

Review Paper

Application of International Political Sanctions as a Means of Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction

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ABSTRACT

Modern challenges and dangers caused by the emergence of significant transnational phenomena and processes have intensified the development of such a direction of international organized crime and the greatest threat to international security as using weapons of mass destruction. The issue of using weapons of mass destruction has become especially acute and topical in the conditions of the full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. It is confirmed by the aggressor country's repeated threats about its application's intentions. This requires an in-depth study of countermeasures, which can be implemented in the form of international political sanctions. The purpose of the academic paper is to study the theoretical and applied principles and possibilities of using international political sanctions as a countermeasure against using weapons of mass destruction. The methodological basis of the research is based on applying general scientific and special methods of economic analysis and scientific knowledge, in particular: system analysis, synthesis, classification, scientific abstraction, statistical analysis, comparison, analogies, graphical, tabular, generalization and systematization. Based on the research results, it was established that applying international political sanctions is an effective and efficient tool for countering the use of weapons of mass destruction. The threat of using weapons of mass destruction has increased. This is proven by an active armed conflict on the European continent, during which threats to use weapons of mass destruction are repeatedly voiced. The largest numbers of weapons of mass destruction were found in the USA and Russia; the risks of their use cause an increase in the amount of funding for countermeasures, the total amount of which in 2022 in the USA reached 427,461 thousand US dollars. The necessity is substantiated, and the application of personal, financial, trade, diplomatic sanctions against the energy sector in order to counter using weapons of mass destruction is proposed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- It has been established that the application of international political sanctions is an effective and efficient tool for countering the use of weapons of mass destruction.
- The necessity of applying personal, financial, trade, and diplomatic sanctions to the energy sector in order to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction is substantiated.

Keywords: weapons of mass destruction, sanctions, instruments of coercive influence, threats of using weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical, biological weapons

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The exacerbation of military-political conflicts in different corners of the world leads to the emergence of unprecedented risk of using weapons of mass destruction in military confrontations. This issue has been especially actualized during the period of the Russian Federation's armed aggression against Ukraine and the conduct of active hostilities using weapons prohibited by the world community on the territory of hostilities. In particular, this refers to using poisonous substances on the battlefield and against the civilian population, the threat of using chemical, biological, nuclear weapons, as well as radiological weapons, as a result of attacks on nuclear power plants. It becomes obvious that the world community is raising the issue of effective counteraction to these criminal acts and searching for methods of deterring the aggressor country, which necessitates using coercive instruments of both national and multilateral diplomacy in order to achieve the political and economic goals of containment and countering the application of weapons of mass destruction. Taking into account the outlined tendencies, ensuring peace and security on a global scale remains one of the most important problems in international relations, and the quick resolution of existing conflicts is the primary goal of international politics. Therefore, the issue of studying international political sanctions as a countermeasure against using weapons of mass destruction acquires special importance and requires in-depth research.

Literature Review

The issue of investigating the possibilities of using international political sanctions as a countermeasure against applying weapons of mass destruction is quite new, and it is increasingly attracting the interest of the international scientific community. After all, the provision of peace and international security in current conditions is subject to a significant destabilizing influence of global factors and dangers.

The presence of modern armed conflicts in the world indicates the instability of the international system (Bakhov, 2013). It increases under the influence of the aggravation of international relations due to the mismatching interests of such participants as states, economic unions and military-political blocs (Holovaty, 2015). Current armed conflicts

pose a significant danger to the world community due to their hybrid nature, which is manifested in the combination of traditional armed and non-traditional informational methods of influencing and waging war. Consequently, the public consciousness is clouded by manipulative information that changes the system of values and citizens' interests, undermines the state's sovereignty and leads to the violation of its territorial integrity (Kostiukevych *et al.* 2020). Dawson (2022), conducting studies on using weapons of mass destruction in the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, pays particular attention to using informational pressure and unauthorized methods of warfare. The scholar insists on the need to improve international law in terms of resolving problematic aspects of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Lederer (2022) takes a similar standpoint. He established the need for the adoption of relevant laws at the level of UN member states to restrict and prohibit the production, acquisition and trade of weapons of mass destruction, as well as similar operations with materials for their production, movement and delivery.

It is obvious that using weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological and chemical) poses a significant threat to global security. In particular, Kassenova (2020) notes that limiting the participation of financial institutions in programs for the proliferation and using weapons of mass destruction is of primary importance. After all, their use for criminal purposes creates conditions for evasion of international and political sanctions, as it allows to simplify the procedure of payment for the purchase of goods related to weapons of mass destruction and, at the same time, to organize the collection, transfer and legalization of funds, which are subsequently directed to the production and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Problematic issues of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction have been repeatedly raised at the level of international intergovernmental organizations. They are considered in the context of preventing the financing of this criminal activity. In particular, the FATF, an independent international intergovernmental organization for developing financial measures to combat money laundering, has carried out thorough studies on the protection of the global financial system from

the threats of financing the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction. It also established special guidance in the specified direction (FATF Guidance on Countering the Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction), and formed recommendations on countering this destructive phenomenon. Moreover, the FATF's Recommendation 7 of the FATF Standards obliges the countries of the world to introduce Targeted Financial Sanctions when establishing cases of financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Recommendation 2 requires countries to introduce effective national cooperation and coordination mechanism to combat this destructive phenomenon.

The issue of using weapons of mass destruction in modern conditions is becoming especially acute, because it has turned into a global problem of humanity, which, as Reynolds, 2020 proves, threatens the entire world population's life and health. After all, the spread of its use does not have limited borders and the selected target audience, which, according to the viewpoint of Vennis *et al.* (2022), has been proven by the destructive effect. Therefore, scientists believe that the search for effective methods of restraining the processes of using weapons of mass destruction is especially important in modern conditions. This can be achieved thanks to establishing an effective international political sanctions policy and its implementation at the global level against countries posing a threat in this field.

Sedlyar (2013) provides a thorough definition of the essence of international political sanctions, under which he proposes to understand unilateral or collective coercive actions of a diplomatic, trade, economic, and financial nature, directed against one or several states with the aim of forcing them to change their foreign policy behavior and comply with obligations to support of international peace and security.

At the same time, Ruys (2016) considers the application of sanctions at the international level as a tool for countering illegal activities and violations of legal norms from the standpoint of three approaches: (1) as a response to violations of international legal norms; (2) application of restrictive measures adopted by an international organization in order to prevent illegal activities;

(3) introduction of economic restrictions on export-import operations, freezing of assets of individual countries and their citizens.

Moiseienko (2022) claims that the sanctions imposed by the European Union against Russia in current conditions are unprecedentedly broad. These are unusual sanctions of an international political nature, aimed at eliminating serious offenses committed by Russia in the course of a full-scale war against Ukraine. At the same time, the scientist insists that the effectiveness of applying such sanctions depends significantly on the goals of their application, as well as on the impact on Russian assets frozen in the European Union's states. It is obvious that the influence of such sanctions policy will have a significant impact not only on the functioning of Russia as a state, but also on the well-being and daily life of the population living on its territory. However, Rajan (2022) considers the introduction of international political sanctions against Russia as a tool to counter its use of weapons of mass destruction to be fully justified and timely.

The proposed hypothesis is supported by Nutt (2022) and Mulder (2022). The scholars came to the conclusion that international political sanctions are an effective method of curbing threatening actions of a military nature, including the use of weapons of mass destruction. The scientists claim that modern approaches to international political policy are most likely aimed at forming and applying a set of punishment measures to countries encroaching on the territorial integrity of other countries using or threatening the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Gosnell (2018) raises the issue of the effectiveness of applying international political sanctions and the consequences they cause. The scholar also claims that such sanctions are a powerful tool for influencing violations of international relations and international law by subjects. Sarau (2017) insists on recognizing international political sanctions as an instrument of foreign policy influence and calls into question the effectiveness of their application. He substantiates the outlined issue by his scientific study, in which the effectiveness of imposing sanctions is estimated at less than 50% of the desired effect. At the same time, Kumar (2022) claims that the existing international political sanctions applied against Russia have a significant economic component. They predict a weakening of its

economy and put up Russia to limit its production and use of weapons of mass destruction, which are partly applied in the military confrontation in Ukraine. In this context, LIM & Ferguson (2021) note the considerable weight of coercive factors accompanying the use of international political sanctions.

It becomes obvious that the issue of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction has become especially acute in current conditions, and it is actualized at the global level. Moreover, certain developments in the outlined direction have already been made. The mechanisms and tools of such counteraction have been established, one of which is using international political sanctions. However, under the influence of significant destabilizing factors of a military nature, which intensified in 2022, there is a need to deepen studies on searching for ways to solve problematic aspects.

The purpose of the academic paper is to study the theoretical and applied principles and possibilities of using international political sanctions as a countermeasure against using weapons of mass destruction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological base of the research is based on using general scientific and special methods of economic analysis and scientific knowledge. In particular, the identification of the essence of the scientific categories “weapons of mass destruction” and “international political sanctions”, as well as the identification of their types, was conducted applying the method of systematic analysis, synthesis, classification and scientific abstraction. Studying the current state and tendencies in applying international legal sanctions for the purpose of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction was carried out on the basis of the method of statistical analysis, comparison and analogies. The display of empirical studies of selected issues was performed using graphical and tabular methods. The formation of the main hypotheses and conclusions based on the results of the conducted research was carried out on the basis of the method of generalization and systematization.

The information base of the research comprises the works of leading scientists in the field of combating the use of weapons of mass destruction

and the application of international legal sanctions for committing such illegal acts. It also comprises official reporting data of governmental and non-governmental organizations for 2020–2022, in particular: Nuclear Weapons by indicator of the number of nuclear weapons by countries of the world participating in their creation and use; Department of Homeland Security USA, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction according to the indicator of the amount of financing measures to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction.

RESULTS

Threats of using weapons of mass destruction have become especially acute and actualized under the influence of modern global geopolitical challenges and dangers. The growing danger on the part of transnational crime, terrorist organizations, and individual states necessitates establishment and development of an international system to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction, their production, and storage. After all, the risks of its application are actualized every day and threaten to create a one-time large-scale destructive effect of destroying the population and the natural environment and creating catastrophic situations.

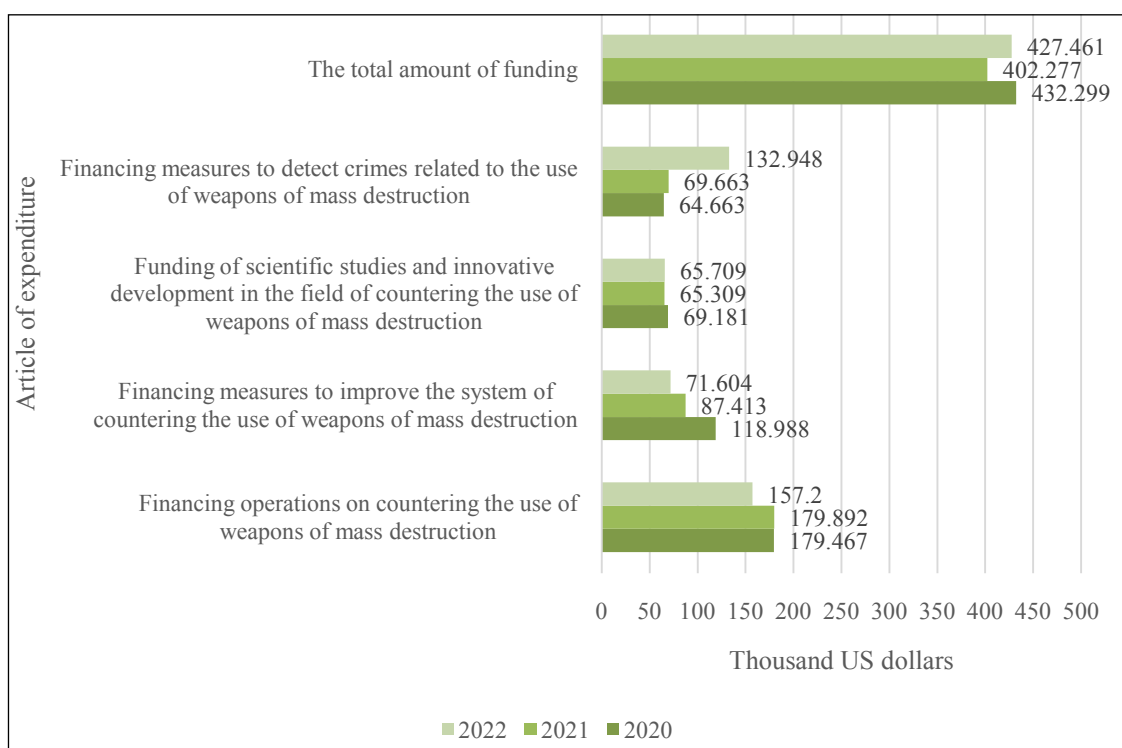
Existing scientific and practical studies in the outlined direction indicate the impossibility of acquiring ready-made weapons of mass destruction, and their creation is under the influence of strict control and the sanctions regime. However, taking into account the existing data (Table 1) (Nuclear Weapons, 2022), currently, there is a significant amount of weapons of mass destruction in the world, in particular, those of a nuclear nature, the largest number of units of which are concentrated in the USA and Russia. These tendencies pose a significant threat and are additional destabilizing factors of instability and danger during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

It is obvious that the presence of a significant arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in the most powerful countries indicates the need to form effective measures to counter their use. Studying the current state of costs for countermeasures against using weapons of mass destruction in the USA during 2020–2022 (Fig. 1) gives reasons to state the seriousness of this problem, as evidenced by the growing trends of the country’s financial

Table 1: Dynamics of changes in the number of nuclear weapons by countries of the world participating in their production and use in 1947–2022

Sl. No.	Country	Years													
		1947	1952	1957	1962	1967	1972	1977	1082	1087	1989	1992	2002	2010	2022
1	The USA	32	1005	6444	26000	31255	27000	25000	23000	23500	22217	12000	10600	8500	5000
2	USSR/Russia		50	660	4000	8339	15000	25000	34000	38000		25000	16000	11000	5977
3	The United Kingdom			20		270						512	225		
4	France					36						384	350		
5	China					25						400	400		
6	Israel											200	150		
7	India											100	100		
8	Pakistan											100	110		
9	DPRK												10		
10	South Africa										6				
11	Total volume	32	1055	7124	30000	39925	42000	50000	57000	63484	22323	40000	28300	20850	10977

Compiled based on: *Nuclear Weapons, 2022.*



Compiled based on: *Department of Homeland Security USA. Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, 2022.*

Fig. 1: Dynamics of financing measures to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction in the USA in 2020–2022

expenditures in this direction. In particular, in 2020, the total cost of financing measures to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction amounted to 432,299 thousand US dollars. It slightly decreased in 2021 to 402,277 thousand US dollars and increased again in 2022 to 427,461 thousand US dollars.

In addition, the analyzed data indicate that significant attention will be paid to the issue of financing the detection of crimes related to using

weapons of mass destruction in 2022. The volume of expenditures in this direction increased two times from 69,663 thousand US dollars in 2021 to 132,948 thousand US dollars in 2022. This confirms the significant threat of the possibility of using weapons of mass destruction by Russia and the formation of preventive measures for effective countermeasures in the event of such a dangerous event.

At the same time, it should be noted that the issues of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction are quite significant, the successful solution of which depends on the type of applying such weapons. Four types of weapons of mass destruction are considered to be the most dangerous in the modern world. Their characteristics are reflected in Table 2.

One of the most dangerous types of weapons of mass destruction is nuclear weapons, being currently one of the greatest threats to humanity's existence. After all, the possibility of its application is often discussed in the course of the Russian-Ukrainian military confrontation. Based on nuclear weapons' essence as explosive devices capable of directing their destructive power from nuclear reactions or fission through a nuclear explosion, using such weapons leads to the mass destruction of a significant number of living organisms.

The problems of using chemical weapons of mass destruction consist in using toxic chemicals and their precursors, specialized ammunition and devices containing toxic and chemical substances,

leading to disruption of the vital activity of the organism, temporary incapacity and death.

The threats of using biological weapons of mass destruction consist in its influence through spreading pathogenic microorganisms and their spores, bacterial toxins, viruses, infectious nucleic acids, prions, infected animals, as well as means of their movement for the purpose of mass destruction of living forces, impact on animals and plants, and use for military purposes.

Radioactive weapons also refer to weapons of mass destruction, and their use consists in deliberate radiation poisoning or contamination of the area and a specific territory with radiological sources. At the same time, this type of weapon of mass destruction can only be aimed at damaging one object, in particular, radiation poisoning of a specific person. Radioactive weapons of mass destruction are similar to nuclear weapons, but have more intense consequences and dangerous results of their use, because they have the ability to make an area uninhabitable for a long period of time.

Table 2: Characteristics of the main types of weapons of mass destruction, for using of which international political sanctions are established

Sl. No.	A type of weapon of mass destruction	Description of the main threats	The main directions of countering applying
1	Nuclear	Use of explosive devices	Establishing bans on the creation and using nuclear weapons; formation of a set of measures to gradually reduce the number of nuclear warheads
2	Chemical	Use of nerve-paralytic substances, suffocating and poisonous gases and their analogs	Control over the disarmament and destruction of chemical weapons; formation and implementation of the mechanism of declaration in the field of chemical production; implementation of international inspections of chemical production; establishment of bans on transferring and moving certain types of chemical substances
3	Biological	Discrediting international cooperation in the field of biotechnology; creation of emergency situations in the field of health care; spreading severe viral diseases and infectious diseases	Keeping records and enhancing the protection of dangerous pathogens; prevention of deliberate misuse of pathogenic microorganisms; improving regional networks for monitoring the activities of biolaboratories; strengthening the tools of biological non-proliferation and responsible behavior when implementing biological experiments; intensifying the process of biotechnology development; strengthening biological cyber security; strengthening control over the prevention of diseases
4	Radioactive	Unauthorized interference in the activity of radioactive danger objects; violation of the norms of safe operation of radioactive danger's objects	Strengthening physical protection of radioactive danger's objects; zoning the conditions of operation of radioactive danger's objects; strengthening the radiological control system; increasing the radiation hygiene literacy of the population

Compiled based on: Federal Foreign Office of Germany, 2022.

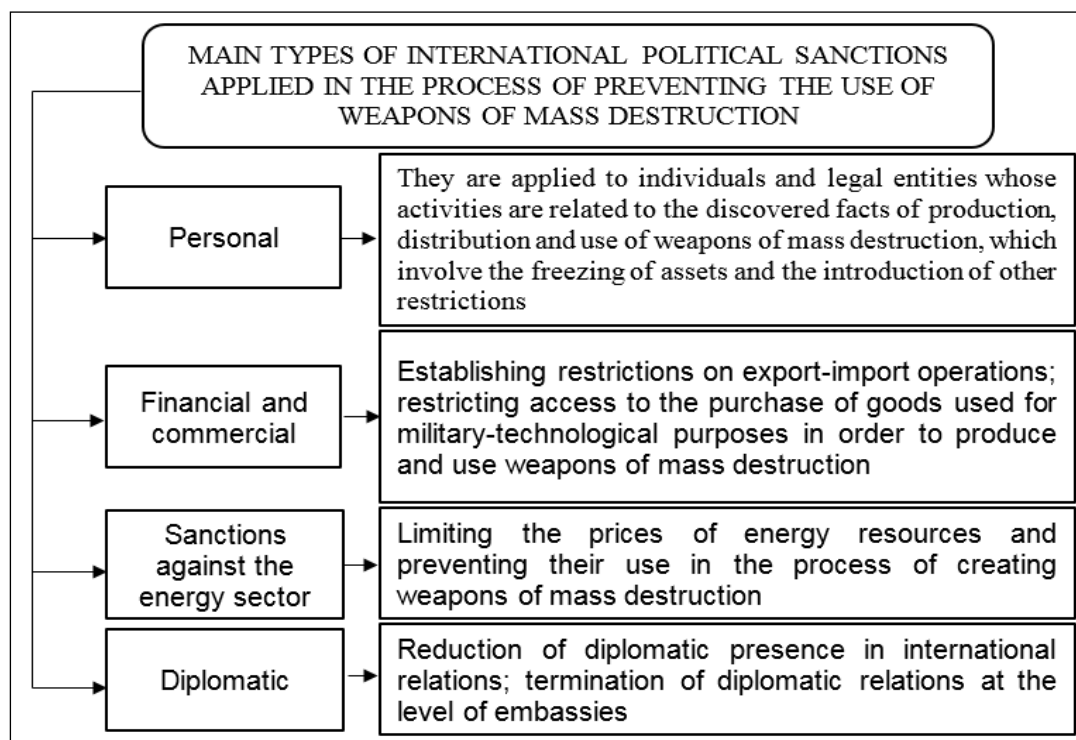
Taking into account the significant threatening impact of weapons of mass destruction, the need to establish a set of measures to effectively counter their use is of particular importance. It is obvious that the world community has conducted significant scientific and practical studies in this direction and it has been established that an effective tool for countering this destructive phenomenon is the introduction of international political sanctions, divided into several types, namely: (1) personal; (2) financial and commercial; (3) sanctions against the energy sector; (4) diplomatic. The detailed characteristics of the outlined sanctions are reflected in Fig. 2.

It is worth noting that the application of international political sanctions, as a tool to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction, is implemented in relation to individuals and legal entities providing support or conducting activities that contain signs of financing and using weapons of mass destruction, as well as in relation to those helping evade the applied sanctions. At the same time, the mechanism of applying international political sanctions used in the process of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction provides for implementing the

international legal (conventional) and international organizational (institutional) mechanism, which is collectively aimed at preventing and countering criminal activity through using contractual and customary norms, decisions of international organizations, influence of other states and international bodies. Therefore, it can be argued that international legal sanctions are divided into two types: (1) those implemented by states in the manner of self-help and (2) those implemented by states with the help of international organizations.

The first group includes such types of international political sanctions as reprisals, self-defense, retaliation, breaking diplomatic and consular relations. The second group includes suspension of the rights and privileges of participation in international organizations, absolute refusal of membership, deprivation of the opportunity to participate in international cooperation. This is manifested in the breakdown of economic relations, suspension of the functioning of communication means and the use of collective weapons.

Considering the current state and tendencies in applying international political sanctions as a tool for regulating legal relations in the field of



Author's development

Fig. 2: The main types of international political sanctions used in the process of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction

preventing and countering the use of weapons of mass destruction, it is possible to state their coercive nature, which are established in response to illegal activities, in order to restore violated rights and to ensure various types liability of entities committing such offenses.

DISCUSSION

Ensuring peace and security on a global scale is one of the priority directions of the modern development of international relations. It is obvious that the existing military conflicts, which are in an active phase, and the deployment of full-scale hostilities on the territory of the European continent, indicate the weakening of security parameters. Moreover, Russia's participation, as a nuclear state, in the military confrontation and its loud threats about the use and partial use of weapons of mass destruction prove threatening tendencies regarding the further development of events and processes.

In the conditions of crisis and persistent uncertainty, measures of sanctioning influence on countries conducting aggression with the use of weapons of mass destruction against other countries and posing risks for the entire world community are determined. Undoubtedly, the issue of countering the use of weapons of mass destruction has become particularly acute and transformed into an active phase in today's conditions, which requires the formation of a set of effective tools for international political countermeasures.

In order to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction, the following measures become of primary importance:

- ♦ enhancing measures to strengthen the international system of countering the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction;
- ♦ strengthening the conditions for compliance with international treaties, norms and regimes for ensuring international security and peace;
- ♦ strengthening control over access to knowledge and materials used to develop capabilities for the production of weapons of mass destruction;
- ♦ introducing and keeping clear records of prohibited weapons, missiles and materials used for their production.

The proposed measures will make it possible to achieve the desired results and reduce the level of exposure to risks and threats of using weapons of mass destruction.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the conducted studies of the theoretical and applied principles and possibilities of using international political sanctions as a countermeasure against applying weapons of mass destruction give grounds for asserting that at the current stage, international political sanctions are a powerful tool for deterring, preventing, and countering the use of weapons of mass destruction. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the threats of using weapons of mass destruction are constantly enhancing and intensifying, which requires the formation of effective countermeasures. It has been revealed that the largest number of weapons of mass destruction is concentrated in the USA and Russia. Strengthening the challenges of its application led to an increase in the amount of financing countermeasures, the total amount of which in the USA in 2022 reached the mark of 427,461 thousand US dollars. The necessity of applying international political sanctions in order to counter the use of weapons of mass destruction has been proven. It has also been established that there are several types of such sanctions, in particular: (1) personal; (2) financial and commercial; (3) sanctions against the energy sector; (4) diplomatic. The principal measures to strengthen the international political sanctions policy are proposed, namely: strengthening the international system of countering the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction; strengthening the conditions for compliance with international treaties, norms and regimes for ensuring international security and peace; strengthening control over access to knowledge and materials used to develop capabilities for the production of weapons of mass destruction; introducing and maintaining a clear record of the presence of weapons of mass destruction, missiles and materials used for their production and use.

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