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# **INDIA'S ASPIRATION TO BE PERMANENT MEMBER UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL.**

AUTHORED BY - AKASH KUMAR

## **Introduction**

“21<sup>st</sup> century is going to be India's century”<sup>1</sup>. Said by Jeff Bezos was not only a remark but a statement for the world. India's changing position in global aspect is being recognized across the globe by superpowers like United States of America and Russia. India is fastest growing economy of the world after covid pandemic, **the World Bank forecasts India's GDP growth for FY23/24 to be at 6.3%**.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, some standards of global aspects need to be changed, and the demand that India shall be permanent member of United Nations Security Council seems more reasonable and appropriate than ever before.

## **Current Position of UNSC**

The United Nations is a global organisation that was established in 1945. The United Nations, which now has 193 member states, is driven by the goals and ideals outlined in its charter. The United Nations has changed over time to keep up with a continuously changing globe. But one thing hasn't changed: it's still the only place on Earth where all nations can come together to debate common issues and create solutions that benefit everyone. The main objective of the United Nations is to ensure peace and security throughout, but in addition to this, the United Nations also help the countries in developing friendly relations with each other based on respect. They also work towards achieving worldwide cooperation to solve international, humanitarian, and socio-cultural problems. The United Nations had over 190 member states by the early twenty-first century. To maintain the interest of country and the world at large, United Nations under Chapter V provides for the establishment of United Nations Security Council. **United**

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<sup>1</sup> Business Standard, ([https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/i-predict-that-the-21st-century-is-going-to-be-indian-century-jeff-bezos-121020302037\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/i-predict-that-the-21st-century-is-going-to-be-indian-century-jeff-bezos-121020302037_1.html)), Last visited on October 11,2023.

<sup>2</sup> The world Bank, (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/10/03/india-s-growth-to-remain-resilient-despite-global-challenges#:~:text=The%20IDU%2C%20the%20Bank's%20flagship,average%20for%20emerging%20market%20economies>), Last visited on October,2023.

**Nations Security Council**, primary responsibility is the maintenance of international peace and security. UNSC consists of 15 members, out of which 5 are permanent members United States of America, Russia, United Kingdom, China, and France.

## **Historical Perspective of India and United Nations Security Council**

In 2021-22 for the 8<sup>th</sup> time became the non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The typical Indian preference in the UNSC has always been to be a part of the democratic majority contributing to the adoption of broadly acceptable resolutions and decisions. Way back in January 1942 India was one of the United Nations' select members who signed the UN Declaration in Washington and attended the landmark UN Conference on International Organisations in San Francisco from April 25 to June 26, 1945. India, being a liberal democracy, has a long and illustrious history of contributing more personnel to UN peacekeeping than any other country. Since 1948, about 244,500 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN peacekeeping operations that have been formed worldwide.

### **India's contribution in maintenance of Global Peace.**

India participated actively in debates on all matters of world security and peace, including various new difficulties that the UN Security Council was asked to address in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, South Sudan, and Yemen. Due to the threat of piracy off the coast of Somalia to international security and trade, India urged international collaboration against the pirates. At the United Nations, India is well-liked and supported, and it has been elected to various UN bodies. India has been elected to the Human Rights Council (HRC), International Narcotics Control Board, United Nations Board of Auditors, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), International Court of Justice (ICJ), Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), International Law Commission (ILC), and International Law commission in recent years. India is now represented in 22 UN bodies.

### **India's Aspiration and UNSC**

The world has witnessed couple of world war and most devastating condition world had witnessed is the Nuclear Bombing over **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki** took place on 6 Aug 1945 and

9 Aug, 1945 respectively, <sup>3</sup>India is primarily a regional power but attempting to define itself in terms of global power in maintaining the relationship to other major powers like US, China, Russia, and European Union. For most of the 20th century, India's relations with the rest of Asia were limited but it changed them with its rising ambitions and increased its trade within Asia by changing economic dynamic gradually and tried to translate them into new political realities. Japan has taken place of China as the dominant economic power while China has become the dominant continental power and is important for an overall stability in Asia. Most of the smaller nations are revolving around these Asian powers. India is not a global power but is one of the top contenders of this race. India has the potential as well as the ambition to become a global power in the coming times by fulfilling the required criteria. <sup>4</sup>India is demanding status of a major power and has supported its claim through different ingredients and indicators of its eligibility which is yet to be fully recognized by the key actors of the international system. India is most populous country of the world and size of its economy is at 4th number in rating due to the purchasing power. It has the 4th largest army with 8th largest industrial economy, having the highest number of scientists and engineers in the world. India's economic growth also supports this claim. Since 1991, following the implementation of the economic reforms, India's economic growth rate is 5-7%, which gave more impetus to India among the regional as well as extra-regional powers, placing India in the world's better performing economics in terms of GDP growth rate. India also claims to be an established democracy and 6th largest economy with a voice of one sixth of world population. Henry Kissinger also noted that the international system in 21st century would be dominated by six nuclear powers, US, China, Russia, Europe, Japan and probably India. Seeking an official international confirmation of its claimed status, Indian government has been "single-mindedly" pursuing the status of major power with a seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) since long time. This desire is due to the decorative status of General Assembly as actual power is occupied by the five permanent but unelected members of the UNSC.

## Veto Power and its Usage

Under Article 27, Para 3, Veto power has been mentioned. Which means that if any of the 5 permanent member of United Nations Security Council dissents from voting then the council

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<sup>3</sup> Akash Kumar, GOLDEN JUBILEE OF COLLECTIVE APPROACH TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT, Volume V Issue II, Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research, pg.1, pg. 1-8, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Livemint, (<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/india-gets-support-from-4-out-of-5-unscc-member-nations-for-permanent-seat-11658497010584.html>), Last visited on October 15,2023.

will not proceed in that matter. It violates the rule of Sovereign Equality. Whatever may be Indian calculation and assessment in international system, small countries understand the value of veto. US used its veto in 1990s mostly in favour of Israel to secure it from the censures of General Assembly. In such circumstances, insistence on veto power aroused suspicion that this demand was not for the democratization of Security Council but accommodation in an unequal power setup. Moreover G-4 proposal had aroused strong opposition on the ground of regional geo-politics. Each member of G-4 was facing a strong critic in its neighbourhood for the permanent membership. Brazil was opposed by Argentina and Columbia, India, Japan, and Germany were being opposed by Pakistan, China, and Italy respectively. In May 2005, a resolution proposed 25 new permanent members of Security Council without veto power with the same responsibilities and obligations like P-5 but India insisted on veto-power.<sup>5</sup>The US and some potential European supporters opposed the demand of veto power made by G-4. After this opposition, other three members of G-4 decided to dilute their demand of veto power, but India was not ready to compromise and viewed it as discriminatory (Ibid: 8). In fact, India's self-image is primarily that of a global rather than a regional power. Indian limited role is due to power politics. US and its western allies strongly pushed the liberal agenda of democratizing countries and internally, they are against the democratizing of global institutions. Mostly act from the realist viewpoint not on Wilsonian idealist principles of international governance many western liberals also supported the hierarchical nature of international institutional governance. The relation between India and Pakistan, there is an old saying "You can change your enemy, but you can't change your neighbour". China constantly uses its veto power to save Pakistan against sanctions and It impacts India in a negative way. This is also one of the major reasons why India need to be a permanent member of United Nations Security Council.

## Future Multi-Polar World Order and India

Keeping the current scenario of the world in view, the possibility of World War 3 can't be neglected. In early October 2023, war broke out between Israel and Hamas, the militant Islamist group that has [controlled Gaza](#) since 2006. Hamas [fighters](#) fired rockets into Israel and stormed southern Israeli cities and towns across the border of the Gaza strip, killing and injuring hundreds

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<sup>5</sup> The Times of India, (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/citing-russias-shameful-pattern-of-abusing-its-veto-privilege-us-says-co-sponsoring-unga-resolution-on-unsc-veto/articleshow/90827778.cms>), last visited on October 15,2023.

of soldiers and civilians and taking dozen of hostages.<sup>6</sup> After that Israel is continuously retaliating and continued bombing on Gaza strip. Isarel stated that the attack would continue till Hamas is completely vanished. In between this Israel and Palestine citizens are suffering the most. Another war is going between Russia and Ukraine. It is to be noted that Russia itself is the permanent member of United Nations Security Council. During the last decade of the 20th century, the western hemisphere has been the global centre of gravity led by US.<sup>7</sup> At the beginning of the 21st century, major geopolitical changes have occurred in the region. The most important is the growth and increasing global influence of China. It is reinforced by Europe's increased role through EU. Because of all this, world, under US leadership is no longer valid and the global politics is moving towards a multipolar system. The future system will most likely be dominated by more than five great powers with US and China as contenders for domination of the globe and to a lesser extent European Union and Russia while India, Brazil and Japan would be its part. A multi-polar world order may serve Indian interests of securing its place among the major powers. No doubt, a multi-polar world order would be peaceful due to the competition and cooperation. The basis for such a system would be, the larger degree of economic interdependence between US and China and the absence of an expansionist foreign policy. Hopefully, the consequences for the world at large would be positive. Such a world order would also serve India's interests. It would facilitate India with its emphasis on non-military means to emerge as a global power, but without being perceived as a threat.

### **Indian Record on UN Agenda**

US has a perceived role and status for India in the evolving strategic partnership, but permanent membership lies beyond that policy. In suggesting the UN reforms during 2005, a high-level panel reported on different issues including the UN charter. The high-level panel reports had mentioned about half-a-dozen times South Asian Studies 25 (2) 246 Kashmir, Palestine, and Korean peninsula as issues, without resolution of these issues, no amount of systemic change would enable UN to discharge its role under the charter. In the Panel report, Kashmir was mentioned as one of the oldest disputes which continued to "faster and feed" new threats for world peace and security. For the role of UN, the objective of US is different, and it wanted to make it an extension of its soft power. It wanted UN to work on the issues like economic

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<sup>6</sup> Global Conflict Tracker, (<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>), last visited on October 15,2023.

<sup>7</sup> The American Presidency Post, (<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-vice-president-and-president-ricardo-martinelli-panama-panama-city-panama>), Last visited on October 15,2023.

development, terrorism, and proliferation. It further expected the UN function consistent with US global interests and strategic vision under its leadership. India and other claimants of permanent membership are not part of this plan and US has its own priorities to work in the UN System. As its ambassador to UN, Johan Biotin gave a controversial statement, indicating American intention that “UN need only one permanent member many are not a plain hyperbole”. He suggested several changes to the draft of reforms in September 2005. It gave impression that US was sabotaging reforms, many of which were originated in the US itself.

## **Indian Diplomatic Campaign for the Seat in Security Council**

India initiated the largest diplomatic campaign adopting different strategies to achieve its objectives. India joined G-4, (a group of four countries), comprising of Japan, Brazil, Germany, and India itself for the permanent seat in UN Security Council. Except India, other members did not stress on having the veto power. However, proposal of the G-4 requires two-third majority in General Assembly and the ratification by two-third votes of Security Council including concurrence of P-5 under Article 108 of the Charter. But the group was not succeeded in gaining support of required number of countries. After the improved relations, New Delhi expected that the US would support it for the permanent membership of UN Security Council. However, Washington did not show any sign of backing Indian candidacy or Japan's, Brazil's, and Germany's, unless they forgo the right to veto. US attitude on this issue caused deep disappointment on Indian part. New Delhi wants Washington support as it perceives no clash of interests with it. This expectation was not only due to the diplomatic and strategic compensations but also for increasing economic and social ties linking the two countries (Ibid). Indian Prime Minister Manmohan stated to his parliament that India would accept the Security Council seat with full veto power only. Non-veto membership would mean that India was low in capability than China. It also meant that Indian would get involved in all disputes, many of the peripheral interest to it, while it might not be able to protect its own vital interests. It was further expressed by Natwar Singh that his country would not accept any discrimination between the old P-5 and new members.

## **Conclusion**

Today's institutional framework of UNSC is based on the realities of Post-World War II period, which are required to change according to challenges of 21st century. Since 90s, UN agenda has been suggesting reforms and extension of the Security Council with a hope of change in the

existing global order. The key issue is to integrate all emerging powers into international system. Among these powers, India is one of the top contenders of becoming a major power as it claims to have the potential and the ambition to achieve this status. But the path to be a global power, is yet a far cry and it depends on many internal and external factors. India has to take a prudent approach towards becoming a global power. Today, the world is confronting with several emerging powers, all demanding a seat at the table. Apparently, it seems as an opportunity but it also means new challenges. Many challenges today, are global in nature. The events of 9/11 have changed the world and security challenge like terrorism has taken place of the containment of communism. India and Brazil were seen at distant and irrelevant actors in the past but in recent situation, NATO's area of operations is touching the Indian borders and threats are being felt in Brazil equally, as these are not regional but global in nature. All the powers must participate to solve them as western countries alone are not able to counter them. India is the most likely candidate to support an international architecture built on good governance and multilateralism and may be a part to solve several key security issues, including Afghanistan, piracy and terrorism. The other side of this equation is that it cannot expect emerging powers like India to take full responsibility for the international order. India's demand for a permanent seat at UN Security Council is a clear indication of the country's desire to be ranked among the major powers. At present situation, India and the US are increasing mutual relations, and the statements are indicating that in the coming times, US would support India, but P-5 are not in favour of conferring veto power to new entries. India should not make veto power as its priority to take a seat in the Council. Instead of seeking support from the US, India needs to settle the disputes and territorial issues with neighbouring countries particularly Kashmir dispute which requires to resolve according to aspirations of its people. After settling disputes at home, path to global power will be easier. As it would also have a great geo strategic importance.