



Постоянный Представитель
Российской Федерации
при
Организации Объединенных
Наций



Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations

136 East 67th Street
New York, NY 10065

S-409/h

New York, March 2, 2010

Excellency,

With reference to your letter dated 5 February 2010 I have the honour to enclose herewith the non-paper containing a summary of Russian position on the key issues of the Security Council reform. We are confident that you will take them duly into account.

Allow me to assure you of our full cooperation and constructive engagement in the collective endeavour aimed at seeking a solution to the Security Council reform that can garner the widest possible support by Member States.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Vitaly Churkin

H.E. Mr. Zahir Tanin,
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
to the United Nations
(Chair of the Intergovernmental negotiations on the Security Council reform)

Copy: - H.E. Dr. Ali A. Treki
President of the 64th Session of the
UN General Assembly

- All Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations, New York

POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, the four rounds of intergovernmental negotiations on the UN Security Council reform that have taken place failed to significantly narrow the gap of differences between the Member States on the five key issues of the Security Council reform. So far none of the existing models of reforming the Council enjoys prevailing support in the United Nations. In such circumstances we see no other alternative but to continue throughout the current UN General Assembly Session the meticulous work within the intergovernmental talks launched in February 2009.

This work should unfold in a calm, transparent and inclusive atmosphere free from any artificial deadlines. It should be aimed at finding a compromise enjoying as wide support of Member States of the Organization as possible -- significantly broader than two thirds of votes of the General Assembly Members. At the current stage it would be counterproductive to prematurely limit the negotiations' agenda down to one or two models only. The discussion should be led on all options available in the talks.

Any attempt to press through any scheme, which does not enjoy widest possible support (preferably consensus), by putting it to vote would inevitably polarize the General Assembly. Even if one of the models gains the necessary 2/3 majority, as required by the Charter, the Council would hardly become more authoritative in the eyes of the "objecting minority", among which there would have been influential states.

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP

In a situation when positions of the two main groups of states – those who support the idea of the UN Security Council's expansion in both categories and those who do not – remain polar, one can advance in the negotiating process only by searching for a compromise. In these circumstances we believe it possible to look closer at the "interim model" as one of the options.

So far we only have some general understanding of what the "interim model" is. If Member States opt for this particular variant of the Security Council enlargement, they would have to agree on its modalities.

SIZE OF AN ENLARGED SECURITY COUNCIL

Russia believes it important to maintain compact composition of the Security Council to provide its adequate and fast reaction to new challenges. For this reason we advocate the idea that the number of members in an enlarged Security Council should not exceed a reasonable level of low twenties.

WORKING METHODS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Working methods of the Security Council have to be improved. It should be done in a transparent way based on the opinions of the member states. However, the prerogative in this process should belong to the Security Council itself. Thus, Russia believes it would be appropriate to withdraw the Security Council working methods from the list of key issues subject to a possible review of the Security Council reform after the Member States come in the course of the intergovernmental talks to a package arrangement on the Council reform issue. Both the Security Council working methods and the current Security Council Permanent Members' veto right issue should not be among the topics subject to the Security Council review process.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Russia supports reasonable and realistic proposals aimed at increasing the authority and effectiveness of the General Assembly. We suppose that any reform innovations should be based on strict observance of the distribution of prerogatives between the United Nations principal bodies as enshrined in the UN Charter.

We are against any attempts to redistribute the powers of the main bodies of the Organization to the advantage of the General Assembly thus compromising the prerogatives of the UN Security Council. The UN Charter defines the Security Council and General Assembly as the two main bodies of the Organization.

QUESTION OF THE VETO

Russia believes that in the course of the negotiations we should talk not about prohibiting or restricting the use of the veto right by the existing Permanent Members of the Security Council – their prerogatives should remain intact under any variant of the Council reform – but rather about extending this right to the possible new Permanent Members of Security Council, if and when the UN Member States agree on the Security Council expansion in both categories. Therefore, a detailed discussion of the veto can begin at a later stage of negotiations, after a new composition of the Security Council is defined.

Any changes of the status quo concerning the prerogatives of the present Permanent Members of the Security Council including the veto right can turn into an insurmountable obstacle on the way of putting future UN Charter amendments through the national ratification procedures, including in the P5 countries.