

An Empire of Sanctions

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Sanctions are now the preferred economic weapon that the United States uses to pressure, discipline and coerce enemies and even allies. Sanctions restrict targeted states from importing, exporting and receiving investments; they prohibit US corporations and banks from dealing with those countries, and they limit the economic activities of individuals in sanctioned countries. The U.S. began using sanctions widely during the Cold War and their deployment expanded greatly after its end. Sanctions have become a powerful tool in the US foreign policy arsenal, a weapon to alter the behavior of governments, bring about regime change or simply punish a state and its people. Today the US is an “empire of sanctions,” as well as an “empire of bases.” Several dozen countries are subject to US sanctions as are many individual political figures and business people and the list appears to expand daily. With growing opposition to direct US military intervention, sanctions are presented as a “more peaceful” form of coercion. Yet, they seldom change the policies of targeted countries and individuals even as they severely harm the civilian population.

The syllabus introduces general debates about the forms, legality, effectiveness and ethical or unethical character of economic sanctions. It explores a variety of case studies, past and present, from the early Cold War sanctioning of Russia, Eastern Europe, China and Cuba, to the post-Cold War targeting of Iraq, Iran and more recently Venezuela and once again Russia and China. It looks as well at cases where non-state actors have sought to have sanctions imposed—against apartheid South Africa and BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement against Israel. The syllabus draws material from a variety of disciplines—history, political science, and law among others, and from the rich journalism on sanctions. It combines analyses and first person experiences, written sources as well as videos. The syllabus seeks to educate, but it also wants to promote activism around this dangerous and counterproductive weapon of the U.S. Thus, it concludes with discussions of blowback from US sanctions coming from abroad and the growing movement against the unchecked use of US sanctions by the United States within both Congress and civil society.

The materials for each week range from short newspaper articles and web posts to academic analyses and interviews. Some weeks have videos and films. All materials assigned are available on the web. We have also suggested supplementary materials; some of these are freely available on the web; others require access through a university or college library.

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Part I. What are sanctions and how should we study them

Week 1. What are Sanctions and how prevalent are they?

This week offers an overview of the past century of sanctions and a snapshot of current sanctions imposed by the US, the UN and the EU. It explores how to define sanctions and the various forms they take: economic and financial, general and targeted/smart, primary and secondary. It compares sanctions to tariffs, asking if these are similar or different ways of trying to shape another state's behavior. Finally, we look at whether sanctions are an alternative to war or war by other means.

How prevalent are sanctions? A brief history and overview

- Benjamin Coates, "A Century of Sanctions," <http://origins.osu.edu/article/economic-sanctions-history-trump-global>
- Current US sanctions, <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/sanctions-programs-and-country-information>
- Current United Nations sanctions, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/information>
- Current European Union sanctions, <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main>
- Joy Gordon, "The Hidden Power of New Economic Sanctions," *Current History*, January 2019. https://ecommons.luc.edu/philosophy_facpubs/40/

Defining sanctions

- Council on Foreign Relations, "What are Economic Sanctions?" <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-are-economic-sanctions>

Tariffs and sanctions

- Simon Constable, "Don't Conflate Tariffs with Sanctions," *Forbes*, April 4, 2028. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/simonconstable/2018/04/09/dont-conflate-tariffs-with-sanctions-the-implications-are-quite-different/#73aaf78c7374>
- William L. Anderson, "Tariffs are Sanctions," *Mises Daily Articles*, Dec. 17, 1999. <https://mises.org/library/tariffs-are-sanctions>

Are sanctions war or an alternative to war?

- Madre, "Sanctions are an Act of War: A Q&A about Economic Sanctions," <https://www.madre.org/press-publications/article/sanctions-are-act-war-qa-about-economic-sanctions>

- Matthew Petti, “Economic Sanctions: An Alternative to War or War by Alternative Means,” <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/2020-election/economic-sanctions-alternative-war-or-war-alternative-means-148996>
- Elizabeth S. Rogers, “Using Economic Sanctions to Prevent Deadly Conflict,” Belfer Center, Harvard. Introduction, section III and Conclusion, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/using-economic-sanctions-prevent-deadly-conflict>

Week 2. Are Sanctions legal?

This week explores the legal bases on which US and UN sanctions rest. It listens to international lawyers who argue the unilateral coercive measures, i.e. sanctions imposed by a single state such as the US, are illegal. We examine the process by which US Presidents can decide upon and impose sanctions and the insignificant Congressional role in shaping this ever more frequently used tool to shape the behavior of foreign governments. Finally, we examine the interactions of UN sanctions and unilateral ones, above all those of the US and EU ones.

US sanctions and US law

- Association of Certified Sanctions Specialists “About Sanctions. What are Sanctions?” <https://sanctionsassociation.org/about-sanctions/>
- 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/95/hr7738/text>
- NPR, “What a President Can Do Under The International Emergency Economic Powers Act, May 31, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/31/728754901/what-a-president-can-do-under-the-international-emergency-economic-powers-act>
- Brian O’Toole and Samantha Sultoon, “Sanctions explained: How a foreign policy problem becomes a sanctions program,” <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/feature/sanctions-explained-how-a-foreign-policy-problem-becomes-a-sanctions-program/>

Sanctions and international law

- Webinar on Unilateral Coercive Measures and Economic Sanctions as Acts of War and Aggression, minutes 9:30-17.00 Micol Savia and 1:18-1:35 Marti Schmidt. <https://nlginternational.org/2020/04/video-unilateral-coercive-measures-and-economic-sanctions-as-acts-of-war-and-aggression/>

UN sanctions

- United Nations Security Council, Sanctions and other Committees. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/sanctions-and-other-committees>

Secondary Sanctions

- Secretariat of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, Unilateral and Secondary Sanctions: An international Law Perspective, executive summary. 2013. <http://www.aalco.int/52ndsession/EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf>

Week 3. Are sanctions effective? Are they ethical?

This week will look at the lively debate about what sanctions are supposed to achieve, according to those who advocate them, and whether they in fact do so. Do they change the political behavior of sanctioned states? Destabilize them? Lead to regime change? And at what cost in terms of political repression and humanitarian consequences for health, education and mortality? Spoiler alert: even those who advocate sanctions most strongly, admit that sanctions have achieved their political aims in at most one-third of the cases where they were imposed.

Do general trade sanctions change the political behavior of targeted states?

- Richard N. Haass, Economic Sanctions, His testimony before the US Senate task force on Economic Sanctions. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/economic-sanctions/>
- Robert A. Pape, “Why Economic Sanctions do not Work,” *International Security*, 22:2 (Fall 1997). <https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/isec.22.2.90>
- Center for Economic and Policy Research, “The Case Against Economic Sanctions,” Jan. 10, 2020. <https://www.cepr.net/the-case-against-economic-sanctions/>

Are targeted sanctions more effective and ethical?

- Joy Gordon, “Smart Sanctions Revisited,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, 25:3 (2011). <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=philosophy-facultypubs>
- George A. Lopez, “In Defense of Smart Sanctions,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, 26:1 (2012). https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C33&q=George+A+Lopez+in+defense+of+smart+sanctions&oq=george+a+lopez+in+defen
- Richard Hanania, “Ineffective, Immoral, Politically Convenient: America’s Overreliance on Economic Sanctions and What to Do about It,” Cato Institute. <https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/ineffective-immoral-politically-convenient-americas-overreliance>

Part II. Sanctions and warfare, hot and cold

Week 4. Economic warfare in first half of twentieth century

There are a variety of ways in which countries can wage economic warfare; these include not only sanctions, but also blockades and sieges. Sometimes these are used in an effort to avert war, sometimes to stop a war in which the sanctioning countries or international organization are not directly involved, and sometimes they are an additional weapon deployed by states at war with one another. This week looks at examples of each of these in the period from World War I through World War II. They show that none of these forms of economic warfare prevented, shortened or stopped wars, however much damage they did to civilian populations.

Allied blockade of Germany in World War I

- Phillip J. Drew, “An Analysis of the Legality of Maritime Blockade in the Context of Twenty-First Century Humanitarian Law,” 2012, pp. 1-10, 18-20, 26-32.
<https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesecanada/vol2/OKQ/TC-OKQ-7028.pdf>

The German siege of Leningrad in World War II

- The Siege of Leningrad, 1941-1944
<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/leningrad.htm>
- “872 Days in Hell: 38 Chilling Photos of the Siege of Leningrad,”
<https://allthatsinteresting.com/siege-of-leningrad>

The Failure of Sanctions to prevent or stop wars

- G. Bruce Strang “The Worst of all Worlds:” Oil Sanctions and Italy's Invasion of Abyssinia, 1935–1936, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 19:2 (2008), 210-235.
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09592290802096257?casa_token=P82BXSLz2R0AAAAA%3Ay-3D0N_z8lJlky8Eb2NKfkDgScZxZi_1rvf_h3WiGiWz0N7KVG07m5MajKw0HS8lQQ5ab6yTUBSV
- Jeffrey Record, “Japan’s Decision to go to War in 1941: Some Enduring Lessons, Strategic Studies Institute, 2009, pp. i-ix, 12-23, 46-51.
<https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/1996.pdf>

Week 5. Sanctioning Communism in the Cold War

Economic warfare was a key part of how the United States waged the Cold War from the late 1940s until 1989. The readings explore why the US government prohibited the sale of strategic/militarily useful goods to the Soviet Union, the Communist States of Eastern Europe and the People’s Republic of China and at various times it pushed for a prohibition of all trade with these states. It examines how the US sought to mobilize, pressure or coerce its Western European allies and Japan to support

these American embargo policies via CoCom, the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls. Despite America's hegemonic position economically and militarily, it had only limited ability to get its Allies to comply and as was so often the case, the embargos had only limited impact on Soviet and Chinese military and economic development.

Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

- “Multilateral Export Control Policy: The Coordinating Committee (CoCom),” in U.S. Congress Office of Technology, Technology and East-West Trade, 1979, pp. 153-170. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc39412>.
- Nikita Khrushchev, “Speech at the Dinner of the Economic Club of New York,” Sept. 1959 in *Khrushchev in America*, pp. 51-61. <https://archive.org/details/khrushchevinamer006997mbp>
- Michael Mastanduno, “Trade as a Strategic Weapon: America and Alliance Export Control Policy in the Early Postwar Period,” *International Organization*, 42 (Winter 1988). https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C33&q=Michael+Mastanduno+Trade+as+a+strategic+&btnG=
- NPR, Morning Edition, “Farmers Caught Up in US Trade War Remember ‘80s Grain Embargo,” August, 16, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/08/16/639149657/farmers-caught-up-in-u-s-trade-war-s-remember-80-s-grain-embargo>

China

- Frank Cain, “The US led Embargo against China, 1949-52,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 18:4, (1995). https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C33&q=frank+cain+the+US+led+embargo+against+China&oq=frank+c

Week 6. Cuba

Since the Cuban Revolution of 1958, the U.S. has used sanctions to curb to limit or completely block trade, travel, investment, educational exchanges and remittances between Cuba and the U.S. It has tried to limit third countries' trade and investment with Cuba. Soviet aid limited the impact of the embargo, but after 1991 sanctions greatly hurt the Cuban economy. Nevertheless, U.S. sanctions failed to bring the regime change the U.S. has wanted for the past 60 years.

History of US Sanctions on Cuba

- Council on Foreign Relations Editors, “U.S.-Cuba Relations,” March 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-cuba-relations>.
- America's Embargo against Cuba, video by *The Economist*, Feb. 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2l1VGtDVTmU>

The Helms Burton Act

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helms%E2%80%93Burton_Act
- Congressional Research Service, “Cuba US Policy Overview, Nov. 20, 2020. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10045.pdf>
- "The War on Cuba," Video (12 min.) 2020. <https://portside.org/video/2020-12-04/war-cuba-episode-1>
- Joy Gordon, “El Bloqueo: The Cuban Embargo Continues,” *Harper’s Magazine*, July 2016. <https://harpers.org/archive/2016/07/el-bloqueo/>

Effects

- Margot Pepper, “The Costs of the Embargo: The 47-year-old blockade now costs the United States far more than it costs Cuba.” *Dollars & Sense*, March/April 2009. <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2009/0309pepper.html>
- “Cuba Says US Sanctions have caused nearly \$5.6 B in losses,” *Star Advertiser*, Oct. 22, 2020. <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/10/22/news/cuba-says-u-s-sanctions-have-caused-nearly-5-6b-in-losses/>
- Joy Gordon, "The U.S. Embargo Against Cuba and the Diplomatic Challenges to Extraterritoriality". <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/philosophy-facultypubs/20>

PART III. SANCTIONS SINCE THE 1990s

Week 7. Iraq

This week offers an overview of UN sanctions against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, which were imposed after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 in an effort to topple the Iraqi government. The sanctions led to shortages of food and medicine and crippled essential infrastructure such as water and electricity. These sanctions have led to bitter debates about the number of children who died as a consequence, but this debate at times misses the larger humanitarian disaster that unfolded in Iraq.

Some background to the sanctions

- Joy Gordon, *The Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions*, pp. 20-37. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0Z1dyiDeRhUC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- The UN Sanctions resolution 661, August 1990. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/661>

The debate on numbers

- John Pilger, “Paying the Price: The Killing of the Children of Iraq,” 2000. View the first 30 minutes of this documentary film. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSe5QidAI3s>
- Geneva International Center for Justice, “Razing the Truth about Sanctions Against Iraq,” 2018. <https://www.gicj.org/positions-opinions/gicj-positions-and-opinions/1188-razing-the-truth-about-sanctions-against-iraq>

Beyond the numbers

- Joy Gordon, “The Enduring Lessons of the Iraq Sanctions,” *MERIP*, June 2020. <https://merip.org/2020/06/the-enduring-lessons-of-the-iraq-sanctions/>

Week 8. Iran

Iran has been subject to various kinds of sanctions, by the United States, the UN, the European Union, on and off since the revolution of 1979. These sanctions intensified in the early twenty-first century in an American and European effort to stop an alleged Iranian nuclear weapons program. These sanctions were relaxed after the so-called Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) of 2015, but the Trump administration withdrew from that deal and reimposed sanctions. The economic limits have been devastating for the Iranian people during the COVID pandemic of 2020.

Post-1979 sanctions

- Josh Levs, “A Summary of Sanctions Against Iran,” *cnn.com*, January 23, 2012. <https://www.cnn.com/2012/01/23/world/meast/iran-sanctions-facts/index.html>

Sanctions and nukes post-2010

- Faridah Farhi, “Narrowing the Options on the Table,” *MERIP*, December 8, 2011. <https://merip.org/2011/12/narrowing-the-options-on-the-table/>

The triumph of diplomacy

- “Trita Parsi On the Politics Behind the Iran Nuclear Deal,” *KGOU*, March 9, 2018. audio interview or 7printed excerpts from the interview with Parsi <https://www.kgou.org/post/trita-parsi-politics-behind-iran-nuclear-deal>

The revenge of sanctions

- [Djavad Salehi-Isfahani](#), “With the US out, how can Iran benefit from the JCPOA?” *Brookings*, May 16, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/05/16/with-the-us-out-how-can-iran-benefit-from-the-jcpoa/>

- Josh Rogin, “Inside Steven Mnuchin’s ‘resistance’ to Trump’s Iran strategy” *Washington Post*, September 13, 2018.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/inside-steven-mnuchins-resistance-to-trumps-iran-strategy/2018/09/13/949a9286-b793-11e8-94eb-3bd52dfe917b_story.html?utm_term=.f8ec7bde8fc1
- “Six charts that show how hard US sanctions have hit Iran,” BBC News, December 9, 2019
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48119109>
- Natasha Turak, “‘Disturbed’ and ‘disappointed’ Pompeo slams EU plan to bypass Iran sanctions,” CNBC, September 27, 2018.
<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/27/pompeo-slams-eu-plan-to-avoid-iran-sanctions-disturbed-disappointed.html>

Covid and sanctions

- Niku Jafarnia, “U.S. Sanctions Worsen Covid-19 Impact in Iran,” *Kennedy School Review*, April 22, 2020.
<https://ksr.hkspublications.org/2020/04/22/u-s-sanctions-worsen-covid-19-impact-in-iran/>
- “Iran’s COVID-19 crisis: the urgent need for sanctions relief,” Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, March 2020. video
<https://quincyinst.org/2020/03/24/irans-covid-19-crisis-the-urgent-need-for-sanctions-relief/>
- Vera Ameli, “Sanctions and Sickness,” *New Left Review*, Mar/Apr 2020.
<https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii122/articles/vira-ameli-sanctions-and-sickness>
- The New York Times Editorial Board, “Iran’s Covid-19 Death Toll Is Rising. Show Mercy, Mr. Trump,” *New York Times*, October 13, 2020.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/13/opinion/iran-trump-sanctions-covid.html>

Week 9. Russia and China

American hostility to Russia goes back to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and to China it dates from the Revolution of 1949. Sanctions against both countries were an integral part of the Cold War. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990 renewed geopolitical rivalry soon returned in which the U.S. imposed an increasing number of sanctions. The U.S. lifted sanctions on China beginning in the 1980s but as China has emerged as an economic competitor and geopolitical rival, the U.S. has engaged in both tariff wars and targeted sanctions. This week’s readings look at the varied sanctions imposed on America’s former Cold War rivals in the new, post-Cold era, the varied justifications offered for them and the economic and political consequences of them.

Why Sanctions on Russia after the Cold War?

- Jeremy Kuzmarov, “A New Battlefield for the United States’: Russia Sanctions and the New Cold War,” *Socialism and Democracy*, 33:3 (2019).
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08854300.2020.1769383>
- Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Sanctions on Russia: An Overview,” March 23, 2020.
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF10779.pdf>

Outcome of Sanctions on Russia

- Dimitri Simes, “Putin is resurrecting Russia’s Cold War pact with Cuba,” *The Spectator*, Feb. 6, 2020.
<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/putin-is-resurrecting-russia-s-cold-war-pact-with-cuba>

Sanctions and Chinese-American rivalry

- Michael Klare, “How Will the US Counter China?” *Le Monde diplomatique*, Oct. 15, 2020.
<https://portside.org/2020-10-25/how-will-us-counter-china>
- Evgeny Morozov, “The Huawei War,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, Nov, 2020.
<https://mondediplo.com/2020/11/10huawei>
- Julien de Troullioud, “US-China Rivalry: When Great Power Competition Endangers Global Science,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Oct. 16, 2020.
https://thebulletin.org/2020/10/us-china-rivalry-when-great-power-competition-endangers-global-science/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=MondayNewsletter10192020&utm_content=SpecialTopics_USChinaRivalry_10162020

Xinjiang—human rights or Muslim Terrorism?

- Foreign Policy Research Institute, “The Uyghurs, China and Islamist Terrorism,” 2019.
<https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/12/roundtable-the-uyghurs-china-and-islamist-terrorism/>
- “Xinjiang: US sanctions on Chinese officials over 'abuse' of Muslims,” BBC, July 9 2020.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53355697>
- Reed Albergotti, “Apple is lobbying against a bill aimed at stopping forced labor in China,” *Washington Post*, Nov. 20, 2020.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/11/20/apple-uyghur/>

Chinese responses

- China and Iran draft a \$400 billion pact
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x--XmKAmJ40>
- “China to impose sanctions on U.S. firms over Taiwan arms sales” Reuters, Oct. 26, 2020.
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-taiwan/china-to-impose-sanctions-on-u-s-firms-over-taiwan-arms-sales-idUSKBN27B0P2>

Week 10. Other 21st Century Sanctions

Latin America, long the United States’ backyard, has not been immune from the punishment of sanctions. In the twenty-first century, they have been imposed upon Venezuela and Nicaragua and the sanctions against Cuba, begun in 1961 continue. All three countries are labelled by some in the US government as the troika of tyranny. Sanctions, along with neoliberal loan and aid policies, have harmed economic development across Central and South America and increased political unrest and human suffering. The U.S. continues to sanction North Korea and Zimbabwe, has imposed sanction on several countries in the Middle East, and is currently sanctioning the personnel of the International Criminal Court and its ally Germany for building the Nordstream gas line from Russia. The readings below focus primarily on Venezuela, for it is a current flash point of U.S. interventions of all sorts, but offer a sampling of the many punishing sanctions imposed on smaller and weaker states around the globe.

Venezuela

- Mark Weisbrod and Jeffrey Sachs, “Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela,” Center for Economic and Policy Research, April 2019.
<https://cepr.net/report/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela/>
- Luis Oliveros, “The Impact of Financial and Oil Sanctions on the Venezuelan Economy,” *WOLA Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas* (October 2020).
<https://www.wola.org/2020/10/new-report-us-sanctions-aggravated-venezuelas-economic-crisis/>
- Athenea Jiménez Lemon and Kevin Young, Venezuelans Under Siege. Watch minutes 10-21 and 27-37. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7aqGjwry0k>
- US Sanctions Venezuela Again to Prove Socialism Doesn’t Work. Video
<https://venezuelanalysis.com/video/14787>
- Steve Ellner, “What is Next for Washington After Its Failed Venezuela Strategy?” September 24, 2020. <https://venezuelanalysis.com/print/14977>

Asia

- Stephan Haggard, “Questions of Deterrence: Can Sanctions Work against North Korea?” *Global Asia*, Sept. 2017.
https://www.globalasia.org/v12no3/cover/questions-of-deterrence-can-sanctions-work-against-north-korea_stephan-haggard

Middle East & Africa

- Gregory Shupak, “Hiding the Impact of US Sanctions on Lebanon,” *Fair*, Aug. 26, 2020.
<https://fair.org/home/hiding-the-impact-of-us-sanctions-on-lebanon/>
- Aaron Matè, “Ex-UK ambassador: War on Syria continues with US occupation, sanctions, propaganda,” *The Gray Zone*, video. Dec. 20, 2020. Minutes 1-8.
<https://thegrayzone.com/2020/12/20/ex-uk-ambassador-war-on-syria-continues-with-us-occupation-sanctions-propaganda/>
- Joy Gordon, “Yemen: where is the UN Security Council?” *Le Monde diplomatique*, Nov. 6, 2018. <https://mondediplo.com/outsidein/yemen-where-is-the-un-security-council>

Africa

- “Zimbabwe sanctions: Who is being targeted?” BBC, Oct. 21, 2019.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50169598>

International Criminal Court

- Jessica Corbertt, “Trump Sanctions Top ICC Officials Probing US War Crimes in Afghanistan,” *Common Dreams*, September 3, 2020.

Part IV. non-state sanctions, divestment and boycott campaigns

Week 11. Confronting apartheid South Africa

From 1948 through the end of apartheid in the early 1990s the UN, the US, various European countries and many non-state actors repeatedly debated whether sanctions should and could be imposed on apartheid South Africa. In addition to limited and voluntary state and UN sanctions, many corporations, churches, universities and other groups divested from South Africa and boycotted sporting events and cultural, educational and intellectual exchanges. South African liberation movements and most non-white South Africans supported such state and non-state sanctions. Whether and how much boycotts, divestment and sanctions hurt the South African economy, changed the attitudes of politicians and businessmen and contributed to the end of apartheid remains a subject of debate.

Who wanted sanctions and why

- Neta C Crawford, “Trump “Card or Theater? An Introduction to Two Sanctions Debates,” in *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa*, ed. by Neta C. Crawford and Audie Klotz, pp.3-24. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/how-sanctions-work-lessons-south-africa-edited-neta-c-crawford-and-audie-klotz>
- David Crary, “Tutu calls for Economic Sanctions Against South Africa,” AP, April 2, 1986. <https://apnews.com/article/9657ea631dc8cd6ae090453489e61591>
- Tshidiso Maloka, “Sanctions Hurt but Apartheid Kills!?: The Sanctions Campaign and Black Workers,” in *How Sanctions Work*, ed. by Neta C. Crawford and Audie Klotz, pp. 178-192. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/how-sanctions-work-lessons-south-africa-edited-neta-c-crawford-and-audie-klotz>
- 15 Reasons for Municipal Sanctions against CDC, IBM, ITT, AND MOTOROLA by the D.C. City Government. https://Africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=210-808-3822

Did Sanctions undermine apartheid

- Philip I. Levy, “Sanctions on South Africa: What did They Do?” *American Economic Review* 89:2 (May 1999). https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C33&q=Philip+I+levy+sanctions+on+south+africa&coq=philip+I+Levy
- Gay Seidman, “Divestment Dynamics: Mobilizing, Shaming, and Changing the Rules,” *Social Research*, 82:4, Winter 2015. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C33&q=gay+seidman+divestment+dynamics&btnG=

Week 12. Israel-Palestine and BDS-Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions

Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement against Israel’s ongoing occupation of Palestinian land and in defense of Palestinian rights to return to their homes, as well as for full equality for Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel. BDS is a grassroots campaign aimed at persuading civil society and states to pressure Israel to change its policies on Palestinians. It is modeled after the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and has many allies in the U.S. and globally. Critics charge it with anti-Semitism, delegitimizing Israel as a Jewish state, and denying freedom of expression and have launched campaigns against BDS, especially on college campuses. This week’s readings provide an overview of the BDS campaign and the counter campaigns, the debates around BDS, and the parallels and differences between BDS and the anti-apartheid movement.

What is BDS

- BDS Movement website, <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>

The Debate within the American Jewish Community

- Jewish Voices for Peace, “The Only Recognizable Feature of Hope Is Action.” <https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/jvp-supports-the-bds-movement/>
- “J Street policy principles on the Global BDS Movement and boycotts, divestment and sanctions efforts” <https://jstreet.org/policy/boycott-divestment-and-sanctions-bds/#.X1EavtYpDq0>
- Anti-Defamation League, “BDS: The Global Campaign to Delegitimize Israel,” <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/bds-the-global-campaign-to-delegitimize-israel>
- David Halbfinger Michael Wines, Steven Erlanger, “Is B.D.S. Anti-Semitic? A Closer Look at the Boycott Israel Campaign,” *New York Times*, July 27, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/27/world/middleeast/bds-israel-boycott-antisemitic.html>

Campaigns against BDS

- Ben White, Bina Ahmad and Phyllis Bennis, “Shrinking Space & the BDS Movement,” (Amsterdam: Transnational Institute and Institute for Policy Studies, October 2018). https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/web_the_bds_movement_0.pdf

BDS and the movement against apartheid

- Statement from Archbishop Desmond Tutu on US anti-BDS legislation, Just Foreign Policy, April 14, 2014. <https://peaceandjustice.org/statement-from-archbishop-desmond-tutu-on-us-anti-bds-legislation/>
- [Dr. Marwan Darweish](#) and [Andrew Rigby](#), “Can BDS copy success of anti-apartheid movement?” *Middle East Eye*, June 11, 2018. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/can-bds-copy-success-anti-apartheid-movement>

Anti BDS laws

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-BDS_laws#

Part V. Responses

Week 13. Blowback to Sanctions

The hardships imposed by US and UN sanctions have been well documented, continue and even increase. President George W. Bush approved over 1,800 sanctions on foreign governments, central banks, and individuals, President Barack Obama over 2,000 and President Trump over 3,700

sanctions. It is well-known that the sanctions rarely achieve their goals of changing the regimes or even the practices of their targets. Less attention has been paid to their unintended consequences. These include encouragement of illicit trade and smuggling, the alienation of U.S. allies whose commercial and financial relationships are interrupted, and challenges to the dollar, the hegemonic currency of trade and thus of sanctions enforcement. Some countries are trading with each other in their local currencies, others are hoarding gold as a hedge, and alternative digital currencies are being created. Just as the pound sterling was slowly replaced as the dominant currency of reserves and trade by a rising dollar in the 1920s when the British Empire began its demise, so the dollar as the face of United States global dominance may be facing a similar fate, in part due to the unintended consequences, i.e. blowback, of sanctions.

General

- Keith Preble and Dr. Bryan R. Early, “Sanctions Busting?: The Risks and Rewards to those Trying to Circumvent the System,” *Sanctions Alert*, June 15, 2018.
<https://sanctionsalert.com/sanctions-busting-the-risks-and-rewards-to-those-trying-to-circumvent-the-system/>

Illicit and criminal evasions

- “Feared Shabab Exploit Somali Banking and Invest in Real Estate, U.N. Says,” *New York Times*, Oct. 11, 2020.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/11/world/africa/feared-shabab-exploit-somali-banking-and-invest-in-real-estate-un-says.html>

The case of Iran

- Saeed Ghasseminejad, “UAE Continues to Serve as Hub for Iranian Sanctions Evasion,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracy*, Mar 20, 2020.
<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2020/03/20/uae-continues-to-serve-as-hub-for-iranian-sanctions-evasion/>
- Lucia Kassai and Fabiola Zerpa, “Venezuela and Iran defy U.S. sanctions with new tanker delivery,” *World Oil*, Sept. 14, 2020.
<https://www.worldoil.com/news/2020/9/14/venezuela-and-iran-defy-us-sanctions-with-new-tanker-delivery>
- China and Iran draft a \$400 billion pact, August 10, 2020. video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x--XmKAmJ40>

The case of Russia

- Judy Twigg, “Russia is Winning the Sanctions Game,” *The National Interest*, March 14, 2019.
<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/skeptics/russia-winning-sanctions-game-47517>
- Matthew Smith, “Russia is Winning the Battle for Venezuela’ Oil,” *Oilprice.com*, Aug. 24, 2020.

<https://oilprice.com/Energy/Energy-General/Russia-Is-Winning-The-Battle-For-Venezuelas-Oil.html>

- Sergei V. Lavrov, “Cuba and Russia look to the Future of Bilateral Relations with Optimism,” *Granma*, May 11, 2020.
<http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2020-05-11/cuba-and-russia-look-to-the-future-of-bilateral-relations-with-optimism>

The case of world opinion

- Pranshu Verma, “Trump’s Sanctions on International Court May Do Little Beyond Alienating Allies,” *New York Times*, Oct. 18, 2020.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/world/europe/trump-sanctions-international-criminal-court.html?action=click&module=News&pgtype=Homepage>

The case of dollar supremacy

- Niall Ferguson, “America’s power is on a financial knife edge,” Sept. 15, 2019.
<http://www.niallferguson.com/journalism/finance-economics/americas-power-is-on-a-financial-knife-edge>
- “Is the World’s Reserve Currency in Trouble?” *International Economy*, Winter 2020.
<http://www.theoverholtgroup.com/media/Articles-China/TIE-W20-DollarRoleSymp.pdf>

Week 14. Resistance

Opposition to US sanctions has been growing. At home and abroad there are calls for rejecting all economic sanctions, for combatting secondary sanctions, and for relaxing sanctions in the face of the Covid 19 pandemic. There are bills in the US Congress to implement Congressional oversight of sanctions that are imposed by the President and to lift sanctions against North Korea for humanitarian reasons. Several peace and social justice organizations are working actively against US sanctions. There are many ways to get involved in these important efforts.

Calls to action

- Nicholas Mulder, “A Leftist Foreign Policy Should Reject Economic Sanctions,” *The Nation*, Nov. 20, 2018.
- Ellie Geranmayeh and Manuel Lafont Rapnouil, “Meeting the Challenge of Secondary Sanctions,” European Council on Foreign Relations, 2019.
https://ecfr.eu/publication/meeting_the_challenge_of_secondary_sanctions/
- Cyril Zenda, “Why Zimbabweans want EU and US Sanctions Lifted,” *TRT World*, Nov. 5, 2019.
<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/why-zimbabweans-want-eu-and-us-sanctions-lifted-31132>

- Pope Francis reiterates call to relax sanctions at UN General Assembly, Sept. 25, 2020.
<http://www.mppre.gob.ve/en/2020/09/25/pope-francis-call-relax-sanctions-un-general-assembly/>
- Progressive International, “Urgent Call to End the Illegal Sanctions,” Dec. 8, 2020.
<https://popularresistance.org/urgent-call-to-end-the-illegal-sanctions/>
- Coalition for the International Criminal Court opposes US sanctions against the ICC.
<https://www.coalitionfortheicc.org/document/joint-statement-oppose-trump-administration-measures-against-international-criminal-court>

Bills before US Congress

- House resolution on congressional oversight of sanctions. Congressional website gives Overview of content and supporters and current status of bill.
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5879/all-info?r=2&s=1>.
Introduced 2020
- Markey-Levin bill on exempting food and medicine from sanctions against North Korea.
<https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-markey-and-rep-levin-to-introduce-legislation-to-streamline-north-korea-humanitarian-assistance>

Organization campaigning against US Sanctions

- National Iranian American council advocates lifting sanctions against Iran.
<https://www.niacouncil.org>
- Code Pink is a women-led grassroots organization working to end US wars, militarism and sanctions and redirect tax dollars to healthcare, education and green jobs.
<https://www.codepink.org>
- Peace Action is working to promote diplomacy with Iran and North Korea and lift sanctions against these two countries. It lobbies Congress and educates the public.
<https://www.peaceaction.org>
- Sanctions Kill advocates an end to all US sanctions and economic warfare. It educates about sanctions and lobbies Congress
<https://sanctionskill.org>

Further Readings

Week 1. What are sanctions?

- Commander John P. Coray, “Military Enforcement of Economic Sanctions: Smart Changes for the Future,”
<https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a377199.pdt>

Week 2. Are sanctions legal?

- Michel Brzoska, “International Sanctions before and beyond UN Sanctions,” *International Affairs*, 91.6 (2015)
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-2346.12449>.
- Tom Ruys and Cedric Ryngaert, “Secondary Sanctions: A Weapon out of Control? The International Legality of and European Responses to US Secondary Sanctions,” *British Yearbook of International Law*, 2020.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bybil/braa007>

Week 3. Are sanctions effective?

- Bryan Early, *Busted Sanctions: Explaining Why Economic Sanctions Fail*, Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Andrew Mack and Asif Khan, “The Efficacy of UN Sanctions,” *Security Dialogue*, 32:3 (September 2000)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26296655?seq=1>
- Reed M. Wood, “‘A Hand upon the Throat of the Nation,’: Economic Sanctions and State Repression, 1976-2001. *International Studies Quarterly*, 52:3 (September 2008).
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/29734248?seq=1>

Week 4. Economic warfare in the first half of the twentieth century

- Nicholas Mulder, *The Economic Weapon: Interwar Internationalism and the Rise of Sanctions, 1914-1945*, Yale University Press, Forthcoming 2021.
- Isabel V. Hull, *A Scrap of Paper: Breaking and Making International Law During the Great War*. Cornell University Press, 2014. Chapters 5 and 6 on blockade of Germany
- Sam Sweitz, “Counterbalancing the Rising sun: How America Saved Europe by Sanctioning Japan,” *Politics in Theory and Practice*, 2016.
<https://politicstheorypractice.com/2016/03/30/counterbalancing-the-rising-sun-how-america-saved-europe-by-sanctioning-japan>

Week 5. Sanctioning communism in the cold war

- Michael Mastanduno, “Strategies of Economic Containment: U.S. Trade Relations with the Soviet Union,” *World Politics*, 37:4 (July 1985)
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2010342?seg=1>
- National Academy of Sciences, *Finding Common Ground: US Export Controls in a Changed Global Environment*, 1991. Appendix G “The Evolution of Export Control Policy: 1949-1989.”
<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/1617/finding-common-ground-us-export-controls-in-a-changed-global>
- Shu Guang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America’s Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949-1963*. Stanford University Press, 2001.

Week 6. Cuba

- Paolo Spadoni, *Failed sanctions: Why the US embargo against Cuba could never work*. University Press of Florida, 2010.
- Richard Garfield and Sarah Santana, “The Impact of Economic Crisis and the US Embargo on Health in Cuba,” *American Journal of Public Health* (January 1997).
<http://archives.usaengage.org/archives/news/9701ajph.html>
- Bryan Early, *Busted Sanctions: Explaining Why Economic Sanctions Fail*. Stanford University Press, 2015. Chapter 7.

Week 7. Iraq

- Joy Gordon, *The Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions*. Harvard University Press, 2010
- Tim Dyson and Valeria Cetoreilli, “Changing Views on Child Morality and Economic Sanctions in Iraq: a History of Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics,” *British Medical Journal of Global Health*, 17:2 (2017).
<https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/2/2/e000311.full.pdf>

Week 8. Iran

- Kenneth Katzman, Iran Sanctions (RS20871). Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, November 18, 2018. Updated November 18, 2020.
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- Joy Gordon, “Crippling Iran: The UN Security Council and the Tactic of Deliberate Ambiguity,” *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, 44:3 (2013).
<https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=philosophy-facultypubs>

Week 9. Russia and China

- “The Magnitsky Act,” film
<http://www.magnitskyact.com>
- Richard Connelly, *Russia’s Response to Sanctions*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108227346>
- “Xinjiang: A Report and Resource Compilation,” Sept. 2020
<https://www.qiaocolletive.com/en/education/sinjiang#introduction>
- James Dobbins, et al, “Overextending and Unbalancing Russia: Assessing the Impact of Cost-Imposing Options. Rand Corporations, 2019.
https://rand.org/pubs/research_brief/RB10014.html

Week 10. Other 21st century sanctions

- Jennifer Goett, “Nicaragua: Sanctions in Three Acts,” *NACLA: Report on the Americas*, 51:1(Spring 2019).
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10714839.2019.1593680?casa_token=Op3feCM8j_UAAAAA:TL_4j7GMvSSruhJITEwMdX-QqZuaxBjBc-7ApYPLzv4MjXQ8Rd1uforLCVh6cCJB4KHx7AawNx7N
- Alexander Main, “Out of the Ashes of Economic War,” *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 52.1 (Spring 2020).
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https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un_documents_type/sanctions-committee-documents/?ctype=DPRK%20%28North%20Korea%29&cbtype=dprk-north-korea

Week 11. Confronting apartheid in South Africa

- Chronology of Sanctions against Apartheid
<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/bbm%3A978-1-4039-1591-7%2F1.pdf>
- UN 1985 Debate on the Question of South Africa.
Google 85-88_08-5-The Question of South Africa and a pdf of the debate will download.
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<https://africanactivist.msu.edu/browse.php>

Week 12. Israel-Palestine and BDS

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https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/an-effort-to-thwart-some-boycotts-of-israel-fails-the-free-speech-test/534627/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMImar05bTN6wIVCivICh1miwbPEAMYASAAEgJDePD_BwE
- “The Changing Relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jews,” American University Center for Israel Studies and the Jewish Studies Program, Oct. 2020. Video
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Week 13. Blowback

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-