

managed. During the last years of the First World War, the United States used control of wheat to oblige Switzerland to make its merchant shipping available for the war effort. The capacity to supply Germany with food during the winter of 1918-19, when the German government was unable to make payments because of the refusal of France to authorize the use of German gold, was used to hasten the signing of the Versailles peace treaty, with results which ultimately back-fired.¹⁷ Food has not been made part of the United Nations sanctions imposed by Security Council resolution number 757, 30 May 1992, on Serbia, but the capacity of Serbians to pay for imports has been attacked by the ban on its export trade.¹⁸ The effect of this is to preempt a strategy which might otherwise have been used by the belligerents, and to strengthen, if only slightly, the position of the peacemakers. All parties to the civil war have become dependent on foreign relief, and that has given the international community some capacity to dampen the parricide.

3.2 Exports of Other Commodities to the Target State

Embargoes on the export to a target state of commodities other than food has a lower public profile, and circumstances determine how rapidly they may produce significant economic strains. The League of Nation's sanctions in 1935 against Italy only embargoed a limited range of commodities which were supplied to Italy by League members. Canada's representative on the Sanctions Committee, Dr. W.A. Riddell, proposed that the sanctions should be made effective by the inclusion of oil in the list of prohibited trade, but Mussolini responded with a threat that "oil sanctions mean war," and French Prime Minister Laval led the retreat. Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King repudiated Riddell's suggestion as unauthorized.¹⁹

In January 1939, the United States government ordered a "moral embargo" to discourage the sale of aircraft to Japan as a beginning to a graduated effort to stop the Japanese takeover of China. In February, there was a cessation of credits to Japan, and in July formal notice was given of the intention in six months to abrogate the 1911 commercial treaty. In July 1940, an export licensing system was established, but only

¹⁷ James A. Huston, "Allied Blockade of Germany 1918-19," Journal of Central European Affairs, 10 (1950) pp. 145-66; S.L. Bane and R.H. Lutz, eds., The Blockade of Germany after the Armistice, 1918-1919, Selected Documents. (Stanford, California, 1942).

¹⁸ United States, Department of State, Dispatch, 3/23 (June 8 1992) item number 448; and see SCVR, S/PV 3082, 30 May 1992.

¹⁹ Robin Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-24; Lester B. Pearson, Mike, The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 92-102; and John A. Munro, "The Riddell Affair Reconsidered," External Affairs, 1939, pp. 366-75.