REGIONAL REPRESENTATION AS A BASIS FOR SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes and illustrates a universally representative Security Council with twelve “regional” seats: four for individual nations (USA, China, India, and Japan) and eight for multi-national groupings (e.g., Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean). Each multi-national region would nominate several candidates to represent it and from such slates the General Assembly would choose one. Regions would cast weighted votes (W) based on the formula, \( W = P + C + 8.33\% \), wherein \( P \) and \( C \) represent their total population and contributions to the UN budget respectively as percentages of world totals, while the constant, 8.33% would signify the equal worth of each regional perspective. Weights would range from Europe’s 16.2% down to 4.3% for the “Westminster League” (Canada, Australia, New Zealand). The paper discusses the dynamics of decision-making within the proposed system and also illustrates a variant system wherein certain nations (e.g., Turkey) could opt for membership in two regions.

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Panels and governments cannot change the world by themselves. They need not only good ideas but also sustained pressure from internationalists in all countries – people who are both visionary and pragmatic....

Kofi Annan

1. Introduction:

Since its inception, the United Nations Security Council has come to be increasingly regarded as unrepresentative of the peoples of the world and the allocation of power within that body is now widely regarded as both unrealistic and unfair. As a consequence, the legitimacy of many Council decisions is questioned. Those who can do so either circumvent such decisions or ignore them altogether. Thus, in the absence of generally accepted lawful means of settling disputes, nations that possess great power will seek to coerce other nations to gain their ends. This perilous state of affairs should and can be corrected, That belief provides the reason for this essay, which presents the case for a system of universal regional representation in the Security Council with realistically weighted, veto-free voting.

The paper indicates why previous proposals for Council expansion have failed to get the desired support; argues that a radical new approach is needed; provides an objective mathematical formula for assigning weighted votes to twelve regionally selected Council members in a way that is at once both reasonable and fair; discusses the nature and likely inclinations of each of twelve regions within the system; illustrates two variants of the system, one without and one with overlapping regional membership; and describes methods whereby regional delegates and alternates would be selected and by which general policy and specific voting decisions would be made. After summarizing the numerous anticipated advantages of the proposed system, the paper suggests strategies that might be adopted in what is likely to be a long and difficult campaign to bring the proposed new system, or something like it, to fruition.

The recommendations put forward here are rather detailed, I have no expectation, however, that they are likely to be accepted precisely as presented. Rather, my purpose in spelling out the suggested reforms as fully as I do is simply to anticipate and respond to likely questions and demonstrate that a radically new system is indeed workable. I would hope that such an exercise will serve as a catalyst for additional creative ideas and presume that some of them will build on those offered in this essay.
2. A Plethora of Abortive Proposals:

No component of the United Nations system has been the subject of more proposals for reform than the Security Council. The period 2003-2005 alone witnessed dozens of such proposals.\(^2\) The most notable were the two models put forth by the High-level Panel on Threats, Security and Change in 2004. These were essentially endorsed by Kofi Annan the following year.\(^3\) Not surprisingly, virtually all recent proposals called for enlarging the Council to make it more representative in light of the UN’s substantial growth since the previous increase in the size of Council from eleven to fifteen members in 1966.\(^4\)

Recommendations envisaged new permanent members, new semi-permanent or rotating members, new non-permanent members, and various combinations of these possibilities. A widely endorsed figure for the number of Council seats was twenty-four, but at least one official proposal called for as many as twenty-six.\(^5\) The enlargement recommended in most of the recent proposals would have come largely from Africa and Asia. While several proposals envisaged a single seat for the European Union,\(^6\) the present norm of assigning seats to individual countries was not challenged. Hence, even in a Council with as many as twenty-six seats, the great majority of the world’s countries and a substantial, though smaller, proportion of its population would be without representation in any given year, given the fact that seat holders normally vote on the basis of their individual country’s interests, rather than on any assessment of the dominant concerns of the region from which they were chosen.\(^7\)

A characteristic feature of most of the SC enlargement proposals is that they were framed to advance the political interests of major world regions (e.g., several proposals emanating from Africa) or of particular sets of countries (e.g., the G4 proposal put forward jointly by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) rather than to promote the welfare of the world as a whole. Not surprisingly, such schemes were met with vigorous opposition from excluded neighbors and/or traditional antagonists: China opposing Japan, Argentina opposing Brazil, Italy opposing Germany, Pakistan opposing India, and so forth, often with little regard to the objective merits of the case for inclusion. A further obstacle to reform was the marked lack of enthusiasm from the United States, which was reluctant, despite its possession of the veto, to see its power diluted in an enlarged SC. Finally, we most note the failure of would-be reformers to set for their proposals a compelling, rationale that would be universally applicable rationale and stand the test of time given the inevitable flux in the fortunes of nations.

So far as I am aware, no proposal put forward by any official government agency challenged the legitimacy of the anachronistic privileged position of the P-5, who, by virtue of having been on the winning side in World War II, were accorded a place on the Security Council in perpetuity. Although some proposals did recommend modest limitation in the use of the P-5 veto,\(^8\) none had the temerity to advocate its total elimination.
3. A Radically New Approach:

Convinced that the present structure of the Security Council is fundamentally flawed and that none of the officially advanced proposals for reform comes close to correcting the Council’s deficiencies, I offer here a radical departure from all previous recommendations, namely a system of universal representation by major world regions, each of which would have an appropriately weighted, objectively determined vote. In subsequent sections of this paper, I shall demonstrate the manifold advantages offered by the proposed new system. I shall conclude by discussing various strategies for implementing the proposed changes, notwithstanding the obvious difficulties in the way of Charter revision.

Let us begin by listing the considerations that might ideally guide the creation of such a system:

- The set of regions established must be alterable over time, perhaps as often as every fifteen years, given the rapidity of political change in the contemporary world.

- Similarly, the number of regions established need not be fixed. The number, however, should not be so few as to preclude expression of the world’s substantial diversity and contrasting geopolitical perspectives. Hence, representation based mainly on continents would prove to be too crude a system.

- Regions should have a population, territorial extent, and/or degree of economic importance such that the legitimacy of their representation in the Security Council will not be seriously questioned.

- The ensemble of regions must be such as to maximize internal homogeneity within each region, with simultaneous regard to a multiplicity of factors: culture, religion, language, economic interests and recent historical experience (say, over the last two or three centuries). This will facilitate the region’s speaking with a single clear majority voice.

- To the extent feasible, the make-up of any given region should preclude co-membership therein of nations that are long-standing antagonists.

- To the extent feasible, no single nation within a multi-national region should have a greater voting weight (W) than that of all the other member nations combined.

- Individual nations, especially those on the periphery of a proposed region should have the right to request membership in another region if that best suits their interest, but without any guarantee that such a request will be honored.
If, as seems desirable, weighted voting is to be allowed, the weights assigned must not create so great a departure from the pre-existing system as to be unacceptable to the nations or blocs that wielded the greatest political influence within that system.

With the above considerations in mind, I have devised a system in which the entire world would be divided for purposes of SC representation into twelve regions up to four of which might consist of single UN member nations and the remainder of which would be multi-national and not necessarily contiguous. The determination of the inclusiveness of each of these regions would initially be set by a committee of the UN General Assembly, but individual nations would then be allowed to request transfer from one region to another subject to the approval of the region within which membership is sought. Map One represents the set of regions that would, in my judgment, prove to be optimal. It reflects, to a great degree, regional organizations (e.g., the EU, Arab League, etc.) that already exist. From time to time, should a compelling need arise, the GA would be empowered to recommend alterations in the regional boundaries without resort to amending the UN Charter.

Each of these regions would be given one seat in the Security Council and the holder of each seat would have a weighted vote ($W$) based on the average of three terms in the following equation:

$$W = \frac{P + C + 8.33\%}{3}$$

wherein $P$ represents the region’s population as a percentage of the total population of all UN member nations, $C$ represents the region’s total contributions to the UN budget as a percentage of the total budget (with contributions being uniformly assessed in proportion to GNP), and $8.33\%$ is a constant signifying that the global perspective of each of the twelve regions is equally worthy of respect. Decisions of the SC on procedural matters would require a total weighted vote exceeding 50%, while actions on substantive matters would require a total weighted two-thirds majority (66.7%) with the concurrent approval of regions whose combined populations totaled more than 50% of the world’s total. Discussion of how seat-holders would be selected, how general regional policies would be formulated, and how voting decisions would be reached are provided in a later section of this paper.

The proposed change would, of course, require an amendment to the United Nations Charter. Text for this amendment is suggested in Appendix One.

Table One provides relevant data for each of the twelve regions, including data on the number of member countries and land area, which do not enter into the weighted voting equation, but are nevertheless of interest.

The validity of the population term of the equation is intuitively obvious. It embodies the democratic principle that is now so conspicuously lacking in both the UNGA, with its
one nation – one vote system of voting\textsuperscript{11} and the Security Council, with its anachronistic and unfair privileged position for the P-5, a subordinate status for another set of politically anointed two-year members (be they great or small), and total exclusion for the 177 remaining UN members. The population term would, of course, be periodically adjusted, say every ten years, in light of differential rates of population growth (or decline) around the world.

The basis for inclusion of the GNP-based contributions term is that it reflects the capacity to be effective.\textsuperscript{12} This is consistent with the wording of Article 23 of the Charter, which stipulates that SC membership shall pay “due regard …. in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of peace and security and to the other purposes of the organization …. “ In determining the value of the term it would be advisable to base it on contributions paid (not merely on assessments) over a stipulated past period of at least five-years duration. From a pragmatic perspective, the world’s wealthier countries would have little incentive to accept the proposed new system if there is no counter-weight to the population term which greatly privileges populous but relatively poor nations such as China (despite its recent economic surge) and India. An additional pragmatic consideration is that linking voting strength to actually paid contributions insures that nations would pay what they owe in that failure to do so will automatically impose a political penalty in the form of reduced voting weight. This would eliminate economic blackmail through the withholding of assessed dues that certain countries (most notably the United States) have occasionally resorted to for political purposes.

\textbf{Table One: Regions to Be Represented in the United Nations Security Council} (Some regional names are here abbreviated; more complete names are provided in the text. Data on number of members and area do not figure in the calculation of voting weights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>No. of UN Members</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
<th>Total GNP (%)</th>
<th>Area (%)</th>
<th>Weighted Vote (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab League</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>11.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>16.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>8.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>14.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Asia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster League</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 192 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0

The constant 8.33\%, representing the presumed equal worth of each region’s global perspective, would, in effect, be accepted as a pragmatic legal fiction. Although that
proposition can neither be proved nor disproved, its acceptance would be akin to that of the legal fiction that posits the sovereign equality of nations within the General Assembly, notwithstanding the enormous variations in their populations, economic or military strength, contributions to the UN budget, or moral standing in the community of nations. The effect of using this term would be to narrow the gulf between the weights of the most and least powerful regions. The range indicated in table one is from 16.19% for Europe to 4.27% for the Westminster League, a ratio of less than 4:1. Without the inclusion of the constant in the equation, the range would have been from 20.12% to 2.24%, yielding a ratio of more than 8:1.

The weights provided by the formula are credible reflections of the real world disparities in power and capability from one region to another, yet not so great as to be unacceptable to the weaker regions. In any event, the system makes a great deal more sense than the present one in which – leaving aside the special position of the P-5 – the vote of SC members with populations of less than a million (e.g., Bahrain, Djibouti, Malta, Mauritius, and current member, Qatar) counted as much as that of any of their then concurrent members, including such giants as India and Japan. Admittedly, this point is largely academic, since the Security Council, whatever its variable composition might be, virtually never takes an action to which any member of the P-5 strongly disapproves.

4. A Fairer, More Workable Allocation of Power:

An important consequence of applying the proposed weighted voting formula is that it would establish a Security Council with a nearly equal balance between the five regions constituting the developed North (i.e., Europe, the US, Japan, Russia and the Westminster League), with a combined weight of 47.19%, and the seven remaining regions of the global South (roughly equivalent to the so-called G-77 + China), with a combined weight of 52.81%. Since a binding vote on a substantive matter would require a two-thirds majority, the practical effect of this near equivalence is that on issues on which there is a North-South division of opinion it would be necessary to engage in a genuine dialogue between the two camps and to forge workable compromises. The resultant outcomes would, I believe, have greater legitimacy in the eyes of the global community than would many decisions rammed through the SC at the insistence of one or more of the predominantly Northern P-5.

Among the reasons that have enabled certain members of the P-5 to gain support for, or to block, certain resolutions within the SC is the susceptibility of weak non-permanent members to coercive pressure on the one hand or to bribery on the other. Such tactics, which were a common feature of the Cold War, regrettably persist in the post-Cold War period. To illustrate the point, consider the remark of the then US Secretary of State, James A. Baker III, after Yemen had the temerity to vote against the US-backed resolution to authorize military action against Iraq in 1991, namely that it would be “the most expensive vote” they’d ever cast. A few days later all American foreign aid to Yemen was terminated. Although it is not easy to prove that the granting or withholding of US aid to weak countries is directly contingent on their support for America’s foreign
policy goals, one study asserts that “poor countries that serve on the ... Security Council typically receive more U.S. aid dollars and find it easier to obtain loans or grants from financial institutions that are strongly influenced by the United States and other economic powerhouses ....”\textsuperscript{15} But, even in the absence of demonstrable coercion or bribery, once precedents of retribution have been established, it becomes difficult for weak SC members to cast their votes without paying due regard to the likelihood of future adverse consequences.

The problem noted in the previous paragraph would almost surely disappear under the system of representation proposed in this essay. While it may be relatively easy to bribe or coerce certain weak countries, it would be well nigh impossible to bribe or coerce a region consisting of numerous countries. By reducing the present enormous power disparities among actors on the United Nations stage the proposed system would enhance the ability of the weak to resist improper pressure from the strong, to act on the merits of individual cases, and to contribute to the crafting of legitimate resolutions.

A final argument against the present system is that there is no empirical validity to the notion that non-permanent members of the Security Council actually seek to represent the wishes of a majority of members of the regional block from which they are selected. Does anyone really believe, for example, that during the four years (1977-78 and 2001-02) when the tiny island of Mauritius held one of the seats reserved for Africa, that it made any effort to determine the wishes of other UN members from that continent? And does Qatar (population 800,000), a current member from Asia, expend any effort in ascertaining how fellow Asian states, such as Japan or India, might feel about matters on which it is required to vote?

5. The Individual Regions:

I comment below first on the four single-nation regions and then on the eight multi-national regions in descending order of their voting strength. In discussing the latter group, I shall consider the inclusiveness and coherence of each region and indicate why certain of its constituent nations might support and others oppose the proposed changes.

The Four Single-Nation Regions: As noted, up to four regions may be constituted by a single member nation. The condition that would have to be met for this to happen would be that the average of the nation’s population and contributions to the UN budget, expressed as percentages of the UN totals, would have to exceed 6%. If there were more than four such nations, only the top four would qualify. Currently, the four qualifying countries would be the United States of America (17.31%), China (15.43%), India (9.26%) and Japan (7.88%). This set of qualifying countries is not likely to change for the foreseeable future. Germany, the country ranking fifth, scores only 4.22%. Applying the weighting formula to each of the four qualifying nations, we derive the following weights: The United States, 14.32% (one seventh of the total), China, 11.09%, India, 8.95%; and Japan, 7.77%.\textsuperscript{16}
When one considers that in the Security Council, as it is presently constituted, the US and China now cast but one vote out of fifteen (6.67% of the total) and would cast only one vote out of twenty-four (4.14%) if the recommendations of the High-level Panel had been adopted, the benefits to those two nations in terms of greatly enhanced voting strength under the proposed system might well provide a sufficient incentive to induce them to give up the veto. In the case of India and Japan, the potential gains would be even greater as they have no veto to give up and are outside the SC much more often than they are in it.

**Europe (16.19%)**:

In the present proposal Europe includes all of the present members of the European Union, as well as a number of eastern European countries presently slated to join or likely to become eligible in the near future, as well as four micro-states (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino) that are in the UN, but not full members of the EU, and Israel. It excludes, however, several former republics of the Soviet Union, which are grouped below with Russia, and Turkey (to be discussed below). The region is already highly integrated and its methods of consultation and policy formulation could well serve as a model for other regions.

In a typical year Europe, excluding Russia, holds four or five seats on the Security Council, as it is presently constituted, including the permanent seats of the United Kingdom and France. Arguably, Europe has been, since the very inception of the UN, the most over-represented of all the continents. Although its voting strength as a proportion of the SC total would be reduced substantially under the proposed system, a substantial reduction would have resulted also under most of the other SC reform proposals put forward in recent years. However, when, as frequently happens, the European members of the EU vote on different sides of a particular issue, canceling each other out, the net result is that Europe’s power in the Council may come to little or nothing. This was the case in the voting on the proposed US resolution to take military action against Iraq in 2003. If, on the other hand, Europe could manage to speak with a united voice, its power would exceed that of any other region. No other part of the world could so effectively serve as a counter-weight to the United States, when and if that need should arise.

**Latin America and the Caribbean (7.77%)**:

This region includes all the countries of the Americas to the south of the United States. All of its members belong to the Organization of American States (OAS); all have had a colonial past; (for the most part ending in the 19th century); and almost all of the region’s population speak one of the Romance languages and adhere to the Roman Catholic faith.

The region typically places two members on the Security Council and several of its more frequently placed member nations would probably initially oppose the reduction in the region’s relative power under the proposed system. Brazil, which aspires to become a permanent member of the Council, might be particularly reluctant to see its hopes for such prominence frustrated. Nevertheless, as in the case of Europe, for Latin America to
be able to speak to the great powers with a united voice would likely enhance the ability of the region to play a significant role in world affairs.

**East Asia and the Pacific (7.46%)**:

This relatively populous region is, arguably, the most culturally diverse of the twelve proposed in this essay. Within it are mingled peoples practicing Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and numerous tribal religions as well as states with political and economic traditions derived from European, American and Asian colonial powers. The region is, however, not nearly as diverse as Asia as a whole, which is presently considered a region (sometimes with Africa and sometimes without) for purposes of representation in the SC as now constituted. In terms of both area and population, the greater part of the region is made up by the ten members of the remarkably successful Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); but there are also a number of non-contiguous outliers (Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and the two Koreas), as well as East Timor and a dozen Pacific island nations. The region’s somewhat anomalous territorial sprawl is explained by the fact that its mainland Asian outliers border China and/or India, both of which qualify as single-nation regions and have no reason to seek the attachment of their much smaller neighbors for purposes of representation.

Over time, the region has been rather poorly represented in the SC, usually having either one or no representatives in a given year. Remarkably, Indonesia, the world’s fourth most populous nation, is now serving only its third term on the SC while Vietnam, the region’s second most populous member, is the most populous country never to have served on the SC. As an area of rapid economic growth, the region would expect a gradual increase in its weighted vote in the type of SC proposed here and would presumably be a strong supporter of the new system.

**Africa (6.56%)**:

Made up of the 44 nations of Africa that are not members of the Arab League, this region has more member states than any of the eleven others proposed in this essay. It also has the smallest gross regional product. All of its members are, along with its nine continental neighbors to the north, members of the African Union, a presently weak body, but one that seeks to emulate and benefit from the integrative experience of the EU. With only two partial exceptions, Ethiopia and Liberia, the worldview of this region has been shaped by its long experience with colonialism and neo-colonialism and their attendant racism and rampant economic exploitation.

Given Africa’s leading share of the membership in the UN, some proponents of an enlarged SC, including the previously cited High-level Panel, have suggested that Africa as a whole be awarded one fourth of the seats on the SC, including two permanent seats. In light of these recommendations, it will not be easy to persuade the nations of Africa to settle for a much smaller share of the voting power in the SC. This would be especially true of aspirants to permanent or semi-permanent seats, most notably Nigeria and South
Africa. However, questions of prestige aside, if Africa’s nations reflect on their negligible effectiveness in the framing of SC decisions to date and their susceptibility to the pressures applied by external powers, they might conclude that they will be able to exert much more influence speaking with a common voice than through the voices of a limited number of mainly weak states, each acting in accordance with its own political agenda.

**West Asia (5.61%):**

Grouped within the West Asian region are twelve predominantly Muslim, but non-Arab, nations of Asia from Turkey eastward as far as the outlying nation of Bangladesh. Other members would include Pakistan and Iran, six former republics of the Soviet Union and the Republic of Maldives. Despite the strong cultural similarities and the common religion characterizing this region, its level of political integration is rather low and the modern political antecedents of the member nations are quite diverse. While all of its member nations are among the 57 forming the Organization of the Islamic Conference, there is no organization akin to the Arab League or ASEAN that covers an area corresponding to the whole or greater part of the region.\(^{18}\)

With the exception of Pakistan, the region has not been well represented in the Security Council. In many years it has lacked even a single member. Thus, its constituent nations would presumably look favorably on the proposed new system.

**Arab League (4.96%):**

This proposed region is coterminous with the presently existing League of Arab States and it is marked by a high degree of linguistic, religious and cultural homogeneity and a shares a legacy of Ottoman and/or Western imperialism. It has historically acted in concert on numerous issues and will, for the foreseeable future, have great strategic importance because it accounts for the lion’s share of the world’s production and reserves of petroleum and natural gas.

As a rule, one Arab state occupies a seat in the Security Council. While the region’s relative power might be seen as being slightly diminished under the proposed new system, the loss would not be great enough to elicit strenuous objection to a change.

**Russia and Neighboring Republics (4.38%):**

The area included in this region is that of the present Russian Federation along with five neighboring republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States (successor to the Soviet Union) that are culturally – though not in all cases geographically – European, namely Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. A special problem in this grouping (to which we shall return below) is that the political, economic and military power of Russia within it is so much greater than that of all the other members combined.

In that Russia presently occupies a permanent seat in the SC and is still a major player on the UN stage, despite the dissolution of the USSR, the implosion of the Russian economy
and the nation’s rapid demographic decline, it seems likely that it would not be especially receptive to any major change in the composition of the Security Council, though the other states within the region might well be. But Russia’s attitude might change in the future as its economy revives, thanks to its vast resource endowment in regard to petroleum, natural gas, other minerals, and, most important, skilled manpower.

**Westminster League (4.27%)**:

The term “Westminster League” was coined to relate to Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all of which are parliamentary democracies within the British Commonwealth of Nations, established by the 1931 Statute of Westminster. All three nations have similar histories of mainly European settlement, primarily English-speaking populations, advanced free-market economies, and active and constructive engagement with the UN. Though sparsely populated and accounting for only 0.9% of the world’s population, the region collectively contributes 3.6% of the UN’s dues (more than each of six other regions). Moreover, it accounts for almost a seventh of the world’s land area and therefore bears a substantial responsibility in preserving global biodiversity and a healthy global ecosystem.

Taken together, the region’s three nations have served a total of twenty-five years in the Security Council, during the sixty-one years of its existence. There is ample reason to suppose that it would see itself benefiting substantially from the proposed new system of SC representation.

**Closing Observations**:

Depending on their divergent aspirations and perspectives, many nations will view the proposed SC reforms favorably, while others, especially nations that had hoped to gain permanent or semi-permanent seats (with the notable exceptions of India and Japan) will not. Although certain regions that might appear to be losing relative strength (e.g., Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean) seem likely initially to oppose the proposed change, dispassionate reflection on the inadequacies of the present system should eventually lead most of their constituent nations to a different view. The vast majority of nations would realize that in most years they are not represented at all, since seat holders predictably act almost exclusively in the interests of their respective home nations, rather than in the interests of the regions from which they happened to be selected. Further, nations would realize that, at any given time, some of the ten non-permanent members that ostensibly represent them are strongly constrained by considerations of political expediency and are reluctant to give offense to great powers on whose good will they largely depend. Thus, the collective effectiveness of the non-permanent members tends to be substantially less than it might ideally be. However, under the proposed system of universal representation, every nation would have a voice (even if it should turn out to be a minority voice) in the formulation of regional policy and in deciding how to vote on a specific issue. The mechanics of the process are spelled out in the next section of this paper.
Finally, if, as I anticipate, restructuring of the Security Council forms part of a much larger package of UN reforms, it would likely be accompanied by measures to strengthen the over-all competence of the world body so that the ability of the UN to be of use to the needy nations of the global South would be greatly enhanced. Surrendering a bit of power in a relatively ineffectual organization in the hope of deriving substantial benefits from a strengthened and improved organization should strike most world leaders as an eminently sensible trade-off.

6. Representation with Overlapping Regional Membership:

To this point, the discussion has presumed that each of the world’s nations would have membership in only one of the twelve proposed regions. But numerous nations have significant ties to more than one of the regions outlined on Map One. Turkey, for example, aspires to be a member of the European Union, but might also wish to retain a voice in the affairs of the West Asian region, in which it would be an especially influential member. Similarly, the United Kingdom, while among the more important members of the European Union, might wish to play a role in the Westminster League. So, too, might Ireland. And the nine African nations that account for more than half the strength of the Arab League, might wish to maintain their bond with the forty-four other African nations comprising the African region.

Table Two indicates the areas of the world that, in the author’s view, might wish to belong to two regions for purposes of representation in the SC if a workable system for doing so were in place.

Table Two: Likely Areas of Overlap between Proposed Regions
(The first region named in each list below is the one to which the countries indicated were initially assigned.)

- **Arab League and Africa**: Nine Arab League members in northern and eastern Africa.
- **Arab League and West Asia**: Iraq or parts thereof in the event of partition of the country.
- **East Asia & Pacific and Westminster League**: Six small Pacific island states with strong ties to Australia and New Zealand; less likely: Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.
- **Europe and Westminster League**: United Kingdom and Ireland.
- **Latin America and Caribbean**: Eleven small former British dependencies in Caribbean region plus Guyana.
- **Russia & Neighboring Republics**: Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine; less likely: Georgia and Armenia.
- **West Asia and East Asia**: Bangladesh.
- **West Asia and Russia and Europe**: Turkey.
- **West Asia and Russia & Neighboring Republics**: Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan; less likely: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

In all likelihood, however, not every one of the forty-five countries indicated in Table Two would actually take advantage of the opportunity for dual regional membership. It
is also conceivable that unforeseen circumstances would lead certain unspecified countries to exercise the choice to do so.

Although allowing national affiliations with only one region would certainly make for a simpler system than one in which nations could simultaneously belong to two regions, there is no reason in principle why the latter could not be established. The key to establishing a just and workable system would be to establish rules whereby a country choosing membership in two regions would have its weight in decision-making divided between the two so that its overall contribution to SC decision-making would be the same as if it were in only one region.

The weighted votes of regions would, obviously, be affected if they were to include one or more nations with dual regional membership. To illustrate how the adjustments might be made, let us consider the hypothetical cases of Turkey, with dual membership in West Asia, the area to which it was originally assigned, and Europe; and of the United Kingdom, with dual membership in Europe, the area to which it was originally assigned, and the Westminster League. Turkey’s population and budgetary contributions are 1.127% and 0.629% respectively of the UN totals. But those two percentages would be divided evenly between West Asia and Europe in calculating the weighted votes of each, diminishing the original weight of the former and adding to the original weight of Europe. In the case of the United Kingdom, the population and contributions terms would be 0.978% and 4.738% respectively. Adding half of each to the totals for the Westminster League would substantially increase the weighted vote of that region, while simultaneously diminishing the weighted vote for Europe. If these were to be the only two changes from the original assignments, the net effect would be a slight diminution in the weighted votes of both West Asia and of Europe and a substantial increase in the weighted vote of the Westminster League.

There is no way of knowing a priori which set of countries would opt for dual regional membership. But if the dual membership option were liberally utilized, I would anticipate significant increases in the weighted votes of Africa and the Westminster League, a more modest increase for East Asia, no significant changes for Latin America and the Caribbean and Russia and Neighboring Republics, modest decreases for Europe and West Asia, and a significant decrease for the Arab League.

A final provision in respect to nations with overlapping regional memberships would be that they could be elected to represent in the Security Council either of the two regions to which they belong, but not both simultaneously.

7. Means of Selection, Terms and Functioning of Representatives and Alternates:

The present proposal would maintain the role of the General Assembly in electing members of the Security Council. It would, however, modify the procedure substantially, introducing a genuinely competitive system that would be far more democratic than the highly politicized system now in effect. Here we shall first consider the means of
selecting representatives and alternates from the multi-national regions and then examine two possible scenarios for the four single-nation regions. I would propose overlapping three-year terms, with four regional members being elected each year. Terms would commence on the first working day of January in the year following election.

Multi-national regions would each be required to nominate from two to five specific nations or individuals (but not more than one per nation) to represent them under any of a variety of procedures. Each region would be allowed to adopt the procedure most congenial to its members. The list of candidates would be presented to the General Assembly in June and the period from then until September would be used for examining and debating the relative merits of the respective candidates. From each regional list of nominees the General Assembly would then elect a representative (as it now does from the five larger groupings of nations under the present system), as well as an alternate.

An important feature of the recommended procedure is that it would promote meritocracy in that nations within a region would wish to put forward as potential nominees only highly capable individuals or countries held in high international regard, knowing that poorly qualified nominees would garner little support from other member nations in the region and stand virtually no chance of election by the General Assembly as a whole. Additionally, once chosen, SC delegates would strive to be responsive to the concerns of all of the countries in the region they represented and would be accountable for all their official actions and votes. Failure to satisfy the expectations of a substantial segment of their regional constituents would possibly result in their recall and would greatly reduce one’s chances for reelection to the SC if consecutive terms were to be allowed.

In the cases of the single-member regions (the United States, China, India and Japan), one might question the wisdom of requiring the nomination of slates of two or more candidates from which the General Assembly would make a choice. Those four powers would very likely insist on exercising their sovereign right to name their own representatives and alternates and to recall them at their own pleasure. Allowing them this perquisite would not substantially affect the working of the system. But, because the decisions of the major powers will likely have a substantial impact on the rest of the world, a case can be made that the General Assembly might be accorded some role in selecting the better/best of a given nation’s nominees. A suitable compromise might be to allow the four key nations the option of putting forth multiple candidates or making their choices without reference to the will of the global community.

Although the proposed system prescribes three-year terms for all representatives and alternates, it would admit the possibility of alternates replacing delegates in mid-term for reasons of poor performance, malfeasance, poor health or death. Whether it would be advisable to permit a country in a multi-nation region or an individual to stand for reelection, however, is moot. While there are obvious advantages to continuity, in the case of multi-nation regions, the advantages of rotation are also clear in that such a practice would prevent domination of the region by its most prominent member and heighten the sense of inclusiveness within the system as a whole. Possibly, rather than
laying down a uniform rule for all regions, it might be best to allow each region to decide the issue in whatever way it deems most appropriate.

As at present, representatives and their alternates would be guided by the foreign ministries of the nations they represent. In the case of multi-national regions this presupposes frequent consultation with and among the foreign ministries of the countries comprising the region. Not long ago this would have been impossible; but in an age of electronic communication such difficulties can rather easily be largely overcome. While much of the deliberation of issues before the Security Council would be handled via the Internet, it would be in the general interest of the region to have periodic face-to-face summit meetings to formulate general regional policies.

Within each multi-national region it would be necessary to formulate procedural rules for the guidance of SC representatives and alternates. Each such region, presumably, would wish to devise its own formula for casting weighted national votes within the region itself. There would be no necessity for all to adopt the same system. In the Russian and Neighboring Republics region, for example, one would hardly expect the weight of Russia’s vote to be no greater than that of Armenia. Nor in Latin America and the Caribbean would one expect the vote Nevis and Saint Kitts (population 47,000) to count the same as that of Brazil (population 184 million).

Some regions, especially those with large national disparities in GNP, might adopt a formula for national weights similar to the one by which regional weights were determined in respect to the SC, namely:

\[ NW = \frac{P + G + M}{3} \]

wherein \( NW \) signifies the nation’s weighted vote, \( P \) the nation’s population, \( G \) is the nation’s GNP, and \( M \) the nation’s unit membership, all expressed as percentages of the regional total.

But there are important differences between the situation within regions and that within the world as a whole. First, intra-regional disparities in per capita income are generally far less than are such disparities from one world region to another. Second, although nations pay annual assessments to the United Nations, there are no comparable assessments levied against nations within multi-national regions. While in devising an acceptable voting formula at the world level it presently seems necessary to take account of the great disparities in contributions to the UN in order to induce the wealthier regions to join in the system, such an argument carries much less weight at the regional level. Consequently, a more democratic and reasonable formula for assigning national voting weights within individual regions might be:

\[ NW = \frac{P + M}{2} \]

wherein \( NW \), \( P \) and \( M \) have the same meaning as in the formula above and the \( G \) term is lacking. This might be designated as the required default formula in the event that
agreement on another formula cannot be reached within a stipulated time period after the new system goes into effect.

An important consideration in favor of the default formula is that its adoption would prevent the domination of decision-making in certain regions by their most powerful nations. For example, within the Westminster League (in a system without overlapping regions) Canada has a substantially greater population and GNP than Australia and New Zealand combined. Similarly, within Russia and Neighboring Republics, the disparity between Russia’s population and GNP, 67.5% and 81.4% of the regional total respectively, would provide even greater dominance than in the case of Canada. If the proposed default formula were applied, the national weighted votes of the six member nations of the region would be: Russia 42.1%, Ukraine 19.4%, Belarus 10.8%, Georgia 9.4%, Moldova 9.3%, and Armenia 9.0%.20

Once national voting weights have been determined, each multi-state region would have to establish rules on voting. For example, the rules might call for simple majorities on procedural matters, two-thirds majorities on most substantive matters, and three-fourths majorities on SC resolutions calling for armed intervention in a given area. If such rules and the default national weighed voting formula were in place, they would permit Russia to have veto power within its own six-nation region, yet not so much power as to make unilateral decisions for that region.

It is in order to observe that the members of multi-national regions would presumably wish to consult not only on issues likely to come before the Security Council, but also in regard to matters falling under the purview of the General Assembly and other organs of the UN system. In fact, they could also use such meetings to discuss matters for which the UN bears little or no responsibility (e.g. multi-national river basin development, educational exchanges, migration rules, tariff policies, etc.). Thus, the system of regional representation would almost certainly lead to fruitful regional consultation and cooperation on a variety of important matters and foster regional integration.

Finally, consultation and cooperation ought not to be limited to the regions established for purposes of SC representation. There is no reason, for example, why the nations of NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Area) or SAARC (the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) should not continue to carry out all the functions that those organizations now try to address even though the member states lie in two or more regions. Nor should there be any bar to prevent the members of any region from inviting the participation of extra-regional states in deliberating a question of mutual concern, even if the invited parties are not given a vote in determining the region’s position when it comes down to a vote in the SC.

8. Advantages of the Proposed System:

We are now in a position to summarize the advantages of the proposed Security Council reforms in comparison to the present system and others that have been proposed:
• The system provides universal participation in decision-making.

• Regions represented would have a much greater degree of political, economic and cultural coherence than do the five broad regions from which members are presently elected or the four continental regions specified by the High-level Panel.

• The regionally weighted votes would provide a more realistic reflection of power than in any other system of representation.

• By necessitating regular regional consultation in respect to matters coming before the Security Council, the proposed system would also promote regional consultation and cooperation in matters outside the purview of the United Nations.

• Weighted votes would be objectively determined by a rational mathematical formula.

• The system would be non-discriminatory. No nation would be singled out by name for permanent representation, as is now the case with the P-5; rather a nation would have to meet set criteria to have a seat in its own right.

• The system would provide a means by which to eliminate the veto in that presently veto-wielding nations would trade off the right to the veto for enhanced voting power.21

• The system would establish a workable balance between the Global North and the Global South.

• Even the regions with the lowest weighted vote would be sufficiently strong to preclude the likelihood of bribery and coercion both of which have cast doubt on the legitimacy of many Security Council votes.

• The system would encourage nations to pay their dues in full since failure to do so would reduce a region’s weighted vote; this would put an end to fiscal blackmail.

• The system of nominating candidates and of selection of seat holders by the General Assembly promotes meritocracy and a sense of global community.

• The system of selection is also more democratic.

• The system would allow each region to establish its own rules for determining policies and instructing SC representatives.

• The system is flexible, providing for periodic adjustments of voting weights based on relative changes in population and economic power.

• When changing voting weights and the composition of regions, the adjustments would not require Charter amendment.
9. Prospects for Effecting Change:

Although there is not the slightest reason why serious deliberation of the proposals set forth in this essay could not begin during the current session of the UN General Assembly, it would be naïve to expect such immediate action. This conclusion, however, has nothing to do with the merits of the proposal. Rather, it simply reflects the immense and insufficiently recognized power of inertia in political affairs. Most diplomats are habitually cautious and prone to resist major political innovations, especially those entailing radical paradigm shifts.

If, then, the diplomatic community proves to be reluctant to push for change along the lines indicated in this essay, the logical alternative is civil society, especially non-governmental organizations. ACUNS, though not an advocacy agency, could do much to help make this proposal for universal regional representation with weighted veto-free voting better known and more widely discussed. Other groups, especially those with a major concern for UN reform, exist in many parts of the world and could also promote discussion of the proposed new system.

Concern with UN reform, of course, is hardly limited to correcting the structural and procedural deficiencies of the Security Council. The previously cited reports of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and of the of the Secretary-General himself point to numerous other problems that require attention. This fact provides an added measure of urgency to those who are pushing a reform agenda.

No less important is the growing global recognition that the United States cannot effectively play the role of the world’s policeman, Nor does it have any legitimate mandate for doing so, even if it could. If, then, the world’s sole remaining super-power is incapable of maintaining global peace and preventing egregious human rights abuses, the only credible agency for doing so is the United Nations, acting through its Security Council as was envisioned when the Charter was written. But the Council will not be able to function effectively without substantial reform, especially in establishing the universal representation that, more than any other act, would heighten its legitimacy. Also vitally needed are a better funded, better staffed Secretariat and a more reliable and expeditious system for providing peacekeepers and peace-makers in areas of actual and potential conflict. Thus, reform of the Security Council might come about as part of a much broader reform initiative, possibly even through the sort of General Conference provided for in Article 109 of the Charter.

At some point, hopefully sooner rather than later, some set of nations must take the initiative in promoting change. Although there is much to be said for the United States’ taking the lead, there are few, if any, signs at this writing that it will do so. A scenario that is more likely to prove effective would be a coalition of relatively small and medium-sized democratic, highly respected nations such as those of the Nordic bloc, Canada, Costa Rica, etc. in concert with a few relatively powerful nations such as Japan,
India and Germany, who would be major beneficiaries if the reforms proposed in this essay were instituted. If such a coalition were to be established, there is ample reason to suppose that it would quickly galvanize mass public support and eventually lead to a wide-ranging debate on the sort of UN the world needs to see to its security in what will inevitably be a troubled 21st century.

10. Summary and Conclusions:

The Security Council is insufficiently representative. Its allocation of power, especially its privileged position for the veto-wielding P-5, is anachronistic and unfair. Its resolutions are often of dubious legitimacy. It badly needs reform; but the reform proposals officially put forward to date do little more than tweak the existing system rather than address its fundamental structural deficiencies.

The proposal put forward in this paper is based on a radically new paradigm. It provides for universal representation, with all nations enjoying a voice within one, or possibly two, of twelve reasonably coherent regions, each of which would have a weighted vote. Those votes would be a credible reflection of the global distribution of demographic and economic power. No nation or region would wield a veto. Each region would formulate the set of rules for decision-making that it found most congenial. Use of electronic media would facilitate deliberation in a way that was not possible until recently. Flexibility would be built into the system so that it could be periodically adjusted without Charter amendment. The proposed system would offer a multitude of advantages over other all other reform proposals.

There is no reason why serious official discussion of the proposed reforms should not begin immediately, though diplomatic inertia seems likely, for a time, to stand in the way of progressive action. Therefore, recalling the words of Kofi Annan quoted in the epigram at the beginning of this essay, the global community will require “not only good ideas, but also sustained pressure from internationalists in all countries – people who are both visionary and pragmatic.” Such a civil society vanguard can become the vital catalyst for future action. Recognizing the popular sentiment for a lawfully workable world, some group of forward-looking democratic states will eventually coalesce to provide a credible movement for change. When it does come, restructuring of the Security Council will likely be part of a broader package of UN reforms.

NOTES:

1 Commencement address at Harvard University, June 10, 2004

2 For an extensive, but incomplete, list see Manuel Fröhlich, Klaus Hüfner, and Alfredo Märker, Reform des UN-Sicherheitsrats: Modelle, Kriterien und Kennziffer, (Reform of the UN Security Council: Models, Criteria and Index Numbers), Berlin: Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen, Blaue Reihe Nr. 94, 2005. This compendium lists a total of twenty-five proposals for
the period 2003-05, as well as fifty-seven others for earlier years and indicates for each the agency responsible for the proposal, the principal recommendations, and the published sources in which the proposal is described. Several additional models are presented in Ayca Ariyoruk and Walter Hoffmann, *Security Council Reform Models: Model A and B, Italian Proposal, Blue and Green Models and a New Model C*, New York: Center for UN Reform Education, Special Paper Number 4, 2006. Proposals by the present author put forward prior to those presented in this paper appear in Joseph E. Schwartzberg, *Revitalizing the United Nations: Reform through Weighted Voting*, New York and The Hague: Institute for Global Policy, World Federalist Movement, 2004. Another detailed, non-official proposal is that of Paolo Bargiacchi, *La Riforma del Consiglio di Sicurezza delle Nazioni Unite* [Reform of the United Nations Security Council], Milano: Dott. A. Giuffrè Editore, 2005. An eight-page “Executive Summary” of this work, in English, may be obtained from the author, who may be reached by e-mail at Bargiacchi@unipa.it.


4 Membership in the UN had risen from 51 in 1945 to 121 in 1966, while the percentage of the world’s population represented rose in that period from roughly 70% to 91%. Since 1965 the membership has increased to 192 and the percentage of the world’s population represented has increased to 99.5%. The only excluded populations at present are Taiwan, some forty remaining dependencies, the West Bank and Gaza, and the disputed territory of Western Sahara.


7 In 1972, when mainland China assumed the Chinese seat in the Security Council the fifteen Council members combined accounted for 58% of the world’s total population and 62% of the population of all the nations then in the UN. Since that high-water mark, these percentages have fluctuated widely; but the overall trends have been downward. In only eight years since the enlargement of the Security Council in 1966 did its members include a majority of the world’s people. (These years corresponded to four of the five two-year terms during which India happened to be a member.) The reasons for the downward trend include the break-up of the Soviet Union and the negative rate of natural increase in Russia’s population, growth rates among the other permanent members well below the average for the world as a whole, and, of course, the expansion of the UN’s membership. A low point in representation, 33%, was reached in 2002. Currently, the Council represents only 35% of the world’s total population; but the ten non-permanent members collectively account for less than 9% of the people of the 187 members that are not permanent members. For year-by-year data on the representativeness of the Security Council from its inception to 2003, see Schwartzberg, 2004 (note 2). Figure 6. Map 4 and Appendix 4 of the same work indicate the frequency of SC membership of all nations and note the 77 nations that had (until 2003) never served a single term in that body.
8 See, for example, paragraphs 256-257 of the report of the High-level Panel, 2004 or the recommendation of the 2003 European Union proposal mentioned in note 6. Discussions of ways of limiting or completely phasing out the veto also appear in Schwartzberg, 2004 (see note 2), pp. 47-48; and Bargiacchi, 2005, paragraphs 9-11 of English “Executive Summary” (see note 2).

9 The author experimented with numerous formulae before determining that the one presented in this paper would yield an optimal set of weights, Region-by-region data for six of these formulae, (apart from equal regional votes) are provided in his unpublished paper (available by request), “Regional Representation as a Basis for Security Council reform,” provisional draft, November 2004.

10 For this table I have used the same set of country-wise data on population (as of 2002) and GNP (as of 1999) as appear in Appendix One of my 2004 monograph, cited in note 2. This will facilitate comparative study on the part of readers with access to that work. While slightly more recent data are available, the differences in percentage terms that they would yield from the percentages indicated in Table One would, for the most part, be small, with the likely exception of data relating to China. In any event, no set of data for the past few years is likely to provide perfect congruence with the regional pattern obtaining in whatever the year may be when (and if) the reforms proposed here go into effect.

11 Thus, the vote of China, with a population of roughly 1.3 billion, counts no more than that of Tuvalu, with a population of only 11,000. The ratio between the two is roughly 125,000:1.

12 Readers may wonder why the author recommends contributions strictly in accordance with GNP, rather than the existing slightly progressive (for the most part), system now in effect. Apart from the anomalous privileging of the United States, which – as a result of intense political pressure – became the only wealthy country to be assessed at a rate less than its proportional share of the gross world product (22% as opposed to almost 30%), the system entails a needlessly complicated formula to provide meager economic savings to poor countries that could be better served by wiser redistributive measures in the allocation of UN revenues. Interested readers may request a copy of the authors note, “Funding the United Nations: A Modest Proposal.”

13 The disparity between the GNP of the United States and of Tuvalu. Is even greater than that between the population of China and Tuvalu cited in note 12. In terms of contribution to the UN budget, however, the disparity is only 22,000 to 1, the United States paying 22% of the total and Tuvalu, along with several dozen other nations, paying the stipulated minimum of only 0.0001%.

14 Mauritius, which recently crossed the one million mark in population, has, in fact served four years in the Security Council. The least populous nation ever to have served was Malta, which at the time (1983-84) had a population of roughly 300,000.

15 Colum Lynch, “Security Council Seat Tied to Aid,” Washington Post, Nov. 1, 2006 (http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/membership/electedmembers/2006/1101aid.htm). Lynch cites specific details from a number of relevant studies and quotes a two-year study by two Harvard economists as follows: “On average the typical developing country serving on the council can anticipate an additional $16 million from the United States and $1 million from the U.N. During important years, these numbers rise to $45 million from the U.S. and $8 million from the U.N.”
Since its admission to the UN in 1956, Japan has served on the SC for a total of 18 years, or 36% of its total of 51 years of eligibility, the highest percentage of any non-permanent member. The comparable figures for India, a charter member of the organization, are 16 out of 61 years, or 26% (in third place behind Brazil’s 28%). An alphabetical listing, by country, of years of Security Council membership from 1946 to 2003 is provided in Schwartzberg, 2004 (see note 2), appendix IV, pp. 68-71. Subsequent data may easily be obtained via the UN web site.

The High-level Panel divided the world into four continental entities (Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe) and, without regard to their population or economic power, assigned four SC seats to each. The shortcomings of this arbitrary recommendation have been discussed at some length in the present author’s paper, “Getting It Wrong on Security Council Reform” (see note 3). Simply stated, the large number of states in Africa is an artifact of decisions made by Europeans sitting around a conference table in Berlin in 1885-86, with little reliable knowledge of the continent they were carving up and even less concern for the welfare of its inhabitants. It is ironic that such a politically unjust legacy should now be the basis for African claims to SC representation equal to that of Europe or Asia. And it makes no sense to consider the global distribution of land masses, notwithstanding their inequality, as a meaningful basis for the allocation of political power in the most important decision-making body in the UN system.

For a time, the Regional Cooperation for Development pact among Pakistan, Iran and Turkey showed signs of playing an important integrative role, but it never lived up to the hopes of its signers.

Methods of selecting candidates within each region might include any, or some mix of, the following: a) leaving national nominations to the executives of the member nations within a region, perhaps with approval by a stipulated majority in the national legislature; b) giving the national legislature either an advisory or a decisive choice; c) putting the matter to the people in a national referendum that could either be advisory or decisive. There is no reason why all regions should follow the same method, nor why the method of putting forward prospective nominees should be identical for all nations within a region.

These percentages were derived using population data for 2005 and GNP data for 1999, as presented in the Encyclopaedia Britannica 2006 Book of the Year.

Russia might prove to be an exception to this rule. Presently it has one vote out of fifteen (6.67%) of the total, But, under the proposals recommended by the High-level Panel it would have had one vote out of 24 (4.17%), as against 4.38% using the figures in Table One of this paper. The UK and France would also lose individually, but would gain as part of the European region, the most powerful of the twelve recommended in this study.

APPENDIX: PROPOSED UN CHARTER AMENDMENT

CHAPTER V. THE SECURITY COUNCIL

N.B. Text in square brackets would be included in the event of a decision to permit overlapping regional membership.
Article 23

1. The Security Council shall represent all Members of the United Nations. For purposes of representation and voting all UN Member states shall be grouped by the General Assembly into twelve major world regions. Regions may consist of one or more Member states. Not more than four regions may consist of a single Member state. Eligibility for the representation of a single state shall be determined by the average of its population and financial contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations, expressed as percentages of the total population of all United Nations members and of the total budget. No more than four Members exceeding a stipulated threshold in this respect shall individually be entitled to a seat on the Council. If more than four Members qualify, only the four with the highest average percentage shall be selected. All other Members shall be grouped into the remaining regions. Multi-Member regions shall be established in such a way as to maximize their coherence, based on similarity of historical experience and contemporary interests. Regions need not be territorially contiguous.

2. Any Member that prefers to belong to a region other than the one to which it was assigned by the General Assembly may request admission to a region other than the one to which it was assigned and be transferred to that region provided that the region is willing to accept it as a member. [Any Members wishing to remain in the region to which it was assigned, but also wishing to belong simultaneously to a second region may request and obtain admission to that region provided that the region is willing to accept it as a member.]

3. The General Assembly may, should a compelling need arise, alter the territorial composition of the twelve regions into which the world has been divided for purposes of representation and voting in the Security Council.

4. Each single-Member and multi-Member region shall have one representative and one alternate representative on the Security Council. These positions shall be held for a term of three years. The governments of the single-Member regions shall be authorized to appoint qualified individuals to hold such posts in whatever way they wish and may replace them at any time. The representatives and alternate representatives from the multi-Member regions shall be elected by the General Assembly. Representatives and alternate representatives from multi-Member regions shall normally, serve on the Security Council for three years. Each region shall be free to specify whether terms shall be renewable.

5. At three-year intervals, each multi-Member region shall, by a method of its own devising, nominate from two to five qualified individuals, for the posts of regional representative and alternate representative on the Security Council. No two nominees may come from a single Member nation. Slates shall be made available to the General Assembly in June. In the following September, after reviewing the qualifications of the candidates, the General Assembly shall vote on each slate. The candidate with the
greatest number of votes shall become the region’s representative and the one with the second most votes shall become region’s alternate representative.

6. Representatives and alternate representatives shall, to the best of their ability, act in accordance with the views of the governments of the regions they represent. Each multi-Member region shall establish a set of procedural guidelines and voting rules for its representatives and alternate representatives to follow.

7. Representatives and alternate representatives may be removed, temporarily or permanently, from their posts by the region they represent because of malfeasance, inadequate performance, ill-health or other serious cause. The basis for and the method of such action shall be at the discretion of the region represented. In the event of the temporary absence of the representative, the alternate representative shall assume the representative’s duties. In the event of the representative’s death or permanent removal, the alternative representative shall assume the representative’s position and the region shall appoint a new alternate representative who shall serve until such time as the General Assembly can hold a special election for that position. In the event that the temporary representative’s post is permanently vacated for any other reason, the General Assembly shall hold an election to fill that post from a slate of nominees put forward by the region in question.

**Functions and Powers**

*Articles 24-26*

[No change from present text.]

**Voting**

*Article 27*

1. Each region shall have a weighted vote, based on an objective mathematical formula in which, initially, the region’s total population, the region’s total contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations over a specified period of time and the presumed equal worth of each region’s worldview shall be given equal consideration. The weights assigned to each region shall be percentages of the total weight of all regions combined.

2. Weighted votes shall be adjusted at three-year intervals in light of demographic and economic changes in the regions represented.

3. The formula for weighting votes may, should a compelling need arise, be changed by the General Assembly at intervals of not less than fifteen years.
4. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote by a simple majority of the total weighted votes cast or by the affirmative vote of any eight regions.

5. Decisions of the Security Council on all substantive matters other than authorizing armed intervention in regard to threats to the peace in any part of the world shall require the affirmative vote of regions that collectively account for at least two-thirds of all votes cast and for at least fifty percent of the world’s population.

6. Decisions of the Security Council authorizing armed intervention in regard to threats to the peace in any part of the world shall require the affirmative vote of regions that collectively account for at least three-fourths of all votes cast and for at least sixty percent of the world’s population.

*Procedure*

*Articles 28-32*

[No change from present text.]
Map One. WEIGHTED VOTES OF TWELVE MEMBER REGIONS OF PROPOSED SECURITY COUNCIL

Weighted vote (W) of each region based on total regional population, total regional contributions to UN budget and regional constant according to the formula $W = (P + C + 8.33) / 3$