

India & the UN System

Day 47. India's seventy-year record inside the United Nations — heavy in the field, patient in diplomacy — compressed for fast recall. **Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.**

Exam load — asked in almost every UPSC cycle from 2016 to 2024: **7 × 15-markers · 2 × 10-markers**. Peacekeeping and the UNSC seat carry most of the weight.

PART I

Foundations & Peacekeeping

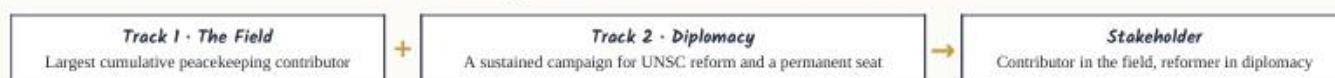
1 Introduction — two tracks

The UN is the largest, most widely represented and most powerful intergovernmental organization, built after the Second World War on the philosophy of **Liberal Institutionalism** to promote cooperation and maintain international order.

- **Jeffrey Sachs** — the UN is the most important political innovation of the twentieth century.
- **David Scott** — for a rising power, voice and weight inside international organizations is both a 'symbolic' and a 'substantive' measure of foreign-policy success. Rising powers push to convert new capabilities into recognition, prestige and control over the rules.

"...may redistribute control from one state to another and benefit those governments at the centre of transnational networks to the disadvantage of those in the periphery." — **Robert Keohane & Joseph Nye (on transnational institutions)**

India's UN engagement — two tracks that reinforce each other



2 India & the Making of the UN

Manu Bhagavan — India helped conceptualize the UN and, at its birth and soon after, moulded it into an organization of universal character and appeal.

- India led efforts against a South African law — the **Ghetto Act** (Apartheid law) — in one of the UN's first acts, with lasting effect on the UN's powers and its self-understanding.
- India also helped develop the Security Council.
- Through the **UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)**, set up in May 1947, India joined UN peace work even before independence.

→ A founding member, associated with the organization since inception.

3 UN Peacekeeping — Meaning & Basis

3.1 Basis in the Charter. Chapter VII lets the Security Council use armed force, if other measures fail, to maintain or restore international peace and security; members must provide forces and facilities.

The point not widely known — Satish Nambiar

There is **no specific provision for peacekeeping in the UN Charter**. It was invented by the Secretary-General and the Secretariat as a **non-coercive tool for conflict management** during a period when Cold War limits blocked the assertive measures the Charter allows.

- Neither superpower would accept UN intervention against allies or within its sphere — the improvisation was peacekeeping without combat connotations.
- → A face-saving device that kept the UN relevant after collective security failed; in an era of Council contestation, peacekeeping has preserved the organization's utility.

3.2 Guiding principles — every operation authorized by the UNSC

Impartiality Consent of the parties Force only in self-defence Defence of the mandate

3.3 Present position

- Established in 1948; the second-largest military force deployed abroad after the US military. Governed by the **Department of Peace Operations (UNDPO)**.
- Tasks: safeguard civilians, prevent conflict, mitigate violence, enhance security, and enable national authorities to take over.
- 71 field missions since 1948; about 81,820 personnel across four continents in 13 operations. (As of May 2025, roughly 69,000 uniformed personnel in 11 active missions.)

4 Evolution of Peacekeeping

Four phases, from execution through an agent nation to a development-linked Peacebuilding Commission.

Phase	Content
Phase I Through an agent nation	Mandated under the UN but executed through an agent nation (1953 Korean crisis, Gulf War). Criticized for the UN's limited force and budget, with the United States dominating after 1991.
Phase II Classical peacekeeping	Cold-War era. Addressed military threats, local conflicts and national tensions through UN forces without great-power involvement; troops withdrawn once tension eased.
Phase III Peace enforcement	Post-1990s. Threats shifted to internal conflicts — civil strife in Africa and Asia — and to terrorism, environment and gender violence, producing peace enforcement and peacebuilding.
Phase IV Peacebuilding Commission (2005)	Proposed by Kofi Annan in <i>In Larger Freedom</i> . An advisory body to the UNGA and UNSC, backed by a Peace Building Support Fund of \$250 million; links the Council's law-and-order role with the development function of ECOSOC.

5 India's Participation in UN Peacekeeping

5.1 Foundations of the approach

Satish Nambiar — as a founding member, India's contribution to international peace and security has been second to none, and in no field more than UN peace operations, beginning with Korea in 1950. The original impulse came from **Jawaharlal Nehru**: liberal internationalism, a desire to strengthen the UN, and peacekeeping as part of his larger goal of peaceful coexistence. **Samantha Power** praised India's support, recalling Nehru's belief that serving India means serving the millions who suffer.

→ Not a permanent member, yet India punches well above its weight in troop and police contribution.

5.2 Deployments during the Cold War

Mission (years)	Indian contribution
Korea (1950–54) US-led	Medical unit (17 off, 9 JCO, 300 OR); Custodian Force for the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (231 off, 203 JCO, 5,696 OR) under Maj Gen SPP Thorat ; India chaired the five-member NNRC in 1953. The 60 Parachute Field Ambulance served three years — the longest single tenure by any military unit in a UN peacekeeping mission.
Indo-China Supervisory Commission (1954–70)	One infantry battalion; monitoring, ceasefire enforcement and repatriation of prisoners of war across Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.
Middle East / UNEF (1956–67) Gaza & Sinai	The first deployment anywhere of armed troop contingents; an infantry battalion with support. Over eleven years: 393 off, 409 JCO, 12,383 OR.
Congo / ONUC (1960–64)	Two Indian brigades (467 off, 404 JCO, 11,354 OR); 36 personnel killed, 124 wounded.
Cyprus (1964)	Three Indian officers served as force commanders.
Namibia (1989)	An Indian force commander oversaw the transition to independence.

→ Across the Cold War, India contributed about 38,000 troops on the Korean peninsula, in Indochina, the Middle East and the Congo.

5.3 Deployments after the Cold War

- **Commanders, observers, staff officers** — Iran–Iraq, Iraq–Kuwait (1991), Angola, Central America, El Salvador, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Lebanon (1998–), Ethiopia–Eritrea, DR Congo (1999–), Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Sudan, the Golan Heights.
- **Military contingents** — Cambodia, Mozambique (ONUMOZ), Somalia, Rwanda (UNAMIR), Angola, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia–Eritrea.
- **Police** — Namibia, Western Sahara, Cambodia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Congo, Liberia, Sudan. **Naval** — a task force of three ships to UNITAF, India's first naval contribution to peacekeeping.
- **Outside the UN framework** — tsunami relief in Indonesia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka (2004), coordinated with Australia, Japan and the US.

→ India has served in every UN peace operation in Africa and led several. Current contingents: UNIFIL (Lebanon), UNMISS (South Sudan), MONUSCO (DR Congo), UNDOF (Golan Heights).

5.4 The cumulative record

Seven decades of contribution — the numbers to hold

2,90,000+ personnel since 1950	50+ UN missions	182 fatalities — highest of any nation	15 Force Commanders
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Largest cumulative contributor over seven decades; about 4,300 serving today across 10 of the 11 active missions. India led from the early 1990s but now ranks third, behind Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The distinction to hold: India is the largest cumulative contributor, while its current standing in active deployment is lower.

5.5 Institutional & peacebuilding contribution

- Member of the Organizational Committee of the **Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)** — argues for nationally-led plans and a 'lighter touch' from the PBC; contributor to the **UN Peacebuilding Fund**.
- **Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK)**, New Delhi — Secretariat for International Peacekeeping Institutes for almost two decades; the **India-ASEAN Initiative for Women in UN Peacekeeping** runs here; now trains about 12,000 personnel a year.
- Recognition through the **Dag Hammarskjöld Award** and the UN Medal. **Operation Maitri** — water channels and medical care for drought-hit communities in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

6 Role of the Indian Armed Forces

Central to the success of UN missions across three registers:

- **Leadership in command** — Indian officers have commanded multinational forces in difficult theatres. **Satish Nambiar** develops this in *For the Honour of India: A History of Indian Peacekeeping*.
- **Operational excellence** — monitoring ceasefires, protecting civilians, disarming combatants; professionalism that set a recognised standard.
- **Humanitarian impact** — medical care and rebuilt infrastructure alongside military tasks; water channels and health facilities in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

7 Women & Peacekeeping

Only about 6 per cent of UN peacekeepers are women; India has led here in practice, not declaration.

- **2007** — the UN's first all-women **Formed Police Unit** to Liberia (UNMIL), serving until 14 February 2016 while empowering Liberian women; newer women's units to **Abeyi**.
- The **India-ASEAN Initiative for Women in UN Peacekeeping** runs training at CUNPK. **Major Radhika Sen** won the "Military Gender Advocate of the Year 2023" award.
- **Dyan Mazurana**, **Angela Raven-Roberts** and **Jane Parpart**, in *Gender, Conflict, and Peacekeeping*, show why including women makes peace processes more effective and inclusive.
- Gender-parity targets for 2025: 12 per cent of contingent troops and 25 per cent of individual police officers.

8 Recent Trends in India's Peacekeeping Role

- **Specialized contributions** — engineering corps, medical teams and trainers; **Satish Nambiar** on the effectiveness this adds.
- **Complex missions** — high-risk roles in South Sudan and the DR Congo; **Gurmeet Kanwal**, in *Indian Army: Vision 2020*, on how Indian military strategy has adapted.
- **Technology** — India helped design **UNITE AWARE**, a situational-awareness platform built with UNDPO; **S. Jaishankar** has pressed for "protecting the protectors".
- **Recognition** — in 2024, Naik **Dhananjay Kumar Singh** (MONUSCO) received the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal posthumously.
- **Normative leadership** — India championed **UNSC Resolution 2589** on accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.

→ **Counter-trend:** India's rank in current deployment has slipped to third behind Pakistan and Bangladesh, even as its cumulative record remains the largest.

UPSC 2019 - ISm Analyze the recent trends in India's role in the UN peacekeeping operations.

9 India's Policy on Peacekeeping

- **Non-alignment & sovereignty** — rooted in respect for state sovereignty; Indian peacekeepers hold to impartiality and take no side in internal conflicts.
- **Focus on developing nations** — concentrated in Africa, in line with South-South cooperation and solidarity with the Global South.
- **Character of the contribution** — measured not only by numbers but by professionalism, humanitarian concern and gender awareness; Indian contingents are described as 'Reliable' peacekeepers through easy adaptation, long deployment and readiness to take risks.

10 Criticism of India's Peacekeeping Role

Satish Nambiar reads India's spontaneous, unreserved participation as commitment to the Charter in real terms — to the point of accepting casualties — earning respect from successive Secretaries-General and professionals who worked with Indian commanders. The record has still been questioned.

- **Nitin Pai** and **Sushant Singh** — the "poorly equipped, mandated and governed operations" of UN peacekeeping; participation is not commensurate to results, whether a UNSC seat or "great power status". **Anit Mukherjee** records the same — "not commensurate to results".
- Peacekeeping is done mostly by developing-country troops; critics say such company implies India may not be taken seriously as a standalone great power.
- **Thierry Tardy** — little goodwill was gained, shown by India's loss to Japan in the 1996 UNSC election at the height of its effort.
- **Richard Gowan** and **Sushant Singh** — contribution flows from habit, not design; India must build strategies that convert it into recognition. **Manmohan Bahadur** — goodwill in UN circles but little impact on power play, which turns on funding and the P5.
- Bad publicity through instances of sexual misconduct and corruption; funders generally have a greater say than troop donors.

→ Not all criticisms are equally valid — especially on the meaning of 'great power' — but together they open a serious debate on peacekeeping and India's place in it.

11 Issues & Constraints in Indian Peacekeeping

- **Protective equipment** — a UN investigation found 2,200 Indian troops in South Sudan without proper protective equipment. **Complex environments** — militias and difficult terrain in Congo, Somalia and South Sudan.
- **Under-resourcing & casualties** — many missions underfunded; India carries the highest fatalities of any contributor. **Limited UNSC influence** — decisions turn on funding and P5 interests.
- **Domestic pressures** — low defence expenditure and personnel shortages raise the question of scaling back. **Local cultural knowledge** — gaps limit the soft power deployment could generate.
- **China's rising role** — China uses peacekeeping to build defence diplomacy with African states; **C. Raja Mohan** notes this has given it a political advantage over India in the discourse. Add the reluctance of developed states to contribute, and the growing danger from non-state actors.

12 Reforms India Proposes in Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is changing “faster than ever”; India's proposals run through the whole mission cycle.

- Troop- and police-contributing countries must have a voice “at every level and in every facet” of mandating, planning and review; Council directives must fit field conditions and match the resources allocated.
- Mandates must be field-driven, realistic, and tied to a political goal and end-state; the Council should decide new missions within 30 days, never beyond 90.
- Budgets must match mandates — modern equipment, early-warning technology and training, with wider use of CUNPK; better casualty evacuation and intelligence; zero tolerance on misconduct.
- More resources for post-conflict peacebuilding so gains persist; recruitment of civilian specialists — engineers, medics, gender advisers, climate and cyber experts.

“Adapting peace operations to new realities cannot happen unless those on ground... are made part of the mandate formulation process at every stage.”

— Ambassador Pardeep Kumar Harish

→ Wider context: the **2025 Berlin UN Peacekeeping Ministerial** is “a high-level political forum to discuss the future of peacekeeping”. It has enabled the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) and a Rapid Deployment Level with units “on standby to deploy within 60 days”, alongside the A4P and A4P+ push for political support and predictable financing.

13 Assessment of India's Peacekeeping Record

Strengths	Limits
Longest and largest cumulative contribution, across every phase.	Contribution has not bought a proportionate say in mandate formulation.
Command experience, specialised capability, training and technology.	Current deployment rank has fallen; China has gained in the discourse.
Leadership on women; soft power in Africa and Asia; a responsible-actor image.	Persistent criticism on equipment, misconduct and absence of strategy.

Way forward — **C. Raja Mohan**: deepen cooperation with major powers and the African Union; go beyond troops to training, logistics and mediation; expand domestic defence capability and military diplomacy. The India–US agreement to jointly train peacekeepers from six African nations signals the change.

→ **Kofi Annan**'s call to move from “peace-keeping” to “peace-building” sets the direction for India's professional and empathetic forces.

UPSC 2017 · 10m

“India has been the largest and consistent country contributing to the UN peacekeepers worldwide.” Examine India's role in this perspective.

PART II

Reform & the Security Council Seat

14 Reform of the United Nations

14.1 Need for reform

Reform is natural to any institution that means to stay relevant. Over fifty years, Cold-War strategic influences have declined, UN membership has grown almost fourfold, and expectations have risen.

Only reformed multilateralism with a reformed United Nations at its centre can meet the aspirations of humanity. — **Narendra Modi, 75th UN General Assembly**

14.2 Structural reforms — organ by organ

Organ	Reform sought
UNGA	Stronger coordination with the Security Council to improve implementation of decisions.
UNSC	Reform of membership and veto to make the Council more representative, democratic and accountable.
ECOSOC	Streamline to avoid duplication and coordinate economic and social initiatives.
Trusteeship Council	Reconsider its functions or assign new roles managing the global commons.
Secretariat	Reduce corruption, improve efficiency, raise representation of developing countries.

14.3 Functional reforms

- Expand the Council: in 1965 it grew from 11 to 15, with no change in permanent members, and has been frozen since — undermining its representative character. An expanded Council would carry more authority and legitimacy.
- Shyam Saran** — expand permanent membership to include India, Brazil and South Africa, with greater African and Asian representation.

“If we don’t change the council, we risk a situation where the primacy of the council may be challenged by some of the new emerging countries.” — Kofi Annan

14.4 Reform of the veto

A single veto blocks a resolution regardless of international support — Russia vetoed a resolution demanding it halt its attack on Ukraine. A means to override the veto is needed. **Richard Gowan**, in “Veto Power at the United Nations: Framing the Debate”, argues the P5 veto must be reformed for more effective decision-making.

14.5 Financial & institutional reforms

- Funding** — **Rakesh Sood** (former Ambassador to France) on the need for sustainable, predictable funding; dependence on member contributions affects independent functioning.
- Outdated Charter** — monistic sovereignty, and Germany and Japan still described as ‘enemy states’. **Dag Hammarskjöld** called the organization a ‘Weird Picasso abstraction’ for its size and complexity.
- Divergent working methods (a non-representative UNSC beside a decentralized UNGA), peacekeeping training and accountability, and effective SDG implementation.

14.6 Reforms for new challenges

António Guterres — new challenges need new solutions; the world has a surplus of multilateral challenges but not enough multilateral answers, which makes both strengthening and structural reform necessary. **Sushma Swaraj** held that the UN, for all its flaws, remains the most important platform for dialogue, and warned that a UN unwilling to reform will erode its own legitimacy and meet the fate of the League of Nations.

14.7 The Pact for the Future (2024)

Adopted by consensus at the Summit of the Future on 22 September 2024. **Action 39** commits states to reform the Council; **Action 40** backs the intergovernmental negotiations ‘without delay’. It changed no seat and no vote, and on the veto goes only as far as limiting its scope and use. India’s reading is sharper — Modi called reform ‘the key to relevance’, while Ambassador **P. Harish** told the Assembly the Pact ‘definitely falls short’ on Council expansion.

15 Challenges Ahead of the UN

- Peace & security** — conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and Asia need sustainable solutions. **Terrorism** — stronger counter-terror effort and cooperation. **Nuclear proliferation** — non-proliferation and disarmament among nuclear-armed states.
- Non-conventional** — **climate change** (collective mitigation), a growing population (pressure on resources, food and health), the **refugee crisis**, and **pandemics** (the COVID-19 lesson on health cooperation).

16 India & the Wider UN Agenda

Beyond peacekeeping — development, poverty, climate, terrorism, piracy, disarmament, human rights and peacebuilding.

- Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027)** — a joint UN–India framework across health, education, growth, environment and community empowerment.
- Forests** — India’s Green Credit Program presented at the UN Forum on Forests. **Disarmament & AI** — the UN’s disarmament chief discussed AI’s implications for security ahead of the Conference on Disarmament.
- Global agenda — the MDGs, the SDGs, climate summits, and the CCIT framework against terrorism.

17 India’s Demand for a Permanent Seat

17.1 Basis of the demand

The Council’s structure is largely unchanged since 1945, when five victors — China, France, the UK, the US and the then USSR — took permanent seats. India’s case rests on representation and equity, Global South representation, economic and demographic weight, its peacekeeping record, nuclear-power status and regional stability. **Article 23** of the Charter itself directs that elected members be chosen with regard to their contribution to international peace and security — a criterion India meets on the Charter’s own terms.

Three reasons — Harsh V. Pant (“The Challenge of Reforming UN”)

(1) acknowledgement that India is a great power; (2) assurance the UNSC is not used against India, as happened in 1948 on Kashmir; (3) capacity to stop sanctions against smaller countries.

17.2 Grounds of the claim

- **Bridging divides** — between the P2 and P3, India presents itself as a neutral state able to build consensus. **World view** — **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** and a constitutional commitment to international peace.
- **Extensive association** — founding member; eight non-permanent terms, most recently 2021–22. In July 2026 India launched its bid for the 2028–29 term under the vision **SHANTI** (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity), naming counter-terrorism, maritime security and the governance of artificial intelligence among its priorities.
- **Intrinsic strength** — the most populous country, the fifth-largest economy and second-largest by PPP, a responsible nuclear power, and the world's largest democracy. **Leader of the Third World** — NAM and the G-77.
- **Global issues & expertise** — the MDGs, SDGs, climate summits, the CCIT, and long counter-terrorism experience; a pluralistic society; active in the G20 and BRICS.
- **Global support** — the US, Russia, the UK and France, and well over 120 states across the L.69 and African Union blocs.

17.3 Views of scholars

Scholar	Position
C. Raja Mohan	Expand permanent membership to include India, given its economic role and peacekeeping.
Rajesh Rajagopalan	The veto is contentious; abolish or limit it to democratize the Council.
Hardeep Singh Puri	Better regional representation — India, Africa and Latin America.
Meena Singh Roy	Transparency and inclusivity; the Council is opaque and dominated by a few.
Happymon Jacob	The Council must evolve on terrorism, cyber threats and climate to stay relevant.
S. Y. Quraishi	A structure reflecting today's geopolitics, accommodating rising powers.
Srinath Raghavan	India's long contributions justify a greater role in Council decisions.
Ramesh Thakur	India's consistent engagement enhances UN legitimacy and effectiveness.
Shashi Tharoor (<i>Pax Indica</i>)	India's role in global peace reflects readiness for greater responsibility.
Arundhati Ghose	Peacekeeping serves India's goals of equity, stability and a reformed order.

UPSC 2020 · 15m Explain the importance of India's claim for a permanent seat in the United Security Council.

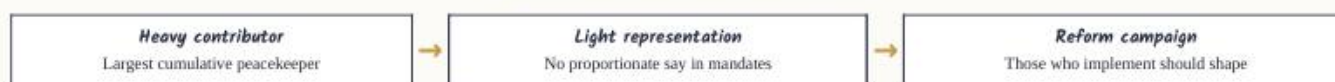
UPSC 2022 · 15m Explain the factors which justify India's claim for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

18 Peacekeeping as a Ground for the Seat

Over seven decades, peacekeeping is the strongest single ground India advances — readiness to shoulder exactly the global responsibility expected of permanent members.

- **C. Raja Mohan** — peacekeeping shows moral authority and strategic capacity. **Ramesh Thakur** (*From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*) — emerging powers' contributions strengthen their case in global governance.
- **Shashi Tharoor** (*Pax Indica*) — involvement reflects readiness for greater responsibility. **Arundhati Ghose** (*India's Role in the United Nations*) — peacekeeping has bolstered India's diplomatic standing.
- **The counter-argument** — contribution has not brought a greater say; funding, not troops, determines influence. **Anit Mukherjee** — “not commensurate to results”; **Thierry Tardy** — the 1996 election loss to Japan.

The tension that drives the reform push



UPSC 2023 · 15m Discuss the importance of India's role in UN peacekeeping operations as a ground for its claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

19 The G4 Proposal

Members — Brazil, Germany, India and Japan: significant economic and regional powers offering mutual support for permanent seats reflecting twenty-first-century realities.

The model — a 25-member Council

Region	New seats added
Africa	2 permanent + 1 non-permanent
Asia	2 permanent + 1 non-permanent
Latin America	1 permanent + 1 non-permanent
Western Europe	1 permanent
Eastern Europe	1 non-permanent (non-renewable)

→ Six new permanent and four non-renewable non-permanent seats — directly addressing the long-noted deficits of Africa and Asia.

- **Inis Claude Jr.** — the veto was a deliberate design to prevent enforcement against any of the Big Five: structural paralysis by choice.
- The P5 treat veto reform as non-negotiable; the G4 has accepted, as a transitional compromise, that the veto be limited to existing permanent members “for at least 15 years”.
- Restraint, not removal, is the realistic path. The UNGA **veto initiative** (resolution 76/262, 2022) forces a vetoing state to explain itself before the Assembly within 10 working days; the **ACT Code of Conduct** and the France–Mexico initiative pledge against the veto in the face of atrocity crimes — though of the P5 only France and the UK have signed the former, and only France the latter.
- **Bharat H. Desai** — these shifts “open the doors for the... permanent membership without veto”, a “pragmatic way out” for India and the G4.

20 Uniting for Consensus (Coffee Club)

Members — formed in the mid-1990s under Italy; core members include Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Spain and Türkiye, speaking for roughly 50–55 states. **Preference** — expand non-permanent seats only (longer-term, re-electable) with curbs on the veto; its March 2024 proposal took this line.

G4	Uniting for Consensus
New permanent + non-permanent seats.	More elected seats only; no new permanent members.
Fixes representation where demand and workload lie.	Rotation and re-election improve accountability.
Veto capped for existing P5 for 15+ years.	New permanent members without veto would deepen the democratic deficit.

Objections — new permanent seats would “freeze privilege” and widen the divide between large and small states; reform must respect **Article 108** (two-thirds of the UNGA plus ratification by all five veto-holders). **Motivation** — regional rivalries, with Pakistan opposing India and Italy opposing Germany.

→ **India’s position:** it has rejected the UfC plan and called for a credible “UN 2.0” at the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (2024), describing the slow pace as a “wasted opportunity”. The Chair’s “Convergences and Divergences” paper of 17 June 2025 confirms deep splits and no agreed negotiating text.

UPSC 2017 · 15m ‘Uniting for Consensus’ also known as ‘Coffee Club’ has opposed the claims of India and other countries over permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Point out their major objections.

21 China & India’s Claim

- China is the main opponent of India’s permanent membership — a position tied to their history of border conflict — and has repeatedly declined to welcome India into the permanent category.
- India has explicit backing from four of the five permanent members — the US, the UK, France and Russia. **China remains non-committal and could veto any Charter amendment.**
- China uses peacekeeping to build defence diplomacy with African nations; **C. Raja Mohan** notes this has given it a political advantage over India. In Delhi, the seat is seen as a way to balance Chinese power in Asia, and in South Asia.

UPSC 2016 · 15m Critically analyze China’s role in international politics against India’s demand for permanent seat in UN Security Council.

22 Impediments in India’s Path

- **Charter rigidity** — a two-thirds UNGA majority plus ratification by every permanent member, so a single veto stops enlargement. **Opposition** — the UfC group, plus competing claims from Africa and Latin America that dilute support.
- **Great-power calculation** — the P5 are reluctant to admit members who would dilute their influence; divide-and-rule preserves the status quo; Russia and the US weigh their support against wider bargains with Beijing.
- **Procedural deadlock** — fifteen years of IGN without a single negotiating text, and no agreed criteria for permanent membership.
- **India-specific** — non-signature of the NPT (despite “No First Use”) and a modest UN-budget contribution.

Three further constraints — Mukherjee and Malone

(1) **Resource constraints** — limited means hinder consistent lobbying; (2) **Normative engagement** — India needs deeper engagement with the normative side of Council issues; (3) **Entitlement vs realpolitik** — entitlement is insufficient; strategic alliances are necessary.

→ **The larger question** — **Neelam Deo**, **C. Raja Mohan** and **Shyam Saran** warn a “Cold War 2.0” could sideline the UN, making the seat less consequential than pragmatic partnerships; **Ramesh Thakur** cautions that threats of “non-co-operation” carry reputational cost; **Teresita Schaffer** notes India’s growing “multilateral personality”.

23 The Veto Question

Should India accept a permanent seat without the veto, or insist on full parity with the P5?

- **Insist on the veto** — **Natwar Singh** and Ambassador **Nirupam Sen**: new permanent members must have veto rights, or the Council runs on two tiers. Commodore **Uday Bhaskar**: refuse seats without the veto, since acceptance would entrench the original five.
- **Flexibility** — India has agreed to delay veto discussions and the G4 accepts a fifteen-year moratorium. **Bharat H. Desai** reads veto-restraint norms as a “pragmatic way out”; **Chinmaya R. Gharekhan** urges realism and practical arrangements such as semi-peripheral membership.
- **The obstacle to parity** — **Ashley Tellis**: reluctance to grant the veto reflects concern about India's independent foreign policy. **Rajesh Rajagopalan** takes the opposite route — abolish or limit the veto altogether.

→ India's settled position: true reform needs equal rights for new permanent members; a seat without the veto is an inadequate compromise.

UPSC 2024 - 10m “India must strive to become a semi-permanent member of the UNSC, rather than a permanent member without the right to veto.” Comment.

24 India's Diplomatic Strategy

- **Maximize support in the UNGA** — leadership in the G-77 and NAM to build a two-thirds majority; the **L.69 Group** (India services its secretariat), which presses for an “accountable, representative, transparent” Council; and the **G4**.
- **Minimize resistance in the UNSC** — bilateral outreach and strategic partnerships; demonstrating credibility (democratic record, responsible nuclear posture, peacekeeping); and presenting itself as necessary on terrorism, climate and development.

What scholars advise

Ramachandra Guha — prioritize internal development over superstar status. **C. Raja Mohan** — guard against being bargained by the West. **Ramesh Thakur** — non-cooperation is a possible but risky lever. **Shyam Saran** — build concrete power instead of chasing illusory goals.

25 India & the UN's Ineffectiveness in Recent Crises

The UN's failure on Russia-Ukraine and the West Asian conflicts has sharpened scrutiny of its structural limits. India's response is shaped by strategic autonomy and the non-alignment tradition.

25.1 The Russia-Ukraine crisis

- India has consistently abstained on resolutions condemning Russia in the UNSC, the HRC and the UNGA.
- **Historical ties & defence dependence** — **S. Jaishankar** treats India-Russia as a consistent fixture; **C. Raja Mohan** and **Harsh V. Pant** point to reliance on Russian hardware and diplomatic backing on Kashmir.
- **Strategic autonomy** — abstention preserves autonomy amid polarization; **Narendra Modi's** line to Putin, “now is not an era of war”, expresses a preference for dialogue. It also helps avoid a Russia-China-Pakistan axis.

25.2 West Asia

- **Israel-Palestine** — India supports a two-state solution, direct negotiations and Palestinian rights while deepening ties with Israel; **Happymon Jacob** calls this dual engagement “pragmatic idealism”.
- **Iran** — cautious engagement on the nuclear question and sanctions; India presses for international law and peaceful settlement while pursuing energy interests, particularly through Chabahar Port.

25.3 Scholarly assessments

Shyam Saran and **Suhasini Haidar** criticise the paralysis of the UN and the Council's inability to act because of veto politics. Think tanks such as **ORF** and **IDSIA** note India's advocacy for multilateralism alongside its readiness to act independently. → The posture combines realist strategy, multilateral advocacy and pragmatic idealism.

26 Theoretical Perspectives

Lens	Reading of India's UN engagement
Realism	The seat is a quest for power and status; peacekeeping bolsters security and standing; Ukraine and West Asia reflect national interest over ideology.
Liberal Institutionalism	The UN's founding philosophy; peacekeeping and multilateralism express commitment to a rules-based order; scepticism yields selective engagement (BRICS, SCO).
Constructivism	Identity and norms matter; peacekeeping reflects India's self-image as a responsible actor and leader of the Global South.
Collective Security	Underpins the peacekeeping role — shared responsibility for peace, and the legitimacy India draws from participation.

→ **Robert Keohane** and **Joseph Nye** supply the corrective: institutions can redistribute control toward those already at the centre of networks — precisely India's complaint about the Council.

27 Important Scholarly Assessments

Scholar	Assessment
Satish Nambiar	Peacekeeping has no Charter basis; India's contribution to peace and security is second to none, expressed in practical terms including casualties.
Manu Bhagavan	India helped conceptualize the UN and shape it into an organization of universal character.
David Scott	Voice within international organizations is both symbolic and substantive success for rising states.
Keohane & Nye	Transnational institutions can advantage those already at the centre of networks.
C. Raja Mohan	Peacekeeping shows moral authority and strategic capacity; move beyond troops; avoid being bargained by the West.
Ramesh Thakur	Emerging powers' contributions strengthen their governance case; non-cooperation is possible but risky.
Shashi Tharoor	India's role in global peace shows readiness for greater responsibility.
Arundhati Ghose	Peacekeeping has strengthened India's standing and serves equity and a reformed order.
The critical school	Nitin Pai & Sushant Singh, Richard Gowan, Thierry Tardy, Anit Mukherjee, Manmohan Bahadur — heavy contribution has not converted into recognition or a seat.
Harsh V. Pant	Three reasons for the seat: recognition, insurance against a repeat of 1948 on Kashmir, and protection of smaller states.
Inis Claude Jr.	The veto was designed to prevent enforcement against the Big Five; paralysis by design.
Bharat H. Desai	Emerging veto-restraint norms open a pragmatic route to permanent membership without veto.
Ashley Tellis	Reluctance to grant India the veto reflects concern about its independent foreign policy.
Shyam Saran	Expand permanent membership to India, Brazil and South Africa; build concrete power.
Chinmaya R. Gharekhan	Be realistic; pursue semi-peripheral membership.
Teresita Schaffer	India's influence grows through its broader "multilateral personality".
Kofi Annan · António Guterres	Reform or irrelevance; the world "needs more UN, not less" — a surplus of challenges, a shortage of answers.

28 Conclusion

India's engagement runs on two tracks that reinforce each other — a leading troop and police contributor supporting day-to-day operations, and a reform advocate pressing for a Council that reflects contemporary power. **Contributor in the field, reformer in diplomacy, stakeholder in the organization's future.**

- Credibility earned in the field supplies both the moral standing and the policy content of the reform case — representation for implementers, credible mandates, safety of peacekeepers, technology-enabled operations.
- The gap between contribution and Council outcomes sustains the campaign and will not close through merit alone — Charter rigidity, competing regional claims, veto politics and great-power competition all work against a quick result.
- Institutions built for the twentieth century will not serve the twenty-first: the Council risks irrelevance, and the world risks turbulence with no one able to address it. A UN unwilling to reform will erode its own legitimacy and meet the fate of the League of Nations.

29 Power Quotes

"If we don't change the council, we risk a situation where the primacy of the council may be challenged by some of the new emerging countries." — **Kofi Annan**

"Adapting peace operations to new realities cannot happen unless those on ground... are made part of the mandate formulation process at every stage." — **Pardeep Kumar Harish**

"Now is not an era of war." — **Narendra Modi (to Vladimir Putin)**

Emerging veto-restraint norms "open the doors for the... permanent membership without veto" — a "pragmatic way out". — **Bharat H. Desai**

India's West Asia posture is one of "pragmatic idealism". — **Happymon Jacob**

The world "needs more UN, not less". — **Kofi Annan**

Better technology is a matter of "protecting the protectors". — **S. Jaishankar**

The organization is a "Weird Picasso abstraction". — **Dag Hammarskjöld**

30 Scholar Index

Angela Raven-Roberts · Anit Mukherjee · António Guterres · Arundhati Ghose · Ashley Tellis · Bharat H. Desai · C. Raja Mohan · Chinmaya R. Gharekhan · Dag Hammarskjöld · David Scott · Dhananjay Kumar Singh · Dyan Mazurana · Gurmeet Kanwal · Happymon Jacob · Hardeep Singh Puri · Harsh V. Pant · Inis Claude Jr. · Jane Parpart · Jawaharlal Nehru · Jeffrey Sachs · Joseph Nye · Kofi Annan · Malone · Manmohan Bahadur · Manu Bhagavan · Meena Singh Roy · Narendra Modi · Natwar Singh · Neelam Deo · Nirupam Sen · Nitin Pai · Pardeep Kumar Harish · Radhika Sen · Rajesh Rajagopalan · Rakesh Sood · Ramachandra Guha · Ramesh Thakur · Richard Gowan · Robert Keohane · S. Jaishankar · S. Y. Quraishi · Samantha Power · Satish Nambiar · Shashi Tharoor · Shyam Saran · SPP Thorat · Srinath Raghavan · Suhasini Haidar · Sushant Singh · Sushma Swaraj · Teresita Schaffer · Thierry Tardy · Uday Bhaskar

31 How UPSC Asks It

Theme	Years & marks
India in UN peacekeeping (the record)	2017 / 10m
Recent trends in peacekeeping	2019 / 15m
Peacekeeping as a ground for the seat	2023 / 15m
Permanent-seat claim (importance / factors)	2020 / 15m · 2022 / 15m
China vs India's claim	2016 / 15m
Uniting for Consensus / Coffee Club	2017 / 15m
Impediments to the seat	2018 / 15m
Veto / semi-permanent membership	2024 / 10m

32 Today's Practice

1. Discuss the importance of India's role in UN peacekeeping operations as a ground for its claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. (UPSC 2023 / 15m)
2. Discuss the various impediments in India's way to a permanent seat in the Security Council. (UPSC 2018 / 15m)
3. "India must strive to become a semi-permanent member of the UNSC, rather than a permanent member without the right to veto." Comment. (UPSC 2024 / 10m)

Model answers drop tonight on the channel — [@psirbyamitpratap](#). Revise this capsule alongside your Foundation / OGP class notes, then write.

See you tomorrow with Day 48 — India & the Nuclear Question.