

The Economic Sanctions Game against Iran

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Washington bears full responsibility for imposing illegitimate sanctions on Iran. Other countries are pressured to go along. Doing so harms their own interests.

Heavy-handed US bullying largely gets its way. Rule of law principles and norms are violated. At issue is advancing Washington's imperium.

America's 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) lets presidents claim unusual and/or extraordinary foreign threats, declare a national emergency, and regulate commerce accordingly.

Targeting Iran began in November 1979. Iranian assets were lawlessly seized. A full trade embargo followed.

In January 1981, it was lifted under provisions of the Algiers Accords. Most Iranian assets were unblocked. Nonetheless, Iranian Assets Control Regulations remained in effect.

Sanctions harm nations. Ordinary people are hurt most. That's the whole idea. Iranians feel the full brunt of US ruthlessness. Multiple rounds of sanctions have been imposed. Doing so is lawless. The previous article explained.

The General Assembly's 1974 Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States says no nation may use or encourage use of economic, political or other measures to coerce another country to subordinate its sovereign rights in any way.

Under Part IV, Section 1, Chapter III, Article 54 of the Protocol 1 Additional to the Geneva Conventions (1977):

(1) Starving civilians during war is prohibited.

(2) Attacking, destroying, removing, or compromising indispensable items is prohibited. They include foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies, irrigation works, and other essential products, services, and facilities relating to them.

UN General Assembly Resolution 44/215 (1989) prohibits political and economic coercion against developing countries.

It specifically covers trade and financial restrictions, blockades, embargoes, and other economic sanctions. It calls them incompatible with UN Charter provisions. They adversely affect the ability of nations to function politically, economically and socially. They harm civilians most.

The International Conference on Nutrition, World Declaration on Nutrition, Food and

Agriculture Organization, and World Health Organization (1992) recognized the right to access nutritionally adequate and safe food as a fundamental right.

US Code defines international terrorism as follows:

A. "violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State;

B. appear to be intended -

i. to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;

ii. to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or

iii. to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and

C. occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States...."

Crimes against humanity breach fundamental international law. Civilian populations must be protected at all times. Illegitimate sanctions harm human rights grievously. Imposing them violates international laws and norms. Targeting nonbelligerent countries is especially unconscionable.

On September 6, China's [Xinhua](#) News quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov calling US sanctions lawless.

He said Russia won't agree to the "extraterritorial use of the US law." Doing so he said "gross(ly) violat(es) fundamental principles of international law."

He added that Iran's nuclear program is entirely peaceful. Its "nuclear material has not been switched to military needs." Sanctions, of course, target Iranian independence.

They're unrelated to its nuclear or other issues. They're smoke screen cover for what's really at stake. Washington tolerates no outliers. Independent nations are targeted. Iran tops the list. Sanctions, of course, change nothing. America has tougher measures in mind.

For now, piling on is policy. On August 10, the Iran Threat Reduction and Syrian Human Rights Act of 2012 was enacted. Previous loopholes were closed. An illegal embargo was tightened.

Iran's oil, petrochemical, or natural gas industries were targeted. So were activities relating to them.

On October 9, Obama signed an [Executive Order](#) (EO) headlined "Executive Order from the President regarding Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 and Additional Sanctions with respect to Iran."

Section 218 covers non-US companies incorporated and operating outside America. They include ones owned or controlled by US corporations. Foreign US subsidiaries henceforth are administered by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Draconian sanctions were further tightened. US companies can be sanctioned for foreign subsidiary violations. Henceforth, they're required to assure compliance.

Section 219 requires "issuers" disclose information in either annual or quarterly SEC filings pertaining to prohibited Iranian transactions. If discovered, one or more US government agencies must investigate.

US financial institutions are prohibited from making Iranian loans or providing credits. Foreign exchange transactions, subject to US jurisdiction, are barred.

Transfers of credit or payments between or through financial institutions, subject to US jurisdiction, are prohibited.

Property and interests in property in America are blocked. They may not be "transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in." Foreign branches are included.

Americans are prohibited from "investing in or purchasing significant amounts of equity or debt instruments of a sanctioned person."

Goods, technology, and services may not be imported into America directly or indirectly.

Property and interests in property in America are blocked. They may not be "transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in."

Overall, congressional sanctions and Obama's EO prohibit companies and individuals from doing business with Iran's oil, petroleum products, natural gas, and petrochemicals industries.

Prohibitions target companies involved in mining uranium with Iran; selling, leasing or providing oil tanker services; offering insurance to the National Iranian Tanker Company; or engaging in any other financial services.

"The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, and the United States Trade Representative, and with the President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and other agencies and officials as appropriate, is hereby authorized to impose on a person any of the sanctions described in" this EO upon determining that violations occurred.

On October 8, [Reuters](#) headlined "Senator works on tighter US sanctions on Iran," saying:

Senator Mark Kirk (R. IL) wants additional Iranian sanctions. He "and other lawmakers are pushing to expand sanctions aimed at cutting off revenues they believe Iran is using to advance its nuclear program."

They want all international banks, public and private, prohibited entirely from dealing with the Central Bank of Iran. They want Iran's entire energy sector blacklisted. They include insurance and other financial services connected to it.

They want new penalties piled on others in place. They're considering ways to freeze an estimated 30% of Iran's foreign currency reserves held in foreign banks. Congress wants Iran isolated, suffocated, and brought to its knees.

It won't work. Too many countries object. They won't go along. Congress and the administration may end up shooting themselves in both feet.

NAM member states support Iran. So do China and Russia. Perhaps America will end up isolated. Countries are reluctant to adopt policies harming their own interests. America demands too much too often.

Iranian oil and gas are valued. Willing buyers want access to them. They have no dog in Washington's fight. Why do things wrong when doing them right is so easy. Hopefully most agree. The fullness of time will tell.

A Final Comment

On October 15, [Haaretz](#) headlined "EU expected to approve tougher sanctions against Iran," saying:

Britain, Germany, France, and Italy want them. UK Foreign Secretary William Hague called them "a sign of our resolve in the European Union that we will step up the pressure."

He and Haaretz said nothing about rule of law issues. Sanctions on Iran have no legitimacy. EU members Greece, Cyprus, Malta, and Sweden objected. Unanimity is required.

On October 14, [Haaretz](#) headlined "Fearing loss of lucrative deal, Sweden opposes new Iran sanctions," saying:

At issue is telecommunications company Ericsson. It wants no part of sanctions hurting business. More than one contract is involved. It has extensive dealings with state-owned Irancell.

It supplies cell phone tracking technology. It also has other contracts too valuable to lose. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt stands by Ericsson. He also said sanctions harm ordinary Iranians most. They don't affect government policy.

EU foreign ministers decided Monday. They imposed tougher financial, energy, trade, and transport sector sanctions. They added asset freezes and tightened restrictions on the Central Bank of Iran.

In addition, European satellite provider Eutelsat agree to take 19 Iranian television and radio broadcasters off air. Spokeswoman Vanessa O'Connor said it's to comply with EU sanctions. It's also about suppressing dissent.

Press TV and other broadcasters air real news and information. Vital issues are covered. They feature what Western media suppress.

Press TV said the move "shows that the European Union does not respect freedom of speech and is a step to mute all alternative news outlets representing the voice of the voiceless."

EU nations don't know when to quit. They bow and scrape to Washington. They harm their own interests in the process.

Note: Ahead of Monday's EU meeting, Bildt denied Sweden's opposition to sanctions or concerns about Ericsson losing business. Most of all, he's angry about Haaretz explaining

what he wants kept secret.

He called its Sunday article "[anonymous slander.](#)" He summoned Israel's foreign minister. He lodged an official protest. He did it that way because Haaretz attributed its information to Israeli Foreign Ministry officials.

On Monday, Sweden and other opposition countries bit the bullet as expected. Twenty-seven EU nations did so no matter how much their own interests are harmed. Perhaps doing so, in part, defines insanity.

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