



Lee Jones. Societies Under Siege: Exploring How International Economic Sanctions (Do Not) Work

Robert H. Taylor

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General

Lee Jones. *Societies Under Siege: Exploring How International Economic Sanctions (Do Not) Work*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015. pp. xiv + 256. Figs. Tables. Notes. Bibliog. Index. Hb. £55. ISBN 9 7801 9874 9325

Societies Under Siege is a sophisticated account of how, and why, economic sanctions applied in recent years to South Africa, Iraq and Myanmar affected the politics of those three countries without achieving the goals that the Western politicians which dictated them intended. It is not that sanctions did not make any difference to the political economies of their target States. However, the consequences of their effects led to reconfigurations of power and political coalitions which allowed regimes to survive unless there was a strong internal coalition created by other forces to lead to radical change. Amongst the author's three cases, that only occurred in South Africa thanks to a coalition of what is referred to as Anglophone capital and black labour unions together with the African National Congress. In the case of Iraq, it took a US-led invasion to remove Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime and in Myanmar, the army created its own transition in its own time on its own terms. While sanctions created problems for all three regimes, unless opposed by strong internal forces not dependent upon the State, authoritarian regimes carry on regardless. As J.M. Keynes is noted as saying, "it is prosperity not adversity that makes the slave shake his chains".

Following a brief Introduction about the changing academic and practitioners' debate on the efficacy and morality of sanctions, the first chapter many readers will find heavy going unless familiar with contemporary theory-building in the social sciences. In that chapter, the author, Dr Lee Jones, a Senior Lecturer at Queen Mary College, lays out the alternative theories as to what economic sanctions are supposed to do, from what he describes as the naïve theory to his own preferred approach.

The naïve theory, of course, is that economic sanctions will impact on the population who will then rise up against their tyrannical rulers and throw the rascals out. It would be surprising if anyone actually still believes this to be the case. Dr Jones's method, which he refers to as Social Conflict Analysis, owes a great deal to the theorising of the Italian Marxist Gramsci. He applies his theory with a degree of sophistication which is impressive, but he perhaps owes more to the Neo-Weberians whom he scolds than he is willing to concede.

Chapters two, three and four then deal with his three case studies. These are each informed by and greatly strengthened by the author's historical approach. Unlike many students of politics these days, this volume does not suffer from the fault of being ahistorical. In each case, he builds for the reader a description of the bases of power of the ruling coalition and how sanctions impacted on them to strengthen, weaken or nullify their utility to the ruling coalition. One of the strengths of the book is that the author does not make the mistake that most commentators on authoritarian regimes make by their obsessive concentration on the supreme leader as an independent actor. Dictators realise they do not dictate as much as respond deftly and quickly to survive the vicissitudes of politics as all politicians must. They are the creatures of political systems as well as their leaders. In the necessity of keeping the volume within bounds, the author has had to elide and eliminate aspects of his three case studies' internal variables directly or indirectly affected by sanctions. Greater concern with, for example, the military in South Africa or the role of strategic factors in Myanmar would have been illuminating.

The final chapter, written like the entire volume with verve, passion and a moral commitment, without losing the chance for a joke or witticism, summarises the entire argument cogently. Here the author also turns his attention in detail to the subject of so-called 'smart' or targeted sanctions, directed not at the entire society and its economy but at allegedly key influential persons within a regime's inner circle. Like all sanctions, these are not as smart as their advocates believe. Dr Jones ends with recommendations for policy advocates and policy makers. These turn out to be good, common sense, such as not reasoning from one case to another analogically. However, as the push for sanctions often comes from within single-issue political movements in the sanction-imposing states, particularly the USA and EU member states, and given that politicians would rather be seen to act than think and explain, believing their public is too stupid to understand rational opposition to the belief that sanctions will achieve their imputed aim, we can be sure they will not go away.

Politicians will not read *Societies Under Siege*. Some policy makers may even agree with it, but they are the instruments of the politicians, not their own men and women. Despite the convincing arguments in this volume, little will change for either the sanctioned or the sanctioning.

ROBERT H. TAYLOR © 2016

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Andrew Gailey. *The Lost Imperialist: Lord Dufferin, Memory and Mythmaking in an Age of Celebrity*. John Murray, London, 2016. pp. x + 454. Illust. Notes. Bibliog. Index. Pb. £12.99. ISBN 9 7814 4479 2454

This book was over 20 years in the writing, possibly not least because there have been several biographies already written about the Marquis. But the author has done a splendid job, combining detailed (admittedly occasionally over-detailed) background research with excellent analysis and insights into the series of important historical events on which Dufferin and Ava had an influence. He also discusses the personal character and motivations of his subject with authority and insight. This not only brings the man alive but also leads the reader to consider whether such characteristics might be found in public figures today.

The initial chapters deal, in considerable detail, with the family history which culminated in the production of this man whose career led him, perhaps surprisingly, to have a significant influence on some important political developments in history. At times, in these chapters, the names, dates and places leave one confused about where we have got to, but, later in the book, the author's analyses mentioned above make it clear that one needs to understand such background in order to assess the progress of the life of the Marquis. It makes it clear that it is particularly important to understand how and why, for example, he was extraordinarily devoted to his mother, and how and why he should have had particular attitudes towards the events and political imperatives which shaped his career.

The rest of the book deals in linear fashion with the career of the Marquis, exploring initially, again in considerable detail, how he developed his place in society, chose his wife, and started and then abandoned a political career for that of a professional envoy. This last aspect is of particular interest since such an opportunity no longer exists in current society and it