

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 15 marks

'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. (2017/15 marks)

FLOW SNAPSHOT – how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 locate group: mid-1990s, Italy-led "Coffee Club", ~50 states → line: objections blend principle (no new permanent privilege) + regional rivalry
R2 1945 Council frozen → G4 seeks permanent seats → UfC forms as the counter-coalition → its objections now define the reform deadlock

Body flow

Objection 1: new permanent seats "freeze privilege" → widen small-elite-vs-membership divide → expand an existing oligarchy → Objection 2: veto untouched → deepens democratic deficit, no cure for paralysis → UfC alternative (March 2024): enlarge only elected tier, longer/re-electable seats → rotation + accountability + geographic balance → Objection 3: Article 108 → two-thirds GA + all five ratify → reform must rest on widest consensus → underlying motive: regional rivalry (Pakistan v India, Italy v Germany) → think-tank reading

Counter-view

India rejects the model → **Kamboj** (2024): ignores Africa / Global South, "just vetoes the process" → calls for "UN 2.0" → yet UfC numbers block the two-thirds majority → reform stuck without an agreed text

Conclusion routes

R1 objections coherent in principle yet selective in effect → democratic language + regional rivalry + Charter rigidity → entrenches the order it claims to reform **R2** objections are real constraints, not mere obstruction → but deadlock persists → any breakthrough needs the consensus UfC's veto-on-privilege denies

The Uniting for Consensus group- formed in the mid-1990s under Italian leadership & speaking for some 50 years, is the sharpest organised block to India's UNSC bid.

Its objections combine a principled case against new permanent privilege with plain regional rivalry. The objection is that fresh permanent seats would freeze privilege. A wider circle of permanent members would deepen the divide between a small elite and the general membership, expanding an existing oligarchy rather than correcting it.

Adding permanent members while leaving the veto untouched would widen the democratic deficit, not cure paralysis. Re-electable seats allowing rotation, accountability and geographic balance.

Any reform must respect Article 108, needing a $2/3$ assembly majority + ratification by all 5 veto-holders.

Beneath the principle lies rivalry, Pakistan against India and Italy against Germany. Recent think-tank assessments read the group as motivated chiefly by such regional contests.

India has rejected the model. At the 2024 negotiations, Ruchira Kamboj argued it ignores African & Global South representation. It merely vetoes the process, pressing instead for a credible "UN 2.0". The group's numbers can still deny the two-thirds majority, keeping reform without an agreed text.

The objections cohere in principle but remain selective in effect. Democratic language that, joined to regional rivalry & charter rigidity, entrenches the order it claims to reform.