

Muslim States and Reform of the United Nations Security Council

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Abstract: *This article explores reform of the United Nations Security Council and the response of the Muslim-majority member states seeking greater participation in the organization. A variety of models and plans for Council reform have emerged since 2000. Within this debate, Muslim-majority member states have focused on the restriction/abolition of the veto, the inclusion of Egypt and Nigeria as permanent African/Muslim representatives, and instigating the procedural reforms. Despite this sentiment, the reform process has led to inter-state rivalry among these states and confusion about the best path to progress. As a result, there is little promise for Muslim states in gaining an increased level of participation in the Council. Muslim ambitions are hindered by an inability of these states to coordinate a unified reaction; inter-state rivalry; the reticence of existing Council members to approve permanent Muslim membership; the relatively weak bargaining position that these states hold in the negotiations, and the tendency for many to support one of the different reform models, some with mutually-exclusive perspectives.*

Key Words: *General Assembly; Muslim States; the Razali Plan; Security Council Reform; Security Council Veto; United Nations*

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Introduction

The military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, sanctions on Iran, and a host of issues from setting gender policy to human rights have amplified a sense of alienation between Muslim communities and the West. Indeed, many Muslims are convinced that they are subject to a neo-colonial agenda of domination and conquest. As the ultimate multilateral organisation, the United Nations is charged with the task of managing this growing alienation and distrust that has generated such a tumultuous relationship. The UN has been party to all cases that have caused many grievances for the Muslim world. However, even when the Organization resisted US pressure to sanction the military invasion of Iraq, as far as many observers in the Muslim world are concerned, the UN sanctions policy against Iraq prepared the ground for this eventuality.

The most common criticism levelled against the UN and its Security Council is that they are dominated by the United States and its allies. The General Assembly is seen, through the Charter itself, as little more than a debating chamber, while key decisions are made by the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5) at the expense of Muslim states. Of course, the power disparity in the UN, most notably represented by the veto right of the P5, impacts on all member states from the South. The two-decade old UN reform movement is a direct response to this growing unease with the lack of proportional representation by the countries of the South in the SC decision making.

This article explores relevant reform proposals and how Muslim member states have responded to them. The UN reform movement has slowly gathered pace in the post-Cold War era. This is welcomed by Muslim member states as they seek to gain a greater UN participation. Achieving this objective would address the pervasive sense of alienation among the Muslim citizens of the world and imbue hope for the prospect of a more just international order. The reform

movement, however, has led to inter-state rivalry among Muslim states and confusion about the best way to move forward. As a result, the chance to reform the United Nations is in danger of being undermined by the very states that need it most.

I. The Status of Security Council Reform

The early 21st century has proven to be a tumultuous period for the UN. The consistent attacks on the Organization from various quarters have portrayed an organization in crisis. This has manifested itself in calls for reform and increased accountability largely from powerful states, namely the United States in pressuring the organization over its role in the “War on Terror” and intervention in Iraq as well as from developing and third world states which have increasingly demanded representation in the decision-making body of the Security Council.

However, the UN is not facing irrelevance as some critics may claim. It continues to operate as the ultimate international body and, unlike its forbearer, the League of Nations, its membership now extends to include virtually the entire community of states. The intense focus on the organization is a vindication of its importance to the functioning of global politics. Whilst the resonance of these critiques points to its very real shortcomings; it also highlights how important it remains, particularly for weaker states for parity and active participation in the international system.

The intensity of the debate on UNSC reform has brought to the fore the need for effective, inclusive and legitimate reform of the UN and the UNSC. Developing and third world states have raised two major grievances. First, the unbalanced relationship between the GA and the UNSC; and second the structure and powers of the Council, particularly the entrenched dominance of the post-WWII Great Powers vis-à-vis the rest of the international community.

The structure and functionality of the GA and UNSC have led to two main charges against the organization. The first centers on a view

of the United Nations as unable to act decisively due to its overly bureaucratic and consultative nature. Such criticisms have emerged particularly in recent years through the advocates of unilateralism in the White House and US Capital. The second grievance sees the majority of states disparage the unbalanced weighting between the advisory body of the UN the GA, and its far more powerful executive counterpart, the UNSC. Here, only great power interests or issues of benign significance to the P5 make it to the level of effective and binding resolution due to the monopolization of decision-making and wielding of the veto.

A microcosm of this latter grievance is reflected in the attitude of many Muslim states to the UN structure. In particular, they point to an intense global focus on them and their activities as symptomatic of a form of exceptional, exclusive treatment by the international community, particularly by the great powers. Despite this, they have little to no representation within the UNSC despite constituting close to 20% of the world's population. Some may dismiss this perception of exceptional treatment as unfounded suspicion and dismay at a general lack of economic and political development among Muslim states. However, an examination of the activities and priorities of the Council and its members since 1946 reveals several interesting trends.

Between January 1946 and July 2010, the Security Council passed 1,782 resolutions not including resolutions relating to procedures and admission of new members. Of these, 842 resolutions (or 47%) relate to Muslim and Middle Eastern states. In other words, almost half of the binding Council resolutions passed since the creation of the United Nations have related to issues involving or directly focused on Muslim or Middle Eastern states. Between 1990 and 2009, there have been 86 resolutions relating to Iraq. This constituted nearly 25% of all Chapter VII resolutions (Weiss & Young, 2005, 144; Malay, 2005, 17-33). This is partly a reflection of the troubled modern political history of the region. However, it also raises the question of external involvement and local representation because of such an intense focus. In other words, these states can legitimately ask question: "where is our voice in decisions

made on our behalf or of vital importance to us?"

Muslim states have been active participants as non-permanent members of the Council since 1946, being elected in 53 of the 67 rounds of voting, or gaining representation in 75% of votes held. While non-permanent members are able to participate in Council debates and vote on resolutions; they are effectively deprived of their power if one of the P5 wields their veto. Due to this imbalance, members are effectively prevented from gaining much more than prestige from non-permanent membership in the UN's executive body.

The veto power has seriously damaged the authority of the Council as anything beyond the guardian of Great Power interests. By the end of 2006, the P5 vetoed 262 resolutions (Global Policy Forum, 2010). In the last decades, a great number were initiated by the US in defense of Israel, giving rise to criticism that it was abusing its Great Power status and the veto right to shield its ally against international sanctions. The US has used its veto 83 times since 1970. (Global Policy Forum, 2010). Of these, 48 vetos (or 58%) have related to issues to do with the Middle East. Notably, only one of these 48 vetoes did not relate to Israel, its relationship with the Palestinians, the Occupied Territories, and their relationship to immediate and regional neighbors.

II. The Security Council Reform Debate

Debate over UNSC reform gained momentum at the end of the Cold War. The issue was discussed at the 41st session of the GA in 1992. In 1993, the Assembly issued Resolution 48/26 which established an "Open-Ended Working Group" to consider "the question of increase in the membership of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Council" (United Nations, 1993). Although numerous meetings were held, no agreement was reached on a specific program or model for organizational restructuring. Despite an attempt to inject the debate with new momentum at the 1995 50th GA session, disagreement over the specifics of reform continued to preclude any concerted efforts beyond agreement over reform (United Nations, 1995).

Indeed, while there is general agreement on the need for UNSC reform, it ends as soon as the specifics of reform are raised (Bourantonis, & Magliveras, 2002, 24). Put simply, agreement extends to the principle of “comprehensive reform of the Security Council,” but does not continue when several key issues are engaged (Fassbender, 2004). The key areas of contention are support for an enlargement of the Council but with no agreement over the numbers of this enlargement; the issue of expansion of permanent members with non-veto power; which states would be the top candidates to join an expanded Council; and most controversially, the issue of the veto (340-341).

As a result of these roadblocks, the 2005 reform debate at the 60th anniversary of the UN did not progress beyond where it was 10 years previously. However, since the end of the Cold War the Council has enjoyed a growing freedom to act with 646 Security Council resolutions passed between 1946 and 1989 while 1,288 resolutions were passed between 1990 and July 2010. Shedding the confines of super power rivalry has allowed the Council to test, rather than preserve, the status quo. The Council role in potentially authorising the use of force, such as the intense debate in the lead-up to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, has injected the Organization and the reform debate with an added energy. For instance, during the Cold War, resolutions relating to Chapter VII of the UN Charter (responses to threats to peace and acts of aggression) made up only 5%-10% of the Council’s work; however, since 1990 these have increased to over 25%. Indeed, in 2002, Chapter VII Resolutions made up 47% of the Security Council’s work.

While this may represent a more effective use of this body for the preservation of international peace and security, it may also represent another, more subtly dangerous drift. Specifically, the Council and the general normative power of the UN is in danger of becoming subject to the pressures of US or other veto wielding powers’ foreign policy. It is impossible to separate the US and UN as dominant global forces. Weiss and Young have argued that this leaves the UN in danger of becoming used as a simple tool of legitimation for US foreign policy (148).

III. Relevance for Muslim States' Participation in the Reform Debate

The above criticism is particularly relevant for Muslim states in the context of the post 9/11 "War on Terror" and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The efforts to use the UN as a legitimizing force for the invasion, despite intense disagreement not only between the Muslim world and the US but also between major Western powers, undermined the consensus politics needed for the Organization to function. The continuation of such trends seriously undermines UN credibility as an independent multilateral organization. This is not a *fait accompli*, however. The reform debate presents a unique opportunity for the Organization to outflank those who seek to monopolize UN debate, by building consensus over a more inclusive model for the executive power of the Council. It is essential that this process allow for increased Muslim participation in the form of active and effective involvement in the future workings of the Council.

A variety of models and plans for Council reform have crystallized since 2000 from within the Organization itself (particularly by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan) and also from member states. Three issues dominate these models: expansion of membership (both permanent and non-permanent) including broader regional representation; the use of the veto; and the transparency of the Council as a decision-making body.

With such marked focus and seemingly little input, it would be expected that Muslim states would seek to promote a united front in their efforts to have an increasing say within the Council. Muslim states have been active in many of the reform proposals, particularly the African Union proposal, the so-called "Uniting for Consensus" proposal and the "Small Five" (S5) proposal. In addition, individual Muslim member states have sought to promote areas of consensus through such initiatives as the "Razali Plan". Despite this, Muslim states are unlikely to gain a significant increase in their current level of representation in the UNSC hindered by state-based self interest and a

weak bargaining position in the negotiations. This weakness is not helped by the ineffectual stance of the major regional organizations such as the OIC and Arab League, and the opposition of the US to the candidature for permanent membership by many Muslim states.

IV. Models for Security Council Reform

The question of Council reform was given renewed impetus by Kofi Annan in his 2004 High-level Panel Report, "A More Secure World" and its follow-up, the 2005 "In Larger Freedom" (United Nations "A More Secure World," 2005a). These reports recommend (Models A and B) which center on an expansion of representation based on a model of geographic regional distribution that was the basis for the expansion of non-permanent seats from 6 to 10 in the Security Council in 1965. The two models differ in that Model A creates six new permanent seats and three new non-permanent seats and Model B creates a new category of representation with eight four-year renewable seats and one new non-permanent seat (all current non-permanent seats are non-renewable).

Both of these models lead to six new seats varying between permanent, renewable and non-renewable membership for four regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, and the Americas). However, in neither of these models do any of the prospective new members gain veto power. Indeed, in the entire High-level Panel report there is little mention of the need to reform the use of the veto. Additionally, in both of these models, there is no specific reference to Arab (Middle East as a "region") or Muslim states in terms of greater representation in the Council. This is despite Annan's declaration that "a change in the Council's composition is needed to make it more broadly representative of the international community as a whole, as well as of the geopolitical realities of today, and thereby more legitimate in the eyes of the world" (42).

The High-level Panel reports addressed key concerns of developing and third world states in terms of the implications of the

US Bush policy of pre-emption in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The UN reform is nearly impossible as the Organization is not a unified entity but made up of highly autonomous agencies. As such, to enable comprehensive reform would require addressing the concerns of all states to all agencies. Thus, when viewing reports such as that of the High-level Panel it is better not to judge them in terms of the success or failure of their recommendations, but as a “piece of analysis” (Maley, 365). In other words, they should be viewed as providing insight into the functioning of the Organization and the preferred ways of operation rather than as a realistic set of goals.

In essence, these reports are an appeal to the collective conscience of member states. They leave untouched the need for the development of specific legal mechanisms to enact change. As far as the Muslim states are concerned, there is little in these reports to offer tangible solutions to their grievances. The power imbalance in UN decision-making continues to be a moot point. The P5 continue to set the agenda and define the boundaries of UN operations. Consequently, the impression is given that “guns, bombs, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction by nuclear ‘have-nots’ constitute the most salient security threats” (Landsberg, 2005, 390).

The Group of Four (G4) proposal has emerged as the most promising alternative to the existing structure of the UNSC, initiated by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan and outlining an expansion of the SC akin to Model A proposed by the former Secretary-General and the High-level Panel (United Nations, 2005b). It proposes that the Council membership be expanded from 15 to 25 with six new permanent members to be elected according to a geographic regional distribution (two from Africa, two from Asia, one from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one from Western Europe and Other states). Additionally, four new non-permanent seats would be created with one each from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. The G4 proposal does not favor the extension of veto rights to the expanded permanent members of the Security Council but does have a provision for a review of extending the veto to the new

members after 15 years.

Brazil, Germany, India and Japan aim to assume four of the new permanent seats with the other two permanent seats going to African states. However, division emerged between the G4 proposal and African initiatives over the use of the veto at the 2005 60th session of the GA when the proposal went to the vote. The G4 proposal was defeated at the GA as many African states sought an immediate extension of the veto to the new permanent members. Thus, it was unable to gather the required two-thirds vote required to amend the Charter (Gordon, 2005).

Japan has since drifted from the G4 position with the backing of the US in seeking a permanent seat while China has amplified its opposition to a potential permanent seat for its regional rival. Japan's shift is in large part a response to the minimalist stance taken by the US in terms of Council expansion where they favor, at most, two new non-veto wielding permanent seats and three new non-permanent seats. This has implications for Muslim states as the US position, one that they have indicated they will protect through using the veto to scuttle any other reform proposal, essentially prevents the accession hopes for the two most likely Muslim states to achieve permanent membership, Nigeria and Egypt.

For their part, Nigeria and Egypt, along with South Africa, have been at the forefront in promoting the most visible alternative to the G4 expansion plan (United Nations, 2005c). Known as the "Ezulwini Consensus" or the African Union (AU) Proposal, these states led a move within the AU in early 2005 to call for an expansion of the Council with two African permanent seats with veto powers and two additional African rotating seats. The AU position initially called the new permanent, veto-wielding African members to be selected by the AU and five non-permanent seats to be allocated to African states. When presented to the GA, the number of non-permanent seats was reduced to two.

The timing of the AU proposal is important to note as it was presented as a challenge to the G4 position vis-à-vis the non-extension

of the veto right to the new permanent members. Initially, Nigeria and Egypt, along with other less likely hopefuls for a permanent seat including Libya, worked hard to generate an African consensus that would see at least one majority Muslim state gain permanent representation should this model succeed. However, the increased intransigence of the US position in opposition to this level of Council expansion plus the manifestation of state-based interests saw Nigeria split from the African position in late 2006, foregoing the hard-line AU stance on the extension of veto powers.

In response, the AU position has been taken up in earnest by three key North African Muslim majority states: Egypt, Algeria and Libya, which all accused Nigeria of undermining the AU effort. For its part, the other likely candidate to gain a permanent African seat, South Africa, has also signaled a shift towards possible accommodation with the G4, a move that might allow a compromise resolution to pass in the GA. However, this compromise position would still fail to meet the minimalist stance of the US and is likely to be vetoed.

Since 2006, Egypt and Algeria vociferously championed the AU Proposal. Egypt's UN Ambassador, Maged Abdelaziz, sought to expand the AU platform during the 61st session of the General Assembly by focussing on curtailing the use of the veto as a key element of Council reform. Here, efforts to prevent the use of the veto "in cases of genocide or massive crimes against humanity" and "in cases where a ceasefire between two belligerents is pursued" was seen as an effort to restrict US use of the veto in relation to issues surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (United Nations, 2006). The Algerian, Qatari, and Iraqi representatives echoed this sentiment. Indeed, the Iraqi ambassador argued that the veto should only be enforceable if it is used by two powers for the same vote.

The regional wrangling over representation led to further spin-off plans for Council reforms from 2006. Disagreement within the AU over whether Nigeria, Egypt or South Africa represents the "genuine" African voice symbolized other divisions, particularly in Asia. Pakistan and, to a lesser extent, as Indonesia sternly opposed the

likelihood of India's strong candidature for permanent membership under the G4 proposal, arguing that India's membership would lead to an unreasonable regional imbalance (United Nations, 2006).

In response, Pakistan along with Turkey, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, South Korea and other states presented the so-called "Uniting for Consensus Proposal". This plan called for an expansion of non-permanent numbers from 10 to 20 while maintaining the number of permanent representatives at five (United Nations, 2006). The non-permanent members would be elected for two-year terms from five geographic regions (six from Africa, five from Asia, four from Latin America and the Caribbean, three from Western Europe and Other states, two from Eastern Europe). Each of these regions would be given the power to administer the allocation of these seats, including the renewable or non-renewable status of the representatives.

This was an effort to circumvent the US reluctance to expand the number of permanent seats and to satisfy regional powers. Pakistan was a prominent player, arguing that the G4 proposal amounted to a "self-centered initiative" on the part of its sponsors that would enshrine the position of what it saw as "self-nominated 'new powers'" (United Nations, 2006).

The membership of the group in this context is revealing as Pakistan and, to a lesser extent Turkey, sought to counter India's rise as a "new power", while Argentina and Mexico sought to do the same vis-à-vis Brazil's position in the G4. South Korea's support for the "Uniting for Consensus Proposal" is also in the same vein in terms of its relationship to Japan. In addition, the structure of this proposal, they argued, would allow for small and medium states to fully participate in the Council, and not simply maintain the great power status quo that had been at the heart of many of the calls for reform to this point.

However, despite the efforts of the UN Pakistani ambassador to draw links to other proposals sponsored by Muslim states, particularly the AU Proposal, the lack of any permanent seats or veto powers for Muslim states within this plan resulted in a lukewarm reception among the Muslim states of Africa.(United Nations, 2006).

This proposal was seen as an expression of medium-power frustration at the potential accession of regional rivals to permanency on the Council and their exclusion.

Perhaps recognizing the difficulty in overcoming the entrenched positions of states concerning the expansion of the UNSC, a new group focused on structural changes to maintain the reform momentum. This group, the S5, formed by Jordan, Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Singapore, and Switzerland, tabled a resolution to the GA in March 2006 calling for reform to the working methods of the UNSC: limiting the use of the veto, and enhancing transparency and accountability (United Nations, 2006). Interestingly, there was minimal mention of expansion in the document, instead stating that non-members of the Council should be consulted regularly and plans should be put in motion to better disseminate information from the Council to non-members.

This initiative has received a surprising level of support from a number of influential members. Japan, arguably the strongest of the G4 candidates, has indicated its support for the initiative. The Uniting for Consensus group has joined Japan in putting special emphasis on the S5's reform efforts at limiting the veto as well as enhancing transparency and accountability. Egypt, speaking for the AU, also saw hope in the S5's proposal; however, they argued that these initiatives must complement the concrete moves toward Security Council expansion to reflect new "political realities" (United Nations, 2006).

Outside the state-based initiatives, there was enthusiastic support for an initiative proposed by former Malaysian Foreign Minister Ismail Razali through the so-called "Razali Plan". While it proved to be an "unworkable" proposal, it has been the 'most important and most cohesive proposal' to emerge from this debate thus far (Bourantonis & Magliveras, 25). Razali introduced his reform plan during his tenure as GA President in 1997 (United Nations, 2006). This was a three-stage proposal for reform. First, the GA would pass a resolution calling on the UNSC to be enlarged to include five new permanent member states (two industrialized states and three developing states) with four new non-permanent members each from

a developing region (Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean). Second, the GA would pass a resolution specifying the candidate states from these areas with the new permanent members not having veto power and the current permanent five being requested to limit their use of the veto in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Third, once these states had been selected and ratified by the Assembly, a vote would be held to enshrine these changes within the UN Charter, a vote that would need to be agreed upon by two-thirds of the member states.

Western powers were generally supportive of the proposal. Indeed, most observers recognized that Razali's mention of "two industrialised states" referred to lead candidates Germany and Japan, both of which enthusiastically welcomed the proposal (Bourantonis & Magliveras, 25). However, the majority of the Non-Aligned Movement members as well as Italy rejected the plan as they saw it as too close in terms of its legitimacy vis-à-vis the requirements of Article 18 of the UN Charter relating to Charter amendments which states that amendments to the Charter must receive a two-thirds vote from all member states where Razali's plan involved only one vote in stage three. Stages one and two were to be guided by the voting provisions of Article 18 which required that a two-thirds majority of members present and voting should be enough to pass the resolution. Concerned that they might miss out under this proposal, Egypt used the legal ambiguity of the plan to prevent its adoption by the NAM as an official position. Indonesia and Pakistan also voiced their disapproval, arguing that the selection of potential candidates might take place outside Article 18, effectively depriving the process of any form of legitimacy (26).

However, this legal objection was largely a cover for the real battle going on between these prominent Muslim member states of the Non-Aligned Movement. None of the states objected to the Council's enlargement or the inclusion of Germany or Japan specifically. Instead, the divisions within NAM centred on which nations should take the three new permanent seats, one of which would likely be reserved for

a Muslim representative. The NAM executive, therefore blocked sponsoring the Razali Plan in order to protect the integrity and cohesion among these powerful member states.

The objections from Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan are interesting to note as this proposal was the only plan by a Muslim member state that reached high level consideration. The plan was rejected by these key states as it did not go far enough in balancing the need for a Muslim voice with the competing interests of Muslim states. The plan ultimately came up against entrenched issues around securing a permanent seat for a Muslim state and deciding which one would be that representative state. Egypt pushed for the seat as representing both Muslim and African states, Pakistan staked its claim on representing Muslim states whilst balancing India's likely accession, while Indonesia based its claim on its status as the largest Muslim state and as a representative of South-East Asia.

In this way, some have argued that suspending the Razali Plan served the interests of the Non-Aligned Movement more than its implementation. The promotion of particular developing countries to the Council, such as India, would have created irreparable damage to the unity of the movement (27-28). As for the Muslim states, this issue was less salient. Instead, inter-state competition seemed to characterize the Muslim response. Egypt and Nigeria locked in over the single permanent seat for Africa (along with strong claims by South Africa, and to a lesser extent Senegal and Libya). Also contentious was the question of representing the Muslim world. It became more and more clear that the Muslim world did not act as a bloc but was riddled with inter-state rivalry and competition (Akbarzadeh & Conner, 2005). The reform plan brought to the fore divisions which had been hidden away by the rhetoric of Muslim unity.

The Razali Plan presents a paradox that lies at the core of the official stance of Muslim states to the issue of the Council reform. In particular, while pursuing the ultimate goal of achieving more representation on the world body, the already tenuous unity of Muslim states is threatened. Therefore, advocating for reform is

pursued but its actual implementation, even based on a plan crafted by one of its central members, is avoided.

V. Conclusion

The reform of the Security Council presents a unique opportunity for Muslim states to become involved in the restructuring of arguably the most important element of the essential international organization, the UN. The combination of calls for reform, by critics of many different persuasions, has nearly reached a point of no return. Failure to act would damage the UN irreparably. The challenge is to reach consensus on the key points of membership expansion, the extension of the veto power and procedural reforms. The stakes are very high. It is the very importance of these issues, however, combined with the post-9/11 global environment that requires a concerted and coordinated Muslim effort to achieve a visible and effective voice in the Council.

There is room for coordination among Muslim states on several common points, particularly the restriction/abolition of the veto, the inclusion of Egypt and Nigeria as permanent African/Muslim representatives, and instigating the procedural reforms outlined in the S5 proposal. If there is no expansion of permanent seats, or only minimal expansion to include, for instance, Japan, Germany and/or Brazil, Muslim states may shift their attention towards gaining semi-permanent representation through expanded non-permanent seats under the "Uniting for Consensus" proposal.

This semi-permanent representation could be achieved through the AU or another regional organization allowing for renewable, non-permanent seats allocated to a Muslim state. However, for this to be achieved, there would need to be a significant level of coordination between regional organizations such as the AU and international organizations representing Muslim states, notably the OIC and the Arab League. The lack of institutional support provided by these organizations on this issue to date is not encouraging.

This points to the broader problem. There is little promise for

Muslim states in gaining an increased level of participation in the UNSC. Muslim ambitions are hindered by an inability of these states to coordinate a unified reaction; inter-state rivalry; the reticence of existing Council members, particularly the US, to approve permanent membership for certain Muslim states; the relatively weak bargaining position that these states hold in the negotiations, and the tendency for many to support one of the different reform models, some with mutually-exclusive perspectives. This is an important dilemma to work through, as the UN has survived the serious challenges presented by the US invasion of Iraq. The Organization is vital for the long-term interests of Muslim states, particularly if the UNSC is reformed in a more equitable, transparent and legitimate fashion. Muslim consensus over this issue may indicate sorely needed future cooperation and effective outcomes.

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