

# The Reform of the UN Security Council: How to Balance Legitimacy and Efficiency

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**ABSTRACT:** With the development of multi-polarization in the world, the UN Security Council plays an increasingly important role in maintaining international peace and promoting international cooperation, which has attracted much attention from the academic and industrial circles. However, the current structure of five permanent and ten non-permanent members of the Council does not maximize efficiency and legitimacy, making it more difficult to resolve international conflicts on time. This article first has carried on the extensive search for relevant theories and finishing, and on this basis, using the survey method, literature research, interdisciplinary research method, qualitative analysis method, and other research methods. The goal is to balance the efficiency and the legitimacy of the UNSC, especially improving the council's legitimacy. This paper draws the following conclusions: 1. Increase the number of seats on the Council by twenty-four (five permanent members, eight four-year renewable seats, and 11 non-permanent members) 2. It is impossible to abolish the veto completely, but permanent members should be urged to reduce the use of the veto through legislation. Given the political conflicts of interest and the complexity of revising the UN Charter, governments of all countries should promote internal negotiations as soon as possible, conduct in-depth dialogue and consultation on core major issues, clarify the principles and methods of reform, and determine practical solutions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Under U.N. Charter, the first and the foremost mission is "to maintain international peace and security." [1] Security Council, comprising five permanent states (China, Russia, Great Britain, France, and the United States. Later refer as P5) and ten nonpermanent rotating countries, takes the major responsibility to carry out such mission. Shouldered with the heavy obligation, UNSC has the greatest power in the UN. It can demand actions, authorize sanctions, or even use force, including peacekeepers and voluntary military operations of its member state. While other departments of the U.N. can only make recommendations, the decisions made by the Council are binding to law. In the Council, P5 are granted special veto powers by the consent of others because they were the most influential states when the Council was created in 1945. The Security Council checks the world to ensure safety. In 1990, UNSC passed resolutions 660[2] and 678[3] and successfully drove the force of Iran out of Kuwait when Iran unlawfully attacked it. As the world changes quickly, the current situation is significantly different from that of post-WWII, yet the Security Council has made no apparent adaptations. The United Nations Security Council has constantly failed

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in peace and security as illustrated in its failure to act effectively in various major crises around the world, and the multiple factors behind the ineffectiveness also generate legitimacy concerns.

First, The UNSC has not been effective in maintaining global peace. Too many times SC is unwilling to act when there is a crisis. Even if the Council acts, states, especially P5, vote or veto primarily based on their own interest rather than the purpose of global peacekeeping. The examples in the political block of the Ethiopia, Rwanda, and the Ukraine crisis have all proven the ineffectiveness of the current Security Council. [4] Second, many issues constantly question the legitimacy of the Council. As the most powerful international organization, the decision-making process of the Security Council should be transparent in the eyes of the public, preventing the tyranny of using power. [5] Yet the procedure of the Council is highly secluded and is unchecked by either public or other institutions. While the UN is established based on state sovereignty and equality[6], the decision of the Security Council usually keeps the states that will be largely influenced excluded [7], or even if they do participate, their voices are often ignored by the powerful countries in the Council. Very often states have to bow down their interest to a powerful state, as illustrated in the

Russian invasion of Ukraine. [8] At last, a legitimate IO should have an equal representation aligned with the geographical locations, ensuring interests are balanced in decision making. In the Security Council, though rotating states do represent geographically, the P5 underrepresents the entire of Africa and Latin Africa but has two members in Europe, making the states not represented disadvantaged in the policymaking process.

The inaction in the Rwanda genocide illustrates the ineffectiveness of the Council. Ignoring there was a potential genocide, SC led to an estimated 800,000 rebels of the government being slaughtered after the airplane crash of the Rwandan president. When the slaughtering started, there was little progress in the Council in an attempt to control the crisis. Finally, the Security Council even abandoned Rwanda's people as it ordered the departure of peacekeepers when the time needed the most. [9] States failed to act during the crisis primarily because they saw no potential benefits by doing so. Different from human relationships, state relationships are often dominated by physical interests or benefits rather than emotions. Rwanda was poor before the genocide (the economy even further deteriorated after the genocide) and had no significant geographical significance. From the view of states in the Security Council, to risk the lives of peacekeepers in intense violence for apparent no benefits is a "bad bargain."

Despite the inactions of the Security Council, a political block by P5 members can also undermine the both effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council. Recently, the most prominent failure of the security council was its impotence in terminating the Russian invasion of Ukraine that started on February 24th. Subsequently, the Council held a meeting on February 25th, proposing a draft resolution to order Russia to cease all the force against Ukraine and withdraw them immediately. The draft failed as a result of 11 votes, three abstentions, and most importantly, a veto from Russia. [10] Due to this veto, the emergent special session of the General Assembly was

called for the 11th time since its foundation and almost unanimously (141 in favor, 5 against, and 35 abstentions) adopted the resolution of an immediate end to the Russian invasion of Ukraine." [11] Until March 25, 2022, the failure of action resulted in 3.7 million people in Ukraine left their country, and 13 million people were trapped in the affected area due to significant security risks. Children were unable to go to school because they were under attack. Food, water, and other basic needs were facing short supply. Humanitarian suffering was a part of daily life. [12] Unfortunately, the Security Council would likely fail any responses in the future to stop the Russian invasion because Russia, as the aggressor, will veto any resolution against itself simply because it will hurt its own interests. This failure particularly demonstrates the urgent need for reform of veto power, as the loophole that the very aggressor who breaks the law has the power to determine whether the action against itself should be in effect despite the consensus of others significantly threatens the impartiality and the legitimacy of the Council. The absurdity of the current system is parallel to a criminal having the final say on whether he or she will be punished regardless of the decision of the jury and judge.

All these cases reflect a tendency of consistent ineffectiveness and legitimacy crisis of the Security Council. As shown in the Rwanda case, a legitimate Council aiming for peace should not watch the crime escalating and fail to act. In the Russian case, the Council also should not allow a strong country to dominate the decisions and force weaker states to bow to their interests. In the following passages, we will discuss and explore the effectiveness and legitimacy in deep.

## 2. MEMBERSHIP

### 2.1 How to reform

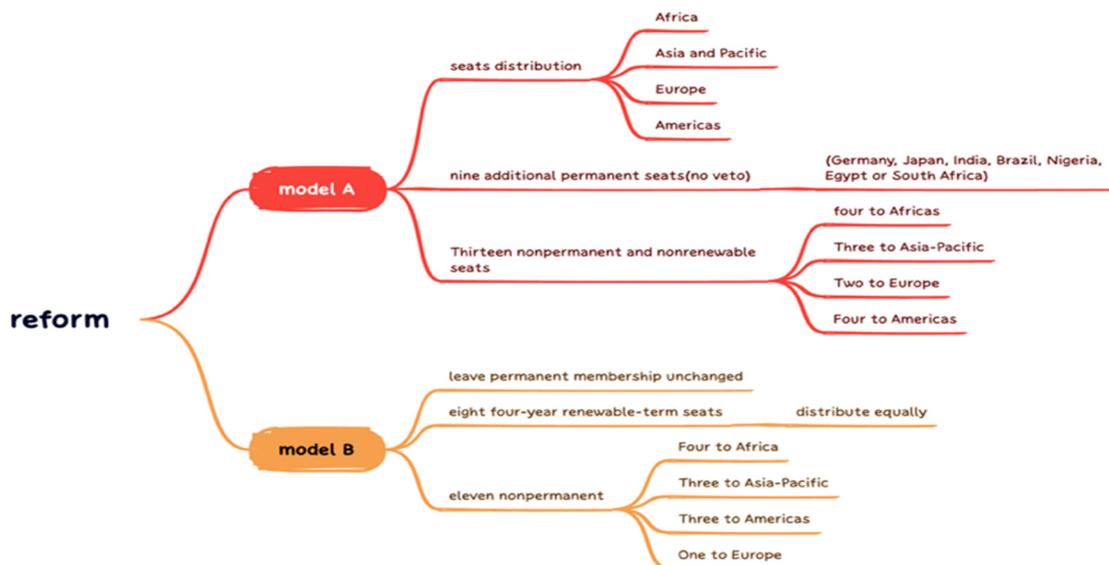


Figure 1 Two of the reform models

According to the introduction part, the UNSC now consists of P5(China, Russia, France, The UK, and The US) and ten nonpermanent countries and meet neither legitimacy nor effectiveness. Our team provides two of the reform models. Both models separate the world into four regions, Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe, and the Americas based on their political groups (geographic areas). According to model A, nine additional permanent seats will be elected in the UNSC. The new nine seats will be distributed to Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil (which are G4 and have already supported the UN economically and physically for a long time[13]), Nigeria, and Egypt or South Africa(which constitute half of Africa's 2021 economy). Also, there will be thirteen nonpermanent or nonrenewable seats distributed to the four regions proportionally. Through model B, the original permanent seats will be kept. This would interfere with less interest in P5. Instead, eight four-year renewable seats and eleven nonpermanent seats will be distributed. Different from model A, the renewable seats (semi-permanent seats) will be distributed equally to the four regions instead of proportionally. [14] Distributing equally is more convincing in our opinion. Countries should get an equal chance to be elected to the UNSC because they have no chance to choose which region they belong to. Also, this way will reduce the economic and political gaps between regions because they have an equal number of representatives(seats).

There is no difference between the permanent countries and nonpermanent ones when most of the members meet in private without official records being kept and write resolutions in the public meetings. [15] The only difference is about the veto power (which will be elaborated on in the next part). Getting a permanent seat means the county has been recognized as a political superpower and will be recognized by other countries in the future. Also, because of no limitation in duration, the country will be able to influence the world for a longer period.

The efficiency of model B must be higher than A because of the fewer three seats (according to the theory that the fewer number there is, the more efficiency there will be). Considering the reform must include the legitimacy and the efficiency. "Therefore, it is necessary to properly control the expansion of the Security Council, increase the fairness and representativeness of the Council, and try to avoid the damage to the efficiency value of the Security Council caused by the diversity of interests and the difficulty of reaching consensus."

From the analysis above, we consider model B is the better solution because it can balance the legitimacy and the effectiveness as well as involve more countries to join in.

## 2.2 Possible difficulties

Reform of the membership is also facing some possible difficulties and results. Several superpowers are using the policy of balance to sanction other countries which are intended to rise sharply in the future. Some superpowers would use their efforts to support countries that can help

themselves to grow economically (seek rent by power) or offset the power of their competitors. All of the new permanent seats, according to model A, will benefit greatly. Model A will be preferred by the United States and the European Union because it includes prospective supporters of Japan, India, and Germany. Because of their opposite political positions, China will veto any draft resolution that would add Japan to the UNSC's permanent seats. However, the more permanent members of the UNSC there are, the less power they will have and the less they will be able to dominate the globe. As a result, reaching an agreement is difficult. According to model B, it is likely to be passed because no permanent seat will be added. Also, Europe will lose two non-permanent seats but gain two four-year renewable seats. Asia-Pacific will gain one non-permanent seat but gain two four-year renewable seats. Americas will gain one non-permanent seat and gain two four-year renewable seats. Africa will gain one non-permanent seat but gain two four-year renewable seats. Europe seems to be the least beneficiary in this transformation because model B lessen their seat the most so the veto from Europe should be considered. The enlargement also needs to consider how to represent more countries' willingness including the ones who did not get a seat. [16] If not, the reform will have no effect on the UNSC's efficiency or legitimacy. It's also important to think about how to elect non-permanent seats from one region. Finally, deciding which country should be elected will be contentious, and the outcome of the argument must be determined.

## 2.3 Conclusion

Model B appears to be more likely to be used, according to the research above, because it interferes with permanent members' power the least and has the highest efficiency. Despite the fact that various interest groups will be opposed to it or may even veto it, it is still likely to be a future transformation. The UNSC still has a long and difficult road ahead of it in terms of reforming and allowing the seats to adopt the reform plan. Different countries and regions have different interests and goals, making it difficult for them to come to an agreement. The United Nations Security Council and academics should explore for approaches to reform that countries are more willing to compromise and accept.

## 3. THE VETO SYSTEM

### 3.1 The history and effect of the veto system

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

In the context of the end of World War II, the veto system was established, which relates to a collection of veto powers connected to the United Nations Security Council, with permanent members' veto powers being the focus. After entering the era of great power competition, the veto system has deviated from its original intention, which was reflected in the frequent use of the veto power which has

seriously weakened the effectiveness of the Security Council in responding to threats.

### 3.1.2 The purpose and the deficiency of the veto system

The creation of the veto is based on pragmatic considerations, focusing more on efficiency rather than legitimacy. From the perspective of the victorious countries in WWII, the failure of the League of Nations in peacekeeping was mainly caused by its ineffective decision-making mechanism and the lack of participation of the great powers, which prevented the great powers from taking concerted action, thereby failing to curb the pace of aggression by the fascist countries. [17] Therefore, the system of the new international organization should guarantee the leadership of the great powers in peacekeeping activities, and enable them to act collectively.

US President Roosevelt elaborated on this view, that is, as long as the great powers unite and play the role of “world police”, the world war will not break out again because they and their allies represent more than three-quarters of the total population of the earth, and have a strong military force. [18] The Soviet Union's Marshal Stalin elaborated on this view from another perspective, that the big powers can protect the interests of the small powers, but the premise is that the actions of the big powers cannot be submitted to the judgment of the small powers. [19]

Based on these ideas, the great powers(US, UK, USSR, China, and France), as the principal framers of the UN charter and founders of the UNSC, planned to provide themselves with one-vote veto power, that is, as long as one of the permanent members votes a veto, a draft resolution of the Security Council cannot be passed, while votes of non-permanent have the same effect only if more than seven of them vetoed or abstained. [20]

The veto system has two significant deficiencies. One deficiency is the lack of legitimacy. The veto system and the concept of having “permanent members” were criticized as a kind of “victors justice” and an infringement on the concept of sovereign equality of states. [21]

Another deficiency is its potential inefficiency. The veto system was set up based on an assumption that the great powers can uphold the spirit of cooperation and consider the security of all mankind when making decisions, which may be too idealistic.

### 3.1.3 The operation and the negative effect of the veto system

In the course of history, the veto system has not worked as it was presupposed. Among the great powers, fierce competition quickly superseded cooperation, and they frequently vetoed draft resolutions that conflicted with their own interests, resulting in low efficiency of the Security Council and difficulty in maintaining peace and security.

In the early years after World War II, the permanent members adhered to the principle of cooperation and carefully used the veto power. However, during the Cold War, the use of the veto surged. From March 12, 1947, to December 26, 1991, the permanent members cast 192 vetoes, of which the Soviet Union cast 81 vetoes. [22] After the end of the Cold War, although used less frequently than before, veto powers were exercised by more permanent members in a targeted manner. The US, UK, and France have shown a relatively consistent position on the use of the veto, while China and Russia are just the opposite. [23]

There are many unavoidable conflicts among the great powers and in the face of which, they do not act in the interest of humanity but for their economic, political, and ideological interests. [24] The veto system and its principle of “unanimity of the great powers” not only fail to ensure that major powers make concerted efforts to contain armed conflicts but also prevent the UNSC from responding promptly, which eventually leads to serious human rights crises.

Take the Middle East issue as an example. In the past ten years, the permanent members have cast 28 vetoes on the resolutions related to the Middle East, of which Russia has voted 16 vetoes, China has voted 9 vetoes, and the United States has voted 3 vetoes.

Permanent Member <sup>a</sup>	Agenda Items <sup>b</sup>	Number of veto votes <sup>c</sup>
Russian Federation <sup>d</sup>	(1)The situation in the Middle East; (2)Middle East; (3)Middle East - Syria <sup>e</sup>	16 <sup>d</sup>
China <sup>e</sup>	(1)The situation in the Middle East; (2)Middle East; (3)Middle East - Syria <sup>e</sup>	9 <sup>e</sup>
USA <sup>f</sup>	(1)Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks (Terrorism in the Middle East); (2)Middle East situation, including the Palestinian question <sup>e</sup>	3 <sup>f</sup>

**Table 1** The use of veto votes on resolutions related to the Middle East from 2011 to 2012 Source from: <https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/>

Due to energy security, arms trade, and many other reasons, the Middle East is of great significance. And all the great powers want to maximize their own interests in the Middle East, thus they all hope that the resolutions passed by the Council will be beneficial to themselves rather than to other countries. What’s more, the use of the veto will have fewer adverse consequences on public

opinion than the use of violent means. As such, they play political games through the veto system that ultimately paralyzes the Council, preventing it from curbing the further intensification of the conflict in the Middle East.

Data on the use of the veto and the case of the Middle East show how the great powers abused the veto power and deviated from the original purpose of the veto system.

However, this situation is unavoidable, given that the conditions under which the veto system will function are too idealistic, requiring the great powers to overcome entrenched statism nationalism.

The veto system gives permanent members the veto power in the hope that they can unite and undertake the obligation to maintain peace. However, in practice, great powers use the veto power in consideration of their interests of their own rather than the interests of all mankind, making the Security Council inefficient.

### **3.2 Reform proposals**

#### *3.2.1 Review of the veto system*

The veto was originally introduced in 1945 to “ensure that the victors of World War II spoke with a single voice on matters of war and peace – and not to give each of them the means of blocking any resolution they chose.” The increasing usage of the veto by the permanent members has lost its original intent and has reduced the Security Council’s working effectiveness and efficiency significantly.

#### *3.2.2 Proposal*

The majority of the United Nations member states support the abolition of the veto right. The reform is promoted by the African Union, the Arab League, and the Group of Non-Aligned Nations, but also by many western countries. Because the amendment of the United Nations charter must be rectified by the 5 permanent members and the 5 permanent members have concurring votes, most States have abandoned elimination proposals and have put forward less far-reaching suggestions.

A frequent proposal that has been suggested by Australia and China is to “waive the veto power in all proceedings arising under Chapter VI of the UN Charter on the peaceful settlement of disputes.” Some other proposals restrict the exercise of the veto to a larger extent, limiting the Security Council’s actions being taken under chapter VII of the Charter. The idea was promoted by the Non-Aligned Movement and was utilized by individual countries including Spain, Brazil, Pakistan, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ghana, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Lithuania, and the Slovak Republic. The African Union and several individual UN Member States suggested that “the veto power should only prevent the Council from adopting a resolution if it were cast by two or more permanent members simultaneously”, as permanent members now tend to use the veto as their privilege to defend their own rights.

However, permanent members, the United States and Russia are convinced that they will not accept any limitations to the veto. As a result, many states start to call for restrictions that are self-imposed and/or do not require a Charter amendment. The ‘group of ten’ [25](Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, and Slovenia) urged the permanent members to only use their veto with regard to

matters of vital importance and for example not with regard to the decisions listed as procedural in General Assembly Resolution 267 (III).

Some other states call for permanent members as it seems to be a rather possible way, for “common justice”. Germany, India, Brazil, and Japan have argued that discrimination between first and second-rate permanent members must be eliminated. “New permanent members should have the same responsibilities and obligations as the current permanent members.” The proposal about the extension of veto power is also later supported by Russia and France. Whereas the United States has been arguing that the veto power should remain with the 5 permanent members.

States have also proposed and expressed their idea at international meetings or through their Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For France, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been suggesting to regulate the use of veto power in the United Nations Security Council since 2000.

In September 2014, on the margins of the 69th session of the General Assembly, France and Mexico claimed that the use of veto power should be regulated. According to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regulation of veto in the Security Council reduces the possibility for the Security Council to be paralyzed during mass atrocities and it also claimed that the veto should not be used during such mass atrocities. The French define these “mass atrocities” as genocide, crimes against humanity, and large-scale war crimes. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein supports the French idea. However, among the 5 permanent members, only the UK supported the idea.

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the veto power should not become a privilege that the five permanent members can utilize for their own benefits. The veto power should be regulated in order for it to work for its original intention when it was created, which is to resolve international conflicts. This further ensures that states work complying with the charter effectively. It also ensures the global civilians’ safety. However, the five permanent members must all agree collectively not to use the veto while mass atrocities which is impossible.

In conclusion, France holds a rather pragmatic attitude toward the regulation of veto power. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not seek to abolish the veto, but it holds the idea that the Security Council will get to take action against mass atrocities if the veto is abolished. French claimed that it will be in full cooperation with the security council and the global community. [26]

Numerous states claimed negatively about the veto. Spain is convinced that “the veto power is an error” and she demanded that it “head towards disappearance”. Spain claimed that the initiative that France and Mexico suggested was supported by 106 states and reinforced multilateralism necessarily must include reform of the Security Council. Cuba and Ukraine are opposed to the veto. They both advocate phasing out the veto right and strongly support all initiatives aimed at limiting veto use. They are both convinced that “it is inappropriate for a permanent member to have a privilege to exercise a veto

right during consideration of situations in which that member is directly involved as a party to the conflict.” Argentina and Australia question the Security Council’s transparency of work. Georgia suggested that the veto should be restricted and reformed. It claimed that “the veto right should be restricted when the decision of the Council aims to prevent crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocide, and when a member is involved in a conflict under consideration and, therefore, cannot exercise that right impartially.”

Whereas, Africa, does not seek the abolition of the veto right. It demands no less than 2 permanent seats including all privileges of the permanent members. Uganda is supportive of the proposal that permanent seats for African members should be added. Uganda’s government claimed that African permanent members who must have the same privileges, including the veto rights, should be added to reduce inequalities. Iran claimed similarly that many of the members of the Security Council are from the west, while the main regions are poorly represented in both number and privilege, causing severe inequalities and the veto acts as one of the causes.

However, the United States, claimed that the current condition of veto usage should not change. The United States suggested that though it is positive about the proposal to expand the Security Council, the veto has nothing to do with the membership. Thus, the United States believes that the veto should not be altered. The representative of the Russian Federation and the United States both defend the veto. The representative of the Russian Federation claimed that its use has more than once spared the United Nations from getting involved in dubious enterprises. The representative of the United States claimed that his delegation is firmly opposed to any change in the current veto right.

### 3.2.3 Evaluation

It is a better choice to regulate the overall use of the veto by permanent members as it is obvious that it is almost impossible for the veto to be abolished. It is apparent that states now use the veto as chips to defend their own benefits by threatening other states. The veto now no longer works in the way that it was intended to be when it was created. The idea of France that the veto shouldn’t be involved in situations with mass atrocities is justified. Otherwise, acts like genocide will not be stopped, and there will be unbearable and disastrous consequences. So, the usage of veto must be regulated in order to empower the Security Council for it to play its correct role.

Relevant actions have been taken to regulate permanent members’ use of the veto and to empower the Security Council for it to regain the ability that it should have.

During the 2005 World Summit, the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change called for the permanent members to agree not to use their veto power during mass atrocities like cases of genocide and large-scale human rights abuses in the permanent member’s individual capacities. The governments of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore, and Switzerland came

together and formed the cooperation -- Small Five(S5). Their goal was to advocate for the permanent members not to use their veto power during atrocities. There were also numerous states and non-permanent members that called for the permanent members because of similar reasons during open debates. The Small Five, however, disbanded in 2012.

An organization composed of 27 small and medium-sized states was formed on May 2nd, 2013, Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency. ACT works for improving the efficiency of the Security Council, including regulating the usage of veto. ACT aims for enabling the Security Council to take its actions promptly to prevent mass atrocities like genocide from happening. The Security Council is thus urged to agree to refrain from using their veto while atrocities voluntarily. There were 120 members who support the Code of Conduct on January 1st, 2020. Further discussions and debates over the refrain from using the veto must be done to regulate the veto use.

## 4. POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR SOLVING THE ISSUES

### 4.1 Introduction

The reform of the UN Security Council is not an easy thing to complete successfully. The process of reform is tedious and strict. Besides, the complicated and volatile international situation is a huge obstacle to reform. There are several rival groups within the United Nations. Vested interests such as the permanent members of the Security Council are reluctant to give up their rights. Meanwhile, powerful countries with less power are eager to seek political status. Such circumstance makes it difficult to achieve the standard of votes required by the procedure for voting on the reform package. As a result, the reform of the UN Security Council has been repeatedly delayed.

### 4.2 The procedural difficulties during the reform of the UN Security Council

Chapter 18 of the Chapter of the United Nations provides for the reform procedures of the United Nations. [27] The article states that changes to the Charter shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the Members of the United Nations. A two-thirds majority is a harsh standard that is hard to achieve in an international world with the diverse interests of different countries.

In theory, the reform of the UN Security Council should go through the following procedures.

First, member States must firstly reach a consensus on reform programs, then take decisions. The reform plan will have to be screened by the UN General Committee before it becomes the official agenda of the General Assembly. If there is disagreement in the General Committee, a vote needs to be taken. The plan that has the support of a majority of member states can be submitted to the General Assembly.

Second, bills submitted by the General Committee to

the General Assembly need to be voted on by the General Assembly plenary. A bill must be approved by a majority of member states before it is formally placed on the assembly's agenda. A resolution needs the approval of two-thirds of the countries present and voting to be adopted.

Third, the plan passed by the Legal Committee needs to go back to the full Assembly for a vote. It also requires the consent of two-thirds of the countries present and voting. In this way, the UN Security Council reform plan can be formally adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

In the end, for the UN Security Council reform plan to take effect, it is inevitable to amend the UN Charter. The reform plan of the UN Security Council can take effect only after the UN Charter has been amended in accordance with the procedures and the new Charter has been approved by the domestic constitutional procedures of each member state. [28]

As can be seen from the reform procedure of the UN Security Council, the reform procedure of the UN Security Council is cumbersome. A two-thirds majority is a tough requirement. It is virtually impossible to achieve a high degree of unity of opinion among the Member States. Therefore, the reform of the United Nations Security Council has great difficulties in terms of procedures for the internal administration of the United Nations.

### **4.3 The difficulties brought to the reform of the UN Security Council by the international political environment**

#### *4.3.1 The cause of the difficulties*

Apart from the difficulties in the reform procedures, complicated and volatile international situations are the main reason why the reform of the UN Security Council is so difficult.

Italian scholar Patrick A. Mr. McCarthy argues that the difficulties of Security Council reform stem from uneven national development. The ascendant countries seek to break up the existing security Council structure and seek more power, while the downward-trending permanent members struggle to maintain their status. [29] Albert Venter, a South African scholar, believes that the permanent members will never give up their power unless there is a dramatic change in the balance of international power and the emergence of a new world power whose influence cannot be ignored. [30]

Some developed countries insist on reforming the UN following Western values while developing countries try to break away from hegemonism and power politics. Since security Council reform involves immediate or long-term interests and the establishment of a new international order, it has always been difficult for states to reach a consensus.

#### *4.3.2 Group Conflict: Big obstacle to UN Security Council reform*

At present, there are the following major groups on the

reform of the UN Security Council: G4, African Union, L69, Non-Aligned movement, Uniting for Consensus, and Alliance of Small Island States. Countries come together and form groups because of their similar interests. The interests of different groups are opposed to each other, forming the game between groups. The conflict between multiple forces is the main reason for the delay in reaching an agreement on the reform plan of the UN Security Council.

Considering the current international situation and the interest demands of all groups, it is almost impossible for all groups to reach a two-thirds majority consensus.

Japan, India, Germany, and Brazil allied to secure permanent seats on the UN Security Council. This group is called G-4. On the contrary, more than 20 countries, including Italy, South Korea, Pakistan, and Mexico, are opposed to a permanent increase in the security council. African Union had not reached a compromise with the G-4, China and the United States, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, have agreed to work together to block reforms proposed by the G-4.

As African countries have a huge numerical advantage in the UN General Assembly, the direction of the African Union's position and its coordination with other groups of states will greatly affect the prospects of Security Council reform. African countries are competing with each other for their own national interests. Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Senegal, and Libya are among those vying for potential permanent seats in Africa. [31] African countries such as Egypt and Libya have joined Islamic states elsewhere in demanding representation in the Islamic world. Internal conflicts have led to disagreements within the African Union and even the creation of more groups.

At the same time, a coalition of small island states from the Caribbean Community, the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean called for greater participation of small states, especially small island developing States, in the work of the Security Council. [32] Speaking on behalf of CARICOM at the informal plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 2 September 2009, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations stated: "We cannot support any proposal that seeks to exclude or marginalize us under any circumstances."

Will the number of permanent members be increased? Who can be the new permanent member? In conclusion, these two irreconcilable interest problems cause irreconcilable group conflict.

We have to admit that international law cannot change the interests of all countries. National interests determine international relations. Since countries differ in development history, national conditions, national strength, and international status, it is impossible for them to have the same national interests and aspirations. This phenomenon is particularly obvious in representative countries. Japan, a member of the G4, will definitely support the reform plan to increase the number of permanent seats in the Security Council. Because the organization of the UN was designed based on the world pattern after World War II. Nowadays, great changes have taken place in the world. Countries like Japan and German undoubtedly want to gain more political power in the UN.

On the contrary, countries like China and the United State which have got high political status just because of their choice in a war are not happy to let their power be distributed to other small countries. This is the invariable law of international political operation that each country chooses its own interests.

#### 4.3.3 The resolution of these difficulties

Perhaps the political difficulties of Security Council reform are insurmountable. The conflict between the groups is intense and hard to eliminate. As long as there is an unbridgeable gap between the interests of countries, the problem of group conflict cannot be solved.

To realize the reform of the Security Council at an early date, it is necessary to conduct in-depth dialogue and consultation on major core issues with intergovernmental negotiations as the leading role within the UN, clarify the principles and methods of reform, and determine a feasible plan at an early date. [33]

## 5. CONCLUSION

Prospects for Security Council Reform are not promising.

The reform of the Security Council has been ongoing since the 1950s. But the balance of power in the Security Council has not changed obviously. Even more, problems have appeared. Some countries took illegal military action without the permission of the UN, and they would not pay any price or be punished. The pace of reform is too slow to keep pace with the speed of change in the world.

The main obstacle to reform is the political difficulties, which are almost insurmountable. Different countries and regions have their interests and goals, so there are inevitable conflicts and it is hard to reach a consensus. Also, from a procedural point of view, the veto system and the membership are stipulated by the UN Charter, and the procedure for amending the Charter is complicated, requiring a two-thirds vote of the UN General Assembly and the unanimous approval of the permanent members, which further increases the difficulty of reconciling interests.

The current measures that can be taken are to promote intergovernmental negotiations within the United Nations, conduct in-depth dialogue and consultation on major core issues, clarify the principles and methods of reform, and determine feasible solutions at an early date.

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