

## **On Crossroads: Zimbabwe's Foreign Policy and the West<sup>1</sup>**

**Percyslage Chigora**

### **Abstract**

Zimbabwe at the turn of the new Millennium has received widespread condemnation particularly with the implementation of the controversial land reform. The image portrayed abroad has been tattered because of reports of violence, instability and abandonment of the rule of law, which has created a serious challenge to modern developments on democracy and human rights. Zimbabwe has seemingly lost many friends especially those from the West and/or West controlled institutions, through suspension from, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Commonwealth; the US and the European Union has applied targeted sanctions; Scandinavian countries which have supported Zimbabwe's social services, especially health, have cut aid and have threatened to close their missions. From such a standpoint the paper seeks to examine the causes behind this strain in relations between Zimbabwe and western global actors. It will also analyse the extent to which Zimbabwe as an actor in the International System has been affected. Finally, the paper will examine the survival strategies adopted by Zimbabwe in the face of such environment of animosity.

### **Introduction**

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century has seen a rapid rise in the importance of foreign policy with virtually every nation in the world being able to interact with one another in some diplomatic form. This can be attributed to the increased inter-linkages amongst international actors both in developed and developing societies in various fields of interaction i.e. economic, political and socio cultural. Zimbabwe is one African country that has maintained a rather active role participating in several fora maintaining links with several countries, participating in several multilateral processes, namely through the United Nations (UN), Organisation of African Unity (OAU) /African Union (AU), Group 77 (G77), Non Aligned Movement (NAM), European Union (EU)-African Caribbean Pacific (ACP), Commonwealth and Southern African Development Community among others. At the turn of the new millennium Zimbabwe has seen its relations with the West souring. It has largely featured Zimbabwe's heated debate with Britain over the land issue, enactment of the US-Zimbabwe Democracy Bill in the United States, suspension of Zimbabwe from the International Monetary Fund, suspension and subsequent withdrawal of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth, suspension of Aid in social services by some Nordic countries, the imposition

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<sup>1</sup> The West is a term used to denote mostly countries in the developed world, the first world, largely industrialised countries. The author is not exhaustive making reference to the countries and institutions but only makes reference to those that are pertinent to the Zimbabwean case.

of sanctions by the European Union and damning reports on human rights abuse, non-adherence to the rule of law and massive rigging of elections. This paper explores these trends with an intention to analyse the causes and nature of antagonism between Zimbabwe and Western international actors.

## **The Concept of Foreign Policy**

It is important to highlight from the onset that foreign policies are designed to help protect a country's national interest, national security, ideological goals and economic property and this can take place through peaceful co-operation with other nations through aggression, war and exploitation. ([www.encyclopedia.laborlataalk.com](http://www.encyclopedia.laborlataalk.com)). According to Evans and Newnham (1990:100) foreign policy is "the activity whereby state actors act, react and interact". In other words it is a set of political goals to outline how a particular country relate with another country. To some, foreign policy is the "set of decisions made by national leaders which are intended to serve as a broad guideline for choosing among various courses of actions in specific situations in international affairs." (Pearson and Rochester 1988:103).

According to Pearson and Rochester there are three sets of factors that are at play intermingly in considering a state's relations to the other actors, that is, systematic (conditions in external environment), national attributions (demographic, economic history, governmental) and idiosyncratic. (Ibid). Foreign policy behaviour, thus, ranges from establishing diplomatic relations, to include threatened or either use of force, formation of authorities, the giving of foreign aid voting in international organisations and to other acts. Thus, when one talks of foreign policy it means both goals that national government pursues in relation to other international actors.

Normally, as Pearson and Rochester have noted that states' actions are not taken as ends in themselves but are tied in some ways to larger purposes from long term aspirations to more immediate aims that national leaders hope to achieve in their dealing with other countries. (Ibid). It is difficult to find consistency in foreign policies hence not easy to evaluate a state in simplified version, for instance, label Zimbabwe as an autocracy, abuser of human rights, outpost of tyranny. It is important to notice that behaviour of states can change overtime and with different set of leaders and conditions though there are patterns that are easily noticeable.

In comprehending foreign policy of a country one needs to take note of the scope of operation, that is, defining interests in global terms, regional terms, or choose to be isolationist. For Zimbabwe, she has resorted to an active participation in the global arena. The modus operandi, multilateral or bilateral has increased the miscegenation of ideas. But in foreign policy national leaders have a tendency to reassure their citizenry that they have a plan and they often accuse national leaders of other countries that they have same intentions.

## **Background to Zimbabwe's Foreign Policy**

In understanding any country's foreign policy it is important to outline the essential actors, their objectives as well as the overall geographical, historical and strategic factors that are at play. Since

independence Zimbabwe reflects a policy that is more or less consistent and predictable. This is attributed to the manner in which the policies are formulated and that the present leader has been in power and has been the locus of decision making since independence in 1980 and through the manner in which nationhood was achieved. (Chigwedere 1993). According to Stan Mudenge, Zimbabwe's former Foreign Affairs Minister, Zimbabwe's foreign policy objective is fundamentally to help safeguard and enhance the security and prestige of the country. Also, it is geared towards the improvement of quality of life of the Zimbabwean people. This is done through interaction with other countries at various levels in order to influence the behaviour of other actors so that the international environment is conducive to the attainment of these goals. Hence, Zimbabwe is "guided by an overriding belief in and love for mankind, the sacredness and inviolability of our national sovereignty and the need for freedom, justice and equality for all". <http://www.gta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html>).

Lessons from the period of the struggle for independence of Zimbabwe are factored in, and play an important role in the foreign policy making process. The secretary for Foreign Affairs once hinted "our belief in ourselves as a people in charge of our destiny controlled by no power."(Chigwedere 1993) Emerging is a major lesson that successful foreign policy is largely dependent on the ability and willingness to form coalitions and solidarity groups with other correspondingly minded states. This will bring about critical weight needed at a particular point in order to influence the case and events in a state's own favour. In the case of Zimbabwe, such coalitions are evident with support from some fellow SADC countries. A shining example is Namibia, as evidenced by the then president, Sam Nujoma's speech at the Earth Summit in Durban 2001 explicitly blaming the British for having caused the problem in Zimbabwe.

There has been a general assumption that Zimbabwe's foreign policy is formulated at the highest level of the state apparatus with the president being the articulator of the foreign policy making process. This is attributed to the fact that different dimensions of Zimbabwe's foreign policy converge in the person who is the Head of government and the administrative structure controlled by the secretary of the president. The Head of Government becomes the focal point for decision-making and overseeing their implementation. Critics have noted that such a position reflects an undemocratic way of governing as power is vested in an individual with no checks and balances, hence the tendency for a dictatorial system of governance. However, a number of actors are involved in the foreign policy making process and they range from government ministries, to civil society groups, academia and political parties. These play a role in the policy formulation and implementation with their roles being dependent on which sphere they operate from, i.e. either political, economic, socio-cultural or security. Patel has noted that Robert Mugabe, the head of state and government, is an intellectual, and has an abiding and deep interest in foreign and global issues, hence has to be visible rather than being passive in foreign policy issues in Zimbabwe. (Patel 1987:9)

Contrary to the criticism that foreign policy making in Zimbabwe has not been democratic, Engel's 1994 observes that foreign policy formation has not been a closed one. It has indeed been partly open to competitive societal inputs. An example can be drawn from political parties and civil society groups that

are affected negatively by the land distribution and those concerned with governance issues. To some extent, it also takes into consideration external demands largely from Britain and other countries, and other organizations concerned with land issue in Zimbabwe. An example is the Abuja Agreement of 6 September 2001 in which Zimbabwe had to comply with conditions that there be no further farm occupations and also speed up de-listing of farms that do not meet set criteria among other conditions.

Early scholars on Zimbabwe's foreign policy have tried to trace Zimbabwe's relations from liberation movement heritage and have consistently argued that this have influenced the pattern which Zimbabwe took since attaining its independence in 1980. ZANU sought external support from nations like China and the Scadavian countries, whilst ZAPU sought partnership and solidarity with Soviet Union. Both have an Afro-Asian people's solidarity through OAU, and the Comecon countries. In 1976-1979 ZANU consolidated its international relations. According to Reed (1990:289) "not only did ZANU broaden its net work of external missions, it also broadened its network of international patrons, and for the first time begun to receive assistance from countries which were formally allied to the Soviet Union" The support rendered to ZANU pertained to sanctuary, military assistance, political support, economic and technical assistance. According to Ulf Engels (1994:59) , during the same time the main donors were either Scadavian states, government inter state-organisation (like the International Red Cross, Lutheran World Federation and the world council of Churches.

At independence, as Schwartz 1999 informs us, a government of a third world country inherits a set of international economic relations and a set of international political relations. Zimbabwe just like any other developing countries suffered constraints in terms of their policy execution that has contributed to its marginalisation. As Callaghy puts it:

The increase in marginalisation of Africa is two-fold economic and politico strategic- and both aspects are tightly linked in terms of their consequences. The first, primarily economic aspect is that Africa is no longer important to other major actors in the world economy (multinational corporations, international banks, the economies of major western countries or those of the newly industrialising countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, and Mexico, and the economy's division of labour. The second aspect of Africa's marginalisation is that, with the end of cold war, African countries have little political strategic importance for the major world power. (Ibid)

Mudenge the foreign Minister made it expressly clear that;

Zimbabwe's foreign policy objective is fundamentally to help safeguard and enhance the security and prestige of the country and the quality of life of its people by engaging with other countries at various levels in order to influence their behaviour so that an international environment conducive to the attainment of these goals is created and maintained. (<http://www.gta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html>)

Peace and stability in the country and its environs is central to any state to allow and encourage investment and economic development. This includes forming partnerships with others to create large markets and to attract greater investment interest from outsiders and regional players and also for companies to benefit from the economies of scale that come with bigger markets. (<http://www.gta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html>)

Ruled continuously by a liberation party, Zimbabwe developed and maintains close ties with a number of revolutionary states and organisations. Emanating from struggles for independence and post independent emancipation of black people has been the major motive force. Zimbabwe though a small state has managed to make impact in international politics. Hasu Patel (1987:9) outlined the principles on which Zimbabwe's foreign policy is based. These represent aspirations and achievements of the liberation period, supporting positive non-alignment and solidarity between poorer nations of the world. The old liberationist principles still have a way to run, and although they are personified and articulated by Mugabe, they are not dependent upon him. In fact according to Mudenge,

*Zimbabwe's foreign policy has been influenced by its revolutionary origins which place emphasis on the solidarity with the down trodden and the dispossessed and a decision to pay back the support we enjoyed during our struggle for independence.*

<http://www.gta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html>)

The factors are deeply embedded in the state which is neither a collapsing state nor a failing state but continues to function effectively at many levels.

Zimbabwe with the inception of independence has seen the increase in development assistance particularly within the framework the 1980 UN decade for development in the Third World. Individual states had supported the new government on various fronts. At the Zimbabwe on reconstruction and development (ZIMCORD) in March 1981 the United States pledged \$225 million over a three-year period towards government goals of post War reconstruction, distribution and development of land, and the development of skilled manpower. Of the amount contributed 94% came from western countries. By the end of 1986 the US had contributed \$380 million, the majority in grants, with some loans and loan guarantees.

However, in July 1986, the US government decided to discontinue future bilateral aid to Zimbabwe as a result of continuing pattern of uncivil and undiplomatic statements and actions by the government of Zimbabwe in the United Nations and elsewhere. ([www.state.gov/r/p](http://www.state.gov/r/p)) Aid programmes previously agreed upon were not affected by the decision nor were regional programs that might benefit Zimbabwe.

Colin Stoneman 1988:56 had noted that despite the constraints which restricted growth rate, Zimbabwe has been just successful enough from 1984 to 1987 to do without the IMF programme and therefore

remain resistant to IMF leverage. And in dealing with World Bank the relationship has been extensive and has been the largest world donor. (Ibid 57)

The total amount of aid could be seen from the debt structure. Zimbabwe had by 1992 accumulated a debt of Z\$14.2bn including the Z\$1.2bn inherited at independence under the Lancaster House commitment. Tied to the aid that has continued to flow to Zimbabwe particularly in the first decade of independence, Rothchild and Foley have found that “despite dramatic changes of regime goals and values the newly emergent Afro-Marxist Regimes find themselves not capable of breaking out of a structure of dependency and unequal exchange” (Schwartz 1999:46)

Issues of equitable and fair-trade system have dominated the discourse on the slow pace of growth in developing countries to include Zimbabwe. According to Clapham, 1996:93-94 “it has become impossible for most Third world states to contemplate any strategy of economic development which would involve any substantial reduction in their participation in international trade.”

Foreign Minister Mangwende delivering a speech in the UN fortieth anniversary did note,

*If trade is to be beneficial to all countries, developing countries should be guaranteed just and equitable prices for their exports. Indeed, no durable economic recovery can take place unless urgent steps are taken to safeguard the incomes of commodity producers.* (Schwartz 1999:46)

### **Zimbabwe at the Turn of the Millennium**

Despite the support that exited from western countries and institutions at the turn of the Millennium Zimbabwe has witnessed the dwindling of resources and support. The origins of such turn in events is attributed to the end of Cold War where the world has become embroiled in “the ideological and political context within which the foreign policies of western states have been shaped by the principles of liberal democratic capitalism.” (Williams 2003:2)

There should be no surprise that when it comes to Zimbabwe there has been convergence of thinking between majority of EU members, partnership with the US and the western oriented states within Commonwealth. On contrast, Mugabe has positioned himself internationally as a result against neo-conservatism and neo-liberal economics. His land reform policy has been presented and widely interpreted, as a challenge to policies of the rich nations and a refusal, to conduct its economy according to the dictates of the World Bank. Consequently, Mugabe is regarded within Africa (and elsewhere) as a hero of the poor peoples of the world, standing up against the bullying by champions of liberal democracy, for example the likes of Tony Blair and George Bush. This contradicts the very visions of the Blair government, which among other things encourages the adherence to the tenets of neo-liberal economic policies. The visions of addressing real enemies of Zimbabweans, of ending poverty, disease, hunger, oppression and social injustice by the British government patterns well with Zimbabwean position of ensuring development. But, there have been divergent as to the way of approaching the whole issue.

Pertaining land reform, Zimbabwean government seems to have been disappointed by the actions of Britain pertaining to funding of the process of land reform especially in the 1990s. A letter from the British Government, Department of International Development (DFID) in 1997 shows how the current crisis in Zimbabwe emerged, externally, as it concerns Anglo- Zimbabwe relations was borne. According to Stan Mudenge, Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs Minister, this led the Zimbabwean Government to resort to a policy of compulsorily acquiring land after the new Labour government under Tony Blair had reneged on the Lancaster House obligation to (financially) assist Zimbabwe's land reform. (<http://www.gta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html>). An appraisal of the letter clearly shows how the problem started. It gives the background to the problem especially in relation to efforts by the Zimbabwean Government to resolve the land problem based on past agreements. Mugabe government feels addressing this social injustice and availing land to majority is the central way of ending endemic hunger, poverty and overall democratisation as there will be an increase in people participating in the economy.

The implementation of the fast track land reform in Zimbabwe did receive condemnation from the British government. Cook, the British foreign secretary, indicated in 2000 that they were willing to fund 'proper' land reform process. He noted "Neither Britain nor any other donor is going to fund the land reform unless: it is based on fair price to the farmer; and it reduces poverty among the rural poor who have no land." (Cook 2002:149). A conditionality that the Mugabe government refused because of certain reasons. Firstly, the Blair government in 1997 had refused to fund the land reform as shown by Clair Short's letter. Secondly, that the farmers were going to get compensation on improvements done of the farm not the land as it was appropriated from the indigenous Africans without compensation. Lastly, that the framework for carrying out land reform with support of UK, and agencies like IMF and World Bank was based on ill-conceived research. Cliffe (2002: 315) has noted:

Political opposition to a major land redistribution of land reform has been carefully orchestrated, beginning with Whitsun Foundation reports (financed by Shell and other companies) before independence. One main argument, implicitly racist, is that effect of resettlement in overall decline in output and in a number of people gainfully employed in agriculture. This has been articulated mostly by Kinsey (1982, 1983), whose arguments have been taken by the World Bank and Commercial Farmers Union.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have ceased financial assistance to Zimbabwe, which has contributed to its foreign currency crisis. Western investors have also shied away in response to going political and economic problems. (<http://www.misa.org/pipermail/misanet/2005-July/000000.html>). The borne of contention has been that the austerity measures that Zimbabwe was expected to follow contradicted with redistributive policies that Zimbabwe had adopted since independence as part of its overall transformation of peoples' lives. The IMF went further in 2001 to demand the restoration of property rights an idea that was meant to reverse/derail the attempts to fully

implement the fast track land reform and ensure that social justice was achieved in the agrarian sector.  
( Bond 2003:39)

Another area of contention has been the effected sanctions on Zimbabwe particularly smart sanctions on ZANU PF elites, which was supposed to increase support for opposition while isolating Mugabe regime. This had a net effect of increasing nationalistic tone real and rhetoric on the part of Mugabe government and accusing Britain of interfering in internal affairs of Zimbabwe and overall planning to put in place a puppet government that is controlled by the metropolitan former colonial power.

Aid was cut anywhere. According to Williams (2002:8) "Britain imposed an embargo against Zimbabwe on 20 May 2000...it halted the provision of 450 land rovers to the Zimbabwean police force, withdrew the British Military Advisory Training Team...and cut aid to Zimbabwe by one third." DFID channels resources through the agencies of the United Nations and through civil society organisations. No direct funding is going to the Government of Zimbabwe. DFID has spent £120 million on programmes in Zimbabwe since 2001. The department targeted to spend £38 million in Zimbabwe in 2005/2006, prioritising tackling HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, and in support to orphans and vulnerable children. This DFID-funded emergency project enables UNICEF to procure vaccines and other essential immunisation programme commodities for use in routine childhood immunisation programmes.

The new policy in the west asserts that there are a handful of regimes whose very existence threatens the national security of the United States and by extension, western style democracies. There is need to take cogniscence of the point that the countries like North Korea, Iran, Cuba, Belarus, Myanmar and Zimbabwe may not main target of the US policy but the strong ties and connections between these countries and other bigger powers that are of great threat to western style model of democracy.

Mugabe as the leader of the Zimbabwean government is now every African who is opposed to the British, and North Americans domination, plunder and exploitation. In him and others there is a powerful elementary memory going back to the first Nehanda and even too ancient Egyptians and Ethiopians who are reclaiming Africa in history as cradle of humankind. According to Ranger (<http://www.britainn-zimbabwe.org.uk>)

The British, Europeans and North Americans have exposed themselves as opposed to Mugabe as Pan African memory, Mugabe as the reclaimer of African space. Mugabe as the African power of remembering the African legacy and African Heritage, which slavery, apartheid and imperialism thought they had dismembered for good. It is not accidental that both the opposition to Mugabe and its sponsors sought to denigrate African liberation history as out-moded and undemocratic traditions.

On several occasions, Blair has spoken of a strong preference- though not the inclination- to see Mugabe removed from power. The British government has taken the Zimbabwean issue beyond being bilateral. Zimbabwe had to remain adamant and showing no signs of reversing its land reform programme. Efforts of the British government were concentrated on deligitimising the Mugabe regime



and supporting opposition political parties, civil society groups and Non Governmental Organisation that were putting effort in dislodging the Zimbabwean government. Even when ZANU PF won the elections in 2002 Jack Straw (2002:9) condemned the elections as there was persistent use of violence and intimidation, manipulation of voters' roll, restricted access to polling stations and exploitation of 'every instrument of the state to distort the electoral process. Paul Williams has noted, " in relation to Zimbabwe, the British government has drawn upon its increasingly close relationship with the EU to supplement its own bilateral (efforts to achieve its foreign policy objectives." (Ibid 2002:1-2) That is the reason why the European Union had to cut annual development aid to Zimbabwe from 30 million euros (\$27 million) to 5 million euros (\$4.5 million) a year was because of what it calls the worsening human rights situation. (<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/africa/01/11/zimbabwe.unhcr/index.html>)

Such policy had to continue to all institutions and countries where Blair thought he could squeeze the Mugabe regime out of power. The House of Commons (2002) did declare:

"We recommend that the government seeks in the United Nations, G8 and elsewhere to persuade countries outside the European union to impose sanctions to those agreed by the EU, and to build the widest possible consensus for a swift and orderly transition to democracy in Zimbabwe. We conclude that the government was right to call for Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth. We warmly welcome the Commonwealth's decision to make a suspension for the first time on the grounds of violation of human rights and the Commonwealth Harare declaration-in the past, countries have been suspended from the Commonwealth only after the unconstitutional overthrow of elected governments. We recommend that the government continue to urge the Commonwealth to exert strong pressure on the government of Zimbabwe to comply with the principles enshrined in the Commonwealth Harare declaration".

Infact, the public opinion has been made to believe, As far as the *Guardian* is concerned, it is perfectly acceptable to overthrow a foreign government when it is in Britain's interests to do so—and provided it can be done without arousing mass opposition either in Britain or in the region concerned. (<http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/africa/01/11/zimbabwe.unhcr/index.html>). Baroness Amos made it clear to the Foreign Affairs committee:

...We are very well aware that in terms of the United Kingdom being able to influence what is going on in Zimbabwe, we have to work through our international partners because that government of Zimbabwe has sought to portray the difficulties that we have with respect to human rights, the harassing of the opposition, the harassing of the judiciary, as a bilateral issue between United Kingdom and Zimbabwe...so the opportunities for the United Kingdom to influence are very much through our work with our European Union partners, through out contact with the United States, and through our membership of the Commonwealth. (Williams 2002:13)

One quickly notices the post-modernist era that the modern society thrive in and enunciates the borne of contention in existence. Terence Ranger noted,

'the west stresses mechanical, even computerised, recall in the place of what Mary Daly calls 'deep ancestral memory'. In the place of original elementary memory, which reconnects the once disconnected and liberates them, the west now prefers speed and efficiency, which are often mistaken for information and knowledge. What then the West takes for a memory is mechanical recall, superficial regurgitation of Paul Williams prumulaic catechisms, which are taken out of context because they must be both unipolar (centralised) and globalised-rule of law, transparency, free enterprise and human rights. By contrast to this mechanical, artificial memory, Mugabe represents' a deep ancestral memory. And this allows him to penetrate below the apparent surfaces of world affairs. Younger Zimbabweans do not associate Britain with colonial exploitation because Ian Smith was in revolt against British Crown and British governor presided over Zimbabwe's independence. Mugabe understands the underlying British responsibility for the loss of Zimbabwean land. Younger Zimbabweans accept Colin Powell's appointment as secretary of State as a sign of American pluralism and democracy. Mugabe knows that there have always been house slaves complicit with the slave owners". (<http://www.britainn-zimbabwe.org.uk>)

The attempt to influence public opinion on the Zimbabwean situation has been noticeable, in fact, the *Guardian* dismissed Britain's colonial history in Zimbabwe as "barely relevant." More than a century in which British colonialists drove Zimbabwean farmers from their land and looted the country's mineral wealth was dismissed in this phrase. "Today is the beginning of history," the editorial declared, referring to the Zimbabwean elections. These editorials amount to a concerted campaign to manipulate public opinion to accept deep-going political changes that will involve a new colonial division of the world and the curtailment of democratic rights. ([http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/apr2002/zimb-a03\\_prn.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/apr2002/zimb-a03_prn.shtml))

Some people have argued that Mugabe's domestic policies are rather misplaced particularly the land reform programme. Kahiya has noted that the challenge for the Zimbabwean leadership should be how best to formulate a policy that guarantees global interactions beneficial to national interests of which, the prime needs are investment, food aid and balance of payment support. ([www.Rhodesia.net](http://www.Rhodesia.net)) However, it needs to be noted that these short-term goals should not let the government loose sight of the home grown long term needs that will completely transform the Zimbabwean society positively for the benefit of all.

At the centre stage is the question of the government's respect of human rights. The ruling party ZANU PF and its allies are accused of fomenting intimidation, arson, kidnapping and murder. For its part, the US government has called on the Zimbabwean government to end human rights abuses and Washington has provided some funds to non-governmental, legal and human rights organisations.

Bill S.494 was introduced to define a more responsible U.S policy towards Zimbabwe. The Bill declares that America supports peaceful democratic change, economic growth and the establishment of the rule of law in Zimbabwe. ([www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org)) It opposes giving bilateral and debt relief and assistance to

Zimbabwe until government restores the rule of law, provides protection for democratic elections, implements an equitable, legal and transparent land reform program, withdraws troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo and establishes firm civilian control of the military, police and other state security forces. For any state in the developing, that certainly contributes to state decay and overall weakening of the state.

The issue of land reform illustrates well the problems in achieving the goal of economic redistribution. The U.S and other industrialised countries want Zimbabwean, Namibian and South African independence governments to pay a fair Market prize for under-utilised land that is willingly offered. This sounds fair enough until one consult history. But, in America, after the war of independence, the new US government simply confiscated vast estates from Tories, Lord Baltimore and Lord Fairfax. ([www.fpiif.org](http://www.fpiif.org)). When the US assisted South Korea and Taiwan in the agrarian reform, America did provide hard currency to pay for the parcels of land. And the US army accompanied the South Korean Army in enforcing the removal of the landowners. (Ibid)

Contrary to the desire to see a democratic Zimbabwe, the attacks on Mugabe reflect the interests of the mining companies and big business and the international financial institutions, not those of the small farmers, the agricultural workers and the urban masses. In comparison to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe maintained a higher standard of living. The pro-IMF policies of the UK and US governments would go much further than Mugabe in wiping out all the modest social gains made by the Zimbabwean people. Since 2000, the United States has taken a leading role in condemning the Zimbabwean government's assault on human rights. In 2002-2003 the US imposed targeted sanctions on the government of Zimbabwe and these included financial and visa sanctions against selected individuals, ban on transfer of defence items and services and suspension of non-humanitarian government-to-government assistance.

The issue of conditionality have left developing countries vulnerable to the dictates of the developed world, who have resorted to this as a means of promoting national interest without due consideration to the status of their counterparts who have remained beggars. For example, the US has promised African countries US\$64billion in trade and investment in exchange for democratic processes being honoured.

Double standards have been witnessed in modern global interaction which have led Zimbabwe behaving in rather uncompromising manner. The World Bank and IMF have sanctioned Zimbabwe for its war expenditures but both institutions continue to lend Uganda whose troops support rebels in DRC. Although Zimbabweans believe the U.S and international agencies are not being even-handed they are also overwhelmingly against Zimbabwean troops involvement in the War because it diverts funds for development needs. SADC leaders have consistently been at the fore front of negotiations for peace beginning one month after the Uganda/Rwanda invasion in 1998. (Ibid)

In its most outspoken statement yet on Zimbabwe, the Bush administration has made it clear that it is taking steps to bring down President Robert Mugabe's government. US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner announced the shift in US policy in a statement on August 21. He told reporters that Mugabe's government was "illegitimate and irrational." "We do not see President Mugabe as the democratically legitimate leader of the country," Kansteiner said. "The political status quo is unacceptable because the elections were fraudulent." The US was putting pressure on neighbouring states, Kansteiner said, to "correct that situation." At the same time it was providing Zimbabwean opposition forces—such as trade unions, pro-democracy groups and human rights organisations—with advice, training and finance to overthrow Mugabe and establish a new regime. (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/nov2002/zimb-n18.shtml>)

It seems likely that the US is offering the UK assistance to remove Mugabe in a quid-pro-quo arrangement. If the US uses its longer military and secret service reach to bring down Mugabe, Blair will be able to show his critics that his slavish adherence to US foreign policy has been rewarded. But more important in the long term than any back scratching for Blair, Kansteiner announcement is a clear signal that the US is planning an aggressive assertion of power in Southern Africa. (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/nov2002/zimb-n18.shtml>)

The economic situation has to be understood in its own terms, while Mugabe's land reform programme has certainly disrupted production, it is by no means the primary cause of the country's problems. Contrary to Straw's claims, Zimbabwe is a victim of colonial oppression and its present economic condition can be traced directly to its status as a former colony. At independence in 1980 Zimbabwe inherited all the debts of the former colonial regime. Under the direction of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Zimbabwe incurred more debt. In 1998 it owed US\$5 billion and was paying more than a third of its export earnings on debt repayments. The debt now stands at US\$10 billion—more than its annual gross domestic product. In a pattern typical of colonial exploitation, Zimbabwe's economy is dependent on the export of primary products such as tobacco and minerals, the prices of which have all collapsed in recent years—resulting in a severe economic decline. Since 1996 the value of its agricultural exports has fallen by 30 percent and of minerals by 24 percent.

There is no friend or multilateral institution that accept devalued values of governance. Salvation for Zimbabwe is to look for other friends especially under the banner of South-South cooperation. Makwiramiti has since remarked that "Given that Zimbabwe's traditional trading partners in the European Union and the United States have drastically scaled down on business or stopped completely, it is natural for the government to look elsewhere in order to save the country from total collapse, and there is nothing bad about that". (<http://www.misa.org/pipermail/misanet/2005-July/000000.html>) The government's Look East Policy has led to closer co-operation with East Asian Countries of China and Malaysia. There has been the view that no real benefits can accrue from South cooperation. "The country has to see the benefits of going to bed with former South East Asian Tigers as no real investment has come to Zimbabwe from that source" ([www.Rhodesia.net](http://www.Rhodesia.net)). With India a memorandum of understanding was signed for the development of small- scale industries. Criticism has

since emerged that these relationships are rather short termed. This is quite normal for a country in crisis. Mugabe believes relations with these countries are beneficial than engaging the West in the meantime. Benefits have come though menial to solve the huge gap that surmounts the crisis.

## **Conclusion**

It has been noted that Zimbabwe through its political leadership, composed mainly of veterans of a gruesome liberation guerrilla war, has been positioning itself as the world challenger of international capital. This is based on outdated rhetoric that does not meet the demands of a changing world in the globalisation era. But it ought to be understood that Zimbabwe's current foreign policy and the economic policy with which it is so closely linked, have created problems internally and externally. At one set Zimbabwean government has stuck to rectifying socio economic iniquities and to make its concern known at the international arena. Significantly, they have become regionally destabilising, threatening the credibility of the South Africa backed NEPAD initiative. Friendship between nations and other international actors exists because there is commonality of interest between those leading and absence of the same creates a situation of enmity. It needs to be highlighted that Zimbabwe must be allowed to choose among the various options at the Southern African nation's disposal to solve its problems. It appears Zimbabwe will remain following the same path, as there are no signs of renegeing or turning back, at least in the foreseeable future. The struggle for civil liberties, economic redistribution, and regional security are still very much on the agenda of post-apartheid Southern Africa. These goals ought to be pursued while the absence of one will destroy the others. Equally to claim that history is not important and dismiss socialist paradigm as central to African society is to expose people to alien dominant ideology of liberal market capitalism and ideology. The West should not advocate respect for human rights and democracy while ignoring pervasive economic inequality, social injustice and exploitation that has its roots from colonialism and is part of the overall regional security concern. As Paul Williams (2002:14) has noted:

A high degree of convergence exists over both the means and ends of Zimbabwe policy between the British and the EU. Both sides are attempting to promote good, liberal governance within Zimbabwe, an objective shared by the US and the rest of G8...British foreign policy ....is arguably becoming more westernised...

It becomes central that if western governments are to engage seriously with Zimbabwe's proclaimed vision of a nation of small scale farmers, selling successfully on their own terms on the world markets, it will need concerted international transformation of the international trade and financial agents that include WTO agreements, the involvement of the world Bank in Land reform and resumption of the IMF lending to Zimbabwe.

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