

The article proceeds with a broad overview of temporal fluctuations in the extent to which states have historically put weight on SC decisions. The next section explains why SC authority stems from its ability to legitimize uses of force and provides an operational definition. While there is a large literature that asserts that SC decisions confer legitimacy on uses of force, explanations for this phenomenon are rarely made explicit. One of the contributions of this article is to more precisely identify the various plausible roles of the SC in the international system. After discussing the four most common (though often implicit) explanations, the elite pact argument is introduced more elaborately. The conclusion discusses the implications for theories of international legitimacy and the future of SC legitimacy.

Elite Pact Correct

The Security Council functions as an elite pact that helps great powers signal their intentions

Voeten 5

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In accordance with the literature on comparative politics, Weingast suggests that the most effective manner to induce limited governance in divided societies is through elite pacts. 94 An elite pact is an agreement among a select set of actors that seeks to neutralize threats to stability by institutionalizing nonmajoritarian mechanisms for conflict resolution. The SC can usefully be understood as such a pact that functions as a focal point that helps state actors coordinate what limits to the exercise of power should be defended. If the SC authorizes a use of force, the superpower and the states that cooperate should not be challenged. If, however, the United States exercises force in the absence of SC authorization, other states should challenge it and its allies, for instance, by reducing cooperation elsewhere. This equilibrium behavior can be understood as a social norm or convention. For a convention to be successful, it needs to be self-enforcing. This means that actors should find it in their interest to punish unilateral defections from the pact, for example, because they believe that deviations have the potential to steer international society down a conflict-ridden path. SC authorizations thus legitimize uses of force in that they form widely accepted political judgments that signal whether a use of force transgresses a limit that should be defended. This fits with the conventional interpretation that legitimate power is limited power.

To domestic publics this convention performs a signaling function. Citizens are generally unprepared to make accurate inferences about the likely consequences of forceful actions. If the convention operates as specified above, SC agreement provides the public with a shortcut on the likely consequences of foreign adventures. SC authorization indicates that no costly challenges will result from the action. The absence of SC authorization on the other hand, signals the possibility of costly challenges and reduced cooperation. A U.S. public that generally wants the United States to be involved internationally but is fearful of overextension⁹⁵ may value such a signaling function. To foreign publics, SC approval signals that a particular use of force does not constitute an abuse of power that should lead to a coordinated, costly response. 96 Clearly this conception of the SC poses fewer informational demands on general publics than alternatives. Moreover, it does not rely on the assumption that citizens share common values about the normative qualities of global governance. All citizens need to understand is that SC authorization implies some measure of consent and cooperation, whereas the absence of authorization signals potential challenges. The symbolic (focal point) aspect of SC approval allows for analogies to past experiences in a way that cooperative efforts through ad hoc coalitions do not.

The elite pact theory explains why the UNSC can only be altered in times of crisis

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The alternative explanations either do not give a clear prediction of how a shift in the authority of the SC takes place or (implicitly) assume that change occurs in response to gradual normative shifts toward greater reliance on liberal values or globalization. 98 The elite pact model predicts that if a shift toward a more cooperative equilibrium occurs, it will be in response to a discrete event. Elite pacts cannot be formed at just any time. In the most natural uncoordinated equilibrium, groups of actors exploit others and have no direct incentive to stop this practice. Elite pacts are therefore imposed following galvanizing events that disturb the beliefs on which a preceding equilibrium rested. 99 The conclusion of major wars is particularly likely to upset previously held beliefs and payoff structures. 100

This is compatible with the empirical record. Concerts were imposed following the defeat of a hegemon in a major war; a characterization that also fits the formation of the SC in the immediate aftermath of World War II. 101 Nevertheless, the pact was not self-enforcing and had little bearing on whatever stability there was during most of the Cold War. 102 The end of the Cold War created uncertainty in the perceptions of states about new equilibrium behavior. In such a situation it is highly likely that the manner by which a cooperative resolution to the first major international conflict was reached greatly influenced beliefs among policymakers, politicians and citizens about the future resolution of conflicts, and hence that adherence to the norm that the SC authorizes force helps enforce a stable (but limited) form of governance.

It is important to emphasize that the strategic dilemma that states faced in the Gulf War matches the game that motivates the elite pact account. First, there were clear incentives for cooperation. The Iraqi conquest of Kuwait constituted a violation of an international norm that nearly all states would prefer to uphold. Moreover, many states had strategic interests in the region that could be harmed by a unilateral response. Second, there were fears of exploitation. These were especially apparent in the USSR and motivated its initial preference for prolonged economic sanctions over multilateral intervention. 103 Such fears were also evident in China, 104 Arab states, 105 and even Europe, especially in France, where President Francois Mitterrand had to force the resignation of his defense minister over the issue. 106 Mitterrand explained to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker that SC approval was necessary even if lawyers believed that the intervention was legally justifiable without explicit authorization: 107 "Fifty-five million French people are not international lawyers. We need that resolution to ensure the consequences it will entail." 108 Thus, Mitterrand believed that his domestic audience desired reassurance and that SC approval would provide it. Finally, the U.S. motivation for seeking SC approval hinged strongly on the acquisition of political approval that would remove suspicions of exploitative behavior. Baker explained his logic of going through the SC in the following way: But to my way of thinking our disagreement about legalities was academic. As a practical matter, the United States had no real choice initially but to try a coalition approach in dealing with the crisis.... The credibility of our cause would be suspect, not just in the Arab world, but even to some in the West, including the United States. 109

Game Theory Confirms

Game theory explains the Security Council as a form of credible commitment between great powers

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An alternative perspective is that the SC is an institutional manifestation of a central coalition of great powers. 87 This view does not proclaim that the SC enforces a broad system of collective security, but rather that it may serve as a useful mechanism that facilitates cooperative efforts in an anarchic world characterized by the security dilemma. 88 Councils were historically designed to deal with situations of multipolarity that followed the defeat of hegemony. However, similar incentives for cooperation exist in a unipolar world characterized by interdependence. There are substantial potential gains from cooperation between the superpower and other states on economic issues such as trade and financial stability. Moreover, many governments face common security threats such as terrorism and states with the capacity and intention to challenge status quo boundaries or produce nuclear weapons. The main impediment to cooperation under the security dilemma is fear of exploitation. 89 Such fears are also relevant in a unipolar world where the superpower can use its preponderant capabilities to extract concessions, set the terms for cooperation, and act against the interests of individual states without being checked by a single credible power.

In such asymmetrical situations, credible limits to the use of force potentially benefit both the superpower and the rest of the world. 90 In the absence of credible guarantees, one observes suboptimal levels of cooperation as states pay a risk premium, captured for instance by increased military expenditure or other actions targeted at limiting the superpower's relative primacy. Institutions, such as NATO, help increase the credibility of security guarantees by raising the cost of reneging from a commitment. However, the absence of an outside threat and strong collective identity make such arrangements much more difficult to achieve at the global level. Game-theoretic analyses that treat institutions as self-enforcing equilibria suggest an alternative route by which institutions help achieve better outcomes: they aid in solving the coordination dilemma among those actors that fear exploitation. Potential individual challenges are unlikely to deter a superpower from engaging in transgressions. However, the prospect of a coordinated challenge may well persuade the superpower to follow restraint. For this to succeed, states would have to agree on a mechanism that credibly triggers a coordinated response. For example, Greif, Milgrom, and Weingast argue that merchant guilds during the late medieval period provided a credible threat of costly boycotts if trade centers violated merchants' property rights. 91 Without these guilds, trade centers were unable to credibly commit to not exploit individual merchants and consequentially, merchants traded less than desired by the trade centers. As such, cooperation with the guilds became self-enforcing: it was in the self-interest of all actors to abide by the cooperative norm and defend against violations of the norm. Therefore, breaches of the norm came to be seen as illegitimate actions.

P5 Key to Elite Pact

The elite pact theory explains permanent membership; the great power veto is integral to the council's main function

Voeten 5

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The argument advanced here does not presume that it was inevitable that the SC would play the role it did in the Persian Gulf War or that it would have risen to the same prominence had the Yugoslavian crisis occurred before the Gulf War. 115 Rather, I maintain that given that the SC functioned as it did at a time of great uncertainty about equilibrium behavior, it is plausible that it impressed beliefs on state actors that a cooperative equilibrium could be played with the SC as a focal solution. Nevertheless, the institutional design of the SC did make it a more viable candidate for such a role than alternative institutions.

First, elite pacts eschew majoritarian decision making and commonly grant influential actors the power to veto decisions. 116 This is understandable because the goal of elite pacts is stability, not proper procedure. Stability is threatened if those with the power to disturb it are overruled in the decision process. Thus the GA would be a poor coordination device and indeed has been largely irrelevant in security affairs throughout the 1990s.

Second, the process by which compromises in elite cartels are achieved is generally secretive rather than transparent. Public deliberation manifests heterogeneity and commits actors to take stands from which it is costly to recede. For the most part, the public record of SC meetings is uninformative about true motivations actors have as most compromises are achieved in unrecorded negotiations. Extensive public debate is uncommon and counterproductive, as commented on in the section on deliberation.

AT: Dialogue

The goal of the UNSC is not international dialogue

Voeten 5

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Alternatively, discourse in the SC may be guided by rules that the international community collectively understands to guide the process of acquiring approval for uses of force, even if not codified by law. 60 This thesis relies on the presence of easily recognizable common values that facilitate the evaluation of arguments. The above view provides a promising account for why states frequently appeal to legal arguments, precedents, and collective security rules, even if final decisions often violate those rules. However, this view does not provide a plausible explanation for the role of the SC in this discursive process. It is widely recognized that the SC falls far short of Habermasian conditions for effective communicative action. 61 There is only a shallow set of common values, participants are unequal, and the SC relies extensively on unrecorded and informal consultations between subsets of the permanent members. 62 U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's public exposition of evidence for the case against Iraq was highly unusual and of questionable efficacy as a persuasive effort. 63 More frequently, the most visible efforts at persuasion occur outside of the institutional context of the SC. SC debates are usually recitations by representatives of statements prepared by their state departments. Strategic incentives further impede deliberation. There are clear and obvious incentives for states to misrepresent their positions, as the stakes are clear and the relevant actors few. In short, it is hard to see how the institutional setting of the SC contributes to the process of justificatory discourse and why, if deliberation were so important, institutional reforms have not been undertaken or alternative venues such as the GA have not grown more relevant.

AT: Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness has minimal impact on SC legitimacy

Voeten 5

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The many attempts to reform the SC indicate that the legitimacy of the SC may be enhanced from the perspective of some if its decision-making procedures more closely corresponded to liberal principles. But one cannot plausibly explain the legitimacy the SC does confer on uses of force from the assumption that governments and citizens demand appropriate process. As outlined earlier, SC practice sets a low standard if measured against any reasonable set of liberal principles. One may object that a use of force authorized by the SC more closely approximates standards of appropriate procedure than unilateral actions. But if demands for appropriate procedure were strong, one would surely expect a greater use of more inclusive IOs, such as a return to the "uniting for peace" procedure popular in the 1950s and 1960s, perhaps under a weighted voting system. Instead, the GA has grown increasingly irrelevant for legitimizing uses of force. Alternatively, one might have expected reforms that increase transparency and accountability, which have been moderately successful in international financial institutions. Some argue that accountability has worsened in the 1990s, as the GA can no longer hold the SC accountable through the budget by qualified majority rule, 68 and because of the increasingly common practice of delegating the authority to use force to states and regional organizations. 69 It is equally implausible that the general public appreciates the SC for its procedures.

AT: Public Perception

The public doesn't know or care how the UNSC operates

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The public knows little about how the SC makes its decisions. Even in the midst of the Iraq controversy, 32 percent of the U.S. public claimed that the United States does not have the right to veto SC decisions, 70 and only 16 percent could name the five members with veto power. 71 Knowledge is not much better elsewhere, with correct identification of permanent members varying in a nine-country study from 5 percent in Portugal to 24 percent in Germany. 72

AT: Consensus

Consensus is an unattainable goal for the Security Council

Voeten 5

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Finally and most fundamentally, there is no set of common values that generate consensus about what constitutes appropriate global governance. Disagreements have become especially apparent in debates about voting rules and membership questions, but they have also surfaced in virtually any other area where meaningful reforms have been proposed. ⁷³ Even liberal democracies generally disagree on if and how liberal principles ought to be extended to global governance. ⁷⁴ Explanations that emphasize strong common values are less likely to be successful for a diverse global organization than for an institution with more homogenous membership.

Consensus Not Key

Elite pacts successfully promote cooperation even in the absence of consensus

Voeten 5

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More generally, the elite pact account does not depend on the existence of a broad set of common values that generates a consensus about what global governance should look like. For a cooperative equilibrium to survive, it is not necessary that each actor believe that the norm that sustains the equilibrium is morally appropriate, as long as most nonbelievers assume that other actors would react to violations. This is consistent with Weber's view on why a social order is binding on an individual level.⁹⁷ It helps explain the observation that governments insist on SC authorizations of uses of force even if they challenge the normative qualities of the institution. As observed earlier, powerful states such as Germany, Japan, and India, as well as many developing countries, regularly criticize the SC for its composition and decision-making procedures. Yet, they also insist on SC authorization of uses of force and in some cases even adjust their domestic laws to make cooperation conditional on SC.

Reforms

Reform More Pragmatic

The only pragmatic question is focusing on minor reforms

Ng 23

Joel Ng (deputy head of the Center for Multilateralism Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Paradoxically, changes to international institutions are most possible when the global distribution of power is at its most unequal (these almost always happen at the behest and acquiescence of the hegemon). The incentives for equitable redistribution, however, are weak. When the global distribution of power is more equal, powerful countries will strive to block changes, whether from fear of losing status and privilege or from distrust that others seeking greater representation will use their powers irresponsibly. The crux is that reform of the UN Security Council seems stuck in a Gordian knot that only major upheaval could possibly sever.

Given growing international tensions, prospects for that sort of disastrous, conflict-driven upheaval have risen. Even were it to occur, however, reconstructing any type of world order might well prove an impossible task. Accordingly, we are left with a more pragmatic question: What are the realistic prospects for incremental changes that could bring some measure of progress on Security Council reform, despite the current, unfavorable global circumstances?

Evolutionary changes are far more viable than revolutionary changes

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

Evolutionary, not Revolutionary, Change

Card-carrying members of the UN fan club and theologians of that elusive "international community" rue that state interests remain the basis for decision-making in the world organization, but modifications in the way that states approach efforts in the Security Council nonetheless are possible even within the strictures of *raison d'état*. State practice has been anything except static. Hence, high-profile debates about Charter amendments continue apace without any progress, but unpublicized changes take place below this formal level.

Indeed, states have repeatedly modified the Security Council's procedures over the years and numerous delegates point out the importance of remaining flexible. Figure 4.1 details some of the Council's modest changes in working methods and procedures between 1993 and 2002. Under Secretary-General Kofi Annan's tenure, there have been such initiatives in the Security Council and elsewhere. What he called "the quiet revolution," to indicate changes that could be initiated without altering treaties or asking the approval of member states in resolutions, took the form of efforts beginning in 1997 to improve efficiency and accountability.⁷⁸ Based on a June 2002 report, the Council itself has made a number of efforts at Cluster II reform issues regarding transparency, inclusiveness in proceedings, and accessibility to the General Assembly.⁷⁹

Reform Benefits Small States

Small states benefit more from minor reforms that preserve UN effectiveness

Ng 23

Joel Ng (deputy head of the Center for Multilateralism Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

From a small state's perspective, a multilateral rules-based order is essential for security. The UN system is the most universally accepted and legitimate platform on which to build. The UN's effective functioning is therefore of paramount concern to Singapore, which has stated that Security Council reform is necessary for the legitimacy, credibility, and accountability of the world's premier body for international peace and security. Singapore has also actively supported the inclusion of underrepresented nations at the Security Council, including from Africa and small island developing states. And it favors more avenues for countries to participate on the council, such as by increasing the number of both nonpermanent elected members and permanent members. However, it does not support additional veto powers for new permanent members. As with all small states, its influence in pressing for reform is limited.

US Supports Expansion

The US supports expanding the UNSC but not ceding its authority

Ryan 23

Missy Ryan (Washington Post reporter). "U.S. seeks to expand developing world's influence at United Nations." Washington Post. 12 June 2023. JDN. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/06/12/biden-un-security-council-reform/>

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, President Biden's envoy to the United Nations, is consulting with diplomats from the organization's 193 member states to solicit feedback about a potential expansion of the powerful council ahead of world leaders' annual gathering in New York this fall.

The evolving U.S. proposal, which is expected to include the addition of roughly a half dozen permanent seats to the council without granting those nations veto power, reflects Biden's desire to acknowledge the developing world's growing clout and to address widespread frustration with the council's current members and their inability to stanch global conflicts, particularly the war in Ukraine.

Since the creation of the United Nations after World War II, the United States, France, Britain, China and the Soviet Union — later Russia — have wielded veto power on issues of war and peace as the Security Council's five permanent members. The council's rotating membership element lacks such authority.

Biden is pushing for reform despite established powers' reluctance to cede their traditional sway and although Washington faces acute challenges in forging any consensus in an increasingly fractured world. The stakes are high as his administration seeks to ensure that the United Nations remains a central tool for preventing wars, even as doubt grows about its ability to do so.

China Supports Expansion

China supports UNSC expansion

Guihong 23

Sithem Zhang Guihong (rofessor and the director of the Center for UN Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

As a permanent member of the Security Council and the largest developing country, China articulated its principled position on Security Council reform in 2005. It includes five key points: (1) more developing countries should be represented in the council; (2) more countries, especially small- and medium-sized states, should have greater opportunities to serve on a rotating basis and participate in decisionmaking; (3) Security Council reform should adhere to the principle of geographic balance, ensuring representation of "different cultures and civilizations"; (4) all regional groupings should agree on reform proposals that concern their respective regions; and (5) any consensus on reform should reflect full democratic deliberations, as is consistent with the UN Charter.

There have since been no substantive changes to China's position. In November 2021, China's ambassador to the UN added that "hasty preparation of documents for negotiation and launching text-based negotiations will only aggravate division and confrontation among member states and undermine the momentum of reform." China supports adding new seats to the Security Council for developing countries, especially from Africa, but it does not support any specific country becoming a new permanent member.

Alternatives

General

There are a myriad of reforms available.

Thibault 20, Professeur en relations internationales, École des hautes études publiques, Université de Moncton (Jean-François Thibault, 6-21-2020, "The UN Security Council isn't working. Will it ever be completely reformed?," Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/the-un-security-council-isnt-working-will-it-ever-be-completely-reformed-141109>)

Proposals for reform

Several proposals are on the table. The most significant is that put forward by the Group of Four (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan). The members of that group wish to enlarge the membership of the Council so that they, together with two states from the African Group including South Africa, can have a permanent seat with the same privileges as the current members. The number of non-permanent seats would also be increased to 14 for a Council of 25 members.

In a counter-proposal, members of the Uniting For Consensus Group (created in the mid-1990s and formerly known as the Coffee Club), favours a simple increase in the number of seats occupied by non-permanent members from 10 to 20. The members of this group — which now includes Canada, Italy, Argentina, Pakistan, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden and others — are also juggling the idea of creating a new category of semi-permanent members and limiting the veto power of permanent members on a case-by-case basis.

In 2004, the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change presented two options for reforming the Security Council's membership.

The first proposed the creation of six permanent seats without veto power and three new non-permanent seats with a two-year term. These would be distributed among the regions so that each area would have six seats on the Council, including two for Africa, three for Asia and the Pacific (including China), four for Europe (including France, the United Kingdom and Russia) and two for the Americas (including the United States).

The second proposal would see the creation of a new category of non-permanent members, this time for a renewable term of four years. Two seats would thus be allocated to each of the four regions and a new non-permanent seat with a two-year term would also be created. Each of the four regions would have six votes in a Council composed of 24 members.

Finally, anticipating an enlargement of the Council and calling for "full representation," there was the joint African proposal based on "The Ezulwini Consensus" adopted by the African Union in 2005. It calls for "at least two permanent seats with veto power (at least, "for as long as it exists") and five non-permanent seats.

Alts---Extend the Veto

Alternatives exist – we could extend the veto to non-permanent members.

Lund, 10 – Partner at Nordic Consulting Group Denmark; Freelance Writer

[Jakob Silas Lund, "Pros and Cons of Security Council Reform," Global Policy Forum, 1-19-2010, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/48674-pros-and-cons-of-security-council-reform.html>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Extending the Veto to New, Semi-permanent Members

The discussion about whether to extend the right of the veto to new members is in many ways parallel to the discussion about the categories of membership. And the arguments for and against are also quite similar. There is an additional twist to this issue, however: many of the countries or blocs that are vying for seats in an enlarged Council, particularly the African countries, say that they are in principle against the veto but that for the sake of democracy and equality it is paramount that new members have the same rights and privileges as the P5 currently holds. The issues of democracy and equality are common themes held by both those who wish to grant the veto to new potential members and those who do not.

Those opposing expansion of the veto say it will hamper the ability of the Council to address crisis situations in a timely fashion, or in some situations, at all. Added to that is possibly a certain level of wariness on the part of many Western countries with a taste for such concepts as the responsibility to protect, concepts which have received harsh criticism from many African countries. Some speculate that granting two African countries the veto may be a serious blow to implementing the doctrine of the responsibility to protect as well as weakening the International Criminal Court, which in some circumstances depend on action by the Council, as provided by Article 13 of the Rome Statute.

Some speculate that a few of the most arduous proponents of expanding the veto are, in fact, trying to halt progress on reforms that they do not really support. The complex explanation for this is that an African country with no chance of winning either of the two permanent seats being requested for Africa, may see insisting on including the veto power as the best way to maintain a pan-African ethos of solidarity while simultaneously ensuring that none of the current front-runners will actually succeed in gaining permanency on the Council. This is the reason why some view the African group as being the most difficult stumbling block for the G4 in their quest to include additional permanent seats in any Council expansion.

Alts---Abolish the Veto for Crimes Against Humanity

We could abolish the veto in cases of genocide or other crimes against humanity.

Lund, 10 – Partner at Nordic Consulting Group Denmark; Freelance Writer

[Jakob Silas Lund, "Pros and Cons of Security Council Reform," Global Policy Forum, 1-19-2010, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/48674-pros-and-cons-of-security-council-reform.html>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Abolishing the Veto for Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity

The S54 [7] has urged the P5 to agree to refrain from using the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international humanitarian law. The benefits of such a limitation is fairly obvious. The downsides are less clear. The P5 countries point out that the rules of procedure of the Council are to be decided on by the Council as provided by and in accordance with Article 30 of the Charter. They argue that compromising on that principle could lead to a corrosion of the relationship between the GA and the Council. On a broader scale, there is a fear that allowing anyone to limit the privileges of the P5 could undermine the whole functioning of the Council. For those who want to see the veto modified or eliminated altogether, none of these concerns are sufficient to justify not limiting the veto, which in too many instances, they believe, has blocked the ability of the Council to take effective, timely action to safeguard peace and prevent the massive loss of life.

An additional complication, which arises when considering abolishing the veto under the aforementioned circumstances, is the issue of whether to include designating a crisis "genocide," "crime against humanity," or a "serious violation of international humanitarian law." This was made abundantly clear in the Council debate surrounding whether or not the atrocities carried out in Darfur in the last decade fell within the legal definition of genocide included in the Genocide Convention. Some speculated that the recently published Goldstone report further strengthened US opposition to giving up the right to use the veto in cases of certain specified crimes, given the disagreement about whether Israel's conduct in Gaza constituted war crimes or not [7]. Both Russia and China have their own internal conflicts to deal with and have little appetite for discussing whether actions they have taken in dealing with these could be designated a crime for which the use of the power of the veto could no longer be invoked if the proposed reform were to be adopted.

Alts---Extend the Veto Conditionally

We could extend the veto to semi-permanent members conditionally.

Lund, 10 – Partner at Nordic Consulting Group Denmark; Freelance Writer

[Jakob Silas Lund, "Pros and Cons of Security Council Reform," Global Policy Forum, 1-19-2010, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/48674-pros-and-cons-of-security-council-reform.html>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Extending the Veto to Semi-Permanent Members Conditionally

It has been proposed to formally extend the veto to new, semi-permanent members, but requiring them to promise not to use it for the extension of the review period. This would, in principle, present the same opportunities and problems as discussed above, but add a new twist: how can it be implemented and administered legally? Would the Charter be extended before the review period to provide for the new, semi-permanent category of membership? Would the promise not to use the veto be inscribed into the Charter? Would everything be postponed until after the review process, alternatively would changes to the Charter be carved up in a legal step-by-step process? These questions may seem mundane but could prove very difficult to solve in real life and without a clear answer the model could be rendered useless.

Alts---Abolish the Veto

We could abolish the veto altogether.

Lund, 10 – Partner at Nordic Consulting Group Denmark; Freelance Writer

[Jakob Silas Lund, "Pros and Cons of Security Council Reform," Global Policy Forum, 1-19-2010, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/48674-pros-and-cons-of-security-council-reform.html>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Completely Abolishing the Veto

A former Pakistani Ambassador to the UN, Ahmad Kamal, states that in a democracy no one can be more equal than others and he terms the veto anachronistic and undemocratic, a sentiment echoed by many African countries. Abolishing the veto altogether seems to appeal to quite a few member states, but many of these same states also maintain that if they themselves end up on the Council it would only be fair that they be endowed with the right of veto.

Among those who oppose abolishing the veto-and the P5 are the most prominent in that group- references are made to the League of Nations, which many believe ended up in demise because major powers such as the US refused to join. This, they argue, is exactly what would happen if the veto was abolished: the major powers of the world would either leave the UN or disregard or refuse to pay for UN actions they oppose. Whether the major powers would actually risk losing the legitimacy provided by the Charter is an open question, but the scenario presents the flip side of the cost-benefit analysis discussed above in the section on categories of membership. In reality the debate would seem to be moot as long as any P5 member refuses to agree to abolish or modify the veto: Article 108 of the Charter provides that two-thirds of the membership of the UN including all of the permanent members must ratify amendments to the Charter. Only then does the amendment come into force for all UN members.

While the veto could appear to be one of those irreconcilable issues that divide people as abortion, health care and tax questions do in local American politics, some diplomats close to the process say that it will not be a major determining factor when push comes to shove. As discussed recently [8] by the Center, there are rumors that the African group may be willing to soften their insistence on the Ezulwini consensus [9], which includes a demand for at least two permanent and two non-permanent seats in the Council for Africa, and supposedly this would include their stance regarding the veto.

As described in a recent article [10] by the Center, there is, at least theoretically, a large majority of member states in favor of revamping the working methods of the Council as well as its relationship with the GA. Two issues, however, seem to inhibit progress: those who can directly decide on the matters, the P5, are not eager to change things, and those who could put pressure on the P5, the remaining 187 member states, cannot thus far agree on whether and how to do so.

To date, the Center has found unanimous agreement among non-P5 member states that the Council should hold more open meetings. Even P5 representatives to whom the Center has spoken agree that more open meetings could increase transparency at the UN as a whole. And indeed, the number of open meetings has gone up over the last several years. There have reportedly also been more meetings between the President of the GA and the Council in recent years. Nonetheless, many also note that

there is a limit to the number of open meetings the Council can have. Representatives from these countries maintain that certain discussions need to stay within the exclusive forum of the Council for it to maintain its efficacy.

Furthermore, as recently reported by the Center, some believe the increased number of open meetings has resulted in more decisions being reached outside the formal forum of the Council's chamber before they are brought to the full Council for a vote. Among other things, the informal meetings, oftentimes held by the P5-at times even by a smaller segment of the permanent members-are reportedly used to negotiate ways around usage of the veto. By settling contentious issues in an informal environment, the veto-wielding powers avoid having a veto cast when they vote on the action to be taken in the chamber. This process is seen by some as a positive way of reaching compromises and thus avoiding vetoes being cast, while others see it as an undemocratic rigging process that may block effective Council action while protecting the reputation of the veto threatening power or powers, but harming the image of the Council itself for its inability to contain a crisis situation. It is easy to imagine that extension of the veto to a handful of additional member states would make agreement in some crisis situations harder to reach, while at the same time lending greater weight to and support for those agreements that are reached. These contending views serve to underline the power associated with wielding the veto and why some member states believe that to achieve equitable representation the veto needs to be extended to more countries or eliminated altogether.

Asked about the advantages and disadvantages of reforming the working methods of the Council, experts were hard pressed to list aspects that would be disadvantageous to the world as a whole rather than merely to the P5. It is clear that the P5 is very concerned with any non-Council member trying to meddle with the procedures of the Council. The P5 has continuously made it clear, as did a P5 diplomat in an interview for this article, that the Council and the GA are two equal and independent bodies and must behave as such.

Alts---Increase Representation

We could increase the Security Council's geographical representation.

Lund, 10 – Partner at Nordic Consulting Group Denmark; Freelance Writer

[Jakob Silas Lund, "Pros and Cons of Security Council Reform," Global Policy Forum, 1-19-2010, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/48674-pros-and-cons-of-security-council-reform.html>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Geographical Representation

As described above, Article 23 of the Charter states that when choosing non-permanent members to sit on the Security Council "due regard" must be paid to the contribution of UN members to the maintenance of international peace and security, and also to equitable geographical distribution. Particularly the latter requirement is given as the main reason expansion is urgently needed now. Most member states agree that the current distribution of permanent seats in the Council severely under-represents some parts of the world, particularly Africa and Latin America, but also smaller states such as the Caribbean nations, and East European countries, which feel left out.

As expanded geographical representation would necessarily include numerical expansion, the advantages and disadvantages associated with broadening the geographical representation are the same as discussed above regarding a general expansion of the Council. Additionally, there is the question of whether a country can represent anyone other than itself that arises when considering whether to add regional or more individual seats.

Alts---Increase Representation

We could increase the Security Council's geographical representation.

Lund, 10 – Partner at Nordic Consulting Group Denmark; Freelance Writer

[Jakob Silas Lund, "Pros and Cons of Security Council Reform," Global Policy Forum, 1-19-2010, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security-council/security-council-reform/48674-pros-and-cons-of-security-council-reform.html>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

Regional Seats

When discussing Security Council reform, Africa speaks with one united voice, demanding two permanent seats for its continent; others are unsatisfied with the lack of permanent Latin American membership; and Central and Eastern European countries, as noted earlier, want a seat for their group. It is thus clear that there is some sense of unity within geographical groups representing more than just one country. A 2007 letter [11] from the appointed facilitators of Security Council reform, spelled out why some countries could be assumed to "represent, through internal arrangements, the views of the groups to which they belong." This, however, is a questionable assumption in many, if not all, cases. For example, can Brazil, the only non-Spanish speaking country on the Latin American continent, be said to represent Latin America, as one diplomat close to the process asks. Taking into account the fierce disagreement among African countries concerning which two countries should represent them on the Council, how could the two countries chosen be considered to be representative? The stern resistance from countries neighboring the powers that are vying to become permanent members of the Council, such as Pakistan, Korea, Italy, and Argentina, is a sign that neither the G4 nor any other member state can represent anyone aside from itself on the Council according to one expert who spoke to the Center. This expert added that regional representation only makes sense when countries in a region have agreed in advance to pool their sovereignty and share seats or make some similar arrangements, which will ensure that regional representatives will in fact represent a whole region and not just their own countries.

If this type of agreement could be reached in Africa, Latin America and Europe, however, expansion would suddenly be seen in a different light. One of the main obstacles Africa faces in its quest to obtain two regional seats-aside from its insistence on including the veto power-is its insistence that the two countries to be offered permanent membership must be elected by the African Union. The US, for one, has stated that this is unacceptable and has underlined that the two countries must be named before they will even negotiate the question of giving them permanent seats. This observation could undermine the idea of providing for rotating seats. While the US might be willing to accept seats for Latin-America rotating between, say, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico or for Europe between, say, Germany, UK, France, Spain and Italy, it would be politically difficult for them to argue in favor of rotating seats if the countries to rotate were to be elected by the Organization of American States or the European Union, respectively, rather than being restricted to a rotation amongst specifically pre-named member states in advance.

General

Alt Worse

Abolishing the P5 leaves them entirely unrestrained by international law.

Paige 23, Senior Lecturer, Deakin University (Tamsin Phillipa Paige, 9-21-2023, “Stripping Russia’s veto power on the Security Council is all but impossible. Perhaps we should expect less from the UN instead,” Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/stripping-russias-veto-power-on-the-security-council-is-all-but-impossible-perhaps-we-should-expect-less-from-the-un-instead-213985>)

The only avenue left for reform is to dissolve the UN Charter and reform the UN under a new treaty that limits or abolishes the power of the veto.

Given the state of global solidarity is very different today compared to the end of WWII when the UN was established, I’m loathe to test this approach. A P5 that is restrained by the Charter when it suits them is less dangerous than a P5 that opts out of international law entirely, leaving them completely unrestrained in their aggression.

It is more likely that efforts to reform the UN will result in the destruction of existing multilateral cooperation than bring about more just arrangements.

Dayal & Dunton 23, *a senior scholar in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an associate professor of international politics at Fordham University, **a research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa (Anjali Dayal, Caroline Dunton, 3-1-2023, “The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?,” United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>)

Everyone from U.N. Secretary General António Guterres, to the Biden administration, to voices from the Global South have called for fundamental, formal revisions to the UNSC’s membership and powers, with ideas ranging from expanded permanent membership to finding ways to strip the P5 of their veto. Some have even invoked Article 109, the formal procedure for rewriting the Charter via a general conference that the Charter itself lays out. But in an era of waning multilateralism, efforts to revise the U.N. Charter are more likely to kill most existing structures of multilateral cooperation than to produce a more just institution. As Natalie Samarasinghe wrote this fall, “there is little chance of a successor organization rising from the current geopolitical ashes.”

Indeed, significant reforms would require both a complete revision of the U.N. Charter and true political will and agreement from the same powerful member states who benefit enormously from the status quo. The one major reform of the UNSC, in 1963, cost the P5 little at the time: they agreed to increase the number of non-permanent members at the UNSC, following pressure from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), but ceded none of their power.

Temper Expectations

The UN is not designed to be a world government---it is a diplomatic congress aimed at encouraging some cooperation---wholesale abandonment would be far worse.

Paige 23, Senior Lecturer, Deakin University (Tamsin Phillipa Paige, 9-21-2023, "Stripping Russia's veto power on the Security Council is all but impossible. Perhaps we should expect less from the UN instead," Conversation, <https://theconversation.com/stripping-russias-veto-power-on-the-security-council-is-all-but-impossible-perhaps-we-should-expect-less-from-the-un-instead-213985>)

Tempering our expectations

Yes, this means the UN is powerless to address Russian aggression in Ukraine, in the same way it was powerless to address US and UK aggression in Iraq. And yes, this seems to go against the initial purpose of the global body, which was created to:

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.

The Security Council, too, was given the mandate of maintaining international peace and security when it was created, as Zelensky has repeatedly pointed out.

But in accepting that mandate, the P5 ensured they wouldn't be subject to it. In creating the UN, they placed themselves above the law and above the power of the UN specifically so they could avoid scrutiny of their actions. They also ensured they could prevent any reform of the UN to limit their power.

As a result, maybe it is time we start treating the UN for what it is – a diplomatic congress aimed at making the world a little better through encouraging cooperation. Rather than what we hope it to be – a world government capable of effecting peace.

War

The current structure of the UNSC enables great powers to moderate disputes and avoid direct conflict.

Gowan 13, research director at New York University's Center on International Cooperation and a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations (Richard Gowan, 12-1-2013, "Is it time to junk the UN Security Council?," New Internationalist Editorial, <https://newint.org/sections/argument/2013/12/01/argument-junk-un-security-council>)

You are right: the Security Council, like life, is not fair. But it was never meant to be. Its main goal is to moderate disputes between big powers and so reduce the risks of major war. In the past few years the US has hammered out deals with China and Russia on Iran, North Korea and, most recently, Syria through the UN. The process is often ugly and the human costs appalling – as the Syrian slaughter underlines. But I'd argue that UN diplomacy is still preferable to unfettered competition between Beijing, Moscow and Washington. I would actually like to see more big powers, like Brazil and India, become full-time members of the Council and give it more credibility as an arbiter in global arguments.

Backlash

Any reform that sidelines China, Russia, and the US would generate immense backlash.

Martin 24, has been a special representative of the UN secretary-general, secretary-general of Amnesty International and executive director of Security Council Report (Ian Martin, 2-26-2024, "The Key to Security Council Reform Is Fewer Permanent Members, Not More," PassBlue, <https://www.passblue.com/2024/02/26/the-key-to-security-council-reform-is-fewer-permanent-members-not-more/>)

The door is therefore open to reform today, so long as it does not go too far against the interests of China, Russia and the US. One can imagine circumstances in which the Chinese National People's Congress, the Russian Duma or the US Congress would veto an amendment that had been opposed by their respective government, despite it being backed by more than two-thirds of the General Assembly. It is almost inconceivable, however, that the French or British Parliaments would isolate themselves from overwhelming world opinion by doing so.

Root Cause

Wishing for a better UN ignores that the root cause is ultimately the substantive conflicts of interests among states.

WP 22 (Washington Post Editorial Board, 10-2-2022, “Opinion U.N. reform is a self-defeating idea — literally,” Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/10/02/united-nations-security-council-reform-biden/>)

There is no ready-to-hand procedural fix for what ails the United Nations because its failures ultimately stem from substantive conflicts of interest among states, on the Security Council and in the body as a whole. If and when those conflicts can be lastingly resolved, institutional reform will become much easier — but also much less necessary.

US Interests

Sapping the P5 of its power would undermine US interests.

Adams, 22 -- a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and the chairman of the Vandenberg Coalition

[Elliott, "Biden Is Working to Undermine America's Authority at the U.N.," National Review, 9-21-2022, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2022/09/biden-is-working-to-undermine-americas-authoritys-at-the-u-n/>, accessed 2-20-2024; AD]

As the U.N. General Assembly meets this week for its 77th high-level "General Debate," the Biden administration is pressing for changes in the U.N. Security Council that will undermine U.S. national interests.

When the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations spoke at the State Department last week, she outlined three U.S. priorities: food insecurity, global health, and Security Council "reforms." Here are Assistant Secretary Michele Sison's words:

The United States will subscribe to six clear principles for responsible behavior for Security Council members. First and foremost, we pledge to defend and act strictly in accordance with the U.N. Charter; second, we will engage pragmatically with all Council members to address threats to international peace and security; third, we will refrain from the use of the veto except in rare, extraordinary situations; fourth, we will demonstrate leadership in defending human rights and fundamental freedoms; fifth, we will enhance cooperation, inclusivity, and transparency; and sixth and finally, we will advance efforts to reform the U.N. Security Council.

Now, on this last point, Security Council reform, we do not believe the United States should defend an outdated status quo. While we're clear eyed about the obstacles to Security Council reform, we will make a serious call for countries to forge consensus around credible, realistic proposals for the way forward. To remain credible into the 21st century, the Council needs to better reflect global realities and incorporate regional perspectives.

Security Council "reform" has been proposed, and fought over, for decades. Why has it never been achieved? First, the five permanent Security Council members (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) have a lot to lose when their veto power is restricted in any way. Second, changes in membership may empower new members — but offend those who lose out. Would Argentina like to see Brazil join the Council? Would Pakistan accept India's membership? Would China allow Japan to be added? Would Italy vote for Germany to join? To ask these questions is to answer them.

Other proposed "reforms" would limit the use of the veto. Of course, we would all like to see restrictions on Putin's ability to veto important resolutions that promote human rights, but veto restrictions will bite the United States as well — and bite our allies. For decades the United States has used the veto to protect Israel from hostile, one-sided, hopelessly unfair resolutions. Now Sison promises we will use the veto only in "rare, extraordinary situations." Al Jazeera claims the United States vetoed 53 resolutions against Israel between 1973 and 2021. Was each one of these "rare" and "extraordinary?" Or would the reforms now being proposed by the United States leave Israel vulnerable to the U.N.'s automatic majority against her, while removing the U.S. veto that has protected her?

And why would the United States seek to limit its own justifiable use of the veto? So that we do not “defend an outdated status quo” is the Biden administration’s answer, but who is to say what’s outdated? U.N. member states that do next to nothing to support and pay for the institution? Vicious dictatorships such as Russia and China, who are Council members, and ones that are not, such as Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, and Myanmar? Is an “outdated status quo” not better than an updated system that puts the General Assembly’s automatic anti-American majorities in charge?

Certainly there is nothing democratic about giving the General Assembly more power if that power is exercised by national governments that are themselves not democracies — that speak for unelected dictators rather than for the people of those countries. The Economist Intelligence Unit found in 2021 that 74 countries out of the U.N.’s membership of 193 countries are democracies, so “Security Council reform” is simply moving power toward the undemocratic majority in the General Assembly. Some “reform.”

The Biden administration says the Security Council needs to “better reflect global realities and incorporate regional perspectives.” At all times, the Council consists of ten non-permanent members in addition to the five permanent ones. Those ten are chosen by region and do “incorporate regional perspectives” already. If reflecting “global realities” means depriving France and Britain of their seats, why would the United States benefit from such a move? Would adding Brazil and India, for example, make the Council more effective — or less so? Would they be likely to support American initiatives in the Council or regularly oppose them?

The Biden position reflects the victory of fashionable opinion over careful thinking about U.S. interests. Nor will any “realistic” Security Council reform, ostensibly what the Biden administration seeks, improve the U.N. system and the functioning of the Council. We can only hope that like its predecessors, the current “reform” efforts fail due to national rivalries within the U.N. And as for using our veto only in “rare, extraordinary situations,” here’s a far better rule: use the veto whenever a Security Council resolution — about Israel or anything else — reflects the lack of reality, the bias, and the hostility to us and our allies that have characterized scores of resolutions since the U.N. was founded. In the real world, those occasions are very far from “rare” or “extraordinary.”

Membership on the Security Council is important to US interests – we can use it to manage difficult challenges.

Berdal, 16 -- Professor of Security and Development at the Department of War Studies, King's College London

[Mats Berdal, "The UN security council: ineffective but indispensable," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 11-14-2016, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/003963303123313434761?>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

The United States

On the face of it, the value and the utility of the Security Council is much less obvious to the US than to its veto-wielding colleagues on the Council. Set against the resources and capabilities of fellow Council members (let alone the UN membership at large), the overwhelming nature of America's military, economic and political might has long encouraged a constituency within the US to argue that it simply does not need the UN. At best, so the argument runs, the Council can endorse US actions; more likely, it will only complicate and shackle its exercise of leadership in the international system. And yet, the US has repeatedly been drawn back to the UN, finding that the legitimacy it confers on its actions, if not indispensable to taking action, is extremely costly to ignore. The very decision by Bush to confront the issue of Iraq's non-compliance through the UN is testimony to this fact, even though reaching that decision required all the persuasive powers of his Secretary of State, Colin Powell. The Security Council has also been effectively used by the US as a means of managing, containing or simply putting on the backburner difficult issues and challenges to which its military might is of limited relevance but which, as a truly global power, it cannot ignore. Nevertheless, it is undeniable and hardly surprising that the attitudes to the UN, historically as well as in the post-11 September world, are more ambiguous and complex than those of the other four permanent members. The question it raises is whether the Iraq experience has permanently damaged US–UN relations and tipped the balance in favour of those always inclined to avoid that route.

Norm Compliance

The Security Council checks the power of powerful states via norm compliance.

Berdal, 16 -- Professor of Security and Development at the Department of War Studies, King's College London

[Mats Berdal, "The UN security council: ineffective but indispensable," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 11-14-2016, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/003963303123313434761?>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

The usefulness of the Security Council to the P5

Throughout the post-Cold War period, the general presumption that matters of international peace and security ought, if at all possible, to be referred to the Security Council has proved resilient. In particular, all five permanent members, have though for different reasons, retained a strong interest in ensuring that the Council does not become marginalised, notwithstanding its many real and apparent failures. The Council is, quite simply, the only forum of its kind; that is, a forum able to address, if not resolve, security challenges of international concern and, crucially, to confer near-universal legitimacy on the actions of states or groups of states in a way that no alternative candidate or agency, real or proposed, has been able to do. It is, in this context, striking how problematic and, on the whole, unsuccessful have been the attempts – explicitly called for in the Agenda for Peace in 1992 – to breathe life into Charter provisions encouraging ‘regional arrangements and agencies’ to deal with issues of peace and security.¹¹ The evident difficulties of doing so – as the experience of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia in the 1990s suggests – have stemmed not from questionable legality (after all ECOWAS action was authorised by the Security Council) but rather from ECOWAS’ perceived lack of legitimacy. The diplomatic effort by Britain and the US to secure an explicit authorisation for the use of force, however unsuccessful and flawed the diplomacy, is itself testimony to the importance attached to the Council’s legitimising role. Not only that, but both the US and the UK, in justifying the resort to force and explaining the need for military action, have continued to rely heavily on UN Security Council resolutions, a fact that only reinforces the sense that neither country felt they could dispense with some kind of UN sanction for its chosen course of action.¹² This esteem in which the Council continues to be held derives in large part from its custodial role as protector of principles and rules seen by the vast majority of member states as foundational to international order – above all, the principle of sovereign equality of states and its corollary, the rule of non-intervention by states in the affairs of other states. To the extent that military action in Iraq has been viewed, in many parts of the world, as a challenge to these principles, one may expect to see a renewed commitment to the UN by the membership at large.¹³ This, in turn, is unlikely to diminish the need for major powers to work through the UN to secure legitimacy for its actions.

More positively, however, and as indicated above, the P5 members also have their own compelling reasons for ensuring that Council’s role, status and authority in international affairs is not irreparably weakened. In setting out and explaining their policies, member states invariably emphasise the degree to which these conform to the principles and intentions of the Charter. The near-ritualistic character of the language used on such occasions is an important part of what gives the UN its quality of theatre and ‘sacred drama’, qualities much in evidence in the run-up to war.¹⁴ While principles clearly do play a role and should not be dismissed simply as the ‘gentle civiliser of national interest’, the postCold War history of the UN also points to other powerful reasons why all of the P5 members – though, especially, Britain, France and Russia – are likely to remain committed to using the Security Council.

Progress Possible

The UNSC can and has improved absent structural reform.

Dayal & Dunton 23, *a senior scholar in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an associate professor of international politics at Fordham University, **a research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa (Anjali Dayal, Caroline Dunton, 3-1-2023, “The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?,” United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>)

We know the UNSC can continue to work amid internal fractures, and that the P5 want it to continue working in many cases. And even if formal reforms are unlikely, we know the UNSC can change because it has changed in the past. The UNSC’s one formal reform allowed more member states to sit on the council, and these states, in turn, have used the chamber in creative, innovative and new ways, opening up new possibilities for multilateral action via small shifts: meaningfully coordinating with groups outside the UNSC, meaningfully coordinating with each other, transforming the practice of penholding, and drawing on the rotating UNSC presidency to advance new agendas and procedures.

While these changes are seemingly small and clearly insufficient to fix the UNSC’s fundamental problems, they make today’s UNSC markedly different in practice from even a few decades ago. They may not formally shift power away from the P5, but they empower other members to take up new tasks, and in doing so, change how the chamber works, change which tools are available to diplomats trying to navigate the P5’s conflicts, and form part of a suite of ideas to advance multilateral action on pressing conflicts in the face of P5 obstruction.

Reform is possible---membership expansions, coalition-building, etc. all point to workarounds to P5 gridlock.

Dayal & Dunton 23, *a senior scholar in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an associate professor of international politics at Fordham University, **a research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa (Anjali Dayal, Caroline Dunton, 3-1-2023, “The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?,” United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>)

Can the UNSC Change Enough?

Both the form and the content of the UNSC’s work have evolved over time through informal practices and concerted effort from the U.N.’s other member states. We should therefore anticipate that these members will be at the forefront of finding creative procedural and substantive ways to confront P5 gridlock.

A full-scale revision of the U.N. Charter is distant, and gridlock is likely to continue at the UNSC, particularly when a member of the P5 is committed to either breaking the terms of the U.N. Charter, or protecting another country doing so. No widespread consensus among other states can change how easily a P5 member can turn the UNSC away from action.

Still, these historical changes in the UNSC — a formal expansion in elected membership, coalition building at the UNSC, shifting ownership over UNSC resolutions and new agendas via the UNSC presidency — point to one set of levers for people concerned with multilateral action even amid fractures among the P5. Taken alongside other tools, like actions through the U.N. General Assembly or the U.N. Secretariat, these changes in practice offer action points even when global institutions seem hopelessly unfit to address the conflicts before them, helping transform the UNSC’s work on international peace and security even when the P5 refuse to cede meaningful power to the rest of the world.

Other Benefits

The current Security Council performs valuable functions – the P5 can advance its interests without resorting to force.

Berdal, 16 -- Professor of Security and Development at the Department of War Studies, King's College London

[Mats Berdal, "The UN security council: ineffective but indispensable," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 11-14-2016, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/003963303123313434761?>, accessed 2-23-2024; AD]

In addition to its formal role, the Security Council has long performed a number of other unacknowledged functions. Three of these merit special mention. First, the UN and its associated organs and agencies can always be relied upon to act as a 'scapegoat for the vanities and follies of statesmen' and, especially for its P5 members, the 'shortcomings of the UN' have often provided cheap and convenient cover for the failure of their own policies.⁵ As Conor Cruise O'Brien has regularly reminded us, this function is in fact 'one of the things the UN is about, and is a large part of utility to national leaders'.⁶ A second and vital political function of the Council has been to serve as an instrument for collective legitimisation of state action, that is, as a 'dispenser of politically significant approval and disapproval of the claims, policies, and actions of states'.⁷ A third and related cluster of functions has been to provide P5 states with a mechanism through which their separate and distinctive interests can sometimes be more effectively advanced, concessions or quid pro quos from other member states secured, and likely international criticism of what are in effect unilateral policies or actions deflected. Post-Cold War examples illustrating each of these functions include: China's repeated use of its Council membership to signal and restate its interests vis-à-vis Taiwan⁸; Russia's apparently successful effort in 1993 to obtain a 'more forthcoming US position on Georgia and Tajikistan' in exchange for supporting a US-sponsored resolution on Haiti⁹; and France's ability to deflect criticism of its policies in Rwanda before and during the genocide by receiving Security Council endorsement of Operation Turquoise, its military-humanitarian and, it should be added, morally ambiguous operation in the country from June to August 1994.¹⁰

Once these considerations are borne in mind – to wit the persistence of power politics inside and outside the organisation and, intimately related to this, the importance of the Council's unacknowledged functions – it becomes much easier to understand why repeated 'crises of credibility' facing the Council in the 1990s did not fatally undermine its perceived utility to states. The paralysing tensions over Bosnia in 1994–95, the shameful inaction over Rwanda in 1994 and the insurmountable divisions that emerged over Kosovo in 1999 were, to observers at the time, as lifethreatening as the impasse over Iraq appeared to many pundits in early 2003. An underlying question informing the present article is whether the deep divisions exposed over Iraq in 2002–03 have ushered in an altogether different and more serious crisis for the Council and for the UN's role in peace and security than those that occurred in the 1990s.

Reform Fails

Any structural reform will be seen as alienating.

CFR 24 (Written By, 2-26-2024, "The UN Security Council," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council>)

The odds of substantial reform are seen as remote because amending the UN Charter requires an affirmative vote and domestic ratification by two-thirds of UN member states. This includes all of the Security Council's permanent members, which are unlikely to take measures that would curb their own influence. While there is broad agreement among UN members that the Security Council's makeup is outdated, each of the various proposals for reform inevitably leaves some aspirants alienated. Some proposals call for additional permanent members and others for a new class of elected seats that have the possibility of renewal. In the absence of charter reform, smaller states have advocated for procedural changes, including greater transparency and closer consultations with troop-contributing countries.

Alternatives will likely fail to capture the legitimacy of the UNSC---we should aim to improve balance, not abolish the UNSC. COMBS '11

Coombs 11, Diplomatic Courier Contributor (Casey L. Coombs, 9-12-2011, "Balancing the United Nations Security Council," Diplomatic Courier, <https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/posts/balancing-the-united-nations-security-council>)

Reality

If the blocs are steering negotiations, the UN Charter amendment process is steering the blocs. A proposal first requires an initial two-thirds vote from the General Assembly; then two-thirds of the parliaments of Member States need to ratify the resolution; finally, nine out of the UNSC's fifteen members must ratify the measure, including all five veto-wielding permanent members, who benefit most from the status quo.

With that in mind, the Ezulwini Consensus is untenable. None of the P5 is in a position to extend the veto at present, and neither of Africa's two main candidates are without flaws: Nigeria has a burgeoning population and great economic potential, but still faces systemic corruption and a host of unwieldy governance problems; and South Africa, though bustling economically, has yet to establish itself as a global player.

The UfC's enlargement proposal, by shelving any talk of permanency, underplays balance of power concerns important to rising powers and pointed out by McDonald and Patrick. Moreover, the African bloc – which represents about one-third of the General Assembly – combined with the diplomatic reach of G4 countries, lowers the likelihood that such a plan could overcome the first hurdle in the amendment process.

The G4 – perhaps due more to the composition of its membership than the substance of its proposal – has seemed most palatable of late. In fact, the Group indicated earlier in the year that it was close to securing the 128 votes necessary to bring a draft resolution to the GA floor. However, sources close to the negotiations told your correspondent as the Diplomatic Courier was going to press that G4 countries have since refocused efforts toward advocating longer-term, non-permanent seats with an option for permanency down the road. That would afford the G4 a probationary period to prove themselves while giving the P5 a horizon against which to evaluate the potential permanent suitors. Either way, the Group's biggest initial obstacles remain the UfC and African blocs, though a deal with the latter – by swapping GA votes for one or two African seats on the G4 ticket – might be the optimum suboptimal outcome either could hope for.

Alternatives will likely fail to capture the legitimacy of the UNSC---we should aim to improve balance, not abolish the UNSC.

Coombs 11, Diplomatic Courier Contributor (Casey L. Coombs, 9-12-2011, "Balancing the United Nations Security Council," Diplomatic Courier, <https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/posts/balancing-the-united-nations-security-council>)

Balancing Legitimacy and Consensus

While regional collective security institutions – ranging from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) – play a vital role in the maintenance of peace and security, none has the scope of the UNSC. Further, as Lee Feinstein, former US national security advisor and UN expert, observes: "the reality is that for much of the world, the UN has carried the stamp of legitimacy and consensus. In this respect decision by the United Nations, including the legally binding decisions of the Security Council under Chapter VII, may be more acceptable to other governments than pressure from any single nation or group of nations."

A more balanced Council would foster both legitimacy and consensus in an increasingly multipolar world.

AT: UNSC Blocks R2P

The P5 aren't the only barrier to effective R2P.

CFR 24 (Written By, 2-26-2024, "The UN Security Council," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/background/un-security-council>)

Other critics include advocates of R2P, who say the veto gives undue deference to the political interests of the P5, leading to inaction in the face of mass atrocities. Russia's two vetoes of Security Council action on Ukraine, for instance, have spurred calls to kick Russia out of the P5. This line of criticism was growing even before the invasion; Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, the UN human rights chief from 2014 to 2018, repeatedly criticized the outsize power of the veto-wielding member states, warning that without institutional change, the United Nations could collapse.

But it is not just P5 members who have demonstrated reluctance to use force. Aspirants to permanent-member status, including Brazil, Germany, and India, have generally opposed interventions as violations of sovereignty. While R2P advocates criticize the Security Council and its members for a lack of political will, others question the United Nations' conflict-management capacity, often citing 1990s peacekeeping crises in Rwanda, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia. Recently, the United Nations has faced scrutiny over its ability to provide aid to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, with critics saying that delays and watered-down support for a cease-fire have rendered the body's response "woefully insufficient." Calls to reform the Security Council grew stronger after China, Oman, and Turkey condemned the U.S. decision to block a cease-fire resolution, the only member to do so.

AT: Gridlock

Gridlock is overblown---the UN is an active site for diplomacy and has made remarkable strides in advancing global peace.

Dayal & Dunton 23, *a senior scholar in residence at the U.S. Institute of Peace and an associate professor of international politics at Fordham University, **a research associate at the Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa (Anjali Dayal, Caroline Dunton, 3-1-2023, “The U.N. Security Council Was Designed for Deadlock — Can it Change?,” United States Institute of Peace, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/03/un-security-council-was-designed-deadlock-can-it-change>)

The P5 and the UNSC

To understand these changes in practice, how they came about and what kinds of changes at the UNSC are possible even when the P5 are unwilling, we have to start with why the P5 care about the UNSC at all. Even as their own divergent agendas prevent action on key cases, the P5 have more in common than not on many issues of international peace and security — when their own primary interests and political processes aren't at stake, they can agree on even complex issues of international peace and security, and take action to address pressing issues. For much of the post-Cold War period, and even amid substantial disagreement on Ukraine and Syria between 2013 and 2016, for example, the P5 agreed to all proposed new peacekeeping force authorizations. And work continues now despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In fact, the body remains an active site for diplomacy even on conflict cases that divide the P5, and even when one of the P5 members is a key obstacle to collective action. Many scholars have asked why the P5 turn to the UNSC at all, when in most cases they could simply bypass it altogether, and when in all cases the UNSC cannot keep powerful states from breaking international law. Some scholars have argued the UNSC is a place where powerful states can work together to check other states' military ambitions, each member investing the chamber and its decisions with importance so every other powerful state will also invest the chamber with importance, and a place where powerful states can offer their own populations and the international community information about their plans and intentions, making the body a vital part of diplomatic and foreign policy projects even when it can't stop P5 members from breaking the U.N. Charter.

Although gridlock at the UNSC draws the most headlines and external attention, the bulk of the UNSC's work is on wars and crises where no permanent member has a primary national interest in the outcome of the conflict. Here, the P5 have an incentive to keep the focus of international decision-making within UNSC chambers. The status and rank that a permanent seat on the UNSC provides can incentivize the P5 to continue to work with one another on some issues even when their foreign policy goals and interests are wildly divergent. This willingness is a space for diplomatic action by other concerned states.

AT: Ukraine

There is already an existing legal basis for disregarding Russia's veto on the grounds it qualified as an abstention.

Peters 23, Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg, Germany (Anne Peters, 2023, "The war in Ukraine and legal limitations on Russian vetoes," *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law*, 10:2, 162-172, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20531702.2023.2264085>)

4. Conclusion

This contribution has argued that the duty to abstain from participating in a decision concerning one's own cause (Article 27(3) of the UN Charter), in conjunction with the principle of good faith/the prohibition of abus de droit, and taken together with the obligation to respect the right to life and the overarching requirement to respect jus cogens, generates a legal responsibility of all Security Council members to treat the Russian vetoes as abusive. When such vetoing occurs on draft resolutions tabled under Chapter VI (or Chapter VIII), the veto can, as developed here, persuasively be qualified as an abstention. This argument does not call into question the legal right of the P5 to exercise the veto at their discretion, for furthering their own interests, even if in tension with their responsibility to contribute to maintaining world peace. The very narrow point is only to call into question the legitimacy of a vote shielding a manifest prima facie aggression of the state casting the veto.

Practice in the Ukrainian crisis has not drawn the legal conclusions presented in this paper. There are many pragmatic and prudential reasons for not drawing them. The course of states not to plead what has been presented here as legally arguable is an expression of the 'realism' that pervades the international legal discourse, i.e. the belief that insistence on legal arguments might make political negotiations more difficult and may prevent peace, and that they should therefore not always take over. Legal scholars, too, are well advised to take note that the United Nations, including its most powerful organ 'exists in a world of sovereign states, and its operations must be based in political realism.'Footnote52

However, realism is only one possible posture towards the international world in which ideational and material factors come together, and where actors, structures, and coincidence bring about changes of the law. Another posture is idealism, a belief in the power of ideas. Both postures, in varying intensity, guide human conduct and institutions-building. Therefore, the workings of the United Nations are not only governed by realism: the organization is 'also the repository of international idealism, and that sense is fundamental to its identity.'Footnote53 It remains to be seen whether the legal arguments in this paper are picked up in a political momentum that strengthens rather than undermines this repository of international idealism.

Ukraine proves that the UN can still facilitate limited cooperation.

WP 22, (Washington Post Editorial Board, 10-2-2022, "Opinion U.N. reform is a self-defeating idea — literally," Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/10/02/united-nations-security-council-reform-biden/>)

Better for the United States to focus on shoring up what still does work at the United Nations. Though not living up to its loftiest global-governance promises, the U.N. has real crisis management capabilities and can facilitate limited cooperation among warring parties — when their mutual self-interest dictates. Ironically, the same Russian aggression against Ukraine that demonstrated the U.N.'s incapacity to prevent war has demonstrated the U.N.'s capacity for at least some damage control: Its diplomats were instrumental in negotiating and implementing a deal between Russia and Ukraine to lift the former's previous blockade and allow the latter to export more than 1 million metric tons of much-needed grain through the Black Sea. A U.N. body, the International Atomic Energy Agency, has been providing a crucial neutral monitoring presence at Ukraine's massive, Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

P5 Influence Inevitable

Outsize influence is inevitable; studies show election of non-permanent members also reflects US interests

Iwanami 11

Yukari Iwanami (Department of Political Science, University of Rochester). "Delegating the Power to Govern Security Affairs: The Composition of the UN Security Council." APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper. 16 September 2011. JDN.
https://www.rochester.edu/College/gradstudents/yiwanami/UNSC_members.pdf

This paper examines the nomination and election process of Council non-permanent members by focusing on whether elected members' policy preferences differ substantially from those of the permanent members such that they actually increase the heterogeneity of the Council. I argue and find that regional groups have a significant influence on the composition of the Security Council, and that countries representing the interests of the region are more likely to be elected as Council members. However, when I look at overall elected members, I find that countries with policy preferences closer to that of the United States are more likely to be elected, suggesting that the current electoral system works advantageously to pro-U.S. member states. The results also indicate that international norms have some influence on the selection process and that countries with a reputation for free-riding or transgressing international security norms are less likely to be elected. This paper provides two data sets: one on the elected members and the other on the candidates.

UN GA Solves

UN General Assembly can take on a greater role to counter Security Council veto power **Ng 23**

Joel Ng (deputy head of the Center for Multilateralism Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Singapore also envisions the General Assembly itself assuming a greater role in global security if the five permanent council members (P5) use their veto power to block Security Council action, as has been the case with the war in Ukraine. As Singapore's UN ambassador suggested, the General Assembly should be permitted to take up "critical issues of international peace and security where the Security Council is unable to act because of a lack of agreement among its permanent members."

Such a change would accomplish at least three things. First, it would help shift the discourse on international peace and security from larger to smaller states, which represent the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly. Smaller states, of course, already enjoy an outsized voice on international affairs in the one-state-one-vote Assembly. While the UN's representative body has a reputation for making largely symbolic resolutions, giving small states an expanded platform to shape deliberations on international security could have salutary consequences. All such countries, after all, require a stable, rules-based system in which to develop. Thus they have the least incentive to destabilize the system, even if they could secure significant short-term national gains (for example, in territorial disputes).

Second, elevating the role of the General Assembly would help isolate permanent members that wield a veto. Currently, the decision to use the veto carries remarkably few consequences. If nothing else, elevating the General Assembly would demonstrate that irresponsible use of the veto carries social cost. One should not expect this disincentive to halt use of the veto altogether, but permanent members will need to consider whether the perceived gain of using their veto is worth the resulting opprobrium. Such considerations could be especially relevant in cases where some permanent members have traditionally protected the parochial interests of smaller partners over the opposition of most UN member states, by imposing legitimacy costs on that behavior.

Third, the General Assembly's great diversity may itself be an underestimated source of innovation. While much of the post-World War II order, including the now calcified UN system, was a creation of the allied victors, the developing world has been the most affected by conflict ever since. During the Cold War, the relative stalemate and threat of nuclear war kept the peace between the first and second worlds (aligned, respectively, with the United States and the Soviet Union), but not in the third world, which saw myriad violent conflicts both between and within states. While these wars were not necessarily resolved through the wisdom of peacemakers or well-designed conflict resolution mechanisms, the states that lived through these experiences fully understand the consequences of violence and the preciousness of peace. Having such states and their respective regional organizations assume significant roles and devise mechanisms to reduce and resolve conflict should be embraced.

UN GA More Pragmatic

Changes within the General Assembly are more practical

Ng 23

Joel Ng (deputy head of the Center for Multilateralism Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

This suggestion to elevate global security cooperation in the General Assembly in the face of obstructed Security Council reform may seem impractical and even naive, particularly given the General Assembly's penchant for symbolic rather than substantive action. Three points are worth bearing in mind. First, the General Assembly would not replace the Security Council. The council would retain primary responsibility for taking effective action in response to threats to international peace and security. The General Assembly would only be mobilized when an impasse exists at the council. Under those circumstances, any relief from the impasse that reflects the general mood of the UN's membership would represent progress.

Second, as has been the experience in regional organizations resistant to change—like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the African Union (AU)—incremental shifts are most likely to be unobjectionable. They are also necessary for deeper reform. In the Organisation of African Unity, for example, gradual changes during the 1990s paved the way for greater collective security responsibility before the transition to the AU enabled their institutionalization. The mere act of expanding the space for debate in such bodies can alter approaches to defending and enforcing agreed-upon rules. Open debate at the General Assembly is a necessary step for this to take place.

Finally, it might be argued that this proposal is asking too much from small states or that they should not overstep their place. While such concerns are understandable, growing tensions between larger states may make this alternative the only viable pathway to reform. The curious centrality of ASEAN in the regional architecture of the Asia-Pacific is instructive as to why. In that case, a group of small states achieved outsized influence because larger states—each competing for regional sway—could not countenance their major rivals taking a leading position. It was the unobjectionable quality of the small states that allowed them to drive the initiative. As an added benefit, these states have the greatest stakes in a stable and effective architecture because of their inherent vulnerability. Extending this logic to the global level, a bottom-up approach may be the most viable alternative route to strengthening the UN system, given competition among the big states.

The current impasse on Security Council reform is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon. Lots of attention is being afforded to the structural details of various proposals, but the more significant issue at stake is really the rules-based order that the UN represents. This system needs reform more urgently than ever, even as prospects for its renewal grow dimmer. Empowering small states to take on new responsibilities might be the best way forward, given the lack of trust among the larger powers that is obstructing the formal reform process.

Non-Permanent Members Solve

Non-permanent members can constrain permanent members

Kelly 1

Michael J. Kelly (Director of Legal Research, Writing, and Advocacy at Michigan State University; JD, Indiana University). "U.N. Security Council Permanent Membership: A New Proposal for a Twenty-First Century Council." 31 Seton Hall L. Rev. 319 (2000-2001). JDN.
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/shlr31&div=21&id=&page=>

The UNSC voting structure restrains the five permanent members from doing whatever they choose. Any Council action requires the concurring votes of at least four of the non-permanent members. 72 Additionally, while the non-permanent members have no individual veto prerogative, they can exercise a collective veto of sorts. When any five of the non-permanent members are in agreement, they can prevent the Council from taking an action by exercising an open or hidden veto. 73

AT: UK/France

France and UK hold legitimate seats; they are both major contributors to international peace

Novosseloff 23

Alexandra Novosseloff (Research associate at the Centre Thucydide, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Two unwelcome and misleading ideas have complicated global agreement on a way forward. First, some member states have challenged the legitimacy of permanent seats for France and the United Kingdom on representational grounds, arguing either that they should make way for others or that, in the event of an enlargement that includes Germany, three permanent European seats would overrepresent the continent. This position ignores France's and the UK's inherent capacity to support international peace and security by virtue of their diplomatic agility and proactiveness, military strength, economic stability, and commitment to remaining fully involved in world affairs. Aware of their relative diplomatic vulnerability, France and the United Kingdom have been more progressive on council reform than the other three permanent members. Both together and separately, they have supported the G4 position. At the July 2009 UK-France bilateral summit in Evian, they introduced the "pragmatic option of an interim reform"—a new category of seats with a longer term of office for some nonpermanent members that could be transformed into permanent seats at the end of an interim phase. Since 2015, France has also supported a proposal for restraining the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities, in line with UK thinking on the matter.

AT: Consensus

There is no agreement on how to reform the UNSC

Guihong 23

Sithem Zhang Guihong (Professor and the director of the Center for UN Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai). In: "UN Security Council Reform: What the World Thinks." Ed. Stewart Patrick. Carnegie Endowment. 28 June 2023. JDN. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/06/28/un-security-council-reform-what-world-thinks-pub-90032>

Most member states agree that the Security Council should be expanded to include more countries in its decisionmaking. However, the enormous challenges to increasing the council's permanent membership make that goal unlikely to succeed in the near future. Even among those who advocate increasing the number of permanent members, positions differ on the rationale and criteria for enlargement, on the desirable size and regional distribution of any expansion, and on whether any new permanent members should have the right of veto. The struggle to increase the number of permanent members also faces at least three daunting procedural difficulties: unanimous approval by the P5, endorsement by two-thirds of the General Assembly, and the passage of relevant legislation by those member states.

There is no consensus; countries agree on the idea of reform in the abstract, but disagree on how

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." *Dialogue on Globalization*. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

Beyond the discretionary use of the veto, the second problem preventing reform is political paralysis over the exact candidates for non-permanent and permanent members, the latter with or without vetoes.⁴⁵ The increase in numbers beyond the current 15 – five permanent, and ten non-permanent members serving rotating two-year terms – is unobjectionable in terms of greater diversity. At the same time, those more interested in results than process are quick to point out that an expanded Security Council would hardly improve effectiveness. A larger Council would increase the chances for what one observer poetically called the *Sitzkrieg* over Iraq.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it would not only be too big for serious negotiations but also remain too small to truly represent the membership as a whole. The vague agreement about some expansion to accommodate more seats at the table for the clearly under-represented Global South is obvious.⁴⁷ But so too is the clear lack of consensus about which countries should be added. The arguments coming from delegations, from the North or the South, are transparently self-serving. "More diversity" from Germany or Japan, "more middle powers" from Pakistan, or "more small states" from Singapore are predictable packaging of self-interest in the garb of a more legitimate Security Council. States defend their own interests; but somewhat less hypocrisy would be welcome.

AT: Legitimacy

Lack of dramatic reform does not compromise legitimacy

Weiss 5

Thomas G. Weiss (Presidential Professor of Political Science at The City University of New York's Graduate Center). "Overcoming the Security Council Reform Impasse." Dialogue on Globalization. 5 January 2005. JDN. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/global/50099.pdf>

While rhetorical fireworks over the last decade have not and will not enable Charter amendment per se, they undoubtedly have contributed to a permissive environment that facilitated pragmatic modifications in working methods. Such modifications are unlikely to make a substantial dent in the national-interest decision-making in the Security Council under its current membership and procedures, but neither would amending the UN Charter. The gains in transparency from such modifications, nonetheless, are not trivial. The potential to nourish them and to invent new ones is a more promising way to improve Security Council accountability and effectiveness than excessively naïve and optimistic notions to amend the Charter.

Will the inability to move ahead with dramatic reforms compromise UN credibility on matters shaping the future use of force? The answer is "probably not", or at least "not more than in the past". The continued dithering about the slow-motion genocide in Darfur, for instance, reflects geopolitical realities that would be even more prominent in a Security Council that resembled a "rump General Assembly".