



The Logic and Limitations of Economic Sanctions

——Implications for North Korean Policy

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[Key Points]

- The fundamental objective of economic sanctions is to maintain and strengthen international norms, rather than forcing a specific action to be taken in the short term. The sanctions repeatedly imposed on North Korea have been imposed in part because the country has violated United Nations (UN) resolutions or UN norms.
- The first political objective of sanctions based on UN resolutions is to strengthen the UN's authority and functions in respect of the maintenance of peace and safety. The second political objective is internal political unity, as such sanctions can have the effect of unifying domestic opinion and establishing a consensus within the major countries concerned. On the other hand, there are constraints on the effectiveness of economic sanctions and contradictions lurking within their policy objectives, as well as political limitations arising from the international situation.
- It would be fair to say that sanctions imposed on North Korea have, in some ways, actually helped to shore up domestic support and bolstered political unity, and have hardly shaken the North Korean regime at all. The effectiveness of economic sanctions depends on whether or not the international situation at the time presents strategic reasons pushing the countries concerned down the path of compromise. In the case of the North Korean issue, the fundamental question is, given the international situation regarding the Korean Peninsula, whether or not the countries concerned (including North Korea) can establish shared strategic interests.



Key Data

The Effects and Limitations of Economic Sanctions

国連の経済制裁の主な目的と効果

- 平和と安全の維持に関する国連の権威と機能の強化
- 内部の政治的団結、国連加盟国同士の結束強化
- 関係国内の意見の一致・団結の促進
- 制裁対象国内の政治的バランスへの影響
- 特定の行動を防ぐ予防的措置
- 類似の問題を抱える第3国への抑止効果

制裁の制約と限界

- 制裁に従わない国の存在
- 制裁に加われない国の存在
- 物資の代替が可能な場合の実効性
- 被制裁国の一般市民に対する打撃の問題
- 既存の国際経済秩序の破壊を伴う側面
- 独特な貿易・経済網や「見えない秩序」が広がる懸念

Source: Compiled by the author

Purposes & Effects of UN Economic Sanctions

Strengthen UN authority & functions for maintaining peace & safety

Bolster internal political solidarity & unity among UN member countries

Promote consensus/solidarity within relevant countries

Influence domestic political balance of sanctioned country

Preventive measures against specific actions

Deterrent effect against third countries with similar problems

Constraints & Limitations of Sanctions

Existence of non-compliant countries

Existence of non-participating countries

Effectiveness if alternative supplies are available

Impact on ordinary citizens in sanctioned country

Potential to destroy existing international economic order

Concerns about spread of unique trade/economic networks or an “unseen order”