

ANALYSIS OF INTEREST GROUPS THAT MAY MATTER AT THE LEVEL OF THE REFORM PROCESS OF THE MOST RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: *The current international environment, viewed from a geopolitical and geoeconomic point of view, is characterized by unpredictability and heightened dynamism. After the Second World War, the theoretical and doctrinal landscape was marked by an increasing openness to the concepts of harmony, cooperation, structural peace, prohibition of war. The UN is a symbol of multilateralism and sustained worldwide efforts for peace, security and sustainable development. Strategic autonomy, national security and other non-economic objectives (environmental sustainability, protection of workers and human rights) motivate calls for collaboration between countries with similar political-economic values and systems. In today's conditions, security considerations have already become more prominent in trade relations. Since the end of the 90s, several scenarios have been proposed for the reform of the United Nations: the reform of the Security Council, the reform of the UN Secretariat, the financial reform, the reform of human rights, the reform of operational activities and, last but not least, the reform of the Economic Council and Social. The research methodology uses various research methods: the logical analysis method, the systemic method, the comparative method, the historical method, the situation analysis used in geopolitical theory and the stakeholder analysis to understand the positions and perspectives of the players (stakeholders) who have an interest and/or likely to be affected by a particular reform, as well as to outline the prospects for reform and how particular states/organizations might influence the outcome of the process.*

Keywords: *reform of international organizations, stakeholders analysis, geopolitics, geoeconomics.*

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INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, the theoretical and doctrinal landscape was marked by a growing openness to the concepts of harmony, cooperation, structural peace, the prohibition of war. In 1944, at the Monetary and Financial Conference of the United Nations at Bretton Woods, it was agreed to place the international geo-economic system on three pillars - the financial-monetary, the banking and the commercial. For this, the participating states agreed to create three modern institutional architectures: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Trade Organization (OIC). The first two institutional structures became operational in a very short time, while the third encountered difficulties in its establishment, which led to a long temporary one in the form of the General Agreement on Tariffs and

Trade (GATT) formalized only in 1995 when it was established World Trade Organization (WTO). Currently, at the level of the UN system, six main bodies are operational (the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Guardianship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat) which have an important role in maintaining international peace and security, but also for the orientation of the activity of modern societies towards a sustainable and balanced development.

The current international environment, characterized by unpredictability, viewed from a geopolitical and geoeconomic point of view, is much different from the existing international environment at the level of 1945. Against the background of large-scale transformations in the economic-financial mechanisms and in the relations of forces existing worldwide, the reform of international institutions is a necessary condition for them to be able to adapt to the new geopolitical and geoeconomic realities. The purpose of this research is to facilitate the understanding of the positions and perspectives of actors (stakeholders) who have an interest and/or are likely to be affected by a certain reform, as well as to highlight the reform perspectives and how certain states/organizations could influence the result of the process. The research methodology assumes a gradual approach, in two steps: first, the general context of the international environment in which the most important organizations appeared and operate is presented, also pointing out the need to reform these organizations, then the analysis of the interested parties is carried out. Various qualitative research methods are used: historical method, logical analysis method, systemic method, comparative method, situational analysis used in geopolitical theory and stakeholder analysis.

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➤ CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE REFORM OF THE MAIN INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The urgency of the need for UN reform

The UN system, as it is today, is much different than originally planned. Its role is quite mitigated compared to the provisions of some important documents from 1974; Despite the fact that emerging/developing economies have been the main "engines" of global growth in the last decade, their voting power in the IMF and the World Bank does not reflect their economic power. Since the late 1990s, several scenarios for reforming the United Nations have been proposed. However, there is little clarity or consensus about what reform might mean in practice. The current stage of the UN reform is a multi-level one: firstly, within the UN development system, the way of working at the global, regional and country level is addressed; this ranges from UN strategic planning approaches and tools to accountability systems, administrative arrangements and budgetary practices.

Reform of the United Nations Security Council

The Security Council (SC) represents the institutional component of the United Nations Organization which, according to the Charter of the United Nations, has the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Currently, four groups of states have emerged in the reform process: the Group of 4 (G4), the Uniting for Consensus Group (UFC), the African Union and the ACT (a trans-regional group of 21 states promoting the need revising the working methods of the SC, in order to increase the responsibility of its members in front of the entire UN community and to increase the transparency of its activity). The main controversy concerns the total number of members that the reformed

Council should have and their distribution by category (permanent and non-permanent members). At the UN level, there were debates on 5 major themes: categories of members, the right of veto, the magnitude of the expansion, working methods and the relationship with the General Assembly. In 2015, there was an intensification of the work of the Working Group for the reform of the SC, but a consensus solution was not reached.

IMF and World Bank reform

As early as 2004, within the Report prepared by a group of experts led by the American scholar Meltzer, the reform of international financial institutions was discussed, the major changes that took place or that should have taken place in order for these institutions to become more effective in achieving their goals. Much of what the IMF and World Bank charter states about goals and objectives is outdated. The IMF's current mandate should be to reduce global risk to the lowest possible level. The mandate of the World Bank should be to facilitate social and economic development as a means of reducing poverty.

WTO reform

The multilateral trade system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) as its main institutional vector, is the most complex panel of economic management and development tools. The institutional progress recorded over 70 years is notable and takes shape in the creation of well-being in industrialized countries, the accommodation of the rural economies of developing countries with supercompetitive commercial giants and the laying of sustainable foundations for economic and technological progress in all regions of the world. A growing number of voices question many of the successes attributed to a national economy's participation in the multilateral trading system, arguing that it has become a victim of its early successes. Criticisms of the current state of affairs within the multilateral trade system are multiplying, emphasizing that it has not firmly switched to the new logic of global governance. Part of the criticism is a reflection of the perception that the WTO's institutional mechanisms are not adequate to face the new challenges fueled by a set of sources of economic, technological and even socio-cultural instability [1]. Against this background of profound and unpredictable change, the idea of reforming the regulatory framework and institutional architecture of the international trade system has slowed down. Many reform proposals have focused on the WTO's current decision-making mechanisms.

Five areas of WTO reform have been highlighted in recent multidisciplinary research on strengthening the WTO's effectiveness as a forum for trade cooperation: revising the organization's working practices; improving transparency: collecting and reporting information on relevant (challenged) policies and supplementing them with analysis of policy side effects; preparing the ground for the negotiation of new agreements through evidence-based deliberations and support for plurilateral initiatives where there is no consensus to proceed on a multilateral basis; reforming the WTO dispute settlement system; and, last but not least, addressing what is called the "China Inc" problem [2].

In general, the reform proposals focus on three aspects of the functioning of the WTO: rule-making; transparency and monitoring; and dispute resolution. Two major issues stand out: the status of developing countries, i.e. Special and Differential Treatment (SDT), and free market-distorting policies in terms of state involvement, mainly targeting China [3].

➤ STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The analysis of Interest Groups focuses on 3 (three) basic elements:

- a. The interest that the groups/actors have in achieving the objectives of the Process;

- b. Power of groups/actors (influence and importance) over the Process;
- b. The amount and type of resources they can mobilize to influence the results of the Process and their ability to mobilize resources.

Interest groups can be structured into 3 important categories:

- Key interest groups - are those that can significantly influence a project or a program whose success directly depends on them (in accordance with the major objectives of the policy and the purpose of the respective program);
- Primary interest groups - which are formed by people, groups of people or institutions (depending on the level of analysis), which are affected, either positively (beneficiaries) or negatively, by a certain project or program that has an impact on them;
- Secondary interest groups – are various intermediary entities that carry out certain activities within the program or project that may or may not take part in the decision-making process and that may also be affected positively or negatively.

Identification of Interest Groups

The main Interest Groups identified can be structured as follows:

a. Key interest groups:

- The European Union (represented by its institutions);
- The Russian Federation;
- USA, China, Japan, India, Brazil, Turkey;
- International Organizations (eg: UN, WTO, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc.).

b. Primary interest groups:

- The countries of the Middle East;
- African countries.

c. Secondary interest groups:

- Pressure groups (lobby)/ economic agents (potential investors);
- Consumers and Labor Unions.

It must be taken into account that the political environment has a considerable influence on the reform of international institutions. Also, there are certain pressure groups (lobbies), which, in turn, exert pressure on public decision-makers, in order to obtain decisions in line with the interests they represent.

Analysis of Interest Groups

The interest in the process of reforming the most relevant international organizations depends on how the reform directions will be formulated and, at the same time, the implications of these changes on the targeted organizations, but also on each member state, will be highlighted.

According to [4] - [6], the main positions of some states regarding the reform of the United Nations system can be summarized as follows:

USA - contributes the most to the UN budget among the member states, their contribution amounting to 22% of the total UN budget. The United States Congress has shown a constant concern for reforms related to the effectiveness of the UN. The official position: “The administration is focused on UN management reform. As the largest financial contributor, we have the largest financial stake in sound management and operational efficiency ... and it is essential that we refocus the efforts of all UN member states on the need to reform this institution.”[4]

China - is among the most prominent proponents of multilateralism and actively participates in global governance reform and improvement. Chinese diplomacy appreciates the value of "the international system built around the United Nations (UN), the international order supported by international law, and the multilateral trade system centered on the World Trade Organization (WTO). There are a number of different points of view between China and Western countries regarding UN reform. Compared to Western countries, China takes a more cautious stance, stressing the need for proper consultation and coordination among all member states. According to official statements, China does not want to rush reform as long as there are still significant disagreements between developing and developed countries. China prefers a gradual and cautious reform of the UN system. China supports UN reform to achieve the goal of coherence and efficiency in the UN operational system. The difference is that Western donor countries emphasize "a single UN system" and China appreciates "flexible approaches" according to "diverse national needs and requirements", believing that the reform should lead to an increase in the ability of UN activities to meet the different requirements of beneficiary countries in an integrated and flexible way and that reform should not be strictly limited to certain areas.

European Union - The influence of the Union within the UN derives not only from its official status, but also from its ability to coordinate the positions of its member states, to take advantage of the diplomatic influence it exercises over third countries and to present different positions through representatives his. The status of the Union in the various entities of the United Nations system varies from membership (FAO, WTO) to being non-status (Security Council and some specialized institutions), through privileged observer status (General Assembly) or simple observer status (ECOSOC and many specialized institutions). The Union and its member states contribute about a third of the budget of the United Nations system, although they account for less than 15% of the membership of the United Nations. This contribution increases the visibility and influence of the Union in the organization. In the context of the UN reform debate, it has been proposed several times since the 1990s to grant the Union a seat on the Security Council. For now, this eventuality is unlikely. The European Union is a full member of the WTO and is, to date, the only international organization that enjoys such status. The European Union can also exert significant informal influence. For example, it has no formal status within the IMF but, under an unwritten rule, Europe nominates the person to head the IMF and the United States does the same for the World Bank. In practice, the Union can exert considerable influence on the activities of the specialized agencies of the United Nations due to its coordination with Member States, its normative weight and its essential role as a financial contributor. The EU is committed to strengthening and maintaining the UN's credible position on the international stage. As such, the EU's priority at the 2018 UN General Assembly was to support UN reform. The EU favors a rules-based global order with the UN at its core. The commitment to effective multilateralism is a central element of the EU's external action, as enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon. The three pillars of UN reform run in parallel with the eight EU-UN strategic partnerships for peace operations and crisis management for the period 2019-2021. The interest of the European Union for the reform of international institutions is very high, and power can be exercised through its institutions in various ways.

Russian Federation - The latest version of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved in March 2023, clearly links the current official understanding of Russia's role in the modern world to its Soviet past: Russia's place in the world is determined by its significant resources in all areas of life, its status as a permanent

member of the United Nations Security Council, a participant in the main intergovernmental organizations and associations, one of the two largest nuclear powers and the successor (continuing legal personality) of the USSR. Russia, taking into account its decisive contribution to the victory in the Second World War and its active role in shaping the contemporary system of international relations and eliminating the global system of colonialism, is one of the sovereign centers of global development. Overall, Russia's actions in Ukraine and its ability to block any response from the Security Council have contributed to an increasingly radical set of demands for reform. Many states are now calling for the complete abolition of the veto, as well as more frequent recourse to the General Assembly to avoid the use of the veto in the Security Council. For its part, Russia has presented itself as generally sympathetic to Security Council reform, declaring its general support but remaining vague and cautious on the details. At the opening of the 77th UN General Assembly in September 2022, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke in favor of better representation from Africa, Asia and Latin America in the Security Council, naming India and Brazil as "worthy candidates to become permanent members of the Council". Given the realities of contemporary Russian foreign policy, it is hard to be optimistic about Russian support for Security Council reform. Russia may eventually be open to a limited expansion of the Security Council — including additional permanent members — provided those candidates do not expect to receive veto power. One possible solution could be to designate places for regional groups rather than specific countries through an internal selection mechanism. While such measures would fall short of what some UN member states are demanding, they would be the first major step forward in reforming the Security Council since its expansion in 1965 [6].

Japan - joined the UN in 1956 and is a major contributor to the regular UN budget, second only to the United States. Since 2005, Japan has been a strong supporter of United Nations Security Council reform in a joint campaign with Germany, India and Brazil. While countries such as Britain, France and the United States support Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC, the country faces strong opposition from its two closest neighbors, China and South Korea. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2014) pointed out that this country was a major donor in the period 2004-2014, providing more than 20% of the total volume of public assistance for development. In addition, Japan is one of the largest donor countries in the world for the translation into practice of the main Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in areas such as education, health, water and environment. Japan has contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of developing countries through programs based on the concept of "ownership of developing countries and their partnership with developed countries". Based on these principles, Japan aims to fully cooperate in efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals of the MDGs. [4]

India - as a founding member of the UN, India strongly supports the objectives and principles of the UN and has over time made significant contributions to the implementation of the objectives of the UN Charter, UN specialized programs and agencies. India has been a member of the UN Security Council for seven terms (a total of 14 years) and is a member of the G4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan), a group of nations that support each other for a permanent seat on the Security Council. Security of the UN, advocating in favor of its reform.

Brazil - Since the founding of the UN nearly eight decades ago, the Brazilian government has advocated for its own permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Although the willingness and ability of successive national administrations to properly

lobby for reform has waxed and waned over the years, the goal has become one of the most entrenched pillars of Brazilian grand strategy. The belief that Security Council reform is necessary for the international order to be legitimate – and that Brazil is an obvious candidate for any expanded membership – has been stated so many times and repeated in so many documents that it is taken for granted understood throughout foreign policy. From a financial point of view, Brazil's position is not consistent with its desire for a seat on the Security Council. Between 2018 and 2022, Brazil's annual budget allocations to the UN fell from \$92 million to \$56 million, and as of December 2022, Brazil's outstanding debt to the UN stood at \$300 million. [6]

Turkey - "The world is bigger than five" is a slogan first coined by Turkish President Erdoğan in 2013. Almost a decade later, it remains the central message of Turkey's ongoing campaign to reform the UN Security Council. As the size of the Security Council has not kept pace with the growth of the UN, Turkey has consistently criticized the exclusivity of the council. The absence of permanent members representing South America, Africa and the Islamic world not only attests to a representative injustice, but also demonstrates a failure to reflect multiculturalism. "Strengthening regional representation at the Security Council is a must." Turkey is also proposing a formal review of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, with the ultimate goal of expanding the authority of the General Assembly. Turkey's most radical—indeed, revolutionary—proposal is the complete abolition of permanent members' veto rights as a "first step toward UN reform." A more constructive and plausible reform agenda would be to create a new category of semi-permanent members, with longer-term and potentially renewable seats. Under this scheme, certain countries would be eligible for periodic elections (and re-elections) on a rotating basis. This could provide an attractive option to key regional powers such as Turkey, which aspire to play a more active role in global affairs. Eligibility criteria for this category could include, among other factors, a nation's overall financial contribution to the UN, its contributions to UN peacekeeping operations, the share of national GDP it allocates to development and humanitarian assistance, and the rate his participation in various specialized agencies. Ensuring fair representation of the Global South and the Islamic world would undoubtedly greatly enhance the credibility of this reform initiative. This new category of semi-permanent members should include at least some seats allocated to socioeconomic groupings such as least developed states or small island developing states, just as non-permanent member seats are designed to improve the geographical representation of different regions. The Russia-Ukraine war is widely seen as ushering in a new period defined by great power competition. Unlike the bipolar nature of the Cold War, however, the ongoing era is anticipated to be multipolar, with key regional powers such as Turkey expected to play more assertive roles in regional and global issues. These powers are generally inclined to act as so-called swing states, keeping channels and options open to all great powers while taking advantage of great power rivalries to maximize their own interests. [6]

Middle East - On the 75th anniversary of the UN, many leaders from the Middle East criticized in their speeches the way the United Nations and the international community is organized, functions and acts in the face of various problems in the region. Some of them stepped forward and came up with proposal and regarding the reform of the organization and especially of the UN Security Council.

African countries- African states have long advocated for the expansion and reform of the Security Council. The Security Council must be adapted to meet new and evolving challenges such as climate change, new pandemics and global terrorism. Such threats can be

resolved, African leaders argue, only by an institution that represents the interests and perspectives of all humanity. African states have long lobbied the council to include development and poverty reduction, as well as controlling the flow of small arms, as key conflict prevention strategies. The African Union (AU) in March 2005 adopted a common position known as the Ezulwini Consensus. It called, among other things, for Africa "to be fully represented in all decision-making bodies of the UN, especially the Security Council", where the continent should have no less than two permanent seats, "with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent member, including the right of veto", as well as five non-permanent seats. In June 2005, the AU issued the Sirte Declaration, reaffirming that Africa should be given two permanent veto seats and two non-permanent seats on a twenty-six member council. The Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration pitted Africa against the G4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan), the main contenders for permanent seats on an enlarged council. In 2004, the G4 proposed expanding the Security Council to twenty-five members. Unlike the AU, however, the G4 has signaled some willingness to give up its veto power (at least during a transitional period) in exchange for a permanent seat on the Security Council. South Africa and Nigeria have tried to bridge the gap between the G4 and the AU, hoping that a common position will ensure their proposal gets the necessary two-thirds majority in the General Assembly. The two groups were unable to reach a consensus. Previous failed efforts to reform the Security Council have also exposed fault lines between African states themselves. Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa have been touted as the main contenders for permanent seats on an enlarged council. However, Egypt's dual identity as an African and Arab state has led many African nations to question its proper character. Nigeria and South Africa, as Africa's two largest economies, are generally accepted by non-African observers as having the most compelling cases to represent Africa, particularly because Nigeria has the continent's largest population and Africa's South the most sophisticated economy. However, other regional powers such as Kenya, Algeria, Ethiopia and Senegal contested the two countries' claims to continental leadership. [6]

Regarding Lobby/Economic Agents (Potential Investors), Potential Investors represent an interest group that generally supports the reform process, as it actually allows them to expand into new markets. Pressure groups (lobbys) exert pressure on political power to obtain decisions in line with their interests, influencing political power in sectoral decisions. In general, their power is relatively small, but the interest and impact of the reform on them is important.

Consumers and Labor Unions represent an important interest group, showing a high interest in the reform process. Instead, they have a less significant power and influence on this process because they do not have important resources nor the ability to mobilize resources. Unions are, in general, hostile to reforms for fear of repercussions on affiliated employees.

Stakeholder analysis can include a range of forms of analysis, from the very simple to the more sophisticated. A very simple stakeholder analysis technique is the Readiness/Power Matrix. This assesses, on an incremental scale from zero to high, how ready different stakeholders are to participate in an activity and how much power they have to influence its success. A Stakeholder Table can be combined with an Importance/Influence Matrix. The Table is used to set out the primary and secondary stakeholders, detail the interests of each and assign a value to the priorities of these interests (relative to the aims/priorities of the action being contemplated), and to assess the likely impact of any activity on them. The matrix takes the stakeholders and, using the data from the table, situates them in a two-by-two grid where one axis ranges from low to high

importance, and the other from low to high influence. This can help inform strategies and priorities for engaging with various stakeholders [7].

In Table no. 1 presents an assessment of the interest and power of the Interest Groups involved in the process of reforming the most relevant international organizations. In order to remove the subjectivity of this evaluation, we also took into account the results of the situation analysis used in geopolitics (based on the data and information collected for the analysis of the geopolitical space – resources, the actors' perception of the geopolitical space, the approach and resolution of conflicts, etc.)

Table 1. Evaluation of the interest and power of interest groups in the process of reforming the most relevant international organizations

No. crt.	Interest Group	Interest in reform	The power (influence and importance) over the reform	Resources available for reform	The ability to mobilize resources for reform	The position of the group towards the reform	Impact/Effect of the reform on the group
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
A	US	(+5)	(+5)	-financial resources (+5) -coercion (+5)	(+5)	(+5)	(+5)
B	China	(+4)	(+5)	-financial resources (+5) -coercitie (+5)	(+5)	(+5)	(+5)
C	European Union	(+5)	(+5)	-financial resources (+5) - coercion (+5)	(+5)	(+5)	(+5)
D	The Russian Federation	(+2)	(+5)	-financial resources (+3) - coercion (+3)	(+2)	(+1)	(-1)
E	Japan	(+5)	(+5)	-financial resources (+5) - coercion (+5)	(+5)	(+5)	(+5)
F	India	(+5)	(+1)	-financial resources (-3) -coercitie (+1)	(-3)	(+4)	(+4)
G	Brazil	(+5)	(+2)	-financial resources (+2) - coercion (+2)	(+2)	(+4)	(+3)
H	Turkey	(+5)	(+2)	-financial resources (+2) - coercion (+1)	(+1)	(+4)	(+4)
I	Middle East	(+5)	(+1)	-financial resources (+3) - coercion (+1)	(+3)	(+3)	(+4)
J	Africa	(+5)	(+1)	-financial resources (-3) - coercion (+1)	(-3)	(+1)	(+4)
K	International Organizations (potential funders)	(+5)	(+4)	-financial resources (+5)	(+1)	(+4)	(+4)
L	Pressure groups (lobby)/Potential investors	(+5)	(+2)	-financial resources (+4)	(+4)	(+3)	(+3)
M	Consumers/Labor Unions	(+5)	(+2)	-financial resources (+2)	(+2)	(+1)	(+4)

Note:(c) Estimation of the degree of interest the group has. This can be from Very High (+5), to Very Low (-5); It can also be: Uncertain or Unknown

(d) Powerful (+5), No Influence (0)

(e) Enumeration of the resources held by interest groups (eg: financial, status, legitimacy, coercion)

(f) Estimating how the group can mobilize resources. It can be from Very High (+5) to Very Low (-5); It can also be: Uncertain or Unknown

(g) Pro (+), with variation up to (+5); Against (-), with variation up to (-5).

(h) Positive (+5), Negative (-5)

Source: original

Table 2. Classification matrix of interest groups
I=Interest, P=Power, H=High (>3), L=Low (≤3)

A: <u>H.I. & L.P.:</u>	B: <u>H.I. & H.P.:</u>
1. India	1. The European Union
2. Brazil	2. USA
3. Turkey	3. China
4. The Middle East	4. Japan
5. Africa	
6. International Organizations (including potential funders)	
7. Pressure groups (lobby)/Economic agents (Potential investors)	
8. Consumers/ Labor Unions	
C: <u>L.I. & L.P.:</u>	D: <u>L.I. & H.P.:</u>
	The Russian Federation

Source: original

Through the analysis of the Interest Groups, it was possible to identify those key groups that are important for the process of reforming the most relevant international organizations, that must be included in the process and that have sufficient strength to favorably influence this process. Thus, the groups listed on the right side of the stakeholder classification matrix at B and D and that hold "high power" are the key and most important groups for the success of the reformation process of the most relevant international organizations. So the Interest Groups important for the success of the Program are: the European Union; USA, China, Japan, Russian Federation. Note that in window D (L.I & H.P.) in the lower right is only the Russian Federation, indicating that it has an increased interest in the reform process (in the sense of keeping the current configuration), but its power to influence this process is (at least for now) quite reduced. On the other side of the matrix are the groups listed in window A (H.I & L.P.), for whom it is important, for the good progress of the reform process, to find the means by which to increase their interest in the reform process of the most relevant international organizations. They are: India, Brazil, Turkey, Middle East, Africa, International Organizations (including potential funders), Consumers/Labor Unions.

In fact, however, all interest groups related to the reform process must be involved and, for its success, those means will have to be identified by which high-powered, disinterested groups do not obstruct the reform process.

CONCLUSIONS

The new global geopolitical and geoeconomic context differs substantially from the developments recorded in the 19th and 20th centuries; we are witnessing in the 21st century a redefinition of power relations worldwide, a shift in the centers of power and a marked affirmation of multipolarity.

Few global issues have taken on more current importance than the future of the postwar, rule-based international order. Revisionist pressure against the order today is not as much opposed to the idea of multilateral rules and institutions *per se* as it is to US hegemony over key aspects of the order. The post-1945 order has come under

unprecedented strain from the ambitions of increasingly revisionist powers, challenges to the underlying neoliberal ideology of the order.

The UN is a symbol of multilateralism and sustained global efforts for peace, security and sustainable development. Strategic autonomy, national security and other non-economic goals (environmental sustainability, worker protection and human rights) motivate calls for collaboration between countries with similar political-economic values and systems. In today's conditions, security considerations have already become more prominent in trade relations. Since the late 1990s, several scenarios have been proposed for the reform of the United Nations: the reform of the Security Council, the reform of the UN Secretariat, the financial reform, the reform of human rights, the reform of operational activities and, last but not least, the reform of the Economic and Social Council.

Although the reform should always generate a positive impact on society, experience has shown that the real interest in the reform of international institutions is still low, while the power and influence on the reform process is very high.

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