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# India's Pursuit of United Nations Security Council Reforms

**Manish S. Dabhade**

School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

[mdmanish@jnu.ac.in](mailto:mdmanish@jnu.ac.in)

## Abstract

The United Nations Security Council has emerged as the key arena and barometer for evaluating the promise and progress of accommodating new, rising powers in the international system. The case of India provides one of the best examples of a rising power coming to terms with its increased power, role and expectations of itself and of other powers, great and small, in negotiating its place in the reformed Council as a permanent member. This paper begins by mapping its historical association and varied interests vis-à-vis the Security Council, and its perspectives on various strands to reform the Council and finally, Indian strategies over the years to gain permanent seat in the reformed Council. This paper concludes that only a pragmatic, realpolitik approach that involves hard power bargaining would lead India to achieve its decades old aspiration to sit at the global high table.

## Keywords

India, Security Council, Permanent Membership, G4, Diplomacy

## Introduction

In a truly “historic” move to reforming global governance in the arena of international peace and security, the 193 member-United Nations adopted a consensus resolution in its 69th General Assembly on September 14, 2015 to move from Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) to a Text-Based Negotiations (TBN) process for reforming the United Nations Security Council. Welcoming this General Assembly Decision 80/560 and calling it a “significant development,” India’s Ministry of External Affairs (2015) struck a very optimistic note:

*We look forward to early commencement of text-based negotiations with a view to securing concrete outcomes during the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We call upon all Member States to constructively engage in this process so that the long pending reform of the UN Security Council can be achieved so as to equip the Council to more effectively address the global challenges.*

In the Indian eyes, “no reform of the United Nations (UN) is complete without the composition of the Security Council changing to reflect contemporary realities of the twenty-first century. This requires expansion in the membership of the Security Council in both the permanent and non - permanent categories.” This Indian quest for the Security Council permanent membership, what India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh once rightly described as “an essay in persuasion” lies at the heart of repeated Indian pleas for reforming the UN, the only existing universal organization of global governance. (Nafey 2005, p.1) This paper posits some fundamental questions: what have been the Indian experiences vis-à-vis the Council; what drives the Indian interests in pursuing the permanent seat in the Council; what perspectives and positions have India articulated on the proposed reforms; what bilateral and multilateral strategies has India put in place in pursuance of its Council objectives; and lastly, what roadblocks India needs to surmount before it achieves its objective of a permanent Council seat. Reflecting what Teresita C. Schaffer (2010, p.219) calls India’s multilateral “personality,” this paper seeks to locate current Indian perspectives and positions on the entire issue of reforming the Security Council. It begins with first delineating the nature and role of the Security Council itself and the Indian experiences therein of serving two-year seven terms as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. It then examines the multi-layered calculus in pursuing a permanent seat in the reformed Council by looking at its historic role in the UN system, its intrinsic value and its great power ambitions. Further, Indian perspectives on the five sets of issues marked by the General Assembly and Indian strategies, viz., its diplomacy, are discussed. This paper ends by identifying serious roadblocks to Indian Council seat ambitions and concluding that India has to display more pragmatism, more realpolitik to realize its aspiration to be a permanent member of the Security Council, the global high-power table.

### **Understanding Role of Security Council: Indian Experiences**

Before examining the Indian ideas, aspirations and strategies, an understanding of the very special nature of the UN Security Council becomes necessary. The founders of the UN were very clear about a “security specialist” Council whose pre-eminent purpose was the maintenance of international peace and security. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that in pursuance of its security-specific mandate and promised efficiency, it has an extremely rigid representation system matched with an extraordinary decision-making power/procedures (Goodrich 1969). To “ensure prompt and effective action” the Council was created as a strictly limited membership body. This membership, not a right but a privilege, was structured in two categories of membership, viz., permanent and non-permanent. Although Article 23 of the Charter names the five member states as permanent members of the Council, the criteria for conferring this privileged permanent membership

remained conspicuous by its absence. Thus, a self-conferred status formalized the formidable stature of some states who were on the victorious side who “froze their superior status and built near-insurmountable hurdles to any future alteration attempt.” (Murthy 1995, p.18-20) Regarding the non-permanent members of the Council (that increased from six to eleven in a 1963 Charter amendment that became effective from 1 January 1966), it was seen by the UN’s founding fathers as facilitating legitimacy of the Security Council decisions. Thus, an addition of non-permanent members was seen as providing a much needed representational character to the Council and making it a “microcosm of world opinion.” (Nicholas 1975) Although the Charter has not put any criteria for permanent members, it has provided for a two-part criteria for the election on non-permanent members: the contribution to maintenance of international peace and security and other purposes of the Organization, and equitable geographical distribution. Further, to ensure restricted access to the membership of Council, it was required to elect the non-permanent members with the support of two-thirds of members voting in the General Assembly and it would be only for a two year term. Also, Article 23 explicitly disallowing immediate re-election of a retiring member ensures that the non-permanent members shall not be accorded “even a pretense of permanence.” (Murthy 1995, p. 20) Most significantly, the permanent members were provided with a veto power on substantive matters of peace and security.

The Indian approach to the UN, in India’s first PM Jawaharlal Nehru’s words, is characterized by “whole-hearted cooperation” through full participation “in its councils to which her geographical position, and contribution towards peaceful progress entitle her.” (Murthy 2010)

The UN Security Council, with its exceptional role in the UN in preserving international peace and security, has always been of significance for India right since its founding years. During the 1945 San Francisco conference itself, India displayed a keen, active interest in Security Council’s composition, especially the basis of election of non-permanent members. Here, India strongly advocated weightage for factors such as population, industrial potential, willingness and ability to contribute to international peace and security, and past performance, and the need for representation for various regions for states to be selected for the Security Council. Significantly, India did not have to press for a vote on its amendment as the Sponsoring Powers accepted this suggestion and modified their original proposals. (Murthy 2011, p.2)

India has been elected for seven terms for a two-year non-permanent member seat, the last being 2011-12, only behind Japan, Brazil and Argentina. Except for the first time, when India held the seat earmarked for the Commonwealth group, it has held the seat on every other occasion on behalf of the Asian group. India has been a member of the Council during 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73,

1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92, and lastly, 2011-12 which was seen as a “rehearsal for permanent membership” (Srinivasan 2013) During the last term, India won the non-permanent seat with the highest number of votes in the General Assembly showing its impressive electoral popularity. It needs to be recalled that not long ago in 1996, India had lost the elections to Japan by a wide margin for a non-permanent seat.

The typical Indian preferences in the UNSC has always been to be the part of the democratic majority contributing to the adoption of broadly acceptable resolutions and decisions. Analyzing all terms of India in the SC barring the last one, Murthy (2011, p.3) points out that India joined 59 per cent of the resolutions adopted either unanimously or without a vote. With regard to aggregate of 113 adopted resolutions (41 percent) that gave rise to a division, India cast an affirmative vote on 101 (89 per cent) of them. Significantly, on not more than a dozen times did India stand aside without joining the concurrent majority, and has not voted against any resolution, and resorted to abstentions only to express its reservations. Remarkably, India was never a loner in abstaining as it always had company of other Council members on many occasions. The Indian behavior herein clearly points to a systematic effort to display a constructive, rule of law abiding and a democratic majority building state in a global, multilateral setting like the Security Council.

### **India's Security Council Calculus**

The origins of the Indian interests in the Security Council can be traced as back to the founding of the UN itself when Mahatma Gandhi felt that India, then including Pakistan and Bangladesh, should become a veto-wielding member of the Security Council. But the leadership precedence for independence and managing the difficult, bloody partition followed by the India-Pakistan conflict on Kashmir moved their attention and interests away from the possible opportunity of a seat. (Cohen 2001, p. 33) Later, India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru shied away from the highly debatable offer to join the Security Council by both the superpowers, the US and the then Soviet Union in 1950 and in 1955 respectively, keeping in mind the emerging Cold war calculus and steadfastly refused to join at the expense of China (Harder 2015). Specifically acknowledging India's rightful claim to a permanent seat, Nehru wrote:

*It would do us little good and it would bring a great deal of trouble in its train.... India, because of many factors is certainly entitled to a permanent seat in the Security Council. But we are not going in at the cost of China.*

The Indian calculus on permanent membership of Security Council flow broadly from a mix of, not necessarily hierarchical, three streams, viz., India's historic as-

sociation with the UN system itself since its independence, India's intrinsic value and place in contemporary international politics and its ambitions as a traditional great power in Asia and beyond.

***India in UN System:***

In pursuance of its claims to the Council seat, India points out its rich history of consistent international, multilateral posture of cooperation and fraternity, especially when it comes to the UN. The origins of Indian multilateral engagement dates back to 28 June 1919 when India signed the Treaty of Versailles that ended the First World War and created the League of Nations, the precursor of the UN, wherein India, too, was a member. India, also the original member of the UN that signed the Declaration by the UN at Washington on 1 January 1942, participated in the historic UN Conference of International Organization at San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. (Permanent Mission of India to the UN, New York, no date given)

India, since its independence and even before that, has been an active participant in all initiatives undertaken by the UN and the various UN organs including the various discussions on the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development, the Millennium Development Goals, and various UN summits, including most importantly on climate change. India also contributed most importantly by being instrumental in establishing the G77 of developing states at the UN, other than supporting the establishment of various bodies like the UNICEF on a permanent basis, the UNDP, the UNEP, and the restructuring of the economic and social fields of the UN and the UN Development Fund.

India also makes a strong case by highlighting its regular, significant contributions to the UN. In the arena of peacekeeping, India has remained the largest cumulative contributor of UN peacekeeping troops with around 180,000 troops since the 1950s. Currently, around 7700 Indian peacekeepers have been deployed in 13 missions (out of the total of 16) in 11 countries. (Permanent Mission of India to the UN, New York 2016)

Today, most significantly, India has almost twice the number of peacekeepers deployed in the ground as do China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States combined – also known as the P5, the five countries that wield veto power at the Council. In terms of financial contributions to the UN, India with US\$ 20.46 million ranks 23rd in the list of contributors. On this, India has emphasized way back in 1993 itself: "...not just the financial contribution in absolute terms, but also in relative terms. For a country with low per capita income, assessed contribution as per the United Nations scale may entail proportionately higher sacrifice. The record of timely payment also should be taken into account." Adding further, India asserted: "the financial contribution does not remain static

forever, and the crucial issue is the readiness to fulfil the obligations and not the quantum of payment at a particular point in time. The point is India could emerge before long, if its economy performs well, as a sizeable contributor to UN budget.” (Menon 1995, p.15)

Indian strategic interest in the Council seat has also been shaped by its history of interacting with the Security Council. In the early years of its independence during its armed conflict with Pakistan on Kashmir, India paid the price for being “idealistic” to take the Kashmir issue to the UN wherein it had to battle hard real-politik of Cold war years leading to UN interventions over the Kashmir dispute. To prevent this negative outcome ever again, the Indian presence at the Security Council, it is hoped will ensure Indian interests are not sacrificed at the altar of great power politics. Most importantly, it will stall any possible intervention by China, a permanent member at the behest of its ally Pakistan.

Indian interests in the Security Council also flow from the larger, many foreign policy debates in India on whether it will be a status quo power that accepts liberal norms and positions itself as a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system or a revisionist power that seeks to redefine the norms of international engagement. Many pundits agree that India would be moderately revisionist that seeks to adjust international norms and frameworks that suits its global vision, without seeking to overthrow the current international system.

India also always seen itself as a champion, a ‘moralistic force’ of the so called Third World, the developing states. Former Secretary General Kofi Annan has been quoted as saying that India has been one of the most significant votaries of shaping the UN agenda on behalf of the developing world. At his speech in New Delhi, Annan stated: “Indians have better understood than many other peoples that the goals of the ‘larger freedom’ that which include development, security and human rights are not alternatives. They have been single-mindedly pursuing larger freedom through pluralist democracy.” (Annan 2005)

### ***India’s Intrinsic Value:***

India’s Ministry of External Affairs has clearly articulated India’s “legitimate” candidature to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It declares:

*By any objective criteria, such as population, territorial size, GDP, economic potential, civilizational legacy, cultural diversity, political system and past and on-going contributions to the activities of the UN — especially to UN peacekeeping operations — India is eminently qualified for permanent membership.” Going further, it says, most importantly, “India has affirmed its willingness and capacity to shoulder the responsibilities of permanent membership.*

At the outset itself, demography remains the primary reason why India should be in the Council. India, with its population at 1.25 billion now, is the second most populous country in the world comprising almost one-fifth of humanity. This basic fact itself warrants Indian inclusion and representation in the Security Council. For India, moreover “population represents both an expression of the principle of democracy and an element of power. With increasing emphasis on the principle of democracy at the national level, there is a need for extending the principle to the international level also.” (GA/48/264, 20 July 1993, p. 48)

India's rising economic stature globally has added to Indian claims as well. India is now the fastest-growing major economy in the world, and Asia's third largest. India's real GDP growth, as its 2017 Economic Survey predicts, will remain between 6.75% and 7.5% despite international upheavals like growing oil prices, Brexit, growing protectionism and trade related tensions between major economies. India's leading position in software and its IT-enabled services making it a global technology giant adds to its increasing economic and trade footprint across the world. India is now counted amongst the most influential players in economic organizations like the WTO, BRICS and the G20.

India's newly acquired status as a Nuclear Weapons State (NWS) in May 1998 also makes India a natural claimant as a permanent member similar to the existing permanent members who are all Nuclear Weapon States. Though India has not been accorded a de' jure recognition of this by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, India now stands recognized as a de' facto NWS due to the nuclear deal signed by India and the United States in 2005 and the Nuclear Suppliers Group waiver in 2008 to nuclear transfers for India despite not being a NPT signatory. On the negative side, it is argued by critics that India has still not signed the NPT, had rejected the CTBT in 1996 and in fact, was the target of unanimous Security Council Resolution 1172 after it conducted nuclear tests in 1998. But, India's nuclear diplomacy after the May 1998 tests successfully turned India from a pariah state to being increasingly a part of the non-proliferation regime.

***India's Great Power Ambitions:***

Foremost in Indian calculus, however, lies the Indian aspiration of the institutionalized big power status the permanent seat in the Security Council would confer on India right away. Being a “pen holder” as the permanent member of the Security Council, India would similarly assume the mantle of international peace and security decision-making. India sees itself carrying the necessary abilities, actual and potential, which entitles it to a permanent seat at the Council. Further, the seat on the high table, at the UN's premier, powerful body would provide it the much needed leverage to expand its geo-political and geo-economic clout glob-

ally. It would serve as an equalizer to China, its rival and an emerging hegemon in Asia and an ever increasing strategic and security concern in its immediate neighborhood and beyond. India has always seen itself as a democratic alternative to the authoritarian China in a leadership role in Asia. India's millennia old civilizational existence also demands it to be at the top of international hierarchy of states.

As India's international profile and capabilities rises due to its ever expanding global and regional footprint in diverse areas like politics, development, economics, and culture and science and technology, India wishes to shift its international position from a rule taker (a constrained role) to a rule maker (a system shaping role). The Indian attempts at joining various regimes like the MTCR and the ongoing, high pitched campaign to join the NSG amply indicate that India is no more satisfied with being either the target or a mere follower of various international norms and rules and wants now to shape and align them to suit Indian ideas and interests.

In conclusion, and most significantly, Indian hopes significantly rest on an acknowledgement by UN itself of the need to expand the UNSC. In an interview to *The Guardian* (2015), former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the Security Council must either reform or risk becoming increasingly irrelevant: "If we don't change the council, we risk a situation where the primacy of the council may be challenged by some of the new emerging countries."

### **Indian perspectives on Council Reforms**

The UN Security Council reforms became an international agenda with the UN General Assembly adopting in 1992 the Resolution 47/62 entitled "The Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council." In 1993, the Assembly set up an open ended Working Group that would facilitate a full and frank exchange of views. In its report to the 1994 General Assembly, the Group stated:

*".....the debate was substantive and constructive, clarifying the positions of member states, (but) no conclusions were drawn. While there was convergence of views that the membership of the Security Council should be enlarged, there was also agreement that the scope and nature of such enlargement require further discussion." (Murthy 1995, p. 22)*

The arguments put forward by the Member States centered on four aspects for making the Council more representative: the future size of the Council, the categories of membership, the criteria of membership, and the veto power. It needs to be recalled that the Security Council reformed as back as 1965 when it increased its non-permanent members from 11 to 15, and increased the necessary votes for

the adoption of resolutions from seven to nine.

The Indian attempts at reforming the Council date as back as 1979, when India's ambassador to the UN Brajesh Mishra along with other NAM countries submitted a draft resolution to the General Assembly calling for an increase in the non-permanent membership from 10 to 14, arguing an increase in the UN membership as the principal reason. The 1990s also saw Indian attempts at pressing for UN reforms. India joined a number of countries in adopting General Assembly Resolution A/RES/47/62, inscribing this item on our agenda for the first time in September 1992.

Calling the 69th UN General Assembly decision of September 2014 "truly historic and path-breaking on several counts," Asoke Mukerji, India's then Permanent Representative to the UN, clearly put forward Indian thinking on the matter. Three issues were highlighted specifically. Firstly, that the consensus decision was not a technical, but a substantive decision since it was now adopted through an official formal L document of the UNGA, the A/69/L.92, and the first in the history of the Inter-Governmental Negotiation process. This was "a most positive and unique development" for India as these moved beyond mere statements, compiled texts or summaries. Secondly, the UN General Assembly decision has formally changed the IGN process to a text-based negotiations. And, lastly, quoting the UN General Assembly President's 31st July 2015 letter that reflected a true mandate, India highlighted that the text attached to the letter "represents a sound basis upon which Member States can engage in text-based negotiations through the next phase of the IGN." India, in fact, in April 2013 itself, had already called for a conclusion of the IGN process on UNSC reforms by the 70th anniversary of the UN. Hoping that the UN now moves purposefully to conclude the negotiations during the 70th session, India reminded that the World Summit of 2005 had given a unanimous mandate for "early reform" of the Security Council and make it "more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions."

In order to move the TBN process forward, India has clearly, frequently and seriously articulated its positions on diverse aspects of the Security Council reforms. Two organizing principles do stand out: first, purposeful, result oriented negotiations and secondly, parity for the unrepresented and the underrepresented.

Five sets of issues have been identified by the General Assembly 62/557 decision on "question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters": categories of membership; question of veto; regional representation; size of an enlarged council and working methods of the Council; and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

### *Categories of Membership*

On the issue of categories of membership, India has argued that an overwhelming majority of Member-States have already supported expansion in both categories. Two largest groups including Africa with 54 members and L.69 with 42 members and CARICOM, G4 and another 233-Member States including 2 permanent members, France and UK have supported expansion in both categories. India claims that around 85% of total submissions that are part of the text and the annex have supported expansion in both categories.

India supports increase in both permanent and non-permanent membership of UN Security Council. Making a case that there is an imbalance of influence between the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council, India has called for a “balanced enlargement in both categories.” Herein, India has highlighted the need of Africa to be represented in both categories. This directly challenges the proposed “so called” intermediate models wherein a longer term and immediate re-election are seen as compensations for a permanent membership. India, citing the deliberations held in 1945 itself, pointed out that these models were rejected by an overwhelming majority. India identified number of reasons for its opposition to increase in non-permanent category only. Firstly, the issues raised by the current imbalance between permanent and non-permanent members are not addressed due to lack of any checks or balances. Secondly, the African continent and other developing countries would still not be represented fully in the Council. Importantly, it would mean a new category of members and addition of new members that fails to make the Council more effective and accountable. According to India, only addition of elected, new permanent members which are subject to “stringent review” could provide such an accountability. Siding with the small states, India supported their contention that the chances of the small states to serve at the Council would be reduced as the proposed intermediate models surely enhanced the chances of more resourceful middle powers to contest in both the traditional non-permanent category seat and the “so called long-term seats.”

### *Question of Veto*

On the most important question of veto, Indian position is fully aligned with the G4, L.69 and Africa who have called for the abolition of veto and till it exists, it needs to be provided for all members of the permanent category of the Security Council which should have all prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership in the permanent category including the right of the veto. (March 2016) The Indian position is not one of quantity, viz. extending it immediately to new permanent members, but talks about quality, viz., of introducing restrictions. India, showing a marked flexibility, has argued that it supports new members with same responsibilities and obligations as current permanent members as a matter of principle, it is open to not exercising the veto by new permanent members until

a decision is taken during a review process.

### ***Regional Representation***

On the question of regional representation, India has forcefully argued for an equitable geographical representation and the urgent need for mitigating the non-representation and under-representation of some regions in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. Making the case, India has pointed to the increase in the number of states to 193 at present from 51 when the UN was founded, and the un-tenability of whole continents not being represented at all in the permanent category. The Council in its existence of 70 years also does not represent the geo-political and economic realities. The Security Council, for India, needs to reflect contemporary realities and provide adequate representation to all regions of the world. India sees the growing clamor for regional representation as “a cry of frustration and dissatisfaction with the state of affairs.” The demand for regional representation has been made on multiple grounds including historical injustice, entire regions not equitably represented or even unrepresented in a key category, and hope of moving beyond the nation state as the primary actor on international affairs. In Indian eyes, it is “anachronistic” situation that the UN has three of the five permanent members from one region alone while the regions of Africa, Latin America, three-fourths of Asia including the Arab states, the entire Central and Eastern Europe, the Caribbean states and the Small Island developing states remain excluded from the functioning of the Security Council. On the role of regional groupings in the selection of new members, India favored the current practice, viz., each regional grouping would endorse its candidate, to be followed by the need to contest an election on the floor of the General Assembly for occupying a seat at the Security Council.

Acknowledging the various existing perspectives on the on the issue of regional representation that vary from one region to another, India has welcomed the approach of regions like Africa who have asked as a collective to be treated as a unique case. But, these should be seen as supplemental in nature and do not replace the Charter requirements of all Member States voting to elect a permanent member for an equitable regional representation. While India accepts the inter-linkage drawn by the African states between the issue of categories and regional representation, India opposes such linkages. (Joint G4 Statement by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, April 2017) Realizing that such a unanimity in the Asian region does not and will not come about, India has stated that though it respects the unanimous desires of a region like Africa, it cannot be replicated elsewhere where such desires do not exist.

### ***Size of Council and Its Working Methods***

On the question of the size of an enlarged Council and working methods of the

Council, India has stated that ‘we the peoples’ in whose name the Charter was agreed to have more than trebled since 1945, from about 2.35 billion worldwide to more than 7.3 billion estimated today. Also, at the signing of the UN Charter in 1945, the Security Council had 11 members including 5 permanent members and 6 non-permanent members and a total of 51 member states. Thus, there was one Council member for every five Member-States and one permanent member for every 10 of the General Assembly. The UN membership now has also trebled. (Feb 2016) India, realizing the need to be realistic, has not called for a three-fold expansion in the membership of the Council.

### ***Relationship Between Security Council and General Assembly***

On the equally significant issue of the relationship between Security Council and the General Assembly, in India’s view, it should not be competitive or adversarial, but “one of synergy and complementarity” which benefits the UN objectives of the promotion of international peace and security. A relationship with the General Assembly based on transparency, mutual trust and frequent interaction with all Member States will increase the credibility of the Council that includes increase in dialogue between the Council and the Assembly. India thus has called for a greater transparency and consistency to improve the relationship between the two. (G4 Joint Statement 2014)

Additionally, and crucial, as it assumes implications for Indian success in getting the permanent seat in the Council, on the issue of election process of new permanent members, India has argued for a process of elections by a secret ballot in consonance with the UN Charter and General Assembly rules. Article 108 of the Charter stipulates that the any amendment to the Charter could be done with a vote of two-thirds of members of the General Assembly. On the other hand, Rule 83 of the GA Rules of Procedure says that two-thirds of the majority of the members present and voting can take decisions of the General Assembly on important questions. Such decisions include recommendations regarding maintenance of international peace and security and the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. India has also cited that the General Assembly’s Resolution A/RES/53/30 of 23 November 1998, which was unanimously adopted, decided on a 2/3rd majority of the membership, as the threshold for arriving at substantive decisions on Security Council Reforms.

### **Indian Strategies: Diplomacy in Action**

India has adopted a multi-layered strategy to assume the highly coveted permanent seat in the Security Council. According to Stuenkel, the Indian strategy of “revisionist integration” into the Security Council consists of two components: Maximizing support in the UN General Assembly and Minimizing resistance in the UN Security Council. India’s continued leadership of various Global South

forums such as G 77 and NAM, it hopes would garner the much needed numbers in the UNGA. This is amply reflected in India's strong defense of the principle of sovereignty and the constant voluble criticism of the "Responsibility to Protect." On the other hand, India's growing strategic partnerships with the P5, including the historic nuclear deal with the US in 2005, reiteration of historic ties with Russia, and most importantly, seeking a rapprochement with China, in Indian eyes, paint a favorable picture for Indian hopes in the Security Council by the existing permanent members. (Stuenkel 2010, p. 59) Explicit public declarations supporting India's candidature as a permanent member in the Council now embodied also in bilateral Joint Statements/Declarations since last few years by most of the P5, including China, have shown Indian successes in garnering agreement for its Council objectives.

Parallel to courting powers, big and small, in a bilateral framework, India has also formed the G4 comprising Brazil, Germany, itself and Japan, its "coalition of the willing", a "collaborative strategy" to negotiate reforms of the Council. After initial euphoria after its creation in 2004 when its first summit-level meeting was held, Indian interest ebbed as its campaign to secure a seat did not fructify in 2004-05. After 2004, G4 has been revived by the current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PM Modi, speaking at the G4 Summit held in New York in September 2015 clearly identified the rationale for coming together, viz., "our shared commitment to global peace and prosperity, our faith in multilateralism and our willingness to assume our global responsibilities that the world expects from us." ("Modi pitches for permanent seat" 2016). He further reiterated that the UNSC "must include the world's largest democracies, major locomotives of the global economy, and voices from all major continents" to carry "greater credibility and legitimacy." Making a much stronger case for the G4 in its entirety, he said that "more Member States have the capacity and willingness to take on major responsibilities with regard to maintenance of international peace and security." In a move to garner substantive support, the G4 Joint Statement pledged to support "Africa's representation in both the permanent and non-permanent membership in the Security Council," and highlighted the significance of "adequate and continuing representation of small and medium sized Member States, including the Small Island Developing States, in an expanded and reformed Council." (Full Text of G4 Joint Statement 2016)

India has also joined the L-69, the 42 member grouping of developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America. India also, in late 2016, joined as a member the newly founded group of Friends on UN Security Council Reform created to accelerate the negotiating process of Council reforms. India had hoped that in next UN General Assembly session, the 70th one, and entering 10th IGN process and 25th year of the consideration of the issue of the reforming the Security

Council by the UN General Assembly would bring out the desired outcomes expressed by a large majority of Member States, but it remains unrealized.

However, Mukherjee and Malone (2013) highlight at least three challenges in Indian aspirations at the UNSC: lack of enough Indian government resources for multilateral diplomacy, insufficient engagement with the normative aspects of many UN Security Council issues, and an over-reliance on entitlement as the bedrock of India's claims to permanent membership, at the cost of more hard-nosed realpolitik bargaining in the UN. Further, with India as part of G4 seems to have limited its options to negotiate a seat for itself as great power and regional politics would circumscribe the G4 attempts to win permanent seats for all as a group (Baru 2015).

More significantly, the status quo bias amongst the existing P5, despite the General Assembly consensus, remains the overriding obstacle to adding permanent seats. This has been amply demonstrated by the lack of any progress since 2015 as the US, China and Russia have not yet submitted their country positions for TBNs and no agreement at all on the criteria for deciding permanent membership of the Council.

## **Conclusions**

India has emerged as a foremost, singularly acknowledged rising power seen by most states, great and small, as making a legitimate claim to a place in the changing architecture of global governance, including the UN Security Council.

The Indian interests in joining the reformed UN Security Council stem from its long, civilisational history, an exceptional, globally impacting geography and demography, its rapidly increasing traditional great power ambitions, and assuming its rightful place in the comity of nations in addition to its truly rich, varied and significant historic contributions to the UN system. Successive Indian leadership have therefore, emphasized again and again, the pressing need to democratize the international relations embodied most importantly in the UN and its all-powerful Security Council. Reiterating this, the Indian PM Modi said in September 2014:

*We must reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, and make it more democratic and participative. Institutions that reflect the imperatives of 20th century won't be effective in the 21st. It would face the risk of irrelevance; and we will face the risk of continuing turbulence with no one capable of addressing it... Let us fulfill our promise to reform the United Nations Security Council by 2015.*

Though these Indian desires repeatedly articulated at the highest levels of government remain unfulfilled and seemingly intractable, its ideas and diplomacy, bilat-

eral and multilateral, over the last few decades on the UN Security Council and its reforms including its quest for a permanent seat, highlight a growing, powerful great power consciousness in India. The Indian decision makers realize that it is now historically placed to become an international rule maker and shaper than a meek rule follower in the policy relevant future. It truly marks a rising India's dramatic desire to move to the centre from the periphery of global politics.

### **Bio**

Manish S. Dabhade is an Assistant Professor of Diplomacy and Disarmament in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Convener of the Indian Diplomacy Research Group. His teaching and research interests include diplomacy- history, theory and practice with a special reference to India.

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