

Failing the Syria Test Javier Solana Reuters Blog: The Great Debate 13 October 2011 On October 2nd in Istanbul, Syria's disparate opposition movements gave the go-ahead for the formation of a "Syrian National Council." This is the most important step yet taken by the fragmented forces that have been trying since May to lead a peaceful uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime. The Council's formation boosted the morale of those who have been demanding stronger and more unified representation.

But a mere two days after its creation, the embryonic Council suffered its first big setback. France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Portugal, in collaboration with the United States, presented a draft resolution before the United Nations Security Council seeking to condemn repression in Syria and put an end to the use of force against civilians. (...)

The object was plain: to gain a Russian, and consequently, a Chinese abstention. But Russia and China vetoed the proposal anyway, and only nine members of the Security Council voted in favor, with Brazil, India, South Africa, and Lebanon abstaining. (...)

Finally, the Security Council vote exposed a clear division within the international community. Among the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, all of which happen to be on the Security Council currently – two vetoed and the rest abstained (along with Lebanon, for obvious reasons). (...)

Of course, there is no "one size fits all" model for intervention, but that does not justify evading our "

responsibility to protect

" – a fine concept promoted by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and adopted by all UN member states in 2005. Support for the resolution would have weakened Assad's position, as it would have revealed him as isolated from his traditional allies, Russia and China. It would also have shown the international community to be unanimous in its rejection of repression and committed to protecting the Syrian people (though the draft made no mention of military intervention). (...)

In recent years, with countries such as China, India, and Brazil taking their rightful place on the international scene, the G-7 has given way to the G-20. Likewise, an ambitious reform of the International Monetary Fund was adopted in 2010 to reflect changes in the global distribution of power.

But this change in global governance must not be limited to economic policymaking. After all, globalization has brought many overall benefits, but also less friendly aspects, such as the ones dealing with global security. Despite our growing interconnectedness, the UN Security Council has not yet been unable to achieve sufficient consensus to resolve pressing matters

such as Syria.

Nobody ever said that the road to stronger global governance would be straight or simple to navigate. But there are no detours: without effective structures of power and a genuine commitment from all players, the future does not look promising for global stability and prosperity.

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