



# U.N. REFORM WATCH no 8.

*Analyses from Associates of CENTER FOR U.N. REFORM EDUCATION*

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## **A Competing Model: A Security Council with 20 members**

By Walter Hoffmann

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According to The Japan Times, Japan is preparing to introduce a new model, which enlarges the Security Council from 15 to 21 members. While the Japanese officials will not confirm the details, sources say Japan plans to increase the number of permanent seats and create a new category to allow countries to serve terms consecutively. In November last year, John R. Bolton, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, said that the United States would *not* reconsider any of the proposals for Security Council expansion, put forward over the summer. Recently, Japan has withdrawn from the coalition it formed with India, Germany, and Brazil, and started its own consultations with the United States. While Japan's move to consider alternative methods is encouraging, a permanent seat, especially for Japan, is not likely to be accepted by China, who would veto Japan's permanent inclusion to the council, if the issue comes to a vote. For the sake of not slowing debate on the enlargement of the council, states should start giving serious consideration to non-permanent models.

What are the characteristics of a model that might stand a chance of gaining wider support? First, it would need to keep the council compact, consisting of no more than 20 members; second, it would avoid opposition from regional rivals by not expanding the number of permanent seats; third, it would accommodate Japan, the second largest contributor to the U.N. budget and a U.S. ally; fourth, it would ensure more representation from the developing world. The following plan, called Model X, enlarges the council to 20 members by adding five four-year renewable term seats; two four-year renewable seats for Africa, two for Asia, and one for the Americas and the Pacific. It would be up to each region to decide whether the terms of the states occupying these special seats should be renewed. Considering Europe's overrepresentation in the permanent seats of the current council, Model X does not give Europe an additional four-year renewable term. Model X has kept in mind the possibility that the European Union may claim a permanent seat in lieu of United Kingdom and France. Any model that enlarges the council must also be accompanied by assurances that would improve the working methods of the council, by making it more accountable, transparent, and inclusive.

### **Previous Plans**

During the summer of 2005, three main proposals were debated. The most heavily promoted one came from the so called Group of Four, G4 –Brazil, Germany, India and Japan. It enlarged the council to 25 and granted permanent seats to the four sponsors, plus two unnamed African countries. That was not well received by G4's regional rivals, including China, and also by the United States which has been consistent in voicing opposition to a council consisting of more than 20 members. Canada and eleven other countries, including Pakistan and Italy, opposed expansion of the permanent category and proposed a 25-member council with 10 additional rotating seats. The African Union put forward a competing 26-member-council plan, demanding veto powers for their new permanent seats, plus one additional rotating seat. At the African Union summit on October 28, 2005, African countries refused to drop their demand for veto powers and no compromise agreement was reached with the G4 states.

### **The Model X difference**

The primary difference with model X is that it envisions a more compact council by adding only five new seats as opposed to the 9 or 11 new members, proposed by previous models. Another major difference can be found in the way Model X groups the member states. It moves the Pacific countries from the highly populated Asia to the Americas, thereby ensuring more balanced representation from each continental region; accordingly Africa, Asia, Europe, Americas and the Pacific would each have five seats. In 1965, there were only 111 member states; today there are 191. Of the 80 that were added after 1965, eleven new states came from the Pacific and nine came from the Caribbean portion of the Americas.

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Model X is similar to Model B and the Blue Model in that it creates a new renewable category to accommodate the member states who contribute most to the United Nations financially, militarily or diplomatically. [[See Special Paper No. 4 for more info on Model B and the Blue Model](#)]. This category, allowing re-election by the continental regions assures representation without freezing any particular state in a permanent seat and allows other heavy-contributing states to rotate into the four-year term at a later date.

While many member states have indicated a preference to stay with the 1965 electoral divisions that have been used for electing members to the non-renewable two year terms, Model X re-arranged these for three reasons; first it built on the concept of four continental groupings, set forth by the High Level Panel; second it combined Western and Eastern Europe to reflect the unification of the two Europes after the end of the cold war; and finally by moving Pacific states from Asia to the Americas, it ensured a more balanced representation among the continental regions. One cannot improve the structure of the Security Council to reflect the current state of world affairs, by using the electoral grouping method the General Assembly developed in 1965. The ten existing two year non-renewable terms, for example, may be allocated by Model X as follows; Africa (one seat each for East Africa, West Africa, and the Sahara); Asia (one seat each for East Asia and West Asia); Europe (one seat each for East Europe and West Europe); Americas and Pacific (one seat for South America, one seat for North and Central America jointly, and one seat for the Pacific states).

## What's next?

It is well known by now that Security Council reform is not the first item (if not the last) on Washington's "to do" list on U.N. reform. Management reforms and replacement of the undermined Commission on Human Rights are the U.S. priorities. But this should not discourage member states and their respective capitals from starting to discuss alternative proposals and moving away from the ones that have not found the requisite support. Jan Eliasson, the President of the General Assembly said to the New York Times' Warren Hoge that he "decided to be in a listening mode" on the issue of Security Council reform (November 18, 2005). Regions should start discussing alternative models and agree on a proposal. Model X or one of its variations might be a good place to start.

### Model X

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(To view the list of states in Model X electoral groupings, visit Center's web site at

[www.centerforunreform.org](http://www.centerforunreform.org)

| Electoral Group      | Number of States | Current Permanent Seats | Two year terms Non-renewable | New Four-year renewable terms | Total Council Members |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Africa               | 53               | 0                       | 3                            | 2                             | 5                     |
| Asia                 | 43               | 1                       | 2                            | 2                             | 5                     |
| Europe               | 47               | 3                       | 2                            | 0                             | 5                     |
| Americas and Pacific | 48               | 1                       | 3                            | 1                             | 5                     |
| Total                | 191              | 5                       | 10                           | 5                             | 20                    |

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