

PADDING UP FOR THE NEXT UNSC INNINGS

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"India must give exceptional weightage to how all Security Council issues have an impact on the subcontinent."

Despite the fact that India has served as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) more often than any country other than Japan from the Asia-Pacific Group, it is a matter of satisfaction and a tribute to Indian diplomacy that the Group unanimously decided this year to support India for an eighth second-year term. The elections are to take place in June next year. This means that India's election is assured and its term will run in the calendar years 2021 and 2022.

Fast-changing dynamics

To anticipate what issues will arise during India's tenure two and three years down the road, in the highest decision-making organ concerned with peace and conflict in the global organisation, is clearly problematic. The dynamics of international politics are fast moving.

The Washington consensus of the post-Soviet era, if it ever truly existed, has unravelled in the wake of three factors: tensions between major powers; proxy wars in West Asia, and widespread and scattershot use of threat and economic sanctions by the United States which pursues a militarised foreign policy with a military and intelligence presence in 150 countries, and 800 bases in 70 nations.

The rise of China and the bogey of Russian aggression are resisted through military and economic measures by Washington, which urges its usually reluctant European allies and others to follow suit. The race is on for supremacy in artificial intelligence, high technology and 5G which will have strategic significance in future decades. In this variable world of incessant jockeying for greater influence among big and medium powers, and where the centre ground for concepts such as strategic autonomy and equidistance has shrunk with rising polarisation between the major powers, there are nevertheless some constants. Whether or not the U.S. President Donald Trump is re-elected, the 'America First' doctrine will endure in some form since it has the support of a sizeable constituency in that country. This makes U.S. foreign policy more transactional, which in turn will generate less traction to the reform process within the UN and the expansion of permanent membership of the UNSC to which India aspires.

India can use its term as a non-permanent member to enhance its credentials as a constructive and responsible member of international society, but an upgrading of its status will have to wait until an indeterminate future date. It may be noted in passing that the inclusion of India, Japan, Germany and Brazil in the UNSC, to which package India is formally committed, will create an even greater imbalance in favour of the West versus the Rest in world affairs. India is one of the world's biggest economies, which even the pessimists cannot deny. Accordingly, its voice resonates

and is capable of making a significant contribution during its tenure by emphasising and strengthening multilateralism as a means of making the world safer.

Multipolar focus

India needs to uphold the objective of a multipolar world and counter existing trends towards unilateralism, ethno-centrism, protectionism and racial intolerance. It should seek to protect the World Trade Organisation from American attempts to undermine it, since the WTO's dispute mechanism is a resource for developing countries, as is the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the UN Human Rights Council and other UN bodies despite the U.S. and a few other countries withdrawing support to them. India should attempt to make progress on the non-discriminatory elimination of weapons of mass destruction, protection of the environment against global warming, safeguarding outer space from weaponisation, and enhancing respect for diversity and plurality in world politics. India should underline the validity of Article 2 of the UN Charter that provides for state sovereignty and safeguards countries against outside interference in the domestic affairs of other states. In upholding respect for a rules-based order in international society, India should underline the sanctity of treaties such as the multilateral accord with Iran endorsed by the Security Council and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Among country-specific topics that are likely to re-appear before the UNSC are the 'frozen' disputes of Cyprus, Palestine, Ukraine and North Korea. On each of these, India has taken a balanced position that needs little reset. Kashmir remains on the UN agenda and if the situation in the Kashmir Valley deteriorates, the issue may be revived in the UNSC by Pakistan, although third parties have no enthusiasm for involving themselves in India-Pakistan disputes. If reports are true that Mr. Modi is seeking to normalise relations with China during this term in office, it will greatly strengthen India's position.

Pakistan and the terror angle

It bears repetition that the growth of India's economy and its democratic system are our best insurance policy; witness what China has been able to get away with in respect of the Uighurs. New Delhi's preoccupation with Pakistan finds its articulation in the subject of international and cross-border terrorism. Although the context is normally couched in general terms, no one is in doubt that the Indian reference is to Pakistan. The question of an international convention against terrorism has been under discussion in UN committees for many years, and the UNSC will not be the forum for headway on this. India could use its presence on the UNSC's sanctions subcommittee to proscribe Pakistan-based militant groups and individuals. But experience shows that this is frankly of dubious benefit when weighed against the effort expended.

New Delhi will feel in the next few years that its time has come for a major role on the world stage, but big player status will be difficult without India being pivotal in the South Asian region. In this respect, India's regional status is insufficiently credible. Accordingly, on all issues before the UNSC, India must give exceptional weightage as to how they will have an impact on the Indian subcontinent.

Demosthenes in Fourth Century BC Athens stated that diplomats had "no battleships at their disposal... their weapons are words and opportunities". India's presence on the UNSC will present opportunities to enhance the country's reputation. American policies in India's near-neighbourhood towards West Asia, Russia and China present challenges that can be met only with great skill and delicate balance. India should aim to end its eighth term on the Council with its merit- and legality-based judgments intact and widely respected.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Why in the discussion?

- Under the major diplomatic victory of India, the Asia Pacific group of 55 countries has given its support unanimously to India's temporary membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- This group also includes China and Pakistan. Countries supporting India's candidature include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE) And Vietnam.
- With this support India's claim has become very strong. This election can happen in June next year.
- If India wins this election, then India will become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the next two years.
- In fact, for the 2021-22 in the UNSC, five temporary countries will be elected to make a non-permanent members. There are a total of 15 countries claiming this. Any five of these 15 countries will be made non-permanent members of the UNSC.
- India has been a non-permanent members for 7 times in 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985, 1991-1992 and 2011-2012.

What is it?

- The Security Council is the most important unit of the United Nations, which was formed in 1945 during World War II.
- The Security Council has five permanent members- America, Britain, France, Russia and China. The permanent members of the Security Council have the right to veto.
- The membership of these countries demonstrates the balance of power after the second world war.

- Apart from these permanent member countries, 10 other countries are included in the Security Council as non-permanent members for two years.
- Permanent and non-permanent members are alternately appointed to be chairmen of the Council for one month.
- The purpose of choosing temporary member countries is to create regional balance in the Security Council.
- Election is done by member countries for non-permanent membership. It consists of five members from Asian or African countries, two South American countries, one from Eastern Europe and two from Western Europe or other areas.

What will be the benefit of India from a permanent seat?

- India will play important role in important global issues and policy formulation.
- Help in reducing China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- India's image of emerging super power will go a long way.
- In the context of POK and Blochistan, will be able to build a strong hold on Pakistan.
- Will be able to develop socio-economic development of the country
- The Standing Seat will enable India to speak more strongly in global geo-politics.
- The permanent membership of the Security Council will provide India with veto power.
- The permanent membership of the Security Council will prove to be helpful in strengthening the mechanisms for safeguarding external security threats and state-sponsored terrorism against India.

Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

1. Consider the following statements-

1. India recently presented its claim as a member of Security Council from Asia-Pacific Region.
2. All members of Asia- Pacific except Pakistan have supported India.
3. If India is chosen then it will happen for eighth time when India will act as a member of United Nations Security Council.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) Only 1
(c) 1 and 3 (d) All of the above

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

- Q. India has recently presented its claim as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Discuss the factors that strengthen the Indian claim of permanent membership at Security Council. (250 Words)**

Note: Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 30 July. is 1(d).

