

II. Lessons and Policy Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this study are guided by some rather pessimistic conclusions regarding the utility and morality of sanctions writ large, and of comprehensive economic sanctions in particular. These conclusions merit special emphasis at the outset. First, *sanctions rarely accomplish their stated purpose, but they often carry considerable costs in terms of human suffering.* Second, *sanctions will remain popular instruments of statecraft because they tend to be viewed as a relatively cheap and risk-free means of satisfying domestic demands for action in response to perceived misbehaviour abroad.* Third, *targetted sanctions - despite their problems - often represent the best means of satisfying the domestic political demands of senders while avoiding the humanitarian costs of comprehensive sanctions.*

As a member of the Security Council, Canada should give priority to three tasks: *discouraging the use of sanctions wherever more constructive and humane alternatives exist; developing the capacity of the international community to design and administer strong, targetted sanctions; and ensuring that the needs of innocent civilians in target states are given due consideration in the design and implementation of sanctions.*

The next few pages outline in more detail the main trends affecting the practice of sanctions in recent years, and the steps which should be taken in order to encourage the more appropriate, effective, and humane use of sanctions.

1. International trends affecting sanctions policy

- In the 1990s, the UN Security Council has been willing to consider a broader range of inter- and intra-state issues as threats to international peace and security. At the same time, there has been an unwillingness to commit the resources required to respond to these threats. As a result, sanctions have been used more frequently, often as a relatively inexpensive means of appeasing domestic audiences who are outraged by events abroad.
- The increased use of sanctions has been accompanied by increased skepticism regarding their effectiveness, and growing dissatisfaction with their humanitarian consequences.
- In general, states seem unwilling to act on the knowledge that the effective administration and enforcement of sanctions requires considerable expenditures of human and material resources.
- High levels of economic interdependence and the globalization of trade and capital have made it more important than ever to ensure that sanctions are imposed and enforced by a broad-based, multilateral coalition. However, these same factors have made it more lucrative for senders to defect from such a coalition. This poses obvious challenges for the effectiveness of sanctions.
- Interest in 'targetted' sanctions appears to have been driven by self-interested political and economic motives, as well as a genuine interest in crafting effective measures.