

Possible routes of influence

-Nigeria's leader, General Abubakar, may presently be more susceptible to external pressure, given that his regime is in its nascency and he has not yet wedded himself to a policy of continued repression. At the same time, he may feel compelled to engage in such repression in order to consolidate his rule. It is therefore important to offer him positive incentives for change.

-The opposition movement within Nigeria has exhibited an impressive degree of unity, with regard to its strategies as well as its objectives.

-Elements of the African-American lobby are pushing the Clinton administration to adopt a tougher stance on Nigeria.

-Nigeria is heavily dependent on imports of refined petroleum products, and exports of crude oil.

Obstacles to sanctions-induced change

-The opposition in Nigeria, while cohesive, is very weak relative to the regime.

-Support among African states for tough action against Nigeria is falling. Neighbouring states fear the political and economic consequences of openly supporting such action, and they approve of the constructive role recently played by Nigeria in regional politics. This lack of support makes it difficult to design an effective regime of sanctions.

-France strongly opposes sanctions, and French corporations are anxious to do business in Nigeria.

-Nigeria is not an attractive place for corporate investment: this means that sanctions on foreign direct investment would provide little leverage over the regime.

-In the United Nations Security Council, it would be very difficult to find nine votes in favour of a resolution mandating sanctions against Nigeria.

-If Canada pushes for sanctions against Nigeria at a meeting of the Commonwealth Minister's Action Group (CMAG), Nigeria may lobby other African states to oppose Canada's Security Council candidacy. Both the Nigerian elections and Security Council elections are scheduled for October.

Comments on various policy options

-**Economic sanctions** generally lead to profiteering by elites, and cause harm to innocent civilians.

-**Assets freezes** would require the cooperation of the U.S. and U.K. if they are to be effective. Assets freezes are relatively easy to evade (it was suggested that evasive tactics have already taken place). We lack a reliable means of identifying the ownership of relevant assets.