

V. Administering and Enforcing UN Sanctions

There have been numerous surveys of the administrative deficiencies of United Nations sanctions, and numerous suggestions regarding how to address these problems.⁷⁷ To this point, little progress has been made toward this end. In addition to the political obstacles to reform noted at the end of the preceding section, there are two main reasons why reform has been elusive. First, many of the proposed measures are costly in terms of human and fiscal resources. While some reforms are purely procedural, these must be supplemented by more cost-intensive efforts at monitoring and enforcement if they are to yield substantive gains in effectiveness.

Second, as several sources indicated in off-the-record interviews, there is likely to be little enthusiasm for reform efforts until the sanctions against Iraq have been lifted. The duration, cost, perceived ineffectiveness, and humanitarian consequences of these measures have led to endemic cynicism about sanctions in general. And yet, despite the widespread knowledge that bold reforms are needed, it seems unlikely that the P-5, in particular, will support reform efforts until the Iraq experience has passed into history.

Despite the lack of appetite for wholesale institutional changes, there are several process reforms which can and should be implemented in the interim. This section surveys a wide variety of proposed reforms, and places special emphasis on those which seem most likely to garner support in the short- and medium-terms.

1. Strategic planning

Sanctions, like military force, require strategic planning and flexibility if they are to succeed. Unlike military force, however, most types of sanctions will not be effective unless they are implemented consistently by a coherent multilateral coalition. This presents daunting problems of strategic planning; problems which are only complicated by the inevitable demands of political compromise. Ideally, then, strategic input into sanctions policy would be formulated by a unit of the UN secretariat, which would draw upon the intelligence resources of member states, and the expertise of diplomats, academics, and NGOs from around the world. Unfortunately, this is not a viable option because of cost concerns, a fashionable distaste for 'big' bureaucracy, and a general lack of political will. In any event, such an arrangement would also be inadvisable, because it would (presumably) be called into action only by a request from the Security Council, which - as a political body - tends not to call for potentially controversial Secretariat advice in a proactive fashion.

Informal means of strategic planning will require foresight and political will on the part of member states. Ad hoc arrangements involving hastily assembled collections of diplomats and

⁷⁷ E.g. Stremmlau, section five, and Doxey, United Nations Sanctions: Current Policy Issues.