Most people consider sanctions a peaceful and effective means to enforce international law. Under Article 41 of the UN Charter, the Security Council may call on Member States "to apply measures not involving the use of armed force to give effect to its decisions." Typically, sanctions cut off trade and investments, preventing a target country from buying or selling goods in the global marketplace. Sanctions may aim at particular items like arms or oil. They may cut off air traffic, suspend or drastically curtail diplomatic relations, block movement of persons, bar investments, or freeze international bank deposits. Sanctions enjoy a good reputation that many now question. Increasingly, critics charge that sanctions are cruel, unfair and even violent. International law has developed no standards on which sanctions can be based or the destructive impact of sanctions limited. Ironically, then, sanctions are used to enforce law, but themselves are outside acceptable standards of law.

This page aims to provide insight into the events and debates that inform contemporary theory and practice in the realm of sanctions. The background items introduce the concept of sanctions, the analysis section presents the debate over sanctions, and the external links connect to helpful sources of further reading. Although these articles are a decade old, they are by no means outdated. They consider the world of sanctions before "targeted" sanctions were widely introduced, effectively conveying the issues and controversies that arose as the true consequences of sanctions came to light.
All of the following articles are available freely on the internet. They are posted here for your convenience.

**Background**

**Sanctions: An Essential Introduction**

This article, exclusive to Global Policy Forum, tracks the origin of sanctions and their development as a norm in diplomacy over time. It follows trends in the use of sanctions and concludes with a note on the status of sanctions today. This conclusion is a logical entry point to the analysis this website presents. *(Under development)*

**Learning from the Sanctions Decade (Summer 2000)**

In this comprehensive article, David Cortright and George A. Lopez explore the reasons why the Security Council suddenly began to impose sanctions on numerous countries in a variety of situations during the 1990s. They take note of the effects these sanctions have had on people worldwide and on this basis chart a path for sanctions in the first decade of the 21st century.

**Chapter VII of the UN Charter**

The legal document that creates sanctions, among more punitive measures, as way for the Security Council to enforce its demands.

**Analysis**

**Sanctions: An Analysis**
Introduction to Sanctions

Written by James A. Paul and Senwan Akhtar of Global Policy Forum. This article presents the key issues and challenges surrounding the use of sanctions. Writing before the adoption of "targeted" sanctions, Paul and Akhtar pave the way for the Security Council to adopt more humane, more just and more consistent ways of conducting diplomacy and applying pressure to states. (Global Policy Forum)

Sixteen Policy Recommendations on Sanctions

James A. Paul of Global Policy Forum made these recommendations at a forum of German parliamentarians in Bonn on March 31, 1998. Paul outlines the steps that the Security Council must take in order to make sanctions viable and justifiable. In general, Paul asserts that because sanctions can cause so much harm to innocent people, they are not a tool to be taken lightly. Sanctions therefore must be exclusively multilateral, must only be imposed in situations of last resort, and must above all consider human rights. (Global Policy Forum)

International Law and Standards Regarding Sanction Regimes (March 2000)

This paper identifies some of the international legal norms and standards applicable to the international community when applying a sanctions regime. The purpose of this paper is not to take a position with regard to the application of sanctions per se, but to illustrate that when such a regime is applied, it must be in accordance with the human rights and humanitarian principles enshrined in international law. This paper identifies key analyses and recommendations from a number of UN bodies, and also refers to principles articulated in Security Council Resolutions, the United Nations Charter, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other Human Rights conventions. (Peace Action)

Lloyd Axworthy Addresses Security Council on Sanctions (April 17, 2000)

Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, addressed the Security Council on the mixed record of sanctions over the past decade and proposed measures to increase effectiveness and limit civilian suffering in the future.

External Links
Angola Peace Monitor
Magazine published by Action for Southern Africa.

**Bonn-Berlin Process**

Bonn International Center for Conversion in cooperation with Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office) and the UN Secretariat, hosted two seminars in November 1999 and December 2000 on "smart-sanctions". Looking at arms embargoes and travel sanctions in a follow-up to the Interlaken process.  

**Fourth Freedom Forum**

Fourth Freedom Forum in Indiana and Washington D.C., promotes the use of economic and political incentives and "smart" sanctions, such as targeted financial sanctions and arms embargoes, as a means to prevent war and nuclear proliferation.

**Institute for International Economics**

Provides a few papers on targeted and economic sanctions from a US conservative perspective. Also contains a section on case studies - mainly on unilateral US sanctions.

**International Action Center**

Releases and reports from US based Iraq Sanctions Challenge.

**Iraq Action Coalition**

Information and resources and analysis of the Iraq sanctions regime.

**Middle East Research and Information Project**

Comprehensive web site with several articles on sanctions, covering sanctions against Iraq in particular.

**New Zealand Customs Service**

A succinct summary of import and export restrictions related to UN sanctions. March 1999 paper from ODI on the sanctions debate (pdf file).

**Peace Action Education Fund**

**UN Working Group on General Issues and Sanctions**

Launched in 2001, UN site with links to UN documentation (including resolution, letters and reports) on sanctions and other major initiatives.

**United Nations Office of the Iraq Programme**

UN department overseeing implementation of the Iraq oil-for-food programme. Provides full text of the Secretary General's reports; Security Council resolutions and weekly updates on the working of the oil-for-food programme.

**United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**

OCHA's page on the Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions provides a summary of UN concerns about the negative impacts of sanctions as well as links to resources and key UN documents.

**United States Mission to the UN**

The White House perspective on sanctions. **United States Treasury: Office of Foreign Assets Control**

US sanctions regimes and policies on different countries. **Voices in the Wilderness**

A UK/US NGO group campaigning to end the sanctions against the people of Iraq.

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