

Economic Sanctions and US Power

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Economic Sanctions Reconsidered (3rd Edition)

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Sanctions database

- 204 observations from WWI to 2000
- All sanctioners, not just US
- Variety of goals, from release of political prisoners to inducing Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in 1990-91
- 12 economic, political explanatory variables

Caveats

- Data is qualitative
- Cases are heterogeneous
- Foreign policy is complicated—
omitted variables (pseudo r-
squareds < 0.25)

>>> difficult to generalize

Defining success

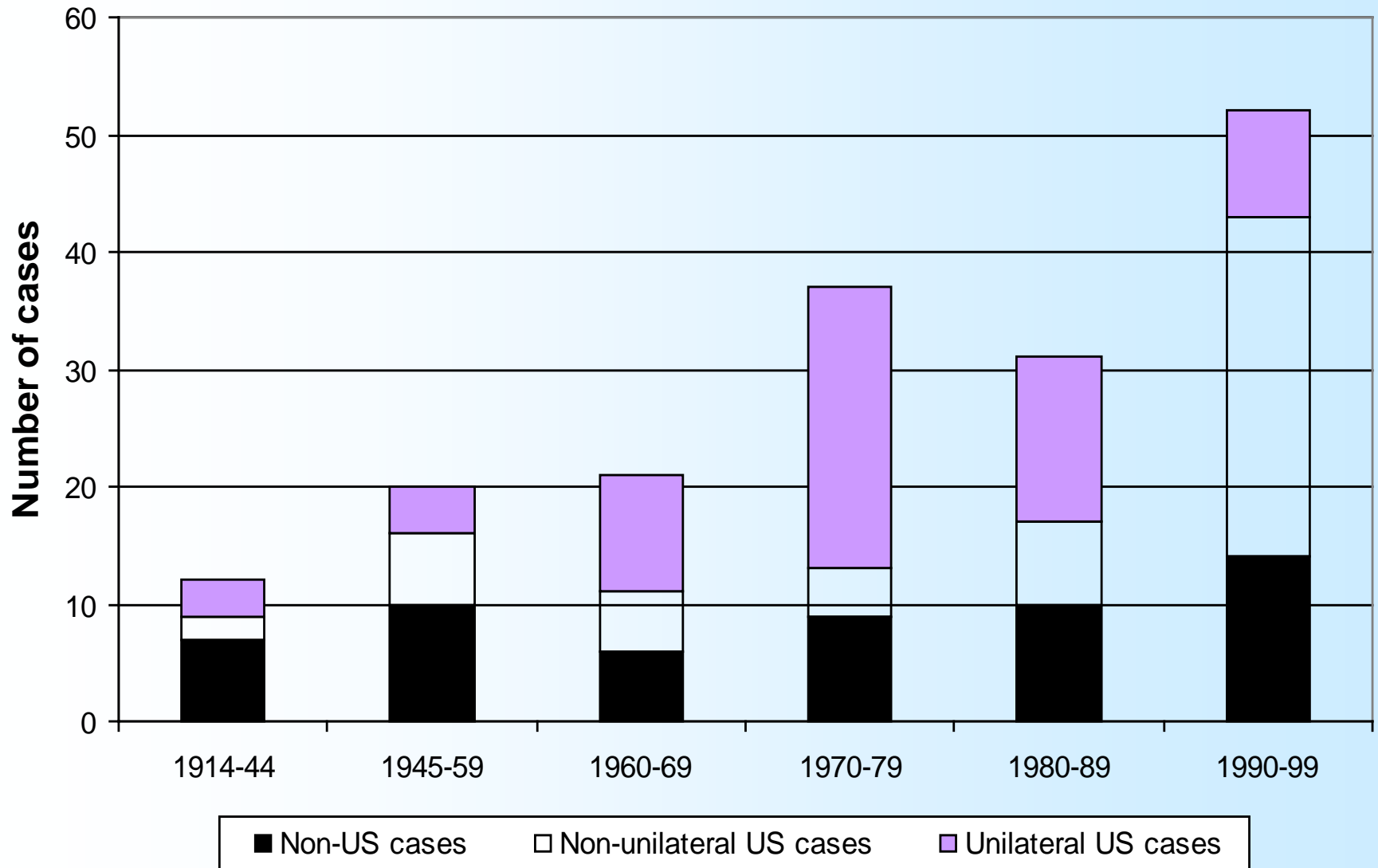
- Instrumental goals, not symbolic or domestic political goals
- Two elements:
 - policy result
 - sanctions contribution

Factors affecting probability of sanctions success

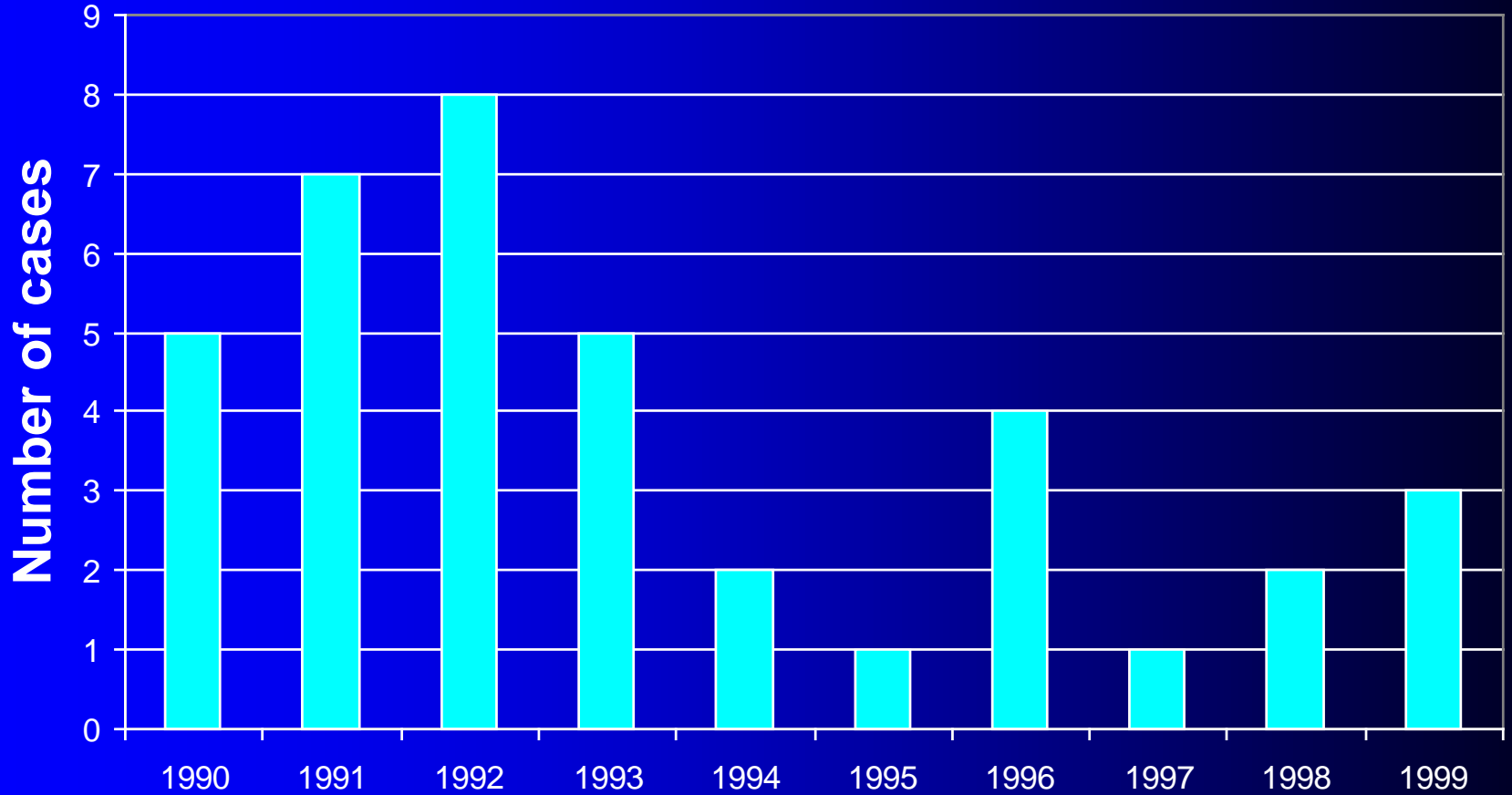
Costs of defiance > Costs of compliance

- Direct cost of sanctions
- Escalation threat
- Relations with sender or third parties
- Political response in target
- External security
- Internal security and stability
- Political, personal well-being

Trends in the Use of Economic Sanctions



US Sanctions Trends in the 1990s



Who hits...

1970-89 1990-99
(number per decade)

US	24.5	38
EC/EU	4.5	19
USSR/ Russia	0	6
UN	1	11

...and who gets hit?

1970-89 1990-99
(number per decade)

Africa	4.5	18
Asia	7	8
Lat. America	9.5	8
Middle East	4	3
USSR/ FSU	3	8

The results overall...

All observations:

1914-2000 $70/204 = 34\%$

Non-US observations:

1914-2000 $23/64 = 36\%$

1970-2000 $17/37 = 46\%$

And for the US

All US observations:

1914-2000 $47/140 = 34\%$

1945-69 $14/27 = 52\%$

1970-2000 $30/105 = 29\%$

Unilateral US observations:

1914-2000 $20/71 = 28\%$

1945-69 $10/16 = 63\%$

1970-2000 $10/52 = 19\%$

Sanctions more likely to be effective when:

- Goals are limited and clearly defined (50% vs. 30%)
- Costs are in line with goals (5.5% of GNP with major goals vs. 2.6% when goals modest)
- Targets are friendly or democratic countries, rather than enemies, autocrats

Goal category	Sanctions only		Sanctions with mil. force	
	% of cases	Success rate*	% of cases	Success rate*
Modest	84	56	5	50
Regime change	69	29	13	60
Conflict management	74	29	5	100
Military impairment	52	13	28	63
Other major	48	38	36	67
All cases	67	35	16	64

Do sanctions lead to war?

- Of 204 sanctions episodes, only 30 involve military force
- In most, sanctions, military force complemented one another
- Only sanctions against Japan prior to WWII possible trigger for war

Failed sanctions and escalation

US cases:

- Panama
- Somalia
- Iraq—pre-Gulf War I; Gulf War II
- Yugoslavia—Bosnian war; Kosovo
- Haiti—sanctions as trigger for failed intervention?

Did sanctions tie hands? Or buy time, weaken adversary?