

United Nations Security Council - UNSC

Study Guide*

**Read the following study guide in conjunction with the previously uploaded guide.*

INTRODUCTION

The Charter of the United Nations – an international treaty obligates member states to settle their disputes by peaceful means, in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered. They are to refrain from the threat or use of force against any state, and may bring the dispute before the Security Council. The UN Charter gives the Security Council primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Council may convene at any time, whenever peace is threatened. In contrast to the decisions made by the General Assembly, all Member States are obligated under the UN Charter to carry out the Security Council's decisions. When the Council considers a threat to international peace, it first explores ways to settle the dispute peacefully. It may suggest principles to the parties for a peaceful settlement, appoint special representatives, ask the Secretary General to use his good offices, or undertake investigation and mediation. It has developed and refined the use of non-military measures including arms embargoes, travel bans, and restrictions to guard against the exploitation of natural resources to fuel conflicts, as well as taking a lead role in the coordination of international counter-terrorism efforts. In the event that a dispute has erupted into armed conflict, the Council tries to secure a ceasefire. It may send a peacekeeping mission to help the parties maintain the truce and to keep opposing forces apart. The Council may, in some cases, authorize the utilization of military force by a coalition of member states or by a regional organization or arrangement. This can only be carried out as a last resort when all possible peaceful means of

settling a dispute have been exhausted, or after a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression have been determined to exist. In order to hold combatants accountable for their actions, the Council has also created international tribunals to prosecute those accused of grave human rights violations and serious breaches of international humanitarian law, including genocide. In addition to its responsibility to maintain international peace and security, the Council also makes recommendations to the General Assembly to appoint a new Secretary-General and to admit new Members to the UN.

Overview

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. There are five permanent members: the United States, the Russian Federation, France, China and the United Kingdom. Ten temporary members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. UN Security Council Voting To be approved, a Council resolution must have nine "YES" votes out of 15 and no "NO" votes from any of the five permanent members. Each Council member has one vote. A "NO" vote from one of the five permanent members kills the resolution. There is no such thing as a "VETO" vote in formal UN rules, though a "NO" vote from a permanent member has the effect of vetoing a resolution. If a member "ABSTAINS" from voting, it does not count as either a "YES" or "NO" vote. Members raise their hands to vote, and sit at a horseshoe-shaped table. Each of the five Permanent Members has gone to war or invaded a country without Security Council approval.

Topic B: Expanding the Membership of the Security Council Topic introduction

The debate about reforming the UN Security Council is about as old as the UN itself. This is mainly due to the fact that from the very beginning in 1945 the dominance of the five permanent members (the so-called P5 countries: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) was enshrined in the UN Charter when they assigned themselves the prerogative of the veto. Back then, in addition to the P5, the Council was composed of six non-permanent members that were elected for a two-year term and did not have veto power. In 1965, the number of elected, non-permanent seats without veto power was extended from six to ten, bringing the Council up to its current configuration. This remains the only Security Council reform involving an amendment of the Charter that has ever been adopted.

Overview

For many years, some member-states have been advocating expansion of the Security Council, arguing that adding new members will remedy the democratic and representative deficit from which the Council suffers. Disagreement on whether new members should be permanent or have veto power has become a major obstacle to Security Council reform. Brazil, India, Japan and Germany want a permanent seat in the Council, and have threatened to reduce their financial or military troop contributions to the UN if they are not rewarded with permanent member status. African countries have also expressed the need for permanent African representation in the Council to bring an end to the hegemony of northern industrialized nations in the powerful UN organ.²⁴ the following terms are used to

Discuss the issue: G4 (Group of Four) includes Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan - four countries which support each bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council;

GRULAC (The Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries) is a non-binding dialogue group that brings together 33 member countries of the seats on the United Nations Security Council.