

"wealth weighted" voting is especially offensive to LDCs, which contend that it perpetuates the system of imperial domination by the industrialized countries.

Unanimity voting constitutes a third scheme. This system requires the assent by all, although sometimes abstaining from a vote does not block agreement. The organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and some other IGOs operate on that principle. Unanimity preserves the concept sovereignty but can easily lead to stalemate.

The voting formula in the UNSC by which any of the five permanent members (the p5) can veto proposals while the other 10 members cannot is an unusual variation on the unanimity scheme. Vetoes were cast frequently during the cold war, but have been infrequent since 1990, Nevertheless, the power remains important. First, a veto is still sometimes cast. In September 2003, a resolution calling on Israel not to expel Palestinian Yasser Arafat from the West Bank received 11 votes, with three countries abstaining. The United States was the lone no vote, but that was sufficient to defeat the resolution. Second, the threat of a veto can sometimes forestall action. For example, the United States and Great Britain wanted to secure Security Council authorization to take military action against Iraq in 2003. But they did not try to push a resolution through the Security Council when it became clear that even if majority support could be gathered (which was doubtful), France and Russia would exercise their veto power.

Many Americans were angry to find that the U.S. effort to gain UN support for action against Iraq faced a veto in the Security Council, but, the United States has itself often exercised its own veto. As is evident, the USSR, cast many more vetoes than the other four permanent members of the Security Council during the early years of the cold war. Since 1980, however, the veto has become a particular tool of the United States, with votes against resolutions condemning Israel being the most frequent use of the U.S. power.

## Chapter Five

### IGO Activities

The most important aspects of any international organization are what it does, how well this corresponds to the functions we wish it to perform, and how well it is performing its roles. The following pages will begin to explore these aspects by examining the scope of IGO activity, with an emphasis on the UN. Much of this discussion will only begin to touch on these activities.

#### Activities Promoting Peace and Security

The opening words of the UN Charter dedicate the organization to saving "succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Which has brought untold sorrow to mankind". The UN attempts fulfill this goal by creating norms against violence by providing debate as an alternative to fighting, by intervening diplomatically to avert the outbreak of warfare or to help restore peace once violence occurs; by instituting diplomatic and economic sanctions, by dispatching UN military forces to repel aggression or act as a buffer between warring countries, and by promoting arms control and disarmament.

**Creating Norms against Violence** One way that the United Nations helps promote international peace and security is by creating norms (beliefs about what is proper) against aggression and other forms of violence. To accomplish this, the UN works in such area as promoting nuclear nonproliferation through the International Atomic Energy Agency, limiting chemical and biological weapons, and fostering rules for the restrained conduct of war when it occurs.

Countries that sign the charter pledge to accept the principle "that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest" and further agree to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or the use of force except in self-defense". Reaffirming the charter's ideas, the UN (and other IGOs) have condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Serbian aggression against its neighbors, and other such actions. These denunciations and the slowly developing norm against aggression have not halted violence, but they have created an increasing onus on countries that strike the first blow. When, for example, the United States acted unilaterally in 1989 to depose the regime of Panama's strongman General Manuel Noriega, the UN and the OAS condemned Washington's action. Five years later, when the

United States toppled the regime in Haiti, Washington took care to win UN support for its action.

Whatever the niceties of various legal arguments, when the United States and Great Britain invaded Iraq in 2003 they violated the general intent of the UN Charter to refrain from taking unilateral action except when under attack or in some other extreme situation. Violating a norm does not disprove its existence, however. Indeed, the efforts of U.S. and British diplomats to get a supportive UN resolution underlined the existence of the norm. Moreover, the angry reaction in many parts of the globe to the Anglo-American preemptive action and the postwar difficulties that the two occupying powers have experienced may, in the long run, actually serve to reinforce the norm. One lesson of the experience is that UN involvement in the postwar stabilization of Iraq, which the U.S. administration and 68% of the American public wanted, was much more difficult to obtain given the earlier U.S. disdain for the Security Council. Having not been in on the take off, the UN was wisely wary of taking responsibility for the crash landing.

## **Providing a Debate Alternative**

A second peace-enhancing role for the United Nations and some other IGOs is serving as a passive forum in which members publicly air their points of view and privately negotiate their differences. The UN thus acts like a safety valve, or perhaps a sound stage where the world drama can be played out without the dire consequences that could occur if another "shooting locale" were chosen.

This grand-debate approach to peace involves denouncing your opponents, defending your opponents, defending your actions, trying to influence world opinion, and winning symbolic victories. The British ambassador to the UN has characterized it as "a great clearinghouse for foreign policy", a place where "We talk to people... whom we don't talk to elsewhere because we have fraught relations with them".

Diplomatic Intervention international organizations also regularly play a direct role in assisting and encouraging countries to settle their disputes peacefully. Ideally this occurs before hostilities, but it can take place even after fighting has started. The United Nations and other IGOs perform the following function: (1) Inquiry: