

UN Sanctions Against Iraq: From Ailment to Chronic

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Abstract

Sanctions are penalties or restrictions imposed by a state, group of states or an international organization on another state, usually involved in the act of international delinquency, to compel that state to amend its behaviour or to change its conduct or policies. At present, sanctions have become an important tool of coercion which the United Nations (UN) applies against states that are indulged in threatening of international law or peace and established international norms. However, these measures can have immense effects for the targeted state and its population as a whole. The UN sanctions imposed on Iraq from 1990 to 2003 are considered the most comprehensive and effectively enforced sanctions. This case is an example of the grave cost in human suffering that sanctions can exert on a country which turns into almost a breakdown in economic, social and political structures. Due to its effects on Iraqi populace, UN sanctions tool has earned huge criticism from many commentators, stakeholders and international elites. An account will be provided of the effects of thirteen years long UN sanctions on Iraq and causing factors. During this thirteen years period, a criminal silence on the part of Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Arab League and international community has been observed. Russia and China, the permanent members of the Security Council (SC), were not more than spectators during the period for some dubious reasons. The UN, the most prestigious international organization, strengthened the perception that it was a porous body and played a second fiddle to the U.S. It cannot be rejected that UN has been mostly protecting the interests of powerful nations. Furthermore, efforts would be made to figure out some useful recommendations for the improvement of UN sanctions mechanism so that the sufferings of the sanctioned society could be reduced in future sanctions regimes.

Key Words: Iraq, United Nations, Comprehensive Economic Sanction, Security Council Resolutions, UN Sanctions Regime, Effects

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Introduction

Since its inception after World War II, the UN has resorted to sanctions as a coercive enforcement tool whenever there is any threat to international peace and security or act of aggression from a country. In fact, of the very few instruments available to the UN Security Council (UNSC) to prevent the breach of international law, to maintain or restore world peace and security and for implementation of its decisions, sanctions are considered one of the most effective tools. However, prior to the disintegration of Soviet Union, the UNSC could not take comprehensive and effective measures towards the conflicts between states or a folly act of a state as it refrained to apply tool of sanctions due to the Cold War politics. Nevertheless, the end of Cold War provided the prospect to revert to the notion of collective security and there has been an increase in the use of sanctions by the UNSC.

A well known and distinct example of UN sanctions regime is its 'Comprehensive Economic Sanctions' (CES) which was used against Iraq also called, "the Mount Everest of sanctions in the post-Cold War era" (Hufbauer et. al., 2007, p. 132) It was originally established under UNSC Resolution 661 after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990. Eventually these sanctions were extended by UNSC Resolution 687 mainly to pressurize Iraq to give up its Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) programme. A chief amendment in the sanction regime occurred when the UNSC approved Resolution 986, which established the Oil-for-Food Program (OFFP) allowing Iraq to sell a limited quantity of oil under strict UN supervision to buy humanitarian supplies in return.

Surprisingly, the Sanctions were imposed for an unlimited period having some ambitious motives of United States of America (US) particularly and some other members like UK and France which were the driving force of the UNSC. As a result, sanctions created multiple effects on Iraq and its people. The broad-brush sanctions completely restricted the country from engaging in most international trade as a consequence, Iraq's economy was badly damaged. While the social cost that UN sanctions exerted was serious, however, the Iraqi ruling elite remained largely unaffected by the sanctions. In 2003, when Iraq was still in a catastrophic situation, the U.S. launched a war and invaded Iraq on the pretext of Iraq's WMD and its link to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Shortly after the U.S. invasion, a bulk of UN sanctions was lifted in 2003.

The imposition of these sanctions on Iraq has led many, within and outside the UN, to say that this tool is largely "antithetical to the fundamental mission of the UN" (Gordon, 2010, p. x). Writers like Mueller, Simon and Gordon have

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described sanctions as “the UN’s weapon of mass destruction, as a genocidal tool and as modern siege warfare” (Farral, 2007, p. 5). While sanctions got much criticism, the tool of comprehensive sanctions has not been excluded from the peace and security toolbox of UN. The case of Iraq provided a lens through which the present perception regarding sanctions can be examined.

UN Sanctions: Meaning, Objectives and Kinds

The word ‘Sanctions’ is derived from a Latin word *sānctiō*, meaning “a law or decree that is sacred or inviolable” (Answers, “Sanction”, para. 1). Oxford Learners’ Dictionary defines sanctions as “an official order that limits trade, contact etc. with a particular country, in order to make it do something, such as obeying International Law” (Oxford Learners Dictionary, “Sanction”, para. 1). In the contemporary world, the UNSC possesses the authority to impose sanctions which now form a prominent feature of the backdrop of international relations. “Unlike the generic term ‘sanction’ applied to international trade, UNSC imposed sanctions are forceful actions that are internationally legitimized” (Joyner, ²⁰⁰³, p. 330). In the past few decades, increased economic interdependence, the desire to avoid the costs of military action, and increased international collaboration through the UN have made sanctions a striking option for states wanting to coerce other states short of war.

In modern times, in addition to sustain or restore world peace and security, UN sanctions have specific objectives that are generally more detailed and differ widely from case to case, requiring the targeted state to take particular steps that can lead to the removal of sanctions by the SC. These specific objectives may include ending aggression, stopping military adventure, bringing about disarmament or reducing military capability of a target, restoring democracy, facilitating human rights, and pressuring regimes charged with international delinquency. Further to this, There are mainly two ways of imposing UN sanctions i.e., either partially or comprehensively. UN may impose “comprehensive economic and trade sanctions and/or more targeted measures such as arms embargoes, travel bans, financial or diplomatic restrictions” (Security Council Sanctions Committees, “Security Council Sanctions Committees: An Overview”, para. 3).

Comprehensive Economic Sanctions

CES are those economic measures which seek “to deny a target state all normal international financial, trade and service interactions except those exempted on humanitarian grounds” (Parliament.uk, “Comprehensive UN Sanctions—Iraq 1990-2003”, para. 1). Since 1945, the UNSC has imposed comprehensive sanctions five times, on Southern Rhodesia, Yugoslavia,

Bosnian Serb, Iraq and Haiti. These sanctions possess the potential to affect the target state in a way that it should feel hardships. The outcomes of these sanctions can be overwhelming creating socio-economic deprivation and political instability in the target country as in the case of Iraq where CES created widespread economic, social and political effects on the whole country.

A Prelude to UN Sanctions against Iraq

Since the inception of the UN on the world stage, some contentious issues remained in the attention of UNSC. For nearly three decades, Iraq has been at the fore of debates in SC meeting agendas. In 1990, Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait with an intention to gain control over the vast portion of the world's oil supply, though Kuwait was its ally during the war with Iran, resulting in the second Gulf war. Through this sudden aggressive action, Iraq threatened regional and international peace and violated international law. The international community was stunned the aggression of Iraq against Kuwait and unanimously condemned the expansionism of Saddam Hussein. The UNSC responded on the very same day and issued its first of many resolutions pertaining to Saddam's offensive action determined that the invasion constituted a breach of international peace and security. Acting under Chapter VII, article 39 and 40 of the UN Charter, the SC adopted Resolution 660 which condemned Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. The resolution required that "Iraq withdraw immediately and unconditionally all its forces to the positions in which they were located on 1 August 1990" (UN Security Council, 2932nd Meeting, 1990, Resolution 660, S/RES/660). But Saddam continued the occupation of Kuwait, and the human suffering that it brought along the looting of Kuwait's wealth and a dismantling of its infrastructure. He seized the authority of Kuwait, declared it 'nineteenth province' of Iraq. Due to Iraq's continued occupation of Kuwait and kept showing military hostility, the UNSC realized that Saddam was not ready to withdraw from Kuwait so it adopted Resolution 661 and imposed CES on Iraq.

Objectives of the Sanctions Regime

The apparent objective behind Iraqi sanctions regime was to restore world peace and preserve international norms which were clearly in danger by the action of Saddam against Kuwait. However, there were certain implicit objectives which evolved with time as the pre-war goals were different from the post-war goals. Indeed, demands of the imposers becoming more and more demanding. Initially, the sanctions were imposed to compel Iraq to end the invasion and occupation of Kuwait and restore sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait. Noteworthy, this objective could not be

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accomplished through sanctions till 1991 thus the coalition forces drove out Iraq from Kuwait even then the UNSC did not remove the sanctions.

Indeed there was another important objective of sanctions regime to curtail Iraq's economic and military capabilities. Under the sanctions, the major measure taken by the UNSC was, imposing an oil embargo which prohibited Iraq from selling its oil on the international market and sharply reduced its oil revenues. Then the adoption of Resolution 687 which demanded the eradication of Iraq's WMD indicated that impairing Iraq's conventional military capability served an important purpose of sanctions regime after the Gulf War.

Another chief objective of the sanctions regime was deterrence. "There was a wider concern for the norm against the forcible acquisition of disputed territory that pervaded the UN. All members of the UN, particularly the smaller nations potentially subject to similar threats from larger neighbors, had an interest in to protecting the sovereignty of the nation state as it could easily be their sovereignty at stake" (Buck, 1997, p. 32). By imposing sanctions, the members of the UN wanted to deter other powerful countries from undertaking undesired actions by demonstrating to other offending states the likely cost of transgression.

Moreover, frequent statements by the U.S. officials confirmed that the central objective of the sanctions regime was to change Saddam's regime in Iraq. From the beginning, U.S. officials like Robert Gates, Madeleine Albright and others stated in a variety of contexts that regime change was a precondition for lifting sanctions. It is however important to mention that "the Security Council never agreed to 'regime change' as a purpose of its sanctions against Iraq" (Global Policy Forum, 2014, "Iraq Sanctions: Humanitarian Implications and Options for the Future"). But it was a vital element of the U.S. agenda toed by the UN and its sanctions regime.

The UN Sanctions Regime

In August 1990 the UNSC adopted Resolution 661 that imposed sanctions on Iraq. Under these sanctions, scope was so broad that the whole economy of Iraq was targeted: (1) All imports into and all exports from Iraq and occupied Kuwait, and the transfer of funds to Iraq and Kuwait were prohibited unless the SC permitted exceptions. (2) The main focus of sanctions was on Iraq's export of oil which was its main source of money generating. (3) Iraq's extensive weapon development, production, and delivery systems and capabilities were also targeted among the broad measures. (4) All foreign assets of Iraq were frozen and companies were forbidden from doing business with Iraq, with very restricted exceptions. (5) All international flights were suspended. Moreover,

the SC established the 661 sanctions committee whose main task was to monitor the progress and implementation of sanctions and it was composed of all members of the SC (UN Security Council, 2933rd Meeting, 1990, Resolution 661, S/RES/661).

Initially the UNSC hoped that the sanctions would drive Iraqi forces out from Kuwait but the regime did not comply and Saddam's forces remained in Kuwait. Then 'on 29 November 1990', after reaffirming its prior resolutions, the SC noted that despite all its efforts, Iraq continued to disrespect its resolutions thus adopted Resolution 678 which gave Iraq 'one last chance' to employ Resolution 660. The resolution stated that "if Iraq did not employ the respective resolution by 15 January 1991", member states were authorized "to use all necessary means to uphold and implement the resolution 660" (UN Security Council, 2963rd Meeting, 1990, Resolution 678, S/RES/678). As sanctions could not persuade Saddam to conform to SC resolutions and he did not surrender Kuwait's territory by the given deadline, therefore, the Gulf War began with the attack of coalition forces on Iraq and by the end of February 1991 finally resulted in the liberation of Kuwait and the restoration of its government. Both objectives of SC were met after the cease-fire agreement signed by Iraq but the SC decided to continue the sanctions regime as the agenda of U.S. was shifted to Iraqi regime change and at this point and the SC added new conditions for the removal of sanctions.

In April 1991, the SC extended the sanctions regime and focused on ending Iraq's WMD program. The UNSC adopted Resolution 687 in which it laid out the certain ambiguous conditions which once fulfilled by Iraq would lead to the removal of sanctions on its exports and related financial transactions. The terms of this resolution required Iraq: (1) to renounce nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles with a range of over 150 km and (2) to co-operate fully on weapons issues with International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) and the UN Special Commission on weapons (UNSCOM), established under the same resolution with the task to monitor and verify Iraq's compliance with its disarmament obligations under the sanctions regime; (3) to accept future permanent monitoring and detailed inspection; (4) to accept a monitored and demilitarized zone; (5) to recognize Kuwait and its borders; (6) to accept liability for damages and losses to foreign government's nationals and corporations caused by Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait; (7) to return property stolen from Kuwait; (8) to repatriate Kuwaiti and third country nationals taken prisoner, and (9) to renounce international terrorism. Further, the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) was established to process claims and pay compensations for losses and damages as a direct result of Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The SC also decided to evaluate Iraq's observance with the new terms in every sixty days to

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determine whether to minimize or lift the sanctions (UN Security Council, 2981st Meeting, 1991, Resolution 687, S/RES/687).

Exemptions in Sanctions Regime

The vigorous enforcement of sanctions by the UN continued even after Iraq was driven out from Kuwait, opposition to sanctions also began to grow both within the UN and in the Arab World. There was growing international concern over the Iraq's humanitarian condition which was getting bad to worse with the passage of time. In the view of the humanitarian effects, the SC had responded with some resolutions that allowed the sale of Iraqi oil in exchange for materials essential of humanitarian needs previously. For example, Resolution 706 and 712 were adopted to allow emergency oil sale by Iraq. However, "the UN Security Council demanded that Iraq hand over responsibilities for its oil revenues to the UN. Oil production would be internationally supervised and subjected to strict export and import controls" (Sponeck, 2006, p. 7). These offers were eventually rejected by Government of Iraq (GOI) as the UN was to manage the spending of funds which was not acceptable for Saddam.

Over the following years, situation in Iraq had become so deplorable that "many Arab countries began calling for an end to sanctions" (Gulal, 2002, p. 7). By 1995 the UNSC revised its decision on humanitarian grounds and established the first OFFP under Resolution 986. Unlike the general perception, this OFFP was not an aid programme and no foreign governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can donate humanitarian necessities to Iraq. This programme allowed Saddam's regime to sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil every six months and then pay in hard currency which was to be held in a specially designed escrow account, to import essential humanitarian supplies including food, medicine and other materials specifically identified by the SC. It is interesting to note that not all the money generated for the oil sale was to be spent on Iraqi population's humanitarian needs yet a system of deduction was enclosed with the programme. The 661 committee was to supervise the oil sale and was to decide that which items Iraq would be permitted to import. This OFFP sought to bar GOI from importing any items which appear to be for civilian use but may in some way used for military purposes. "Such items are known as 'dual-use'. A SC member could place such items, or any other that they chose, on 'hold'—blocking them as an agreed import" (Global Policy Forum, 2014, "Iraq Sanctions: Humanitarian Implications and Options for the Future").

Despite the SC renewed its decision on OFFP, but GOI did not accept the resolution at first and insisted lifting of all sanctions. "They finally accepted the

resolution in May 1996, and oil started flowing in December 1996 but the UN humanitarian supplies did not arrive in Iraq until April 1997” (Joyner, ²⁰⁰³, p. 334). In spite of this programme, continuation of the sanctions met criticism from the international community. “Key global powers, including permanent Security Council members France, Russia and China became more and more critical of the sanctions policy as a whole” (Gulal, 2002, p. 8). Eventually it was becoming clear that there was no longer an adequate consent to sustain anything like comprehensive sanctions.

Change in the Scenario and Removal of Sanctions

Due to faltering international support for the existing sanctions regime and its ineffectiveness in weakening Saddam, even the chief advocates of the sanctions policy, the U.S. and the U.K., began planning that the comprehensive sanctions should be modified and replaced with ‘smart sanctions’. Eventually, after much intense negotiation between SC members, this plan bogged down in the face of uncertainties by some SC members and a threatened veto of Russian. At this point, the terrorist events of 11 September, 2001 in the U.S. and the subsequent war in Afghanistan caused a violent change in U.S. policy towards Iraq. Eventually, the U.S. decided to invade Iraq and the coalition forces were formed to disarm Iraq yet without a UN mandate for the use of force. In March 2003, the U.S. began its military intervention in Iraq and wiped out Saddam’s regime. Thus the U.S. urged the SC to lift its CES against Iraq. Subsequently, in May 2003 under Resolution 1483 the SC lifted a bulk of economic sanction except an arms embargo and the 661 sanctions committee officially ceased to exist.

Effects of Sanctions on Iraq

Prior to the sanctions, in 1970s and 1980s Iraq’s condition was relatively prosperous. While Iraq’s regime was authoritative, its economic wealth was rising as oil revenues increased at all-time high and it was exercising a sufficient degree of autonomy in its foreign policy. However, thirteen years long UN sanctions have completely changed the outlook of Iraqi state. Since 1990 Iraq has become more and more impoverished and its socio-economic and political conditions kept deteriorating which caused chaos and insecurity.

Economic Effects

Thirteen years of CES were more than enough to damage Iraqi economy by isolating it from the world market. Comprehensive trade sanctions put the economy as a whole under siege causing a major trade, industrial and fiscal destabilization. Because of sanctions, Iraq’s oil industry lost markets as a

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result it became deprived of oil revenues, its financial assets were frozen and state internal assets were nearly exhausted. The economy was critically out of balance and the major economic sectors became stagnant. As a result of the prolonged sanctions, “Iraq has suffered absolute declines in GDP, chronic inflation, wholesale depreciation of its currency, virtually non-existent foreign investment and the accumulation of a crushing debt burden” (Sanford, 2003, p. 1).

Effects on Trade: “From 1990 to the end of 1996, UN sanctions prohibited exports of oil, and oil production was limited to the amount needed to meet internal demand. Iraq’s oil sales dropped from \$10.2 billion in 1990 to \$305 million in 1991. From 1992 to 1995, oil exports averaged between \$500 and \$600 million” (Jones, 2004, p. 4). With sharp decline in Iraq’s oil export revenues, the whole economy deteriorated and living conditions in Iraq declined sharply. “The first Iraqi oil exports began on December 10, 1996, after it agreed to implement the program. ... The six-month ceilings on oil sales were raised from \$2 billion to \$5.3 billion in 1998 and abolished altogether in 1999” (Sanford, 2003, p. 34). “Between December 1996 and March 2003 despite periodic increases in the oil export ceiling and the eventual rescission of the export ceiling in December 1999, Iraq’s oil exports often ran significantly below the permitted level of exports” (Jones, 2004, pp. 4-5).

On import side, Iraq suffered from terrible shortage for product and commodities as under sanctions the country was not permitted to import anything. Under OFFP Iraq was finally allowed to import desperately needed items. “Beginning in 1996, Iraq was permitted to import spare parts for repair of its oil infrastructure, limited quantities of transportation and communications equipment, and some consumer goods” (Sanford, 2003, pp. 34-35). Moreover, during this period, GOI conducted illicit oil transaction and imposed addition charges on oil buyers. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), “Iraq earned \$6.6 billion in illicit revenues from oil smuggling and surcharges during 1997-2001” (General Accounting Office, 2014, “Weapons of Mass Destruction: U.N. Confronts Significant Challenges in Implementing Sanctions Against Iraq”).

Decrease in Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Because of economic sanctions, there was a steep decrease in Iraq’s GDP. “According to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) data, Iraq’s GDP stood at \$66.2 billion in 1989, measured in nominal dollars” (Sanford, 2003, p. 11). “From 1990 until Iraq accepted the OFFP in 1996 the GDP in Iraq remained at less than 30 percent of the 1989 value” (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013, “Iraq Economic Data 1989-2003”, para. 1). “In the 1996-2002 period, the data also showed a

gradual recovery as GDP (in nominal dollars) increased from \$10.8 billion in 1996 to \$31.8 billion in 2002 before dropping back to \$26.1 billion in 2002” (Sanford, 2003, p. 11). Decline in GDP affected the Iraqi poor class the hardest and increased inequality in the society and created immediate and drastic downturn in the level of living.

Damaging Industry: Industrial activities and infrastructure especially the oil industry sustained serious damage during the Gulf War and economic sanctions. “The sanctions regime in effect between 1990 and 2003 closed off the possibilities of obtaining inputs or spare parts or exporting manufactured products legitimately. ... Iraqi manufacturing was saddled with aging equipment and infrastructure. The capacity and skill of labor force deteriorated over time. In addition, much of the economic rationale for Iraqi industry evaporated, since much of the capacity built in the 1970s and 1980s was based on national prestige, import substitution, or other non-market considerations.” Many facilities were degraded or left inoperable due to the shortage of spare parts and technical know-how. The aged and debilitation of industrial infrastructure and the absence of a technically skilled workforce affected the economic capability of the overall industrial sector.

Agricultural Decline: Iraq was a major agriculture export market for the U.S. but due to sanctions, there was a decline in Iraq-U.S. agriculture trade. “From 1990 to 1994, Iraq’s agricultural imports averaged slightly above \$1 billion or less than half of the pre-war level. USDA’s export credit offers to Iraq were stopped, and USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation had to pay over \$2 billion in unpaid Iraqi export credit guarantees.” The sanctions affected the country’s ability to employ new technologies and maintain the existing level of agricultural needs which made Iraq unable to meet its growing food needs. Agricultural productivity suffered badly from the lack of agricultural machinery, fertilizers and the means of spraying planted areas with pesticides.

Inflation and Unemployment: During the period of sanctions, Iraq’s streets and marketplaces were hard-hit by hyperinflation, the effects of which were reflected most noticeably in free-market food prices. “A yearly inflation rate of upwards of 2,000% per cent was reported in open market food prices between 1990-1991. Another source estimated that inflation increased 5,000% between 1990 and 1995.” The intensifying inflationary spiral led to decline in living standards and impoverishment of great majority of the population. Moreover, due to inflation there was capital flight, as money left the country to avoid further decline in its value. “Declining confidence in the currency and capital flight further weakened the economy and led to new rounds of inflation, deteriorating confidence and capital flight” (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013, “Iraq Economic Data 1989-2003”).

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Further to it, there were severe implications for the incomes and employment of the Iraqi citizens. “The sanctions have brought about a once-and-for-all reduction in income levels, and set the economy on a further downward spiral” (CASI, 2014, “Rehabilitation Prospects for the Iraqi Economy”, para. 2) The economy also suffered from unemployment which “has risen significantly during the period of 1988-2003. Unemployment in Iraq during 2003 was estimated to be around 28 percent of the labor force”. Subsequently, hyperinflation, low wages and extensive unemployment led to a major decline in purchasing power of most Iraqi families and made everyday lives of people a long-lasting struggle as they were not able to buy medicines, or provide the housing, utilities and balanced food to maintain adequate nutrition.

Increasing Foreign Debt: The economic consequence of sanctions resulted in an increase of a severe debt burden on Iraq and made the debt overdue. “Iraq’s total foreign debt compared to GDP from 1989 until 2003 was not sustainable. Iraq was borrowing much faster than it was producing for over a decade” (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013, “Iraq Economic Data 1989-2003”, para. 1). Though the figures related to Iraq’s foreign debt during the sanctions period varied widely due to the difficulty of getting accurate data about Iraq’s finances, “most experts agree that Iraq’s foreign debt--the money it, as a state, owes other governments--ranges from \$120 billion to \$130 billion. When reparations for the first Gulf War, compensation claims, and pending contracts are added in, the figure could rise to as high as \$300 billion” (Council on Foreign Relations, 2014, “Iraq: The Regime’s Debt”, para. 1).

Social Effects

The prolonged sanctions also had wide-ranging on Iraq’s society and the lives of the civilian population. “Electricity production, water treatment, agriculture, telecommunications, transportation, health care and education were all crippled” (The Middle East Channel, 2014, “Lessons we should have learned from the Iraqi Sanctions”, para. 1). People faced the worst adversities as the decline in state revenue led to reduced capital investment and infrastructural maintenance, and to lower levels and lower quality of social services.”

Depleting Infrastructure: Though the sanctions regime hit various social sectors directly but the actual damage accrued on the infrastructure of Iraq. Due to sanctions, Iraq was not allowed to import spare parts and the foreign technicians who had operated much of Iraq’s sophisticated technology. As a result, the infrastructure deteriorated irreparably. “With the collapse in infrastructure, there was insufficient electrical power, or water and sewage treatment supplies to provide profitable water for the population” (Bufacchi,

2011, p. 69). The destruction of the electric power plants, the water purification system and its distribution system and sewage treatment system caused multiple problems for Iraqi people. "The damage done to water-treatment plants during Gulf War and the inability to obtain spare parts because of sanctions resulted in 2.5 million Iraqis being cut off from obtaining pre-war levels of water supply. The 14.5 million who continued to receive water were allowed only one quarter of the pre-war level" (Buck, 1997, p. 72). The effect of sanctions on critical infrastructure reduced Iraq to a pre-industrialized country and constituted an ultimate social and humanitarian disaster.

Food Scarcity: Prior to the era of sanctions the level of food security was high in Iraq but sanctions drastically reduced Iraq's purchasing power and stalled the import of food commodities. The production of grain and meat also fell throughout the country and importation of food declined rapidly which created food insecurity among masses. "By 1993 the FAO, in conjunction with the WFP, put forth a special report revealing that Iraq demonstrated "pre-famine indicators" (Gottstein, 1998, p. 2). "By 1996, the UN reported that the average Iraqi's food intake was about 1,275 calories per day compared with the standard requirement of 2,100 calories" (Westin, 2002, p. 4). A 2003 report by WFP assessing the food security and vulnerability in Iraq found that "...food insecurity persisted in Iraq for a substantial part of the population who faced serious difficulties accessing food" (NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq, 2006, p. 13.). Due to the inadequate diet and lack of means of a significant segment of the Iraqi population to buy sufficient food and to balance food needs privately contributed to malnutrition. Catalinto described Iraq's situation in the following words:

"Without oil revenue, the Iraqi government can't subsidize the cost of food and medicine, which it did before 1990. At that time, even the poorest Iraqis had enough to eat. But today Iraq is a land of hunger, thanks to the sanctions" (Odele, 1997, p. 15).

Deteriorating Health system: Since 1990, the once finest Iraqi health system worsened due to sanctions. The physical state of the hospitals and health centres in Iraq largely declined because they remained without repair and maintenance after the Gulf War. Most expatriate skilled medical staff left the country during years of war and sanctions. There was lack of medical supplies, shortage of medicines, medical and operational equipments and spare parts. Electricity shortages seriously disrupted hospital care and hospitals were unable to cure treatable illness. A former UN official demonstrated the effects of sanctions on Iraq's health services:

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“The health services are unable to handle the most basic preventable diseases—such as diarrhea, gastroenteritis, respiratory tract infections, polio—and curtail their spread to epidemic proportions. Hospitals attempt to function with collapsed water and sewage systems, without even the basic supplies for hygiene and minimal care” (Wittkopf, Kegley, & Scott, 2000, p. 134).

In addition, with the reduction in medical supplies, poor sanitation, and destruction of food stocks, the disease profile of Iraqi population underwent a change. The deteriorating health system could not adapt to the changed disease profile adequately resulting in excessive mortality rate. In addition, health services were badly affected by the delays under OFFP. This way sanctions aggravated the health problems in Iraq and left Iraqi people at greater risk of poor health outcomes that ultimately led to a major health crisis.

Decreasing Level of Education: After the imposition of sanctions the once premium education system of Iraq badly affected and faced severe limitation of resources. “From 1984 to 2003, the share of education in GNP dropped to almost half, resting at 3.3 percent in 2003.” As Gross income declined due to the direct effects of sanctions on economy, resources for education suffered and “it came to assume only 8 percent of the total government budget. Government spending per student on education dropped from \$620 to \$47. The literacy rate, which had reached 67 percent in 1980, fell to about 57 percent in 2001. Teacher salaries dropped in real terms, from \$500-1000/month to \$5/month in 2002-2003” (Researching Virtual Initiative in Education, 2014, “Iraq”, para. 1). In addition, “the educational institutions suffered from the unavailability of basic educational facilities such as educational material, books, and school desks” (Davidsson, 2004. P. 15).

Furthermore, “as a result of three decades of war and sanctions, the universities were politicized and lost their dynamic nature and ability to deliver quality education. The Sanctions played a key role in isolating, weakening, and impoverishing the once renowned higher education institutions in Iraq” (TAARII Newsletter, 2011, p. 19). Thus the whole educational sector was severely affected and stopped expanding to meet the growing education needs. There was rapid decline in literacy rate and the GOI was unable to meet basic requirements.

Exodus: Although it is not possible to determine precisely what direct effect sanctions have had on post-1990 migration and displacement; but there had been a clear change in the balance of pressures behind migration after sanctions. “The biggest wave of people leaving Iraq occurred during and after

1991, due to the terror inspired by the military operations or the acute hardships of life under the subsequent sanctions. ... Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis had to leave, seeking a better life or political refuge in various countries around the world, especially the industrialized countries” (Samarai, 2007, pp. 938-939). Moreover, “before the 2003 invasion, estimates for Iraqi internally displaced people (IDP’s) ranged from 800,000 to 2 million. Conservatively, 1,250,000 Iraqis are thought to have fled the country during the 12 years of UN sanctions.” As a consequence, Iraq faced a serious loss of skilled manpower as professionals such as engineers, technicians, academics, artists, doctors fled the country mainly due to economic reasons. The exodus of this scale drained Iraq of its middle class and impeded Iraq’s potential for reconstruction and dismantled its institutions sustained by these professionals.

Cultural Aspects: Aside from the more visible effects on many social sectors, sanctions have also left their mark on the cultural life of Iraqi society in mundane ways. Sanctions led to cultural isolation and the ability of artists, authors and journalists was curtailed as they were unable to attend conferences and meetings outside Iraq. Many Iraqis who left Iraq often did not return. “This led to a bifurcation of culture: There was the *thaqafat-al-kharij* (culture of exile) and the *thaqafat-ad-dakhil* (domestic culture). While a sense of Iraqness permeated both cultures, over time, the culture of exile became richer and more critical” (Middle East Forum, 2014, “Culture in Post-Saddam Iraq”, para. 1). Further to this, “Iraqi art was transformed drastically by the Sanctions. Established artists migrated and those left in Iraq felt alienated from the world. ... The embargo limited the material available, and as with literature, new materials and formats were developed” (TAARII Newsletter, 2011, p. 19). Moreover, Iraqi traditional values hurt due to poverty, lack of basic needs and the disintegration of families resulting from the effects of sanctions. “In order to meet their basic needs and continue a life in dignity, many people had to sell their belongings and personal heritage” (Samarai, 2007, p. 933). Following statement of a former UN official who was responsible for the Iraqi OFFP demonstrates the detrimental effects of sanctions on Iraqi culture and society:

“Iraqi families and Islamic family values have been damaged. Children have been forced to work, to become street kids, to beg, and engage in crime. Young women have been forced into prostitution by the destitution of their families. Fathers have abandoned their families” (Wittkopf, Kegley, & Scott, 2000, p. 134).

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Humanitarian Effects: Because of these immense effects within one year, the humanitarian condition of Iraqi people became to deteriorate sharply as more and more Iraqi were forced to live under miserable condition where they were unable to get those opportunities and privileges which are necessary for life and survival. Sanctions resulted in massive deaths of people. Statistics prove that children died in a huge number. By 1999 UNICEF had recorded 500 000 excess deaths of children between the ages of 0 – 5. By 2000 child mortality had increased by 160% making it the highest regression rate in the 188 countries listed in a UNICEF survey. While explaining the casualties caused by sanctions Chomsky wrote, “the number of people killed by the sanctions in Iraq is greater than the total number of people killed by all weapon of mass destruction in all of history” (Good Reads, 2014, “Noam Chomsky”, para. 1). While resigning from his UN post, Halliday declared, “We are in the process of destroying an entire society” (The Washington Institute, 2014. “Sanctions on Iraq: A Valid Anti-American Grievance?”, para. 5). Thus, the weaker and poor section of Iraq faced a worst humanitarian crisis in the history of Iraq and borne the repercussions of sanctions.

Political Effects

While economic and social effects of sanctions were damaging, sanctions also harmed Iraq politically. The state apparatus was seriously affected as the capacity of the regime was restricted by the economic sanctions. While sanctions were imposed to punish the ruler of Iraq for its policies, they did not have much negative impact on the regime of Saddam Hussein. In order to protect its rule, GOI tried hard to direct the cause of anger against the U.S., Europe and the sanctions regime. While sanctions served to strengthen Saddam’s grip on political power, they reduced the capacity of dictator to act in foreign affairs.

Unaffected Ruling Elite: The economic and social instability caused by sanctions in fact resulted in more authoritarian rule by the Saddam’s regime. “Sanctions forced the Iraqi population to depend on rations distributed by the government, and that this provided the regime with an instrument of political pressure and control. ... Sanctions permitted the GOI to avoid blame for economic problems. The regime was able to make approximately \$2 billion from abusing the OFFP by such methods as false pricing and bribes from suppliers, but its main source of income was oil exports outside of UN control which generated a total of around \$12 billion mostly through trade protocols with Jordan and Turkey” (parliament.uk, 2014, “Select Committee on Economic Affairs Second Report”, para. 1). In this way, Saddam’s grip on Iraq’s resources strengthened and he gained more control over the lives of ordinary Iraqis. Meanwhile, Saddam continued his lavish lifestyle at the cost of

his people's well being. "In blunt disregard for his people's plight, Saddam imported \$25 million worth of Italian marble to build 'the largest Mosque in the world.' He also continued building palaces for himself and his family. In 1995, thirty-nine such palaces were under construction or renovation at a cost of \$1.2 billion over a two-year period" (Odle, 1997, p. 22).

Foreign Relations: On external front, sanctions significantly altered the dynamics of Iraqi foreign policy as ever since they were imposed, Iraq's ability to pursue effective foreign policy was restricted and it took a moderate stance in their external relations mainly to end the economic sanctions. The cost of sanctions and war was high in Iraq's foreign relations because they isolated Iraq from the international community as never before. Iraq's actions made the U.S. its implacable adversary and its relations with Europe were hardly better. The coalition members restricted diplomatic ties with Iraq and participated in the sanctions regime authorized by the UN.

State Apparatus: "As sanctions began to take effect after 1991, there was a rapid decline in the official and visible institutions of the state. The government in Baghdad was forced to cut back on the resources it could devote to the armed forces and police. Before 1990, the bureaucracy of the Iraqi state had been complex and all-pervasive. During the 1990s the effects of "self-financing" meant these institutions were hollowed out. Bribery was commonplace, as civil servants' official wages became at times almost valueless. The 1990s saw many professionals leaving the public service, to take their chances in the private sector or flee into exile. ... These state institutions were by April 2003 on the verge of collapse. The combination of war, sanctions fatigue, and rampant criminality led to a complete state breakdown" (Dodge, 2007, p. 212). Thus as a result of sanctions, government institutions which were supposed to ensure the protection of vulnerable groups and to provide services to them became dysfunctional and unreliable and were rife with corruption. Sanctions effectively destroyed chances of strong institutions able to effectively survive any radical political changes.

Political Strife: Another indirect effect of sanctions was the increasing strife and instability which was disturbing the political roots of Iraq gradually. Although political strife and conflicts between different sects of Iraq especially the Kurds and the GOI often resulted in occasional clashes but the authoritative regimes effectively suppressed these uprisings and even during the period of Saddam, until the imposition of sanctions, Iraq was treated as one-unit. However, sanctions, their related sufferings and the involvement of major powers in Iraq after the Kuwait war altered this equation leading to a continuous strife between GOI and different factions for political autonomy resulting in uprisings and civil war.

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Co-sponsors of Iraqi Vulnerability

While the effects of the sanctions were indeed severe, the scholars often debate over the issue that who is responsible for the deteriorating condition of Iraq. To answer, it is important to examine the factors that contributed to the dire situation of Iraqi society and made sanctions to cause massive effects.

Self Destructing Policy of Saddam: The GOI bore a heavy responsibility for the sufferings of its people primarily because by invading Kuwait and violating international law which resulted in the imposition of sanctions. Then Iraq's lack of cooperation with the SC and its failure to employ limited resources moderately were other reasons which deepened the sufferings caused by sanctions. The GOI at first overlooked its people's sufferings by rejecting the UN provisions regarding oil sale. Then it was accused of causing miseries by obstructing the effective implementation of the OFFP and using its revenues improperly. Moreover, it reduced the income available to OFFP by smuggling oil outside of the program and by occasionally halting all oil sales for political motives. It is also claimed that sometimes Saddam's regime even smuggled out humanitarian supplies bought by the OFFP to obtain hard currency. In this way the GOI not only enhanced the miseries of its people but in fact got benefited from the sanctions which ultimately helped the megalomaniac dictator to strengthen its internal control over the people.

Role of International Community: Another factor which contributed to a great extent in creating circumstances for hard-hitting effects on Iraq was the somewhat vague role played by international community towards the dilemma of Iraqis. When the effects of sanctions began to create a humanitarian disaster for Iraqi people the international community did not take tangible steps to rescue them mainly because that it was divided over the moral and strategic repercussion of the sanctions regime which made its role ineffective to act towards the plight of Iraqi people. "The Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Countries and the European Union all failed to play a role in this conflict because of their own internal ineptitude and weakness" (Sponeck, 2006, p. 1).

It seems safe to say that during the whole sanctions period the U.S. was primary the driver of international community's policies and actions towards Iraq. For thirteen years, the U.S. has been authoritative in maintaining the strictest, most closely regulated sanctions in the history of economic warfare. "The US and the UK governments always made it clear that they would block any lifting or serious reforming of sanctions as long as Hussein remained in power" (Global Policy Forum, 2014, "Sanctions against Iraq", para. 2). It becomes obvious that the international community functions on the behalf of

the U.S. In the case of Iraq, the SC resolution and its sanctions had become the personal tools of the U.S. in 'the great chess game of Middle East'.

UN Sanctions Mechanism: There are certain flaws in UN Sanctions mechanism because of which Iraq suffered the most. Due to certain politically ambitious objectives of the U.S. and its political influence and pressure on the SC, the tool of sanctions against Iraq was politicized. The sanctions committee was made ineffective. "The only real function of the Iraqi committee was to give a 15-minute speech to the Security Council when required" (TAARII Newsletter, 2011, p. 17). Moreover, due to the lack of impartiality and transparency in imposing sanctions and without a proper time framework and a pre-assessment of humanitarian conditions, sanctions created immense effects on Iraq. The sanctions enforced on Iraq were not only comprehensive but applied for an unspecific period of time which resulted in great miseries. Furthermore, despite adopting effective humanitarian provision towards Iraqi disaster, the SC approved such Resolutions which allowed Iraq to sell limited supplies of oil but was to deduct about a third of oil revenues to pay for compensation claims, weapon inspection and UN administrative expenses. The amount of oil sale allowed even under the Resolution 998 was inadequate to deal with the disaster and was much less than the ongoing needs of the people. While the UN possessed the means to alleviate the economic and humanitarian crisis of Iraq, it simply failed to play its role effectively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The period of 1990s to 2003 brought disastrous conditions in Iraq and sanctions were at the cause of that catastrophe. The sanctions which were actually meant to oust Saddam's regime proved to be counterproductive and inflicted considerable cost on the well-being of the civilian population. The way these sanctions were designed, implemented and maintained; the rigidity of GOI; and the role of the international community particularly the U.S., nurtured the massive effects on Iraq. So there were three hands stifling Iraqi people; the UN economic sanctions, U.S. policies and ambitious objectives against Iraq and Saddam's autocracy and expansionist policy. Thus it can be said, 'collective folly' which has reduced Iraq to a feeble and politically wrecked state. The sanctions have proved to be the reason behind the sufferings and fatalities of the Iraqi people and a punishment for the crime which somebody else's committed. Then without giving Iraqi society time to recover from the devastating effects of sanctions, a new episode of war had been started in the 2003 by the U.S. invasion and subsequent military occupation.

At present, the condition in the contemporary Iraq is very critical. The after effects of sanctions and war have created far-reaching consequences and

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deep divisions that seriously endanger the harmony of society and integrity of the country. A political vacuum is very much there and Iraq has been facing anarchy currently and turns to be a failing country. The growing and ever-present danger has led to massive social issues, political strife and human sufferings. The fallouts of unfair sanctions and war continue to hurt the state of Iraq and it is extremely difficult to predict how much time will be required to restore its social and political order. Even though sanctions have ended on Iraq, lessons from this unforgettable crisis are vital in edifying existing and future sanctions policy. Following are certain general recommendations regarding sanctions policy that the UNSC may wish to consider for improving the sanctions mechanism.

Effective Actions: The more basic and broad problem actually lies in the structure of UNSC and their decision-making over sanctions mechanism. For sanctions to be more effective and less politicizing, effective actions must be taken at important decision-making levels, i.e., the SC and the sanctions committees. Most importantly, the structure of the sanctions committees which include only members of SC must be improved to include certain other neutral states in order to increase the reliability of these committees. In addition, in order to make sanctions mechanism fair and efficient there must be unity and resolve among SC members. The SC must also consider taking the assistance of the Secretary-General and other agencies to get the clear guidance, skills needed and support for strengthening the implementation mechanism of sanctions.

Well-defined Objectives: The objectives behind the sanctions policy must be specific, well-defined and measurable so that the sanctioner will have concrete grounds to keep or lift the sanctions. The objectives of sanctions must be clearly articulated in the sanctions resolution and agreed upon collectively. The member of the SC should clear all the ambiguities regarding the objectives to make them convincing. For this, the members of SC should agree in advance on rules for how the sanctioned state could be judged to have met the objectives. These rules can contribute to create a clear 'roadmap' that would make clear what a sanctioned state needs to do in order to have sanctions lifted.

Specific Timeframe: Sanctions must always be designed with a specific time frame or with a proper exist-strategy. If the sanctions are imposed for a long time without a proper time frame the effects of the sanctions will be mainly against the innocent civilians. Therefore, sanctions must have a reasonable timeframe and if within that duration success seems unlikely, then it should be considered as an indicator that policy needs to be changed. It is suggested that the SC should create a consensus regarding the establishment of a

general principle that the resolution initiating sanctions should always have a 'sunset provision' by which the sanctions can be time limited and it can also limit the free will of the SC to establish sanctions regimes of indefinite time period.

Transparency: The decision-making process of SC should be made as open and transparent as possible. For this purpose, there is a need to increase the transparency of the sanctions committees which operate in secret and cannot be monitored or held publicly accountable. At present, there is no public access either to committee meetings themselves or to the minutes and records of those meetings. Therefore, it is suggested that the procedures of the sanctions committees should be transparent. The transparency of the meetings of sanctions committees can be enhanced by improving public and media outreach regarding sanctions regimes and by making publicly accessible summary records of official meetings of the sanctions committees on the internet.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Sanctions policy is more likely to be efficient if the monitoring of sanctions regimes is effective. In this regard, the UNSC should consider the establishment of permanent expert staffing at the UN for monitoring purposes which can make more important contribution to correct infringements and to improve the existing monitoring procedures of sanctions regime. Moreover, at present, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of sanctions committees to monitor the overall effects of sanctions. As UN always requires sufficient resources to monitor and enforce these sanctions, one way to increase its resources is to cooperate with NGOs and humanitarian agencies. There is also a need to enhance the regular evaluation process of sanctions regime to get an understanding of their present and future effectiveness of sanctions. Moreover, to evaluate the effects of sanctions the sanctions committee should consult regularly with the sanctioned country and should undertake frequent visits to the affected country in order to have a first-hand account of the situation and to assess the pros and cons of sanctions policy.

Minimizing Humanitarian Effects: The humanitarian situation must be considered in the design of any sanctions regime and should be addressed at an early stage of the UNSC discussions on the imposition of sanctions and throughout their enforcement to restrict as much as possible the damage for the civilian population. It must be a chief priority of the UN and the members of the SC to provide the affected populations with sufficient food, essential medicines, and other necessities. Non-food items might also be supplied in specific situations, such as spare parts and water and sanitation supplies. Technical assistance could also be provided under exemptions to decrease

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the worst effects of the sanctions on the civil infrastructure. Moreover, humanitarian exemption should not be overloaded by lengthy and complex administrative procedures which could increase the cost of delivery of humanitarian assistance and hinder its arrival. Furthermore, humanitarian agencies and NGOs should be given sufficient opportunity to work in affected country and the exemptions system should not endanger their ability to deliver humanitarian goods.

Diplomacy and Incentives: Sanctions policy should be combined with creative and effective diplomacy including a continuing process of negotiations and dialogues. The good offices of the Secretariat can be used for this purpose by the UNSC in order to take the conflict to the bargaining table for resolution. An open channel of communication would provide the sanctioner with the opportunity to effectively negotiate their terms with the target state in order to get their objectives fulfilled soon and peacefully. Furthermore, Sanctions may work best when they are part of a 'carrots and stick' policy. This policy can also be specifically adopted in post-conflict stage when a peace settlement has been reached. At this situation incentives and rewards might prove useful, particularly in supporting humanitarian consequences of sanctions. For instance, when targeted country is unable to make revenues due to sanctions, a sanctions exception fund can be establish to collect and carry out aid to be used for humanitarian purposes. Frozen assets of the targeted country may also be used to finance urgently needed humanitarian assistance in favor of civilian people in targeted country.

Despite the depressing experience of Iraq, UN sanctions are still considered a useful tool in international relations as international community has become more and more unwilling to use military force. However, with the significance of sanctions in international affairs, the need arises to execute them in an effective, transparent, fair and, at the same time, in more humane way. Sanctions authorities should keep aside politically ambitious goals of powerful state and must put some real effort for enhancing the credibility of UN sanctions mechanism. The permanent members of UNSC should observe a policy of checks and balances in the decision making particularly humanitarian aspect should never be compromised. They must fulfill their responsibilities fairly in the collective system of international peace and security. Hence, the usefulness of UN sanctions regimes depends as a whole on the ability and efforts of the sanctions authorities to do something concrete and to cope with flaws of sanctions regimes.

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