



Contributions to
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT,
PEACE ECONOMICS
AND DEVELOPMENT

VOLUME 10

PUTTING TEETH IN THE TIGER: IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARMS EMBARGOES



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FOREWORD

International sanctions by organizations like the United Nations or European Union and individual countries, such as the United States, have become a useful tool of foreign policy. It is needed to prevent the target countries from threatening the economic or political interest of the sanctioning organization and their allies. Sanctions are also applied on moral and ideological ground like supporting human rights and freedom, trade policies and patent violations, protectionist policies, etc. However, it is widely believed that the sanctions are not effective. Some of the sanctions are also costly for the organization implementing the sanctions and the target countries can always go around the sanctions and are successful in getting sources of supply.

An often-imposed sanction is the armed embargo. There have been many studies on sanctions, but few on the topic of arms embargo. The evidence in the literature, however, is that arms embargo does not have any impact on the target countries. Most of the conclusions in those studies were drawn on anecdotes without making any scientific analysis using analytical techniques. It is true that arms embargo itself may not be effective, but it may be very helpful in the broader foreign policy objectives. Sanctions and its effectiveness can also be studied in the framework of Public Choice theory taking into consideration of maximization of the choices of decision makers. It can be also related to domestic policies of sanctioning countries.

Manas Chatterji
Series Editor
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INTRODUCTION

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARMS EMBARGOES: ANALYTICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

Collective sanctions have long been a contested instrument of international politics, especially since 1990, when United States and large power use of the technique increased to the point where Richard Haass declared that a “sanctions epidemic” had emerged (Haass & O’Sullivan, 1999). Regional bodies, most notably by the European Union (EU), paralleled this trend through a dramatic increase in their own resort to sanctions (Kreutz, 2005). The imposition of sanctions by the United Nations (UN) reached the point that, in comparison to pre-1989 behavior, the 1990s were labeled “the sanctions decade” (Cortright & Lopez, 2000).

Yet, coercive sanctions under UN sponsorship were not new tools of statecraft. They are specifically mentioned in Chapter VII of the Charter of the UN as one of the two instruments available to enforce international peace and security. However, the rate of “success” of sanctions, if measured by changes in the behavior of targets, has been low. The imposition of sanctions often led to condemnation of their comprehensive economic effect on humanitarian grounds (Gordon, 1999). This critique was most pronounced in the cases of Iraq and Haiti the early 1990s and has instigated the search for “smart” sanctions (Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1997; Pape, 1997; Elliott, 1998; Doxey, 1999; Cortright & Lopez, 2002a, 2002b; Wallenstein, 2002; Wallenstein & Staibano, 2005).

Arms embargoes comprise one of the major “targeted” or “smart” sanctions with discernible effects on the targets, while projecting as little damage as possible on the wider society. (Cortright & Lopez, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Fruchart, Holtom, Wezeman, Strandow, & Wallenstein, 2007). The embargoes of arms occupy a preferred position among “smart” sanctions in that, on the one hand, they are an established and frequently used form of sanctions and provide a mechanism by which nations may respond to crisis by “doing something” while, on the other hand, such embargoes seldom

impose unusual costs on the imposer. However, arms embargoes often rely on a number of factors for their success.

As is the case with trade sanctions, arms embargoes have often been assessed an apparent low rate of success, yet remain a widely used form of international sanctions. In fact, 19 of the 20 UN sanction regimes mandated by 2005 were arms embargoes, or had such an embargo as an element in the sanction package (see list in concluding chapter). In addition to sanctions mandated by the UN, the United States, the EU, and its applicant states – all powerful players in the international arms market – have announced the termination of arms sales and deliveries vis-à-vis notorious violators of international law and human rights.¹ Through 1987–2006, the period under investigation in this volume, the EU has imposed arms embargoes in 24 separate cases. The United States has halted arms deliveries to at least 35 countries in the past decade (see Appendix 3 of Chapter 9). While arms embargoes have been especially popular as an instrument employed to stifle and stop wars, they were also used as a reaction to gross violations of human rights, as a means of counter-terrorism and to foster democratization.

The policy and scholarly literature on arms embargoes has identified a number of factors that reduce their effectiveness. Among these are the limited participation of suppliers in arms embargoes, especially members of the permanent five (P5) of the UN Security Council. A recent study illustrates the problem by documenting that at the point of passing the last 21 multilateral arms embargoes, in 9 cases one or more P5 members had already established on-going military support for one of the parties about to be targets of the embargo. (Fruchart et al., 2007). Analysts in the non-governmental organization (NGO) community (e.g., *Amnesty International*, 2006) have regularly documented lack of overall enforcement, while scholars have examined in some detail problems of implementation on the ground in supplier countries; weak border control by neighboring countries; and, the emergence of gray and black arms markets (Brzoska, 1991; Brzoska & Pearson, 1994; Knight, 1998; Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1997; Cortright & Lopez, 2000; Bondi, 2001). Some analysts have argued that UN embargoes imposed in civil war conditions have actually increased the havoc such wars generate and more attention much be devoted to target selection and the logic of engagement with parties affected (Tierney, 2005). On the contrary, recent work indicates that under certain conditions, as when arms embargoes are combined with UN peace-keeping focus, the success of an embargo increases (Fruchart et al., 2007). The varied problems of implementation of arms embargoes

have attracted close attention and led to an increased interest in improving their efficacy (Cortright & Lopez, 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Tostensen & Bull, 2002; Brzoska, 2003).

Consistent with these concerns, the German government sponsored a series of meetings among international experts to collect and ventilate proposals on how to improve arms embargoes and travel sanctions. The entire process, which brought together academics and government experts from a large number of countries, was organized by the Bonn International Center for Conversion (Brzoska, 2000, 2001). The academics and government experts involved in the “Bonn-Berlin” process focused on the improvement of legal and practical sanctions mechanisms. The Swedish government later asked the Department for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Uppsala to conduct a similar exercise focusing on the implementation of sanctions, including arms embargoes (Wallenstein, Staibano, & Eriksson, 2002; Wallenstein & Staibano, 2005; Strandow, 2006; Fruchart et al., 2007). These interactions between academics and government experts proved useful in assisting governments and the UN with the implementation of embargoes.

Beginning with the 1996 arms embargo against groups connected to the former government of Rwanda, the UN now regularly monitors arms embargoes through expert groups (Berman, 2001). One result is that a number of countries often named in connection with arms embargo violations in the 1990s, such as Bulgaria, have improved their export control systems.² But the changes that have been instituted thus far fall short of the measures suggested in the Bonn-Berlin and Stockholm Processes as well as recommendations made as a result of various case studies by the various monitoring bodies (Cortright & Lopez, 2002a, 2002b; Wallenstein & Staibano, 2005).

TOWARD A NEW FRAMEWORK AND MORE NUANCED CRITERIA

Considering the frequent use of arms embargoes at the national, regional, and international level, there has been relatively little systematic investigation of the conditions for their success or failure, or in distinguishing among the various problems related to arms embargoes. The available literature, taking its cue from the more general sanctions assessments (Hufbauer, Schott, & Elliot, 1990; Pape, 1997), often assumes that arms embargoes do not work (Control Arms, 2006; Vines, 2007; Yidhego, 2007). And some condemn the arms embargoes as doing additional harm when they ban

weapons coming into a conflict with discriminating between those who are law and norm violators and those who are attempting to defend themselves as victims (Tierney, 2005). However, the perception of widespread ineffectiveness is mostly based on loose analyses of singular cases and a failure to appreciate fully both the dynamics of the arms market and the different goals for arms embargoes. The lack of good studies on arms embargo implementation is partly due to the complexities of studying the subject. Thus, the recent Uppsala-SIPRI study, which has combined on-site analysis in Liberia and Sierra Leone with more traditional expert interviews and data gathering, may be one model for more detailed future research (Holtom, 2007a, 2007b; Fruchart et al., 2007).

However, there remains a great deal of information available on arms flows in general, and, therefore, more systematic scrutiny of arms embargoes is possible. Consequently, however useful suggestions for improving arms embargo regimes, such as those made in the Bonn-Berlin and Stockholm Processes of sanctions reform, may be, they may lack as broad and systematic a basis for their recommendations as they might otherwise have. To undertake a more systematic study proves useful due to the described gap between the popularity of arms embargoes and the generally accepted problems of implementation. This book is designed to provide a better basis for arms embargo implementation through analyzing past experiences on the basis of an analytical framework of incentives and disincentives for effective arms embargo implementation and the examination of a number of case studies that attempt to employ this framework.

Our framework begins with the stipulation that arms embargo design and implementation are the result of complex decision-making by senders and recipients. Without the decision by senders, there can, by definition, be no arms embargoes. Therefore, sender decision-making is a crucial element of the analysis of arms embargoes. At the same time, recipients are also very important. They can dramatically influence the effectiveness of arms embargoes through a variety of countermeasures. The central research question of the volume then is under what conditions have arms embargoes been successful in the past? Our working research hypothesis is that successful sanction regimes depend to an important extent on understanding and affecting incentives and disincentives in the target as well as arms supplier countries. In only rare cases have incentives and disincentives been examined regarding arms embargoes (Cortright & Lopez, 2005).

A precondition for the study of the success of arms embargoes is to refine the measure of their effectiveness. In both public perception and academic study, high standards of success dominate the field. Studies see arms

embargoes as having failed when arms continue to be delivered to targeted states or groups, and the targeted policies are not changed. As pointed out by David A. Baldwin (Baldwin, 1985, 2000; see also Drezner, 2000), however, such strong criteria are not concomitant with political decision-making over sanctions. Real politics is based on cost-benefit considerations of sanctions, as well as the policy alternatives available. Academics have also tended to limit their research on the effectiveness of sanctions, including arms embargoes, to the examination of select variables, such as changes in targeted policies, instead of considering a broader spectrum of success.

Until recently, this narrow academic approach has consistently been based on the dominant studies of the Institute of International Economics (Hufbauer et al., 1990). Their much quoted conclusion on pre-1990s sanctions is that the instrument can only be considered “effective” in about one-third of the cases. These authors focused on economic indicators for effectiveness.³ For arms embargoes, the criterion of success most often used is whether arms reach the target after the imposition of an embargo. This criterion will most likely never be met as long as there remain gray and black markets for arms. More subtle measures could be connected to changes in the conduct of war, getting opponents to the negotiating table or to an increase in the price of weapons. In essence, what has not been examined is the success of the arms embargoes in effecting the unacceptable status quo.

One insight present in the literature that can be considered helpful deals with dependence on arms transfers (Catrina, 1988; Krause, 1992; Brzoska & Pearson, 1994) and public goods theory (Kaempfer & Lowenberg, 1999). In dependency analysis, however, experts should also explore the broader set of factors set out above in our analytical framework, distinguishing between effects on sets of domestic actors and their reactions. A discussion concerning levels of “effectiveness,” both with respect to the various types of effects and regarding the various actors, is an overarching theme of this book. Public goods theory asserts that arms embargoes get more efficient with the number of suppliers that cooperate. However, implementation becomes more difficult to monitor as the number of participants increases. As expanding participation in arms embargoes incurs transaction costs, the incentive for a free ride is high due to strong competition and increasing prices on the black market. It seems useful to investigate whether UN arms embargoes that bind all arms suppliers are more effective than those imposed by regional groups of important suppliers, such as the EU, or a single important supplier, such as the United States. Thus, the existing theory that more participants increase the effectiveness of the embargo may be offset by the fact that multilateral sanctions are more difficult to enforce.

An important but unexplored parallel question is which actors among the supplier states are adhering to, or “championing,” arms embargoes and what induces states to implement them effectively. Some suppliers have greater implementation costs, in both economic and political terms, than others. In some countries where arms industries are an important source of employment, strong lobbying groups can be affected by a decision to stop arms exports. They may lobby the government to adopt a loose interpretation of an arms embargo. Illegal activity in defiance of an arms embargo will often be stimulated by the higher margins of trade to embargoed states. Lobbying and black market behavior on the supply side are almost as difficult to observe as are their results in targeted regions. However, the experience of research on recent embargo cases reveals that the synthesis of information available in the news media, special journals, and official reports yields necessary, relevant data. The data will never be perfect, yet it is often sufficient to judge trends with a reasonable degree of accuracy. The recent Uppsala-SIPRI collaborative documentation substantiates this (Fruchart et al., 2007).

Clearly, social scientists should adhere to the highest standards of measurement accuracy and data reliability. This is what makes the transfer of arms across malleable borders through gray and black markets a notoriously difficult subject of research. There is a lack of reliable official data cross-nationally or in time-series, and international sources can only partly fill the gap. However, as pointed out in Brzoska and Pearson (1994, Chapter 2), much information can be gleaned from looking at event sources such as regional newspapers and specialized arms trade journals. The data situation has improved somewhat lately, especially in the field of small arms. Major research efforts are underway to collect data on transfers of small arms and light weapons (see the website of the relevant NGO, www.iansa.org), and a good part of this research is related to efforts to improve the control of small arms and light weapons since the late 1990s (see, e.g., *Small Arms Survey*, 2005) as well as the UN monitoring groups mentioned earlier.

One major difficulty in studying the success of sanctions, including arms embargoes, is insulating the effects of sanctions from other policies at work in a targeted country. The Serbian or Iraqi economies, for instance, were just damaged not only by the international sanctions but also by the economic policies and war machines of their leaders. Their leaders were able to stay in place for so long, not just despite the sanctions, but, to some extent, because of the sanctions. The imposition of sanctions, including arms embargoes, leads to countermeasures by targeted states or groups, many of which were studied in the Stockholm Process. One of these

countermeasures is to create alternate ways of supplies, such as for arms. These and related factors comprise another essential factor to study.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

The chapters in this study examine a number of elements that are central to shaping the effectiveness of arms embargoes as we have discussed them earlier. These include actual arms transfer relations, including options for the substitution of these relations with other means of supply such as domestic production; causes for the implementation of the arms embargoes; type and nature of the sanctioned behavior; decision-making within the targeted country or group; effects on targeted countries; identification of domestic actors in the target country that gain or lose from the sanctions; as well as the implementation of arms embargoes by embargoing states. The case studies describe patterns in arms transfers and embargo-busting, causes for arms embargoes, and their effects in targeted countries and supplier implementation.

Much of the analysis undertaken in the case study chapters is framed by the measures of effectiveness developed in the next chapter and the identification of major variables hypothesized to influence arms embargo success. The methodology proposed here follows the tradition of focused and structured case studies (George, 1979). The case studies were selected to provide a broad range of situations, with respect to sanction objectives, length of the sanctions period, the sender of sanctions, type of target, scope of the sanctions, and geographical location of the sanctions episode. To a great extent, the “bias” of the chapters is toward United Nations Security Council embargoes, but other important cases, such as the US measures against Pakistan for a decade, are included as well. The chapter authors draw from wide ranging sources of both a global and local format, relying on our own analysis of available data, information, and previous analyses to generate our discussions and findings.

In Chapter 1, Michael Brzoska builds from the existing scholarly claims of the strengths and weaknesses of arms embargoes and from the various structural attempts at reforming arms embargo design and implementation to pose the challenge of what it means to evaluate the effectiveness of such measures. Drawing from the literature and analysis of arms flows and arms trade, he sketches a series of multi-leveled goals that can be employed in scrutinizing arms embargoes. These categories and concerns form the framework, which is used in varied ways in the case studies that follow.

In Chapter 2, Oldrich Bures and George A. Lopez examine anew the often analyzed case of the arms embargo against Iraq. Their contribution to our knowledge base is the examination of the flow of a vast array of conventional weaponry that was one aim of the Hussein regime in its quest to evade the strictly enforced sanctions. Their analysis shows that more than in most sanctions episodes, the unreliability of the black market and the strength of the monitoring and interdiction system made it impossible for the Iraqis to acquire any integrated weapons systems. At the same time, a potpourri of weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials did enter the country, which, when combined with the inability of the American armed forces to control weapons depots and ammunition caches around Iraq following their invasion of spring 2003, led these very same materials to arm the insurgency that exacts such high costs from the US forces in the following years.

In Chapter 3, Wolf-Christian Paes provides a thorough examination of the decade long and diverse embargo experience of the international community in its attempts to control arms flowing into the wars in Yugoslavia. Paes examines the complexities and often contradictory dictates of the arms embargoes placed against all parties from 1991 to 1995 and discusses the difficult issue that the war's imbalances and inequities of parties and purposes imposed on those who wanted to hold to a universal embargo. Paes also shows convincingly that the 1992–1995 embargo against Serbia and Montenegro was successful in various ways, while the final phase of sanctions during the Kosovo crisis in 1998 was much less successful. In Chapter 4 Sumita Kumar deals with one of the more confounding cases of arms sanctions in scrutinizing the saga of US measures designed to deny nuclear development to Pakistan during the 1990s. Kumar deftly shows that the dramatic inconsistency of US goals, its use of coercive instruments, and the US failure to appreciate the constellation of motivations guiding Pakistan and other actors in the region contributed to sanctions failure.

The next four chapters in the book examine the weighty complexities of imposing and enforcing arms embargoes in Africa's worst cases of internal wars. In Chapter 5, Mareike Wenzel and Sami Faltas document thoroughly the intertwined nature of the wars and sanctions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Their analysis of the role of Charles Taylor's sanctions busting systems as well as the lack of enforcement by a myriad of regional and global actors makes this an exceedingly important chapter in the book. They give serious assessment to the utility and effectiveness of the secondary sanctions imposed in this case and show that while these embargoes were imposed too late into the warring situation to change the intensity of the

war, once enforced more steadfastly by outside parties, the embargoes played a clear, albeit limited role, in bringing the wars to an end.

In Chapter 6, Wolf-Christian Paes examines the UN's first case of sanctions against a non-state actor in the form of the arms embargo imposed against the UNITA faction in the Angola civil war in 1993. He details the haphazard monitoring and enforcement that plagued this case for much of the 1990s and explores the factors that led to increasingly effective sanctions when UN commitment to use the embargo as leverage for peace solidified. Marc von Boemcken authors Chapters 7 and 8 covering the embargoes on the Great Lakes (1994–2004) and the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict respectively. In the former, he dissects the very difficult cases of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The initial response of any analyst is that these two brutal tragedies are the ultimate case studies for rejecting any utility to either arms embargoes or the reach of the UN as a peace-building agency. Von Boemcken does not spare any of the international or nation-state actors their distinct culpability in misreading the seriousness of the violence in each instance and in imposing measures that were far too little in scope and much too late to make a difference during the periods of horrific violence on the 1990s. He ends, however, with a tone of cautious optimism as he finds the newer embargoes of this decade more focused, better enforced, and more tied to other regional and international efforts to achieve peace. In Chapter 8, he explores the unique case of threats, imposition, and declining relevance that has been the history of sanctions on Eritrea and Ethiopia. The chapter is especially helpful in tracing the varied external actors, including members of the P5, who provided massive arms to the region during the 1990s, and who then were quickly ready to resupply these nations after the embargo ended in 2001.

We complement these cases with an additional analytical and comparative study in Brzoska's Chapter 9 in which he provides a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of arms embargoes using clusters of variables identified in the theoretical framework. This chapter reveals a more generalized pattern across a larger number of diverse cases that also appears in the individual cases that preceded it. To wit, the more multilateral the structure of imposing sanctions, the more tied such measures are to monitoring and enforcement, and the more adaptability of the embargo to changing conditions in the situation and target, the more likely that the arms sanctions will attain some level of success.

The results of the case studies and the data comparison of Chapter 9 serve as the basis for a final chapter outlining policy conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 10. Here, we outline suggestions for how

arms embargoes might be improved over time by paying greater attention both to the lessons of recent cases and to the array of factors that we discuss as more nuanced in dealing with arms flows than have been related to sanctions in previous studies.

NOTES

1. In addition to “official” sanctions agreed upon formally within the processes of its Common Foreign and Security Policy, the EU member countries can coordinate a *de facto* stop of arms transfers. In 1998, the EU governments agreed to a code of conduct on arms exports, which among other things, aimed at curbing the supply of lethal equipment to authoritarian regimes that are likely to use them for internal repression or external aggression’. Similarly, the United States has had *de facto* stops of the delivery military equipment and training without formally referencing these as arms embargoes. Various Acts include arms embargo elements or denial of export licenses on specified grounds, such as the Export-Import Act, the Arms Export Control Act, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, and others.

2. The Swedish Peace Research Institute SIPRI documents changes in export control systems. On Bulgaria, see http://projects.sipri.se/expcon/natexpcon/Bulgaria/bul_ch.htm

3. For studies on the effects of sanctions in terms of goal achievement (leaving effects on the population aside), see Baldwin (1985, 1998), Leyton-Brown (1987), Nincic and Wallenstein (1983), Hufbauer et al. (1990), van Bergeijk (1994, 1999), and van Bergeijk and van Marrewijk (1995). For a more positive assessment of the effects of sanctions, see Crawford and Klotz (1999). Kaempfer and Lowenberg show in contrast to Hufbauer et al. that “sanctions that create minimal economic hardship can still generate political change”: sanctions impact the utility of the ruling as well as the opposition group in the target country in such a way that their interest in maintaining or opposing the policy of misconduct is altered (Kaempfer & Lowenberg, 1988, p. 786; 1999).

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CHAPTER 1

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARMS EMBARGOES

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Arms embargoes have been heavily utilized in the past 10–15 years by international governmental organizations and individual countries alike. The United Nations (UN) has regulated the flow of arms in 19 of the last 20 embargoes from 1990 until 2005. Similarly, the European Union (EU), the United States, and other nations have lists of countries to which they will not sell arms. Yet, despite the apparent popularity of arms embargoes, there is a political undertone about their futility and significant amount of scholarly literature criticizing their level of effectiveness. This apparent paradox illustrates that though arms embargoes have proliferated over the past decade, there is speculation surrounding their success.

The objective of this chapter is to provide a framework for the analysis of arms embargoes, specifically to determine what dictates whether they are deemed successful or failures. I aim to identify several key components of arms embargoes such as the willingness and capability of actors implementing the embargoes, the process of such an embargo implementation, and the reaction of those targeted by the embargo. These variables – which are hypothesized to be important in assessing the success of arms embargoes – need to be specified adequately. The following analysis is

therefore structured to produce a list of variables, which can be found at the conclusion of the chapter that can guide empirical analysis. In addition to providing a set of standards by which to assess arms embargoes, I also hope to come up with a more salient definition of what constitutes an effective arms embargo.

I begin the chapter by differentiating, by broadening the perspective on arms embargoes beyond a simple understanding of stopping the flow of arms to a particular target. Such a view is valid for an outside observer of the behavior of governments espousing to implement an arms embargo, but it is too simple for understanding the issues of why arms embargoes operate the way they do or for how they can be improved. It underestimates the complexity of decision-making on arms embargoes. The inconsistency between the popularity of sanctions with policy-makers and their perceived ineffectiveness has been called the “sanctions paradox” (Baldwin, 1997; Drezner, 1999). At the heart of this paradox lie conflicting views about what constitutes a successful sanctions regime. Arms embargoes are clearly a class of sanctions marked by this paradox. Exploring the “arms embargo paradox” is critical to the analysis of arms embargo implementation.

I then analyze theoretical perspectives on how an arms embargo can be effective. I contrast models of arms embargoes implementation. The first, dominant in the literature, is a top-down model. The second model is bottom-up. It is process-oriented and predominantly concerned with arms transfer control policies as the primary element in arms embargoes. This model has its roots in the literature on arms transfers. Each model has its weak and strong points. Supplier behavior in arms embargoes need to be explained by integrating both models. Such integration also opens up new avenues for thinking about ways to improve the effectiveness of arms embargoes. In the final part of the text, variables for the analysis of arms embargoes are deduced from the earlier discussion.

THE ARMS EMBARGO PARADOX

The popularity of arms embargoes makes sense on the one hand but can be puzzling on the other. Since arms are a type of good often linked directly to war and peace as one of the central objects of international politics, stemming the flow of arms to a country or group accused of acting against international peace and security is a logical response. However, while this reaction is frequent, it is not generally regarded as being effective. In fact,

arms embargoes have a reputation of not functioning well. One can find many references, in academic literature and policy papers alike, which state that arms embargoes “do not work” that they are “ineffective” or that they are “not worth the paper they are printed on.” The paradox that sanctions are deemed to be of little consequence but are still popular among policy-makers (Baldwin, 1997) is particularly striking.

Academic studies on arms sanctions generally confirm the bad reputation of arms embargoes. Studies on the Tripartite Agreement on the Middle East or the arms embargo against South Africa found many violations of the embargoes and concluded that they had not been properly implemented (Harkavy, 1975; Wulf, 1986; Landgren, 1989; but see also Brzoska, 1991). More recent analysis of the various cases of UN arms embargoes of the 1990s come to similarly sobering conclusions (Cortright & Lopez, 2000, 2002; Bondi, 2002).

Some analysts maintain that the perceived failure of arms embargoes as a structural phenomenon in a market where illegal dealers will substitute law-abiding arms suppliers (Sampson, 1978) while a majority sees limitations in the design and execution of arms sanctions that can be overcome if sufficient political will is mustered (Ohlson, 1987). The experience beyond arms embargoes, such as with the COMECON (Stent, 1985) during the Cold War, or export control regimes in the fields of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (Speier, Chow, & Starr, 2001; Beck, 2003) suggest that it is possible to successfully restrict the export of weapons, while acknowledging that no regime is watertight. It is important to analyze the shortcoming of arms embargo implementation to improve their effectiveness.

The overwhelmingly negative perception on the effectiveness of arms embargoes does not seem to deter governments from deliberately restricting arms sales and from invoking arms embargoes. Why is that so? Are arms embargoes so frequent because it is cheap for governments to invoke them? Or are governments full of good will but overwhelmed by the difficulties to design and implement them well? Or are there problems with the prevailing view of arms embargoes as ineffective?

The literature on the sanctions paradox has shown that it is useful to distinguish between various types of sanctions success (Baldwin, 1997). Sanctions may already be successful in the view of those deciding on them, if their political capital is rising because of that decision. The symbolism of invoking an embargo may suffice to improve the standing of decision-makers in the eye of their political constituents or the outside world. Outside analysts, however, will generally have a different view and judge success by actual changes in the targeted policies.

The standards invoked in much of the sanctions literature are high: sanctions are measured by their success in changing the policies of the targeted government or group within a country. The literature on arms embargoes is often less demanding. Here, the criterion of success is often of whether arms flows are stopped or continue to reach the target.

The high standards in the sanctions literature are easily justified by the rhetoric of those deciding on the imposition of sanctions. Few, if any, arms embargoes have been justified as purely symbolic measures. Rather, at a minimum, they are qualified as measures to stop the flow of arms from the country imposing the arms embargo to the target. At maximum, arms embargoes are claimed to change the behavior of a target, in particular to stop it from continuing to fight a war that the sanctions sender wants to end. Still, it would be analytically somewhat naïve to judge arms embargo effectiveness by targeted policy change alone. Decision-making on arms embargoes in implementing countries is obviously more complex than implied in an approach that only allows targeted policy change as a measure of success.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARMS EMBARGOES: OBJECTIVES AND CRITERIA

What makes an arms embargo effective? How can effective implementation of an arms embargo be measured? Effectiveness is frequently defined as the degree of attainment of an objective. The definition of the objectives is thus crucial to the measurement of effectiveness.

In the academic literature on sanctions, the clear and simple objective of targeted policy change dominates (Hufbauer, Schott, & Elliott, 1990; Drezner, 1999). It is also often found in discussions focusing on sanctions policy (Cortright & Lopez, 2000, 2002) as well as in official policy statements justifying sanctions. Such statements typically stigmatize the objectionable behavior and list the changes expected from the target. There is widespread agreement that the core objective of sanctions, including arms embargoes, is targeted policy change. Sanctions, in the general opinion of academics and policy-makers, should be about influencing the behavior of targets. Since policy change in the targeted state is considered the first objective of sanctions, the attainment of that goal we will call “level I effectiveness.”

However, achieving policy change through sanctions is a very difficult criterion to attain. Even when arms flows are effectively stopped, there may