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The Reform of the United Nations Security Council

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Abstract. Due to the evolution of the global order, the expansion of transnational threats, and the rigidity of resolution procedures, the United Nations Security Council(UNSC) is under increasing pressure to play a substantive and positive role. Under this current situation, this paper aims to explore the reasons and necessities of reforming the UNSC, and mainly focuses on the veto power through case study and data analysis. This paper advocates a comprehensive reform, first by introducing a double veto to ensure broader consensus, second by extending the veto to emerging global powers to reflect current geopolitical realities, and finally by implementing a conditional veto system to limit abuses. A better understanding of the need for reform will help the UNSC enhance its ability to maintain world peace and security. More importantly, it can contribute to better adapting to the characteristics of today's multi-polar world.

Keywords: United Nations Security Council, Double Veto, World Peace, Reform

1. Introduction

The UNSC is a significant institution of international peace and security. The central target of the United Nations is to safeguard international peace and security while fostering cooperation among nations. It stands as the most authoritative and representative intergovernmental organisation, which has played a vital role in mitigating international tensions and halting ongoing hostilities, as well as addressing critical issues such as environmental concerns, food security, climate change, and natural disasters. Nations that cherish peace and accept the obligations set in the Charter are eligible for membership. However, in recent years, its structure and operations, especially efficiency have increasingly gotten doubted. Since "The health of the Security Council is poor but not yet terminal", the voice of reforming the UNSC is getting louder and wider. But just chasing after the so-called reform without making the cause and purpose clear, will make entities fall into a confused situation easily. Thus, the question of "Why does the UNSC need to be reformed?" is critical under the contemporary global background.

While developed countries make use of it as a way to maintain the existing order, the majority of developing countries accept the pre-established rules in a semi-compromising manner. They obey the United Nations Charter and work towards the development of world peace. However, with the

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advent of economic globalisation and the development of regional organisations, the current state of international power dynamics differs significantly from that of the pre-Cold War era. The comprehensive national strength of developing countries has gradually increased, and so has their voice. The Secretariat, headquarters, and main activities of the United Nations reflect the reality of eighty years ago, not the present. This superstructure's inability to keep pace with the economic base can lead to the instability of the international order. The reform of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, has become an urgent issue.

The necessity of reform has been a frequent topic relating to intense policy debates and diplomatic negotiations for decades. The current situation of the UNSC, from its number of permanent and non-permanent seats to the use of the veto, has caused endless discussions. The G4, established by Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, has been firmly asking for expanding permanent membership while saying it can reflect the shifting geopolitical dynamics. Instead, the Uniting for Consensus, mainly led by Italy, South Korea, and Pakistan, has pushed for an increase in non-permanent seats in order to enhance regional representation but not to change the status of the P5. These different and even opposite measures reflect different entities' disparate understandings of the causes and necessity of reform.

What's more, the structure of the United Nations Security Council, which includes the veto power of the five permanent members, has also led to an imbalance of power. With more and more people calling for the reform of the United Nations, the competition to become a permanent member has intensified. This issue is now on the agenda, but its resolution depends on the understanding of the topics rather than the countries' agreement to mechanically expand the Security Council. Under modern conditions, the Security Council must be reformed to play its unique role in international governance.

This research question aims to explore the primary reasons for the growing calls for reform, through examining the historical context and current challenges, and finding out the potential ways to a more equitable and effective UNSC. Analyzing the necessity for the UNSC reform can better reflect contemporary realities, and enhance its capacity to respond to global threats effectively to contribute to broader discussions on strengthening global governance and international peace and security.

2. Thesis and RoadMap

Thesis 1: The UNSC is facing a changing global order, increasingly serious transnational threats, and a rigid resolution process, which makes the reform imminent.

Thesis 2: The UN Security Council veto system must be reformed because it is standing in the way of the effectiveness of the Security Council.

Thesis 3: The veto power of permanent members of the United Nations Security Council should be reformed through the implementation of a double veto requirement, expansion of veto power to include emerging global powers, and the introduction of a conditional veto, to enhance the council's effectiveness, ensure more democratic decision-making, and maintain international peace and security more robustly. The current geographical Realities and the multipolar nature of the contemporary world demand a reevaluation of the council's decision-making processes. This paper argues that reforming the veto power is essential to enhance the effectiveness of the council and proposes a three-pronged approach: Instituting a double veto, expanding the veto privilege, and introducing a conditional veto system.

RoadMap: This paper synthesizes three RoadMaps into a coherent summary. Initially, it outlines existing scholars' perspectives on the rationale for UN Security Council (UNSC) reform,

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emphasizing literature review findings. Three hypotheses are then formulated, focusing on global order, transnational challenges, and political deadlock. Subsequently, the paper employs data and case analyses to validate these hypotheses, underscoring the imperative for UNSC reform. The discussion commences with a critical appraisal of the impact of veto powers held by the Permanent Five (P5), highlighting their decisive influence on key international outcomes. Despite numerous proposed solutions, progress in reform has been hindered by procedural challenges, as noted by scholars. Then, the pivotal role of developing nations, particularly African states, in advocating for reform is underscored, acknowledging their significant contributions to this global initiative. Lastly, a case study and analysis of three hypothesis of reform of the veto power, first introduced the double veto, then expansion of permanent membership last cancellation of veto power, then leading to the strategic pathway of proceed the reform suggestions plus potential challenges and criticisms associated with each reform, including political feasibility, impact on power balances, and the risk of increased paralysis within the council.

3. Literature review

Scholars offer various opinions on the primary reasons for the need for UNSC reform, from structural inequities to inefficiencies in decision-making, from lack of representation, to the Council's limited capacity to address emerging threats.

Structural inequity is a principal argument. The current permanent members reflect the post-World War II power dynamics, increasingly seen as outdated and unrepresentative of today's global power distribution [1].

Different international relations theories describe this inequity in various ways. Morgenthau's realism theory views the privileges of P5 as a part of the balance of power. In contrast, Wendt's constructivism theory argues that structural inequity mirrors the power structures within the international community. Regardless of the theoretical perspective, there is a consensus that power inequality exists in the international community, also manifesting within the UNSC.

The UNSC's decision-making process has faced criticism for inefficiency. While the veto power aims to ensure consensus among major powers, it often leads to deadlock, especially during critical international crises. For example, the UNSC's response to the Syrian civil war was impeded by repeated vetoes from permanent members with conflicting interests, prolonging the humanitarian crisis [2]. This inefficiency delays urgent responses and undermines the UNSC's credibility and authority [3]. Moreover, frequent veto use by permanent members has led to paralysis in addressing crises. What is strikingly noticeable is that veto is often seen as reflecting national interests over global consensus, as a way to delay or block actions. Additionally, there is also a view in the international community that the inefficiency of peacekeeping operations should be attributed to bureaucratic procedures that prevent timely deployment.

Gilad Menashe Erdan, the representative of Israel, said the world has witnessed that the United Nations "no longer holds even one ounce of legitimacy or relevance" [4].

Therefore, various reforms, such as abolishing the veto or implementing a "double veto," have been proposed to enhance legitimacy and accountability, aiming for a more democratic and fair decision-making process.

The lack of adequate representation is another significant issue. Under the dominance of the P5, the current composition cannot reflect the geopolitical realities. Hurd [5] argues that this lack of representation results in decisions that often overlook the interests and perspectives of these regions. Being ignored because they are not strong enough, and because of the negligence they cannot get support from resolutions. In a vicious cycle, these neglected countries never have a chance to

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achieve full development. Therefore, equitable representation is crucial for the UNSC to address global challenges effectively and maintain international peace and security [6]. It's also a key point to make the purpose of reform clear.

The UNSC has often been criticized for its inadequate response to emerging threats. Emerging threats are typically fast-evolving, difficult to predict, diverse, and cross-border. Their complexity and widespread impact necessitate flexible and multi-layered responses from the international community [7]. For example, the UNSC passed Resolution 1973 in 2011, and authorized military intervention in Libya to protect civilians, but it has failed to effectively resolve the crisis. Libya descended in an ongoing civil war, and a number of terrorist groups such as ISIS have taken the opportunity to establish their strongholds, leading to further deterioration of regional security.

In fact, how to improve the ability of the UNSC to resolve crises, it is very important to address the above three issues. The process determines the result, and the solution of the crisis inevitably depends on the subject of solving the crisis and the process of it. The General Assembly should be strengthened for it to play its proper role as the most representative and democratic body within the UN System and as the parliament of the world [8].

As we know, the P5's veto power is the production the World War II, which means it is one of the most vital way of maintaining the peace of the world. However, every coin has two sides. As the development of each country in the world varys in every moment, sometimes the P5's veto power is in contradiction to the principles of the UN Charter as more and more countries would like to stand out for their own interests.

Nations like Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan, along with rising African powers like Nigeria and South Africa, are keen on gaining a permanent seat at the Council's table. Meanwhile, certain BRICS countries, including China and Russia, stand out as established insiders on the UNSC, a stark contrast to their positions in other global forums where they might not hold such a status [9].

The reform of the UN is about to rush onto agenda, and it is exciting to see that the UN has launched a new reform programme. "In its declaration on the commemoration of its 75th anniversary in 2020, it recognised that 'the world of today is very different from what it was when the United Nations was created 75 years ago'." [10] States can and make influence on the UNSC even without permanent seats. Madeleine Hosli and Thomas Dörfler used data to illustrate the representation and influence of non-permanent members within the UNSC. In addition, South Africa in particular can play an important role in fostering collaboration between the UN and AU since it is now on the UNSC while chairing the AU [11]. As a result, South Africa has laid a solid foundation for AU higher position in the UNSC.

When it comes to the solution, some delegations stressed that were there to be new permanent members, no new veto powers should be given"(General Assembly, Supplement No. 47, P23). Fiemotongha Christopher, Nein Godknows, Isaac E. Uki, Ogbotubo L. Seaman and Edoni H. Harcourt mentioned that two meaningful measures should include the expansion of the quantity of potential permanent members and the equity in the use of power in the UNSC [12]. Matthew Gould and Matthew D. Rablen suggested that requiring two permanent members to vote against a resolution in order to form a veto is another sort of reform, which would certainly weaken the concentration of permanent members' power [13]. To be more specific, Richard Butler AC envisions a 27-member Council, with nine permanent members elected by regional groups and 18 elected seats, which he thought that it would be an effective solution [14].

Indeed, the reform of the United Nations continues to face pressures from various interest groups. Compared with Middle Eastern countries, African countries play smaller roles and make minor influence in the world order. Like Niguse Mandefero Alene, Mohammed Seid Ali and Kebede

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Yimam Tadesse said, "Africa's insistence on immediate and full veto power for new entrants and its demand for representation merely through numbers inside the UN are unfeasible" [15]. What's more, recently with the voice of reform of UNSC becoming louder and louder, five permanent members have shown us that they support the joint of African countries. But in this case, as Mr. Niguse Mandefero Alene, Dr Mohammed Seid Ali, and Dr Kebede Yimam Tadesse said, "two issues, in particular, stand out, namely: the veto issue and the lack of a process for selecting which African states will represent Africa on the Council" [15].

So, we can see that there are various challenges except political challenges that the AU would be faced. However, some scholars express their expectations about the promotion of cohesion among the African Party. For example, Daniel Forti and Gustavo de Carvalho thought that A3, as a united bridge between the African Union and the United Nations, plays an important role in "shaping UNSC debates, breaking geo-political deadlocks, and guiding the council's collective action" [11]. So when facing the situation that no consensus has been reached on which African countries should be granted permanent seats [11], A3 countries can be the best solution to the problem of the lack of cohesion within the African Group.

4. Individual research components

4.1. Statement of hypotheses

1. The international situation in the world today is very different from that in the early years of the UN. In addition to the P5, there are numerous emerging countries starting to get the world's eyesight, their economic, military, and other strengths can't be underestimated. Especially communities such as the G4 and Uniting for Consensus are constantly demanding to expand their own voice in international affairs. From this here is Hypothesis 1: The global order is changing, and the balance of power in the world cannot be represented by the UNSC anymore.

2. The world now is facing numerous global issues that cannot be solved by a country or someone, like climate change, terrorism, and nuclear weapon. However, these transnational threats have not been properly addressed in recent years, which makes people wonder whether the UNSC is really conducive to solving global affairs. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is proposed: Transnational threats and global issues are challenging international security and peace.

3. In a series of armed conflicts recently, the P5 has frequently used the veto power, which led to resolutions being rejected. The politicization of counter-terrorism issues and humanitarian crises has left the UNSC deadlocked and thus unable to truly resolve crises. According to it Hypothesis 3 gets proposed: P5 is focused on their own national interest, leading to politicization and gridlock in the UNSC.

Country	Subject	Units	1990	2000	2010	2024
China	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	3.888	8.472	10.611	4.481
India	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	5.534	3.975	10.26	6.331
France	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	2.901	4.116	1.822	1.254
Germany	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	5.723	2.904	4.185	1.098
Japan	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	4.893	2.765	4.098	1.019
United Kingdom	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	0.638	4.093	2.43	0.953
United States	GDP, constant prices	Percent change	1.886	4.077	2.709	1.063

Figure 1. Resource from International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023

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USA: $25.46 trillion
China: $17.73 trillion
Japan: $5.05 trillion
Germany: $4.22 trillion
India: $3.39 trillion
Britain: $3.07 trillion
France: $2.94 trillion
Italy: $2.17 trillion
Canada: $2.14 trillion
South Korea: $1.81 trillion

Figure 2. Resource from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

Figure 1 and Figrue 2 show the change in the power of the world's economies around the 21st century. It's clear to see that among the economic powerhouses of the mid-20th century, the UK and France have fallen far behind and no longer dominate the global economy. The top five countries based on global GDP in 2023 are the US, China, Japan, Germany and India. Three of them are non-permanent members. What should be noticed is the emerging economies account for a growing share of global GDP like India. These countries have a significant presence in the global economy nowadays. Moreover, Japan, which is a developed country in Asian, continues to gain weight but does not have a seat on the UNSC. The mismatch between economic power and the seats of UNSC raises a huge number of questions. But why does the economic power matter a lot, what is the connection between the power and seats?

Economic strength is an important part of a country's comprehensive national strength. Having a strong economic strength means that a country has greater influence and contribution ability in international affairs. First, economically powerful countries usually have strong impacts on the stability and development of the global economy including global markets, trade and investment. Therefore, under the voice of these countries, international rules and policies can reflect the reality of the global economy. Second, economic powers generally assume more international responsibilities including the provision of global public goods and financial support for international organizations. The US is a major financial contributor to the UN, providing substantial funds to support operations and various programs. Third, economic power is also closely linked to a country's military and diplomatic capabilities, which enable states to devote to international peace and security affairs. In the other words, if these powerful countries are lack of corresponding voices in the UNSC, the UNSC may be easy to lose huge supports in all kinds of aspect, such as resources and effective enforcement.

Emerging threats extend beyond traditional security concerns to include issues like terrorism, cybersecurity, climate change, pandemics, and transnational crime. These threats are characterized by their transnational nature, complexity, and unpredictability, posing significant challenges to international peace and security.

Climate change is widely recognized as one of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century. Its impact is not only limited to the environment and ecosystems, but also directly threatens international peace and security. The countries of the Horn of Africa, such as Somalia, Ethiopia,

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Kenya and Djibouti, have been severely affected by climate change for long time. Persistent drought has reduced agricultural production, killed livestock and dramatically destroyed food production capacity. A major drought in 2011 led to a severe food crisis in Somalia, more than 250,000 people, most of them are children, have lost their lives to hunger and related diseases, which the UN declared "one of the worst famines in human history."

Climate change poses long-term and profound impacts on global security. Although the UNSC acknowledges the threat of climate change to peace and security, its actions in this area have been limited, lacking robust measures and international cooperation [16]. In March 2017, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2349, which "recognized the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes". It is a significant acknowledgment of the link between climate change and regional instability. However, it failed to form effective action measures. Disagreement over climate change, in particular over the veto power, further weakens the UNSC's decision-making capacity. The US and China, the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases, have taken opposing positions on climate policy, affecting the unity. In addition, the existing decision-making mechanism and resource allocation of the UNSC are mainly aimed at traditional security threat, and it seems that there is no special and existing mechanism to deal with the non-traditional security threat of climate change. Although other UN agencies, such as UNEP, play important roles on these issues, the lack of coordination and resource sharing with the UNSC makes it difficult to integrate efficiency.

The same logic can be applied to the North Korean nuclear issue. This issue began in the early 1990s, when North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Since then, North Korea has conducted a series of nuclear and missile tests, seriously threatening regional and global security. The UNSC has repeatedly adopted resolutions on it, imposing sanctions and calling for a negotiated settlement. But North Korea persists despite its international reputation. There will always be a variety of contradictions when almost approaching a victorious solution, and the previous achievements are wasted. To remain trapped in such a loop without reform is to indulge the global crisis.

The P5 seats and veto power conferred by the UN Charter are legal, but it cannot be denied that they provide the P5 with special privileges in international politics. Although "maintain the international peace and security" is the purpose, countries will always act from their own national interests and fulfill their international obligations on the premise that their national interests are not violated. Even if the non-permanent members want to obtain these privileges, it is also a sign of their desire to expand own national interests. This is completely normal and understandable. It is just a matter of finding a balance between national interests and international obligations, rather than turning the UNSC into an arena for political gaming.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has continued since the Crimean crisis in 2014 and has become the focus of international attention. Unfortunately, the UNSC has shown clear divisions and impotency in its efforts to resolve this conflict. Western Allies such as the US, UK and France have strongly criticized Russia's military actions in Ukraine and have upported economic sanctions against it. However, Russia, being directly involved in the conflict, has consistently used its veto power in the SC to block any resolutions against it, justifying its actions as protecting its own interests. China, as a strategic partner of Russia, has largely sided with Russia in these resolutions. Under such circumstances, there is no possibility of moving forward so that it is completely deadlocked.

Let's turn the attention to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The situaition in Gaza has led to a severe humanitarian crisis, which the UNSC is responsible for addressing. However, due to its close military alliance with Isreal and various domestic political and economic considerations, the US has

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frequently used its veto power to block resolutions condemning Isreal, thereby preventing any meaningful action from being taken.

Both the US and Russia have used their veto power in the face of crises and have chosen to put their own interests above world peace, which is in fact a violation of the spirit of the UN Charter. This phenomenon not only weakens the UNSC's decision-making capacity and executive power, but also undermines its credibility in the international community. This is why the international community has begun to voice "the UN is ineffective" and even "the SC is dead". It is no exaggeration to say that the survival of the UN is at stake.

4.2. Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: As the development of each country in the world varies in every moment, sometimes the P5's veto power is in contradiction to the principles of the UN Charter as more and more countries would like to stand out for their own interests.

Hypothesis 2: Developing countries, particularly, Africa are under represented and therefore do not find the Council to be legitimate. Compared with other countries, African countries play smaller roles and have a minor influence on the world order. Since African countries do not have permanent seats on the Security Council, their proposals often face significant obstacles due to the difficulty in catering to the interests of various countries, so they are unable to veto important matters. Furthermore, once Africa applies for an increase in the number of permanent seats, other countries will also rush to do so. In this situation, Africa is in a disadvantaged position due to the fact that African countries' economic strength is not that good, which further places it in an unfair position within the international order.

Hypothesis 3: In terms of the veto exercising, the reform process of the Security Council goes so slowly that eliminate the influence of the UN. Although the shortcomings of the P5's veto are becoming more and more prominent, a number of countries still argue for the best and most suitable veto mechanism, which leads to the lower motivation to change the veto mechanism. As we know, the amendment requires the support of two-thirds of all member states and the consent of all permanent members of the Security Council to pass, which is impossible to achieve at this stage. However, efforts to impose some restrictions on the veto power have made some progress.

4.3. Data analysis and case study

4.3.1. UNSC can no longer represent the great powers in the world

The UNSC can't represent the world's great powers in a way. Some developing countries can't be represented as the rights and capabilities of these countries are not balanced. For instance, the percentage of time Japan has served on the UNSC was more than 35% of the time since the end of the Cold War, and India has served 15% of the time since 1990. Pakistan, Indonesia, and the Republic of Korea have served with percentages ranging from 15% to 22% [17]. All these states are not permanent countries, but the data shows that they actually focus on the permanent seats and in terms of the contribution, it is obvious that the UNSC can no longer represent the great powers in the world now.

4.3.2. The abuse of veto power and the UN authorisation was bypassed

There are some examples shown as more and more countries would like to stand out for their own interests, the rules of the UN sometimes would be violated like the abuse of veto power and the UN

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authorisation was bypassed.

Reviewing the past record of the use of the veto power from 1946 to 2004, we can see that the right of veto seldom exercised by European countries, like France and the UK, 13 and 24 respectively in the document A/58/47, Annex III. But the USA exercised more than 60 times. What's more, Russia used 4 times and China used 2 times(General Assembly, Supplement No. 47, P13-19). The comparative numbers illustrate the substance and international balance of power. Through the document, we know that when it comes to the Middle East situation, the USA usually used veto rights. So during this period, the USA focused its main political strategy on the Middle East region, and the United Nations' veto power is a primary and formally legitimate means for the USA to achieve its goals. During the era of US-Soviet rivalry, the former Soviet Union and the United States also exercised their veto power more frequently. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and France reduced the use of their power due to the decline in national strength. In contrast, China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, has exercised its veto power the least, reflecting its stance on maintaining world peace. This data further reflects the comparison of international power dynamics

In the Israel-Palestine conflict in 2023, according to the rules, the United Nations should help find a sustainable solution between Palestine and Israel through dialogue, mediation, and cooperation. As we know, the UN Security Council has passed resolutions on multiple occasions, calling on all parties to abide by international human rights law and international humanitarian law (General Assembly tenth emergency special session, Document A/ES-10/L.25). Additionally, the United Nations has established special agencies and delegations to provide humanitarian aid to meet the basic needs of the affected people. However, the United States exercised its veto power on the resolution concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict. This incident showed that a country's power can strongly affect another country's peace and safety in such a poor international regulation system, which surely violated one of the most important principles in Chapter 1 of the UN Chapter, which calls for adopting effective collective measures to prevent and eliminate threats to peace, and to suppress acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace. But up to now, we can see some hopeful decisions that have been made by UNSC. For example, on May 10, 2024, the 10th emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly resumed. The meeting considered the issue of admitting Palestine as a new member of the United Nations and passed a resolution granting Palestine more rights (General Assembly Tenth Emergency Special session, Resolution A/RES/ES-10/23).

4.3.3. UNSC becomes less effective

From the mentioned cases, the United Nations appeared somewhat powerless and hesitant, finding it difficult to effectively intervene and resolve the situation. This has raised questions about the role of the United Nations in the international community, with many people beginning to doubt whether it is merely a theoretical entity.

Before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell presented what he believed to be evidence that Iraq had not disarmed and announced that the country had substantially violated Resolution 1441 (2002), warning of serious consequences. During this period, the Security Council passed Resolution 1483 regarding the establishment of an Iraqi interim administration by the Iraqi people, and Resolution 1511 on the Coalition Provisional Authority's return of administrative power to the Iraqi people "as soon as possible." However, on March 20, 2003, the U.S. and the U.K. (with smaller forces from other countries) bypassed UN authorisation and launched a series of airstrikes on Iraq, followed by a ground invasion [18]. The Iraqi army was quickly defeated. The event was

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condemned by most countries, but it also illustrated the gradual disregard for the status of the United Nations.

Some scholars may argue that in terms of the veto exercising, the reform process of the Security Council goes so slowly that eliminates the influence of the UN. For example, after the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 76/262, which requires all members of the United Nations to review the situation after any permanent member of the Security Council exercises the veto power. Although this does not basically affect the P5's exercise of veto power, this resolution proves that the world is reflecting on the need for reform.

However, resolution 76/262 seems fair, but in fact, the proposal, which is driven by the United States and some Western countries, is actually to further restrict Russia's power in the Security Council. Behind it is still the logic of great power politics.

4.3.4. The reform process of the Security Council goes so slowly that eliminate the influence of the UN

While incremental measures—such as expanding non-permanent seats and forging temporary alliances among elected members—have marginally improved the Security Council's responsiveness, the slow pace of structural reform continues to erode the UN's legitimacy. One prominent example is the Ezulwini Consensus, a unified African proposal calling for two permanent seats with veto power and five additional non-permanent seats. Although its primary goal was to address historical inequities [19], the proposal has stalled due to systemic obstacles. Specifically, Article 108 of the UN Charter grants the P5 a veto over any reform initiative, effectively creating a "permanent member cartel" opposed to power-sharing.

The repercussions of Africa's lack of veto power were starkly illustrated during the 2011 Libya intervention. In that instance, NATO exceeded the original mandate of "civilian protection," leading to regional destabilisation. Subsequent turmoil in Mali and Niger reflects how decisions misaligned with African priorities can exacerbate security vacuums. Despite bearing the brunt of these crises, African states comprised only 7% of the UNSC's non-permanent seats from 2000 to 2023, even though they accounted for 60% of global peacekeeping missions [20]. This stark disparity highlights an enduring mismatch between responsibility and representation.

Intra-African divisions further undermine collective bargaining efforts. While South Africa seeks flexible veto conditions to gain P5 support, Egypt insists on full veto rights to avoid potential marginalisation by regional competitors such as Nigeria. Such fragmentation echoes the broader "collective action" challenge in UN reform. Even if 54 African countries agree on a seat-allocation formula (per the Ezulwini rotation model), their combined GDP amounts to only 3.2% of the global total, leaving them with limited leverage to overcome P5 resistance.

As a result, the Ezulwini Consensus symbolises both Africa's aspirations for more equitable representation and the path dependency entrenched within the UN system [21]. Without a binding mechanism to bypass the P5 veto, procedural amendments—no matter how well-intended—will remain largely symbolic. A case in point is the 2023 UNGA resolution (A/77/L.52), which called for veto restraint and passed with 100 votes. Yet, none of the P5 members committed to adhering to it, underscoring the institutional inertia that continues to obstruct substantive reform.

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4.4. Proposals, and implementation of reforming UNSC

The veto power which is held by the P5 of the UNSC has been a centrepiece of international diplomacy tasked with maintaining global peace and security. It is a mechanism designed to ensure that the major powers have a direct say in matters of international peace and security. Yet, as the geopolitical landscape evolves, the negative effect of veto power has gradually become apparent, E.g. preventing the UNSC from acting effectively in crisis situations, undermining the legitimacy of the council, shield allies from international scrutiny or intervention even in case of human rights violation. "How should the veto power of permanent power be reformed to ensure the council's effectiveness?" Recent scholarly articles suggest that the UNSC's current structure, established post-World War II no longer reflects the dynamic and multipolar world in which we live. For instance, Jonas Von Freiresleben highlights the historical and ongoing reform efforts aimed at making the council more representative and discussions around altering the distribution of veto power. Meanwhile, Richard Bultler focuses on how the P5's control and their use of veto power have often hindered the council's ability to effectively respond to international crises and conflicts, suggesting that modernising the council could better ensure international peace.

4.4.1. Major reform proposals and case studies

Proposed reforms are diverse and arise from significant debates. One proposal is "double veto", requiring at least two P5 members to block a resolution, aiming to prevent unilateral obstructions and encourage a more consensus-based decisions. Another proposal is the recommendation of expanding the permanent membership of the UNSC which is to include major emerging nations aiming to better reflecting the current global power dynamics. And last but also most radical suggestion is to completely abolish the veto power which argues that such a move could democratise decision-making and increase the UNSC's operations in equity and efficiency. All proposals aim to boost the council's effectiveness, promote more democratic decision-making, and uphold international peace and security more robustly.

To start exploring these proposed reforms, we first consider the first hypothesis: introducing the double veto requirement. This reform proposes that a resolution should only proceed if at least two permanent members concur, Thereby aiming to reduce the frequency and impact of unilateral vetoes. Examining this hypothesis in the context of Syrian cilvil war allows us to critically evaluate how such a change could have influenced the international response to the crisis, potentially leading to more unified and decisive actions by the security council.

During the Syrian war, multiple resolutions aimed at condemning and taking actions against the use of chemical weapons by the ASSAS regime were vetoed primarily by Russia & supported by China. notable among these was the veto of 2017 resolutions that would have imposed sanctions on the Syrian government for the use of chemical weapons. The timeline on the left shows the history of UNSC resolutions addressing the Syrian conflict. Early resolutions aimed at condemning the violence in Syrian and calling for a political solution faced significant challenges, primarily due to the deadlock and vetoes by permanent members of the UNSC, specifically Russia and China. This phase highlights the critical impact of veto power in preventing the international community from responding effectively to emerging crises. Reform could involve implementing a "double veto" requirement, where two PM would need to agree to use their veto, potentially decreasing the chances of deadlock and allowing the UNSC to act more decisively. After a deadly chemical attack in Damascus in September 2013, a resolution was passed that authorised the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. This resolution was unique as it garnered enough international pressure and

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negotiation to pass without a veto. This successful resolution underscores the potential effectiveness of the UNSC when unimpeded by vetoes. It suggests that reducing the frequency and ease of veto use could lead to more effective actions, especially in critical humanitarian situations. In period 2016-2017, several resolutions aimed to established ceasefires were proposed; however, these effort were often undermined by short-lived commitments and fragile agreements, occasionally due to the geopolitical interests protected by the veto power significantly in February 2017, Russia and china vetoed a resolution proposing sanctions against Syrian officials involved in chemical attacks, the veto prevented any form of UNSC- sanctioned punitive measures against Syrian. If a double veto had been required, the resolution might still have been vetoed. By requiring an additional veto, the proposed "double veto" system might foster deeper diplomatic engagement and compromise during the resolution-drafting process. In practice, such an incentive could yield proposals that receive only one veto—or perhaps none at all. Building on this concept, we now turn to the second Proposal 2: Expanding Veto Power to Reflect Multipolarity.

Expanding veto power to include emerging global powers could democratise the UNSC's decision-making process by aligning it with contemporary geopolitical realities. The evolution from the G7 to the G20 offers a great example of how broadening membership can boost multilateral effectiveness: established in 1999, the G20 integrated major economies such as India, Brazil, and South Africa, collectively representing 85% of global GDP and two-thirds of the world's population. This more inclusive structure facilitated coordinated responses to crises like the 2008 financial crisis, when stimulus packages helped avert a global depression. Applied to the UNSC, granting veto authority to regional heavyweights (e.g., India, Brazil, Nigeria) could similarly ensure that resolutions reflect a wider range of interests, rather than those of the P5 alone. On the other hand, The 2011 NATO intervention in Libya shows why emerging powers' voices matter. Although Russia and China—both with veto power—chose to abstain from Resolution 1973, other BRICS members later criticised the operation's overreach into regime change, which contributed to Libya's destabilisation. Had India or Brazil possessed veto authority, their historical skepticism of Western-led interventions might have forced stricter limitations on the mission's scope, achieving a balance between humanitarian objectives and respect for sovereignty. Taken together, these two examples suggest that expanding veto rights could temper unilateral impulses and encourage what some scholars term "principled pluralism" in global security. But the potential benefits come with the challenges it may face. While expanding veto power to emerging nations could strengthen the Council's legitimacy by mirroring 21st-century power dynamics (e.g., G4 inclusion), critics caution that more veto-wielders may deepen paralysis, as illustrated by repeated deadlocks over Syria. However, the G20's consensus-driven approach diverse economies such as India, Brazil, and South Africa joined forces during the 2008 financial crisis shows how structured dialogue can mitigate fragmentation despite varying national interests. In this light, adding new veto holders is more than mere symbolism; it acknowledges the multipolar reality of international politics. Drawing on the G20's inclusive ethos and lessons from the 2011 Libya intervention, a reformed UNSC could strive to balance efficiency with broader representation, enhancing global trust in its resolutions.

Building on proposals to expand veto power to emerging powers such as India and Brazil, we now move on to a more radical pathway: the complete abolition of the veto. Proponents argue that eliminating the veto would democratise decision-making by replacing the P5's dominance with a system rooted in majority voting. While politically contentious, this reform aligns with the UN Charter's commitment to "sovereign equality".The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq is a great case that shows the veto's uneven enforcement allowed unilateral action: despite strong objections from France, Russia, and China(all permanent members)the U.S. cited ambiguities in Resolution 1441

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(2002) to justify military intervention. Without the veto, the U.S. would have needed more affirmative votes, which might have forced more extensive diplomacy and possibly prevented the war. Likewise, the General Assembly's condemnation of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine (passed by 141 votes) shows that broad consensus can be reached outside the Security Council, suggesting that majority-driven decisions are not necessarily doomed to fail. Theoretical and Practical Considerations

Still, critics worry that a simple majority system could lead to deadlocks in polarised disputes. The Council's repeated inability to address the Syrian crisis even with existing veto rules, deeper geopolitical divisions can still stall action. Moreover, Article 108 of the UN Charter requires permanent members' consent to amend veto provisions, creating a paradox where those most invested in the status quo can block efforts to change it. As a compromise, some propose hybrid models. for instance, requiring a supermajority instead of a single veto, aiming to preserve checks on unilateral moves without giving any one nation the power to halt decisions on its own. With such obstacles, hybrid models such as requiring a supermajority (e.g., two-thirds) for resolutions could preserve some veto-like safeguards without discarding them entirely. These approaches may strike a balance between efficiency and inclusivity, preventing unilateral blockages while ensuring that key stakeholders continue to engage in the decision-making process.

4.4.2. Comprehensive considerations and reform path

A practical way to reform the Security Council's veto power is to first extend veto rights to major emerging powers, then later consider a "double veto" system, without pushing for a complete abolition. Which bolster the Council's representation and legitimacy, while respecting the geopolitical balance of the current global order. Incorporating emerging powers like Brazil, India, and potentially South Africa into the permanent members with veto powers could democratise the council's decisions. This reflects the multipolar nature of contemporary global politics ensuring that more regions have a voice in high-stakes international decisions. On the other hand, the UNSC could address criticisms regarding its western-centric bias. The inclusion of new permanent members from different geopolitical background would likely increase the perceived fairness and effectiveness of the council. And new permanent members with veto power might foster greater collaboration and compromise within the council, as these members would need to engage more deeply in the council's work to protect their interests effectively. If the first step proceeds successfully we then could Start considering the first hypothesis: double veto. Implementing a double veto system Post-expansion can ensure that the newly diversified council does not lead to an increase in paralysing vetoes. A double veto requirement would necessitate greater cooperation and prevent any single member or new member from having disproportionate influence. Enhance decision-making quality by ensuring that any action blocked has substantial opposition among the major powers, reflecting a broader consensus rather than unilateral discontent. After evaluating the potential benefit of implementing a double veto requirement, as seen in the context of the Syrian civil war, it becomes evident that such a reform could enhance decision-making within the UNSC without completely removing the veto. This insight leads us to reconsider the practicality and potential drawbacks of completely canceling the veto power, as proposed in hypothesis 3. Eliminating the veto power entirely could result in decision-making deadlock, where significant disagreements lead to inaction. Major powers are likely to oppose this removal, as the veto is a vital tool for protecting their strategic interests. Without it, they might circumvent the UNSC through unilateral actions or alternative international avenues.

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Having outlined the strategic pathway for reforming the veto power in the UNSC we then focus on the practical steps and diplomatic strategies necessary to implement these reforms effectively within the existing framework of international relations. How to proceed? First, expansion of PM: the first step should be engaging in diplomatic efforts to build consensus among current PMs and the broader UN membership about the necessity and benefits of expanding the veto to include new powers. Then move on to the essential step, amending the UN charter, it would necessitate broad agreement and ratification by two-thirds of UN members, including all current PMs. Initially, new members might be added without veto power, transitioning to full permanent status with veto power as part of a phased approach to reform. Then turn towards the implementation of the double veto mechanism. To effectively integrate the double veto mechanism within the UNSC, we first need to develop clear guidelines and criteria for its application. 1: identifying key resolution types(e.g. human rights, international law, security, and peacekeeping) define scenarios where decisions could lead to significant international or regional instability, requiring the double veto to ensure extensive deliberative processes and identifying types of decisions that historically have led to significant disagreements or division within the council or the international community, community, earmarking these for the double veto requirement. Then establish a mandatory process for documenting the rationale behind each use of the double veto, including the specific reasons provided by each vetoing member. This information should be publicly disclosed to maintain transparency. Implement a review mechanism where the application of the double veto is periodically assessed by an independent panel to ensure it aligns with the established guidelines and remains effective. Before implementing the double veto, engage in extensive consultations with all UNSC members to gather input and build initial consensus on the proposed guidelines and criteria.

5. Conclusion

The Reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) goes far beyond procedural tweaks and instead reflects a necessary response to seismic shifts in global power and the growing complexity of cross-border threats. As argued here, the Council's structure shaped by post–World War II geopolitics no longer captures the multipolar realities of the 21st century, eroding its legitimacy and constraining its ability to tackle emergencies ranging from armed conflicts to climate crises. Although the veto was intended as a safeguard against unilateral dominance, it often stymies collective action, as seen in Syria (2011–2017) and the Russia-Ukraine conflict (2022–present). At the same time, cases like the 2013 Syrian chemical weapons resolution show that consensus-driven solutions can work. The representation deficit is equally troubling: Africa shoulders 60% of global peacekeeping but remains absent from permanent membership. Meanwhile, the G20's inclusive governance approach and BRICS' stance on Libya (2011) point to the possibility of expanded veto rights for regional powers, countering P5 dominance and mitigating unilateral actions.

In conclusion, the necessity of reforming the UNSC is essential under the rapidly changing global order with various global issues. There is a compelling need for greater representation of emerging economies and regional powers on the world stage, which necessitates bridging the gap between the existing UNSC structure and the realities of contemporary international relations. A reformed UNSC that limits the use of veto power and enhances the decision-making process is necessary to overcome these obstacles and restore its effectiveness.

Reforming the veto power is pivotal for making the UNSC more democratic and effective. By introducing a double veto requirement and expanding membership to include emerging global powers, the Council can better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities and foster more equitable

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decision-making. Such changes will bolster the Council's ability to maintain international peace and security more robustly.

However, these reforms face significant challenges, including resistance from current permanent members who may see their influence diluted. Furthermore, the complexity of international diplomacy means that any reform process will require careful planning, transparent processes, and an openness to dialogue and compromise among all member states.

To effectively implement these reforms, a series of measures should be considered:

1.A double veto mechanism, where only resolutions opposed by at least two permanent members are rejected, can reduce unilateral blockades and encourage broader consensus.

2.Increasing the representation of non-permanent members by adding more permanent seats for significant regional areas such as Africa, which has not yet had representation, can enhance the inclusivity and relevance of the Council.

3.For countries that are major contributors but not permanent members, increasing their involvement in decision-making could encourage a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the UNSC's goals.

By undertaking these reforms, the UNSC can transition into a more inclusive, representative, and effective body, capable of addressing the pressing issues that define contemporary international relations and global governance. This transformation, while challenging, is necessary to ensure that the Council remains relevant and effective in its role as a guardian of global peace and security.

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