

### **Brendan Taylor, American Sanctions in the Asia Pacific, 2010, Oxon/New York: Routledge Publication**

*Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav\**

Brendan Taylor claims that his book is the first systematic analysis of American sanction policy in the Asia-Pacific during the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. The book is divided into six chapters which include introduction, conclusion as well as policy recommendations.

After the introduction, in the second chapter, Taylor attempts to demonstrate the importance of methodology in the research on sanctions and how the adopted methodology can deeply influence the research outcomes. Author points out four reasons why the study of US sanctions in the Asia Pacific is significant and timely. First, the financial and human costs of employing military force in the Asia-Pacific have gone higher and hence the use of force is now a difficult proposition. Taylor also points out that societies in the Asia Pacific region have become increasingly populated, economically interdependent and technologically sophisticated. This region also has the world's largest armed forces and most of

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the emergent nuclear powers belong to this region. Secondly, because of the unique economic, political, cultural and strategic dynamics as well as growing independence of nations of the Asia-Pacific, it is significant for the policy makers in the United States to effectively utilise this source of potential influence. For that purpose, use of sanction under the condition of increasing interdependence needs to be clearly understood.

Thirdly, according to author's assessment, pressure on the United States to use sanctions is more likely to intensify and less likely to dissipate. Such pressure on the United States with regards to sanctions on Asia-Pacific region is more likely to emanate from internal factors instead of the external ones. In this context, United States sanctions on China can be placed as an illustrative example. Fourthly, Taylor

points out that a small but a growing number of policy makers and scholars are of the view that sanctions actually do 'work'. For example, a recent US sanction

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\* **Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav** is a Research Assistant at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), New Delhi.

on North Korean funds at a Macau-based bank, *Banco Delta Asia* has provided a significant degree of leverage against Pyongyang. Taylor makes a significant point that some forms of sanctions may be more effective than others. So it becomes necessary to identify and ascertain which forms of sanctions are more likely to work. This study also examines why policy makers employ different forms of sanctions as well as why strategies are refined and adjusted over the process executing sanctions.

This book examines nine prominent cases in the Asia-Pacific region where the United States used sanctions during the presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Five case studies have been drawn from the Bill Clinton presidency during the period of 1993-2000 and other four cases belong to George W. Bush presidency covering the period of 2001-2008.

Analysing the sanctions during the Clinton administration, Taylor first, picks up the case of Clinton administration's attempt to make renewal of China's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status contingent upon its improvement of human rights records during the period of 1993-94. Secondly, Clinton administration's threat of using sanctions against Japan during the period of 1993-95 have been analysed which was in the context of US-Japan Framework Talks aimed at redressing bilateral trade imbalance between the two sides. Thirdly, author has analysed Clinton administration's use of positive sanction towards North Korea in form of Agreed Framework of 1994 between the United States and North Korea. It offered North Korea a series of economic, political and technological benefits which were aimed at preventing it from developing nuclear weapons capability. The fourth case study examines the Clinton administration's ban on new investments in Myanmar in 1997. The fifth and final case study during the Clinton administration is the analysis of the use of sanctions against India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the nuclear tests conducted by both the nations in 1998. In this context, Taylor points out that though the political influence of these sanctions appears to have been next to non-existent. But his study does not suggest that imposed sanctions had no economic impact since the economies of both India and Pakistan were experiencing difficulty during that period due to many internal and external factors including Asian Economic crisis of 1997-98. However, the study points out that Pakistan suffered a significant economic downturn immediately after the imposition of sanctions followed by a foreign debt payment crisis. This study figures out that Pakistan was left with only US\$ 500 million in foreign exchange to service its debt of US \$ 32 billion. Taylor points out that these sanctions impacted significantly less on India than Pakistan.

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However, during the George W. Bush administration, the author, first analyses the lifting of sanctions against India and Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks on United States in 2001. The second case study examines the two sets of sanctions imposed against Myanmar. One, against an attack on prominent pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters in 2003 and two, against Burmese Junta's brutal suppression of 10,000 anti-government Buddhist monks in 2007. The third case study examines the lifting of a fourteen years long sanction against Indonesia in 2005. The fourth and final case study during the Bush administration examines the US sanctions with regard to North Korean nuclear crisis.

The selected nine case studies illustrate considerable relevance to the policy makers, practitioner as well researchers. Taylor concludes his study by providing policy recommendations. Some of the significant recommendations are: unilateral sanctions require multilateral support; lifting sanctions can be a cost effective strategy; US domestic politics matters in the process of imposing sanctions; strategic objective condition sanctions substantially etc.

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This work provided an insightful and excellent analysis of the significance and influence of sanctions with regard to recently concluded foreign policy practices of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. As outcome of this research, author Brendan Taylor is able to explore and deliver significant policy recommendations which may be of immense utility to the current policy makers and practitioners in the United States and elsewhere too.

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