

*A. Berezovchuk, BA student*  
*A. Shevchuk, PhD in Hist., As. Prof.*  
*S. Sukhovetska, senior lecturer*  
*Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University*

## **ECONOMIC WEAPONS AS A TOOL OF GEOPOLITICAL PRESSURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

In the 21st century, economic weapons have become one of the key instruments of geopolitical confrontation [4], supplanting traditional methods of coercion and forming the basis of new forms of international competition.

Countries and supranational organizations are increasingly favouring economic pressure mechanisms—such as sanctions, asset freezes, tariff wars, technology restrictions, or manipulation of raw materials—over military force. This is because the globalized economy has created stable networks of interdependencies that make states vulnerable not only to military action but also to targeted economic attacks.

The issue of economic coercion is actively studied by contemporary scholars, including N. Matviychuk, analysts at the National Institute for Strategic Studies, and other experts, who emphasize the multidimensional nature and growing role of sanctions as an instrument of international policy [1; 2].

This study aims to analyse the characteristics of economic weapons in the 21st century, their main forms, effectiveness, and impact on international relations.

The modern world is characterised by the close integration of financial systems and global markets, and it is precisely this that has transformed economic levers into an extremely effective tool of influence. Sanctions remain the most common form of economic weapon, though their nature has changed significantly since the late 20th century. Sanctions are collective or individual coercive measures applied against a violating state to stop the violation or punish it for its commission. Sanctions represent a compromise between diplomatic methods for resolving a problem and certain means that may involve the use of force. [1]

According to the UN Security Council Report (2013), “the use of sanctions can be divided into five categories: conflict resolution, non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, democratisation, and the protection of civilians (including human rights)” [4]. Today, this goes beyond simply banning trade in specific goods; it involves comprehensive, multi-layered mechanisms that encompass the banking sector, access to international financial platforms, innovative technologies, logistics chains, and investment flows.

Russia’s political elite, and weakening the state’s economic base [3]. Their impact is not limited to trade bans or restrictions on access to finance; they have affected high-tech sectors, particularly Russia’s aviation, oil and gas, and defence industries [2]. The loss of the ability to import critical components, such as microchips, turbines, or aircraft parts, has significantly weakened the Russian economy’s potential and reduced its capacity to sustain military operations. This demonstrates that in the 21st century, economic weapons not only punish aggression but also directly limit a state’s military capabilities.

In the 21st century, the significance of information-based and financial economic weapons has grown. These include cyberattacks on financial infrastructure, manipulation of currency markets, and the use of credit and debt dependency to exert political influence.

As a result, economic weapons in the 21st century have become a full-fledged component of modern geopolitics, enabling the exertion of influence over violators of international law and order without resorting to military methods or “hard power”. Their effectiveness is based on the growing interdependence of states in the global economy, and their scope of application encompasses sanctions regimes and energy, technological, and financial pressure. Given the rapid development of technology, the digital economy, and shifts in global energy balances, it can confidently be asserted that economic weapons will remain the primary instrument of geopolitical pressure in the 21st century, shaping the nature of global conflicts and models of state cooperation.

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