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## **EUROPE'S VETO'S POWER**

### **BRITAIN, FRANCE, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE RE- FORM OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**

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AND THE REFORM OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

TRANSATLANTIC ACADEMY PAPER SERIES

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The rapid rise of the emerging powers in the past decade has shaken the international global order and raised many questions regarding the new forms and institutions of global governance. The composition of the United Nations Security Council, and in particular that of its permanent membership, is now widely seen as problematic. The permanent membership reflects more the world order of 1945 than of 2011. Europe — with France and the United Kingdom occupying two of the five permanent seats — is heavily over-represented, while such important rising powers as India and Brazil can at best hope to be elected members for two years at a time. At the same time, Europe is also under-represented in the Council, as other member states of the European Union, such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and Poland have to wait for their chance to serve as nonpermanent members. Nor is the European Union able to inject common positions into the deliberations of the Council.

Security Council reform has been on the agenda of the United Nations since the early 1990s, and despite repeated failures to secure a more representative Council membership, the issue will not go away. If reform does not happen soon, its declining legitimacy will effect the ability of the Council to assume its responsibilities at the apex of the United Nations.

This paper argues that France and the United Kingdom should jointly initiate an effort to re-form the Council, with the twin objectives to broaden the permanent membership and to consolidate the European role in the Council into one seat. This seat would be co-managed by France and the United Kingdom, but represent the common European position. This process of European consolidation would enable Europe to offer one of its two seats to one of the rising powers and thus challenge other member states of the United Nations to accept a thorough restructuring of the Council. Such an initiative would considerably strengthen the credibility and influence of France and the United Kingdom, and also that of the EU as a whole.

In parallel, the United States would commit itself to a “double veto” policy, casting a veto against a resolution in the Council only if it was seconded by at least one other veto power, challenging other permanent member states to follow suit. Through their coordinated initiatives, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States would thus promote reforms of international institutions towards more effective multilateralism both in the United Nations Security Council and within the European Union.

# 1 GREAT POWERS, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Since the beginning of the modern state system, the great powers have been central actors, and the balance of power among them has decisively shaped the prospects for war and peace. The quest for an international ordering of relations between the great powers in a way that is peaceful, legitimate, and enduring has been a recurrent and important aspiration and project of modern statecraft, initially in Europe, but subsequently globally. This quest gained particular urgency in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as war became increasingly destructive. In the wake of the World War I, this quest produced the League of Nations. The failures of the League and the even greater destruction of the World War II catalyzed the formation of the United Nations.

Celebrated as a great step to enduring peace, the new organization was crafted by its founders to combine high ideals with recognition of the realities of power and interests of the great powers. At the center of the organization is the Security Council, the most powerful organ of the UN, on which the five victorious powers of the world war alliance were ensconced with permanent seats and veto power. The Security Council thus ratified and institutionalized the prevailing balance of power and the status of the great powers in 1945. In return for this status, it was expected that the permanent members would assume responsibility for maintaining peace and international security, and take a leading role in upholding the new order. In short, the Council seeks to temper power with responsibility.

The initial distribution of the Council seats, a topic of intense diplomatic negotiation in drafting the Charter, reflected a world in which Europe had played a commanding role, but also one in which European states were coming to be overshadowed as military and economic powers by states at the periphery of the European state system and beyond. But Europe was still heavily represented, with two

states — Great Britain and France — occupying two of the five permanent, veto-bearing seats. This reflected several different realities: the central place that Europe had occupied in world politics over the preceding centuries, the historical role of Britain and France as great powers in the European state system, and their positions in the victorious war alliance. At the same time, the distribution of seats also demonstrated that Europe had lost its previous pre-eminence in world affairs, and that power had shifted towards continental scale states outside of Europe.

This entrenchment of Britain and France as permanent members in the UN system occurred on the eve of their rapid descent as colonial powers and as plausible great powers on the global stage.<sup>1</sup> In the nearly seven decades since the drafting of the Charter, the underlying balance of power has relentlessly shifted, to the point where there is no justification for Britain and France claiming to be global powers. To the extent the Charter's Security Council was a plan to marry power with responsibility, the decline in French and British power, along with the rise of other powers both in Europe and elsewhere, now creates the need for far-reaching changes in the composition and in the modus operandi of the Security Council.

The conventional wisdom of the current policy debate suggests that any proposal that results in the transfer of the permanent Council seats now occupied by Britain and France would face insurmountable opposition from London and Paris. For both countries, permanent membership on the Security Council offers a degree of prestige and authority that they would seem unlikely to give up. Yet a closer look at the historical record and actual national interests of both countries suggests that they not only could accept such a momentous change, but be better off for it.

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*Britain and France should revive and extend their traditions of liberal internationalism and take the initiative in strengthening what looks like an increasingly tenuous and fragile international order.*

In the past, both British and French diplomacy has made major historical contributions to the liberal international order. Although these liberal internationalist efforts have certainly not always been central to the foreign policies of these two states (recall the considerable lengths to which both countries went in trying to defend their colonial possessions), neither can their accomplishments be ignored. In this paper, we argue that Britain and France should revive and extend their traditions of liberal internationalism and take the initiative in strengthening what looks like an increasingly tenuous and fragile international order.

#### **Legacies of British Internationalisms**

For Britain, the legacies of internationalist leadership and accomplishment are numerous. Britain created and dominated the international economic order that developed in the wake of the industrial revolution, which was in many ways a precursor of today's international order. And during World War II and in its immediate aftermath, Britain closely cooperated with the United States in shaping the post-war liberal internationalist order, from its inception in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 through the conference at Bretton Woods in 1944 to the foundation of the United Nations in San Francisco 1945. Since then, Britain has been a significant contributor to many international regimes and organizations, including development assistance and peacekeeping, and its diplomats have often had a major positive influence. Arguably, however, Britain's greatest internationalist accomplishment took place earlier, within its sprawling imperial and colonial domains. In the broader annals of "democracy promotion" — a recently coined term that refers to the broad effort to achieve government within a state that is accountable to the people or citizens and respectful of their basic human rights — Britain's contributions have been second to none. Britain played an important role in the abolition of slavery,

which was banned throughout its Empire in 1833. The British model of parliamentary democracy has been successfully transferred not only to the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, states founded by settlers from Britain, but also to states that have emerged out of the British Empire in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. The crown jewel of this British democratic internationalist effort remains, as it was in a different sense during the Empire, India, where the parliamentary democracy left by the British regime in India has, defying many expectations, grown and flourished, and continues to provide the centerpiece for what has been for more than 60 years the world's largest democracy by far.

#### **French Internationalism in Europe and the World**

At first glance, France would seem the "hard case" as a promoter of a liberal internationalist order. The country appears to many observers to be particularly possessive of a sense of national grandeur and ambition on the world stage, a feature best represented by President Charles de Gaulle and his foreign policy of "independence" during the 1960s and 1970s. Yet precisely because of that ambition, France has traditionally pursued an internationalist foreign policy of its own, which in many ways has displayed a sense of purpose remarkably similar to that of the United States, although with its military, economic and political power.<sup>2</sup> In this foreign policy, insistence on the importance of the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular, as well as support for the Third World, have figured prominently. France has also tried to cultivate cooperation with French-speaking nations in a project somewhat reminiscent of (though less influential than) the British Commonwealth, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), and it repeatedly played an important diplomatic role, for example in efforts to settle the

violent conflicts in Indochina at the conferences 1954 in Geneva on Vietnam and 1989 and 1991 in Paris on Cambodia.

But France's greatest recent internationalist contribution is closer to home – the European project. Since the early 1950s, France, through its close embrace of Germany and in tandem with it, has played a major, at times central, role in propelling the European project of integration. It has also led European efforts to develop Europe into an independent global actor in its own right. It is not by accident that several Frenchmen — Jean Monnet, Robert Schumann, and Jacques Delors — are regarded as some of the most important “fathers” of the European Union, and stand in the pantheon of great European historical figures.

In offering to convert its seat on the UN Security Council into a European seat, France could again play this vital historical role in advancing European integration. France, more than any other European country (including Germany), has cultivated the aspiration for the new Europe to play a role as a great power on the global stage, as a true peer of the United States, Russia, and China. During the Cold War, France strongly advocated Europe as a “third force” between the superpowers to the east and the west. The French seat on the Security Council could – if used in a far-sighted and strategic manner – make a major contribution to the realization of this long cherished French aspiration for Europe.

### **The European Project and the UN**

The drafting of the Charter of the United Nations occurred on the eve of far-reaching change in Europe, toward integration and away from the organization of European order on the basis of great power politics. Cumulatively, the process of European integration has transformed Europe, producing a period of greater peace, prosperity, and freedom than any before in European history. As

this process has moved forward, if at times slowly and intermittently, it has been accompanied by a growing aspiration for this new Europe to act as one in world affairs. Starting in 1970, the aspiration to develop a common foreign policy first took the form of European Political Cooperation (EPC), which from the beginning focused on the United Nations as one of the principal policy areas (and at the same time a particularly congenial institutional arena) for coordinating European-member state policies.<sup>3</sup> In 1993, when the Maastricht Treaty entered into force, the EPC was turned into one of the three pillars of the new European Union as its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).<sup>4</sup> The United Nations remained one of its primary focal points. Most recently, the Lisbon Treaty upgraded the ability of the European Union to conduct foreign relations by strengthening the position of the high representative of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (in effect the European Union's foreign minister), and establishing an independent European diplomatic service (the External Action Service, EAS), which includes a diplomatic mission at the UN in New York.

Despite those institutional advances, the European project to develop a common foreign policy deserving of the term seems to many observers yet again to be adrift.<sup>5</sup> When Libya erupted in upheaval against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi and the Arab League urged the Security Council to impose a no-fly zone to protect the Libyan people from its rulers, the European Union member states in the Security Council were unable to agree or even effectively consult in the debate over UNSC Resolution 1973.<sup>6</sup> More fundamentally, coping with the widening of EU membership over the last decade and more recently with the Euro crisis has absorbed much of the time and energy of political leaders and thus once more produced an inward-looking, self-absorbed Europe.

*In offering to convert its seat into a European seat, France could again play this vital historical role in advancing European integration.*

*If Europe wants to play a role in shaping its future international environment... movement towards a common foreign policy ...can and should be pursued with regard to the UN Security Council.*

This will have to change if Europe wants to play a role in shaping its future international environment. In doing so, Europe could also contribute to a stronger and better international order. For as interdependence between nations continues to deepen, cooperation will become even more necessary to achieve peace, international security, global prosperity, and welfare. And as world politics becomes increasingly multipolar, the overall prospect for the liberal internationalist order will come to be dependent on the efforts and leadership of more states. The progress of this project will increasingly depend on internationalist burden sharing, not only by the liberal democracies in Europe and by the United States, but also by rising, formerly Third World countries.

These developments point, first, to the need for further reform and restructuring of European foreign policy decision-making in the UN. The achievement of a truly unified European foreign policy is unlikely any time soon, given that the EU is going to remain a grouping of 27 member states for the foreseeable future. But a more limited movement towards a common foreign policy, potentially achievable even in the near term, can and should be pursued with regard to the UN Security Council. Specifically, the members of the EU should employ and further develop existing mechanisms of consultation to articulate a common European position on matters before the Security Council. This process of integration should culminate in the consolidation of the British and French permanent seats on the Security Council into one European seat. In doing this, the EU would advance its own capacity for collective action, while at the same time opening a valuable opportunity to increase the representation on the Security Council of the populous and rising states not among the original set of permanent members, most notably India or Brazil. Such a European initiative to strengthen the role of the Security Council in the

future international order should be accompanied by a parallel effort by the United States and perhaps also by other permanent members of the Council.

This essay outlines two specific proposals to this end. Our focus is on Britain, France, and the United States and the unrealized possibilities to advance their internationalist accomplishments. According to this proposal, Britain, France, and the United States would take the initiative to push for a reform of the Security Council where Britain and France would consolidate their two permanent veto-bearing seats on the Security Council into one, which would represent the common position of the European Union. At the same time, the United States would renew its efforts to promote a comprehensive reform of the composition and the modus operandi of the UNSC and announce, as a down payment to such a reform, a “dual veto” policy. Together, those initiatives would create new political momentum towards an enlargement of the UNSC permanent membership in line with the changing balance of power in international relations.

We develop this argument in four steps. First, we briefly review the history of the Security Council and of previous efforts to alter its composition and procedures. Second, we look at the evolving European effort to forge a truly common foreign and security policy in order to increase the weight and influence of Europe in world affairs, focusing especially on the Security Council. Third, we develop our proposal of how Europe could move to consolidate its presence in the Council, and how the United States could help initiate a wider process of Security Council reform, using the opportunity provided by such a consolidated European seat. Finally, we evaluate the benefit that a restructuring of the Security Council along the lines which we suggest could have for Europe, for the United States, for the Council itself, and for the international community at large.

# 2 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

**C**ritique of the composition and *modus operandi* of the UN Security Council predates the birth of the United Nations itself: already at the San Francisco conference in 1945, which adopted the Charter of the United Nations, the composition and, in particular, the veto power of the prospective permanent members came in for criticism.<sup>7</sup> The principal arguments put forward to support a larger number of nonpermanent members were about representation, inclusiveness, and democracy. But the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union insisted on the need to keep the Council small so it could deal with crises effectively and forcefully.

## The 1965 Security Council Reforms

So far, the only successful effort to reform the UN Security Council took place in the mid-1960s. This reform was an enlargement, which brought the number of elected members from six to ten. The driving force behind this enlargement was decolonization and the rapidly rising number of new member states. In 1956, Latin American countries first suggested an expansion of the number of nonpermanent members; by 1960, a number of Western European countries had joined this campaign. In 1963, the Non-Aligned Movement introduced a draft resolution that aimed at increasing the number of elected seats in the Security Council; the four additional seats were to be split between Asian and African countries. This proposition found a majority in the General Assembly, but it was initially supported only by the Republic of China (Taiwan) among the permanent members. The Soviet Union and France opposed the enlargement, and the United States and Britain held back. Still, with an overwhelming majority of member states in favor of enlargement, all other permanent members eventually agreed to accept the reform. The amendment entered into force on August 31, 1965; by that time, 95 member states had ratified the General Assembly resolution.<sup>8</sup>

This experience suggests that permanent members may be reluctant to oppose reform against a clear majority of member states, although each one of them technically could block such reforms by casting their veto.<sup>9</sup>

The only changes in the permanent membership of the Security Council — and the only adjustments to shifts in the balance of power in international relations — came in 1971 and 1991. In 1971, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China on Taiwan as the only representative of China. This change was brought about by a resolution of the General Assembly; since the vote concerned an issue of credentials, rather than of membership (which formally remained unchanged), the Assembly was able to bypass the Security Council. In 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited the Soviet seat as its legal successor.

In December 1974, the United Nations established an “Ad-Hoc-Committee on the Charter of the United Nations,” with an emphasis on the reform of composition and voting mechanisms in the Security Council. Although the General Assembly received and debated a number of draft resolutions that proposed the enlargement of nonpermanent members, none was enacted. The positions of member states were too heterogeneous and the permanent members (with the exception of the People's Republic of China) were strongly opposed to any change. Although the issue formally remained on the agenda of the General Assembly, substantive progress had come to a halt.

## The Reform Debate of the 1990s and Its Legacies

After the end of the Cold War, a third major push for Security Council reform gathered momentum. In 1992, the General Assembly decided to establish a working group<sup>10</sup> to discuss Security Council

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reform and develop possible models.<sup>11</sup> As the debate in the working group gathered momentum, the focus of the debate, which initially had been only on Germany and Japan as possible additions to the permanent membership list, shifted towards a broader enlargement. Great Britain, the United States, and Russia eventually accommodated this by throwing their support behind the formula of a “2+3” enlargement (while ruling out categorically any expansion of Security Council membership above 21 member states). The debate culminated in the proposal of the president of the General Assembly and chairman of the Working Group, the Malaysian diplomat Ismael Razali, suggesting an enlargement of the Security Council by five new permanent members and four additional member states.<sup>12</sup> This proposal severely split the member states. One camp, the so-called “Coffee Club,” a loose coalition of countries led by Italy and Pakistan, opposed any reform that would have promoted the status of regional rivals such as Germany, India, or Brazil to their own detriment. There was also considerable opposition from the permanent members, of whom only France reacted positively. Once more, the process of Security Council reform had stalled.<sup>13</sup>

In September 2003, the secretary general tried again, this time in the context of an effort at comprehensive reform of the United Nations. To prepare those reforms, Secretary General Kofi Annan established the “High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change,” which in its final report presented two alternative models for Security Council enlargement.<sup>14</sup> In his own report to the UN member states, Kofi Annan adopted those proposals, without indicating any preference between the two models. In the meantime, Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan had formed the “G4” to promote their joint ambitions for permanent seats and veto in the Security Council. Again, however, opposition among other member states, once more

led by members of the former “Coffee Club,” which had reassembled under the slogan “Uniting for Consensus,” and demands by the group of African states for greater representation, made any advance on Security Council enlargement impossible. Once more, Security Council reform efforts had reached a dead end: the UN summit in 2005 confined itself to platitudes about making the Council “more representative, more efficient, and more transparent.”<sup>15</sup>

#### **The Current State of Reform Efforts**

Yet demands for reform persisted. In January 2007, the president of the 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly asked five moderators to establish possible consensual models on five issues concerning the future of the Security Council, namely 1) categories of membership, 2) the veto, 3) regional representation, 4) size and working methods, and 5) relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Again, however, the debate quickly got bogged down along familiar lines, and none of the various models presented achieved sufficient support among member states. Nevertheless, the assembly decided to move the five issues of Security Council reform from the level of working group discussion to that of formal negotiations within the General Assembly. But in those negotiations, the old problems of numerous divergent proposals and regional rivalries persisted. If reform of the Security Council is going to advance at all, it seems at present most likely to do so on the basis of an intermediate, transitional compromise.

#### **Difficulties of and Opportunities for Security Council Reform**

Several conclusions can be drawn from this record of past efforts to reform the UN Security Council. First and most basically, enlargement of the Security Council is difficult, but is not inconceivable. The push for widening the membership of the Security Council succeeded in

the 1960s despite considerable skepticism, if not outright opposition, of the permanent members. But in the end, they were reluctant to confront the majority of member states once they had agreed on a common position. Thus, the behavior of permanent members suggests that they can be swayed in their positions by concerns about legitimacy and appropriateness.

Second, there are widespread and serious misgivings among member countries about deficiencies in the composition and in the working methods of the Security Council; reform efforts have therefore continued despite repeated failure. The over-representation of Western Europe among the present permanent membership is one, though not the only, important reason for the widespread unease about the present composition of the Security Council. While “Western Europe” (which for purposes of the United Nations includes not only Western Europe, but also Turkey and the United States), with 29 states accounts for 15.2 percent of total UN membership, it holds one-third of all seats in the Security Council and 60 percent of all permanent seats with veto power.<sup>16</sup>

Third, while changes in the composition and in the veto power of the permanent members so far have been impossible to realize, there has been considerable progress in enhancing the transparency and inclusiveness of decision-making in the Security Council, including the five permanent members. In other words, process innovation has turned out to be easier than structural change, notably with regard to the flow of information and consultation of permanent members with other states, as well as with nonstate actors. In August 2008, the Security Council even organized public hearings and debates on the reform of its working methods.<sup>17</sup>

Fourth, any initiative that would promise to reduce the Western European share of seats in

the Security Council, including permanent seats, would significantly enhance the standing and the legitimacy of the European presence in the Security Council. Europe could use this to advance both its own interests and aspirations and the cause of effective multilateralism in and through the UN Security Council — something to which the European Union has strongly committed itself in its European Security Strategy.<sup>18</sup> Through leading by example, such an initiative — as the one we propose below — could also create much-needed momentum to advance structural reforms by shaming some of the countries that today *de facto* block any change.

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# 3 REFORMING THE EUROPEAN PRESENCE IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

*We want to see EU intergovernmental cooperation in the UN Security Council become more unified, more coherent, more consistent and therefore more effective.*

Our proposal aims at setting in motion processes of change in the Security Council, led by Britain, France, the EU, and the United States, which eventually could result in structural, institutionalized change both of European participation in the Security Council and the composition and *modus operandi* of the Council itself. We want to hear the European Union speak with one voice in the United Nations Security Council, and we want to see EU intergovernmental cooperation in the UN Security Council become more unified, more coherent, more consistent, and therefore more effective. We think the world needs a more legitimate and more effective UN Security Council. Our emphasis is on process, rather than on structures, but on a process with a clear perspective to facilitate institutional changes that would make the European Union more of a unitary actor in the United Nations, and the UN Security Council a more legitimate and effective multilateral body.

## **Toward One European Voice in the UN Security Council**

Today, even the largest member states of the European Union must recognize that their ability to influence outcomes in international negotiations is increasingly circumscribed in a world in which power has been floating away from Europe towards rising powers. Yet the results of more than 40 years of efforts to establish the European Union as a global player have been decidedly mixed. The EU in the past was glaringly divided over the wars of dissolution in former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995 and again, more recently, over the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state. Perhaps most notorious was the falling out of “old Europe” with “new Europe” during the crisis over U.S. military intervention in Iraq in 2003.

While this list of failures could certainly be enlarged easily, and the European Union has

recently being criticized severely for a lack of ambition and cohesion,<sup>19</sup> the EU has also been able to cooperate quite successfully and speak with one voice not only in areas in which the European Commission has legal authority to represent the member states, such as in international trade negotiations, but also in other areas, such as climate change policy and sanctions on Iran to dissuade Teheran from pursuing a nuclear weapons program, which are formally either largely intergovernmental under the so-called “pillar two” of the European Union, the common foreign and security policy, or activities involving several pillars simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> The EU therefore is capable of truly common, consistent, and coherent foreign policies, if member states want this to happen.

European efforts to develop common policies on external issues have long focused on the United Nations with a view to bring member state positions in the General Assembly and in the Security Council in closer alignment. Significant progress has in fact been made in promoting policy convergence member state policies and positions taken in the United Nations.<sup>21</sup> And it is the declared aim of the Common Foreign and Security Policy to promote and consolidate such convergence. Thus, Title V, Art. J.2 of the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992, which established the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, stipulates that “(m)ember states shall coordinate their actions in international organizations...They shall uphold the common positions in such *fora*. In international organizations ...where not all the Member States participate, those which do take part shall uphold the common positions.” And Art. J.4. states: “Member States which are also members of the United Nations Security Council will consult and keep the other member states fully informed. Member States which are permanent members of the Security Council will, in the execution of their functions, ensure the defence of the positions and

the interests of the Union, without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter.” This language reappears in Article 34 of the Lisbon Treaty, with the following addition: “The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy shall organise this coordination.... When the Union has defined a position on a subject which is on the United Nations Security Council agenda, those Member States which sit on the Security Council shall request that the High Representative be invited to present the Union’s position.”<sup>22</sup>

Publicly, France and Britain both support enlargement of the United Nations Security Council,<sup>23</sup> although Paris has been more emphatic in its support than London. Their position no doubt reflects the Achilles heel of Europe’s presence in the UN, its over-representation in the Security Council. This would at least be mitigated, however, if the Council were to be enlarged, and it would disappear altogether if the European presence in it were to be consolidated in one seat.

### **Our Proposal for Europe**

The case for reform of the Security Council is persuasive. Still, the debate about this in the United Nations has long been deadlocked, and reform is unlikely to move forward any time soon without robust new initiatives. If a way could be found to consolidate the European presence in the Security Council, and if the United States then used this to launch a new bid for reform with an effort of its own, this might help to catalyze the reform process and thus enhance the chances of bringing membership in the Council in line with the present distribution of power and responsibilities in the international system. Such a consolidation would advance the credibility and reputation of Europe as a proactive and responsible power and thus enhance its future influence. At the same time,

it would also give Europe more weight in world affairs.

This is what we propose:<sup>24</sup> France and Britain should closely synchronize their respective positions in the United Nations Security Council, enhance consultations with other member states, and also involve closely the EU’s CFSP high representative via its mission in New York. The aim should be to work, as often as possible and as a matter of course, towards a common European policy in the UNSC. In this context, London and Paris should declare their willingness to make available to a non-European country, as part of a comprehensive Security Council reform, one of their permanent seats. The remaining permanent European seat would be taken in two-year turns by France or Britain.

As the recent crisis in Libya has shown, changes in international relations have begun to bring French and British foreign and security policies in closer alignment. Fiscal stringencies have resulted in closer structural defense cooperation between the two military establishments, and the uprising against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya has led the two governments into a joint military intervention. France, Britain, and Germany have also cooperated closely with each other, and with the high representative, on negotiating and imposing sanctions on Iran to dissuade Teheran from pursuing nuclear weapons, as well as on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The most obvious advantage of such cooperation from the point of view of France and Britain is that the two countries together can throw more weight onto the balance in international negotiations. Having Germany on board enhances this effect further, and to be able to present their joint positions as supported and legitimated by the European Union not only adds further weight, but also an added element of credibility and legitimacy.

*The aim should be to work, as often as possible and as a matter of course, towards a common European policy in the United Nations Security Council.*

*There will be more and more instances in the future where France and Britain find themselves induced, or even compelled, to take common positions and act jointly.*

It seems reasonable to expect that there will be more and more instances in the future where France and Britain find themselves induced, or even compelled, to take common positions and act jointly; equally, it should be obvious that their influence (or that of any other EU member country) could be leveraged significantly through common European positions that would commit all EU member states, as well as the European Union institutions. It thus seems logical for the two governments proactively to explore and promote closer foreign policy cooperation in the UN Security Council amongst themselves, but also with Germany, other member states of the European Union, and the high representative of the European Union's foreign policy institutions.

All this, however, would still be a far cry from consolidating their two seats in the Security Council into one. Our proposal goes further, without excluding, however, either of the two from the Security Council. One permanent seat would be shared by the two countries, with each taking turns (say, for two years) in managing and representing the joint European chair. It would seem not only politically wise, but also substantively sensible to confine the actual representation of Europe in the Security Council to those two governments with their long experience and excellent diplomatic services. This arrangement would also argue against any reduction of French or British diplomatic presence in New York; in organizational terms, the principal difference would be that each mission would take turns in the lead and in a supporting role in managing the European presence in the Security Council.

The real hurdle lies, of course, in overcoming remnants of distrust and suspicion between the two countries, and in reining back enduring national impulses, interests, and positions in favor of joint positions. Only through a serious political commitment by leaders in London and

Paris, as well as by the other European member governments, would it be possible to realize the value added which common European positions promise. Even if such political will existed, however, it would initially undoubtedly also need much goodwill, serious efforts, and protracted and sometimes difficult negotiations to bring such common positions about. A firm eye on what is to be achieved would be crucial, and France and Britain, as well as Germany and the high representative, would have the primary responsibility, but also the opportunity, to exercise leadership in this direction. Yet the experience in Brussels with other European policies shows that it is possible to formulate and implement common policies effectively, and that member governments can learn how to do this better over time.

In the case of the Security Council, once such an effort to produce common European policies was seriously undertaken, it would probably imply, at least initially and perhaps for some time, that Europe would abstain more often than France or Britain would have done individually. In each case, Paris and London would have to weigh their commitment to advancing their own influence through developing and leveraging common European policies and positions against the temptation and the urge to fall back on national positions. In this, process will be very important, for it is through practical steps of cooperation that the governments and the European institutions involved will develop the trust and the practical experience needed for policy convergence. There would no doubt be setbacks on this road, and only political perseverance could keep the process firmly pointed towards its destination: common European positions and policies in the United Nations Security Council.

### **Our Proposal for the United States**

Over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American internationalism has occupied a leading role in the overall liberal internationalist effort. Despite the important contributions made by others to the liberal internationalist project, the United States is rightly seen as its chief architect. This gives America both the opportunity and the responsibility to help recast this order, and in particular the UN and its pivotal institution, the Security Council, in order to make it fit for the future.

Once the Europeans have initiated their program of reform for the European seats on the Security Council, the other Western democracy with a Security Council seat — the United States — should advance the UN Security Council reform agenda through an initiative of its own. We propose that the United States should commit itself to a double veto policy. By this, we mean that the United States would veto any decision in the Council only if it were supported by at least one other permanent member of the Security Council.<sup>25</sup>

The United States would stand to benefit from such a unilateral declaration. This would enhance American standing and prestige, and would strengthen cooperation within the transatlantic community. It is reasonable to expect that the “other” veto power usually would be Europe. This arrangement would remove or at least reduce U.S. foreign policy exposure on issues where Washington would otherwise stand alone, such as in its support of the government of Israel. On the other hand, the costs of this new approach would be very limited because Washington could always fall back on a unilateral veto, though of course the benefits of the policy would be correspondingly diminished. Such a policy would enable the United States to leverage the further needed reforms towards a more inclusive and representative Security Council. It would also generally help

Washington to gain the moral high ground vis-à-vis other permanent members, both present and prospective, and put some pressure on them to come forward with their own initiatives.

### **Moving Toward More Effective and Legitimate Multilateralism**

Our proposals attempt to shift international political processes in the direction of more effective multilateralism at two levels, within the European Union and within the United Nations. Multilateral policy processes of decision-making and implementation are often cumbersome and time-consuming. They also require compromises and therefore inevitably will tend towards low common denominators. All problems of multilateralism recently have been on display vividly in the UN Security Council and in NATO decision-making regarding intervention in Libya. Moreover, there is not necessarily superior moral clarity or more policy clout behind numbers: the majority view may be morally problematic (think of international support at the Munich meeting of Chamberlain and Daladier with Hitler for the “peaceful” annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany in 1938), and those supporting it may be unwilling to commit resources to policy implementation. Multilateralism can also become, as John van Oudenaren argues,<sup>26</sup> dysfunctional, with problems ranging from lack of implementation and enforcement to unchecked large-scale cheating via legal but excessive exceptions .

On the other hand, the notion of “effectiveness,” which the present permanent members of the UNSC, and in particular the United States, like to marshal in support of present arrangements, also needs to be scrutinized critically. Strong leadership may produce fast and steadfast decisions, and it may avoid some of the substantive problems of multilateralist approaches spelled out above. But that does not guarantee that its decisions are

*We propose that the United States should commit itself to a double veto policy.*

*The only realistic alternative to dysfunctional multilateralism is to make multilateralism work, and work well.*

good ones. During the wars of disintegration in the former Yugoslavia, the UNSC was quite “effective”: it produced a series of resolutions, including resolutions invoking Chapter VII of the UN Charter, i.e., the use of “all necessary means,” including force, to enforce compliance. Yet those resolutions were also often overambitious, unrealistic, and contradictory.<sup>27</sup> Had the Bush administration prevailed in the Security Council in 2003 and received a mandate for regime change on the basis of false evidence and dubious assumptions, the credibility and legitimacy of the UNSC would have suffered grievously.

Thus, the only realistic alternative to dysfunctional multilateralism is to make multilateralism work, and work well. To be truly effective, multilateral policies will require leadership in terms of agenda-setting, setting deadlines, and watching over policy implementation; and they will also demand a lot of bilateral diplomacy and the mobilization of domestic political support and resources by *all* its participants back home. In reality, there will usually be differing levels of interest and commitment among the countries involved in multilateral efforts. This need not be a problem provided there is a broad general commitment towards effective multilateral policies and a willingness to practice “diffuse reciprocity,” that is to say, to commit some level of support to the general approach, as well as to each individual instance of effective multilateral policies.

What ultimately matters most are good policies in terms of outcomes, and on balance we feel that multilateral decision-making in today’s complex world of dispersed power will often not only be the only available option, but also one that seems at least as likely to produce good policies as policies pursued under a dominant leader. Yet multilateral policies, like strong leadership and even unilateralism, can be well-designed and implemented, as well as flawed; it all will depend on how those policies are shaped and implemented by those involved.

While the shift towards more genuine multilateral decision-making that we advocate would thus undoubtedly involve slower and more cumbersome, as well as at times less forceful policies than might have seemed desirable, there are also two important advantages in this: more time and a broader input into policy deliberation, and moderation through mutual accommodation. Moreover, we also argue that the alternative of strong leadership exercised by one power in the future usually simply will not be available either at the European CFSP or at the UNSC level; the alternative to effective multilateralism therefore would most likely not be strong leadership, but gridlock.

# 4 CONCLUSIONS

**W**hat effects would we expect if our proposals were implemented? First, of course, this should help open the way for reform towards a more representative and hopefully more effective Security Council. Whether that would be achieved on the basis of our two proposals is uncertain, given the steep hurdles and complexities of formally revising the UN Charter to enlarge the UNSC and modify its procedures. But the probability of this happening would be significantly improved. Moreover, the transatlantic community would clearly be seen leading this effort, by setting constructive examples and making proactive adjustments for the sake of a better, more representative international order. This would no doubt enhance Western influence, even if the broader effort to restructure the UN Security Council failed. And it would put pressure on China and Russia, in addition to India and Brazil, to follow the Western example, thus providing the transatlantic community with negotiating leverage to demand responsible behavior from others.

Beyond those advantages, we see specific benefits for France and Britain, for the European Union, for the United States, for the Security Council, and for the international community at large.

**Benefits for France and Britain:** Most obviously, to the extent the two were able to agree among themselves, and to catalyze larger European consensus, implementation of such a policy of moving towards a consolidated European Security Council seat would increase their national foreign policy influence. Moreover, the very need to explain, to mobilize support, and to compromise should also produce better policies — a not unimportant aspect in a changing international environment in which national interests are rarely straightforward and narrowly national, but rather opaque, uncertain, and heavily intertwined with interests of others.

France and Britain would certainly seem to have to sacrifice some national prestige and status (though our proposal would largely leave their privileges intact) but in fact they could enlarge their influence and prestige. The two countries would be able to present themselves as enlightened, forward-looking, generous, and as advocates of a better representation of countries such as India or Brazil on the Security Council. The process of working towards consolidated European positions, if handled properly, would also be self-enforcing: France, the U.K., Germany, and the other European Union member states, as well as its CFSP representatives and apparatus, would learn to work together better and more effectively over time.

**Benefits for the European Union:** Pushed by France and the U.K., the European Union in this way would be able to develop a more coherent and consistent common foreign and security policy, and thus gain in influence. This could work only, of course, if that process accommodated other important member states (most obviously, but not only, Germany), the member states as a group, and European institutions. The policy process would thus need to be open for their input, and would need to make credible and serious efforts to accommodate other interests and positions. The proposal could work only, in other words, if London and Paris were able to give others a stake in this venture and persuade them that this would serve their interests, as well.

As experience mounted and participants became increasingly invested in this approach, European ambitions could expand, turning the European Union, led by France and Britain, into a truly influential global player. Such a Europe would also be able to cultivate its role as a “civilian power” and thus also gain standing and influence as a role model and a global power with a grand strategy which diverged fundamentally from that of traditional great powers.

*As experience mounted and participants became increasingly invested in this approach, European ambitions could expand, turning the European Union, led by France and the U.K., into a truly influential global player.*

***Benefits for the UN Security Council:*** By implementing the reform of the UN Security Council, it would become both more legitimate and more effective. There would be at least one permanent seat on the Council available for a non-Western rising state such as India or Brazil. This would make the Council more representative, which would increase its legitimacy and effectiveness. It would complete the decolonization transition, which has not been reflected in the membership based on the world powers of 1945. It would also bring the composition of the Security Council more into line with the distribution of power in contemporary world politics, reflecting the rise of non-Western states over the last several decades.

***Benefits for the international community:*** Finally, the international order at large could be expected to benefit beyond the reform of the UN Security Council itself. The combined impact of a more unified, more influential, and more credible European Union and a more moderate U.S. approach to its veto power should help shift the behavior of other present and prospective future members of the UNSC, and thus advance the agenda of moderating power through responsibility. It could bring the role of the Council closer to that which was envisaged for it by the founding members of the UN: a concert of the most important great powers to responsibly order international relations, enhance and enforce its rules, and promote peace and international security, as well as individual rights and social justice.

# 5 ENDNOTES

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