

World Peace and the Role of United Nations Security Council

Shahzad Akhtar¹, Muhammad Ajmal² and Waqas Iqbal³

1. Shahzad Akhtar
Assistant Professor
School of Integrated Social Sciences
University of Lahore, Lahore
Email: shahzad.akhtar@siss.uol.edu.pk

Research Associate, Center for Security, Strategy
and Policy Research
University of Lahore, Lahore
Email: muhammad.ajmal1@siss.uol.edu.pk

2. Muhammad Ajmal
Senior Lecturer, School of Integrated Social
Sciences

3. Waqas Iqbal
Research Associate
Center for Security, Strategy and Policy Research
University of Lahore, Lahore
Email: waqas.iqbal@siss.uol.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The preamble of the United Nations Charter states the aim of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and entrust the responsibility of dealing with the challenges facing international peace. However, the structural weaknesses of the Council at the time of its foundation along with the ones it acquired over time, denied the Council its due role. This study aims to summarize the weaknesses of the UNSC and identifies four areas of concern: (i) Setbacks of the Veto Power and the influence on World Peace, (ii) Lacklustre Performance of the Security Council in the Pacific Settlement of Inter-State Disputes, (iii) Violation of the UN Charter by the Security Council Members, and (iv) Legitimacy and Democratic Merit of the Security Council. The paper concludes with suggestions for a way forward, which includes an urgent call for restructuring the Council in terms of inclusiveness, fair international representation, and neutrality in its procedures and services.

Key Words: World Peace, United Nations Security Council, Permanent Members, Veto Power, International Disputes

INTRODUCTION

The victors of World War II established the United Nations (UN) in 1945 to protect future generations from the curse of war by taking all possible measures to prevent the recurrence of another World War (Cousens, 2004). The establishment of the UN and the UN Security Council is the culmination of “various projects for a global organization for the maintenance of world peace that has been suggested by the statesmen and the philosophers from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the 19th century” (Ross, 1966). The preamble of The UN Charter states the aim of the UN Security Council as, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” (United Nations Charter). Subsidiary objectives including the promotion of human rights, economic development, and arms control, are intended to safeguard the world peace for which the Charter further lays out certain rules and the mechanism. A substantive body of these rules forbids all countries to resort to the use of force; and emphasizes adherence to international law for peaceful resolution of disputes.

The UN Charter entrusted the responsibility of dealing with the challenges facing international peace to the UN Security Council. The UN Security Council is composed of five permanent members, including the United States (US), the Soviet Union (USSR), Britain, France, and China, and ten non-permanent members who are elected by the UN General Assembly for a term of two years (United Nations Charter). All the members meet regularly to discuss and evaluate threats to international security, domestic conflicts, natural calamities, arms build-up, and terrorism-related issues. The collective aim of the UN Security Council is to maintain world peace at all times.

The concept of collective security provided a rationale for the working of the Security Council. Purportedly, the five permanent members of the Security Council acted as the guardian of international peace and security. While overseeing international affairs, these members hold the power to decipher which international occurrence can potentially disrupt

international peace and threaten international security as well as to take necessary remedial measures such as imposition of sanctions or other means commensurate to the nature and level of threat/s. Article 24(1) of the UN Charter reads:

To ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer on the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.

The onset of the Cold War between the US and the USSR following the establishment of the UN served as a serious impediment for the Security Council to play a proactive role in dealing with the challenges of maintaining world peace. Both the superpowers frequently used veto power against each other's interests rendering the Security Council practically impotent. The fifth UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar pointed to this fact in his statement:

The Council seems powerless.... The process of peaceful settlement of disputes prescribed in the Charter is often brushed aside.... Sterner measures for world peace were envisioned in Chapter VII of the Charter, which was conceived as a key element of the United Nations system of collective security, but the prospect of realizing such measures is now deemed almost impossible in our divided international community. We are perilously near a new international anarchy (Sutterlin, 1995).

The end of the Cold War and the fall of the USSR, supposedly, cleared the way for the Security Council to play a focused and effective role in dealing with the challenges of international peace and security. The first case in this respect, taken up by the Security Council in the post-Cold War scenario, was Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The Security Council actively responded to this act of aggression and characterized it as a threat to international peace and security. The stern action taken by the Council was commissioning the use of force against the aggressor. This robust response by the council delivered a clear message that any threat to world peace would be dealt with an iron-hand. In iron handline of action, authorization of humanitarian intervention in Somalia, by the Security Council, earned international

appreciation. Likewise, the Security Council's interventions in some Central American and Southern African countries, in the following years, helped the termination of the ongoing wars there. However, this proactive role of the Security Council did not last long and remained markedly absent in resolving some other enduring and volatile regional conflicts such as the Palestine and Kashmir disputes.

Ethnic cleansing and genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia also remained unattended by the Security Council. Thus, the Security Council's euphoria built in the initial years of the post-Cold War period started fading away and later raised questions on the future role of the Council. Doubts and disappointments in this respect were aggravated further when the Council's response to the US invasion of Iraq in the year 2003 was not up to the expectations of the world community. The fact that this US invasion had taken place without approval from the Security Council, provided room for questioning the credibility of the Council. All these incidents, coupled with the discrepant role of the Security Council, stand in contrast to the vision and objectives for which the Council was formed.

Aim of study

This article endeavors to deliberate on the structural weaknesses of the Council it entailed at the time of its foundation along with the ones it acquired over time, which denied the Council its due role in maintaining international peace and security on durable grounds. Furthermore, this research offers some practical but modest suggestions that the present authors consider to help make the Security Council more inclusive and participatory and assume a more diligent role in taking up measures to build and maintain long-lasting peace both regionally and globally.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a literature review and authors used the following academic search engines to search for literature: Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. In addition, specific peace

and conflict journals were searched for relevant literature. The research aimed to look for articles that discussed the role of the UN in achieving peace in the world and the structural constraints it faced in the process. As this was a literature review of publicly accessible academic journal articles or reports, there were no permissions required. The search by the authors took place between August 2021 to August 2023. English language articles published between January 1945 to February 2023 were included in the analysis.

FINDINGS

Setbacks of the Veto Power and the Influence on World Peace

Veto means the legal power to unilaterally stop an official action. Chapter V of the UN Charter deals with the layout of the Security Council such as the number of its members, specific role, and the procedures involved, and states that the veto power belongs to all the five permanent members of the Council. These permanent members are also identified as the P5. It is important to note that only the P5 have veto power within the Security Council whereas the elected members do not have any veto power. The reason was the retention of interest of the then five great powers of the world (the P5), in one way or the other, in establishing a body that could work to promote world peace. It is argued that the post-World War I great powers, such as Germany, Italy, the USSR, the US, and Japan's lack of interest in the League of Nations was one of the major factors in failing the organization which ultimately resulted in the collapse of the Wilsonian order established in 1919 (Kennedy, 2006). The lesson learned from the collapse of the League of Nations was that the interest of powerful nations of the world is essential for any organization conceived to keep world peace. For this very reason, the winners of World War II including the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, who fashioned the post-war political order, conferred the power, to veto a resolution in the Council, upon each of the permanent members.

Article V clearly states the Council's decisions on matters that are not procedural "shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members" (United Nations Charter). It is, however, somewhat unfortunate that the conferral of the veto power upon the five great powers, has largely compromised the objectives for which the Council was founded. Whereas conferral of the veto power on the P5, primarily aimed at protecting their interests, it is implied that the Council would not interfere in any matter where the interests of any of the great powers were at stake. Thus, the veto power provided a structural factor that effectively curtailed the Council's role when any threat to world peace emanated from the great powers. It can, therefore, safely be said that the establishment of the Security Council was an attempt to provide a mechanism for collective security that could respond only to selective acts of aggression, not across the board acts of aggression, while keeping a balance of power among the P5 (Smith, 2001).

As a result, the newly established collective security system responded selectively to the aggression committed internationally. The five permanent members enjoyed the prerogative to decide whether an act of aggression would constitute a threat to international peace and security or not. The Council's response would be very likely to regard an act of aggression a threat to international security if the act is committed by a smaller power and the permanent members collectively regard it an act of aggression. Contrarily, the Council would not be able to respond if either a permanent member or any of its client-states are involved in acts of aggression, primarily because of the veto power of the permanent members.

According to the Council on Foreign Relations of the UN Security Council report published on August 12, 2021, the P5 used the veto power quite often (The UN Security Council, 2023). The Soviet Union is believed to have used the veto power extensively, amounting to vetoing more than one hundred resolutions since the Council was created. The United States has vetoed almost the same number of resolutions as the Soviet Union. China has

also been using its veto power with considerably higher frequency for the last few years. However, France and the United Kingdom have refrained from using their veto power since 1989 and have also been discouraging others who have used it more often.

Power politics between the United States and the Soviet Union, during the Cold War period, have effectively prevented the Security Council from playing any meaningful role for achieving its objectives. The ever-colliding interests of the permanent members, particularly the US and the Soviet Union, paved the way for frequently using or threatening to use their veto power, rendering the council practically impotent (White, 1994). Evan Lurad, a well-recognized scholar on UN affairs, provides nuances involved in using the veto power and points out that the P5 used this special power only as a tool for securing their vital national interests which, as a matter of fact, largely involved Europe (O'Sullivan, 2005). P5 were less interested in other parts of the world until the spread of the Cold War, which expanded the scope of their interests beyond Europe and extended to a global level (O'Sullivan, 2005).

It is noteworthy that in many cases, only the threat of using veto power by one or the other permanent members refrained the Security Council to respond to the threats to international peace. For instance, the threat of using the veto power by China in the Darfur case prevented the Council's involvement in the issue. Similarly, the threat of a Russian veto power in the Kosovo case did not let the Council make any headway towards resolving the question of the territory's political and legal status. Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2014 called into question the Council's ability to mollify the crises. Likewise, to prevent human rights violations by the Assad regime in Syria and holding him accountable proved quite challenging because of the consistent use of veto power by Russia. Therefore, the use of veto power motivated by the quest of the great powers to protect their strategic interests resulted into inaction of the Security Council which had serious repercussion for world peace.

Lacklustre Performance of the Security Council in Pacific Settlement of Inter-State

Disputes

Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations confers the mandate of “determining the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” on the Security Council. Likewise, it confers on it, the right to “decide what measures shall be taken . . ., to maintain or restore international peace and security” (United Nations Charter, Article 39). In continuation of this mandate, proceeding articles of Chapter VII provide a range of political and diplomatic tools (both soft and hard) to the Security Council that are required for the ‘*pacific settlement of disputes*’ (United Nations Charter). Considering this mandate, it is expected from the Security Council to make headways in resolving inter-state disputes to prevent any chances of war among the states and provide sound foundations to long-lasting world peace.

To meet the ends of peaceful resolution of international disputes, soft powers at the disposal of the Security Council include arbitration and negotiation, which can be offered to the contending parties in the first place, along with some other likely tools. In case these soft power means do not make a way forward for peaceful resolution of a dispute, the Security Council has the mandate of using coercive means as well including the imposition of economic sanctions or the use of force, as a last resort. Hans Kelsen has also pointed out that the Council is empowered “to maintain international peace and security by enforcement actions” (Kelsen, 1950). For identifying such issues that could escalate to an event of war between states with the potential of endangering world peace, the Security Council enjoys the power to take the initiative itself or it can also be moved by a member state requesting the Council to intervene and defuse a crisis that could prospectively escalate to endanger world peace. Thus, the Security Council is authorized to bring any such dispute or issue into the limelight.

A discussion among the permanent members provides avenues to assess the threat, given in any crisis, that could arise between countries, be it a territorial or a non-territorial nature, and a consensus among them (the P5) determines whether a crisis poses a threat to the international peace and security or not. However, the fact that the Council could not live up to its mandate laid out in the Charter in this regard, and that it failed to perform a role in deciding on threats to international security and appropriately intervening thereof, has made it lose credibility. Overall, the Council demonstrated a dismissal record of interventions and efforts aimed at the resolution of inter-state disputes.

This realization is also reflected in some of the UN's own high officials' statements. For example, a Former UN Secretary-General, U Thant, contributed an explanation of why the council could not present itself as an effective forum for the resolution of international disputes. He blames this ineffective role of the Council partly, on the states involved in different disputes and their inability to take appropriate initiatives at the time of need, and partly on the terminating nature of disputes.

Great problems usually come to the United Nations because governments have been unable to think of anything else to do about them. The United Nations is a last-ditch, last-resort affair, and it is not surprising that the organization should often be blamed for failing to solve problems that have already been found to be insolvable by governments (Thant, 1978).

However, alternate explanations are also there in the literature. One such explanation is that the discussions among the P5 for determining a threat render the conflict prevention role of the Council largely contingent upon their (P5's) national interests instead of serving the cause and the objective of the Council. Therefore, their resolve to take the lead in bringing a crisis to the limelight and take it up for the Council's intervention is largely jeopardized. Several instances in the history of the Council are evident to support these explanations. For example, the

Council's lack of interest in addressing conflict in Chechnya and not responding to the human rights issues in Uyghurs-dominated areas of Western China count as evidence to support this position. Such instances of service to the national interests of the P5 at the cost of the Council's due role, leaves leave room for the Security Council to intervene in the conflicts where the strategic interests of any of the great powers are at stake (Call & Cousens, 2008).

Another explanation found in the discourse for this impaired role of the Council in this regard is the one that blames P5 for not putting confidence in the Council, especially during the Cold War years, and relying on channels other than the Council, to discuss the disputes involving threats to international peace (Touval, 1994). The reason is the antagonism and the competition within P5, particularly between the US and Russia. The Council's mandate has been bypassed by its members (P5) in the service of their limited national interests. Many instances of such involvement are on record in the history of inter-state conflicts. For example, the United States, motivated by its self-interest in enhancing its international stature, offered mediation between disputing NATO allies such as Greece and Turkey, and between its allies and anti-colonial forces, such as the Anglo-Iranian and Anglo-Egyptian disputes, instead of directing them to the Council.

Likewise, effectively denying the Soviet Union any significant international role while practicing its containment strategy, the US offered mediation to the newly independent states, and engaged in different conflicts such as in Indonesia and Malaysia, and Egypt and Israel. Similarly, other great powers were also motivated primarily by their respective self-serving national interests. The Soviets' mediation between India and Pakistan at Tashkent and France's mediation between Mali and Senegal are cases in point (Touval, 1994). The inadvertent outcome of this trend led to the disappearance of the Security Council in the settlement of inter-state disputes and deprived the Council of a legitimate and credible role in settling international disputes.

Besides the great powers' role of bypassing the Council, another very serious impediment to the Council's international role is that the Council does not hold a sanctioning power (like an armed force) or have finances of its own to execute the requisite response and exert itself (Touval, 1994). This very fact renders the Council unable to act independently. The Council completely relies on the member states, mainly on the great powers for financial and military resources required to intervene in inter-state dispute resolution. Imperatively, the member states in general and the militarily and financially strong states in particular, can contribute and collect resources to infuse credibility and efficacy to the Council but, realistically speaking, such cooperation is hard to attain. National governments are primarily motivated for such cooperation by their self-serving interests and do not come forth for any such contribution otherwise. Extracting such a cost to the effect of international peace is possible only in the event of their interests being at stake. Many instances in history and literature stand in support of this position as well. For example, the United States explicitly pronounced that the American national interest would determine whether the country needed to be involved in peacekeeping or peace-enforcement activities (Sutterlin, 1995).

A strong resolve on the part of the great powers is a prerequisite for the council to play any meaningful role in the resolution of outstanding international disputes. Therefore, the involvement of the Council without the great powers' commitment would not create much hope for the disputes to make any headway. For example, the Security Council has been engaged in resolving the Israeli-Palestine conflict for decades but due to the lack of interest or conflicting interests of the big powers there has been no progress to date (Call & Cousens, 2008). Without a strong political will and resolve of the great powers, the Security Council remains a largely non-functional body in the prevention of domestic and international conflicts, thus posing a continuing challenge to international peace and security.

Due to the structural issues, the Security Council cannot seek a coherent, flexible, and dynamic negotiation process that could fulfill the aspirations of all contending parties. In addition, the domination of the five permanent members in the Security Council affairs further erodes its dynamism and flexibility in the capacity of an international mediating body to facilitate negotiations between adversaries. In recent times, the members' conflicting interests repeatedly thwarted the Council's handling of interstate conflicts and natural disasters like the Syrian civil war, the Russian occupation of Crimea, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Violation of the UN Charter by the Security Council Members

The UN Charter prohibits the use of force or any act of aggression by any state against any other state. However, the Charter has laid down the principles that allow the use of force in certain situations such as in self-defense or when it is approved by the Security Council. Likewise, it is expected from the Security Council to keep these principles of the Charter in its conduct and that the Charter and international law should not be violated (O'Connell, 2019). It is however unfortunate that ever since the establishment of the UN in 1945, many states have committed acts of aggression against other states while attempting to resolve their international disputes, which is a clear violation of the principles laid out in the Charter and the international law. Furthermore, the permanent members of the Security Council have been circumventing these rules at times when their national interests demanded the use of force in an unlawful manner. During the Cold War years, the then superpowers frequently resorted to the use of military power, for instance, the US attacked Nicaragua, and the Soviet Union forcefully intervened in Afghanistan in 1979 (Lupu, 2006).

Instances of other states following the same pattern abound whenever found in a relative power position over adversaries. For example, in March 1999, the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces launched a military campaign against Serbian forces in Yugoslavia without seeking approval from the Security Council. Anticipation of the use of veto power

from Russia provoked the US and the European powers to surpass the Security Council and rely on the NATO troops to serve their vested interests (Lupu, 2006). Furthermore, the NATO military campaign and action, without the Council's sanction further dented the image of the Security Council in handling international disputes fairly, reinforcing the Council's image as a redundant body in the event of international peace disruption (Perle, 2003).

The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 without the approval of the Security Council offers, yet another example of the Council's irrelevance in creating conditions conducive to international peace. The Security Council already passed a resolution (Resolution 1441) in 2002 that called for serious action against Iraq if Iraq failed to comply with protocols of international inspection of the atomic establishments. It should be noted here that the international community supported diplomatic efforts and soft means to persuade Iraq to comply with the United Nations Security Council resolutions whereas the US insisted on the use of force to coerce Iraq. However, disapproval from the international community could not deter the Bush administration from using force against Iraq. President Bush pronounced that the United Nations Security Council resolutions including Resolution 1441 against Iraq provide authorization to use force. (Taft IV & Buchwald, 2003) The American stance was opposed by Kofi Annan who asserted that "from our point of view as well as from the UN Charter's point of view, [the invasion] was illegal" (Lupu, 2006). In addition, it is widely believed in the international community that the US invasion of Iraq was not justified; it amounted to the violation of the UN Charter and side-lined the Security Council (Murphy, 2004). A persistent violation of the Charter especially by the great powers has seriously damaged the credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council resulting in widespread disappointment of the world community.

Legitimacy and Democratic Merit of the Security Council

The world has significantly transformed calling for corresponding changes in the composition and power structure of the Council. First, the UN membership expanded as a result of the decolonization and disintegration of the former Soviet Union, and of the former Yugoslavia; with all the newly formed sovereign states joining the UN and substantially increasing its membership. Secondly, this membership increase provided further impetus to the even more important qualitative change when some of the permanent members of the council experienced a gradual decrease in their military and economic power. For example, France and the UK- notwithstanding their status as nuclear powers, experienced a decline in their relative international standing regarding their power positions right after the WWII. Likewise, the former Soviet Union lost its status as a superpower and several states withdrew from the Soviet federation and established themselves as sovereign states, for example, Central Asian Republics, which are also known as CARs (Berdal, 2003).

Findings of a UN High-Level Panel Report on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* highlighted this fact by saying that since 1945 there has been a change in “the distribution of power among members (but) ... the Security Council has been slow to (respond to that) change” (UN Report, 2004, 79). Likewise, an editorial in the New York Times, in one of its editorials on December 7, 2004, echoed the same concern, “the Security Council’s ... permanent membership reflects the power relations of 1945, not of the 2004” (New York Times, 2004). UN General Assembly President Volkan Bozkir in early 2021 emphasized restructuring of the Security Council while suggesting reforms, “The implementation of the Council’s decisions, and its very legitimacy, could be enhanced if the Council was reformed to be more representative, effective, efficient, accountable and transparent” (UN News, 2021).

Various suggestions, regarding prospective changes in the structure and rules of the Council, have been deemed necessary by different scholars that called for reforming the

Council including expanding the membership as well as amending rules governing the veto right. It is believed that wider representation and participation would help to ameliorate the challenges to international peace (O'Connell, 2019, 114). To achieve these aims, regional powers such as Brazil, Germany, India, Japan, Nigeria, and South Africa have moved proposals for expanding the Council and campaigned to get permanent seats for themselves. In 2021, Britain extended its support to Germany for gaining a permanent seat on the Council. However, these moves have largely remained inconclusive because an agreement among the P5 is a prerequisite for making any amendment to the Council's membership structure. The existing P5 are not willing to relinquish their permanent seats or veto powers and they are very much likely to block any suggestion regarding restructuring of the Council (O'Connell, 2019).

Furthermore, a vivid decrease in the relative strength of the permanent members of the Security Council has undergone a gradual power decline that has lessened their interest in this platform. This bears serious repercussions for their role in maintaining international peace and security. A high-level panel report noted that the "financial and military contributions to the United Nations of some of the five permanent members are modest compared to their special status, and often the Council's non-permanent members have been unable to make the necessary contributions to the work of the organization" (UN Report, 2004, 79). A proportional representation of the international community in the Security Council consistent with the geopolitical realities of the current world would enable the international body to act more authoritatively and decisively in responding to the challenges to international peace (Frechette, 2005).

DISCUSSION

The foregone discussion in this article highlights those questions that relate to the weaknesses of the UN Security Council: its structural problems; antiquity; lack of international representation; veto power of the P5 despite their relative power decline, loss of interest, and

service of vested interests of the great powers. The most detrimental of these is the use, or threat to use, of the veto power by any of the permanent members. It has proved lethal in the functioning of the Security Council. Hence, it is safe to say that removing this stumbling block could potentially enhance the legitimacy and efficacy of the Council. However, no concrete proposal to restrict or eliminate the veto power is underway, which can be partly ascribed to the fact that the P5 are not enthusiastic to relinquish their power given its utility to protect their own respective national interests and international prestige. Moreover, the UN Charter does not provide any injunction that could force them to withdraw from this privileged position (Weiss, 2003).

The international community today is however much cognizant of the fact that the existing makeup of the Security Council needs a serious revision responding to the changed and yet changing regional and global strategic realities that require the Council to act effectively in establishing international peace and security. The High-Level Panel on UN observed that old fashioned structure of membership “diminishes support for Security Council decisions,” adding further, “The Security Council needs better credibility, legitimacy, and representation to do all that we demand of it” (UN Report, 2004, 5). The challenges to the organization’s legitimacy can be overcome only if the membership structure of the Council undergoes a significant overhaul and change (Hurd, 2008). The panel report also suggests expanding the membership of the Council and establishing a membership criterion, “those who contribute most to the organization financially, militarily and diplomatically should participate more in the Council’s decision-making”. However, a considerable number of entities in the international community, notwithstanding the demand for expansion in the Council’s membership, bear serious disagreement over membership expansion of the Council (Weiss, 2003).

Given this disagreement on the membership expansion, a viable alternative for enhanced legitimacy of the Council is that the competition in the power politics among the great powers, or the P5 should be replaced with cooperation to the effect of the Council's due performance in its designated role. It could help the Security Council with smooth sailing, substantially contributing to the objectives envisioned by its founders. Otherwise, Mats Berdal seems right in shedding light on how power politics has worked cross purposely, and stating that "Power politics – within and outside the organization – is alive and well, and the entirely predictable persistence of conflict of interest and value among member states means that the Council is, at one level, inescapably doomed to 'ineffectiveness'" (Berdal, 2003).

CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD

Notwithstanding serious limitations on the part of the Security Council in creating peace on a durable basis through the resolution of international disputes, it would be wrong to assume that the Council has lost all reasons for its very existence. The Security Council not only keeps a close eye on regional and international issues that could potentially destabilize world peace but also strives to find ways to offer solutions to the international disputes in many cases. At least, the existence of this international body keeps hopes alive for establishing durable peace and international security. Some supporters of the Security Council, rather go as far as to give credit of preventing, another world war, to the Council, despite several persistent international disputes.

It would not be wrong to say that the Security Council has barely lived up to the expectations of its founders, but perhaps they were not able to envision the problems the organization was likely to encounter in the years following its establishment. Deeply entrenched power politics in the international system, played out especially during the Cold War years, and frequent use of veto power by its permanent members, did not allow the Council

to proceed well in tackling the threats and challenges to international peace and security. Unwillingness on the part of the great powers or lack of the Council's ability to adapt to the changing regional and international geo-strategic environment, has raised questions over the legitimacy of the organization, further eroding its international standing. Long-standing territorial disputes between the states with nuclear weapons, including the Kashmir dispute and the Palestinian issue have seriously endangered world peace. Pakistan and India came to the brink of war several times in the previous decades, over the Kashmir issue, which alarmed the entire international community for severe global consequences. The great powers' timely intervention in the crisis between the two states, has effectively prevented escalation of the conflict, which otherwise had the risk of bringing unprecedented catastrophe.

Though, reconciling the national interests of states focused on individual gains with that of the collective security interest of the entire international community would not be easy, we argue overall that there is great scope for the Security Council to maintain international peace and security on a durable basis. What is required is that the P5 must assume responsibility to infuse vigor in the Council by thinking beyond their narrow parochial interests and agree to reform it. This is because now more than ever, the Council's role is even greater, as world peace is not just affected by inter-state disputes, but also by climate change, global warming, pandemics that do not recognize boundaries, and the emergence of international terrorism and violence.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest to declare.

Funding

This study has not received any funding.

Permissions

No relevant permissions were needed for this study, as it is a literature review.

Authors' Contributions Statement

All three authors have been involved in working on this paper and finalizing it.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge Dr. Rabia Akhtar's motivating counselling for productive contributions in literature through writing and publishing research papers. Editors of the FJSS are highly acknowledged for their support, constructive feedback and prompt responses on the correspondence carried out in the process of this publication.

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