

Abstract

**Assessing the Evolution and Effectiveness of United Nations Security Council  
Sanctions on the DPRK**

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During the 20 years since resolution 825 (1993) was issued, the Security Council adopted three resolutions *Acting under Chapter VII Article 41*— 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2094 (2013); two others – 1695 (2006) and 2087 (2013) – reflect explicitly and implicitly that they were prompted by recognition of threats to international peace and security—referenced in Chapter VII Article 39 of the UN Charter. The evolution of these sanctions show the broadening scope of what is being targeted as well as deepening efforts against specific targets.

The intent of the resolutions is to halt, or at least slow, developments in prohibited programs, encourage the DPRK leadership to change course and return to the the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and buy time for diplomacy. Viewed in succession, the targeted sanctions taken in the resolutions have been both broadened and deepened, and lists of those designated for an asset freeze and travel ban have been lengthened in an effort to ramp up the pressure on the leadership, plug loop holes and workarounds, and put further road blocks, especially financial ones, in the way of prohibited programs. The Security Council at the same time has made clear that these sanctions are not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population.

In an examination of sanctions and their effectiveness, given that the objective has yet to be achieved (e.g. back in the NPT), then a determination must be made about effectiveness of sanctions to at least see if they are accomplishing or capable of accomplishing secondary objectives--like slowing programs. However, much of the focus has given sway to politics, which determine the form and content of these resolutions, and the measures adopted (and ultimately their potential effectiveness), which reflect an often difficult to reach consensus. The influence of differing political views similarly shapes autonomous sanctions programs, whether to reconcile views of allies and stakeholders or to put teeth in multilateral sanctions possibly viewed as too weak.

Nonetheless, efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of sanctions are indispensable, even if subjectively undertaken, for gaining insight into whether sanctions are achieving some of their designed effect, the possible extent and severity of unintended consequences, and steps that might possibly be taken to improve their effectiveness.