from the ideological rivalry and mistrust of the Cold War, the Uniting for Peace Resolution was adopted by the General Assembly in 1950. It allowed the UN to intervene in the Korean conflict (1950-51) and in the Suez crisis (1956). The Assembly acted as a substitute for the paralysed Council in these cases. The situation changed by the 1960's when a period of decolonization resulted in the admission of several countries, mostly form the developing world. As a result, the UN membership grew from 51 to 118 and put pressure on the Security Council to expand its membership. By 1965, the General Assembly agreed to amend the UN Charter to allow for an increase of the non-permanent seats from six to ten. The 1970's saw a period of futility and stagnation due to several related reasons including a deterioration in the international climate and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Group.

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s brought a new period of "assertive multilateralism." At the same time we have witnessed the merging of the First and Second Worlds, the rise of new economic powers, the expansion of the nuclear power club, an increase in secession activity, the growing role of regional organisations in regional conflicts, the intensification of globalisation, and a shift from interstate to largely intrastate conflicts. The Security Council engaged in a flurry of activity to respond to these new challenges with a sense of a "new-found solidarity" among the permanent members. However, just as the Security Council seemed to be operating in the way in which the UN founders had intended, many UN member states began to doubt the legitimacy of that body's collective authority. The Gulf War, the failed Somalia operation, and other similar interventions contributed to this state of affairs, leading to growing tentativeness in addressing conflicts in countries like Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

The likelihood of continued collective action at the UN will largely depend on the perceived legitimacy of the Security Council by the General Assembly. A major charge of the Councils' illegitimacy stems from the perception that it is dominated by a few states and is not truly representative of the rest of the UN body. There is a wide-spread belief that the Security Council does not portray adequately the values of developing countries. The Security Council can be considered as unrepresentative in these senses:

- composition
- geopolitical representation
- regional representation
- representation by population
- capacity representation (the functionalist principle)
- veto power.

While there seems to be a general agreement among the UN member states that the Council should be the primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, a new system of participation has to be drawn up. A balance between concerns about legitimacy (i.e., representation) and effectiveness must be struck. According to Andy Knight, the overall aim of reforming the Council should be to make that body less elitist, more democratic and thus more representative of the rest of the UN membership. To this end improvement in the following areas