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## Pressure through Economics: Assessing the Effectiveness of US Policy across Shifting Geopolitical Contexts

Hailey Reed

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Pressure through Economics: Assessing the Effectiveness of US Sanctions Policy  
across Shifting Geopolitical Contexts

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Senior Honors Thesis

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## **Abstract**

While some US policymakers argue that economic sanctions always work and continue to use them as a key foreign policy tool, and while some other scholars argue that sanctions never work, this thesis focuses on when, not if, sanctions work. Contextualizing a discussion of the effectiveness of sanctioning undemocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa around the early 2000s shift away from US hegemony back to multipolarity, I conclude that the rise of Russia, China, and smaller states in the early 2000s affected the process through which the US is able to sanction adversarial regimes. Through an analysis of six case studies, I show that pressure to adopt political reforms more favorable to the US through economic sanctions alone has not been successful regardless of global power dynamics. Although such sanctions consistently have limited success, the end of unipolarity gave previously less powerful states room to not only oppose but actively work against US sanctions regimes. The governments of Sudan, Syria, and Iran were given more opportunities to work around US sanctions legally through access to markets in other states. This ability of US adversaries to affect its sanctions regimes alters the costs imposed on the states targeted by sanctions and makes it more likely that the US will act alone in its imposition of sanctions. In a multipolar world, as opposed to a unipolar one under US hegemony, the US will encounter not only more difficulty in garnering international support for its policies, but also more difficulty in bringing about lasting change in the states it sanctions.

## Chapter One: Introduction

Throughout the final years of the Cold War and following its conclusion, economic sanctions became an increasingly central tool of global governance used by states to advance their interests abroad. In the mid-twentieth century, only five states were targeted by sanctions aimed at pushing regimes to make political changes; as a result of the continued desire of states to maintain influence abroad, by 2000 nearly fifty states were sanctioned.<sup>1</sup> These sanctions involved the United States or international organizations as the senders of sanctions attempting to coerce targeted governments to make political changes by restricting economic interactions within target states. Such restrictions included trade, investment, banking, travel, and arms sales. The increased use of sanctions spurred a debate in political and academic discourses that has disaggregated into two broad schools of thought: (1) sanctions advocates and (2) sanctions opponents. While the debate and these schools of thought changed overtime, no prevailing argument has come to be shared by the states and organizations that most often impose sanctions. Different opinions on the use of sanctions are held not only by different western governments but even by different US administrations as well. Nonetheless, the use of sanctions persists.

While the continuance of the debate in the academic literature has yet to lead to a shared understanding of the effects of sanctioning undemocratic regimes, what has always been clear is that the effectiveness of sanctions must be understood in the context of contemporary geopolitics. Foreign policy is not conducted in a vacuum, and states' relative power has an effect on policy outcomes. The changing geopolitics in the decades following the end of the Cold War are especially pertinent to discussing sanctions, as the shift to US unipolarity was coupled with the aforementioned increase in sanctions regimes around the world. As the 1990s came to a close

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Jones, ed., *Societies Under Siege: Exploring How International Economic Sanctions (Do Not) Work*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.

and the post-9/11 wars of the early 2000s began, a decade of US hegemony defined by unprecedented rates of support for US policies ended. The inability of the US by the early 2000s to garner the same level of international support as it was able to just years prior affected the arguments of many scholars regarding the effectiveness, ethics, and legality of sanctioning undemocratic regimes.

Although the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively, aided in bringing about the end of its own hegemonic power and thus fundamentally affected the effectiveness of sanctions, the two schools of thought continue to persist in the academic literature. In the following chapters, I will break through this debate surrounding economic sanctions regimes in undemocratic states. In sorting through the arguments made in both schools of thought and analyzing a new set of cases, I will analyze how the shift from a unipolar world to a multipolar one has affected the effectiveness of sanctions targeting undemocratic regimes in bringing about desired policy changes. In contextualizing the debate on sanctions around the geopolitical shifts following the end of the Cold War and the post-9/11 wars, I hypothesize that—while sanctioning autocrats has never been perfectly effective—the end of unipolarity has solidified the inability of the US to successfully bring about political changes in undemocratic states through economic sanctions alone. I hypothesize that it is now more likely that a great or growing power will not only oppose but actively work against US sanctions regimes. This argument supports the segment of the existing literature claiming that sanctioning undemocratic actors is ineffective.

Beginning with a discussion of the arguments made within this debate, as well as arguments made throughout the 1990s regarding US dominance and power, I will continue on to present and judge a set of cases in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Chapter Two

addresses the existing literature on sanctions as well as theories regarding US unipolarity and power. In this chapter, I analyze scholars' differing definitions of state power and present my own. States' relative power is the independent variable in my hypothesis, and defining it with precision and care is important to further analysis of this hypothesis. In Chapter Two, I also discuss in detail the two schools of thought that my final conclusion breaks through. Using the explanations of both US hegemony and the academic debate on sanctions as background, Chapter Three goes on to define the dependent variable of my hypothesis as well as lay out the criteria against which the cases of sanctions regimes in the successive chapters are judged. Chapter Four explains my process of case selection, and Chapters Five through Ten present each case study for analysis.

I end this thesis with the conclusion that the end of US hegemony changed the process through which these sanctions come about. My analysis, however, does not show a significant variation in the effectiveness of US sanctions policy following the end of US hegemony. Russia, China, and smaller states have gained the ability to more successfully challenge US-led sanctions regimes and actively work against the sanctions to provide alternative economic pathways to targeted regimes. Economic sanctions imposed against belligerent regimes in MENA with the intention of pushing these regimes to adopt new policies more favorable to the US have never been consistently successful—as is demonstrated in Chapters Five through Ten. The context under which these sanctions regimes were imposed and complied with, I conclude, changed with the end of US hegemony.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The growth in the use of sanctions by western powers in the 1990s brought with it concerns from academics and policymakers alike about the effectiveness of sanctioning regimes



that acted counter to United States and western interests. A debate in the foreign economic policy literature ensued focusing on the perceived unique ability of authoritarian regimes to evade sanctions pressures and maintain their adversarial policies. The catalyst for involvement in this debate for many was the observable humanitarian consequences of sanctions regimes in undemocratic states. The difficulty of approving humanitarian exports to sanctioned states as well as the inconsistency in application of sanctions regimes between cases led not only to considerable human suffering within targeted states but also to many scholars contributing to the evolving discourse.<sup>2</sup>

What follows in this chapter will be an analysis of the large body of literature regarding the effectiveness of sanctioning adversarial regimes. Covering a vast array of arguments, this body of literature has segmented into two broad schools of thought: (1) one arguing for the continued use of economic sanctions against any regime no matter their respect for democracy and (2) another arguing against the sanctioning of undemocratic regimes altogether. While all scholars involved in the debate discussed below recognize the conventional wisdom that sanctioning undemocratic leaders most often begets further repression, the conclusions made throughout the literature vary significantly. Sanctions advocates generally prioritize the ability of sanctions against undemocratic regimes to achieve substantive ends even if they do not fully achieve the ambitious objectives stated at the onset of the policies.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, sanctions opponents generally focus on the large failure rate of sanctions to achieve their stated goals accompanied by the human suffering experienced by civilian populations to argue that sanctions are not only ineffective but costly.

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Weiss et al. ed., *Political Gain and Civilian Pain: Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions*. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 219.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Haass, conclusion to *Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy*, ed. Richard Haass (The Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), 198.

The intricacies and diversity of each school of thought will be discussed in greater detail, but it is first important to contextualize both arguments—and the sanctions policies themselves—within contemporary geopolitics. The decade following the end of the Cold War was a time of changing global politics when US and Russian bipolarity shifted to US unipolarity. As the former communist bloc turned to the US, striving to adopt its political and economic principles, the US experienced a time of great global influence and power. This era of unipolarity came to a close, however, as US-led globalization generated a backlash around the world, and the vast power that the US was able to wield globally greatly diminished. This transition back to a multipolar world in the early 2000s considerably affected the ability of the US and its allies to achieve foreign policy successes. Western policies are now challenged to a larger—and more successful—extent by the growing global powers of Russia and China and occasionally even by allies themselves. While scholars on both sides of the debate discussed below focus on events far beyond the 1990s and the end of US unipolarity, the transition back to a multipolar world must be taken into consideration when attempting to analyze the two schools of thought.

### **A Changing World: The Effects of Evolving Polarity on US Influence**

When the Soviet Union began to fall in the late 1980s, scholars began to predict what would come of the world after decades of bipolarity. These predictions—later largely supported by empirical data—centered around the notion of US world leadership. While scholarship differed regarding confidence in the durability of a unipolar world, considerable agreement arose that the US would lead global politics at least in the short term and that, during this time of leadership, US policies would be supported by a broad segment of the global community. To some scholars, America's authority over international liberalism and institutionalism would result in the success of foreign policies based on these ideologies long after the fall of

communism even if the institutions through which many US policies were carried out did not themselves succeed.<sup>4</sup> Others were not as optimistic about the persistence of a US hegemon, but they did concede that such a hegemon—albeit a short-lived one—was forthcoming. Empirical data collected after these predictions of unipolarity were made largely supported them. The US experienced a time of unipolar leadership throughout the 1990s, and its dominance intensified throughout the decade.<sup>5</sup> This dominance was challenged, however, as the wars of the early 2000s began, and Russia and China began to grow significantly; the unipolar influence once experienced by the US was eventually lost.

### *Expectations of Unipolarity*

Scholars began to analyze what could follow the bipolarity experienced throughout the Cold War before it had even ended. In 1989, two years before the fall of the Soviet Union, Fukuyama made one of the most optimistic and triumphalist predictions of what was to follow the geopolitics of the Cold War. This viewpoint asserted that the twentieth century would end the same way it began: with the global community converging to the capitalist market economy, liberal institutionalism, and democracy as the fundamental and necessary aspects of stable global governance.<sup>6</sup> From a US perspective, this argument asserted that the US would experience not only a time of ideological predominance but also one of international support unlike anything experienced throughout the Cold War. Many US policymakers agreed with Fukuyama's assessment that liberal institutionalism led by the US would eventually be adopted by the majority of the global community, but they recognized that the US had to work hard to make

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989), 3, and John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19 (Winter 1994-1995), 5-49.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Kauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," *The National Interest* (Winter 2002/2003), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Fukuyama, 4.

such a thing happen.<sup>7</sup> In a 1992 draft report released to the press, US Department of Defense officials argued that, in order to ensure that the US maintained support for its policies on a global scale, the rise of second-tier states needed to be controlled in such a way that ensured they remained less powerful than the US. Academics such as William Wohlforth argued that the duration of US hegemony and the disparity in power between the US and mid-level states were unprecedented. He emphasized, however, that US hegemony could be threatened by the inability of the US to stymie the growth of any potential adversaries and competitors, as these potential competitors did not value the predominance of US international liberalism.<sup>8</sup> Like Wohlforth and Pentagon officials, many other scholars agreed with Fukuyama that the US would emerge from the Cold War as a global leader in economic and military strength, but they did not necessarily believe that liberal democracy would be the predominant ideology around the world for decades to come.

This fear of the possible growth of smaller states by US officials and other scholars was often coupled with an argument that these smaller states, in attempting to grow and compete with the hegemon, would find themselves in conflict with one another. Krauthammer—who wrote in support of his initial argument years later—acknowledged this possibility that smaller states, namely European states, would fight one another in order to acquire as much power as possible.<sup>9</sup> Smaller states, it was argued, in feeling insecure about their power relative to that of the US, would oppose and attempt to stop US policies in order to foster their own international influence. Like Wohlforth, Krauthammer also believed in the possible loss of America’s global influence and argued that US hegemony would persist so long as the right steps were taken to protect it.

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<sup>7</sup> Patrick E. Tyler, “Lone Superpower Plan: Ammunition for Critics,” *The New York Times*. March 10, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> William Wohlforth, “The Stability of a Unipolar World,” *International Security* 24 (Summer 1999), 5-41.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment,” *Foreign Affairs* 70 (1990-1991), 23-33.

Others were not as confident in the ability of the US or its liberal values to maintain US predominance, however. Scholars such as Mearsheimer and Layne argued that this conflict among smaller states vying for power could not be stopped by US actions alone but would instead lead back to a multipolar world. Mearsheimer suggested that Fukuyama, Wohlforth, and Krauthammer's arguments were only true to the extent that US policymakers believed them to be. Rather than liberal institutionalism becoming accepted globally and the US remaining the leader of a unipolar world for any period of time to follow, Mearsheimer argued that the rising competition among mid-level states would eventually lead to some gaining power that rivaled that of the US, as international institutions began to fail in the 1990s.<sup>10</sup> Instability was predicted to return to Europe as smaller states were given the opportunity to fight for more power and influence without the fear of retaliation from either of the Cold War great powers.<sup>11</sup> This argument was supported by Layne who argued that—even though the US acted in regard to second-tier states more so with benevolence than the coercion it used throughout the Cold War—states would attempt to balance against the hegemon and challenge its power.<sup>12</sup> Countering Wohlforth's argument about the unprecedented nature of the unipolarity of the 1990s as well as the arguments predicting the indefinite continuation of US hegemony, Kupchan argued that multipolarity would return as it always had following postwar lulls in international competition. While economic globalization, nuclear weapons, new information technologies, and the spread of democracy could have tamed some rivalries and necessitated cooperation between states in

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<sup>10</sup> Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions."

<sup>11</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security* 15 (Summer 1990), 5-56.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *International Security* 17 (Spring 1993), 5-51.

some cases, Kupchan argued that the US would no longer experience the international support it had immediately following the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>13</sup>

Neorealists—who believe that power is the paramount factor in international relations—viewed unipolarity as unstable in and of itself.<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Waltz, the leading advocate of neorealist theory, described the unbalanced and unchecked power experienced by one state in a time of unipolarity as being as dangerous to national politics as it is to international politics; small states will attempt to fill a power vacuum by any means necessary.<sup>15</sup> To neorealists, the US would have the power in the short term to experience global support for its policies, but this hegemony was not only fleeting but unstable for the future of both geopolitics and US domestic politics. Expecting America’s allies and international institutions to back US policies was deemed dangerous by neorealists, since the support would only exist in the short term.

#### *The Reality of Unipolarity and the Operationalizing of Power*

Although there were many different opinions regarding the future of US dominance following the end of the Cold War, and the stability of unipolarity was contested, scholars did agree that the US would experience at least a short stretch of international dominance. Such US dominance was experienced in the years following the Cold War. Tables One and Two below, in illustrating some indicators of power, show how these indices of power for the US changed following the end of the Cold War and then continued to trend toward an equilibrium among the great powers in the mid-2000s. While these two tables do not reflect a perfect assessment of global power, and power itself is difficult to define, viewed together and in conjunction with

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<sup>13</sup> Charles A. Kupchan, “Life after Pax Americana,” *World Policy Journal* 16 (Fall, 1999), 20-27.

<sup>14</sup> Wohlforth, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “Evaluating Theories,” *The American Political Science Review* 91 (December 1997), 913-917.

analysis of what makes a specific state powerful, they nonetheless illustrate America's relative share of global strength and wealth.

Power—especially in discussions of politics—is a term often used but rarely defined. It is plagued by vagueness. In this thesis, however, it plays a key role as a variable affecting the ability of a state to achieve its goals set at the onset of a sanctions regime, so it needs to be defined with care and precision. Therefore, I define power as the ability of a state to influence the behavior of another—either implicitly or explicitly—in order to achieve the powerful actor's desired outcome. While some scholars define power more simply as the ability of an actor to get what it wants, it is important to note that power is not defined here by outcomes—as Russett and Starr define it—but by the ability to affect the actions of others when working toward desired outcomes.<sup>16</sup> As power is a means in achieving different objectives, achieving one's objective is simply a byproduct of power, and power cannot be conflated with outcomes. In attempting to breakthrough what he believed to be the overuse of terms such as power and influence, Dahl defines power in this same way, as the ability of State A to exert influence over State B in such a way that brings about A's desired outcomes.<sup>17</sup> These affected actions taken by the less powerful state must also be beyond the purview of how the influenced actor already conducts itself, however.<sup>18</sup> This is to say that power is not asserted when a dictator imprisons a dissident who already desired to be a martyr, since the dissident would presumably carry out similar actions without external pressure.

The ability of one state to coerce another when working toward a desired end, like most topics in international relations, must be understood in the context of how states interact and

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<sup>16</sup> Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr, *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1989), 127.

<sup>17</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* Fourth Edition. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1984), 22-25.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 2.

depend on one another. Keohane and Nye write about the power of interdependence as the ability of one state to exploit a mutually dependent relationship it has with another.<sup>19</sup> Even the neorealist Waltz, who sees the world as anarchic at its core, recognizes that states not only are affected by one another but rely on one another at times.<sup>20</sup> In a self-help world, as Waltz sees it, every state works not only to benefit itself but also to protect itself from others, and this protection can come in the forms of both cooperation and exploitation of interdependent relationships. These acts, cooperation and exploitation, are examples of how a state's power can be used. Whether or not another state changes its usual course of action to adapt to the demands made through cooperation or exploitation is a reflection of the weight of one state's power over another; the eventual outcome of cooperation and exploitation simply demonstrates the successfulness of the use of a state's power.

While the ability of a state to coerce another into action can be used to indicate a state's successful use of power,<sup>21</sup> material wealth and military size are also indicators of a state's power; these are the indices reflected in Tables One and Two.<sup>22</sup> While soft power—a term coined by Nye that incorporates values, culture, and cooperation into the definition of power—is instrumental in acts of coercion, wealth and military might are instrumental in ensuring that less powerful states understand the possible consequences of not acquiescing to a powerful state's desires. Laïdi also recognizes this differentiation between soft power and hard power, defining a state's power primarily as its material wealth and strength but also recognizing the importance of

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989), 11.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), 104.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 3 (December 1957), 201–215.

<sup>22</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, updated ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), 55-137.



**Table One: Indicators of Great Powers' Wealth and Population**

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
<b>GDP (trillion)</b>					
United States	4.339	5.963	7.640	10.252	13.037
China	0.3095	0.3609	0.7345	1.211	2.286
Germany	0.7298	1.772	2.592	1.943	2.861
USSR/Russia	2.200	0.5168	0.3955	0.2597	0.7640
Japan	1.399	3.133	5.449	4.888	4.755
<b>Relative Share of Global Wealth (%)</b>					
US	33.9	26.3	24.8	30.5	27.5
China	2.4	1.6	2.4	3.6	4.8
Germany	5.7	7.8	8.4	5.8	6.0
USSR/Russia	17.2	2.3	1.3	0.8	1.6
Japan	10.9	13.8	17.7	14.6	10.0
<b>Relative Value of Global Exports (% of global value)</b>					
US	13.3	12.8	12.6	13.8	10.1
China	1.1	1.1	2.1	3.2	6.0
Germany	7.4	9.4	8.9	7.6	8.4
USSR/Russia	--	2.2	1.8	1.4	2.1
Japan	8.5	7.4	7.6	6.6	5.2
<b>Population (million)</b>					
US	237.9	249.6	262.8	282.2	296.4
China	1,051.0	1,135.0	1,205.0	1,263.0	1,305.0
Germany	77.7	79.4	81.7	82.2	82.5
USSR/Russia	286.7	148.3	148.4	146.6	143.5
Japan	120.8	123.5	125.4	126.8	127.8

NOTE: GDP figures are in Feb. 2020 US dollars. Empirical export data for the Soviet Union in 1985 was unavailable, but it was noted by Abraham Becker in his November 1987 "US-Soviet Trade in the 1980s" report for the RAND Corporation that Soviet trade with developed states declined in the first half of the 1980s and was largely driven by Soviet imports of agricultural goods.

SOURCES: US Census Bureau Historical National Population Estimates (<https://www.census.gov/population/estimates/nation/popclockest.txt>), and World Bank Open Data (<https://data.worldbank.org/>).

**Table Two: Indicators of Great Powers' Military Strength**

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Military Expenditures (% of GDP)					
United States	6.1	5.3	3.6	2.9	3.9
China	2.5	2.5	1.7	1.9	2.0
Germany	3.0	2.7	1.6	1.4	1.3
USSR/Russia	12.6	9.0	3.8	3.3	3.3
Japan	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Armed Forces (% of population)					
US	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5
China	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Germany	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3
USSR/Russia	1.8	2.9	1.2	1.0	1.0
Japan	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

NOTE: The estimated burden of Soviet military expenditures is represented as a percentage of the state's GNP rather than its GDP.

SOURCES: Shaoguang Wang, "Estimating Defense Expenditure: Some Evidence from Chinese Sources," *The China Quarterly* 147 (September 1996), 896.; Dmitri Steinberg, "Trends in Soviet Military Expenditure," *Soviet Studies* 42 (October 1990), 676.; Central Intelligence Agency, "Soviet Military Manpower: Sizing the Force" (August 1990); and World Bank Open Data (<https://data.worldbank.org/>).

one's ideology—or "meaning"—especially during the Cold War.<sup>23</sup> Zakaria illustrates the positive relationship experienced throughout history between wealthy states and powerful states who entangle themselves in politics beyond their borders,<sup>24</sup> and Mearsheimer goes further to define power solely on the wealth and material assets of a state.<sup>25</sup>

Although Mearsheimer, in providing a realist analysis of military strength and power, focuses on material wealth as opposed to soft power and non-military interactions between

<sup>23</sup> Zaki Laïdi, *A World Without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics*, trans. June Burnham and Jenny Coulon (London: Routledge, 1998), 20-21.

<sup>24</sup> Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 57.

states, he does provide some valuable indicators through which material power can be measured. Material wealth is an important indicator of states' power because it reflects the capabilities of a state, and it is argued that a state with few capabilities cannot be a powerful one. Similarly, E. H. Carr, another figure closely associated with realist theory, defines power first and foremost as military and economic strength, only recognizing the importance of a state's power over opinion to the extent that such power drives favorable international agreements or alliances that may stave off inevitable war.<sup>26</sup> It is this aspect of power, a state's material wealth and size, that is reflected in both Tables One and Two through measures of wealth, size and military capabilities.

All scholars of international relations who work to define power allude to the distinction between power as capability and relational power. The former is illustrated in Tables One and Two; power as capability is marked by the metrics of economic strength and military might. I am concerned here, however, with relational power: my key variable. This is the type of power that Dahl stresses: power to compel or deter an ally or an adversary to change its course of action and adopt policies more favorable to the powerful state. As America's relational power rose relative to other states throughout the 1990s, the US was able to pass successful and internationally supported policies, as reflected in favorable votes on US policies in international institutions. Beginning with UN authorization for the US-led military involvement in Iraq in 1990, and continuing throughout the decade, the US succeeded in gaining international support not only for its interventionist policies but for its economic and trade policies as well. President Clinton's assertive multilateralism—and even his decisions not to intervene in some cases—was supported by the UN in places as diverse as Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, and Bosnia.<sup>27</sup> America's interest in liberal institutionalism also spread in the form of the expansion of the European Union and North

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<sup>26</sup> E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 109-113 & 141.

<sup>27</sup> "US-UN Relations," Institute for Policy Studies. [https://ips-dc.org/us-un\\_relations/](https://ips-dc.org/us-un_relations/) (accessed November 6, 2019).

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) throughout the decade. These institutions that bolstered the US began to falter, however, as Russia began to rebuild its strength in the early 2000s.

By the late 1990s, the increased instability among European states vying for power—as predicted by some scholars of geopolitics—as well as Russia’s recovery led to a waning in the international support for the US. International and regional institutions were seen by some to have failed to bring about the stable international order with which they were tasked.<sup>28</sup> Whether or not these institutions failed is beyond the scope of this paper, but the data does show a decrease in support for US policies and an increasingly multipolar world throughout the late 1990s. By 1999, the US and its closest military allies in NATO were denied UN authorization for their desired intervention in Kosovo, and they were forced to act beyond the scope of international law. As the relative power distribution began to change at the end of the decade, China and Russia had gained enough economic and ideological strength in the international community to feel confident blocking US policies in the UN Security Council (UNSC).<sup>29</sup> Even though the US had no great power enemies in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it faced a continuing threat to its international influence as smaller states as well as China and Russia worked to balance their material power against that of the US, as neorealists had predicted earlier in the decade.<sup>30</sup> The transition back to a multipolar world in the early 2000s, as the US began to lose dominance in international institutions, brought with it not only a lack of support for US foreign policies internationally but a decrease in the effectiveness of these policies.

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<sup>28</sup> Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” 47.

<sup>29</sup> See Samantha Power. “Kosovo: A Dog and a Fight” in *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> Krauthammer, “The Unipolar Moment Revisited,” 8.

## Sanctions Advocates

Some scholars and policymakers advocating for sanctions do so based on the notion that an increasingly globalized world actually aids in the effectiveness of sanctions unilaterally applied by the US. While all in this school of thought ground their arguments in the notion that economic deprivation leads to political change, there are differences within this side of the debate regarding when such economic deprivation is the most potent.<sup>31</sup> Kaempfer and Lowenberg argue that internationally supported sanctions applied multilaterally or through international institutions work to undermine the political power of opposition groups within the targeted states, pushing citizens to support the sanctioned regime as the only body able to support them in a time of economic deprivation. Through this understanding of large-scale sanctions driving domestic constituencies to support a sanctioned regime, the scholars argue instead in favor of economic sanctions applied by only one close trading partner of the targeted regime.<sup>32</sup> O’Sullivan furthered this argument to an extent, arguing that the US exclusively has the power to affect change through unilateral sanctions, but even this unique ability is successful only in the short term.<sup>33</sup> Recognizing that this argument runs counter to the understanding that a globalized world will lead to more effective economic sanctions when a multitude of states carry such policies out, O’Sullivan claims that the US maintains an influential standing internationally that allows its unilateral sanctions to achieve a limited amount of success.

O’Sullivan goes on, however, to argue—like the majority of sanctions advocates—that economic sanctions are most effective when imposed by an international coalition or institution.

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<sup>31</sup> Jones, 1

<sup>32</sup> William H. Kaempfer and Anton D. Lowenberg, “Unilateral Versus Multilateral International Sanctions: A Public Choice Perspective,” *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (March 1999), 37.

<sup>33</sup> Meghan L. O’Sullivan, *Shrewd Sanctions: Statecraft and State Sponsors of Terrorism* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 303.

Using the term “springboard sanctions” to define the sanctions she believes to be the most effective, O’Sullivan contends that sanctions that begin with one sender state and springboard to the broader international community are the only policies with a large enough economic impact in the target state to bring about the economic pressure necessary to drive political change.<sup>34</sup> Other scholars such as Bapat and Morgan, Doxy, and Wallenstein et al. at the Stockholm Process on the Implementation of Targeted Sanctions agree with this argument in favor of multilateral sanctions. These scholars add to their arguments the need for such internationally supported policies to also be limited and single-issue. Bapat and Morgan claim that comprehensive sanctions—covering large swaths of the target state’s economy—are too broad and do not focus enough on the issues the senders have with the target state’s actions.<sup>35</sup> Doxy and the Stockholm Process scholars agree, asserting that multilateral targeted sanctions are the only effective sanctions policies. Like Staibano below, those scholars in the Stockholm Process argue that sanctions need to be not only narrow in scope, but they need to focus on specific individuals who are instrumental in adversarial regimes.<sup>36</sup> It is not enough to simply restrict certain troublesome aspects of a state’s economy, but the individuals who bolster these segments of a target state’s economy must be sanctioned themselves. Doxy goes on to argue that successful sanctions are often coupled with other diplomatic efforts or even—if success does not seem imminent—the use of force, as they cannot often achieve ambitious outcomes.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> O’Sullivan, 300.

<sup>35</sup> Navin A. Bapat and T. Clifton Morgan, “Multilateral Versus Unilateral Sanctions Reconsidered: A Test Using New Data,” *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (2009), 1092.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Wallenstein, Carina Staibano, and Mikael Eriksson, ed., *Making Target Sanctions Effective: Guidelines for the Implementation of UN Policy Options* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research, 2003), 91.

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Doxy, “Sanctions Through the Looking Glass: The Spectrum of Goals and Achievements,” *International Journal* 55 (Spring 2000), 223.

Continuing with arguments in favor of limited, multilaterally applied sanctions, Staibano agrees that for sanctions to succeed they must be limited not only to specific sectors of a state's economy but also to specific people and businesses that support a state's regime. Through international institutions, Staibano argues, targeted or so-called smart sanctions are able to affect changes in an adversarial regime's policies. She does recognize, however—like Mearsheimer—that international institutions are flawed, and some changes within them are needed to ensure that sanctions regimes not only are supported internationally but have the resources necessary for success, such as continued assessment and reshaping of the sanctions regimes when necessary.<sup>38</sup>

There are those scholars who, in focusing on the types of sanctions regimes that are able to achieve their stated goals, present some doubt in the effectiveness of sanctions but argue that they will—and should—continue to be used. Jones furthers the arguments made in favor of smart sanctions but recognizes the conventionally accepted wisdom that sanctions cause adverse civilian consequences in targeted states. Despite this, Jones argues, smart sanctions will and should continue to be used by western states against members and supporters of undemocratic regimes, as they are perceived to be the least disruptive policy options and also bolster domestic politics within sender states.<sup>39</sup> While asserting that comprehensive sanctions are immoral and rarely succeed, Jones and other scholars like Early and Alexander argue that there is still a possibility that sanctions can succeed. Early and Alexander do not focus on the scale of sanctions—whether they are comprehensive or limited; they instead focus on whether they are applied multilaterally or unilaterally. Focusing on the ability of third parties to “bust” sanctions and provide alternative markets as well as on the history of this practice, Early claims that

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<sup>38</sup> Carina Staibano, “Trends in UN Sanctions: From ad hoc Practice to Institutional Capacity Building,” in *International Sanctions: Between Words and Wars in the Global System*, ed. Peter Wallensteen and Carina Staibano (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 50.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, 191.

sanction-busting can be expected, so international support and thoughtful implementation of sanctions can lessen the ability of other states to be busters.<sup>40</sup> Alexander, also focusing on the need for international support, argues that only sanctions regimes with support from the most financially powerful states in the world have a chance of reaching their goals.<sup>41</sup>

The scholars arguing in favor of the use of sanctions do not only focus on what types of sanctions have the ability to succeed, however. Grounding their assertions in the aforementioned notion that an economically deprived state cannot continue to be an adversarial one, sanctions advocates go on to argue simply that sanctions are the preferable and least costly alternative to other policies, especially military conflict.<sup>42</sup> While all scholars—as seen above—contend that specific types of sanctions work better than others, some focus specifically on the argument that sanctions do, at times, achieve their stated goals of affecting policy changes in targeted states and can be seen as an alternative to policies more costly to the sender states.<sup>43</sup> Hufbauer et al. offered a set of cases purporting to show a large percentage of successful sanctions policies. In analyzing the cases selected, the scholars contend that the financial leverage and intensity of interest of the sender state relative to the target of sanctions predicts the success of sanctions; the more economically powerful and interested a sender of sanctions is, they argue, the more likely the stated goal of the policy will be achieved.<sup>44</sup> Peterson's work supports this argument by contending that those states with internationally important industries have high leverage as senders of sanctions. He argues that a state with high value to its trade partners has the ability to

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<sup>40</sup> Bryan R. Early, "Unmasking the Black Knights: Sanctions Busters and Their Effects on the Success of Economic Sanctions," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7 (2011).

<sup>41</sup> Kern Alexander, *Economic Sanctions: Law and Public Policy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 164.

<sup>42</sup> Doxy, 208.

<sup>43</sup> Katerina Oskarsson, "Economic Sanctions on Authoritarian States: Lessons Learned," *Middle East Policy* 19 (Winter 2012), 99.

<sup>44</sup> Gary Clyde Hufbauer et al., *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Washington DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2007), 51.



force change in any of its partners' politics through sanctions because of this relatively increased leverage.<sup>45</sup>

Even when the goal of sanctions regimes is the lofty objective of driving a target state toward greater democratization—as opposed to smaller policy changes—some scholars continue to assert that such democratizing sanctions are successful. Again using a large case selection to demonstrate a large percentage of perceived successes, scholars such as Geddes, von Soest, and Wahman purport that a turn toward democracy from authoritarianism is expected during economic downturns, as influential constituencies—most notably military cadres—lose support for the undemocratic regime.<sup>46</sup> Von Soest and Wahman take this argument further than Geddes to claim that not only does democratization occur in times of economic deprivation, but economic sanctions can be part of a larger strategy that sparks such deprivation.<sup>47</sup> While sanctions may not be the only factor that leads to a state's liberalization, it is argued that sanctions have a positive relationship with future democracy in previously illiberal states.

### Sanctions Opponents

Opponents of sanctions fundamentally agree with many sanctions advocates that sanctions do not always achieve their ambitious stated purposes. They take this further, however, to argue that sanctions fail not only to bring about the large-scale changes they were intended to produce but also to protect the civilians within the target states. Changing the criteria of success, opponents of sanctions do not believe that a small political change in a target state can be considered success; instead, success is observed when the goal laid out at the onset of a sanctions

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<sup>45</sup> Timothy Peterson, "Reconsidering Economic Leverage and Vulnerability: Trade Ties, Sanction Threats, and the Success of Economic Coercion," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* (2018), 16.

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), 140.

<sup>47</sup> Christian von Soest and Michael Wahman, "Are Democratic Sanctions Really Counterproductive?" *Democratization* 22 (2015), 957-980.

regime is reached fully. This, sanctions opponents argue, rarely happens. Focusing on the conventional wisdom that sanctioning undemocratic leaders begets further repression, this school of thought has also expanded to include ethics scholars who use the unintended civilian consequences alone as a reason to end the use of economic sanctions.

Beginning with arguments made against the use of sanctions based on a perceived high failure rate of sanctions, Niblock and Haass concede that sanctions may lead to some small policy changes in an undemocratic state facing economic pressure but argue that this is not enough to declare a sanctions regime effective. In arguing that economic sanctions work adverse to the building of a social basis necessary in a democracy and undermine the long term political stability of a targeted state, Niblock asserts that sanctions strengthen undemocratic regimes.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Haass compiles a case selection through which he shows that, although small changes can be attained, autocrats can withstand the effects of sanctions through the use of illicit markets and the exploitation of the adverse, unintended consequences of sanctions.<sup>49</sup> To these scholars, sanctions can be not only busted—as was demonstrated during the Cold War when the Soviet Union provided billions of dollars in subsidies to Cuba as a way to avoid the weight of economic sanctions imposed by the US—but they also fail in bringing about substantive policy changes in undemocratic states.<sup>50</sup>

The arguments against sanctions, while highlighting the low rate of goals achievement, have historically centered around the adverse consequences often detrimental to the civilian populations of undemocratic target states. An often used example of the detrimental humanitarian consequences of sanctioning undemocratic regimes is the sanctions regime

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<sup>48</sup> Tim Niblock, *“Pariah States” and Sanctions in the Middle East*. (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 218-220.

<sup>49</sup> Haass, 203.

<sup>50</sup> Early, 381.

imposed against Iraq throughout the 1990s that lead to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians.<sup>51</sup> According to scholars of humanitarian implications of foreign policy such as Weiss, Cortright, Lopez, and Minear, sanctions not only frequently fail to achieve their goals, but the inconsistent implementation of different sanctions regimes coupled with the consistent observation of adverse consequences supported an argument against the continued use of sanctions against undemocratic regimes. These scholars argue against the use of all economic sanctions—comprehensive or targeted—based on the assertion that all types of sanctions can lead to leakages that lessen the economic impact on a targeted regime and shift it to innocent parties.<sup>52</sup> Gordon not only flagged this impact on civilian populations of undemocratic regimes caught up in the weight of economic sanctions targeted at their leaders as a reason for their failure, but dubbed it as its own form of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).<sup>53</sup>

The withholding of necessary food and medicine from civilian populations as well as the freezing of imports of tools and parts necessary to fix the civilian infrastructures often crumbling in undemocratic states drive these assertions about the immorality and ineffectiveness of sanctions in undemocratic states. Even as internationally supported sanctions are seen as legitimate policy decisions by Gordon, she claims that sanctions—especially smart sanctions targeting specific individuals—are often politicized and arbitrary.<sup>54</sup> This unintended targeting and sanctioning of civilians uninvolved with an authoritarian regime is used by Peksen to argue that the net benefit of sanctions for the broader international community—including the target regime, the sender state(s), and the civilians involved—is negative, leading him to argue that

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<sup>51</sup> Eric Hoskins “The Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions on Iraq,” in *Political Gains and Civilian Pain: Humanitarian Impacts of Economic Sanctions*. ed. Thomas Weiss, David Cortright, George Lopez, and Larry

(Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 91-147.

<sup>52</sup> Weiss et al., ed., 222.

<sup>53</sup> Joy Gordon, “Cold War: Economic Sanctions as a Weapon of Mass Destruction,” *Harper’s Magazine* (November 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Joy Gordon, “Introduction,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 33 (Fall 2019), 2.

they are immoral.<sup>55</sup> He does not immediately reject such immoral policies as a foreign policy tool, however; this rejection comes in his assessment that sanctions have a poor track record of success and fail to induce any political change in one-party states.<sup>56</sup>

### **Chapter Three: Methods and Variables**

My central argument in this thesis—similar to many other academic writings regarding international politics—is that a state’s relative power defines its ability to not only garner support for its foreign policies but also to succeed in bringing about the desired outcome of these policies. Because of this central argument, both state power and sanctions regimes’ successes are key variables, independent and dependent variables respectively. Although the details of my argument are specific to both sanctioning autocrats as well as the shifting geopolitics following the conclusion of the Cold War, both of these key variables have been defined previously by scholars who related this argument to different aspects of international relations. As has been mentioned briefly above, however, there are many variations in scholarly definitions of both power and sanctions’ success, so both variables will be defined here in greater detail and with precision.

The independent variable here is the relative power of the states involved in any specific case analyzed below. As stated above, I define power in relational terms, as the ability of a state to influence the behavior of another so as to achieve the powerful actor’s desired outcome. As power is defined as a means used when achieving an end—not the end itself—it cannot be measured through outcomes alone. Qualitatively, power is measured through the ability of one

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<sup>55</sup> Dursun Peksen, “Political Effectiveness, Negative Externalities, and the Ethics of Economic Sanctions,” *Ethics & International Affairs* 33 (Fall 2019), 287.

<sup>56</sup> Dursun Peksen, “Autocracies and Economic Sanctions: The Divergent Impact of Authoritarian Regime Type on Sanctions Success,” *Defense and Peace Economics* 30 (2019), 253-268.

state to influence another to take actions it would not have taken otherwise. Quantitatively, power is measured here through economic, population, and military data, examples of which can be seen in Tables One and Two above.

The dependent variable, hypothesized here to have a positive relationship with the independent variable, is the success of sanctions. As was alluded to in the discussion of the sanctions debate in Chapter One, different scholars define a successful sanctions regime differently: some view any step toward political change within the target state as a success while others will not describe anything short of a full completion of the goal as a success. In an effort to account for the grey areas between no progress being made and the adoption of all desired policy chances, the dependent variable is a continuous variable, with Success Scores awarded between zero and nine. The scoring system used here is a two-part system with the final score, the Success Score, representing the sum of the two partial scores, and is inspired by the method laid out by the Peterson Institute for International Economics and used by Hufbauer et al. in *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*.<sup>57</sup> The first criterion against which the cases laid out below will be scored is the outcome of the sanctions. This first section of scoring, the Results Score,

**Table Three: Possible Scores Awarded for Sanctions Regimes’ Results**

Score	Level of Success
0	No observable political changes were made within the target state
1	It is unclear if aspects of the stated goals of the sanctions regime were achieved, but some positive outcomes were observable
2	The sender state’s goals were achieved in part or in full in an excess of ten years
3	The sender state’s goals were achieved in full

<sup>57</sup> Peterson Institute for International Economic, “Defining Success of Economic Sanctions Episodes.” <https://www.piie.com/defining-success-economic-sanctions-episodes> (accessed January 6, 2020).

offers four available scores from zero to three. The progress achieved—if any—within the target state necessary to be awarded each score is defined here in Table Three.

Taking into account the fact that sanctions are not always imposed alone, and other policies are also often used to pressure adversarial regimes, the second component of the Success Score, the Contribution Score, takes into consideration the role that sanctions played in the overall pressure campaign against an adversarial regime. This Contribution Score also offers four available scores between zero and three, and the available Contribution Scores are defined below in Table Four.

**Table Four: Possible Scores Awarded for Sanctions Regimes’ Contribution**

Score	Relative Contribution
0	The sanctions regime made a negative contribution to the outcome of the pressure campaign
1	The sanctions regime contributed only in a small part to the overall outcome
2	The sanctions regime contributed substantially to the pressure campaign
3	The sanctions regime contributed decisively or in full to the outcome of the pressure campaign

The Results Score and the Contribution Score are multiplied together to create the total Success Score, according to which the overall success of an analyzed sanctions regime is judged. Success scores of zero and one are considered failures; scores between two and four are considered moderate successes, and scores of six and nine are considered successes.

**Chapter Four: Case Selection**

I selected cases of sanctions regimes to analyze so as to minimize and eliminate potential intervening variables introduced by variations in geographic and cultural contexts between cases. In his discussion of the obstacles toward a general science of political action and comparative

politics, MacIntyre stresses the disruptive nature of any intervening variables when attempting to adopt a theory of political action.<sup>58</sup> Political institutions and actions are affected greatly by the environment in which they operate or are conducted, so, MacIntyre argues, a common theory regarding political institutions or actions cannot be divorced from this environment. In recognizing the narrow scope of my thesis and this inability to remove political events from the context in which they occur, I have chosen to limit the external variables affecting my cases as much as possible by focusing on one region. The time periods in which the sanctions regimes analyzed below were imposed reflect my focus on the shifting international power dynamics following the end of the Cold War. An initial set of sanctions imposed during the time of US hegemony was thus chosen as well as a second set of cases either imposed during or after the rise of smaller powers and the switch back to a multipolar world. As these time periods were set by the question and hypothesis at hand, I then focused on selecting a region in which these sanctions were imposed in order to minimize context-related factors.

The Middle East and North Africa has long suffered from having lucrative resources and a strategic location, and states outside of the region have long attempted to exploit the region for their own strategic interests. A history of states exerting their own power over MENA has led to an unstable region and many strongmen leaders initially backed by external patron states. The history of colonialism has also left MENA with artificially drawn borders that leave many populations unrepresented by their governments and, therefore, resentful. These histories have led to not only an unstable region but also one that is constantly being watched and critiqued by outside powers. Sanctions have been one way in which outside actors have expressed their discontent with certain MENA states' actions. It is for this long history of external influence and

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<sup>58</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" in *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 260-279.

the fact that MENA is such a target for sanctions that the cases in this thesis are limited to the region and its immediate neighbors.

An analysis of cases occurring around the globe would inherently include a great deal of variance and therefore an increased number of variables that would have to be accounted for. Restricting my geographic focus allows me to avoid the increased number of variables that comes with an analysis of cases around the globe. The US has imposed economic sanctions on authoritarian regimes around the world, but its history of political influence and pressure has differed widely throughout different regions. For instance, while the US began its campaign of influence in MENA for economic reasons and access to resources, its influence in South America under the Monroe Doctrine started as an attempt to maintain its sphere of influence in its “backyard.” The different histories that brought the US to criticize regimes throughout the world and attempt to influence their actions through sanctions greatly affect the sanctions regimes themselves, as different policies such as the Monroe Doctrine introduced variables to cases of sanctions in South America not present in other regions of the world. Focusing on a single region allows me to eliminate variance in the factors that bring about US sanctions regimes.

Unlike other regions of the world, American sanctions in MENA are driven openly and before all else by economic. The US relies on and supports wealthy MENA states in an attempt to maintain order in the region as well as oil production, whereas US influence in South America is largely ideologically driven. For example, Cuba has faced a US embargo and sanctions for decades due to its authoritarian government and support for other dictatorships around the world.<sup>59</sup> Government officials in Nicaragua have been sanctioned by the US since protests and

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<sup>59</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Public Affairs, *Treasury Issues Changes to Strengthen Cuba Sanctions Rules* (Washington DC: September 2019).



harsh crackdowns began in 2018,<sup>60</sup> and the same sanctioning of government officials has occurred in Venezuela for over a decade in response to the Maduro regime's authoritarian leadership.<sup>61</sup> These cases of sanctions were influenced by variables not only different from one another but largely different from variables affecting, for example, the sanctions on Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

While there have been many cases of sanctions regimes throughout the region overtime, these are often limited to a small number of states that are not close allies of the US. Due to the presence of states in MENA to which the US feels too close to sanction, the number of available cases to analyze here is limited to a few states over two time periods. The following chapters will analyze these cases individually, beginning with those cases of sanctions imposed during the time of US hegemony. This initial group of cases includes sanctions against Pakistan between 1991 and 2001, Iraq between 1991 and 2003, and Libya between 1992 and 2003. Analysis of sanctions regimes in MENA will continue to those imposed after the global switch back to multipolarity. This grouping of cases includes Syria between 2004 and September 2019, Sudan between 1997 and 2017, and Iran between 1984 and 2015.

## **Chapter Five: Pakistan**

### **The Case for Sanctions against Pakistan**

As the Cold War went on in the 1980s and the Soviet Union solidified its occupation of Afghanistan, the US began to view Pakistan as a possible pillar of democracy and capitalism in the region.<sup>62</sup> With the Soviets in Afghanistan since 1979, India's policy of non-alignment, and

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<sup>60</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, *Nicaragua Sanctions Regulations* 31 CFR Part 582 (Washington DC: September 2019).

<sup>61</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Venezuela: Overview of US Sanctions* (Washington DC: February 2020).

<sup>62</sup> Dennis Kux, "Pakistan," in *Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy*, ed. Richard Haass (The Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), 160.

the toppling of the pro-Western Iranian Shah, the US was left to look toward Pakistan as a tool for containing communism in the region. US assistance was used throughout the 1980s to modernize Pakistan's military capabilities and Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) agency, and both the Pakistani military and ISI supported the anti-Soviet campaign within Afghanistan.<sup>63</sup> In 1985, the Pressler Amendment (Section 620E of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961) was passed, making clear the important position the US believed that Pakistan occupied. US military and economic aid were defined in this amendment as a way to protect the Pakistani people and support economic development. As aid was intended for the promotion of peace and democracy alone, Section 620E(e) added the caveat that US aid to Pakistan can only be permitted if it can be determined that "Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed United States military assistance program will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device."<sup>64</sup>

By 1990, President George H. W. Bush could no longer certify that Pakistan was a non-nuclear state, so aid was no longer permitted. The discovery of Pakistan's nuclear program coincides, however, with the weakening of the Soviet Union and the removal of Soviet troops from neighboring Afghanistan. The US, while it continued to promote the spread of democracy globally, no longer had a perceived dire need to maintain a strategic and ideological alliance with Pakistan as a buffer state against the Soviets in Afghanistan. As a result, the US was able to recognize the issues it had with Pakistan since the state's birth, including Pakistan's border clashes with India and the government's growing nuclear ambitions. It was these nuclear ambitions and the subsequent testing of nuclear devices outside of the purview of International

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<sup>63</sup> "Pakistan-US Relations," *OxResearch Daily Brief Service* (July 1986), 1.

<sup>64</sup> *The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961*, Public Law 87-195 as amended through PL 116-92, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session (September 4, 1961).

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) guidelines that justified the imposition of a US sanctions regime against the government of Pakistan between 1990 and 2001.

### Sanctions against Pakistan

In compliance with Section 602E(e) of the Pressler Amendment, military and economic aid valued at \$564 million slated for fiscal year 1991 was blocked on October 1, 1990. The planned delivery of military equipment to Pakistan was also halted, including the sale of 71 F-16A fighter jets, and joint military exercises between the two states were halted.<sup>65</sup> The newly free Pakistani press responded to the sanctions with anger, denouncing the US sanctions as anti-Islamic, unfair, and discriminatory. By 1992, however, Sharyar Khan, Pakistan's foreign minister, admitted to the *Washington Post* that the country possessed the components and know-how necessary to build at least one nuclear device. This admission was supported by US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reports to Congress and it was later determined that China had broken a verbal agreement with officials of the US government and delivered 24 M-11 ballistic missiles with a range of 18 miles and a payload of over 1,700 pounds to Pakistan.<sup>66</sup>

Sanctions escalated in 1998 following six nuclear test explosions on May 27, five on May 28, and one on May 30.<sup>67</sup> The Glenn Amendment (Section 102(b)(B)(ii) of the Arms Export Control Act of 1994) was enforced, mandating the imposition of sanctions on any state that detonates an explosive nuclear device without prior adherence to IAEA regulations and

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<sup>65</sup> Ian Anthony, et al., "Appendix 7B: Register of the Trade in and Licensed Production of Major Conventional Weapons in Industrialized and Third World Countries, 1990," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1991: World Armaments and Disarmaments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 264.

<sup>66</sup> Saadet Deger and Somnath Sen, "World Military Expenditure" in *SIPRI Yearbook 1992: World Armaments and Disarmaments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 247 and 249.

<sup>67</sup> Eric Arnett, "Nuclear Tests by India and Pakistan," in *SIPRI Yearbook 1999: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 371.

recognition by the agency as a nuclear state.<sup>68</sup> These sanctions prohibited all exports to Pakistan of specific goods and technology with civilian and military nuclear applications. Although the government of Pakistan did not stop its nuclear ambitions in the face of escalating economic sanctions, and public opinion in Pakistan remained critical of the US, the Pakistani regime did not modify its foreign and security policies significantly throughout the 1990s.<sup>69</sup> The Pakistani government did change its policies in 1999, however, when the state's army ousted the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on October 13 of that year.<sup>70</sup> This military coup triggered Section 508 of the Foreign Operations, Export, Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act 2000 which prohibits all aid and credit from the US to any state whose duly elected government is deposed in such a coup.<sup>71</sup>

### Removal of US Sanctions

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US looked again to Pakistan as a strategically neighboring Afghanistan. On September 22, 2001, the Pressler and Glenn Amendments were waived by the George W. Bush Administration, and on October 17 the military coup-related sanctions were also waived.<sup>72</sup> At the time of these waivers, the government of Pakistan was facing a \$32 billion external debt, using close to 60% of its annual revenue to service these debts. The newly reopened US military and economic assistance came at a time when the US

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<sup>68</sup> *Arms Export Control Act of 1976*, Public Law 90-629 as amended through PL 115-232, 94<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session (June 30, 1976).

<sup>69</sup> Kux, 168.

<sup>70</sup> Celia W. Dugger, "Coup in Pakistan: The Overview; Pakistan Army Seizes Power Hours After Prime Minister Dismisses His Military Chief," *New York Times*. October 13, 1999.

<sup>71</sup> *Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2000*, HR 3196, 106<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session (November 5, 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, "Pakistan's Sanction Waivers: A Summary" (Washington DC: October 29, 2001).

needed a stable Pakistani government able to aid the US in its fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Although Pakistan was a useful ally in the first years of America's war on terror, the Pakistani government never slowed its nuclear ambitions. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, as of 2019 Pakistan possesses between 150 and 160 nuclear weapons and produces enough highly enriched uranium annually to supply 10 to 15 new warheads per year. Despite this large stockpile, Pakistan is party to neither the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons nor the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The continuing nuclear ambitions of Pakistan constitute a failure of the US sanctions regime imposed against Pakistan.

#### **Success Score: Zero**

Due to the failure of the Pakistani sanctions regime to bring about the intended end of Pakistan's nuclear program as well as the sanction regime's sole contribution to the US pressure campaign against Pakistan, the Success Score of this sanctions regime is zero. This score can be broken down into a Results Score of zero and a Contribution Score of three. The Results Score of zero is due to the complete failure of the US sanctions regime in Pakistan to stymie the state's nuclear ambitions. Even with the sanctions regime's focus on nuclear weapons, the Pakistani government was still led by a military government that came to power in the 1999 coup at the time of the sanctions' removal. The Contribution Score of three is due to the presence of sanctions alone in the US pressure campaign against Pakistan and its nuclear ambitions. This focus on the dismemberment of Pakistan's nuclear program coupled with the failure of the sanctions regime to bring about this dismemberment and a return to democracy in Pakistan result in a total Success Score of zero, amounting to a failure of the US sanctions regime in Pakistan.

## Chapter Six: Iraq

### The Case for Sanctions against Iraq

On August 2, 1990, in violation of Chapter 1, Article 2.4 of the UN Charter, the Iraqi military invaded neighboring Kuwait. By early afternoon, Iraq's Republican Guard had captured important government buildings in Kuwait City, raided the royal family's palace, and killed the brother of the emir. In the days following the August 2 invasion, Kuwaiti forces were outmatched, and Iraqi forces had pushed south to capture key Kuwaiti ports.<sup>73</sup> The UN Security Council responded to the invasion immediately with a formal condemnation of Iraq—the passage of which was encouraged by US representatives—in UNSC Resolution 600 on the same day.<sup>74</sup>

Along with the impositions of the sanctions regime described below the Bush Administration also prepared for a military campaign against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, later code-named Operation Desert Shield. With approval from the Saudi crown prince, 100,000 US troops and airmen were sent to Saudi Arabia tasked with defending Kuwait by expelling Iraqi forces and restoring Kuwaiti political sovereignty and territorial integrity. US naval vessels stationed at Diego Garcia were also moved to the Persian Gulf off of the Kuwaiti coast. At the time, this operation accounted for the largest mobilization of US troops since the Vietnam War.<sup>75</sup>

With pressure again from US delegates to the UN, UNSCR 678 was passed on November 29, 1990, allowing member states to use all necessary means to remove Iraqi occupying forces from Kuwait if they had not withdrawn on their own by January 15, 1991.<sup>76</sup> On January 16,

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Brigham, *The United States and Iraq Since 1990: A Brief History with Documents* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 14.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 600* (August 2, 1990).

<sup>75</sup> Brigham, 16.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 678* (November 29, 1990).

1991, US forces deployed from their bases and began a bombing campaign against Iraq's air defense and command-and-control centers known as Operation Desert Storm. The First Gulf War ended on February 28, 1991 after Iraqi troops had been pushed out of Kuwait's sovereign territory and President George H. W. Bush told the Iraqi people to act however they could, independently from the US, to remove Saddam Hussein from power.<sup>77</sup> This air and ground military campaign worked alongside the imposition of sanctions against Iraq to not only restore Kuwaiti sovereignty but also to punish the Hussein regime for its violation of international law.

### Sanctions against Iraq

On August 6, 1990, UNSCR 661 reaffirmed the Security Council's condemnation of Saddam Hussein's regime and added the imposition of multilateral sanctions against the regime. All exports from Iraq—and the occupied Kuwait as an extension of the Hussein regime—were prohibited from being accepted by member states, and nationals of all member states were also prohibited from assisting in Iraq's export industry, including oil exports. Along with this, all imports and aid to Iraq and Kuwait were restricted with the exception of supplies with strictly medical purposes and, in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs.<sup>78</sup> Within days of Resolution 661, 90 percent of Iraq's imports and 97 percent of its exports were cut.<sup>79</sup> UNSCR 706, passed on August 15, 1991, allowed the sale of Iraqi oil through specialized UN accounts—called the Oil For Food Program (OFFP)—on the condition that all profits from the sale of oil go to the purchase of humanitarian goods such as medicines and food.<sup>80</sup> It was mandated in Resolutions 661 and 706 that all sanctions on Iraqi imports and exports were to be maintained until the

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<sup>77</sup> Brigham, 26.

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 661* (August 6, 1990).

<sup>79</sup> Brigham, 15.

<sup>80</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 706* (August 15, 1991).

government of Iraq removed its troops from Kuwait's sovereign territory, repatriated all of its and Kuwait's citizens, and paid in full the costs of the Special Commission created to monitor the situation in Iraq as well as the IAEA's costs for its increased monitoring of Iraq's possible WMD program.

The US voted in favor of these UNSC resolutions and mirrored the sanctions in Executive Order (EO) 12722, issued on August 3, 1990. In this EO, the Bush Administration froze all property of the government of Iraq and its officials held in or transferred through the US.<sup>81</sup> Throughout the 1990s, the US and its allies—most notably the United Kingdom—continuously blocked sales of materials such as chlorine to Iraq through the OFFP by claiming that they had potential military uses as well as humanitarian ones.<sup>82</sup> These sanctions have become the subject of considerable scrutiny since their removal and the publication of numerous studies that show the humanitarian effects of their imposition, including the increase in malnutrition and child mortality rates.

### Removal of US and UN Sanctions

After thirteen years of harsh sanctions on Iraq, the US escalated its pressure campaign against the Hussein regime with another invasion and the commencement of the Second Gulf War in March 2003. Based on faulty intelligence connecting the government of Iraq to the al-Qaeda terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks and claiming that Iraq had WMD capabilities, the US began a bombing campaign on key ministries and potential residences of Hussein in Baghdad on March 20, 2003.<sup>83</sup> While the war to maintain a government supported by the United States in

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<sup>81</sup> George H. W. Bush, "Executive Order 12722, Blocking Iraqi Government Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Iraq" (August 3, 1990).

<sup>82</sup> Gordon, "Cold War: Economic Sanctions as a Weapon of Mass Destruction"

<sup>83</sup> Brigham, 98 and 114.



Iraq and eventually against a growing insurgency continued for years—roughly 5,200 US troops remain in Iraq as of March 2020<sup>84</sup>—the US installed the Coalition Provisional Authority and claimed victory as early as May 2003.<sup>85</sup> With the establishment of an American-led government in Baghdad and the eventual capture, trial, and execution of Saddam Hussein, the US and UN reduced some sanctions to promote the Coalition Provisional Authority and Development Fund for Iraq, a branch of the Central Bank of Iraq.

Executive Order 13303, issued on May 22, 2003, made it so that sanctions imposed by EO 12722 no longer applied to Iraqi government institutions established by the US. As the US had deposed the Hussein regime, sanctions previously imposed against the government of Iraq were transferred to specific individuals formerly involved in the Hussein regime. Properties and international transactions that could benefit the development of a new Iraqi government backed by the US were permitted.<sup>86</sup> UNSC Resolution 1483, passed on May 22, 2003, also transferred the UN sanctions previously imposed on the government of Iraq to individuals who constituted the former government.<sup>87</sup> While sanctions against former Hussein regime officials and individuals who were thought to pose a threat to the stability of Iraq continued to be imposed for years, sanctions against the government of Iraq itself ended with the defeat of Saddam Hussein's government in 2003.

### Success Score: Two

Due to the removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwaiti sovereign territory and the commencement of two wars during the international pressure campaign against Saddam

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<sup>84</sup> Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Military Reviewing Iraq Operations After Two Troops Die Fighting ISIS" *The New York Times*. (March 9, 2020).

<sup>85</sup> Brigham, 149.

<sup>86</sup> George W. Bush, "Executive Order 13303, Protecting the Development Fund for Iraq and Certain Other Properties in Which Iraq has an Interest" (May 22, 2003).

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1483* (May 22, 2003).

Hussein's regime, the Success Score for the sanctions regime against Iraq is two. This score can be broken down into a Results Score of two and a Contribution Score of one. The Results Score of two accounts for the removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait following the imposition of sanctions and the First Gulf War as well as confirmation following the commencement of the Second Gulf War that Iraq did not possess WMDs. As the regime targeted by sanctions was deposed before the sanctions were removed, a success score of three cannot be awarded. It is impossible to determine how Hussein's regime would have responded to the sanctions regime without an invasion.

The two invasions of Iraq, besides affecting the Results Score, also contributed to the Contribution Score of one. Both Gulf Wars led to the removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and later the dissolution of the government of Iraq, but sanctions also contributed in part to the pressure campaign against the government. Throughout the 1990s, between the two Gulf Wars, sanctions continued to isolate the Iraqi government and build an international coalition opposed to Saddam Hussein and his government. The Results Score of two and the Contribution Score of one constitute a moderate success of the sanctions regime imposed against Iraq between 1990 and 2003.

## **Chapter Seven: Libya**

### **The Case for Sanctions against Libya**

On December 21, 1988, a bomb was detonated aboard Pan Am Flight 103 en route to New York over Lockerbie, Scotland. Including eleven Lockerbie residents struck by debris, 270 people died in this terrorist attack, later found to have been perpetrated by Libyan intelligence officers.<sup>88</sup> Following a three-year investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation

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<sup>88</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, "The Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103" (December 14, 2018).

and Scottish authorities, warrants for the arrests of Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamén Khalifa Fhimah were issued in November 1991. In a similar incident, Union de Transports Aériens (UTA) Flight 772 was brought down by a bomb over the Sahara Desert in Niger on September 19, 1989. All 170 people on board were killed. Six Libyan nationals were later found guilty by a French court for their involvement in the planning of this terrorist attack.<sup>89</sup>

Despite investigations into Libyan officials and nationals, the Libyan government had neither accepted any responsibility for the attacks nor contributed to the ongoing investigations by January 21, 1992. UNSC Resolution 731, passed on this date, formally condemned the government of Libya for its inefficient response to the attacks and requests from member states to cooperate in the investigations.<sup>90</sup> Muammar Gaddafi's regime continued throughout the 1990s and early 2000s not to cooperate with international investigations into its citizens and grew increasingly adversarial in the eyes of US officials. As has proven to be a recurring theme, consecutive US administrations began to worry about Libya's chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons capabilities. These capabilities became an additional issue of contention between the US and an increasingly adversarial Libya.

### Sanctions against Libya

In response to what was seen as the government of Libya's assistance to terrorist organizations, the UNSC passed resolution 748 on March 31, 1992, imposing an arms embargo against Libya and restricting air travel from the country. Member states were asked to prohibit the entrance of any aircraft into their territory that traveled through Libya and to prohibit the provision of any aircraft component, arms, or advice on military matters to Libyan officials and

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<sup>89</sup> Vibeke Venema, "The Sahara Memorial Seen from Space," *BBC World Service*. (January 22, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 731* (January 21, 1992).

nationals.<sup>91</sup> Having made no progress on the calls to contribute to investigations and end support for terrorist groups, the government of Libya was further sanctioned through UNSCR 883, passed on November 11, 1993. With the exception of petroleum and agricultural sales conducted through a designated account, all Libyan exports were blocked from global markets, and the assets of the government of Libya and any of its officials were frozen by member states. Libyan Arab Airlines was also singled out in Resolution 883, and all business with the airline was to be prohibited by all member states.<sup>92</sup>

By 1996 the aforementioned concern from the US government regarding Libyan WMD capabilities had grown considerably, and the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 was passed to address this concern. Through this act, the accusation that the Libyan government consorted with terrorists previously made by the UNSC in Resolutions 731, 748, and 883 was reiterated. The US president was also given authorization to sanction any individuals found to have contributed to the ability of the Libyan government to acquire WMDs, develop its petroleum resources, or maintain its aviation capabilities.<sup>93</sup> The total UN and US sanctions regime imposed against Libya amounted to the near complete isolation of Libya from global markets. All exports save for important oil and agricultural sales were blocked by the UN and even these sales were blocked by the US.

### Removal of US and UN Sanctions

After more than a decade of harsh sanctions and near isolation, Gaddafi announced the surrender of his WMD program on December 19, 2003, including a previously unknown

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<sup>91</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 748* (March 31, 1992).

<sup>92</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 883* (November 11, 1993).

<sup>93</sup> *The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996*, Public Law 104-172, 104<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session (August 5, 1996), 4.

uranium enrichment project.<sup>94</sup> Along with this surrender, in the same announcement, the government of Libya invited IAEA inspectors into Libya and became a party to the 1993 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. This appeasement to international concerns regarding Libyan weapons capabilities followed the government's 1999 recognition of Libyan officials' involvement in terrorist activities. The Libyan government paid appropriate compensation to the families of the victims of UTA Flight 772, allowed two Libyan intelligence officers to stand trial for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, and committed to cooperate in ongoing investigations.<sup>95</sup> By 2003, Gaddafi's regime had also vowed to end support for violent political movements across Africa and instead join peacekeeping missions. With these developments, UNSC Resolutions 731, 748, and 883 were repealed with the passage of Resolution 1506 on September 12, 2003.<sup>96</sup> All US sanctions not already repealed by Resolution 1506 were repealed in full on September 20, 2004 with President Bush's EO 13357.<sup>97</sup>

The international pressure campaign against the government of Libya between 1992 and 2003 was largely focused on the sanctions regimes imposed by the UN and US. Diplomatic relationships were, however, also severed with the Libyan Government by the United States and a number of Asian and European states. These contentious relationships between Libya and governments around the world eased with the removal of sanctions, especially as states engaged in the US-led global War on Terror began to see Libya as an "important partner"—a phrase used in 2005 by Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Chairman Richard Lugar.<sup>98</sup> Once

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<sup>94</sup> Ian Anthony, "Major Trends in Arms Control and Non-Proliferation," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2004: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 578.

<sup>95</sup> Christopher Blanchard, "Libya: Background and US Relations," *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress* (August 6, 2008), 5.

<sup>96</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1506* (September 12, 2003).

<sup>97</sup> Blanchard, 6.

<sup>98</sup> Blanchard, 7.

international economic engagement with Libya was normalized in the years following the removal of sanctions, the pressure campaign imposed against the Gaddafi regime—a regime still at the time seen by many observers as undemocratic and adversarial—ceased.

#### Success Score: Four

Due to the eventual acquiescence of the Libyan government to the demands of the senders of sanctions as well as the presence of diplomatic pressures in the overall pressure campaign against the Gaddafi regime between 1992 and 2003, the Success Score for the sanctions regime against Libya is four. This score can be broken down into a Results Score of two and a Contribution Score of two. The Results Score of two is due in part to the outcomes of the sanctions regime and in part to the time it took to achieve these outcomes. While the government of Libya abandoned its chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons ambitions, accepted responsibility for the terrorist actions of its officials, and stopped its support for violent political movements across Africa by 2003, it took over a decade for the demands of sanctions senders to be achieved in full. Throughout the years between 1992 and 2003, the government of Libya escalated its support for violent actions in other states and actively worked against the investigations of its officials. While the outcomes were eventually in favor of senders' demands, the time that it took for pressure on Libya to bring about these outcomes negatively affects the Results Score.

The Contribution Score of two is due to the presence of diplomatic sanctions as well as economic sanctions. The sanctions regime that largely contributed to the outcomes described above was also not the only aspect of the pressure campaign against the Gaddafi regime. Along with economic isolation from the global economy, the Libyan government was also cut off diplomatically, meaning that the sanctions regime contributed significantly rather than in full.

The overall Success Score of four constitutes a moderate success of the sanctions regime against Libya.

## **Chapter Eight: Syria**

### **The Case for Sanctions against Syria**

As the United States worked to stabilize the newly installed government in Iraq and solidify its control over the state, it began to extend its influence beyond Iraq's borders in 2004. On May 11, 2004, President George W. Bush issued EO 13338, which stated that the government of Syria sponsored terrorism, illegally occupied sections of Lebanon's sovereign territory, pursued WMDs, and worked to undermine the stability of the US backed government in Iraq.<sup>99</sup> For just over seven years, the US maintained the position set forth in EO 13338 that the Syrian government was a sponsor of terrorism and instability in the region and was illegally pursuing WMDs. This position was changed in 2011 only to add to the severity of the US stance vis-a-vis Syria and acknowledge the state's abysmal human rights record.<sup>100</sup> This was a drastic change from US policy regarding Syria prior to 2004. In the years leading up to President Bush's May 2004 Executive Order, the US saw Syria—along with Egypt and Saudi Arabia—as an important actor in the region, one instrumental to any Middle East peace process that could not be sanctioned as severely as other states in the region.<sup>101</sup> The Assad regime in Damascus, especially under the control of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar al-Assad's father, was seen by the US as a key negotiator in any peace agreement between Arab states and Israel. Hafez al-Assad was the first president to maintain control of Syria for an extended period of time after a long line of

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<sup>99</sup> George W. Bush, Executive Order 13338, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons and Prohibiting the Export of Certain Goods to Syria" (May 11, 2004).

<sup>100</sup> Barack Obama, Executive Order 13572, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to Human Rights Abuses in Syria" (April 29, 2011).

<sup>101</sup> O'Sullivan, 242.

short-lived leaders and repeated coups. He was seen as stabilizing an important regional broker state crucial to the US and its interests in MENA.<sup>102</sup>

The events of the Arab Spring in 2011 brought about even more changes to US policy regarding Syria. In response to peaceful protests throughout Syria and MENA calling for liberalization, the government of Syria used arbitrary arrests and torture against the protesters in an effort to stop them. The human rights abuses experienced throughout Syria were well documented, and President Barack Obama responded by extending the sanctions originally imposed in EO 13338 through further executive orders. US State Department officials went as far as saying in 2011, in response Syria's growing disregard for international condemnation, that President Assad had to make the choice either to lead a "transition to democracy, or to leave." Note, however, that President Obama's additions to the sanctions regime against Syria did not explicitly state that regime change was a goal of the US Administration. Rather, they called for the cessation of human rights abuses, destabilizing actions, and WMD programs.

### Sanctions against Syria

From the initial declaration in 2004 of Syria as a sponsor of terrorism and instability in Iraq and as a state with unmonitored WMD ambitions, the US restricted imports to and exports from Syria. With the exception of food and medicine, the second Bush administration restricted all imports to Syria of any item illustrated in the US Munitions List (22 C.F.R. Part 121)—including any guns, armaments, ammunition, and explosive materials<sup>103</sup>—and the Commerce Control List (15 C.F.R. Part 774)—including any items that can be used in nuclear energy or weapons programs, covert and overt military actions, or materials needed for torture or

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<sup>102</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, "Hafez al-Assad, Who Turned Syria into a Power in the Middle East, Dies at 69," *New York Times* (June 11, 2000).

<sup>103</sup> "The United States Munitions List," *Code of Federal Regulations* Title 22 Part 121.



executions.<sup>104</sup> Pursuant to EO 13338, only the US Departments of State and Commerce are able to authorize exports to or imports from Syria. All other exports from US government agencies, persons, or businesses were restricted. Additionally, this executive order also blocked the assets of any person found to have assisted the government of Syria in providing safe haven to sanctioned terrorist organizations, its pursuit of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and its destabilizing activities in Iraq.<sup>105</sup>

The list of these sanctioned individuals found to have assisted the government of Syria in its actions perceived to be hostile to US interests in MENA was expanded in 2011. Following the breakout of the Arab Spring, the US increased its pressure campaign against Syria to include actions against the country's human rights abuses. With President Obama's of EO 13572 issued on April 29, 2011, sanctions against the Assad regime in Damascus were expanded to include the freezing of assets held by any individual assisting the government of Syria in its arbitrary arrests and torture of peaceful protesters.<sup>106</sup> Merely 19 days later, on May 18, 2011, President Obama imposed sweeping sanctions across the entire Syrian government when he issued EO 13573. This executive order as well as EO 13582, issued on August 17, 2011, finalized the sanctions regime against Syria to include the freezing of all assets held by any Syrian government official or individual found to have aided the government of Syria, the restriction of all imports to and exports from Syria—with the exception of food and medicine—and the prohibition of any new investments made within Syria by US citizens or businesses.<sup>107</sup> This latest imposition of

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<sup>104</sup> "The Commerce Control List," *Code of Federal Regulations* Title 15 Part 774.

<sup>105</sup> George W. Bush, Executive Order 13338.

<sup>106</sup> Obama, Executive Order 13572.

<sup>107</sup> Barack Obama, Executive Order 13582, "Blocking Property of the Government of Syria and Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to Syria." (August 17, 2011).

sanctions against the Assad regime included an explicit mention of the blocking of the sale of Syrian petroleum products to any citizen or agency of the US.

The European Union mirrored these sanctions against the Syrian Government and its officials in May 2011. Like the sanctions regime imposed by the US, the EU sanctions also include the freezing of assets held by any official of the Syrian government and an embargo on the sales of arms and any equipment that may be used for repression of civilians.<sup>108</sup> Although Chinese and Russian vetoes have ensured that the UN Security Council not passed a resolution sanctioning the government of Syria, the 28 member states of the EU as well as Japan, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Norway, and Turkey have all imposed unilateral sanctions against Syrian government officials and entities.<sup>109</sup> The Arab League, with 22 members, also imposed sanctions against the Assad regime in November 2011, but there has been limited enforcement of these economic restrictions.<sup>110</sup>

### Continuation of Sanctions against Syria

Because sanctions continue to restrict economic activity with Syria at the time of this writing, my analysis of these sanctions ends at the start of this thesis: September 2019. As sanctions regimes carried on leading up to September 2019, countries with close ties to Syria continued to “bust” the sanctions imposed by 57 states. A global turn against Syria in 2011 presented Russia with an opportunity to extend its influence where others would not. Russia had been attempting to reclaim its position as a global power since the early 2000s, so this opportunity was attractive to the Russian government. Since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 and the subsequent insurgency and counterinsurgency campaigns in the country, Russia

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<sup>108</sup> Council of the European Union, “Press Release 197: EU Extends Sanctions Against Syria” (June 23, 2011).

<sup>109</sup> Aron Lund, “Briefing: Just How ‘Smart’ Are Sanctions Against Syria,” *The New Humanitarian* (April 25, 2019).

<sup>110</sup> “Arab League Sanctions for Syria,” *BBC News* (November 12, 2011).

has presented itself as a patron of the Assad regime and one of the very few international allies of the regime. As a sponsor of the Syrian government's campaign against its own citizens, Russia is not only providing aid to Syria, but it also views its influence in Syria as a potential first step toward regaining the global status it badly desires. It is a quid-pro-quo; the government of Syria gains access to Russian weaponry while Russia gains the ability to project its effectiveness in Syria beyond the country itself and even beyond MENA as a whole.<sup>111</sup>

Although Russia's patronage in Syria does not directly violate international sanctions, the sale of weapons to the country as well as the purchasing of Syrian oil deliberately circumvent these sanctions. There are specific individuals and businesses that evade US sanctions against Syria. These individuals and entities were themselves sanctioned in EO 13608, "Prohibiting Certain Transactions With and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Foreign Sanctions Evaders With Respect to Iran and Syria," issued on May 1, 2012.<sup>112</sup> This executive order empowered the US Treasury Department to identify any person or entity involved in sanctions-busting activities, restrict their entrance into the US, revoke any US aid provided to them, and prohibit their ability to do business with any US firms, citizens, or government agencies.<sup>113</sup>

Since sanctions against the government of Syria have yet to be removed at the time of this writing, only an analysis of the continuing effects of sanctions can be conducted. The Assad regime continues its campaigns against Syrian civilians in an effort to reclaim control throughout its sovereign territory, being accused multiple times in the past three years alone of the use of chemical weapons against citizens within its own borders.<sup>114</sup> Through these acts, the Syrian

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<sup>111</sup> Dmitriy Frolovskiy, "What Putin Really Wants in Syria," *Foreign Policy* (February 1, 2019).

<sup>112</sup> Bryan R. Early, *Busted Sanctions: Explaining Why Economic Sanctions Fail* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015): 135.

<sup>113</sup> Office of Foreign Assets Control, "List of Foreign Sanctions Evaders Sanctioned Pursuant to Executive Order 13608" (March 17, 2020).

<sup>114</sup> Donald J. Trump, "Remarks on United States Military Operations in Syria," *2018 Daily Presidential Briefing 242* (April 13, 2018).

government violated both international law and multiple international sanctions regimes imposed against it by not only using chemical weapons of mass destruction but also targeting civilians in an illegal act of collective punishment.

#### Success Score: Zero

Due to the ongoing human rights abuses, support for non-state militias targeting civilians, and influence over hostile groups and governments in Iraq and Lebanon, the success score for sanctions against Syria is zero. This total success score can be broken down into a Results Score of zero and a Contribution Score of two. The Results Score of zero is attributed first and foremost to the continued presence of human rights abuses throughout Syria as well as to the influence that the Assad regime continues to exert over destabilizing forces in Iraq and Lebanon. In 2007, three years after the initial imposition of sanctions against Syria, Iraqi reports alleged that 50 percent of terrorists within the country entered from Syria. In 2009, Iraq again accused the Syrian government of conspiring with Islamic terrorists in the country to conduct bombings in Baghdad.<sup>115</sup> Today, with a Shia government in Baghdad and powerful Shia militias controlling segments of Lebanese politics, the Assad regime continues to extend its influence beyond its borders, an action that led to the initial imposition of sanctions against the Assad regime in 2004. In the 2011 vote that suspended Syria's participation in the Arab League, only Lebanon and Yemen abstained, and Iraq voted against the suspension while all other member states voted to condemn the state.<sup>116</sup>

The Contribution Score of two is due to the prominence of the economic sanctions discussed throughout this section in the overall pressure campaign against the Assad regime.

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<sup>115</sup> Hayder al-Khoei, "Syria: The View From Iraq," *European Council on Foreign Relations* (June 14, 2013).

<sup>116</sup> David Batty and Jack Shenker, "Syria Suspended From Arab League," *The Guardian* (November 12, 2011).

While the US began a military campaign against the Islamic State in Syria in 2014 with airstrikes and support for the Iraqi security forces and Syrian Kurdish Peshmerga on the ground, this fight that the US entered was strictly against the Islamic State rather than the Syrian government.<sup>117</sup> President Obama explicitly chose not to conduct military strikes against the Assad regime in 2013 when it used chemical weapons against its citizens despite an early pronouncement that such weapons crossed a “red line.”<sup>118</sup> Instead of direct military responses, sanctions and support for anti-Assad forces were tools used in 2004 and 2011 to combat belligerent actions taken by the Syrian government. Military action in yet another MENA state is not easily supported by the US public, but economic restrictions and support for proxies often are, and that is what happened in Syria. With the Results Score of zero and the Contribution Score of two, this overall Success Score of zero constitutes a failure of the US sanctions regime against Syria.

## **Chapter Nine: Sudan**

### **The Case for Sanctions against Sudan**

On June 25, 1995, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, eleven men attempted to assassinate Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Three of these men fled to neighboring Sudan after the unsuccessful attempt, and the Sudanese government failed to surrender the men for extradition to Ethiopia once it was revealed that they were hiding out in the country. This harboring of the three suspects came after years of concerns within the international community regarding the government of Sudan’s support for international terrorism, especially following the 1989 coup that brought to power an Islamist-oriented military government led by Umar al-Bashir, and the

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<sup>117</sup> David Hudson, “President Obama: ‘We Will Degrade and Ultimately Destroy ISIL,’” *White House Office of Digital Strategy* (September 10, 2014).

<sup>118</sup> Greg Jaffe, “The Problem With Obama's Account of the Syrian Red-Line Incident: The Events in 2013 Remain Some of the Most Hotly Debated Moments of Obama's Presidency,” *Washington Post Blogs* (October 4, 2016).

1993 invitation from Bashir's advisor Hassan al-Turabi to Osama bin Laden to seek refuge in Sudan.<sup>119</sup> With this invitation, Sudan was placed on the US government's list of state supporters of terrorism.<sup>120</sup> By April 26, 1996, UNSC Resolution 1054 was passed at the urging of the Ethiopian, Egyptian, and US governments, requiring all UN member states to significantly limit the Sudanese diplomatic missions within their territories and restrict to the greatest extent possible the movement of Sudanese government officials and armed forces through their territories. These diplomatic sanctions were to remain in place until the Security Council was satisfied that the government of Sudan ceased supporting and providing shelter to terrorists.<sup>121</sup>

The US began its economic sanctions against the government of Sudan in November of 1997 when, despite Sudan's expulsion of bin Laden in 1996, it was determined that Sudan was not curtailing its actions related to terrorism and that human rights violations in the country persisted.<sup>122</sup> Executive order 13067, issued by President Bill Clinton on November 3, 1997, called for economic sanctions against the government of Sudan in response to the government's alleged human rights abuses. These alleged abuses included slavery and the denial of religious freedoms. Along with these abuses and Sudan's ongoing support for terrorism, the state was also accused by the US of working to destabilize neighboring governments.<sup>123</sup>

Critiques of the Sudanese government escalated in 2005 in response to the genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan perpetrated by the government of Sudan and its Janjaweed militia. The genocide began in early 2003 with what was portrayed as a counter-insurgency campaign against rebel groups in the region. Through targeted attacks on farms, villages, and towns in

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<sup>119</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, "9/11 Commission Report" (August 21, 2004): 57.

<sup>120</sup> Niblock, 199-201.

<sup>121</sup> Idib, 205.

<sup>122</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 63.

<sup>123</sup> William Clinton, Executive Order 13067, "Blocking Sudanese Government Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Sudan" (November 3, 1997).

Darfur as well as through forced displacements, starvation, thirst, and disease, an estimated 450,000 civilians died.<sup>124</sup> The UNSC responded with a formal condemnation of the al-Bashir regime's actions in Darfur and escalation of economic sanctions against the regime.

### Sanctions against Sudan

The aforementioned 1997 EO 13067, Blocking Sudanese Government Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Sudan, in condemning the government of Sudan for its destabilizing activities in neighboring states, support for terrorism, and human rights abuses, imposed economic sanctions against the al-Bashir regime. Through this executive order, all assets of the Sudanese government held in the US or by US residents and businesses abroad were blocked. Other than informational materials and materials intended to mitigate human suffering, all imports to and exports from Sudan were restricted, and all US residents and businesses were prohibited from providing the government of Sudan with credit, loans, technology, or any technological assistance.<sup>125</sup> These initial economic sanctions, imposed in 1997 by the Clinton Administration, amounted to a near complete expulsion of Sudan from US trade, limiting any trade with the country to humanitarian relief packages only.

Just as the international critiques of the Sudanese government escalated following the commencement of the genocide in Darfur, economic sanctions against the country escalated as well. UN Security Council Resolution 1591 was passed on March 29, 2005 following seven previous UNSC resolutions condemning the government of Sudan throughout 2004 and early 2005 for its and its proxy militias' actions in Darfur. Resolution 1591 created a committee to

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<sup>124</sup> Eric Markusen, "Three Empirical Investigations of Alleged Genocide in Darfur," in *The World and Darfur: International Response to Crimes Against Humanity in Western Sudan*. ed. Amanda Grzyb (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009): 95.

<sup>125</sup> Clinton, Executive Order 13067.

monitor the ongoing genocide in Darfur and froze the assets of any individual—either employed by the government of Sudan or by one its allied militias—found to have contributed to the human rights and international law violations. All assets, funds, and economic resources held directly or indirectly by these individuals in any member state were to be frozen by the respective member state until the government of Sudan and its client militias ended their campaign of human rights abuses. China and Russia were the only members of the permanent five members of the Security Council to abstain from voting on this resolution.<sup>126</sup>

Along with voting in favor of Resolution 1591, the United States reiterated its condemnation of Sudan and mirrored the sanctions in EO 13400 after more than a year of Sudan's non-compliance. This executive order, issued on April 26, 2006, froze the assets of any individual found to have provided arms, military equipment, or assistance in military planning to the Sudanese government, Sudan Liberation Movement, Justice and Equality Movement, and/or the Janjaweed militia.<sup>127</sup> These bodies were found by the US government to have been complicit in the genocide in Darfur and human rights abuses throughout the country of Sudan, so sanctions were extended from the initial 1997 regime to include not only government officials but any individual found to have assisted such officials or worked on their behalf.

### Removal of US and UN Sanctions

Shortly after the imposition of the US sanctions regime in Sudan, the list of sanctioned individuals came under scrutiny by those monitoring the situation in Darfur. The list of those individuals sanctioned by the US did not include three high-ranking Sudanese government officials that led the state's defense forces and interior, reflecting a lack of diplomatic will to

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<sup>126</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1591* (March 29, 2005).

<sup>127</sup> George W. Bush, Executive Order 13400, "Blocking Property of Persons in Connection with the Conflict in Sudan's Darfur Region" (April 26, 2006).



punish those directly responsible for the genocide in Darfur.<sup>128</sup> Despite the absence of these three top-ranking men from the US sanctions list, the government of Sudan agreed to comply with the United States' conditions in January 2017, and the economic sanctions were removed. The sanctions imposed by the UNSC in Resolution 1591, unlike the US sanctions regime, remain in place at the time of writing, however, but only four men remain on the list of sanctioned individuals, and all remaining sanctions apply only to non-governmental groups and militias.<sup>129</sup>

Beginning in July 2016, the government of Sudan initiated certain positive actions that led to the repeal of the sanctions regime imposed against Sudan. The Obama administration credited the al-Bashir regime with a marked reduction in offensive military action and with taking steps to improve humanitarian conditions throughout the state. The government of Sudan made a formal pledge to the US government to cease hostilities in Sudan's conflict areas, and it cooperated with the Obama administration in addressing regional conflicts as well as terrorism. These actions led to the formal removal of economic sanctions against the Sudanese government by the US through Executive Order 13761, issued on January 13, 2017.<sup>130</sup> This final removal of sanctions against Sudan came six years after the independence of South Sudan in 2011, which was also coupled with the removal of import and export restrictions within that territory.

The international pressure campaign against Sudan for its actions in Darfur, along with being comprised of economic and diplomatic sanctions, included UNAMID, the African Union-UN hybrid operation in Darfur, which was authorized under UNSC Resolution 1769 on July 31, 2007. This UN peacekeeping mission was largely performed by African Union (AU) troops as

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<sup>128</sup> Eric Reeves, "Death in Darfur: Total Mortality from Violence, Malnutrition, and Disease: April/May 2006," in *The World and Darfur: International Response to Crimes Against Humanity in Western Sudan*. ed. Amanda Grzyb (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009): 169.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1591 (2005) Concerning the Sudan: Background Information."

<sup>130</sup> Barack Obama, Executive Order 13671, "Recognizing Positive Actions by the Government of Sudan and Providing for the Revocation of Certain Sudan-Related Sanctions." (January 13, 2017).

well as troops and experts from Asian states; the US and its NATO allies were not involved. This peacekeeping mission was tasked with the provision of humanitarian assistance and enforcement of a 2011 peace agreement between involved parties.<sup>131</sup> The pressure campaign also involved the first warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the arrest of Umar al-Bashir. Despite the UN peacekeeping mission and arrest warrant, however, average Sudanese citizens—most notably Darfurians—remain insecure, with millions living in squalid camps.<sup>132</sup> Additionally, although Umar al-Bashir was ousted in April 2019, protests against the successor military government resulted in even more human rights abuses, including the killing of peaceful protesters.<sup>133</sup>

#### Success Score: Two

Due to the recent human rights abuses in response to protests in Sudan and near full contribution of the US and UN sanctions regimes to the overall pressure campaign against the Sudanese government the Success Score for these sanctions is two. This overall score can be broken down into a Results Score of one and a Contribution Score of two. Although the al-Bashir regime made formal concessions to the Obama administration in the first weeks of 2017, this government and its successor continued its patronage of non-governmental militias—most notoriously the Janjaweed—that committed crimes against humanity in Sudan. These continued human rights abuses conducted by representatives of the government of Sudan and the government itself account for the Results Score of one. While some steps were taken toward the

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<sup>131</sup> African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur, “The Establishment of Peacekeeping Operations.”

<sup>132</sup> Harry Verhoeven, Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, and Madhan Mohan Jaganathan, “To Intervene in Darfur, or Not: Re-examining the R2P Debate and Its Impact,” *Global Society* 30 (2016).

<sup>133</sup> “Sudan Crisis: What You Need to Know,” *BBC News* (August 16, 2019).

fulfillment of the conditions for the removal of the sanctions regimes, these have proven to only be nominal advancements.

The Contribution Score of two can be attributed to the prevalence of sanctions in the overall pressure campaign against the Sudanese government. Especially in regard to the US, sanctions were the only tool used against Sudan's human rights abuses and support for terrorism. As has been discussed above, the UN also authorized a Chapter VII peacekeeping mission in Darfur. As it is ultimately US sanctions that are at issue here, a Contribution Score of two was awarded to the sanctions regime in Sudan because US actions are of my utmost concern. This total Success Score of two constitutes a moderate success.

## **Chapter Ten: Iran**

### **The Case for Sanctions against Iran**

The United States has had some type of formal scrutiny against the Iranian government in place since the Islamic Revolution in February 1979, which upended a history of cooperation between the US and the Shah of Iran. Similar to the US relationship with the Assad regimes in Syria prior to 2004, the US had a long-term, positive relationship with Iran that unraveled in 1979. Since the 1953 US-backed coup in Iran that brought down the Shah of Iran's prime minister, Iran was a client state of the US, seen to be bringing stability to MENA and balancing against Soviet influence in the region.<sup>134</sup> An initial set of sanctions was imposed immediately following the Islamic Revolution and the subsequent seizure of the US embassy in Tehran, but these sanctions were removed on January 20, 1981 following the Algiers Accord that provided

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<sup>134</sup> Roham Alvandi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

for the release of the US hostages.<sup>135</sup> By 1984, however, sanctions were back in place against the government of Iran following the declaration by the Reagan administration that Iran was a sponsor of terrorism in response to the Hezbollah suicide attack on a US Marine base in Lebanon.<sup>136</sup> Along with retaliating against the Khomeini regime in Tehran, the new sanctions that came with the declaration of state sponsorship of terrorism also worked to balance Iran against Iraq in the midst of the Iran-Iraq War. The US feared an expansionist Islamic power in MENA and chose to favor Iraq in the war as the lesser of the two evils.

Sanctions against Iran escalated even further in 1987 near the end of the Iran-Iraq War with the designation of Iran as a major narcotics trafficker.<sup>137</sup> With this intensification in the allegations made by the US against Iran regarding its illicit activities, the US also increased its efforts to induce third-party states and foreign entities to comply with its sanctions regime. Efforts to increase the number of states and entities supporting the unilateral sanctions imposed by the US were driven by domestic constituencies in the US that viewed Iran as a threat to US interests in the region as well as interests of America's allies—notably Israel.

With changing US administrations in 1993 and 2001 and the May 22, 1997 election of the seemingly moderate Mohammed Khatemi as president of Iran came wavering commitments to America's long-term sanctions against Iran. But sanctions persisted, nonetheless. While the US continued to view Iran as a destabilizing player in MENA and a sponsor of terrorism that gravely affected the US and its allies' interests in the region, US firms also continued to value and desire Iranian oil exports. This desire for Iranian oil complicated the ability of US

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<sup>135</sup> Patrick Clawson, "Iran," in *Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy*, ed. Richard Haass (The Council on Foreign Relations, 1998): 85-106.

<sup>136</sup> United States Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, "State Sponsors of Terrorism."

<sup>137</sup> O'Sullivan, 49.

administrations to confidently sanction Iran, but, by August 1997, the US banned all exports to third-party countries of products that were destined to be sold to Iran.

### Sanctions against Iran

The January 19, 1984 declaration of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism came with the prohibition of the transactions of any goods on the US Munitions List (22 C.F.R. Part 121) with Iran as well as the termination of the provision of any bilateral assistance to Iran from the US. As mentioned above, these sanctions were increased four years later in 1987 with the further declaration by the Reagan Administration that Iran was involved in narcotics-trafficking.<sup>138</sup> With this October 29, 1987 declaration came the further imposition of sanctions that prohibited nearly all imports from Iran into the US through Executive Order 12613.<sup>139</sup> This had the key exclusion, however, of petroleum products refined from Iranian crude oil in a third country.<sup>140</sup> US oil, gas, and construction businesses continued through the early 1990s to profit off of Iranian crude oil, and Iran even awarded the US firm Conoco a contract to develop its Sirri offshore oil fields in early 1995.<sup>141</sup>

Although oil, gas, and construction companies desired the ability to maintain access to Iranian markets, domestic constituencies that feared Iran's close ties to terrorist groups throughout MENA and their ability to affect US interests in the region won the debate over Iranian sanctions. President Clinton issued two executive orders in March and May of 1995 that sanctioned any involvement in the Iranian petroleum industry and further banned virtually all economic transactions between US entities and Iran.<sup>142</sup> Except for transactions of informational

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<sup>138</sup> O'Sullivan, 49.

<sup>139</sup> Clawson, 85.

<sup>140</sup> Ronald Reagan, Executive Order 12613, "Prohibiting Imports from Iran" (October 29, 1987).

<sup>141</sup> O'Sullivan, 54.

<sup>142</sup> O'Sullivan, 50.

materials between the two states, all imports from and exports to Iran as well as all investment in Iranian businesses or government agencies were prohibited under Executive Orders 12957 and 12959.<sup>143</sup>

The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of August 1996, discussed in Chapter 6, worked to solidify the US sanctions regime imposed against Iran by placing penalties on foreign firms found to have made an investment of \$20 million or more in Iranian petroleum development.<sup>144</sup> This imposition of sanctions against foreign firms was done with no respect for the origin of the sanctioned firms, bringing about protests from European states that claimed the Act violated international trade regulations. Despite protests, however, President Clinton further restricted US exports concerning Iran in EO 13059, issued in August 1997, by prohibiting the export of US goods to third-party states where they were ultimately destined for Iran.<sup>145</sup>

US actions regarding Iran began to liberalize in the late 1990s when the economic impact on US entities began to become evident. The Clinton administration issued waivers to two companies, Total and Boeing, to participate in Iran's oil-driven economy in 1998 and 1999 respectively, and Iran was removed from the US government's list of narcotics-producing states in December 1998. By April 1999, an executive order issued by President Clinton allowed for the provision of food and medicine to Iran, Libya, and Sudan, and Secretary of State Madeline Albright announced the lifting of US sanctions on some non-oil exports—including carpets, caviar, and pistachios—in March of 2000.<sup>146</sup> Despite the interest in liberalizing some relations with Iran, sanctions against the state by the US continued through this time of light sanctions-

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<sup>143</sup> William Clinton, Executive Order 12957, "Prohibiting Certain Transactions with Respect to the Development of Iranian Petroleum Resources." (March 15, 1995), and William Clinton, Executive Order 12959, "Prohibiting Certain Transactions With Respect to Iran." (May 6, 1995).

<sup>144</sup> *The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996*, 2.

<sup>145</sup> William Clinton, Executive Order 13059, "Prohibiting Certain Transactions with Respect to Iran." (August 19, 1997).

<sup>146</sup> O'Sullivan, 51.

lifting, focusing on Iran's oil and chemical production capabilities. A discourse in the US that painted the government of Iran as belligerent and dangerous continued throughout the 2000s as the US government also continued to pressure third-party states and foreign businesses to comply with the sanctions.

The sanctions regime imposed by the US government against the government of Iran amounted to the most extensive restriction on economic activity with a specific country by the US in recent history, and Iran's import of goods originating in the US decreased from 21 percent of the state's total imports in 1978 to less than 1 percent in 2001. Iran's exports to the US also decreased from 19 percent of the country's total output to less than one percent in 2001.<sup>147</sup> The United Nations Security Council followed the US lead in 2006 with Resolution 1737 which, in condemning the state for its illicit nuclear ambitions and insistence that it would not stop its nuclear program, sanctioned the transfer of any enrichment related goods to Iran from any UN member state.<sup>148</sup> Resolutions 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), and 1929 (2010) grew the international sanctions regime against Iran to include prohibitions on the sales of arms, heavy weapons and machinery, and restrictions on certain financial transactions believed to bolster illicit trade with the country.<sup>149</sup> The US government continued to combat foreign entities that violated both US and UN sanctions by sanctioning these entities themselves—including North Korean, Chinese, Armenian, and Moldovan businesses—through the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> O'Sullivan, 68-69.

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1737* (December 23, 2006).

<sup>149</sup> "UN Sanctions Against Iran," *BBC News* (July 26, 2010).

<sup>150</sup> O'Sullivan, 57.

## Removal of US and UN Sanctions

Following almost two years of negotiations, on July 14, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed by Iran, the EU, and the Permanent Five Plus One (P5+1)—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the US comprising the P5 and Germany accounting for the additional negotiator. This JCPOA agreement brought about concessions from all parties; Iran agreed to a serious rollback of its nuclear program and accepted fifteen years of IAEA inspections in exchange for sanctions relief from the other involved parties.<sup>151</sup> The agreement—commonly referred to as the Iran Nuclear Deal—was affirmed by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2231 on July 20, 2015. This UNSC resolution established a joint commission tasked with monitoring Iran’s compliance with the JCPOA and called for the IAEA to regularly verify compliance.<sup>152</sup> Since January 16, 2016, the day the JCPOA was implemented, the IAEA has consistently verified the government of Iran’s compliance with the standards set for its nuclear weapons program.<sup>153</sup> This compliance on the part of the government of Iran was coupled with the removal of sanctions by the other involved parties, ending the US and UN sanctions regimes in 2016.

Following the removal of sanctions against Iran, the IAEA has continued to verify Iran’s compliance with the conditions for the removal of sanctions. Despite this, the Trump administration left the agreement in May 2018, claiming that it was an unfair deal that allowed Iran to continue its destabilizing practices in MENA while requiring concessions from the other signatories.<sup>154</sup> All other parties, including Iran, have remained in the deal despite the US

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<sup>151</sup> Farhad Rezaei, “JCPOA Collapse: Will Proliferation Follow?” *Middle East Policy* 26 (Summer 2019): 48.

<sup>152</sup> United National Security Council, *Resolution 2231* (July 20, 2015).

<sup>153</sup> International Atomic Energy Agency Director General, “Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in Light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015),” *International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Directors* (March 3, 2020).

<sup>154</sup> Mark Landler, “Trump Abandons Iran Nuclear Deal He Long Scorned,” *New York Times* (May 8, 2018).



withdrawal, but the US has re-imposed harsh sanctions on the government of Iran.<sup>155</sup> My analysis of the US sanctions regime against Iran ends with the signing of the JCPOA, but these actions taken after January 16, 2016, are important for scoring. The government of Iran continues to sponsor destabilizing actors in MENA, including Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Israel respectively as well as insurgent groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen trained by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force.<sup>156</sup> As the IAEA verifies regularly, however, the government of Iran has not pursued nuclear weapons or violated international regulations regarding WMDs.

#### Success Score: Three

Due to the continuation of destabilizing activity throughout MENA, the persistent evasion of US and UN sanctions to sell oil while the sanctions were in place, and the complete reliance on sanctions in the international pressure campaign against Iran, the Success Score for sanctions against Iran is three. This score is broken down into a Results Score of one and a Contribution Score of three. The JCPOA was passed without Iran having complied with the conditions of the sanctions regime against it. Instead, the agreement was signed in the belief that, since three decades of economic sanctions had not driven Iran to change its behavior at all, another path needed to be taken. Although the Iranian government did not comply at all with the conditions for the sanctions' removal, I have still awarded the sanctions regime a Results Score of one because of the ability of international sanctions to get Iran to the negotiating table. During the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979, the Khomeini regime refused to negotiate until the economic impact of the early sanctions regime began to be felt in 1981.<sup>157</sup> Unlike previous cases of Iran's

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<sup>155</sup> Donald Trump, Executive Order 13846, "Reimposing Certain Sanctions With Respect to Iran" (August 6, 2018).

<sup>156</sup> Daniel L. Byman, "How Terrorism Helps—and Hurts—Iran," *Brookings Institute* (January 6, 2020).

<sup>157</sup> O'Sullivan, 48.

refusal to cooperate with international agencies and foreign powers, it can be inferred that the weight of economic sanctions drove Tehran to the negotiating table.

A Contribution Score of three was awarded to the sanctions regime against Iran because such a sanctions regime was the only tool used directly against Iran in the international campaign to pressure Iran to change its domestic actions and its activities in MENA. Unlike the cases of Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011, military campaigns were not instigated in Iran to bring about a change in the regime's behavior. The US and UN instead imposed sanctions against Iran and only fought its proxies militarily outside of the country's borders, including ongoing international intervention against Iranian-backed groups in Yemen's civil war.<sup>158</sup> With these proxy wars occurring only outside of Iran's borders, the pressure campaign to induce Iran to end its support for terrorism and pursuit of nuclear weapons included sanctions alone. With a Results Score of one and a Contribution Score of three, the overall Success Score of three constitutes a moderate success of the sanctions regime.

## **Chapter Eleven: Conclusion and Summary Analysis**

In the introduction to this thesis, I hypothesized that, while sanctioning autocrats has never been perfectly effective, the end of unipolarity further solidified the inability of the US to successfully bring about political changes in undemocratic states through economic sanctions alone. I hypothesized that an analysis of case studies before and after the growth of less powerful states would reveal that these states not only opposed but actively worked against US sanctions regimes. This assertion supports existing literature arguing that sanctioning undemocratic actors is ineffective. While the body of this thesis has not borne out this hypothesis in full, my analysis

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<sup>158</sup> Alan Lis, "Yemen is a Battleground in Iran's Proxy War Against the U.S. and Saudi Arabia," *Global Security Review*. (October 2, 2019).

of six case studies demonstrates the effect of decreased US relative power on the ability of the US to compel states to both impose and comply with economic sanctions.

**Table Five: Summary of Cases and Scores**

Target State	Start Date	End Date	Sender(s) of Sanctions	Reason for Sanctions Regime	Results Score	Contribution Score	Success Score
Pakistan	Oct. 1990	Oct. 2001	Unilateral: US	Illicit nuclear programs and testing and a military coup	0	3	0
Iraq	Aug. 1990	May 2003	Multilateral: UN	Invasion of Kuwait and illicit WMD ambitions	2	1	2
Libya	March 1992	Sept. 2003	Multilateral: UN and US (1996)	Support for terrorism, and illicit WMD ambitions	2	2	4
Syria	May 2004	Ongoing as of April 2020	Multilateral: US joined by EU, Arab League, and six unaffiliated states in 2011	Support for terrorism, illicit WMD ambitions, destabilizing actions in MENA, and human rights abuses	0	2	0
Sudan	Nov. 1997	Jan. 2017	Multilateral: US and UN (2005)	Support for terrorism, human rights abuses, and genocide	1	2	2
Iran	Jan. 1984	Jan. 2016	Multilateral: US and UN (2006)	Support for terrorism, illicit nuclear ambitions, and destabilizing actions in MENA	1	3	3

The six cases discussed above demonstrate that effect of Russian, Chinese, and smaller states' growth on the ability of the United States to easily achieve an international consensus regarding its economic foreign policy. While the Success Scores laid out in Table Five do not necessarily illustrate support for my initial hypothesis, that US economic sanctions would become less effective after the end of US hegemony, the context in which the cases of sanctions regimes were implemented lends credence to my hypothesis. My conclusion does not show a binary and positive relationship between the end of US hegemony in the early 2000s and the clear increase in the inability of the US to achieve its goals of a sanctions regime. The conclusion instead shows a persistent difficulty in affecting the actions of undemocratic regimes in MENA overtime no matter the scale of US power—represented by continuously low Results and Success Scores—yet an increased complexity in the imposition of these unsuccessful sanctions regimes. The ease with which the US commanded an international audience and enacted its desired foreign policies throughout the 1990s was thrown aside when US hegemony experienced during this period ended. The changing geopolitics, while not gravely affecting the success of sanctions against belligerent regimes in MENA, fundamentally changed the conditions under which the US has been able to act in the international arena.

During the era of US hegemony, the only score of zero was awarded to the only case of unilateral sanctions: Pakistan. Despite their unilateral imposition, however, the economic sanctions imposed against Pakistan by the George H. W. Bush administration in 1990 faced little opposition from other states. China continued to sell conventional weapons to Pakistan while the country faced economic sanctions and an arms embargo from the US, but the Chinese government did not increase its arms sales to the country as a response to this US sanctions

regime.<sup>159</sup> China was growing its international economic ties throughout the early 1990s, and selling weapons to countries unlikely to be supported by western governments was one way to grow these economic connections as well as its domestic economy. Despite the continuing arms sales between Pakistan and China during Pakistan's adversarial relationship with the US, the sanctions regime was imposed with ease by the US. Pakistan's actions in regard to WMDs and nuclear weapons as well as its military coup violated US trade policies, so the Bush administration was able to trigger economic sanctions against Pakistan without having to gain international agreement to legitimize the sanctions.

The other two case studies of sanctions regimes during the era of US hegemony were imposed by the UN Security Council. The US lobbied for the sanctions against Iraq and Libya on the Security Council and succeeded in gaining the necessary votes. Not only did Russia and China not threaten to veto the US-backed resolutions, a practice the states developed later in the 1990s (leading to the stopping of UN sponsored military intervention before they were even considered), but China and Russia both voted in favor of UNSC Resolution 661, imposing sanctions against Iraq. China was joined by only four other states on the Security Council in abstaining from the vote on UNSC Resolution 748 regarding Libya, and it was the only member of the P5 to abstain from the vote.<sup>160</sup> Once the Security Council imposed these sanctions against the Iraqi and Libyan governments, the sanctions regimes also faced little formal opposition from these states that would later prove to complicate US desires for sanctions. The sanctions regimes were far from perfect, and the Success Scores awarded to them reflect that, but these imperfections were due to the targeted regimes, not the senders of the sanctions.

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<sup>159</sup> Ian Anthony et al., "The Trade in Major Conventional Weapons," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 217.

<sup>160</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 748*.

The Iraqi Oil-For-Food Program that in 1996 permitted the sale of Iraqi oil through specified channels as a means of funding the humanitarian costs of the first Gulf War was highly corrupt, and Saddam Hussein earned close to \$13 billion through kickbacks and smuggling. Firms from around the world were complicit in this scheme, however, and investigations into the corruption did not show a deliberate attempt on behalf of any particular state to delegitimize the program and the sanctions regime that brought it about. French and Russian firms proved to be the largest contributors to Hussein's corruption of the program, accounting for 45% of the illicit oil sales and kickbacks.<sup>161</sup> These firms were not acting in such a way as to deliberately work against the UN sanctions regime, however; they were simply corrupt themselves and further corrupted by Hussein's desire to subvert the sanctions against him.

Regarding the moderate success of the sanctions regime against Libya, this was largely due to the fact that the Gaddafi regime was so resistant to change throughout the 1990s, finally terminating its belligerent actions throughout the African continents as well as its WMD program and protection of terrorists only after a decade of near-complete economic and diplomatic isolation from the rest of the world. Gaddafi, like Hussein, used his autocratic policies to transfer the weight of sanctions against his government onto his citizens, and it took much longer for him than it would have taken a democratic leader to feel the weight of the UN pressure campaign against him. While it did take thirteen years for the Libyan government to change its actions, this case of sanctions is the most successful of the six and functioned the closest to how sanctions advocates argue sanctions should work.

While the Success and Results Scores of the cases of sanctions imposed when the US was not a global hegemon did not vary from the previous cases as much as I hypothesized they

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<sup>161</sup> Sharon Otterman, "Iraq: Oil for Food Scandal," *Council on Foreign Relations* (October 28, 2005).

would, the conditions under which the sanctions regimes were imposed did change. In these cases of sanctions, the US was only able to convince different segments of the international community to join the sanctions regime after an average of twelve years. Additionally, unlike the sanctions against Pakistan in 1990, important to the reasoning behind these sanctions was a fear that target regimes would gravely shift the status quo in MENA and threaten US interests in the region. Pakistan was no longer a necessary ally of the US when sanctions were imposed in 1990, and the US wanted to establish credibility in its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the treaty's maintenance of only five nuclear weapons states.<sup>162</sup> These reasons for imposing sanctions against the Pakistani state do not align with the much more apocalyptic views of the target states in the second group of sanctions regimes analyzed.

The US viewed—and largely continues to view—the Syrian, Sudanese, and Iranian regimes as not only threats to their own citizens but also as threats to regional security. It was this latter concern—especially in the cases of Iran and Syria—that brought about US sanctions against these regimes. Unlike the prior decade, however, the US was not as easily able to convince a global audience of its cause. As late as 2003, the US was able to use unfounded claims to convince allies to start another war in Iraq, but the balancing of other states' power against that of the US shortly after the commencement of this war significantly limited the ability of the US to continue gaining such international support.

The time it took for international organizations and other states to join the US in its pressure campaigns against the Syrian, Sudanese, and Iranian governments shows how changing

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<sup>162</sup> Alessandra Petrobon, "Nuclear Powers' Disarmament Obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty: Interactions between Soft Law and Hard Law," *Journal of International Law* 27 (March 2014): 169-188.

geopolitics has affected US efforts abroad. Not only was the US left to pressure belligerent regimes alone until these regimes became so obviously threatening to regional peace and security, but states like Russia and China have actively worked around these sanctions, buying oil and selling arms to sanctions regimes. Russia has committed its troops and aid in support of the Syrian regime indefinitely, and leaders from the United Arab Emirates have begun to cool their relationship with the Assad regime and work with Russia to rebuild a stable status quo.<sup>163</sup> China as well as other Asian and Mediterranean states have continued to defy US sanctions and risk economic penalties to purchase Iranian oil.<sup>164</sup> Lastly, the Sudanese government, although Umar al-Bashir stepped down, maintains its ties to the Janjaweed militia that was complicit in the Darfurian genocide, yet, nonetheless, the country also maintains ties to other states that had long protected Bashir from arrest by the International Criminal Court.

Although one aspect of my initial hypothesis—that the outcomes of sanctions would be significantly affected by the rise of Russia, China, and smaller states—was not supported by an analysis of six cases, my analysis has shown the difficulty of near universal imposition of sanctions. It has also shown, however, that such universal imposition is necessary for sanctions' effects to be long-lasting. Support from the UN Security Council, as opposed to support from the EU, Arab League, or other individual states alone, has seemingly proven to be necessary to maintain lasting effects of sanctions regimes. No regime analyzed became a close ally of the US after the imposition of sanctions, but the latter three regimes blatantly continued the practices that brought about sanctions in the first place. I am arguing that this is because the international community only stepped in when the actions of the target states became so vulgar as to mandate

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<sup>163</sup> Ben Hubbard et al., “In Syria, Russia is Pleased to Fill and American Void,” *New York Times* (October 15, 2019).

<sup>164</sup> Anjali Singhvi et al., “Defying US Sanctions, China and Others Take Oil from 12 Iranian Tankers,” *New York Times* (August 3, 2019).



a response and because this international condemnation was limited, and active opposition to the sanctions from Russia and China persisted. The exception to this conclusion has been the success of the JCPOA. This is a limited exception, however, because the JCPOA dealt only with Iran's weapons programs, neglecting the state's destabilizing activities throughout MENA. What the continued verification from IAEA inspectors of Iran's compliance with the agreement shows is that such a large-scale threat of economic sanctions in the face of specific belligerent actions is successful in stopping such actions. The government of Iran felt the weight of multilateral sanctions during the decade spanning 2006 and 2016, and this history of economic isolation has proven—at least for four years—to be enough to compel Iran to stop its weapons programs in exchange for re-entry into the global economy.

Such near-universal imposition of sanctions was not experienced in the cases of sanctions against Sudan and Syria, however, and it is certainly not experienced with current US unilateral sanctions against Iran since the Trump Administration left the JCPOA. This global support—or at least lack of opposition from Russia and China—has not been experienced since the US lost its hegemonic position in the early 2000s. Certain international relations scholars argued that the US hegemony of the 1990s would lead to global instability once smaller states gained enough power to attempt to balance against the US. That seems to be the case at least in regard to US efforts to sanction undemocratic regimes in MENA. The cases of sanctions have not become significantly less effective, but the process through which they are imposed and the lasting effects of the sanctions regimes have become more unstable since China and Russia gained the ability to more forcefully counter US foreign policies.

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