

## **The Position of Boycott in the International System**

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**ABSTRACT**— Since 19th century along with human advancement in the area of science and technology, the need of societies to each other has increased so that nowadays we cannot find any country in the world that does not need other countries. Therefore, one of the ways pressure imposition on the countries that violate international rights is using the tool of international boycotts so that interested countries adjust their behavior. However, sometimes powerful countries misuse this tool, and employ it in the direction of their national interests and aggressive policies. However, using international boycott is legal as a mutual action or a kind of collective action on behalf of Security Council. If the implementation of boycott is accompanied by the study of violator country status and its disadvantages and to be imposed special boycott for every country, we can be hopeful regarding the efficiency of boycott as executive guarantee.

**KEYWORDS:** Boycott, international system, international boycott.

### **Introduction**

Today, international boycotts are considered as a tool for the imposition of economic pressure on countries on behalf of global society to adjust their behavior and policies. Now this role has been given to the security council of United Nations that is responsible for maintaining international peace and security based on United Nations charter. But using trade boycott with the purpose of providing special interests of sanctioning country and regardless of the interests and needs of other members of global community and against international principles is a policy that in the recent years on behalf of some powers, particularly US has imposed on some developing countries that their policies and stance are not associated with those of sanctioning countries. US are one of the proponents of political and economic boycotts to achieve interested goals in foreign policy.

### **The concept of economic boycotts**

Boycott term consist of a systematic avoidance of the establishment of political, economic and social relationships with a state or a particular group of states to punish or establish acceptable behavior.

However, its application is more common in the international economic relations, and service and goods of a particular state are banned. Boycott may be general i.e. includes all service and goods or it may be particular and limit to one kind or special class of goods (Evans & Nounam, 2002, 96).

It is important to note that although there is an element of punishment in boycotts, but it is not just for the establishment of difficult conditions for the people of sanctioned country. In deed, its purpose is to create changes in the political behavior of this country government. Some believe that the most important output of boycott is hindrance (Zarif, 1997, 92).

The boycott dates back to the destiny of “captain chalsey Boycott” who was an English landlord in the famine- Ridden of Ireland in the late 1870s. In this event, captain was secluded due to his tyrannous behavior towards farmers on behalf of Ireland land assembly in terms of economic and social.

At the beginning of this century, the boycott term transferred to international area from its common application in the rights of work relations, and gradually was changed.

Boycott in the international relations had private or national aspect. It describes Unity and consolidation of individuals who decided to not have relationships with foreign citizens in order to force foreign country or its citizens to conduct certain behavior. Then, this term expanded so that it included the beginning of such actions on behalf of a country. The cut of economic and financial relations with other countries and their citizens may be conducted by one or several countries that act jointly as a kind of economic pressure during peace or war time. In addition, boycott may be applied as a collective economic punishment in the cases of threatening or violating peace on behalf of United Nations against violator country (Hadadi, 2003, 111).

Boycott is divided in to primary boycott and secondary boycott. If boycott is only related to the relations of two countries so that a country avoids the establishment of economic and social relations with other country, this boycott will call primary boycott that its inclusion range is limited.

Sometimes a country may expand the area of boycott, and avoid the establishment of trade, financial and other relations with other countries that have relations with sanctioned country. This kind of boycott is called secondary boycott. Sometimes in the secondary

boycott, sanctioning country goes beyond this and like US Damatv law against Iran determines punishment for countries and corporate that establishes financial and other relations with sanctioned country (Kosch, 2003, 74).

It should be noted that the purpose of boycott which is forcing sanctioned country to conduct certain behavior or damaging that country separates boycott from other economic measures that conduct in the direction of the advancement of a country economic goals such as tariffs, the prohibition of exports or imports and...

Economic boycott is a category that reveals inequality in power structures of new global order. Indeed, the position of economic boycotts in the result of change in the structures of global power. The matter that which country to be sanctioned necessarily does not relate to that country, but is related to the concern of powerful countries. Security Council is decision-making circle for the interests of superpowers, and boycott is an effective tool in the direction of these interests.

United Nations decisions often lead to the punishment of third world countries that disobey the will of superpowers. United Nations is aware of human aspects of international economic boycott via reports that its experts provide in countries such as Iraq and Libya (Hadadi, 2003, 114).

It should be noted that international boycotts have the least impact on the regime governing countries, and have the worse impacts on their people. Even boycotts lead to the strengthening of power foundations of regime against a society that has been subdued because of poverty and starvation.

If sanctioned regime has a strong public base, it can strengthen national morale and direct people desires in favor of self-reliance economic policies that finally society will benefit from it. However, if sanctioned regime does not have a strong public base, boycott will lead to excessive disorder and starvation of society people.

The imposition or cancellation of economic boycotts against a special country depends on this point whether economic interest overcome political expediencies or vice versa. If trade and economic interest cannot be ignoring, we can ignore political considerations regarding human rights and regional security.

In addition, economic boycotts are often a Justification for implementing other policy such as Panama case in which us changed power equations in that country and in the strategic region of Panama in Favor of itself by humanitarian interventions. Therefore, we can say that economic boycott has become one of the main necessities of international political strategy.

### **The purposes of boycott**

Economic boycotts consist of punishment and alteration of economic cooperation's and relations in order to achieve political purpose. Indeed, economic boycott is one of the subset tools of foreign policy provide the possibility that countries follow their political purposes towards interested country when conflict appears. Economic boycotts are two kinds in terms of purpose: First, economic boycott to make unstable the political regime of the interested country that results from the contradiction between strategic interests of sanctioning country and the interested country. The purpose of this kind boycott is to change the regime of the interested country. Second, economic boycott to change the political or economic behavior of the interested country. This kind of boycott is more moderate than first kind. Once countries want to change the regime of a country, the first kind of boycott will implement to severely damage the interests of target country. Indeed, in this kind of boycott, economic boycott replaces war and is considered as a prewar option (Yavari& Mohseni, 2010, 12-13).

Barber believes that economic boycotts can occur due to different reasons.

Among the most important reasons, we can refer to behavior and action of states against sanctioned country, future expectations of sanctioning states and international attitudes that are related to the overall international structure or a part of international structure.

The imposition of boycott is divided into kind according to the number of participants:

Unilateral, multilateral and comprehensive. Unilateral boycott is often limited to only one country. In this case, boycott will be implemented by one country against other country. In multilateral case, boycott includes more than one country. In this case, other countries may follow pioneering country in boycott. Finally, comprehensive boycott includes all countries. It should be noted that the selection of economic punishment could be made via a framework of international organization like Security Council (Barber, 2012, 64).

The implementation manner of economic punishments (sanction) can be divided into three kinds: boycott, seizure and financial. Boycott refers to the prohibition of importing one or several goods from the interested country. This kind of sanction leads to the decrease of exchange income and as a result the decrease of target country power to buy fundamental goods.

Using this kind sanction can damage some special industries that require the imports of fundamental goods to keep on production. This policy does not have necessary efficiency because target country will be able to achieve other markets or countries that don't follow such sanctions, and provide its necessary goods. The manner of sanction via seizure includes the exports of important goods to the target country.

This method is a common tool that will be used to punish sanctioned country (Rahimi, 2012, 16).

Of course, this kind of prohibition in the export may be partial or complete. Finally, financial sanction limits the lending or investment of target country. In addition, sanctioning countries can determine more limitations for international payments of target country like blocking foreign assets in order to impose more pressure.

The manner of adopting economic boycotts

Trade prohibitions

The most important cases of trade prohibitions are as follows:

- 1- Rationing, Limitation and general stop of exports and imports.
- 2- Tariff discriminating policy including the rejection of more cooperation with target country and public tariff privilege acceptance
- 3- The cancellation and suspension of trade agreements and common projects and the prohibition of technology exports.
- 4- The preparation of a check list from trade transaction that are doing by target country.
- 5- Cut, suspension and cancellation of technical aids and educational programs (Aziznejad & sayed Nourani, 2010, 168-169).

### **Financial prohibitions**

Financial prohibitions are another aspect of financial boycotts. They are implemented in one of the following ways:

- 1- the prohibition of insurances and other financial service.
- 2- Country exports tax
- 3- The establishment of financial and bank limitations.
- 4- The boycott of financial transfers
- 5- The blockage of country foreign assets
- 6- The establishment of prohibition in the sale of crude oil, imports and oil products
- 7- The establishment of disorder in opening documentary credit for country traders.
- 8- The establishment of obstacles in the field of foreign investment attraction.

### **Boycott impacts**

Generally, the impacts of boycotts and punishments depend on the goals that will follow.

The primary goals are related to the behavior of sanctioned country, and secondary goals are related to the internal status and the expectations of sanctioning country.

In many cases, international economic boycotts have had significant economic impact, but their political achievement has been less. Particularly when sanctioned country is less dependent on sanctioning country economically and other countries don't accompany sanctioning country in the enforcement of boycott.

In collective boycotts by United Nations, although committees have been established by security council for supervising the enforcement of boycott, but in general the enforcement of boycotts has been entrusted to states.

Therefore, if the countries of world are not associated with each other regarding these boycotts and the manner in which such boycotts should be enforced, these boycotts will not be very effective. On the other hands, trade world is always able to discover ways for escaping from these boycotts. In addition, the negative humanitarian impacts of international boycotts on the most vulnerable people of target country have always been one of the main concerns of international society.

One of the international boycotts that caused people of a country suffer from undesirable social and economic conditions was Iraq country at the time of Saddam regime so that some considered the continuation of boycotts as illegal and demanded its cancellation (Tabatabaee, 2000, 71).

However, using boycotts by Security Council is allowable to adjust the behavior of a state that threatens peace and security, but it should be noted that if the purpose of boycott is not achievable, how long it should continue? However, the impacts of boycott on violator state determine in the long term, but extremely increase of boycotts enforcement time can lead to the increase of humanitarian costs and emerge problems that were not predictable. On the other hand, in such conditions the termination of boycotts generates this danger that the officials of violator states are encouraged by these problems and sacrifice their nation. Therefore, according to the characteristics of international humanitarian standards, security councils is obliged to consider these standards in order to support nonmilitary individuals. In order to achieve this goal we can do the following practical orders: the necessity of evaluating the potential impact of boycotts before the approval of boycott, and during its enforcement, and then the necessity of controlling the enforcement of boycotts in order to ensure their conformity with the standards that are related to international human rights (Evans & Nounam, 2002, 33).

The impacts of boycotts on open trade and development right and their destructive outcomes for the neighbors of target state are considered as important matters that require careful evaluation. The last point is that boycotts, even those that have been enacted by United Nations, have political motivation and have been implemented selectively.

In some cases, some members of Security Council follow certain purposes and try to achieve their interested goals in the direction of these boycotts enforcement. Boycott against Iraq and Libya is one of these examples.

### **The challenges of boycott**

Economic boycotts have many challenges. First, if threat doesn't have enough credit, it will demand infinite pressure. In addition, Limitation leads to restlessness and anxiety. This has a negative impact on the decision making power of opposite party, and does not resolve any problem. The extent of action is such that due to the lack of success, the sanctioning country will use military force inevitably.

Indeed, this violates the main logic of economic boycott implementation. Since as we stated previously, boycott is considered to not use military force. Based on this analysis, regardless of what is the purpose of sanctioning country, economic boycott may lead to war. The past and present history shows the examples of economic boycott that finally have led to war (Ahmadi, 2011, 261). In 5th century B.C., Pericles who was the emperor of Athens enacted trade boycott against one of the countries that collaborated with emperor enemy. Emperor was going to show that everyone who challenges the power of emperor. Will be punished. Indeed, despite emperor goal was not war, but interested boycott leads to a war that continued 30 years. Here, we can refer to the case of US and Japan. Indeed, Japan attack on Pearl harbor was a response to the severe boycott of US against this country. US began World War II. US boycott against Iraq at the time of Saddam led to the same destiny.

There is another point regarding boycotts that is its negative impacts on citizens.

Economic boycotts that were implemented after cold war were such destructive that their casualties were more than those of massacre weapons were. This caused that intelligent boycott to be discussed. It is noted that multilateral boycott targets all people, which intelligent boycott only targets governmental elites of important sections. However, intelligent boycott is not very effective. So it is suggested that intelligent boycotts target individuals who are responsible for adopting policies that sanctioning country disagrees with those policies (Barzegar, 2013, 38).

Finally, many theorists concluded that in resolving conflicts, incentive is more effective than boycott and pressure. Since in this case, the possibility of struggle decrease and opposite party will find the field for a kind of transaction. David Baldwin believes that threat leads to violence, restlessness and fear, while positive stimulus can result in cooperation, good intention and hope. In this point of view even if incentive is regarded as exaction, nevertheless it does not lead to a provocative behavior.

In addition, incentive can be applied as a tool for the creation of split. When certain individuals have become secluded the society, positive stimuli can provide the field of changing other parts of target country that benefit from incentives. This occurs when the government of sanctioned country cooperates. In this step, theorists believe that when a country prefers compromise to loss acceptance, it has the background of being surrender even before boycott implementation. Therefore, based on the model of theorist just threat to boycott is sufficient to its success. Otherwise, it should not be implemented.

### **Conclusion**

As determined in the previous study, boycotts are tools and efforts that have been implemented in a private or governmental manner or as an executive guarantee in the cases of threatening or violating peace to force states to change their behavior.

Private boycotts that are organized by individuals and private and national groups rarely lead to the international responsibility of state. There is no doubt regarding the legality of this kind of boycotts.

Governmental boycotts have been implemented by powerful countries as a tool of foreign policy. The purpose of these boycotts is to force target state to change its foreign policy behaviours. Therefore, these boycotts not only follow economic goals, but also achieving political, social or military purpose may be the programs and stimuli of sanctioning country.

Governmental boycotts may include only target state (primary boycott) or this is possible that its inclusion circle may expand and include countries that have trade or financial relationship with target state (Secondary boycott).

However, this kind of boycotts was considered allowable in the past according to the sovereignty principle of countries. However, today based on contemporary international rights including United Nations resolutions, the principle of nonintervention in domestic and foreign affairs of countries, development right, etc international boycotts particularly secondary boycotts are not allowable, and there is doubt regarding their legality. But according to this fact that in the international rights resorting to the mutual actions against countries that violating international rights is legal under some conditions. Countries can use boycotts as mutual action. In this field, there is an objection regarding international responsibility of states. That objection is allowing states that only by discussing the claim of violating international rights on behalf of other country, they resort to mutual actions including boycott. This can lead to negative consequences for international society.

Collective boycotts that have been predicted by United Nations convention and United Nations charter (article 41) are regarded as tools of executive decisions of these organizations. Security council during cold war only in two cases has used this tool. One of the most extensive boycotts was enacted against Iraq in 1990 after Iraq attack on Kuwait.

The consequence of international boycotts depends on the interested goals of sanctioning country or United Nations. However, most of these boycotts have undesirable economic impacts but they have not been very successful in changing the behavior of sanctioned country. This due to the capability of sanctioned country and negative reaction of other countries.

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