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Issue Brief

Pakistan's Opposition to the Creation of New Permanent Seats at United Nations Security Council

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Pakistan on Monday, November 7, 2016 strongly opposed the creation of new permanent seats at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).¹ The opposition came during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session on Security Council Reforms. While addressing the session, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Dr. Maleeha Lodhi voiced Pakistan's concerns over the creation of new permanent seats at the UNSC and said that Pakistan firmly opposes the idea of such a move.

Dr. Lodhi rightly pointed out that the creation of new permanent seats will definitely "serve to satisfy the hunger for power and privilege of a few states and not address the issue of representation."² Pakistan also raised its concerns and question earlier in June this year about how the addition of new permanent seats to the UNSC will improve the representativeness and effectiveness of the UNSC body. A body whose very existence puts a big question mark in academic circles on the democratic nature of the UN organisation.

The Pakistani ambassador reiterated that no satisfactory answer to the question regarding such a move's efficacy has been given till date. In fact, Dr. Lodhi in her address stated that such a move would have the opposite effect.

Pakistan's opposition to the creation of new permanent seats in the UNSC is facing serious disgust and criticism from a few countries who wish to become permanent members of the UNSC, especially India.

India has been struggling extremely hard to get itself into the "big league" along with other global powers and to this end it has been lobbying to become a permanent member of the UNSC. Acquiring membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is also on India's agenda to achieve a 'world power' status but to no avail yet.

Pakistan's firm stance against the creation of new permanent seats in the UNSC is purely on grounds of merit and facts. Dr. Lodhi in her address to the UNGA session on SC Reforms was right in pointing out that the current deadlock in the SC reform process was due to a handful of states seeking to "promote a self-arrogated right to an unequal status."³ She termed the creation of new permanent seats in the UNSC, "the anti-thesis of principles enshrined in the UN Charter."⁴ This statement is a hard core fact.

¹ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1294912/pakistan-opposes-creation-of-new-permanent-seats-at-un-security-council>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

In order to become a permanent member of the UNSC, there are a few prerequisites that a country needs to fulfil in order to be eligible for the status. Currently, there are four countries who are striving for a permanent position in the UNSC, namely Germany, Brazil, Japan and India. Hypothetically, even if these four countries are considered for a permanent position in the UNSC, the former three still have a better case but not India. Here's why:

- India is the biggest violator of UN Charter Resolutions and human rights (Article 1, 2, 6, 10, and 12 to list a few. Point and case Indian Occupied Kashmir and the atrocities committed by Indian state and forces).⁵
- Kashmir Dispute is a recognised and declared issue adopted by the UNSC and the council have also passed several resolutions on Kashmir as well.⁶ With a pending dispute like Kashmir, India does not qualify for a permanent seat at the UNSC.
- India does not have the capacity to exert certain extent of strength (militaristically and economically) to become a permanent member in the UNSC. It is not even close being at par with the rest of the candidates for the permanent seat let alone the permanent members.
- India does not exercise strong and tangible international influence (no matter how much it claims otherwise). Proof of that lies in India's failed campaign to isolate Pakistan internationally and also during the BRICS conference earlier this year.
- India's contribution to the UN fund (25th in ranking with 0.666%) is far less than what Japan (with 10.8%, 2nd largest contribution after the US), Germany (7.14% 3rd) and Brazil (2.93%) contribute.⁷ India is not even in the top 10 contributors. So much for India's claim of being an economic giant when 21.2% of its population still lives under poverty line.
- There are far more under and unrepresented regions in the world that need representation in the UNSC, e.g. Africa, South America and even the Muslim world for that matter.
- India's poverty and equity indexes are far inferior as compared to other three candidates for permanent position in the UNSC for it to be even considered for membership into the club.⁸
- In terms of Human Development Index, India, if made a permanent member in the UNSC, would be at the lowest (130th out of 188, with a score of .609) if compared with other UNSC members. India would even rank lower than Brazil (75th), Germany (6th) and Japan (20th).⁹

⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/>

⁷ <https://factly.in/united-nations-budget-contributions-by-member-countries/>

⁸ <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/IND>

- Finally, there are many structural issues such as how will adding one more "veto" to the equation improve UNSC's ability to solve issues and reach unanimous consensus on international matters. As a matter of fact, it would do the opposite.

All the above outlined arguments support Pakistan's stance on the creation of new permanent seats in the UNSC. However, "Pakistan does support the expansion of non-permanent seats in the Security Council to make it more democratic, accountable, transparent and effective."¹⁰ Pakistan has said this time and again at the UN forum.

The world should stop criticising Pakistan's stance on this matter and look at the bigger picture. Expansion of permanent UNSC seats is not only unnecessary but illogical as well. It will disrupt the international order and hierarchy and further complicate international matters. United Nations was created as an organisation to maintain peace and stability and it should be allowed to function as such.

⁹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

¹⁰ <http://www.dawn.com/news/1294912/pakistan-opposes-creation-of-new-permanent-seats-at-un-security-council>