

Within sanctioning states some groups will suffer disproportionately: producers, exporters, importers. The Polish crisis brought no reimposition of the United States grain embargo, in spite of the Reagan administration's harder anti-Soviet line, because United States farmers would be hurt. Nor have the West German and French governments been willing to cancel their gas pipeline contracts with the USSR as a contribution to collective sanctions. And when chrome from Rhodesia seemed essential to the US in the 1970s, the embargo was lifted in technical violation of the Security Council order. There is also the strong likelihood of counter-measures by the target which can raise costs for sanctioning states; limiting sanctions to import embargoes to protect export earnings will only work if the target does not retaliate in kind — as Argentina has done.

Thirdly, economic sanctions can harm innocent parties whose economies are linked with the target (the fate of Zambia while Rhodesia was under UN sanctions). They can also have "ripple effects" which disrupt the international economy and undermine international confidence. Freezing assets and denying loans and credit interfere with the delicate balance of international trade and payments. Earlier this year, despite sanctions, the US government had to meet Polish liabilities to Western banks and there were worries over the destabilizing effects on Arab confidence in Western financial institutions when Iranian assets were frozen. The "ripple" effects of an Argentinian default could be very serious and Canadian banks would be among the sufferers. Recession is a reality in many industrialized countries and deliberate acts of policy which jeopardize jobs, undermine confidence and retard recovery need to be very carefully considered.

Willingness to resort to sanctions should reflect the

value placed on defending an interest or a norm and the estimated costs of the measures to be used. On the other hand, willingness to defy sanctions will reflect the value placed on the offending act or policy and calculations of capacity to survive weighed against the costs of succumbing to pressure. Political as well as economic costs will be relevant on both sides and political will could prove stronger in the target whose government may have more to lose by bowing to international pressure. And political judgment on all sides may be defective.

Assessment of the actual impact of sanctions is complicated by ignorance of what the situation would have been if they had not been imposed as well as by the effects of other factors operating alongside them. Thirteen years of UN sanctions against the Rhodesian regime, which denied international recognition and ostensibly severed trade and communications, were one element among many making the survival of the regime more difficult. But guerrilla warfare, the loss of Portuguese and (to some extent) South African support, and Commonwealth pressure on Britain not to settle for less than majority rule, were more significant than sanctions in the long run. And those sanctions had the added legitimacy of Security Council backing.

Sanctions against the Soviet Union were not expected to bring withdrawal from Afghanistan; even less could they hope to detach Poland from the Soviet sphere of influence. According to the US administration they were intended to indicate no "business as usual," echoing the policy adopted by Washington twenty years earlier of making it more costly for the USSR to support Castro because of US sanctions on Cuba. A problem with such sanctions is to know when to lift them. If they are "official," they cannot just fade away; if they remain in place, do further crises bring inevitable intensification?

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