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Q6(b)

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 Civil Services Mains 2023 · PSIR GS 2 · 15 marks · India and the UN System

India and the UN System: Role in UN Peace-keeping; demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss India's role in UN peacekeeping and its claim to a permanent seat in the Security Council
- Write at 15-mark length

Revision summary

India is a historic top troop contributor to UN peacekeeping.

That record supports a claim to help write the mandates, not only to staff them.

G4 and African positions seek Council expansion; Charter amendment needs P5 consent.

China is a central political obstacle among the five.

Peacekeeping strengthens India's case; it cannot by itself create a seat.

Introduction

India has been among the largest cumulative contributors of troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping. It uses that record, plus population, democracy, and economy, to claim a permanent Security Council seat. Contribution and representation are the two halves of the argument.

Body

Peacekeeping record

- Indian personnel have served in operations from Korea and the Congo to Namibia, Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in later decades.
- India has taken casualties in UN service and has supplied force commanders and formed units, not only observers.
- The record is a Chapter VI-VII practical contribution to Council mandates that India does not write as a permanent member.
- **Limits exist:** great-power wars are not UNPKO tasks, and some missions have weak mandates. India still shows up with troops when many P5 members do not.

The permanent-seat claim

- The G4 (India, Japan, Germany, Brazil) seek expansion of permanent and non-permanent membership. The African **Ezulwini Consensus** seeks two African permanent seats.

- **India's case:** share of world population, a large economy, nuclear and space capability, democracy, NAM and Global South voice, and peacekeeping numbers.
- The 1945 P5 map omits India, Africa as a continent with permanent rights, and Latin America.

Link and tension

- **Peacekeeping is the moral and practical link:** those who carry out **Article 42**-adjacent tasks should sit where **Article 24** power is.
- The veto is the hard problem. Existing P5 members do not easily dilute it. China has been the most explicit political obstacle to India's permanent seat among the five.
- Reform needs Charter amendment, which needs P5 consent. That is why the claim is long, not why it is empty.
- Keohane would note that institutions lag power. Waltz would note that seats follow capability only when incumbents allow it.

Flow diagram

UN peacekeeping troops -> Contribution argument
Size economy democracy -> Contribution argument
Contribution argument -> G4 reform claim reform claim
P5 veto Charter veto Charter -.blocks. -> G4 reform claim

Conclusion

India's peacekeeping record is a standing contribution to UN security work. The permanent-seat claim rests on that record plus size and capability. The Council's 1945 structure, not India's contribution, is the binding constraint.

Facts & figures

UNPKO

United Nations peacekeeping operations mandated by the Security Council and staffed by member-State contingents.

G4

India, Japan, Germany, and Brazil as a joint campaign for permanent membership.

Ezulwini Consensus

African Union position on Council reform, including permanent African seats.

Article 108 UN Charter

Amendment requires two-thirds of the Assembly including all P5 ratifications.

Troop casualties

India has lost personnel in UN missions, which it cites as a cost already paid for collective security.

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