

Review article

The effectiveness of UN and EU sanctions: lessons for the twenty-first century

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UN sanctions and conflict: responding to peace and security threats. By **Andrea Charron.** Abingdon: Routledge. 2011. 226pp. Index. £80.00. ISBN 978 0 41559 835 4. Available as e-book.

Coercing, constraining and signalling: explaining UN and EU sanctions after the Cold War. By **Francesco Giumelli.** Colchester: ECPR Press. 2011. 210pp. Index. Pb.: £27.00. ISBN 978 1 90730 120 9.

Targeting peace: understanding UN and EU targeted sanctions. By **Mikael Eriksson.** Farnham: Ashgate. 2011. 296pp. Index. £65.00. ISBN 978 1 40941 932 7.

European Union sanctions and foreign policy: when and why do they work? By **Clara Portela.** Abingdon: Routledge. 2010. 206pp. Index. £85.00. ISBN 978 0 41555 216 5.

This decade has been a difficult time for the United Nations. Splits among the dominant powers in an increasingly divided Security Council have stymied its efforts to resolve acute global problems. The UN global system, built more than 60 years ago, is finding today's challenges overwhelming. Many issues that the United Nations should lead on are being resolved through world capitals or by regional power blocs, leaving the UN at risk of being marginalized.

Russia and China, increasingly assertive in the Security Council and more regularly backed by emerging powers, have blocked intervention proposals by western states, including imposing sanctions. The lack of productivity of the Security Council is likely to endure, as efforts at Council reform have failed to make progress; this is increasingly felt throughout the system.

UN sanctions are a good example of this tendency. In a book published in 2000, David Cortright and George Lopez described the 1990s as the 'sanctions decade' in assessing UN strategies during that time.¹ It has taken a decade, but over the last couple of years the publication of four books in close succession has added to this original work on targeted (or 'smart') sanctions.

The books under review show that, although the rate of adoption of sanctions has slowed in recent years, new sanctions are still being imposed. There are a

¹ David Cortright and George Lopez, *The sanctions decade: assessing UN strategies in the 1990s* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

number of reasons for this. One is the end of the unipolar moment, with China and the Russian Federation in particular challenging western neo-liberal norms with the emergence of a multi-nodal world. In the early 1990s a more cooperative working relationship developed among the Permanent Five of the Security Council, and where there were disagreements they would result in abstaining rather than threatening veto.

Russia has become increasingly hostile to the use of sanctions in recent years, illustrated by former Russian defence minister Sergei Ivanov stating that: 'I know of no instances in world practice and previous experience in which sanctions have achieved their aim and proved effective'.² China has consistently indicated with regard to countries such as Sudan, Burma (Myanmar) and Iran that: 'Using pressure and imposing sanctions is not practical and will not help settle the issue'.³ Anger by China and Russia that western mandate creep resulted in regime change in Libya, rather than civilian protection provided by Security Council resolution 1973 of March 2011, is still playing out—most notably over the ongoing crisis in Syria.

There is no doubt that a fractious Security Council has contributed to the decline in effectiveness of a number of UN sanctions adopted in recent years; however, as these books argue, this does not mean their end. Sanctions remain a tool of the Security Council and will continue to be used for counterterrorism efforts and when there is greater consensus. In the meantime, the challenge is to understand how UN and EU sanctions can still be meaningful in such a climate. All four books provide suggestions.

In *UN sanctions and conflict*, Andrea Charron gives a solid review of UN sanctions, showing that the end of the Cold War brought with it a new willingness among the permanent members of the Council to use Chapter VII instruments, including sanctions. Since the early 1990s, Charron shows, there has been a dramatic increase in sanctions imposed on countries by the UN Security Council. Until then sanctions had been imposed on only two countries: Rhodesia in 1966, and South Africa in 1977.

She also demonstrates that the type of UN sanction most widely used is the arms embargo, such as those imposed on Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), North Korea (DPRK), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Libya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Somalia. There have also been commodity embargoes, for example on diamond exports from Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire; timber exports from Liberia; charcoal exports from Somalia; travel bans and asset freezes on individuals in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan, as well as the suspects of the killing of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others; a ban on the sale of petroleum products to, and financial sanctions on, the Angolan rebel movement UNITA, Libya and the DPRK; and an arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

² Steven Myres, 'Russia says it opposes UN sanctions on Iran', *New York Times*, 26 August 2006.

³ Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun, cited in Howard French, 'China seeks solution to Darfur crisis', *International Herald Tribune*, 24 January 2007.

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These embargoes are usually administered by a UN sanctions committee.⁴ These committees are established by a UN Security Council resolution to oversee the implementation of UN embargoes, including those on arms. Information on violations is fed to them by member states and Security Council members, other UN agencies (including UN peacekeepers), regional organizations, intergovernmental bodies and NGOs and other non-state entities.

Political will, design and institutional effectiveness

In an *International Affairs* article published in 1979, James Barber identified a variety of possible roles for sanctions beyond their coercive role.⁵ Francesco Giumelli in his book builds on this and suggests that there are three phases of sanctioning: designing, implementing and monitoring; and that sanctions designers should focus on 'whether a target should be coerced, constrained or signalled' (p. 149). The analytical distinction between different purposes of sanctions is useful, although his analysis of 70 episodes of UN and EU sanctions is flawed as each episode requires thorough understanding of the politics and context. Giumelli demonstrates the limitations of applying theoretical frameworks or scoring methods for assessing sanctions or drawing policy recommendations. Mikael Eriksson captures this complexity far better in *Targeting peace* by 'disentangling various segments of the sanctions policy process, the kind of political complexity that occurs when applying sanctions and this shapes a particular outcome' (p. 235).

Eriksson tries to evaluate sanctions variability, refining the analysis of sanctions regimes into separate episodes. He also advises on how institutional decision-making on and evaluation of sanctions can introduce efficiencies even in a highly politicized context—'black box' processes, as he calls them. For example on page 123, he writes:

Regarding possible ways to act more effectively, it was suggested that those UN bodies responsible for implementing sanctions should make more use of the information that had been collected over the years (for example, from different panels of experts). This had not yet been done. The absence of lessons learned prevents future sanctions from being effective. In addition, there were also a number of institutional issues and practices that prevented the implementation of more effective sanctions regimes. For example, there was a lack of meetings between officials working with different sanctions committees (such as chairs), an unwarranted lack of transparency, over-sensitivity regarding the interests of members of the UNSC, as well as very little information-sharing. However, these factors were seen as part of a common culture.

⁴ The first sanctions committee, on Rhodesia, was created in 1968. Its task was to receive reports from governments which had been sent a standard questionnaire for filing monthly returns, and to follow up allegations of violations from governments and, after 1973, from NGOs and individuals. After six months and three reminders, the committee published lists of non-respondents. In 1977 a second sanctions committee was set up to monitor the arms embargo against South Africa, but governments policed themselves and the committee's work was mainly restricted to debating whether to impose additional measures. This was not acceptable to western members: it was dissolved in 1994.

⁵ James Barber, 'Economic sanctions as a policy instrument', *International Affairs* 55: 3, July 1979, pp. 367–84.

Sanctions committees are set up as subsidiary organs of the Security Council under Article 29 of the Charter and replicate Council membership. What Eriksson misses is that these sanctions committees suffer from an endemic lack of continuity, in part because they draw their representatives from junior staff in the permanent missions in New York, whose personnel change; a discontinuity exacerbated by the rotation of the ten non-permanent members of the Council. The greatest challenge is that they operate on a consensus basis, which makes reaching decisions even more difficult than in the Security Council itself.

Over the last decade there has been the increasingly frequent mandating by the UN Security Council of independent panels, groups of experts or monitoring mechanisms charged with monitoring sanctions and investigating allegations of violations, drawing up regular reports and making recommendations on the basis of their findings to the UN sanctions committees. The first such group was mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1013 (1995), which established the UN International Commission of Inquiry to investigate reports and allegations of violations of the UN arms embargo on Rwanda. This concept was developed further in May 1999 with the establishment of a ten-member expert panel for Angola to follow up suspected violations in the field, publicize results and make recommendations for more effective implementation.⁶

Subsequently, a monitoring mechanism was also established for Angola, and such panels have become almost standard practice. The quality of the reports from the consultants has improved over the last decade, but the effectiveness of the sanctions committees is variable. The choice of country to chair these committees is important—and can determine their effectiveness (Eriksson, p. 146); the quality of the secretary to the committee provided by the UN secretariat also matters a great deal. Greater scrutiny and feedback of what expert groups produce is also needed.

The shortcomings of the UN secretariat are many. UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon, at an annual retreat for senior UN management in Turin in August 2008, voiced his own concern, saying: ‘Here at the UN, unfortunately, I see people too often putting their own interests first. I see too many turf fights, too much intramural wrangling, too much protectiveness of the status quo ... Department heads squabble among themselves over posts and budgets and bureaucratic prerogatives, as though they somehow owned them. But our departments, agencies and programmes are not personnel fiefdoms.’⁷

The Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch, responsible for the management and support of UN Security Council sanctions efforts, received a mixed internal appraisal in 2006 for its work, and has in recent years suffered from a silo mentality. This has led to inertia and a lack of coherence, which has impacted downstream into monitoring efforts. One coordinator of an expert group admitted to this author in 2012 that these institutional issues held back the

⁶ Alex Vines, ‘Monitoring UN sanctions in Africa: the role of panels of experts’, in Trevor Findlay, ed., *Verification yearbook 2003* (London: Verification Research, Training and Information Centre, 2003).

⁷ Harvey Morris, ‘United less than ever, the world’s nations ponder reform’, *Financial Times*, 24 September 2008.

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sanctions monitoring efforts as much as target politics. Some sanctions committees and expert groups enjoy greater security of tenure and resources: the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on Al-Qaeda for example.

The Subsidiary Organs Branch also provides administrative support for expert groups and monitoring efforts, including embedding junior political officers in many of them. This has assisted the reducing of bureaucratic demands on expert groups in the field, but has failed to deal with effective appraisal and quality issues. Panels still need to be encouraged to meet the highest evidentiary standards; the Stockholm Process on implementing targeted sanctions as a key recommendation highlighted this, as did the UN's informal working group on sanctions.

The Branch speaks regularly of the need for more resources to improve its effectiveness; this is broadly correct and it could do with extra analytical and budgetary capacity. Databases need to be improved, archives created and a system of follow-up to panel reports created. Efforts to create a credible database and archive system were started in 2006, and again in 2008 with Canadian support, but then shelved.

Several other weaknesses are apparent here. Despite a roster, there are ad hoc and arbitrary hiring systems with weak due diligence checks of consultants. This is not made easy by the politics of hiring, as sanctions committees approve appointments on a non-objection basis. Over the last decade in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Somalia and the DPRK, nominations or reappointment requests by the UN secretariat have been blocked due to politics. In such a political process it can be hard to attract quality investigators, but establishing better systems would help.

Measuring impact

According to Charron, until the late 1990s UN sanctions had little impact. As noted above, between 1945 and 1990 only two mandatory embargoes were imposed globally, on Rhodesia and South Africa. Since then there has been a dramatic increase. From 1990 there have been two voluntary and 28 mandatory cases of sanctions. Currently six of twelve UN sanctions regimes are on Africa—Libya's resolution 1973 (2011) being the latest.⁸ This expansion is a result of the post-Cold War thawing in the Security Council, which has made it easier to reach consensus within the permanent five members in particular. There have already been academic assessments of the effectiveness of UN arms embargoes, and the points these have highlighted are that the sanctions tend to be symbolic rather than practical; that their application is often late; that they lack effective monitoring; that violators are rarely punished; and, most importantly, that there is a lack of political will by member states, including those in the Security Council, to see them become effective.⁹ Since 2000 greater efforts have been made in monitoring

⁸ Guy Lamb, 'Beyond "shadow boxing" and "lip service": the enforcement of arms embargoes in Africa', ISS Paper 135 (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, April 2007).

⁹ Michael Brzoska, ed., *Design and implementation of arms embargoes and travel and aviation related sanctions: results of the 'Bonn-Berlin process'* (Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2001); Peter Wallensteen, Carina

compliance, but despite the new enthusiasm for advocating sanctions, the record remains variable.¹⁰

Sanctions are more successful if mobilized as part of a wider diplomatic package. The mandatory sanctions against South Africa were limited to an arms embargo, and although the South African government's credentials were refused by the General Assembly, recommendations for the country's expulsion from the UN were vetoed by western powers. However, individual states and organizations such as the Commonwealth and the Organization of African Unity imposed diplomatic and membership sanctions, sports and cultural boycotts, and the severance of air links. These boycotts, rather than the arms embargo, consigned the country to a pariah status that became increasingly unwelcome to both the apartheid regime and the business community.¹¹

South Africa is not unique: across Africa, arms embargoes have failed to stop arms and ammunition reaching their destination. Travel bans and asset freezes also have a variable record, although the UN diamond embargoes on Liberia and Sierra Leone and the timber embargo on Liberia have been fairly successful as measures to encourage better post-conflict management of these natural resources. Liberia sets an interesting precedent, in that since 2003 it has become a test case of UN sanctions and monitoring in support of post-conflict efforts. It remains to be seen if this experience can be duplicated elsewhere, as Charron notes.

The key to a successful embargo impact is majority political will on the part of the Security Council to implement and monitor the sanctions and regional buy-in. It is telling that the two countries in respect of which western political will for effective UN sanctions was at its greatest in the 1990s were Iraq and Libya. Sanctions probably stymied Saddam Hussein's efforts to procure weapons of mass destruction, and in Libya they encouraged Tripoli's *rapprochement* with the West.¹² Sanctions on Liberia itself were not successful, but as a secondary means to loosen Charles Taylor's grip on the Revolutionary United Front rebels of Sierra Leone they worked; and they also probably contributed to the Taylor regime's failure to procure a Mi-24 attack helicopter.

Need for a systematic appraisal

There have been a number of assessments of UN sanctions: most recently in 2010 and 2011, an international research consortium, which includes the authors of these four books has been undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the impact and effectiveness of UN targeted sanctions. A shadow study was also conducted in 2004 by the Antwerp-based think-tank, the International Peace Information

Staibano and Mikael Eriksson, eds, *Making targeted sanctions effective: guidelines for the implementation of UN policy options* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, 2003).

¹⁰ Damien Fruchart, Paul Holtom and Siemon Wezeman, *United Nations arms embargoes: their impact on arms flows and target behaviour* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, November 2007).

¹¹ Margaret P. Doxey, *United Nations sanctions: trends and problems* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 2007), p. 42.

¹² George Lopez and David Cortright, 'Containing Iraq: sanctions worked', *Foreign Affairs* 83: 4, July/Aug. 2004.

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Service, on the effectiveness of the arms embargo in the eastern DRC.¹³ Three ex-UN sanctions investigators from the Sudan panel of experts, who had resigned in frustration, published in February 2012 (on the day of circulation to the UN sanctions committee of an official UN panel report by their successors) their own shadow report on sanctions violations in Darfur. The official report by the UN panel of experts has never been published by the United Nations Security Council, although widely leaked.¹⁴ The problem here is that Security Council resolution 1572 (2004) provided a mandate that could never really work.¹⁵

However, there has not been a detailed lessons learned assessment of a particular sanction and its monitoring. An opportunity was missed following the lifting of UN sanctions on Angola. The Trust Fund for Angola retained US\$200,000 which could have funded an independent assessment. In this case the unspent funds were handed back to the respective donors.

In 2002, drawing from an original Canadian proposal, France and the United Kingdom circulated non-papers about sanctions reform but made little headway. On 17 April 2000, the members of the UN Security Council established, on a temporary basis, the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions to develop general recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions. Following fits and starts this group, under Greece's leadership, in December 2006 discharged its mandate and produced a public report (S/2006/997) on best practices and recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of UN sanctions.¹⁶ This report was launched on 30 April 2007 at a public event on enhancing the implementation of United Nations Security Council sanctions at the UN in New York sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Greece to the UN.¹⁷

External processes have also had their impact on wider process thinking, most notably the Interlaken Process in 1999 and 2000 on financial sanctions, and the Bonn–Berlin Process on design and implementation of arms embargoes and travel- and aviation-related sanctions during the same period. This was followed by the Stockholm Process on the implementation of targeted sanctions during 2002.¹⁸ The Stockholm Process was stimulated by due process issues tied to listing and delisting targeted individuals, and was followed up by a meeting in New York and the production of a white paper on the issue by the Watson Institute in

¹³ All Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, *Arms flows in eastern DR Congo* (London: All Party Parliamentary Group on the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Dec. 2004). This report provided an important alternative, independent source of information for members of the Security Council who had become frustrated at the variable output of a dysfunctional expert group (author's interviews with members of the DRC sanctions committee, New York, March 2005).

¹⁴ Claudio Gramizzi, 'The embargo on Darfur: a disappointing experience', 10 May 2012, http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_13338.html, accessed 29 May 2012.

¹⁵ Alex Vines, 'Can UN arms embargoes in Africa be effective?', *International Affairs* 83: 6, Nov. 2007, pp. 1107–1121.

¹⁶ *Best practices and recommendations for improving the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions: based on the report of the Security Council informal working group on general issues of sanctions* (New York: UN, April 2007).

¹⁷ 'Annex to the letter dated 12 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council. Enhancing the implementation of United Nations Security Council sanctions: a symposium, 30 April 2007, New York', S/2007/734, 13 December 2007.

¹⁸ Wallensteen et al., eds, *Making targeted sanctions effective*.

March 2006.¹⁹ This fed into a process of establishing fair and clear procedures for placing individuals and entities on sanctions lists and for removing them, as well as for granting humanitarian exemptions. The Security Council, on 19 December 2006, adopted resolution 1730 (2006) by which the Council requested the secretary general to establish within the UN secretariat (Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch) a focal point to receive delisting requests.

EU sanctions

When the UN Security Council is unable to agree on sanctions or they end up being mostly tokenistic, the EU has imposed sanctions on third countries. Clara Portela's book focuses on EU sanctions and foreign policy. She digs deep and examines sanctions as a political tool of the EU, evaluating their efficacy. Portela also considers the suspension of development aid under the ACP–EU Partnership Agreement; the withdrawal of trade privileges under the Generalized System of Preferences; and other sanctions outside these frameworks. For example, informal sanctions like the 2003 EU decision to invite only Cuban dissidents to national day receptions in Havana seems to have resulted in the release of detainees that it was aimed to achieve (p. 109).

The European Union can be a powerful united front on imposing targeted measures and has strengthened its efforts in recent years. Autonomous EU sanctions have developed since the 1980s; originally developed on Rhodesia, they shifted in response to the invasion of the Falklands in 1982 (Malvinas Doctrine, as Portela calls it). Since then the logic has been one of incrementalism (p. 32). Their success has partly been linked to the importance of the EU as an aid or trade partner. EU sanctions practice includes economic and non-economic sanctions, such as an oil embargo on the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and a gems ban on Burma.

The EU plays an important role in signalling and constraining when UN sanctions are weak or not available such as on Burma, Iran and Zimbabwe. On Iran, current UN sanctions have had limited effect, but western sanctions are having a greater impact than expected because of unusual levels of international acquiescence. This is particularly helped by western dominance of world banking and insurance, making targeting of Iranian oil transporters easier. States have also been diversifying away from Iranian oil for some time: China, for example, has reduced its supplies by 30 per cent, and has been heavily investing in Angola and Brazil.

Another good example of the role of EU (and US sanctions) is the Côte d'Ivoire post-election crisis in 2010–11. Prior to slow UN Security Council action, the EU imposed sanctions on President Laurent Gbagbo, his wife Simone and 17 others (which grew by February 2011 to 91 individuals and 13 economic entities) for rejecting the election results. The United States also applied its own sanctions. Côte d'Ivoire is the world's largest cocoa exporter, and in January 2011, following Alassane Ouattara's call for cocoa sanctions, the European Union barred all EU

¹⁹ 'Strengthening targeted sanctions through fair and clear procedures', white paper prepared by the Watson Institute targeted sanctions project, 30 March 2006.

companies from doing business with Ivorian institutions seen as backing Gbagbo. This resulted in some 400,000 tonnes of cocoa worth over \$1 billion left in storage facilities, stopping payments to Gbagbo and his supporters. Côte d'Ivoire defaulted in early February 2011 on its \$2.3 billion Eurobond, leaving the country effectively sequestered from the international debt markets. International markets reacted quickly to the crisis. The regional bank, the Banque Centrale des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, also cut off the government's access to state accounts in late December 2010, putting them at the disposal of Ouattara's government-in-waiting. The deteriorating banking environment resulted in western and regional banks in Abidjan suspending their Ivorian operations, resulting in a cash crisis. Cash flow problems piled pressure on Gbagbo, making it difficult for him to continue paying for loyalty.

African institutions played a role too. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) suspended Côte d'Ivoire and threatened sanctions in December 2011. ECOWAS, led by Nigeria, threatened to use 'legitimate force' to depose Gbagbo. The UN Security Council caught up on 30 March 2012 by imposing sanctions on Gbagbo and his inner circle through a resolution drafted by France and Nigeria. The AU called for an inclusive government to reunite the country, following recommendations made by an AU high-level panel. This signalled to Gbagbo's supporters that their efforts to have the election results recounted had failed and that his days as president were numbered.

International policy increasingly needs the lead of regional and continental bodies. As we saw over Libya, Arab League endorsement for a no-fly zone was instrumental in getting approval by the UN Security Council. In a multipolar world, P5 Security Council members do not automatically call the shots: Russia was forced to moderate its pro-Gbagbo position because of the common African position supporting Ouattara as the legitimate president.

This Ivorian example highlights a major gap in the literature, which none of the four books under review examine adequately. Understanding EU and UN sanctions requires considering US sanctions too as the US imposes more sanctions than any other country.²⁰ The building bricks provided by regional economic communities such as the Arab League and the African Union are increasingly important for EU and UN sanctions.²¹ UN sanctions on Côte d'Ivoire and Libya in 2011 can only be understood through these processes.

Avoiding unintended consequences

The Côte d'Ivoire case also shows how the EU has not learned from the UN experience. If the crisis had continued beyond April 2012, the humanitarian impact of its cocoa embargo would have been serious; there are lessons for the current EU measures on Iran. Indeed, unintended consequences of good intentions can also

²⁰ Robin Niblett and Derek Mix, 'Transatlantic approaches to sanctions: principle and recommendation for action' (Washington DC: CSIS, October 2006).

²¹ Mikael Eriksson, *Supporting democracy in Africa: African Union's use of targeted sanctions to deal with unconstitutional changes of government* (Stockholm: FOI, June 2010).

be seen in Zimbabwe. US sanctions on Zimbabwean diamond exports have made the trade even more opaque, and Finance Minister Tendai Biti has had to draw up a more pessimistic budget for social spending.

What is fascinating in Portela's book is the importance of Article 96 suspension.²² The high rate of success of development aid cut-off stands in sharp contrast with Common Foreign and Security Policy sanctions. The positive record observed in Article 96 suspensions is almost always connected to the restoration of constitutional rule.

Portela warns that 'reciprocating progress, or even lifting the measures, remains complicated in the EU framework'. An EU aid blockade on Turkey remained for 15 years because of Greece's veto; after Germany lifted its own sanctions, Spain imposed sanctions on Cuba, but three years later could not lift them because of a veto from Eastern European member states. This is also the case of EU sanctions on Zimbabwe. During a visit to Zimbabwe in May 2012 by this author, both opposition and government officials advocated the ending of EU sanctions, arguing that they hindered political progress and frightened away international investors. Although the EU partially lifted the sanctions in February 2012, it has become a classic example of a targeted measure having outlived its purpose. Eriksson writes about a 'striking deterioration of sanctions' and suggests there is no correlation between the sanctions and the resolution of the crisis. The EU is no longer united on sanctions policy but the ex-colonial power, the United Kingdom, is perceived to be the driver of these measures for neo-colonial reasons.

The psychological impact and target perception of sanctions regimes also need to be considered in evaluating impact. Whereas Eriksson does this well on Zimbabwe, his section on UN sanctions on UNITA rebels in Angola is weaker. It shows that understanding the effectiveness of sanctions episodes requires detailed country expertise. Chatham House research on UNITA sanctions, including interviews with many ex-UNITA combatants in Angola, indicated that diamond sanctions contributed to the degrading of the rebels, particularly due to a cash shortage, which additionally resulted in demoralizing troops, including causing a salt and beer shortage. It also resulted in increased predatory operations. The death of Jonas Savimbi in April 2002 was probably inevitable, but his efforts to seek new negotiations in 2001 were ignored by the Angolan government that had determined it needed a 'peace through war' solution.

Conclusion

Eriksson argues that assessing impact is subjective and yet does just this in the case of Burma (Myanmar) by concluding that the 'EU autonomous sanctions regime imposed on the Myanmar elite is never likely to succeed in achieving democracy and putting an end to violations of human rights' (p. 178). Eriksson's and Portela's books were published before the dramatic events in Burma (Myanmar) in

²² Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement provides for an EU consultation over poor governance and violations of human rights, and—as a measure of last resort—the reduction of development cooperation.

late 2011/2012. Portela argues that EU sanctions never worked in Burma, because it was protected by China. However, recent events suggest that the Burmese junta has decided it no longer wishes such close relations with Beijing. Portela is equally pessimistic in writing that 'the Burmese junta remains as uninterested in developing the country and increasing its international prestige as it was when sanctions were first imposed' (p. 86). In 2012, Burma (Myanmar) stands at its most important moment since the beginning of military rule in 1962. The landslide victory of Aung San Suu Kyi in April 2012 by-elections is part of a transition few predicted. Whether western sanctions provided any impetus for these changes needs research. Even if they did not, they may be important tools for supporting change: the suspension of many of the sanctions other than the arms embargo is telling, and has been done surprisingly quickly, despite the poor record of the EU quickly lifting sanctions.

All four books show that targeted sanctions cannot be seen as a stand-alone measure, or assessed in isolation. Sanctions are multi-faceted and require detailed assessment of political context, episode and institutional process. They will remain political, and variable in their impact, but will continue to be a favoured international response to crisis. There are political moments, sometimes by design, sometimes by luck, when sanctions can contribute to changing behaviour. Eriksson's and Portela's books in particular deepen our understanding of such moments.