

## ● EMERGING COUNTRIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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# The Role of Emerging Countries in the United Nations

Alexandra Novosseloff

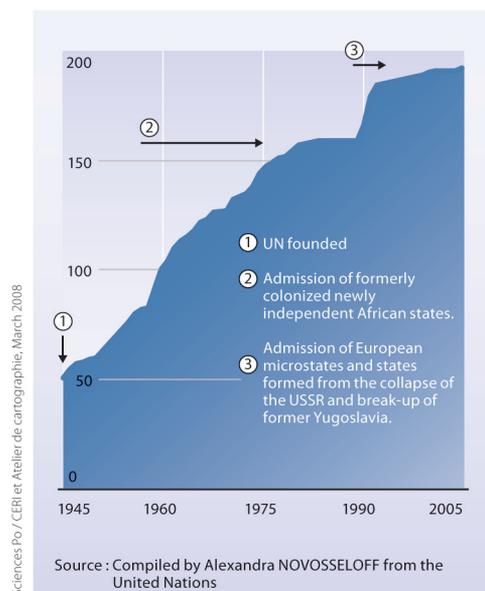
Given the universal nature of its composition, the United Nations has historically been the first organization to grant a place, a voice and a tribune to emerging countries. They have in return profoundly transformed this world organization over time into something that no longer merely brings together the victors of World War II as it did in 1945. This change, which began when the newly decolonized countries joined the UN, has not been without turmoil or resistance.

Today, emerging countries are not only the recipients of international aid and UN interventions, or the “targets” of Security Council decisions; they increasingly influence the decisions of the main UN bodies. Their voice counts, and Western countries can no longer ignore it, particularly when emerging countries are knocking at the Security Council’s door.

### **Once spectators, now actors**

The construction of the United Nations Organization in 1945 addressed a certain number of concerns: to prevent the resurgence of enemy states, associate the Soviet Union with the future organization, maintain the preeminence of the major powers and their alliance during the war, help reconstruction and reestablish peace

figure 76: **Number of UN member states, 1945-2006**



among nations. To that was added the desire to achieve, as regards international security as well as crisis and conflict resolution, a more positive result than what the League of Nations managed to accomplish by giving more weight to the new organization (particularly in military matters). The UN, founded in April 1945 in San Francisco, was clearly dominated by the victors of World War II which became the five permanent members of the Security Council: the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR, Chiang Kai-shek's China, and France, which owed its last-minute admission into this very closed club to Winston Churchill. South Africa, Brazil, Chile, India, Mexico and Turkey, even if they were among the original signatories of the United Nations Charter, on the international scene were only allies of the United States and the United Kingdom at the time, or dependent on them in the case of India.

President F. D. Roosevelt is said to have envisaged a permanent seat for Brazil, a faithful ally during the war. The emerging countries moreover expressed themselves little during the San Francisco negotiations, as opposed to Australia and New Zealand for instance. In 1945, Africa had only four independent states, South Africa, Liberia, Ethiopia and Egypt, all charter members of the UN.

This situation did not last long, and decolonization radically altered the postwar landscape. Between 1955 and 1960, 41 additional states joined the UN, a majority of them newly independent African states. The number of member countries doubled in five years. 27 other states joined between 1960 and 1970. To reflect this increase, the number of non-permanent Security Council members went from 11 to 15 between 1963 and 1965. The increase in the number of member states changed not only the nature of the institution but also its field of action.

Designed as a peacetime alliance of five major anti-fascist powers, the UN became a universal organization in the mid-1950s. It went from being an alliance built around a few states to a structure that could only function by consensus and deal with low-intensity conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Within this framework, the United States no longer commands an automatic majority or a blocking third enabling it to prevent adoption

1 As Edward Luck wrote, instead of becoming a strong-arm organization of collective security as the Americans expected, the UN has evolved into a subtle and hidden "maker" of peace that is reluctant to use force. Edward Luck, "Peacekeeping Plus: The UN and International Security", in Edward C. Luck and Gene M. Lyons, *The United Nations: Fifty Years After San Francisco: A Conference Report*, 1995, Hanover, Dickey Center, Dartmouth College, p. 28.

of a resolution by the General Assembly. The large-scale entry of newly decolonized, non-aligned developing countries changed the UN during the 1970s into a special platform for anti-Americanism. In the eyes of the Americans, their organization “was being turned against its founders and diverted from its original rationale and principles” and this came as a shock: “children” had turned against their “parents.”<sup>2</sup>

In parallel with this evolution in the General Assembly, the Security Council agenda continued to deal with crises and conflicts: from the question of Spain to the question of Iran and the India-Pakistan question, from the question of Palestine to the response to aggression against the Republic of Korea, from the question of Cyprus to that of the Congo, from the question of Indonesia to that of apartheid in South Africa and the situation in Southern Rhodesia. Each gave rise to resolutions and vetoes. In the Security Council, emerging countries were not yet full-fledged actors.

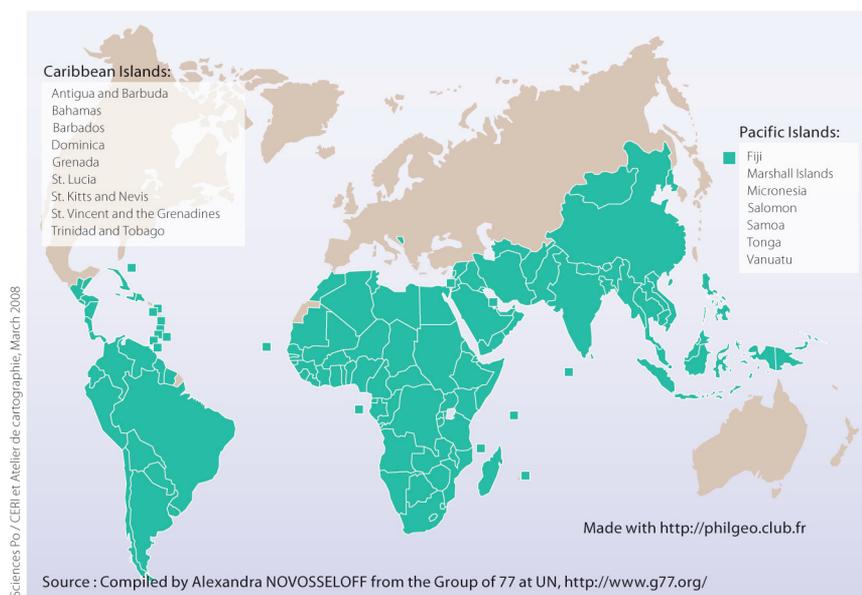
### Actors of change or hindrances to adapting the UN system?

Numbers are not everything. Newly independent countries gradually organized within the General Assembly to use their weight and if need be to form a blocking majority. The Assembly enabled some to launch initiatives and projects. Thus, regional groups—the Groups of African States, Asian States, Latin American States, Eastern European States, Western European States and Other States—were formed for the purposes of geographical distribution of positions in the various UN bodies, plus broader interest groups within the General Assembly, such as the Nonaligned Group (or NAM) and the Group of 77 developing countries. The Group of 77, created in 1967 by the Charter of Algiers, currently has 130 member states with a group president elected yearly by geographical rotation between Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. It was originally more oriented towards problems of an economic nature and has liaison offices with all the international institutions in Paris, Nairobi, Rome, Geneva, Washington and Vienna.

The Nonaligned Group has 118 members and was initially focused on political issues. These groups and other more regional organizations (Organization of African Unity/African Union, Mercosur, G20, ASEAN, etc.) have become institutionalized. They have not only campaigned for better representation of their regions in all the UN bodies, they have also helped to define voting strategies and mutual support in important negotiations within General Assembly committees and commissions.

Emerging countries want to have a voice that matters in the concert of nations. Their influence constitutes a stronger leverage for partnerships of South-South cooperation. Aside from regional and subregional organizations, the UN is practically

2 Edward Luck, *Mixed Messages – American Politics and International Organizations (1919-1999)*, 1999, The Century Foundation, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, p. 108.

figure 77: **Group of 77**

the only place where they can make themselves heard on a world level, lobby on certain topics and criticize the consequences of certain policies. It is also the place where they can block progress, especially on human rights issues. The UN Human rights Council at Geneva is increasingly polarized and dominated by regional groups. More worrying is a tendency within the Council to question the universality of human rights. Some emerging countries (particularly China, India, South Korea and Brazil) have also become donor countries with an aid ethic that is sometimes at odds with current principles and practices of good governance. In Africa, these non-traditional donors and their no-interest loans tend to wreak havoc with the rules of international aid by exercising less scrutiny than others regarding the respect certain governments have for human rights. On 16 and 17 May 2007 the African Development Bank Board of Directors meetings were held for the first time in Asia, in Shanghai, and for the second time outside Africa.

### **A blocking minority in the Security Council?**

There are two categories of emerging countries within the Council: the permanent members, China and Russia, and the non-permanent members.

The first category plays a highly important role because of its capacity to block the decision-making process with its veto: Kosovo for Russia, Burma or any other internal state situation such as Kashmir, Zimbabwe, North Korea or Sudan or any question regarding Taiwan. On 12 January 2007, China and Russia vetoed a US

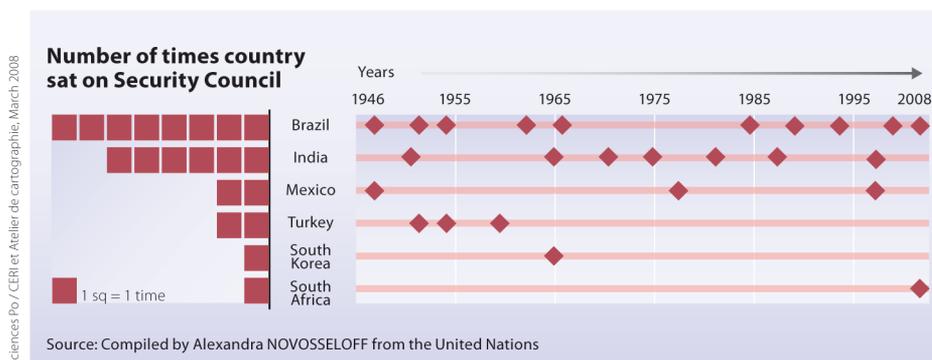


draft resolution concerning the situation in Burma. During the September 2007 crisis, the two countries demonstrated a more open attitude that enabled a presidential statement to be adopted in October, not condemning the Burma junta's brutal repression but "strongly deploring the use of violence against peaceful demonstrations in Myanmar." China has threatened to use its veto every time an issue has anything even remotely to do with Taiwan and the recognition of that country by certain states. Thus on 15 February 1999, it did not hesitate to block a resolution extending the mandate of the Preventive Deployment Force in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (UNPREDEP) after the latter had recognized Taiwan. In one month, UN forces thus had to pack up and leave, although the effectiveness of its preventive action was unanimously recognized. More recently, China threatened to veto an extension of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), because the newly elected authorities there expressed a desire to develop relations with Taiwan. China thus prevented Haitian authorities from making an official visit to Taiwan. On the Kosovo question, China remained cautious because Russia has come to the fore. No replacement for Resolution 1244 (1999) has been found and following a meeting on 19 December 2007, certain members of the Security Council publicly stated that it was impossible for the Institution to take a unified stance on this issue.

In this power game among permanent members, the non-permanent members, despite their lack of experience, play the role of gatecrashers, more and more often refusing to merely vote on texts previously negotiated between permanent members. Mexico and Turkey have only sat on the Security Council three times since 1946, the Republic of Korea and South Africa only once, India not since the early 1990s. Turkey is a candidate for the 2009-10 session. Only Brazil has sat on it regularly (until 2005). On all the major issues dealt with by the Council (Iraq, Iran, African crises), the non-permanent countries have played a little publicized but crucial role in the decision-making process. They are often courted by the permanent members and thus constitute a significant "minority" (representing seven of the 15 Security Council members or of the ten non-permanent members of the Council if one sets aside the non-permanent members of the "Group of Eastern Europe States and Other States" that also includes Israel, Australia, New Zealand and Canada). Together they sometimes amount to a collective veto. That was the case during the Iraqi crisis in 2003. Before securing the veto of a second resolution (the one that would have authorized the Anglo-American intervention), the two camps, the first organized around France, Germany and Russia, the second around the United States and the United Kingdom (with Spain and Bulgaria), courted the "undecided" (Pakistan, Mexico, Guinea, Angola, Cameroon, Chile) to secure their vote. But despite the pressure on them, the latter refused until the end to take a clear stand. This refusal thus in a way constituted a blocking minority that prevented the second resolution from being passed.

In this context, the role of South Africa, which entered the Security Council for the first time in 2007, should be examined briefly. A charter member of the UN in 1945, later banished from the international community and deprived of its voting rights on account of its policy of apartheid, the country was elected on 16 October 2006 as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2007-8 period to replace Tanzania. South Africa, consecrated by a crushing majority vote in the General Assembly, is an example of renewed international legitimacy and recognition for both its political and economic weight, but also its exemplary democratic transition. Everyone expected this country to act as a vote-bearer for the African states, but it played this role for the nonaligned states as well, demonstrating its diplomatic capacities on three issues: the situation in East Timor, the relationship with the African Union and promotion of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), and the situation in Somalia (by chairing the Sanctions Committee for that country). Involved in the resolution of many African crises, particularly those of Burundi and Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa aims to embody the new African politics which implies African management of African problems. With 1,800 soldiers deployed mainly in the Congo (MONUC), it is also one of the main contributors to peacekeeping operations on the continent. Concerning Zimbabwe, South Africa has been the most violent opponent of the inclusion of a specific point on the agenda of the Security Council relating to this situation. South Africa along with China, Russia, Libya, Indonesia, Burkina Faso, and Vietnam consider the conduct of the election as outside the Council's remit. According to the States, the Security Council should not pronounce on the internal situation of States so long as there is no threat to regional or international peace. However, faced with international pressure, the Council publicly declared on 23 June that it condemned the actions of the Zimbabwean government and the campaign of violence and intimidation visited on the regime's political opponents.

figure 78: **Participation of selected emerging countries as non-permanent UN Security Council Members, 1946-2008**



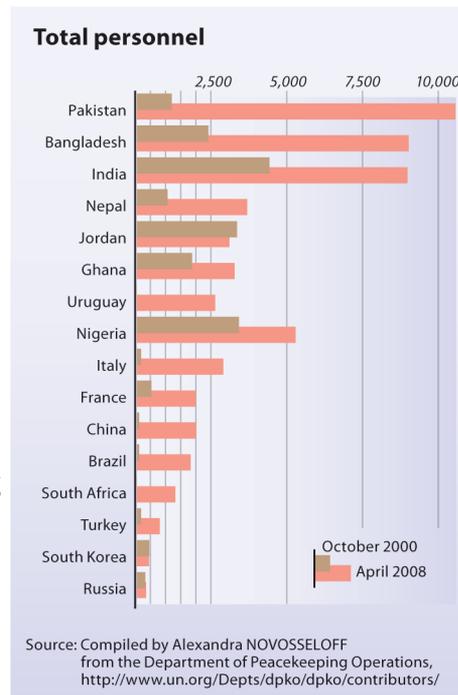
## Emerging countries, pillars of UN peacekeeping?

Even if emerging countries are not the main deciders in the field of international peace and security, they have become the main contributors of troops for peacekeeping operations created by the Security Council since the mid-1990s with the disengagement of Western countries after the failures in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia and Rwanda. Southern countries in a way supply UN peacekeeping operations with cannon fodder, whereas the North finances them (the United States, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and France are the five biggest financial contributors to the peacekeeping budget of about \$7 billion).

There is thus an uneven distribution of risk that maintains a divide between North and South. Indeed, today, the largest contributors of troops are Pakistan with 10,600 police and military personnel deployed, Bangladesh with 9,000, India with 8,800, Nepal with 3,700 and Jordan with 3,000. With respect to the needs of new peacekeeping operations (UNAMID in Darfur with numbers planned up to 19,000 military and 3,700 police personnel, UNMIS in South Sudan with 9,400 soldiers and 600 police, MONUC in the Congo with 17,400 soldiers and 900 police, MINUSTAH in Haiti with 7,000 soldiers and 1,700 police), Southern countries have become the backbone of UN peacekeeping, with Western countries contributing occasional and often rare capacities (logistics, swift reaction, first entry, training for African countries). There too, the Southern countries want to be consulted and listened to: the Security Council and Secretariat have thus regularly organized “troop contributor meetings” since early 2000 before extending the mandate of operations in which they participate. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (or C-34), a General Assembly committee, each year offers them a forum to negotiate the evolution of peacekeeping operations and doctrine.

The reasons for this “surplus” are numerous: lack of interest among Western countries; payments for UN troops that offer emerging countries the means to help finance their armies while keeping soldiers outside a country’s borders; new arguments in favour of a permanent Security Council member seat; assertion of the role of regional powers; involvement in areas having considerable strategic

figure 79: **10 largest troop contributors to UN peace operations, 2000-2008**





and energy interests. China has decided to become increasingly involved in peacekeeping operations. For the first time, one of its generals has been appointed to lead a peacekeeping operation, MINURSO in Western Sahara. From 1971 to 1981, the country abstained from voting on the creation of any operation, refusing to send troops or pay its share of the budget. During the 1980s, China reconsidered this policy by sending military observers to certain operations and, in 1988, by demanding a seat on the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. It was at the end of the Cold War that China decided to participate more actively and on a larger scale in UN peacekeeping. The operation in Cambodia was the first in which it took an active part, sending 400 engineers and 49 observers between 1992 and 1994. Today, Beijing has 1,900 men engaged in peacekeeping operations (193 police, 66 military observers and 1,700 soldiers), mainly in Liberia, the Congo, Sudan and Lebanon. Russia is pursuing a similar policy and is currently involved in all peacekeeping operations, though to a lesser extent (300 soldiers and police deployed).

Since the end of the Cold War, 70% of the Security Council's work has been devoted to Africa. Things are no longer conducted in a vacuum: not only does the Security Council often travel—the 15 ambassadors go on site to support peace processes underway and meet all the parties involved—but the Security Council has also initiated a dialogue with African countries and the regional or subregional organizations that represent them. On 18 and 19 November 2004, for the fourth time since 1952, the Security Council met exceptionally outside New York, in Nairobi, together with representatives of the African Union, to try to advance the Sudan peace process. In September 2007, peace and security in Africa was chosen as the theme for the third Security Council summit, at the level of heads of state.

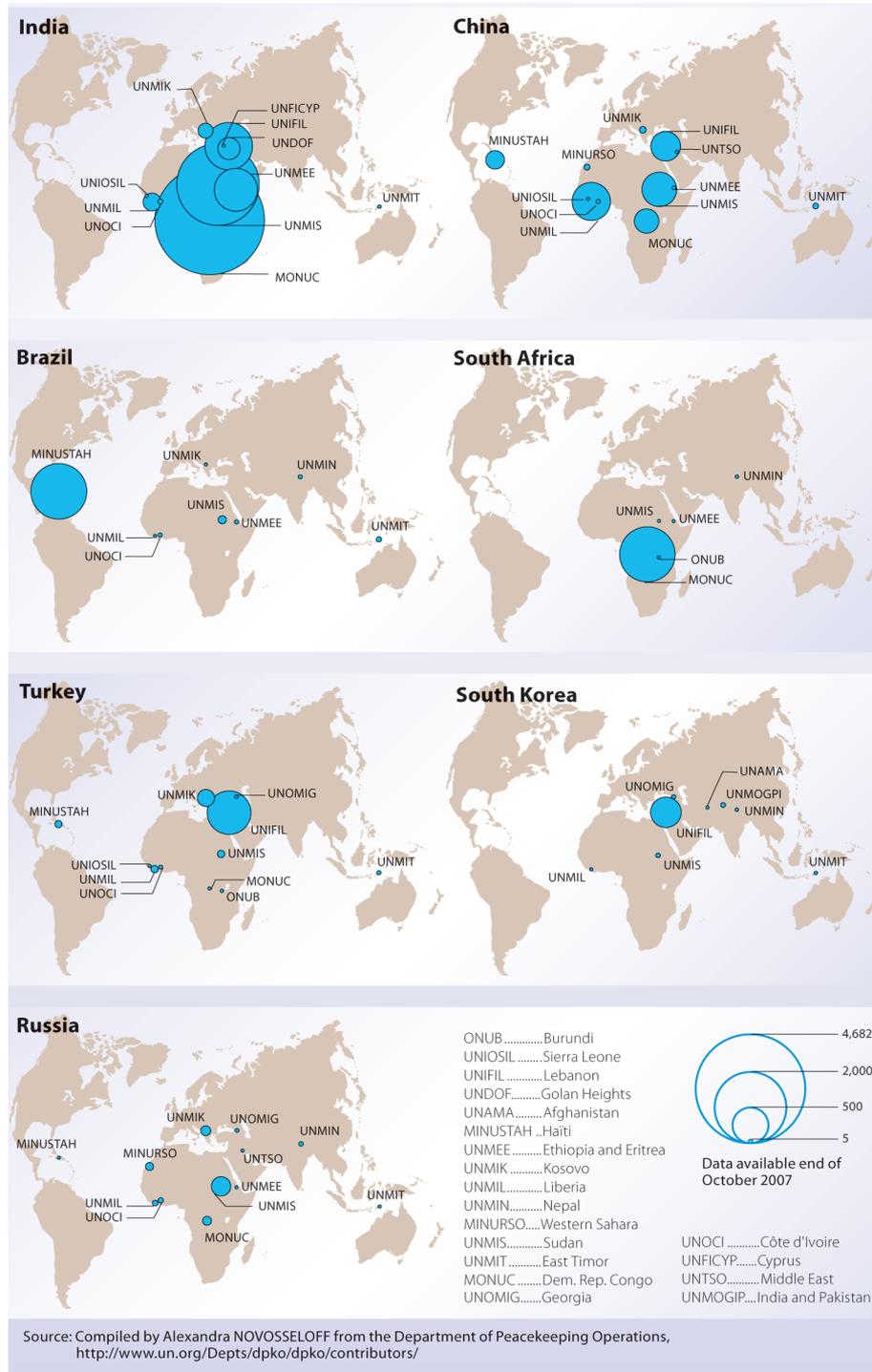
### **Security Council reform: emerging countries knocking at the door**

The first enlargement of the Security Council took place on 10 December 1963, increasing the number of members from 13 to 15. When the ten non-permanent members were elected, five were chosen among African (three) and Asian (two) countries, one from Eastern European states, two from Latin America and two from Western European countries. This enlargement reflected the exponential number of new UN member states after decolonization. In the 1980s and 1990s, as the UN underwent another major increase in the number of its members (37 admissions between 1980 and 2000), the question of reform of the Security Council, more precisely its enlargement, was tabled once again and has been debated ever since. The Council today in fact represents less than 8% of the Organization's 192 member states. It is thus entirely legitimate that emerging countries are knocking at the door of the Security Council. The absence of an African country is now felt by the





figure 80: **Per country participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, 2007**



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states on this continent, to use the words of Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade, as an "historic injustice done to Africa". Similarly, Latin America is not represented either, whereas Brazil could have become a permanent member in 1945. The largest emerging countries (India and South Africa), just like the largest financial contributors (Japan and Germany) and military contributors (Pakistan, Bangladesh and India), are queuing up for a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Discussions on the enlargement process got a fresh start with the publication of reports by the High-Level Panel in December 2004 and by the Secretary-General in March 2005. They were kept going throughout 2005 by the "Group of Four" (G4), declared candidates for a permanent seat and considered as the most legitimate claimants to such a position: Germany, Brazil, India and Japan. The G4 launched a veritable campaign to convince member states of the validity of their candidacy. This pressure awakened the group of opponents of these candidacies which took the name of "United for the Consensus" (or formerly the "Coffee Cup"), led by Italy, Pakistan, Mexico and Argentina and also including Spain, South Korea, New Zealand and Sweden. The members of this group favoured a mere increase in the number of non-permanent members. One more group was formed, the S5 (Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Singapore and Costa Rica), to work towards improving the Security Council's work methods.

The momentum ran up against the African Union's inability to designate its candidates for the two positions of permanent members reserved for Africa, according to a formula used as the basis for negotiation (formula A, creating six permanent seats without the right of veto and three new non-permanent seats with a two-year mandate), and its insistence on a veto. Following the World Summit of September 2005, the reforms lost their momentum due to the African deadlock. Emerging states perceived as having the most legitimate claim to a permanent seat in the Security Council had trouble convincing others, whereas enlargement could have been a means to bridge the gap between North and South. But what would be the (magical) formula that suited all member states? This debate actually revealed certain regional rivalries.

China was one of the main opponents of enlarging the Security Council. In fact, it wants to remain the only Asian representative on the Security Council and has every interest in seeing Japan's candidacy rejected. Japan's seat would in fact be perceived as another US seat and one more step in the American policy of containing China.<sup>3</sup> Despite the improvement of Sino-Indian relations, China's position on giving India access to the Council remains ambiguous. South Korea, a member of the "United for the Consensus" group, has very little to say in this

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3 Among the declared candidates, Japan is probably the country that wishes the most strongly to gain admission to the restricted circle of permanent members, which would enable it to have a "return on its investment" from its financial contribution (19%).





debate, and even less since the arrival of Ban Ki-Moon in the post of Secretary General of the UN.

For Africa, it was decided that it was up to the African Union to designate the two candidate countries for a permanent seat. On 7 and 8 March 2005, the African Union member states adopted a common position on the reform of the UN known as the “Ezulwini consensus”. It stipulated that full representation of Africa at the Security Council must involve attribution of two permanent member seats having a veto right and five non-permanent seats. The African Union would select the representatives for Africa. Three countries have long claimed to legitimately fulfil these functions: South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria. Alongside the two Sub-Saharan candidacies, Egypt has played the role of gatecrasher, claiming to represent North Africa and the Arab-Muslim world. Egypt is a leading figure in the Arab League but cannot speak in the name of North Africa because of competition with the Maghreb countries, or for the Middle East because of its specific policy towards Israel, and even less for black Africa, which in no way feels represented by an Arab country perceived as distant. Owing to a lack of consensus within the African Union, the candidate countries seem to have understood today that they would improve their chances better by campaigning individually than by going through their regional organization. The question is, do they have the means, the energy and the will to differentiate themselves in an Africa that is seeking to strengthen its unity day by day?

Latin America is also divided on the issue of Security Council enlargement, even if the various countries’ positions seem reconcilable. Brazil, owing to its economic weight on the continent, its market of 180 million consumers and the wealth of its subsoil, hopes to become a privileged spokesman for its neighbours and play a leading role on the international scene in the South-South dialogue and spokesman for emerging countries. Brazil seems more concerned with maintaining its rhetoric in its quest for a permanent seat than really engaging with the international arena (for instance by contributing to UN operations in Africa). Argentina, backed by Colombia and Mexico, has campaigned against the G4 project, but seems to admit the legitimacy of the Brazilian claim behind closed doors.

### **Are the emerging countries the future of the United Nations?**

Since the failure of 2005, the bargaining process has fallen back on the indecisiveness of the working group for the General Assembly in charge of this issue. In fact, the machine seems to have trouble getting started again, antagonisms do not seem to have budged, and the status quo seems the best solution for the moment. However, some members are also in favour of an intermediate solution (semi-permanent members with a ten year mandate). Is the question of enlarging the Security Council ripe for consideration? In other words, do UN member states





consider it as essential in order to legitimate the Council's decisions? Are emerging states the future of the UN and can they instigate a better balance in world affairs and crisis management?

The UN must adjust to the world and reflect its diversity. Its various bodies should be representative of all continents and the most important states from the demographic, economic, political and strategic standpoint. They must also soften the fractures, divisions and rivalries. Probably this representativeness should also be extended to the international economic organizations (World Bank, IME, WTO). The past 60 years have shown that emerging countries today want to take their rightful place on the Security Council. But still, to do so they must manage to overcome their regional rivalries so that a South-South paralysis does not replace the East-West paralysis. In order to do so, they must collectively take on the responsibilities (political, military, economic) for the region.

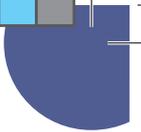
All things considered, is the time really so ripe for enlarging the Security Council to the new powers of the 21st century? The lack of consensus sows doubt. Should the idea of reinvigorating its authority by making it more representative be shelved? The Security Council's legitimacy lies in its capacity to make all UN member states enforce its resolutions (article 25 of the Charter), without discrimination, to reduce the current gap between deciders and contributors and make needs and means converge. It was indeed according to a logic of responsibility and capacity, and not of representativeness, that the Security Council was founded in 1945, and it is to this logic that the Security Council member states, and first of all the five permanent members, should return. Such a process cannot dispense with a renewed political commitment of the 192 member states to respect for the Charter's principles, the central role of the Security Council in matters of peace and security, the effective implementation of all of its resolutions and collective crisis and conflict management.

Emerging countries are increasingly involved in UN peacekeeping missions; they have won their independence from countries of the North. Their responsible attitude regarding world affairs and their role as mediators and negotiators from a political and economic standpoint will eventually lead them to join the permanent members of the Security Council. How long from now remains to be seen.

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