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JOINT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ENFORCEMENT PLANNING

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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Navy War College or the Department of the Navy

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Abstract of

JOINT ECONOMIC SANCTION ENFORCEMENT PLANNING

Economic sanction enforcement operations represent a viable U. S. foreign policy option now and in the future. However, these operations suffer from three operational level deficiencies. First, they have a decidedly single Service focus, usually naval. Second, they fail to account for an opponent's reactions and unintended consequences. Third, Measures Of Effectiveness (MOEs) often fail to capture the actual level of success of the operation. This paper addresses these deficiencies by correlating socioeconomic and other sanction-specific issues to the Commander's Estimate of the Situation (CES) planning methodology. The CES process exposes the weaknesses in potentially ineffective single Service courses of action, and highlights the possibility of unintended consequences and militarily significant enemy courses of action. This analysis also highlights the need to involve the J-2 organization as early as possible in the process. Finally, because the effects of sanctions are cumulative, direct and indirect MOEs should change as the operation evolves.

## Introduction

JCS Pub 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War contains the following description:

“Enforcement of Sanctions/Maritime Intercept Operations. These are operations which employ coercive measures to interdict the movement of certain types of designated items into or out of a nation or specified area. These operations are military in nature and serve both political and military purposes. The political objective is to compel a country or group to conform to the objectives of the initiating body. The military objective is to establish a barrier which is selective, allowing only those goods authorized to enter or exit. Depending on geography, sanction enforcement normally involves some combination of air and surface forces. Assigned forces should be capable of complementary mutual support...An example of sanctions enforcement is Operation SUPPORT DEMOCRACY conducted off the coast of Haiti beginning in 1993.”<sup>1</sup>

By combining Enforcement of Sanctions and Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) into one definition, and by neglecting any mention of ground forces in the description, one might conclude that these operations are primarily maritime in focus. A reader might also observe that of the 16 types of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) described in this publication, only Support to Insurgency is described in less detail than Enforcement of Sanctions/Maritime Interception Operations. This lack of fidelity suggests that sanctions enforcement is misunderstood as a joint operation. To make matters even less precise, the definition of a MIO is habitually misused in naval and commercial literature. For this analysis, a MIO is any of a variety of different naval operations such as blockade, quarantine, pacific blockade, visit and search, or Maritime Interdiction Operation that have use naval forces to enforce sanctions on the seas.<sup>2</sup> Each

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, (Joint Pub 3-07) (Washington D.C.: June 16, 1995), III-3-III-4.

<sup>2</sup> For a description of each form of MIO, see Richard Zeigler, “Maritime Interdiction Mechanisms: Distinctions with Differences,” (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1995).

form of MIO varies in degree of enforcement, purpose and place in the continuum between war and peace.

Sanction enforcement operations suffer from three operational level deficiencies. First, they have a decidedly single-Service focus, usually naval. Second, they fail to account for both an opponent's reactions and unintended consequences. Third, Measures Of Effectiveness (MOEs) often fail to capture the actual level of success of the operation. This paper will address these deficiencies by correlating socioeconomic and other sanction-specific issues to the Commanders' Estimate of the Situation (CES) planning methodology.

### **Sanctions Enforcement in Perspective**

Sanctions enforcement is an integral part of U. S. National Military Strategy (NMS).<sup>3</sup> The 1997 NMS directly refers to sanctions enforcement no less than five times. Specifically, sanctions enforcement operations figure prominently in the "shape the strategic environment" role of the "Shape, Respond and Prepare" conceptual triad.<sup>4</sup> Compelling the enemy to act in a certain way, preventing conflict, reducing a threat, controlling the level of conflict, buying time, and denying materials are all suggested uses of sanctions.

The United States uses sanctions today more than ever before. In the 1950s, there were five U. S.-initiated sanctions operations. In the 1990s, the number is 35 to date and

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy Of The United States of America, Washington, D.C.: 1997, 16.

<sup>4</sup>Joint Chiefs of Staff, 14.

counting.<sup>5</sup> In most of these cases, the military enforcement mechanism was the U.S. Navy. One possible reason for this is that the U.S. Navy has been unopposed since the end of the Cold War and maritime enforcement is non-intrusive. In other words, the U.S. Navy is assigned to enforce sanctions because it can. At the same time, however, sanctions enforcement is under increasing scrutiny for seemingly poor results. A New York Times article estimated that from the 1950s to the 1980s, the success rate dropped from 70 percent to 10 percent.<sup>6</sup> While the article did not state the criteria used to measure this decline in success, it suggested two larger questions. Can sanctions alone accomplish their goals? And, is there a disconnect between the strategic goal and the operational plan?

The answer to the first question is widely debated. During the debate to launch Operation Desert Storm, Senator Ted Kennedy said that sanctions were "...the best means at the least cost to persuade Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait."<sup>7</sup> Former Secretary of Defense Dr. James Schlesinger testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee, "I think the probability of success of the sanctions is very, very, high if we stay with the original objectives."<sup>8</sup> However, former National Security Advisor Dr. Henry Kissinger was more skeptical, "If the sanctions do bite within a timeframe relevant to the political process, Iraq is more likely to offer to negotiate than to yield."

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Backs Off Sanctions, Seeing Poor Effect Abroad," The New York Times, 31 July 1998, A1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., A6.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Taylor, "Clausewitz on Economic Sanctions: The Case of Iraq," Strategic Review, Summer 1995, 57.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 58.

Dr. Kissinger's assessment is consistent with Clausewitz's maxim that "War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>9</sup> For sanctions to work then, they "...must be effective enough to make the cost of compliance with the senders' demands less than the burden that will be lifted by compliance."<sup>10</sup> This is indeed a high cost and suggests that most sanctions alone can not compel another country to change, especially in the short term.

The second question suggested a disparity between strategic goals and operational plan. This points to a failure in the planning process. The bulk of this paper will discuss sanction-oriented concepts for joint staff use as it develops operational plans. These concepts are intended to integrate with the following steps of the CES process: mission and factor analysis, enemy and friendly courses of action development, and MOE.

### **Sanctions Enforcement in the Commander's Estimate Methodology**

Mission Analysis - In August 1990, President Bush said, "There's no point in getting into all the semantics: the main thing is that we are going to stop the oil coming out of there. That's what we are doing."<sup>11</sup> Although President Bush clearly stated what he wanted done, the who, when, where, how, and why of the mission were at first unclear. UNSCR Resolution 661 provided more fidelity to the mission by stating that the sanctions were intended to force Iraq out of Kuwait and that the effort would be immediate and multinational. At this point, military planners had a clear vision of their limitations, actual and implied tasks, and the desired end state. In other words, the military

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Taylor, 58.

<sup>11</sup> A. Kamen, "U.S. Set to Enforce Embargo on Iraq," The Washington Post, 13 August 1990, Sec A, p. 1.

understood the mission. In other cases, however, mission statements are vague or incomplete. During the Balkan conflicts of the early 1990s, the U. S. National Command Authorities used sanctions in a crisis response mode as a stopgap measure to “do something” until a plan was developed.

The following is a historical and speculative listing of possible military goals of a sanction operation:

Early in the crisis/conflict:

- Stop or slow the flow of certain materials
- Symbolic stand
- Generate international concurrence with U.S. position
- Stabilize a potentially escalatory situation with actions other than war
- Create an environment where escalation is possible
- Demonstrate U.S. or Coalition resolve
- Give sanctions credibility
- Identify critical weaknesses in target country
- Reduce war reserves
- Create civil unrest, coup
- Create choke points

During the crisis/conflict:

- Stop flow of strategic materials
- Expose weaknesses

As described earlier, sanctions enforcement historically has been a naval task. However, the ability of merchant ships to communicate with their parent companies or governments to arrange alternate ports for their goods can spread naval forces beyond their geographic capabilities. The 1990 comprehensive sanctions against Iraq are an excellent example. While coalition naval forces effectively stopped any traffic from entering Iraq via the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf, Jordanian trucks managed to provide

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Iraq with a steady though limited supply of critical war goods. This suggests a joint approach is necessary for sanction enforcement operations. A comprehensive analysis of air, ground and sea transportation networks would have identified the Jordanian factor. This type of analysis also highlights the importance of multinational coalitions to enforce sanctions. Multi-Service and multinational participation in sanctions operations increases overall effectiveness by reducing or eliminating alternate routes of travel for sanctioned materials.

Is the Joint Task Force organization prepared to deal with the requirements for an adversary's economic and social information? Yes. The vital link between the target country and the JTF is the National Intelligence Support Team (NIST) and its relationship with the target country's military and economic advisory staff if NIST sources are still in the target country.<sup>12</sup> When developed early in the crisis or deliberate planning process, this relationship can provide crucial baseline data from which factors, possible reactions and unintended consequences, and Courses of Action are developed. The J-2 organization can provide in-depth detail on sanction-specific factors. Using the CES methodology, such factors are evaluated by space, force and time in the following analysis.

Factor Space - In a more traditional conflict, space centers on military capability, national infrastructure and the character of the people, place, and flow of the conflict. But in a sanctions enforcement scenario, the critical factors become economic, social, and political.

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<sup>12</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures, (Joint Pub 5-00.2), (Washington D.C), 13 January 1999, VI-14.

From a geographic perspective, the important factors to consider are the target nation's methods and routes of trade, and trade relationships with neighbors. While less than robust trade systems react to sanctions quickly, a number of interrelated factors complicate the analysis. The sanctions operations against Haiti in the early 1990s are illustrative. Haiti is an essentially maritime nation with its capital city, Port au Prince, dominating the political, economic, and cultural life of the country. The road system is poor and predominantly designed to access Port Au Prince. Single lane roads in steep, hilly terrain provide the two peninsular forks their only links to the rest of the country. The body of the country rises towards a mountainous and thickly forested border with the Dominican Republic. Less than 10 paved roads provide commercial access to this border.

Politically and militarily in 1993, the rulers controlled the Haitian population with an intimidating police force. The police and military functioned primarily as an internal security force. Because of the limited access to the country, the police could easily control all trade choke points throughout the country.

As one of the poorest countries in the Americas, Haiti's education was also primitive, and the only national income came from tourism in Port Au Prince, drug smuggling, government employment, a baseball factory, and some farms. The general population was, and is, subsistence farmers and day laborers.

The combination of economic choke points and authoritarian rule allowed for the possibility that the ruling group could control and profit from black market activities. Thus, U. N. sanctions had the potential to make the poor poorer, and the government richer and more powerful.

Factor Force - That the United States is enforcing sanctions against another sovereign state generally suggests that it does so from a position of strength, especially during peacetime enforcement operations. The factor force elements are essentially the Clausewitzian trinity of leadership and its interrelationships in terms of the sanctions. For example, when faced with the embargo of 1990, Saddam Hussein concentrated his remaining efforts on the armed power essential to keeping him in command. He enacted rationing programs for his constituents and imposed a secondary blockade on his internal enemies. He was able to do this because he controlled the country in a despotic manner and his people were accustomed to severe deprivation. If a democratic country such as Israel or Ireland faced economic sanctions, the leadership would have to consider the citizenry's power in a way Saddam did not.

Factor Time - Time is often the key word of debate in discussions about economic sanctions. Like strategic bombing and submarine operations against merchant shipping, the effects tend to be cumulative. Supporters of sanctions as an alternative to armed conflict or escalation usually cite their cumulative nature as reasons to give them time to work. Ironically, if a sanction is in effect for a long time, substitute products and markets or changes in behavior can mitigate it. For example, one of the results of the 40-year-old embargo on Cuba is that Cubans enjoy Canadian beer, take money from non-U.S. tourists, and buy and maintain their heavy equipment from Soviet bloc or Canadian

companies.<sup>13</sup> With the foregoing in mind, the following factor questions have been significant in recent sanctions operations:

Is the target country:

#### SPACE

- Highly dependent on certain products such as oil, water, arms, data, cash flow?
- A vital supplier of certain goods to the United States?
- A vital supplier of certain goods to coalition members?
- The only supplier in the world for certain products, or are there alternates?
- Dependent on the United States only for the supply of a product? On the Coalition?
- Principally dependent on income from a single product such as oil?
- Holding strategic reserves of the product? How much? Who controls it? Is it vulnerable?
- Liable to run out of any highly perishable or high usage commodities such as energy products?
- Able to enact rations, concentrate goods with the military.
- Going to feel the effects right away or over time?
- A maritime, insular, peninsular nation, land locked?
- Susceptible to mass migration?
- Connected commercially by a finite number of rail, road, ferry and maritime links?

#### FORCE

- Dominated by a closely linked police and military force?
- Ruled by intimidation and fear?
- Government politically accountable to its people?
- Capable of controlling the country if civil war breaks out?

#### TIME

- Inclined to hold out against sanctions?
- Population accustomed to long periods of deprivation, suffering, or is it accustomed to, and demanding of, a certain standard of living?

Enemy Courses of Action – In the sanctions environment, enemy course of action

alternatives tend to be more socioeconomic and political than military. Historically, the

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<sup>13</sup> Robin Renwick, "Economic Sanctions," Harvard Studies in International Affairs, no.45, 1981, 66.

United States has effectively handled maritime ECOAs. An example is the compulsion of non-cooperative merchant ships by tailored Rules of Engagement in maritime interdiction operations during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. However, the United States has failed on many occasions to adjust to an enemy reaction to a sanction, especially in economic terms. The case of U.S. sanctions against Japan in 1940-41 is a good example of misreading adversarial reactions. By July 1941, the United States had ceased exports of steel, iron, and petroleum to deter Japanese expansion. While it made no sense to continue supplying Japan with materials to fight a war inimical to U.S. interests, the embargo galvanized Japanese solidarity and anxiety over resources. Five days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Ambassador told the U. S. Undersecretary of State, "...it is preferable to fight than to yield to pressure."<sup>14</sup> In this instance, all indications were that the embargo was extremely effective in reducing Japanese war supplies. However, the embargo did not provide a politically survivable way for Japan to yield to U.S. desires. This opposite reaction was a misreading of the Japanese culture and ultimately, Japanese intentions. In all likelihood, the sanctions accelerated the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies and attack on Hawaii.

Thus, misreading an adversary's international context is a profound risk in evaluating ECOAs. National interests and the laws of economics are the most powerful forces in this environment. For example, in 1990, Iraq maintained trade with Jordan for critical products that would have been otherwise unavailable both before and after Desert Shield/Storm.<sup>15</sup> Jordan's national interests were complex. On one hand, it placated the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, 55.

international community; on the other, it derived much needed economic benefit from smuggling operations.

The following table lists examples of possible enemy courses of action:

- Comply with the demand
- Request negotiations
- Enact rationing
- Declare martial law
- Wait for the United States to tire
- Portray the United States as imperialist, defy sanctions, rally nationalistic emotions
- Seek imports through means not closed by sanctions
- Sell exports by means not closed by sanctions
- Offer border nations or weak coalition partners sizeable profit in exchange for trade
- Enact secondary sanctions on own population
- Conduct ethnic cleansing
- Encourage mass migration
- Widen the conflict
- Seek support from a strong, unaffiliated nation with ideological or ethnic loyalties
- Sponsor and conduct terrorism
- Blockade critical products from the United States or weak coalition countries

Unintended Consequences - Unique to the economic aspect of sanctions enforcement is the consideration of unintended consequences. What differentiates these occurrences from COAs is the unplanned nature of the reaction. They can be emotionally or culturally driven, or purely in response to economic realities. History provides a rich supply of both political and socioeconomic examples of unintended consequences. The recent sanctions operations in Haiti had a variety of unintended socioeconomic consequences. While the U. N. maritime embargo was reasonably successful, the combination of despotic rule, violent suppression, and stultifying poverty in the general population created a potential mass migration problem. While this problem existed to some extent before the sanctions were enforced, the sanctions made the plight of the

Haitians even worse. Naval forces had to conduct an unpopular "Repatriation" policy until a U.S. invasion temporarily restored order. In this case, the sanctions disproportionately affected the general population in negative ways, making the Haitian police force even more powerful. The failure here was in not recognizing the combination of the ruling organization's ability to concentrate wealth and power, and its disregard for the plight of the citizenry.

Based on a historical survey of past sanction enforcement operations, the following is a summary of possible unintended consequences:

- Ethnic polarization
- Economic polarization
- Hatred of the United States
- Target country seeks support from another country
- Target people unite, conserve, and resolve to outlast the sanctions
- An unwanted coup or civil war
- A widening of the crisis or conflict into a neighboring country
- Acceleration of the conflict
- Mass migration
- A secondary blockade
- An irrational reaction due to national pride

Measures of Effectiveness - One can measure the effectiveness of sanctions enforcement in direct and indirect ways. First, the military effectiveness of the operation can be broken down directly into percentages of the product intercepted, number of ships intercepted, percentage of areas covered etc. These direct measurements accurately illustrate the effectiveness of the military portion of the operation. The commander also needs to know if the sanctions are achieving the overall strategic objective. This is a more difficult and certainly less precise task. Moreover, because sanctions are cumulative, measurements and indications of effectiveness will vary at different times during the enforcement. It is entirely within reason for MOEs to evolve as enforcement

operations force the enemy to change his procedures. For example, during the Pacific campaign in World War II, the Japanese altered indigenous coal transportation methods over time. As large bulk shipping losses mounted, shipments shifted to coastal ferries and then finally to railroad cars through a series of vulnerable chokepoints known as the Kanmon Tunnels and the Hakkodate-Aomori Rail Ferry. Post war interviews with senior Japanese officers revealed that destruction of these small but critical transportation nodes would have had a much greater effect on the war than the all out destruction of the main Japanese cities.<sup>16</sup>

The following is a listing of possible direct and indirect MOEs for sanction operations:

Direct:

- Ratio of amount of blockade running attempted to amount that succeeded
- Amount of prohibited items confiscated
- Amount of prohibited items making it into sanction or export ports
- Shortage of weapons
- Shortage of energy

Indirect

- Alternate markets, black markets
- Change in shipping patterns
- Price of critical materials
- Change in use of railroads, shipping, air traffic
- International condemnation
- Increased pressure from international community
- Media reaction
- Coup attempts
- Civil unrest
- Political opposition gains strength
- Mass migrations
- Internal migration
- Rationing

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<sup>16</sup>U. S. Army Air Force, U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey: Summary Report (Pacific War), (Washington D.C.: 1 July 1946), 19-20.

- Change in lifestyle
- Secondary blockade
- Target country calls for negotiations
- Target country complies with sanctions

The effects of the Union blockade on the South during the U.S. Civil War is a richly illustrative example of the problems that can occur in miscalculating measures of effectiveness or reading the wrong ones. Nearly 150 years after this, the most analyzed war in U.S. history, military and economic historians still cannot agree on the effectiveness of the blockade. The consistent element in the difference of opinions is the measures that they use.

A purely military analysis of the blockade suggests that it was ineffective. Of the 6,316 vessels that attempted to run the blockade, 5,389 made it into southern harbors, an 85.3 percent success rate.<sup>17</sup> In total, blockade runners provided more than 60 percent of the armaments and 66 percent of the saltpeter requirements for the Southern war effort.<sup>18</sup> Exports survived to a lesser degree, with 700,000 bales of southern cotton making it to Europe. This represented about 10 percent of prewar deliveries. However, the price of cotton increased three to fourfold during the war so the dollar sales of cotton in Europe were about 80 percent of the prewar value.

Some indirect and less obvious measurements suggest an entirely different result. Though the number of ships that made it through the blockade was quite high, they often ended up laboriously unloading their cargo in unprepared and unintended ports of opportunity. Bulky products such as railroad iron and machinery rarely came through because they were unprofitable. Caribbean staging ports bulged with undelivered goods

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<sup>17</sup> David Surdam, "The Union Navy's Blockade Reconsidered," U. S. Naval War College Review, Autumn 1998, 85.

waiting for any ship to attempt a transit. The collective effect of these factors triggered the collapse of the Confederacy's railroad system. Goods were hauled by cart to distant railheads, and the infrastructure crumbled without replacement rails, machinery, and engines. The goods that did make it on the trains had to compete with deliveries to the battle front and a completely disrupted export system.

Those exports that did make it out of the country went by wagon to inferior ports and ships via Mexico or Texas. The combined effects of costly ground transportation and expensive blockade running ships reduced the South's buying power considerably. Southern revenue from cotton dropped at least 50 percent during the war. The U.S. Secretary of State, William H. Seward, probably got it right when he wrote the following: "The true test of the efficiency of the blockade will be found in its results. Cotton commands a price in Manchester...four times greater than in New Orleans...Judged by this test of results, I am satisfied that there was never a more effective blockade."<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, Mr. Seward was not too concerned with how his military commanders measured their effectiveness during the blockade. The value of this example is how the analysis of different measures of effectiveness results in totally different conclusions about the blockade.

### **Conclusions**

Sanctions enforcement is inherently difficult to measure because it is an indirect approach to a problem. This reality aside, sanctions remain and will in the future represent a viable foreign policy option for U. S. National Command Authorities. A joint

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 88.

planning perspective on mission analysis, factor analysis, course of action development and measures of effectiveness will reduce a considerable degree of uncertainty in this mission and afford a high degree of success.

The mission analysis stage of planning provides the crucial end state and task orientation to the problem. When the NCA enacts sanctions hastily, the desired end state is often unclear. In these cases, the importance of considering what undesirable reactions and consequences are possible is the essential issue for the joint planning staff. For sanctions enforcement operations with better defined goals, the joint staff can shape the operation with well thought out courses of action. This results in mitigation of the most dangerous enemy courses of action and unintended consequences.

Factor analysis sheds light on the decidedly socioeconomic influence in relation to the mission. This influence forces the commander to deal with the socioeconomic dynamics of the target nation. National Intelligence support for the planning and execution stages of the operation is required to establish baselines in socioeconomic and political activity, and then to measure essential factors during sanctions enforcement. National Intelligence support can also provide insights into possible unintended consequences.

The comparison of possible enemy and own courses of action will reveal the force and coalition requirements for the operation. This process may reveal an increasing requirement to conduct joint and multinational operations to ensure that the military and multinational enforcement operation is comprehensive.

The discussion of MOEs highlights a need to address the non-military aspect of the enforcement operation and to measure how that operation is affecting the overall goal

of the mission. Because sanctions are cumulative, the measures will change as the operation evolves and the antagonists interact. The joint force planner must recognize this important factor and adjust MOEs accordingly.

### **Recommendations**

Joint planning staffs need to use the CES methodology to identify the essential aspects of sanctions enforcement missions, especially mission and factor analysis, COA development and MOEs. Staffs should be open to the possibility that the enforcement might need to be a joint and possibly multinational operation, and that interagency support, especially from the national intelligence community, will be required early on. Finally, joint planners must ensure that measures of effectiveness accurately describe the effect of the sanctions at any given stage in the cumulative progression of sanction efforts. These measures should be a combination of both direct and indirect measurements.

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