

REVISITING CHAPTER VIII: THE ROLE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

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Recently, the world has seen both pragmatic and sudden changes in international relations. Cooperation between Super Powers, along with regional organizations, seems to be possible today. Consequently, the scope of general cooperation and consensus is increasing among member states of the United Nations. The Charter of the United Nations should be changed according to the needs of the changing world.

We should be grateful for the flexible nature of Chapter VIII, which allows the interplay of United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. The demise of the Cold War and the changing nature of conflicts have brought a number of challenges to the United Nations. Internal, ethnic, and political issues are the source of disputes today. The framers of the Charter of the United Nations did not anticipate these intra-state conflicts in 1945.

In light of the changing nature of conflicts, regional organizations can play an important role in maintaining international peace and security. Regional organizations should be given enough authority and resources to play an active role in the pacific settlement of regional disputes. Meanwhile, the Security Council needs to encourage member states to use the regional organizations to solve their disputes. However, regional organizations should not move into the enforcement of actions because the Security Council could be a better forum for the enforcement.

The role of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security is increasing. In some instances, regional organizations are best suited to solve regional conflicts due to their proximity and ability to provide faster information than the United Nations. For example, during the Rwandan massacre, many non-African countries such as India, Pakistan and the United States left Rwanda, but African countries stayed to prevent further massacre. But the lack of resources has prevented the regional organizations from operating a large scale peace-keeping operation. The United Nations should provide enough resources to carry out the regional peace-keeping activities.

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The capability of the United Nations in peace-keeping is overstretched due to the ever-increasing number of operations. Regional approaches to settlement of disputes could be realized through an active cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Joint operations under flexible, innovative mandates could enhance international peace and security effectively. We must be open to allow experimentation of joint actions or interplay of the regional organizations and the United Nations. The cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations is in the initial stages and there is a need for further refinement and development.