Conflict & Security

Forest from the Trees

The Cost of Severing Defense Ties

Stephen C. Ball

Since the late 1990s, sanctions have come under increasing scrutiny. Punitive policies meant to compel change, sanctions are being labeled ineffective and indiscriminately harmful to populations that are vulnerable and not responsible for the behavior that instigated the sanction. Yet sanctions continue to be the policy of choice when dealing with recalcitrant or rogue states.

Much of the research and writing on international sanctions has focused on economic sanctions, overlooking the case of defense sanctions. Defense sanctions are those policies that affect—that is, limit, deny, restrict, sever, or prohibit—military- and defense-oriented education, training and operational exercises, weapons and equipment procurement, and all other military-to-military contact with a target country.

In the case of a military coup in a foreign state, the United States is obliged by law to impose full defense sanctions as well as to halt economic assistance. In most other circumstances, the policy is not legally predetermined. When a state's military exceeds accepted boundaries of conduct, for instance, by securing political influence through force or turning combat power against its citizens to preserve power, part of the policy remedy has frequently been to enact defense sanctions. In some cases, sanctions were held out as a deterrent to steer countries Stephen C. Ball is a Colongian the U.S. Jamey, U.S. Jamey Senior Service Cottage Pilloy, and U.S. Define Attachedesignate to Visionan. away from nuclear development. Policymakers within the United States government have turned to defense sanctions with the hope that by cutting off communications, aid, equipment, training, and recognition, the country and its military will change their behavior.

On the surface, sanctions seemed the appropriate policy prescription for countries whose militaries behaved in a manner that put U.S. interests at risk or that was inconsistent with U.S. policy mandates. Severing defense ties with recalcitrant regimes, however, has also had the effect of severing contact with a weak state's most powerful institution and jeopardising fledgling reform movements within the state. It has not resulted in an improved or safer security environment. In the late 1980s and 1990s, U.S.-imposed sanctions resulted in a rise in prominence of destabilizing influences in the target countries, for instance, heightened Islamic fundamentalism or cultivation of closer relations with China, Iraq, or North Korea. They have also helped create, or at least failed. to arrest, the formation of failed or near-failed states, thus jeopardising security in several regions.

A look at Asian states that have been targets of U.S. defense sanctions—Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, North Korea, Pakistan, and Vietnam—reveals that one policy does not fit all. Severing ties has not been an impetus for regime change, military reform, human rights improvement, or increased domestic or regional stability. An analysis of two sanctioned countries reveals that the universal policy remedy of severing defense ties not only has been unsuccessful on the surface, but also has exacerbated the very conditions that justified the sanctions in the first place.

Sanctions as a Policy Option.

Branded "the Sanctions Decade," the 1990s were characterized by a dramatic rise in the use of sanctions. Between 1914 and 1990, countries around the world imposed economic sanctions in 116 cases.⁹ Between 1992 and 1996, the United States imposed sanctions sixty-one times on a total of thirty-five countries, for reasons ranging from state-sponsored human rights violations and religious persecution, to proliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons, to state sponsored terrorism.¹⁶ It is estimated that the United States has approximately seventy sanctions of various types currently in effect.

There are four primary reasons for the dramatic increase in sanctions since 1990. First, many states previously held in check, if only loosely, by the bipolar Cold War international system now feel a growing sense of unaccountability. Policymakers perceive sanctions to be a way of reining in these states. Second, without the overarching Cold War strategy of maintaining Eastern or Western bloc solidarity, the necessity of policymakers to overlook bad or reprehensible internal state behavior is moot. Third, in a few notable instances sanctions have been effective, as evidenced by the role. they played in South Africa's abandonment of apartheid in 1992. Finally, sanctions offer policymakers a way to take action against a regime without committing military forces.

Two Cases. Indonesia and Pakistan have enjoyed long and comprehensive relationships with the United States. They have also been subject to several U.S. defense sanctions regimes. Partial defense sanctions were enacted against Indonesia after reports that the Indonesian military participated in violent clashes between East Timorese separatist groups and pro-Indonesia groups in 1991. Such sanctions were again enacted after the Indonesian military was determined to have supported atrocities in East Timor after the August 1999 sovereignty referendum. Defense sanctions were imposed on Pakistan in 1990 due to its nuclear development program and were increased following the 1998 nuclear tests.

The Road to Sanctions. The history of U.S. involvement with Indonesia and Pakistan stretches back to their earliest days of independence. Through the policy of containment, the United States supported the young armed forces of these developing countries in the hope of extinguishing communist movements cropping up in post-colonial Southeast and South Asia. The fight against communism remained the foundation of U.S. policy in these regions for much of the three decades following World War II.

As the Vietnam War came to a close, the United States became the primary aid provider to the Indonesian armed forces, increasing aid from \$5.8 million in 1969 to \$18 million in 1970. By 1976, American military aid had rizen to more than \$40 million annually.* The payoffs from this relationship of aid, training, and assistance were beginning to be noticed in the early 1990s. Former Azistant Secretary of State for the East Asia and Pacific Bureau Winston Lord noted that in the areas of peaceful settlement of disputes in the region, arms control, and free trade, Indonesia's accepted position of leadership within Southeast Asia and its pro-U.S. stance established it as a "positive force for promoting regional and global goals that are in the U.S. interest."

Pakistan's history since independence has been more tumultuous. Since 1947, Pakistan has fought three wars with India, experienced six constitutional arrangements, and developed close, but separate, political-military associations with China and the United States.

Former Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad John Holsman characterizes the U.S.-Pakistan relationship as "a mutually explicitative affair." Recognizing the importance of a friendly, or at least non-adversarial, Pakistan, the United States cultivated this relationship while carefully avoiding entanglement in the India-Pakistan rivalry. The U.S.-Pakistan relationship was viewed as very useful to U.S. policy in South Asia and the Middle East, toward China, and, particularly during the Cold War, in containing the spread of communism. For Pakistan, the "partnership" was a means to stronger defense and deterrent against India.

The U.S.-Indonesia and U.S.-Pakistan relationships developed fissures with the end of the Cold War. Concerning Indonesia, human rights violations by the Indonesian military, culminating with the horrendous and violent period after the August 1999 sovereignty referendum in East Timor, introduced tension into the relationship. Defense sanctions were imposed on September 9, 1999.

In Pakistan, with containment no longer an issue, nonproliferation assumed the forefront of the U.S. agenda. In 1989, as stipulated by the Pressler Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, defense sanctions were imposed following then-president George Bush's declaration that he could not verify that Pakistan was not engaged in a nuclear weapons program. Following Pakistan's nuclear tests on May 28 and 30, 1998, the United States tightened prohibitions on the sale or transfer of weapons and spare parts to Pakistan and trade with any other country where U.S.-licensed components were involved. After the October 1999 coup by Chief of Army Staff General Pervais Musharraf, the United States imposed further sanctions, adding more restrictions on military-to-military contact to the nuclear-based defense sanctions still in effect.

ExaCerbating Instability. Sanctions have done little to improve conditions in Indonesia and Pakistan. In fact, the state of security has dramatically worsened. Governance in both states is increasingly ineffective. Both countries have suffered intense internal political upheavals and experienced violent social chaos resulting in countless deaths. Economic recovery has stalled and conditions indicate that further recession is underway. The spillover effects of turmoil in these failing states continue to be felt in

fractured. The resulting breakdown in military discipline and effectiveness has created much instability in the country. As a result, the military has not been able, or in some cases is not inclined, to restore order in the face of rising separatist, ethnic, and sectarian violence. In some instances, members of the military have even contributed to the violence or failed. to take rudimentary steps to stem the breakdown of order. The continuation of this situation fuels further sectarian violence and militant separatism by undermining trust in Jakarta's ability to provide security and stability to local regions.

The inability of the security forces to restore order has contributed to increasing separatist sentiment, and with Abdurrahman Wähid's ouster from the presidency, the future of the Indonesian government is uncertain. Forces posturing to fill the potential political vacuum include the Axis Group, a Muslim-based political coalition that calls for Shariah law. As one analysis boldly states, "If that

"Balkanization" of Indonesia is not a

remote possibility.

Asian markets, in reduced productivity of natural resources, and, in Indonesia's cæe, in more unstable transit routes. through important sea lanes of communication (SLOCs). In fact, a 'Balkanization" of Indonesia is not a remote possibility, and an increase in militant Islamic activism is evident in both countries. Meanwhile, the governments in both countries remain unable to contribute actively to reform and recovery.

Coupled with the social, political, and economic upheavals in Indonesia, defense sanctions have left the military happens, Indonesia will certainly break up. Provinces where Christianity is strong—East Nusatenggara, Maluku, and North Sulawesi—have hinted that they would declare independence if Shariah law*is a*dopted."⁵

In Pakistan, sanctions have similarly contributed to political instability by fostering a dangerous rise in religious extremism. Since the imposition of sanctions on Pakistan, extremist and sectarian groups have begun to operate freely and openly in the country." Despite Musharraf's harsh words early in his tenure aimed atmilitantIslamic groups, the occurrence and scale of Muslim extremist violence have increased. Not only does the rise of religious extremism and militancy impede reform in Pakistan, but it also threatens the security of its volatile surrounding region. Commenting on the troubling effects of the increase in Islamic militancy in Pakistan, a recent Center for Strategic and International Studies paper notes that the violence and the government's inability to effectively deal with it "have made Pakistan a source of instability that radiates outward to its neighbors."" One effect of this breakdown in stability is the exacerbation of the long-standing India-Pakistan dispute in Kashmir.

Defense sanctions have also contributed to shifting the focus of Pakistan's defense strategy toward an increasing reliance on nuclear weapons. Former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Robert Oakley argues that sanctions have "clearly led to an acceleration of [Pakistan's] nuclear efforts, as well a shift from strategic reliance upon sophisticated U.S. aircraft to acquisition of Chinese and North Korean ballistic missiles capable of carrying the nuclear warheads. [Additionally,] cancellation of IMET [International Military Exchange and Training] and most other military education and training for Pakistan has aggravated anti-U.S., Islamic and nationalistic attitudes amongst its officer corps and reduced incentives for restraint in military-supported, anti-Indian activities in Kæhmir and elsewhere." Sanctions have only exacerbated the arms race and the potential for instability in the region.

Additionally, defense sanctions have prompted Indonesia and Pakistan to forge closer relationships with potential U.S. adversaries and states of concern. Largely because of the effect the lack of access to

U.S. training, arms, and assistance has had on military readiness, Jakarta and Islamabad are increasingly forced to look to other sources for military assistance. Indonesia is considering buying armaments from Poland and Russia, while Pakistan remains dependent upon China for military aid and technology. Pakistan has also established a missile-related technology transfer relationship with North Korea that is likely to continue barring U.S. intervention.³ At the same time, Pakistan's uncomfortably close relationship with the Taliban government in Afghanistan has drawn criticism from both Russia and the United States.

Minimizing U.S. Leverage. Another problem of defense sanctions is the over-emphasis on singular issues. In the cases of Indonesia and Pakistan, U.S. interests go far beyond human rights and proliferation. Indonesia is a major source of energy for countries in East Asia, and it sits astricle the Molucca and Sunda Straits, the major SLOCs between Europe, the Middle East, and EastAsia. Indonesia's size and geographic location also make it central to security and stability in Southeast Asia. Pakistan provides a crucial gateway to Gentral Asia, is located near the entrance of the Persian Gulf, and is key to peace and stability in South Asia.[®] By hinging military contact on single issues, defense sanctions impede Washington's ability to influence these countries in order to protect and promote U.S. interests.

Pakistan's strategic value to the United States changed in 1988, when its role as a "frontline state" lost relevancy after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Non-proliferation became the sole focus of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Unfortunately, the United States has too many interests at stake in South Asia—from access to energy in the Persian Gulf and Gentral Asia to the need to control terrorism—to allow a relationship to be dominated by any one issue. By concentrating exclusively on non-proliferation, Washington is ignoring Islamabad's importance in other areas of U.S. interest.

Amidst Pakistan's crumbling civil and political structures, the military is the only national institution that remains largely intact. By severing contact with the U.S. policy towards Indonesia. In a country where the military remains a central political force, defense sanctions are drastically discounting the U.S. ability to affect the situation. With defense sanctions in place, the United States has effectively extinguished its capability to encourage the Indonesian military to support political and institutional reform, refrain from politically-motivated violence, and develop more peaceful ways to maintain order.

The one-dimensional nature of U.S.

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military, the United States has handicapped its ability to communicate with, and influence, a major power broker in the Pakistani political system. Thus, by diminishing Washington's contact with the military, defense sanctions in Pakistan are threatening the capacity to advance and protect U.S. interests in South Asia and its environs.

Similarly, the United States has tied its relationship with Indonesia to one narrow issue. Though the U.S.-Indonesia relationship was founded on the broad area of containment, in the post-Cold War era the relationship has come to be defined by human rights. Fueled by knowledge of atrocities committed by the Indonesian military, U.S. policy in Indonesia has come to be dominated by outrage over military conduct. As a result, political, economic, and defense interests have become secondary.

Efforts to change the corrupt behavior of the military through the penalties of defense sanctions now form the core of

policies toward Indonesia and Pakistan has made bilateral relations strategically weak. Since the end of the Cold War, viewing the relationships through the lenses of human rights and nonproliferation has established "single points of failure" for both relationships. By basing relations exclusively on progress on restrictive single issues, Washington is ignoring the importance of bilateral relations with Indonesia and Pakistan to other areas of U.S. interest. In "pivotal states" such as Indonesia and Pakistan, defense sanctions have damaged the states and the region and put U.S. interests at risk.

Missing the Forest for the Trees. The cost of defense sanctions is high. In Indonesia and Pakistan, defense sanctions have uniquely hurt reform. Continued U.S. isolation of the military in both states has not brought shout improvements in the areas that initially prompted the imposition of sanctions. Defense sanctions have neither empowered other state institutions nor have they been a catalyst for fundamental military reform. The net result of defense sanctions has been to weaken the institutions of the armed forces, leaving internal law and order unattended to such an extent that progress in political, economic, and other civilmilitary reform has essentially halted.⁵⁵

Instead, domestic political instability and the weakening of civil-political institutions continue, militancy and extremism are on the rise, and countries are looking more to rogue states and potential U.S. adversaries for assistance. In the case of Pakistan, defense sanctions designed to stem the country's nascent nuclear and ballistic missile programs have likely encouraged Islamabad's dependence on such defense technologies. In Indonesia, military sanctions are not helping to rein in the political instability that may provoke destabilizing refugee flows and continues to depress investor confidence. "

Sanctions have diminished U.S. influence in Indonesia and Pakistan overall. In the long term, certainty that either regime will support U.S. requests to participate in responses to regional crises (for instance, in the UN-led coalition against Iraq in 1991 and in East Timor) is decreasing. The impact of influence is hard to measure. However, an excellent example of the importance of U.S. influence on the militaries of countries like Indonesia and Pakistan was witnessed during the destabilizing Pakistani troop movements in Kashmir in June 1999. The unique access of the former Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Central Command, General Anthony Zinni, to Pakistan's leadership and his timely diplomacy led to disengagement of Pakistan's military from the Line of Control (LOC) and de-escalation of hostilities between India and Pakistan in Kashmir. It is doubtful whether the United States will be able to exert such effective pressure in the future.

The task for U.S. policymakers is to view defense relationships through the lens of maintaining and nurturing strategic interests. In states where the military plays an important, if not primary, role, accessing and influencing the military is important for meeting U.S. strategic interests. In these situations, the enactment of defense sanctions cripples Washington's ability to bring its influence to bear. In cases where countries or their militaries have gone astray, one policy does not necessarily fit all.

If the intent of sanctions is to compel change, then their record is checkered at best. In developing states where the military is prominent, severing ties has not been an impetus for regime change, military reform, human rights improvement, or increased stability in the state or region. In fact, considering the situations in Indonesia and Pakistan, the policy remedy of severing defense ties has not only keen unsuccessful on the surface but has also accelerated already declining conditions, leaving these states in circumstances far worse than those prior to the enactment of sanctions. In being so quick to impose defense sanctions over narrowizsues, U.S. policy is jeopardizing broader, long-term interests.

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EYEING the STORM

Admiral Dennis C. Blair on security and cooperation in Asia

From conflict in the Korean Peninsula, the Taiwan Strait, and Kashmir to political and social collapse in Indonesia, Asia hosts some of the world's most volatile flæhpoints. At the same time, Asia is home to some of the world's most important economies—Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and increasingly, India. At the proverbial "sharp end" of promoting stability and preserving U.S. interests in Asia is the United States Pacific Command (PACOM) in Hawaii, headed by Admiral Dennis C. Blair.

Recentmonths have not been smooth for Admiral Blair and PAC OM. The command has been at the center of several storms. These range from the accidental sinking of a Japanese trawler by a U.S. nuclear attack submarine in February, to a mid-air collision between U.S. and Chinese military aircraft in April, to mounting pressure in Okinawa against the U.S. military presence on the island. In the midst of these challenges, Admiral Blair, ever the picture of calm, spoke to the *Jamual* about his vision for advancing peace, security, and cooperation in Asia. Dennis C. Bhir is an adminish the U.S. Navy and Commander-an-Chief of the United States Pacific Command. seesses: What do you see as the greatest security challenge in the Asia-Pacific region, and what role do you think the United States has to play in addressing this issue?

Second I think disputes remaining from former wars, the emergence and growing influence of certain countries in the region, and communal violence and transnational crime form the web of threats and concerns the United States and other countries deal with in the region. Underlying that, if the United States and the Asia-Pacific countries treat them as opportunities to work together, manage them, isolate the points of contact, and emphasize points of cooperation, we can develop a really new way forward for Asia. If we allow the threats to divide us—through arms races, balanceof-power politics, suspicious ways of thinking—then Asia, I think, risks becoming a very dangerous place.

www. In previous statements and articles, you mentioned the need to create security communities and enrich bilateralism to respond to the above situation. Critics see this as detrimental to long-term U.S. involvement in the region. How would you speak to these concerns?

seesses I would fundamentally disagree. I think an Asia-Pacific community that has a security structure built on bilateral and multilateral activities and norms of conduct, as well as bilateral security treaties with a strong set of interactions that involve information technology, business, academic exchanges, and travel, is in fact a much more favorable Asia for the United States than we have ever had. The United States is not seeking to control or dominate Asia. I think the United

States is seeking to participate in a secure and peacefully developing Asia. To me, all the concepts for regional cooperation are consistent with U.S. interests and are better suited to the Asia of the future than some of the models of the past, such as Cold War rivalries and strictly bilateral approaches. So I think this is a different age of policy for us, but one that is better.

www. When you talk of successful cooperation, one of the examples you often cite is that of ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations]. However, the countries of ASEAN are facing a host of domestic problems and have many differences among themselves. What steps do you think ASEAN and the United States need to take to deal with this situation, because so far ASEAN seems rather ineffective in dealing with regional issues?

seems It depends on the time scale that you are looking at. It also is worth looking at bad things that did not happen, as well as the good things that did not happen quite as quickly as ASEAN members would have wanted. No ASEAN member has fought against another member since its founding; neither have subsequent members once they joined. I have talked to military leaders in ASEAN and I have asked about particular potential flashpoints in the region, whether they are Malayzian-Singaporean disputes over airspace or water, or Thai-Burmese disputes. over narcotics, or Indonesian-Malaysian-Philippine piracy and immigration flows across their borders. What I inevitably hear from Southeast Asian countries is, "We'll work it out." Nobody is a pushover, but they want to "work it out." That ASEAN attitude, I think, counts for a lot, whether or notyou think it can go further

in terms of preventive measures. We all know that the region has had a hard time with the Asian financial crisis and huge social change in Indonesia. These are big setbacks to ASEAN. I am not one who thinks ASEAN is a failure by any means. It spawned the ARF [ASEAN Regional Forum], the ASEAN-Plus-Three, and so on. I think these are useful forums that can be applied to specific problems. I think people—like the visionaries who solving the problem. So I think the security community approach contributes to an atmosphere for peaceful resolution in Taiwan, although I agree with you that just to take such an approach and put it right on top of Taiwan is a stretch.

See Further concerning the Taiwan issue, during your trip to China in mid-March, Beijing essentially rebuffed the attempt to link a decrease in the number

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founded ASEAN—would like to see more progress, kut I am not completely discouraged by any means.

www. When you say that ASEAN has the attitude that it can work things out and its mechanisms can work across different issues, how does this apply to the issue of Taiwan? Is it possible to apply the security community approach to the problem of Taiwan, especially given the fact that China sees the matter as strictly internal and consciously tries to exclude Taiwan from any international grouping?

seems to me that we can solve even tough problems like Taiwan is a regional attitude and dependable expectations of peaceful change. If that is the prevailing ethic and attitude in the region, then it seems to me that we can solve even tough problems like Taiwan, Kashmir, and Korea. Those problems tend to dominate relationships, unless there is some sort of environment or countervailing tendency with an emphasis on cooperation and

of missiles facing Taiwan with a less robust U.S. arms sale package to Taipei. In light of Beijing's intransigence over its arms build up vis-à-vis Taiwan, how do you think the United States should balance its commitment to help Taiwan meet its defense needs yet avoid provoking the PRC?

Second As I said to the Chinese when I was in Beijing, I do not want to specify a year, date, number of missiles, or specific metric to them, but over time, China's missile buildup will threaten the sufficient defense of Taiwan. So there is some time to work on a restrained approach that will lead to a peaceful development, but China cannot simply continue to add more and more missiles every year. It is an internal Chinese matter, but one that is going to run right up against U.S. obligations to provide Taiwan with a sufficient defense. That is not good for either side.

Second Second

craft and a Chinese fighter plane over the South China Sea suggest a stronger view of the United States within the People's Republic of China, especially among members of the People's Liberation Army [PLA]. What should the U.S. military in Asia do in light of the situation?

seesses I believe that the participation of the PLA in some of the cooperative, multilateral approaches, which the United States also cooperates in and sometimes sponsors, is one very important step. It puts us on the ground where we are working on common problems as professionals from different countries that have an interest in making progress. It expands our relationship from a one-dimensional focus, and those sorts of activities are very important to working out a peaceful way forward in the region.

Second How do you think the United States should deal with domestic issues with broader regional implications? I am thinking especially of Indonesia, where domestic cohesion—a sovereignty matter—can adversely affect the region as a whole.

seeses I think the military aspects of those situations are something in which the United States does not have much of a role to play; so in the short term, it is not something in which I think my command canplay arole. I believe in keeping in contact with those in the Indonesian Armed Forces who share the goals of turning the TNI [Suton Navinal Indonesian Armed Forces] more toward external threats, toward internal reform, and toward a more professional force. Our effort should be to support, and that is the best contribution we can make. See officers in the TNI have asked for the resumption of U.S. military aid to help them play a more constructive role in their country. The TNI has avery negative record in human rights, yet at the same time it is central to Indonesia's identity and unity. In light of this, do you still see a very limited U.S. role in dealing with the TNI?

www. We are limited by legislation restricting many aspects of our military relationship until the TNI assigns accountability for the actions in East Timor in the summer of 1999 and solves the problem of East Timorese refugees in West Timor. The TNI has to make good on those matters before we can really renew anything even close to the former relationship that we had, so those are important things.

www. With regard to North Korea, the current administration seems much more cautious than its predecessor. Do you agree with this approach? Does it also mean that the Perry Process is dead?

The new administration is reviewing policy towards North Korea. The important components of the Perry policy—consultations with the Republic of Korea and Japan, keeping a strong military posture for deterrence are there. Then the whole area of arrangements to keep North Korea from threatening its neighbors is being re-examined. I think the fundamental pieces of the Perry Process will be continued.

sees: Right now Washington is facing a lot of problems in the U.S.-Japan security pact. How can the U.S. military help repair the current rawness in relations? seesses I think the important thing is the continued realisation on both sides that our alliance is not an alliance of the past that was dealing with a single threat, but an alliance of the future that can be used for addressing big problems in the region and the world. We are talking about the two largest economies in the world, the two countries that contribute over half the international aid in the world. Japan and the United States and their alliance can solve future regional problems, and we are in the process of working that out now, because it is new territory.