

C) U.N. Charter Reform

Ultimately, the creation of a genuine common security system in the world will require a revision of the U.N. charter. A call by the United States for weighted voting in the general Assembly on financial matters, which would require charter amendment, has catapulted the subject of U.N. charter review onto the international agenda. Canada should seize the moment to broaden the discussion around weighted voting by proposing more constructive weighted voting schemes than the self-serving one being advanced by the U.S. Canada should also seek to establish an on-going deliberative process in an appropriate forum in the hope of forging a new consensus which might be the basis of an eventual charter review conference.

Canadian peace researcher Dr. Hanna Newcombe is a world authority on U.N. weighted voting. In a separate brief submitted by Dr. Newcombe to this committee on behalf of the World Federalists of Canada--Hamilton Branch, she considers a number of options for weighted voting schemes, noting that the proposals most likely to be acceptable to Western and Soviet bloc states would reduce the influence of the South, which as a group benefits from the one-nation, one-vote system. Weighted voting would therefore need to be accompanied by off-setting reforms of benefit to the South, such as a U.N. Development Fund financed by a tax on the wealthier states of the North.

One proposal we would particularly commend for consideration is the Binding Triad developed by Richard Hudson. (Appendix 3-4) The Binding Triad proposes that every vote in the U.N. General Assembly be counted three ways, first to determine the number of countries, then to determine if they represent 2/3 of the world's people, and finally to determine if 2/3 of the contributions to the U.N. are represented. A vote which carried a 2/3 majority in all three houses would then become law and be binding on the membership. It is possible that the 2/3 majority, as proposed by Hudson, is unnecessarily high, and that a simple majority would be sufficient. In either case, the principle remains: a majority in all three houses would meaningfully represent the "will of the world" and as such should be accepted as the legitimate basis for U.N. authority.

The U.S. wants its greater financial contribution to receive greater weight in U.N. voting. Other countries like China and India rightly want to be recognized for their large populations. The Binding Triad provides a compromise.

The Binding Triad would require only two minor amendments to the U.N. charter. The result could pave the way for the reformation of the U.N. General Assembly into a *de facto* world federal legislative assembly of states. The Binding Triad might also be tied to increased powers of the General Assembly in security matters, specifically the power to over-rule a veto in the Security Council. This in itself would also constitute an off-set benefitting the South and would improve the possibility of a consensus.

Recommendation 3-11a: That Canada promote discussion and negotiation on U.N. weighted voting by seeking an on-going deliberative process in an appropriate forum, perhaps one constituted especially for the purpose.

Recommendation 3-11b: That Canada propose more equitable U.N. weighted voting schemes, such as the Binding Triad, as part of a package deal which would include off-setting benefits to the countries of the South.