

**COMING TO TERMS: ZIMBABWE IN THE
INTERNATIONAL ARENA (1980-1994)**

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Ph.D

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“How much have I forgotten that I thought I knew; how many things am I perplexed about, which once were as clear to me as sunlight?”
Elias Canetti, 1955*

* The Human Province (London: Picador) 1986

Abstract

At independence, a government of a third world country inherits a set of international economic relations and a set of international political relations. The latter, being dominated by intergovernmental links, are more easily refashioned to the design of the new regime. The former, having been forged by a combination of external factors (international markets, international commodity regimes, trade treaties, transport routes) and diverse internal factors (private sector and public sector actors, production patterns, import necessities and export opportunities) are less responsive to government intervention. International economic relations will therefore almost inevitably remain at variance with the pattern of political relations and alliances that the new regime wishes to develop.

The inevitability of this discrepancy does not lessen the dilemma for the government of a newly independent state, especially one with a revolutionary or radical public posture. The problem for a third world government in such a situation is not therefore to reconcile its international political and economic relations, but to develop a coherent and plausible explanation for the discrepancy between them which does not at the same time diminish the regime's credibility.

On 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe became independent. Since then, Zimbabwe's cabinet has been dominated by a party, ZANU(PF), that came to power with a revolutionary ethos and an avowedly Marxist-Leninist world view. Today, Zimbabwe's role on the world stage and its network of international political and economic relations only very partially reflects ZANU's pre-independence positions.

Despite its inevitably unique aggregation of experiences, Zimbabwe shares political, economic, social and historical characteristics with a number of other countries. This study attempts to delineate the principal factors, whether individual or common to other third world states, that shaped the way Zimbabwe forged its international links in the first fourteen years after independence. It argues that government attempts to restructure international economic relations since independence have largely failed. While such failure has been recognised, it has been neither acknowledged nor adequately explained to the Zimbabwean electorate.

CONTENTS

Introduction **6**

An outline of the domestic and international events that brought Zimbabwe to independence. The expectations engendered by a ZANU(PF) victory. The “inevitable discrepancy” between economic and political relations.

Chapter one: Zimbabwe’s inheritance **26**

The foreign relations of the Smith regime and the nationalist movements prior to independence

Chapter two: Constraints **47**

Domestic and international constraints on policy action of LDC governments and Zimbabwe in particular. Trade, aid, investment, debt and Lancaster House.

Chapter three: Policy making **65**

Competition and co-ordination among ministries, the Cabinet, the party and the Prime Minister/President. Declared guidelines for Zimbabwe’s international relations.

Chapter four: Patterns of involvement **80**

A panoramic view of Zimbabwe’s international links as they have developed since independence. Major bilateral ties. Membership of and participation in international organisations. High profile foreign policy issues.

Chapter five: Zimbabwe in the region **102**

a) South Africa **102**

Political will and economic imperatives. Changing trade patterns. Transport links. Sanctions.

b) Mozambique **114**

Mozambique as a frontline state before and after Zimbabwe’s independence. The Beira corridor. Renamo. The limits of solidarity.

c) Regional organisations **121**

SADC, PTA: aims, achievements and Zimbabwe’s role therein.

Chapter six: Zimbabwe and Britain **135**

Adversity and co-operation in the transition to independence. Bilateral links.

Clashes and co-operation on the international stage.

Chapter seven: Zimbabwe and the major powers **144**

a) USA **144**

Diplomatic and trade links. Aid: generosity and manipulation. Bilateral quarrels on third issues.

b) The USSR **156**

c) People's Republic of China **160**

Contrasts, pre- and post-independence. Trade and aid agreements.

Chapter eight: Zimbabwe and Europe **171**

Western and Eastern Europe: changing patterns of involvement. The cases of Sweden, France and Romania

Chapter nine: Zimbabwe and the Middle East **206**

a) Israel/Palestine **206**

Support for PLO positions. Trade with Israel. Palestine and the official media.

b) Iran/Iraq **215**

Responding - or not - to pressure. Constraints of the NAM environment.

c) Iraq/Kuwait **217**

Taking sides.

Chapter ten: Zimbabwe in IGOs **226**

UN General Assembly and Security Council. OAU.

Conclusion **242**

Bibliography **251**

Introduction

Zimbabwe: one of a kind? A brief outline of the domestic and international events which brought Zimbabwe to independence in 1980 and the expectations that a ZANU(PF) victory engendered. Demisting the analytical window.

At independence, a government of a third world country inherits a set of international economic relations and a set of international political relations. The latter, being dominated by intergovernmental links, are more easily refashioned to the design of the new regime. The former, having been forged by a combination of external factors (international markets, international commodity regimes, trade treaties, transport routes) and diverse internal factors (private sector and public sector actors, production patterns, import necessities and export opportunities) are less responsive to government intervention short of *diktat*. International economic relations will therefore almost inevitably remain at variance with the pattern of political relations and alliances that the new regime wishes to develop.

The inevitability of this discrepancy does not lessen the dilemma for the government of a newly independent state, especially one with a revolutionary or radical public posture. Recognising the inevitability would be tantamount to admitting an unacceptable degree of powerlessness. While structuralist explanations of the international system (a controlling core, a controlled periphery) lend intellectual credence to such admission, they are not - at least overtly - a viable basis for government policy. Non-Alignment - one of the declared cornerstones of Zimbabwean foreign policy - would also lose much of

its symbolic attraction if its parameters of action were seen to be externally defined.

On the other hand, a refusal publicly to recognise external constraints could lay a government open to charges of hypocrisy or incompetence. The problem for a third world government in such a situation is not therefore to reconcile its international political and economic relations, but to develop a coherent and plausible explanation for the discrepancy between them which does not at the same time diminish the regime's credibility.

This problem is admittedly felt less keenly by those governments adopting an ideological approach of non-intervention (or retreat from intervention) in the economy. Even where a government has no ideological preference for non-intervention, it may be able to invoke the strictures of a "structural adjustment programme" which will ultimately lead to more jam tomorrow. Yet given the awesome array of unmet social needs in the countries of the South, such a hands-off approach is not generally received with spontaneous enthusiasm by the local citizenry.

Most governments - at least those working within systems that demand some degree of accountability to the population - will feel most pressured to reconcile their rhetoric on international affairs with domestic political and economic initiatives. That is not to suggest that they feel obliged to act on principle. The so-called rhetoric-reality gap is often evoked in a way that conflates rhetoric and principle. It is worth bearing in mind that rhetoric can equally be used to mask a diversion of action from principle.

As far as international relations are concerned, Claude has spoken eloquently of the academic preference for inter-state dealings to be governed by principle. The preference is stated wistfully or plaintively,

he suggests, as an ideal far from realisation: “We like intellectual tidiness, the kind of regularity and uniformity permitting generalisation.”¹

The effort which a government puts into developing explanations for its international behaviour may, however, simply reflect the extent to which domestic pressure exists for one and the degree to which pressure is perceived from counterparties in the network of international economic and political relations, either for overt positions on specific issues or for more general declarations in bilateral or multilateral meetings.

Third world governments may tend to overestimate the importance of foreign relations to their citizens since the world stage provides public relations opportunities to demonstrate a government’s international standing. Leifer observes, for example, that:

The practice of foreign policy within South East Asia has been confined to elite circles with only limited response. Where popular response has played a role in the foreign policy process, it has usually been the product of governmental initiatives which seek to utilise foreign policy for domestic political purpose.²

The case of Zimbabwe

On 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe became independent. As Southern Rhodesia, it had, since 1923, officially been a self-governing British colony, but with power firmly entrenched in the hands of the white minority. Although Britain retained certain reserve powers allowing it to veto any discriminatory legislation, it never exercised them.

Pressure for change grew, however, both internally, from the majority and externally, from the independent former colonies of

Britain, still bound together in the Commonwealth. In November, 1965, the government of Ian Smith and his Rhodesian Front party declared independence unilaterally, with the aim of ensuring the long-term continuation of white control and domination. The country spent the next fourteen years as an international pariah. UDI was unrecognised by all member states of the United Nations, including those whose practical sympathy allowed the Smith regime to survive 12 years of international sanctions and a gruesome seven-year liberation war.

Despite Rhodesia's diplomatic isolation on the world stage, initiatives aimed at finding a negotiated exit from this political cul-de-sac were launched fairly regularly. Well documented elsewhere - and therefore saved from the diplomatic dustbin - are the early meetings between Ian Smith and British Prime Minister Harold Wilson on the unfortunately named British navy ships HMS Tiger and HMS Fearless in 1966 and 1968, the Smith-Home agreement of 1971, the abortive Geneva talks of 1976, not to mention the numerous official and semi-official emissaries including Lord Goodman (Harold Wilson's solicitor), Henry Kissinger, David Owen, Cyrus Vance, Andrew Young and others whose efforts created few ripples³.

A local attempt at an "internal settlement" involving a new name - Zimbabwe Rhodesia - and a new constitution was implemented following the signing of an agreement in March 1978 by Ian Smith, Abel Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole and Chief Jeremiah Chirau. Smith's three co-signatories were, however, seen by the two main African Nationalist movements, ZANU and ZAPU (united in the Patriotic Front), as sell-outs and the new dark green Zimbabwe-Rhodesia passport opened no new international doors.

The stage for a successful negotiated settlement was set by the Commonwealth. At the August 1979 Commonwealth Conference in

Lusaka, leaders of Commonwealth countries signed a nine point agreement calling on Britain to assume her colonial responsibility and convene a Constitutional Conference aimed at breaking the Zimbabwean political deadlock.

In addition to Commonwealth initiatives, UN resolutions, sanctions and other appeals had, according to Robert Mugabe, a catalytic effect. Addressing the UN General Assembly a few months after independence, he acknowledged that “the totality of those resolutions was an effective pressure which combined with the pressures of our armed struggle.”⁴

Great Expectations

The implications of this cocktail of forces for subsequent foreign policy decisions by Zimbabwe's government will be examined in later chapters. Initially, however, some understanding is necessary of the expectations of and from that government at the time of independence.

Since the lowering of the British flag in the presence of Prince Charles and Bob Marley, Zimbabwe's cabinet has been dominated by a party, ZANU(PF), that came to power with a revolutionary ethos and an avowedly Marxist-Leninist world view, albeit through an electoral process and with certain limits on its freedom of action imposed by the Lancaster House Constitution (see Chapter 2). Today, Zimbabwe's role on the world stage and its network of international political and economic relations only very partially reflects ZANU's pre-independence positions. Party dogma on the structure of the international system and Zimbabwe's role within it as part of the exploited South remains intact, but its impact on actual policy decisions - debatable at the best of times - has grown increasingly tenuous. Individual foreign policy decisions are therefore not adequately explained by this theoretical identification.

Thematic context

A trawl through the library shelves will reveal that while Zimbabwe has been the focus of much academic work over the past decade, its international political and economic relations have received scant attention. This hole in the academic road can, however, be filled in different ways with a variety of methods and materials. It may look bigger to some than to others, depending both on perspective and distance and on choice of analogy to describe the lacuna.

The aim of this study is, simply put, to make the hole look smaller. Whether it succeeds or not depends as much on the way it is read as the way it is written. It is therefore important to set out here the reasons for the apparent lack of an explicit theoretical framework. The word “apparent” is used advisedly, since some readers may legitimately be able to infer such a framework, should they feel it necessary to do so.

No serious scholar would claim to be free of preconceptions affecting the shape of his or her research efforts. These are inevitable, if only in the pre-selection of criteria considered worthy of attention. Nevertheless, many an academic brow has sweated over the strain of the epistemological contortions necessary to squeeze a particular body of work into the confines of an overt paradigmatic frame in a specific subject area. Although situated broadly and most conveniently within the field of “international relations”, this study acknowledges, but does not heed, the boundaries of knowledge which may have evolved in academe by default or job design. Where borders are recognised, they are treated as open.

Academic discussion of Zimbabwe’s international relations has tended to take place in the context of broader examinations of Zimbabwe’s post-independence development. The two most valuable

sources to which reference is made throughout this study are “Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition 1980-1986” edited by Ibbo Mandaza⁵ and a chapter in Shaw and Tandon’s “Regional Development at an International Level” by Hasu Patel entitled “No Master, No Mortgage, No Sale.”⁶ Both Mandaza and Patel were involved as members of ZANU(PF) in the struggle for independence and as such produce an insider’s view, though not uncritical, of Zimbabwean government policy. These works provide an underlay to the present thesis. I take issue with certain assertions made by each author. I am also not concerned to engage in the debate on the extent to which the Zimbabwean transformation contains the seeds of a “genuine” anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle. The reasons for this reluctance are explained in more detail later in this chapter (see “Polemical pitfalls” and “To Marx and Back”). Nevertheless, there is far more of direct relevance in these two works than in any other studies.

Herbst has produced a study of the locus of political decision making in Zimbabwean state politics.⁷ Despite its antagonistic reception by Mandaza among others, it provides useful observations on both the formation of government policy and the role of ZANU(PF) in the decision-making process.

A discussion of the available literature on the politics of Zimbabwe’s transformation is provided in Stoneman and Cliffe⁸. While their book is situated firmly within the Marxian tradition, they point out in their preface that “the literature, and indeed our own perspective, is ambiguous, and this is no doubt in part a consequence of the very recentness of the emergence of Zimbabwe as an independent African state in 1980”. The validity of this observation is strengthened by the profound changes in South Africa in the 1990s, the long-term regional implications of which remain unclear.

Paradigm detour

The study of international relations has often been presented in terms of competing paradigms, essentially Realist, Pluralist and Marxist/Marxian, each including a range of variants. The radical reshaping of international economic and political relations since the collapse of the Communist governments of Eastern Europe has, at the very least, challenged defenders of these paradigms to demonstrate their continued usefulness as analytical frameworks.

This study devotes little energy to testing the relevance of each paradigm to the Zimbabwean case. Halliday has reminded us of Kuhn's observation that "any decent paradigm, any 'historically significant' theory, can come up with an explanation, 'more or less'."⁹ A profound exploration of the Zimbabwean experience through each paradigm would no doubt yield much of value. Hopefully, those who are committed to such an approach will be able to use the material in this study to carry their work forward.

At the same time, journalistic description is, on its own, clearly an inadequate substitute for analytical bite. It is therefore necessary to map out the structure of the study, while acknowledging that many of the boundaries are arbitrary.

Despite its inevitably unique aggregation of experiences, Zimbabwe shares political, economic, social and historical characteristics with a number of other countries. Two works, in addition to Patel, have proved helpful in identifying the impact of such common elements on the formation of international political and economic relations. These are Clapham's *Third World Politics*¹⁰, and Ojo, Orwa & Utete's *African International Relations*¹¹. While neither offers a grand setting, they do provide useful points of reference. In addition, a number of personal interviews helped to structure the thrust

of the study, while others provided an opportunity to test and refine any tentative conclusions.¹²

This study attempts to delineate the principal factors, whether individual or common to other third world states, that have shaped the way Zimbabwe has forged its international links since independence.

Chapter One examines the raw material of inheritance: the economic and political legacy of the Rhodesian experience along with the network of relations formed by the nationalist movements during the years of struggle. This gives some insight both into the extent of the new government's desire to refashion the country's international relations and the magnitude of the task confronting it.

The second chapter outlines the constraints that the new government faced in setting about that task. Some are identified as common to most LDCs; others are specific to the Zimbabwean context. The former include, *inter alia*, a scarcity of available resources, the marginalisation of Africa, and the need to interact with the world market. Among the latter are the Lancaster House constitution (of decreasing importance) and the country's trade patterns. In the case of Zimbabwe, debt is considered of less, though growing, significance.

Chapter Three explores the way that foreign policy is made in Zimbabwe. In forging political relations, the importance of Robert Mugabe, initially as prime minister and then as president is stressed, with the foreign minister providing commentary and the ministry supplying the functionaries. Economic relations are shown to have come under less direct central control, notwithstanding an initial desire to bring them under the political umbrella.

The pattern of relations resulting from the Mugabe government's attempts at diversification is laid out in Chapter Four. This includes the

sequence of establishment of diplomatic relations, a geographical profile of sources of economic assistance and the role of private investment.

The remaining six chapters attempt to show in greater detail how important elements of Zimbabwe's network of international relations have been constructed. The choice of countries and organisations considered is of necessity partial. In some cases, the reasons for the choices will be more obvious than others. Chapter Five, for example, covers Zimbabwe in the region. This could include Zimbabwe's relations with each of the front-line states in addition to South Africa. Nevertheless only South Africa and Mozambique are singled out for detailed treatment, as they have represented the two greatest dilemmas in foreign policy facing the Zimbabwean government in the first fourteen years of independence. Zimbabwe's relations with other front-line states are considered in the context of the two main regional organisations: the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Preferential Trade Area (PTA).

Chapter Six, though relatively short, is devoted to relations with one country only: the UK. This is justified on three counts at least. First, is the tangled history of relations between the two entities going back to the founding of Rhodesia as a commercial venture of the British South Africa Company. Secondly, as producer, stage manager and chief fire officer of the Lancaster House Conference, Britain is at least as responsible as the Zimbabwean participants for the shape of the Constitution and its subsequent impact. Thirdly, Britain remains Zimbabwe's largest aid donor and second largest trading partner.

Chapter Seven explores the shape of links with, for want of a better term, the major powers: the roller coaster with the USA as Zimbabwe fell in and out of favour (and in again) with the State Department; the failure to break the ice between Parties in the case of

the USSR; and the surprising modesty, though largely fulfilled, of Sino-Zimbabwean ambitions.

Zimbabwe and Europe is the focus of Chapter Eight. Following a general introduction, the three cases considered in depth are Sweden, France and Romania. These may appear strange choices, but they have the benefit of providing vivid studies in contrast: Sweden as the epitome of the conscientious donor and one of ZANU(PF)'s few active western supporters during the independence struggle; France as the "enlightened hand of self-interest"; and Romania as the ally attempting to translate declared ideological affinity into meaningful trade.

In Chapter Nine, the Middle East is viewed through the prism of three specific conflicts: Israel/Palestine, which in the first decade of independence assumed a Zimbabwean media profile second only to South Africa; Iran/Iraq, in which Zimbabwe remained studiously neutral; and Iraq/Kuwait, where Zimbabwe's stand against Iraqi aggression was out of step with many of its fellow members of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM).

Finally, Chapter Ten examines Zimbabwe's behaviour on three specific international stages. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has benefited little from the energy Zimbabwe has invested in its performance on the international stage. In contrast, the United Nations has provided a platform for some of Zimbabwe's weightiest international (verbal) interventions, both in the General Assembly and during the country's two stints on the Security Council. Two bodies — NAM and the Commonwealth — perhaps deserve greater attention than I have given them. They are, however, discussed in the context of particular international issues.

Conclusion: running the international affairs of an LDC is a tough assignment, but it could be done more efficiently were the government

to submit to some form of internal yet open political audit. In the case of Zimbabwe, there is no indication that this has been attempted, either at party or government level. With the “commanding heights” of the economy still largely in private hands since independence, the failure of evident efforts to bring Zimbabwe’s international economic relations within the government’s operational ambit is, in itself, not surprising. Yet it remains largely unexplained

Polemical pitfalls

One trap that has been debated with a degree of rancour in academic circles is that of a supposedly innate perspective deriving from the origin of the researcher. Some radical third world scholars have been critical of studies emanating from western academic institutions. H. Ekwe-Ekwe refers disparagingly, for example, to “Westerners who have arrogated themselves the status of guardians of African and Third World studies.”¹³

Either such studies are accused of colonial assumptions or they are seen as reinforcing a dubious strain of revolutionary romanticism, which hinders post revolutionary reconstruction through sustaining unrealistic expectations¹⁴.

In both cases, the essential charge appears to be a lack of empathy. Certainly, many studies of the third world are suffused with implicit assumptions of all kinds, but this is no less true of published work emanating from institutions within the third world itself. There is therefore no reason to treat such scholarship as any less diverse or error-prone than that germinating in Northern conditions. This particular work has been written by a Zimbabwean based mainly in London during its genesis and is therefore the product of numerous influences. As far as possible, however, it is based deliberately on Zimbabwean sources, both primary and secondary. While it obviously

takes two to tango, we focus here on the footwork of the Zimbabwean partner.

A revolution betrayed?

Was there a revolution in Zimbabwe? The question is complicated by the lack of a commonly accepted working definition of revolution in social science. The issue is further clouded by the fact that, in Zimbabwe, a 'revolutionary' movement engaged in a purportedly revolutionary struggle finally won power through elections under a compromise constitution.

Clearly the change that occurred at independence was far more profound than that normally ensuing from an opposition victory at the polls. Whether there was a revolution in the Skocpolian sense with its emphasis on societal change is debatable. Clapham defines revolution as "a rapid, violent and irreversible change in the political organisation of a society." He stresses that any social transformation, however critical, is "made possible only by the prior conquest of political power and by deliberate political decisions as to how that power is to be used."¹⁵ That conquest certainly occurred and political power passed to the group that espoused revolution during the struggle.

Arguments over whether the profound and fundamental change that occurred in Zimbabwe scores high enough to be inducted into the revolutionary hall of fame continue to arouse academic passions. Stoneman¹⁶, noting the overt allegiance of ZANU(PF) to Marxism-Leninism at independence, suggests that the constraints imposed by the circumstances of the transfer of power left one of Lenin's key precepts – "the need for a victorious revolution to smash the state apparatus of the old régime" – unfulfilled.

He identifies four strands of criticism in relation to Zimbabwe's revolutionary credentials in the first decade of its independence. The

first saw the outcome of the Lancaster House negotiations as evidence of the petty bourgeois domination of ZANU(PF). The second saw the revolution as having lost its way around the time of independence. The third saw objective constraints and paper agreements as denying freedom of manoeuvre to the government until political consciousness and productive forces had been strengthened, while a fourth saw a national democratic revolution as a prerequisite to a second socialist option.

A *caveat* is applicable here. Assuming a revolution did occur, there is a strong tendency to measure its successes in terms of the expectations that were rhetorically nurtured during the independence struggle.

Mandaza¹⁷ alludes to the distortions this approach imposes on scholarship:

The analysis of the historical factors and processes leading to independence constitutes a necessary pre-condition for understanding the present and future developments of any post-colonial society. In the Southern African situation, however, even this task is clouded and obstructed by the mythology that has developed around the issue of *armed struggle*.

Referring to Wallerstein's proposition that revolutionary myths sustain the troops during the long struggle¹⁸, Mandaza argues that the role of such myths, if imbibed and reimposed by scholars, be they local or foreign, can be negative:

The contribution of African radicals to the development of a 'revolutionary mythology' cannot be underestimated. For it was mainly

the radical intellectuals who articulated and wrote the radical speeches and publications that increasingly projected the liberation movements as revolutionary and Marxist-Leninist. Whatever disparity there was - and there was - between this conception of the struggle by a few radicals on the one hand, and that of the reality of the mass of the people on the other, was lost as part of the overall revolutionary mythology that had to sustain and defend the struggle against its many enemies.¹⁹

How a revolutionary movement portrays itself during the struggle is thus not always an accurate pointer to its policies as a party in power. Keller, for one, betrays a certain disappointment at the 'impure' outcome of the Zimbabwean revolution:

Self-designation, while important, is not sufficient to ensure that a regime can be transformed into a viable, credible Afro-Marxist regime. Nor does it guarantee that, once declared, an African scientific socialist regime will forever 'stay on course'. The regime of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe has pledged to reorganise his society along scientific socialist lines. However, because objective conditions inhibit Mugabe, he has not been able to translate ideology into praxis. Indeed, he has yet to even clearly articulate his ideological orientation.²⁰

Although such disappointment exists within Zimbabwe itself to a large degree, it results from far more concrete daily hardships, the causes of which are vigorously debated. Nevertheless, the fact that post-independence Zimbabwe has fallen short of external expectations will be addressed in Chapters Two and Three in the context of policy formation and the constraints thereon.

To Marx and Back

Initially reformist, the Zimbabwe nationalist movement, incarnated primarily in the two rival parties of ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) and ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), developed in the early 1970s a radical nationalism based on armed struggle and people's war. Even then, independence, rather than socialist transformation, remained the central goal. Marxism-Leninism eventually took hold, in Mandaza's words, "in the form of an anti-imperialist analysis and self-identification and solidarity". Nevertheless, the revolutionary ethos of the liberation movements rested on the overthrow of a political regime. The ordering of socio-economic relations along certain lines was a later consideration. This is not to deny the impact of Marxism-Leninism on the independence movement and the way it presented itself. It is rather something to bear in mind when trying to locate the dividing line between success and failure of the revolutionary enterprise.

According to M. Sithole, ZANU, at its 1963 inception, declared itself as embracing nationalism, pan-Africanism and socialism (in its Fabian sense)²¹. Marxism-Leninism and Maoist thought became conspicuous in the Zimbabwe nationalist movement in the 1970s. At its formation in 1971, Frolizi - a short lived attempt to unite elements of ZANU and ZAPU - claimed that these two movements were ideologically bankrupt, lacking a Marxist-Leninist scientific outlook. The official adoption of Marxism-Leninism by ZANU took place in 1977 and was reaffirmed in 1984. Yet it is Sithole's contention that:

throughout the liberation war , ZANLA (the Zimbabwe National Liberation Army, allied to ZANU) was inspired much more by the sentiment of nationalism and opposition to white settler political

domination than by a Marxist analysis of the capitalist colonial economy.²²

While land expropriation was a rallying call to garner popular support, particularly in the rural areas, the guerrilla armies were essentially seeking the political kingdom. It has been suggested that this is fairly representative of third world revolutionary movements with an ostensible commitment to socialism. A forthright expression of this view is to be found in Hobsbawm, who has argued that

while on paper these movements belonged to the old revolutionary family of 1917, in reality they clearly belonged to a different species, inevitably so given the differences between the societies for which Marx's and Lenin's analyses had been designed, and those of sub-Saharan post-colonial Africa.²³

[He wisely allows “the economically developed and industrialised settler capitalism” of South Africa as an exception, given the integral role of the South African Communist Party and the trade unions in the destruction of apartheid]

Popular expectations for a post-independence Zimbabwe centred largely on redressing domestic grievances. International relations could therefore be forged by policy makers within the limits of constraints which, as will be explained in Chapter Two, were and remain primarily external.

With that in mind, the question of how far the ‘revolution has sold out’ is not considered of central importance. In addressing discrepancies between performance and pronouncement, much of the acrimony surrounding that debate can perhaps be evaded by judging

success or failure not against abstract standards but against the targets explicitly outlined by those who set them and are responsible for implementing them. This allows us to acknowledge the peculiarities of any particular situation, but also to recognise that failure in the face of overwhelming odds is still failure. While odds can be entered in mitigation, unwillingness to recognise them cannot.

At the same time, attempts at special pleading, allowing states to derogate from rhetorically or oratorically enunciated standards of integrity and morality can be dismissed. All scholars experience disappointment in the course of research. When confronted with the unwelcome, criticism may turn to accusation and sympathy to apology. While elements of both may appear in this study, it is not intended that either should dominate.

Finally, while government performance in the first fourteen years of independence is assessed and judged, no attempt is made to predict. This is in line with Strange's assertion that social science can never confidently predict, since the irrational factors involved in human relations and the various combinations and permutations of them, are too numerous. The one social science that has most notably aspired to predict is, she points out, economics:

“But its record of success is so abysmal that it should make all those that seek to emulate the economists and to borrow from them try something else.”²⁴

¹ I. Claude, The Tension between Principle and Pragmatism in International Relations, in Review of International Studies (Cambridge: CUP), 1993, vol 19, p215

² M. Liefer, The Foreign Relations of the New States (Sydney: Longman Australia), 1974, p95

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- ³ see for example K. Flower, Serving Secretly, An Intelligence Chief on Record (London: John Murray) 1987, for a colourful account of many of these meetings. See also M Meredith, The Past is Another Country (London: Pan) 1980
- ⁴ PM Addresses United Nations, August 26, 1980 (Ministry of Information & Tourism) September 1980. Mugabe has served as Zimbabwe's head of government since independence, first as prime minister and subsequently as executive president
- ⁵ I. Mandaza (ed.), Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition (Dakar: Codesria) 1986
- ⁶ HH Patel, No Master No Mortgage No Sale, in Shaw & Tandon (eds), Regional Development at the International Level (University Press of America) 1985
- ⁷ J Herbst, State Politics in Zimbabwe (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications) 1990
- ⁸ C Stoneman & L Cliffe (eds.), Zimbabwe: Politics, Economics and Society (London: Pinter) 1989
- ⁹ Fred Halliday, The Gulf War 1990-1991 and the Study of International Relations, in Review of International Studies (Cambridge University Press) Vol 20, no.2 April 1994, p120
- ¹⁰ C. Clapham, Third World Politics: An Introduction (Beckenham: Croom Helm) 1985
- ¹¹ O. Ojo, D. Orwa & C. Utete, African International Relations (London: Longman) 1985
- ¹² Interviews were conducted, formal and informal, with a number of serving diplomats, including: Ambassador Jamgwa and Jean Gonçalves at the Zimbabwean Embassy in Paris
Edwin Mandaza, head of the European desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare
Godfrey Dzairo, First Secretary at the Zimbabwean Mission to the UN in New York.
Among the academic community, Hasu Patel, and Reg Austin of the University of Zimbabwe, and Ibbo Mandaza of the African Association of Political Science all provided useful insights at different times into how I should proceed with the study. Nathan Shamuyarira, at the time foreign minister, pointed me in the direction of useful information on the differences between the various nationalist organisations' international connections prior to independence.
Among the non-Zimbabwean commentators were Ilan Halevi and Zuhdi Terzi of the PLO.
These discussions and interviews were helpful in shaping my approach to the subject but none of the text should be taken to represent or reflect the opinion of any of this diverse group of people.
- ¹³ H. Ekwe-Ekwe, Write Your Own History, in West Africa, No.3627, 16 March, 1987

¹⁴ see for example I. Mandaza, Relationship of Third World Intellectuals and Progressive Western Scholars: An African Critique and R. Davies, Non-Revolutionary Intellectuals and Neo-Colonialism – two discussion papers reproduced (unedited) by the University of Zimbabwe from a seminar entitled Intellectuals, the State and Imperialism: Towards Intellectual Decolonisation, Harare, 20-22 October 1987.

¹⁵ C. Clapham, *Third World Politics*, p160

¹⁶ C. Stoneman, A Zimbabwean Model, in C. Stoneman (ed), Zimbabwe's Prospects (London: MacMillan 1988), pp3-4

¹⁷ Mandaza, *Political Economy*, p4

¹⁸ In Forward to G. Chaliand, Revolution in the Third World (Harmondsworth: Penguin) 1978

¹⁹ Mandaza, *Political Economy*, pp4-5

²⁰ E.J. Keller in Keller & Rothchild, Afro-Marxist Regimes: Ideology and Public Policy (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner) 1987, p10

²¹ M. Sithole in Keller & Rothchild, pp85-106

²² ibid

²³ Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes: the short twentieth century 1914-1991 (Penguin: London) 1994, p450

²⁴ S. Strange, States and Markets (London: Pinter) 1988, p11

Chapter one: Zimbabwe's Inheritance

The foreign relations of the Smith regime, ZANU and ZAPU

Between UDI in 1965 and independence in 1980, the Smith regime became increasingly isolated politically, though trade continued with many of the countries which had broken off diplomatic relations. Conversely, ZANU & ZAPU's political relations expanded as representative offices were opened in various capitals around the world, but economic relations, inevitably one-way, were confined to financial assistance for humanitarian, educational and administrative purposes, to the free provision of military training and, in a few cases, to the supply of military equipment.

UDI & the Economy

The Rhodesian economy at the time of UDI in November 1965 could be characterised by the relatively high contribution of foreign trade to GDP and by the degree of foreign ownership of capital stock. British prime minister Harold Wilson's belief that the Smith regime could be brought down by economic rather than military measures was therefore not entirely devoid of reason:

In theory, there were good reasons why the imposition of sanctions should have worked. Rhodesia was a small landlocked country, dependent on foreign oil supplies and foreign trade. About thirty five percent of its gross domestic product was earned from exports and a large percentage of these exports was bought by Britain.¹

Wilson expected the economic decline resulting from sanctions to create internal dissent and pressure on the Smith regime to recant. Yet his piecemeal application of economic measures allowed both the

Rhodesian government and the private sector valuable time to adjust to new conditions. Immediately after UDI, Rhodesia was excluded from the sterling currency area, selective exchange controls were imposed, access to the London financial market was denied and Commonwealth preferences on Rhodesian goods were withdrawn. By mid-December, Rhodesian Reserve Bank assets in London had been seized and the import into the UK of Rhodesian tobacco, sugar, minerals and meat had been prohibited. The Rhodesian Front cabinet responded to the financial measures by defaulting on British loans and those World Bank loans under British guarantee, thereby making a considerable fiscal saving.

On 17 December, the British government imposed an oil embargo and by the end of January the ban had been extended to cover all trade between Britain and its rebel colony. It was not until 1966, however, that Britain asked the UN to impose mandatory sanctions, at first selectively and finally, in 1968, comprehensively. By then, the country had embarked on a significant import substitution programme and had made considerable progress in finding alternative trading partners.

A deeper analysis of the significance of both foreign trade and foreign capital to the Rhodesian economy would perhaps have tempered Wilson's optimism and suggested to the British authorities the complexity of an approach based solely on economic sanctions. With diverse trading and investment links primarily in private hands, both the motives and the avenues for evading centrally directed restrictions were numerous, though, paradoxically, one impact of economic sanctions was to increase state intervention in the economy.

The post-UDI "miracle" was the result of a state-led effort to survive and flourish under a strict import substitution regime. Smith forbade

foreign firms to remit profits or dividends to parent companies and individual shareholders, and they could not import many essential materials and equipment, divest holdings, or transfer them to other companies without state agreement. Key monetary, fiscal and infrastructural operations came under state control, and an industrial development parastatal courted South African capital.²

From 1965 to 1972 the economy achieved fluctuating growth rates averaging 6% per annum, despite adverse movements in the terms of trade resulting from the need to pay premiums in sourcing imports and to absorb discounts and intermediary costs in export earnings. The role of South Africa and Portugal both as trading partners and conduits notwithstanding, other countries took advantage of trading opportunities with Rhodesia or were less than diligent in bringing sanctions breakers to book. Sylvester cites South Africa, Portugal, France, Greece, Italy, Belgium, Brazil, Japan and the US as among the “well-documented cases of violators.”³ The comprehensive list is much longer.

Restrictions on access to international financial markets had, according to X. Kadhani, the paradoxical effect of widening the country’s access to investible financial surpluses, “primarily in the shape of the large blocked balances that would otherwise have been remitted abroad”.⁴ With these surpluses either redirected towards domestic reinvestment or at least retained within the domestic economy, the involvement of foreign capital actually increased over this period. MNCs with subsidiaries in Zimbabwe maintained operations although the link with the parent company was officially severed.

The Role of the Private Sector

The degree of concealment in Rhodesia's economic relations has been a subject of great speculation. Certainly the mechanics of

disguising the origins, content and transport routes of much bilateral trade during the UDI period involved a variety of state and non-state actors. A common assumption is that the Rhodesian government used the country's economic relations as a cover for political contact. This appears to be overstating the case, if one takes into account the opinion and perceptions current among members of the local business community at the time.

Unlike the sourcing of oil and the search for markets for bulk primary exports, the manufacturing sector benefited little from Government involvement in trade which appeared in most cases to be limited to bureaucratic controls. There was little co-ordination between government and business and little perception of government assistance.

In general, the business community was hostile to UDI, primarily on economic grounds. The advent of sanctions, however, presented commercial and personal (rather than articulated political) challenges to those involved. Individual enterprises and their representatives played the dominant role in establishing and maintaining trade contacts, both before and during the UDI period. Similarly, contacts in other countries were with private companies. In most cases, the governments concerned turned a blind eye, rather than participating directly themselves. Exceptions were, perhaps surprisingly, Britain and USA, which actually fined certain infringers of the sanctions.

A ready excuse available to governments of countries with a largely capitalist economy was the impossibility of tracking all private transactions. False end-user certificates and other customs documents were commonly employed to obscure the trail of dealings with Rhodesian firms. The practice that, in international trade, the last country of dispatch is of more significance than the country of origin of a product in a particular transaction served the Rhodesians well.

Ironically, a number of state-controlled agencies in Eastern European countries were involved in direct purchases of Rhodesian primary products. In Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, for example, tobacco sales were arranged by a visiting Rhodesian businessman. The People's Republic of China meanwhile exported pharmaceutical raw materials to Rhodesian production companies, though it is possible that in that case the final destination was unknown, since the contracts were arranged and paid in Europe and the goods delivered to South Africa⁵.

South Africa became an important conduit for the shipment of goods to Zambia, one of Rhodesia's main trading partners, which as far as possible applied direct trade sanctions. Goods were first sold to South Africa then resold to Zambia and shipped back through Rhodesia to its northern neighbour at significant cost to the Zambian economy. In some cases, the goods did not even leave Rhodesia, but were collected by South African transport companies on their way through to Zambia. In addition to South Africa and Portugal (until 1974), neither Greece nor Switzerland made any pretence of applying sanctions, though they were more important as conduits than as markets in themselves.

The major changes in the direction of trade over the UDI period were therefore the reductions in importance of UK and Zambia, to the profit of South Africa and a number of continental European countries (see table 1.1).

Diplomatic relations

In 1965, prior to UDI, Rhodesia hosted a sizeable diplomatic community. Britain was represented by a High Commissioner and South Africa by an Accredited Diplomatic Representative. Japan, France, USA, Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, West Germany and Belgium all had consuls-general. India, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Greece,

TABLE 1.1
Comparison of direction and composition of trade in 1965 and 1980

EXPORTS 1965

<u>Composition</u>		<u>Direction</u>	
tobacco	28.8%	Britain	22%
minerals (ore & processed)	33.0%	Zambia	19%
manufactures	27.2%	South Africa	9%
meat	4.3%	West Germany	9%
cotton	3.6%	USA	6%
sugar	2.9%	Malawi	5%
gold (unreleased)		Japan	5%

Zambia was the major purchaser of manufactures and Britain of tobacco.

EXPORTS 1980

<u>Composition</u>		<u>Direction(Aug-Dec)</u>	
manufactures	32.0%	South Africa	17%
crude materials	18.9%	West Germany	11%
beverages/ tobacco	13.6%	UK	5%
gold	12.8%	Italy	5%
food	11.4%	Belgium	4%
Other	11.3%	Botswana	3%

IMPORTS 1965

<u>Composition</u>		<u>Direction</u>	
Food products	10.0%	Britain	30%
Crude materials	11.7%	South Africa	23%
Capital goods	34.7%	Europe	14%
Manufactures	43.5%	USA	7%
		Rest of Africa	6%

IMPORTS 1980

<u>Composition</u>		<u>Direction(Aug-Dec)</u>	
machinery and transport equipment	25.8%	South Africa	27%
mineral fuels and electricity	24.1%	UK	8%
manufactures	18.5%	USA	7%
chemicals	13.5%	West Germany	7%
other	18.1%	Japan	4%

[source: Central Statistical Office, Harare]

Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Norway, Finland and Turkey were represented at lower levels, while a number of other countries⁶ did not have resident representatives, but had accredited diplomats with jurisdiction in Rhodesia. Rhodesian political or commercial attachés were posted to London, West Germany, Mozambique (officially Portugal) and USA.

Despite the quasi-universal condemnation of UDI on the international stage, the closure of foreign missions in post UDI-Rhodesia was not carried out in haste. On 20 August 1966, the Minister for External Affairs, Lord Graham told parliament that since UDI, the UK had withdrawn its high commissioner and closed its diplomatic office, leaving a residual mission; South Africa had kept its existing representation; Finland, Sweden, and Turkey had closed their honorary consulates, while Denmark, France, Belgium, West Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Switzerland had maintained their representation at the same level.

By 10 October 1967, only six consulates and trade missions had been completely withdrawn. Of those remaining, some were more particular than others in limiting the scope of relations. T.J. Stoklasa, the honorary commercial counsellor for the Belgian Consulate-General's office commented at the time: "I don't complain about trade, but I cannot tell you anything about that."⁷ In early June, 1968, following the UN Resolution, Japan closed its consulate general. Just over a year later, on 25 June 1969, Britain closed its residual mission and tried, without success, to persuade the US to do the same.

A greater catalyst to diplomatic rupture appears to have been the unilateral assumption of republican status by the Smith regime on 1 March 1970, following a referendum in 1969 on a new constitution.

That month saw something of a haemorrhage. In the first week Norway and Denmark broke off consular relations. The USA announced its intention to close its consulate general on 17th, though the Rhodesian Government Information Office planned to continue operating in Washington. (Although it had no official diplomatic status, it was registered as an agent of a foreign government.) On 12th, the French announced closure, and the Swiss that they were reconsidering their position. The following day the West German consulate general ceased functioning, leaving Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Greece, South Africa and Portugal and Netherlands. By the end of the month, only the Portuguese and South Africans remained with Malawi maintaining a liaison office.

The Smith regime tried where possible to maintain a diplomatic presence abroad. In August 1966, foreign missions existed in Lisbon, Portugal (with five Rhodesians and seven local employees), Lourenço Marques, Mozambique (four Rhodesians and five locals) and South Africa (six Rhodesians, eight locals). Lord Graham, described the London Mission as a “holding operation....until we know which way the cat will jump”.⁸ The former Rhodesian High Commissioner in London, Brig. Andrew Sheen suggested that the London mission should not be considered the most important. He listed them in order of significance as South Africa, Portugal and Mozambique.

In the absence of diplomatic representation, there were also a number of Rhodesian Information Offices, which survived throughout most of the UDI period. On 21 September 1977, for example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted to attempts to close down the RIO in Sydney, issuing a press statement that the Australian government should allow the office to remain open in the interests of freedom of speech [!]. A previous attempt to close the Office by Gough Whitlam's

labour government had floundered on legal grounds. Since then, however, the UN had passed the Resolution of 27 May 1977 calling on member states not to permit the funding of Rhodesian government agencies in their territories. In the event, the RIO received a reprieve in November when Australian Foreign Minister Peacock rejected the draft legislation as “too dragnet”, while government MPs were divided on the issue.⁹

However extensive the network of unofficial contacts may have remained, both the Rhodesian government and its supporters among the white population considered the governments and people of South Africa and Portugal as their only “real friends”, despite periodic assurances from foreign sympathisers, particularly British and American, that their more hostile governments did not reflect the true feelings of their citizens.

On a political level, South Africa and Portugal provided overt support to the Smith regime. Economically, they provided the Rhodesian economy with a lifeline. With the introduction of the oil embargo, the British navy blockaded the port of Beira in Mozambique, from which an oil pipeline ran to Rhodesia. As a result, some trade was diverted to Lourenço Marques, Mozambique’s capital (now Maputo) and main Southern port. Blockade of Lourenço Marques was not feasible given its use by South Africa, which became not only Rhodesia’s principal trading partner, but also the most vital link in its trade routes.

Even with its two firmest allies, relations showed signs of tension, both at government level and among the white populations of the two countries, as Rhodesia’s dependence on the two countries increased. The Portuguese in Mozambique were suspected by the Rhodesians of incompetence in the fight against FRELIMO, the Mozambican liberation movement. In January, 1972, Portuguese Prime Minister Marcelo

Caetano, in a none too prescient comment, rebuked the Rhodesians for showing unease over the military situation in the Tete province of Mozambique. "Some of our neighbours, with less experience do not conceal their fears," he said. "They have been told more than once that there is no reason for their great fright."¹⁰

In addition, the popularity of Beira as a holiday resort for white Rhodesians led to a certain amount of cultural friction. One Beira resident, Rebelo da Silva Gomes, with two teenage daughters, was quoted in the Sunday Mail as complaining that

a few years ago I was unquestioned head of the family. Now, my kids talk about drugs, they use ugly western expressions and dress in a manner that would shock my mother. This is the Rhodesian influence.¹¹

Following the Portuguese revolution there was, despite historical antagonism, some initial sizing up between FRELIMO and the Smith regime. On 18 September, 1974, Joaquim Chissano, then a high ranking FRELIMO official hinted at a possible policy of non-interference. However, addressing an OAU Liberation Committee meeting in Dar es Salaam in January 1975, Samora Machel declared that Mozambique would support an armed struggle in Rhodesia if the negotiations then underway failed.

Within nine months of Mozambican independence, relations had deteriorated significantly. On 3 March 1976, Rhodesian Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs PK van der Byl went on radio and television to announce that news reports of a call by Samora Machel for a state of war and a closing of borders were incorrect, though the latter

had called for Mozambique to defend itself against supposed Rhodesian aggression. Van der Byl explained that:

We have from time to time gone into Mozambique in hot pursuit of terrorists and this is in complete accord with international law and custom, and Samora Machel has only himself to blame for this.¹²

He added that Machel “harbours terrorists” and “admits it openly.”¹³ In fact Machel had announced a closure of borders and the severance of all communications with Rhodesia along with the imposition of sanctions and the expropriation of Rhodesian assets in Mozambique, in a speech delivered in the presence of Abel Muzorewa, then head of the ANC, which served as an umbrella Zimbabwean nationalist movement for a brief period. Nine days later, Mozambique government accounts in Rhodesia were frozen.

The Rhodesian government set about training and supporting the MNR, also known as RENAMO, as an anti-FRELIMO irritant, providing propaganda back up with a radio station, Voz de Africa Libre, using Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation transmitters. The first MNR recruits received their training at Bindura in August and September 1976.

Nationalist Links

Pre-UDI, the Nationalist movements devoted much of their energy towards persuading Britain, both directly and through the UN, to act on their demands. After the abortive Tiger and Fearless talks, the realisation that diplomatic pressure would not produce the desired results led both ZANU and ZAPU to adopt a policy of armed struggle, support for which was sought among neighbouring independent states, the OAU, the Comecon countries and China. The exiled

movements maintained political and military headquarters and camps in Zambia and Tanzania. After the victory of FRELIMO in 1974, ZANU shifted its major bases to Mozambique.

Most material support for the armed struggle came from the USSR and Warsaw Pact in the case of ZAPU and China and the Scandinavian countries in the case of ZANU. Soviet support for ZAPU right up to the post-Lancaster House elections was to retard the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations with independent Zimbabwe (see Chapter Seven).¹⁴

At a party youth seminar in 1983, Mugabe explained the genesis of the armed struggle and the assistance received therein:

When most of the leaders were detained or restricted, a few including Herbert Chitepo, remained outside the country. Accordingly, we, in restriction at Sikombela, held a meeting in the period August-October 1965, and drew up a brief document in which we spelt out the form of struggle that should be carried out and then mandated those members of the Central Committee outside the country to constitute, under the leadership or chairmanship of Herbert Chitepo, a Revolutionary Council to organise and train a guerrilla force for the prosecution of the struggle which congress had tasked to prosecute.¹⁵

Some military training had already begun in 1963 with the dispatch of a small group to China and a larger group of fifty to Ghana. The setting up of the Revolutionary Council or Dare in 1966, however, led to a more co-ordinated approach. Training camps were established in successive stages in Tanzania. In addition to the training facilities in its own country, China providing instructors for the Tanzanian camps.

Mugabe makes it clear that ZANU had some initial difficulty convincing its potential backers that its formation in 1963 by dissatisfied ZAPU members had been necessary. Although ZANU subsequently came to be seen as the larger of the two movements, residual distrust remained on the part of Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda and for a time, of Samora Machel as leader of FRELIMO:

At the same time, its external existence was never firmly assured, for those who had accepted ZAPU found it difficult to comprehend the *raison d'être* for the formation and so for the existence of ZANU. Thus, for a long time, ZANU was regarded as a minor party whose major counter-part was ZAPU....The death of Chitepo in 1975 was one of the saddest blows the party has suffered, because in its wake, Zambia arrested all the cadres in the country plus all members of Dare.¹⁶

Mugabe further criticised the front-line states, at least implicitly for their “unwitting strategy” in 1974 “as they shepherded us into the ANC fold led by the politically naive and counter-revolutionary Bishop Muzorewa”.

Following the independence of Mozambique in 1975, the support patterns of the movements became clearer, with ZANU moving its headquarters and bases to Mozambique. Since 1970, ZANLA, ZANU’s military wing, had maintained rear bases in the liberated areas of Mozambique - an invitation initially extended to ZAPU but, which, according to Sylvester:

...lapsed when it became clear that ZAPU was in the throes of an incapacitating leadership struggle between vice president James Chikerema and more militant strategists Jason Moyo, Edward Ndhlovu,

and George Silundika that was set off by debates about the prosecution of the war.¹⁷

The war had begun in a small way in 1964 with plans for acts of sabotage. Action was, however, sporadic until 1972, when the scale and frequency of operations by all parties escalated significantly. The first real engagement, in the case of ZANU, took place in April 1966 with the battle of Sinoia and for ZAPU in the form of a short lived military alliance in 1967 and 1968 with the South African ANC, which first sent a joint force into the Wankie area. Although that alliance achieved little of practical significance, it was one factor in the subsequent strained relations between ZANU and the South African ANC and partially accounted for ZANU(PF)'s lobbying after Zimbabwe's independence for greater international recognition of the rival PAC. It also heralded the direct and continuous involvement of South African military and paramilitary forces on the side of the Rhodesian Front regime.

The OAU Liberation Committee, set up in 1963 was supposed to provide financial support through its Liberation Fund, established in 1964. The fund, however, depended on contributions from member countries and proved inefficient. It was revamped in Accra in 1973 when the Liberation Committee set a budget for 1973/74 of £1.4m. Seventy percent of this was earmarked for the Portuguese colonies, 15% for South African and Namibian liberation movements and 5% for the rest. ZANU and ZAPU were theoretically allocated £35,000 each, provided all subscriptions were paid. In fact, well under half the total budget was collected¹⁸.

Despite these disappointments, it seems that international support for the military struggle did pick up between 1975 and 1979. Since independence, Mugabe has been generous in his praise for help received

during this period. At his first OAU summit as Zimbabwe's prime minister in May 1980, he saluted the part played by the Liberation Committee of the OAU and by the front-line presidents in trying to secure assistance, as well as by socialist countries, progressive western countries and humanitarian organisations. Certain individual members of the OAU were also mentioned:

I would certainly sound an ingrate if I did not refer to the very substantial material military aid that came to us from Nigeria, Socialist Ethiopia, Algeria and Libya, especially during the last two years of our struggle, which aid brought about a qualitative transformation in our national armed struggle.¹⁹

Although a late-comer to involvement, North Korea has been singled out for particular gratitude. In 1978 Mugabe first went to Pyongyang in quest of military aid and met Kim Il Sung for the first time. "My memory of our first visit is still extremely vivid," he told his Pyongyang hosts at an official banquet on his first post-independence visit in October 1980.

He had heard, he said, all about me and the national struggle I was leading. My request for aid would thus be granted substantially as submitted because our just cause was also the just cause of the Korean people and the Workers' Party of Korea. And the aid was truly given us in accordance with that undertaking.²⁰

Older debts have also not been forgotten. On a visit to Dar es Salaam in 1983, Mugabe reaffirmed the importance of Tanzania in Zimbabwe's liberation:

We feel deeply indebted to you Mwalimu, to Chama Cha Mapinduzi and to the government and people of Tanzania for that crucial and unequalled role, demanding immense sacrifices, which you played in rendering us abundant assistance.

Indeed, when the history of the liberation of not only Zimbabwe but the whole central and southern Africa is finally written, the crucial role which Tanzania played must necessarily portray it as the main revolutionary mould in which our various territorial struggles took shape and content...And when that Federation was dismantled in 1963, here it was that the people of Zimbabwe found a sound venue for the development of their armed struggle...Tanzania, thus, became the melting pot of the revolutionary theory and practice of each liberation movement. Several military training camps accordingly emerged where our cadres were equipped with guerrilla skills for the overthrow of the colonial enemy.

In the case of Zimbabweans alone, our cadres were trained and groomed for their military and political role at such centres as Chunya, Itumbi, Mgagao, Morogoro and Nachingweya. It was indeed in Tanzania that our national struggle for independence underwent a qualitative transformation and our cadres were systematically instructed in the art of guerrilla struggle for liberation.²¹

Referring to the feuding within the nationalist movement, Mugabe admitted that the Zimbabweans “abused Tanzanian hospitality not only once but on several occasions”.

Diplomatic pressure continued throughout the UDI period through support groups and representative offices in several countries, notably those with a high concentration of Zimbabwean exiles. The UK

was pivotal in this regard, despite a lack of faith in any the British government's intentions.

A friend of a friend?

Although both main nationalist groups had offices in the same countries, relationships with the host government were rarely of equal warmth. Despite sharing a common view of the colonial enemy, the two movements fought on different fronts with weapons and aid sourced from different countries. In fact, those countries whose governments were closer to ZAPU during the struggle had more difficulty establishing significant relations with the ZANU(PF) government than did countries in Western Europe accused of being less than vigorous in isolating the Smith regime. The USSR was the last major country to post an ambassador to Harare.

Romania was one Comecon country on the side of ZANU. During a state visit to Zimbabwe by the Ceaucescus in 1983, Mugabe referred to:

[the] more than 2000 comrades [sent] to be trained in Romania, which used its own aeroplanes to carry them. And outside Africa, Romania was the country which gave us the most help in training many people.²²

Prior to independence, Mugabe clearly placed his movement's fight in the line of other liberation struggles:

It is necessary that if we are to promote our revolution and the attainment of its goals, our struggle should be placed in the context of identical struggles and our national front should be strengthened by an international alliance with our allies and friends in the international community.²³

The struggle against imperialism, colonialism and capitalism was, he suggested, as much international as national:

Let us thank and never forget our allies, especially the front-line states, socialist countries and progressive organisations.²⁴

When Zimbabwe took its seat at the UN General Assembly on 26 August 1980, Mugabe took the opportunity to thank these countries most fulsomely:

..There can never be sufficient recompense for the assistance given and supreme sacrifices made by the front line states and their nationals. Where we died, they also died; where we were harassed, bombed and massacred by the enemy, their people were also harassed, bombed and massacred by the enemy. Where we went hungry, their people also went hungry. They fought with us and suffered with us the whole way through.²⁵

Mugabe also thanked “several socialist countries” for supplying “huge quantities of effective weaponry and other material needs of support.” As for the west, there were amongst them:

...progressive states who made it their policy annually to budget for the amelioration of the physical and social needs felt by our people during the protracted war period. Although they did not give us arms, they gave us equally essential commodities for the maintenance of body and soul, for the welfare of our refugees and our fighters.²⁶

The support received by ZANU and ZAPU during the latter war years and the impact of sanctions on the ability of the Smith regime to finance and source its growing military requirements helped to ensure that by the end of the 1970s, the Rhodesians were fighting a losing battle. Ultimately, however, it was the war weariness of the frontline states and the erosion of support by the South African government for the Rhodesian position that ensured the presence of the Patriotic Front forces and the internal settlement signatories at the final signing of the Lancaster House Agreement, which set the stage for the constitutional transfer of power and granting of independence.

Following the victory of ZANU(PF) in the pre-independence general election, Robert Mugabe was invited to form a government. While maintaining an overt allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, Mugabe's decision to include a former member of the Rhodesian Front administration in his first cabinet, David Smith, in the post of Commerce and Industry Minister, suggested that immediate transformation of the country's economic ties was not his first priority. Nevertheless, the contrast between ZANU(PF)'s political friendships and the trade and investment patterns of the country at independence was stark. Few of the former had previously had any diplomatic representation in the country; few of the latter were with countries that ZANU(PF) regarded as having been supportive during the liberation struggle. The initial focus on national reconciliation notwithstanding, this incongruence would need to be addressed.

¹ M. Meredith, The Past is Another Country (Pan) London 1980, p.57

² C. Sylvester, Zimbabwe: The Terrain of Contradictory Development (Westview) Boulder 1991, p. 47

³ *ibid*, p.46

⁴ X. M. Kadhani, The Economy: Issues, Problems and Prospects, in Mandaza (ed), p.105

⁵ This information was gathered in a non-attributable interview with a retired senior executive of the pharmaceutical company concerned. A rather purple account of foreign tobacco sales under sanctions is provided in P. Armstrong, Tobacco Spiced with Ginger: The Life of Ginger Freeman (Harare: Welston)

1987

⁶ Argentina (London-based), Brazil (based in Lorenço Marques - now Maputo), Israel (Johannesburg-based), Pakistan (Nairobi-based), Spain (Cape-Town-based)

⁷ Rhodesia Herald, 10/10/67

⁸ Hansard: 16/9/66

⁹ Undated press clipping in Diplomatic and Trade Missions file (vol 2), Ministry of Information library, Harare

¹⁰ Rhodesia Herald, 18/1/72

¹¹ Sunday Mail, 27/1/74

¹² Transcript of broadcast made on RTV and RBC, 3/3/76, in Mozambique file (vol.3), Ministry of Information library, Harare

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ On 13/11/79, The Citizen newspaper in South Africa reported that the USSR had given R15m to the Patriotic Front for election campaigning and Tiny Rowland of Lonrho had provided R2m. In the first election, Mugabe's party campaigned as ZANU(PF) and Nkomo's as Patriotic Front(ZAPU)

¹⁵ Policy Statement No. 12: PM Outlines Tasks for Zimbabwe's Youth, July 16, 1983 (Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications) July 1983

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Sylvester - *op cit*, p49

¹⁸ undated clipping in OAU File (vol 1: 1972-79), Ministry of Information Library, Harare

¹⁹ Speech at OAU 17th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2/5/80

²⁰ Policy Statement No. 1: PM Addresses State Banquet in North Korea, October 9, 1980 (Harare: Ministry of Information & Tourism) October 1980

²¹ Speech at Dar es Salaam banquet, 24/1/83 (Copy in Tanzania clippings file, Ministry of Information library)

²² Herald, 18/7/83

²³ Speech on Sinoia Day, April 30, 1978 in Mugabe, Our War of Liberation (Harare: Mambo) 1983, pp130-131

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ PM Addresses United Nations, August 26, 1980 (Ministry of Information & Tourism) September 1980

²⁶ *ibid*

Chapter two: Constraints

Constraints on LDC governments in the international arena. Domestic and international limits on policy action with specific reference to Zimbabwe. The impact of Lancaster House. Debt and trade.

There are a number of factors which if combined in their worst cases can lead to the conclusion that anything other than complete paralysis on the international stage is a miraculous outcome for a developing country.

At the simplest level, constraints are evident in the internal resources available for commitment to international issues. Tied to this is the degree to which the populace is willing to see resources committed to issues which they may feel are of only indirect relevance to them.

If, however, we were to assume a level playing field in terms of internal influences on foreign relations, there remains an array of potential external constraints.

One elastic limit exists in the extent to which countries whose power relations dominate the international system perceive a need to interact with others in their own national interests. In the post cold war period, the declining significance of Africa in this respect has been a focus of attention in a number of studies. Callaghy, for example has written that:

The increased marginalisation of Africa is twofold — economic and politico-strategic — and both aspects are tightly linked in their consequences. The first, primarily economic aspect is that Africa is no longer very important to the major actors in the world economy (multinational corporations, international banks, the economies of the

major western countries, or those of the newly industrialising countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, and Mexico) and that economy's changing division of labour. The second aspect of Africa's marginalisation is that, with the end of the cold war, African countries have little politico-strategic importance for the major world powers.¹

While pessimistic about reversing this broad trend, Callaghy does not imply that it is terminal. Furthermore, on a case by case basis, an individual country's importance may vary in relation to specific situations and events, a common example being contiguity to a conflict area. Individual LDCs may therefore appear more "empowered" at certain times than at others.

Non-state actors from LDCs face particularly stringent constraints in developing significant cross border links. Domestic businesses are perhaps an exception, though where trade is in goods and services considered of strategic importance, government parastatals often intermediate. NGOs may have close and frequent interaction with foreign counterparts, but the primary arena for such interaction remains domestic. In the majority of LDCs, the polity's international relations are vulnerable to fairly easy scrutiny, either by design or simply as a result of the "small town" syndrome of everyone knowing everyone else's business. This can occur even in heavily populated developing countries, since large swathes of the population - rural, urban marginal, and even urban working - to whom tickets to the international arena are not normally sold, will be considered *ipso facto* powerless to influence events other than through mass action.

While the structuralist paradigm has been somewhat frayed by the collapse of command economies and the reconciliation, reluctant or otherwise, of national authorities across the political spectrum with the

international market, it nevertheless continues to provide a useful restraining influence on flights of fancy. A sober reading encourages modesty in measuring the potential influence of a peripheral country on both the metropole and the system as a whole. Writing about what they term the Afro-Marxist regimes of Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique, Rothchild & Foley find that:

they are limited in their capacity to implement their policy preferences throughout the domains nominally under their control.....Moreover, the export-oriented nature of their commodity- and mineral-producing economies perpetuates their dependence, much as in the rest of Africa, upon the powerful industrial economies of Western Europe and North America. Despite dramatic change of regime goals and values, the newly emergent Afro-Marxist regimes find themselves no more capable of breaking out of a structure of dependency and unequal exchange than other regimes the continent over.²

As an explanation of the shape of the international system, structuralism has gained wide currency in the peripheral countries themselves. There is a point, however, where structuralism meets dependency theory, that LDC authorities must begin to look elsewhere for relief from their condition of marginality. "Orthodox" dependency theory implies a certain fatalism that can never be comfortably integrated into government rhetoric. Chan has argued that:

One of the major objections to dependency theory is...the mockery it makes of the nationalist struggles for independence. Far from struggling for independence, the nationalists were mere pawns in a calculated

procedure to alter the appearance and personnel of formal rule, leaving the underlying apparatus of exploitation untouched.³

Nor is breaking with the world market a viable policy option for a third world government with precariously scarce resources to allocate. Even if such a break were hypothetically possible, the adjustment period from the adoption of such a policy to the achievement of relative autarky would, in the best of cases, require a degree of hardship and sacrifice from the general population. Only a supremely (and perhaps terminally) confident government would assume that the majority of its citizens share with it the requisite degree of ideological commitment to adopting such an approach. Even André Gunder Frank has acknowledged that:

The usefulness of structuralist, dependence, and new dependence theories of underdevelopment as guides to policy seems to have been undermined by the world crisis of the 1970s. The Achilles heel of these conceptions of dependence has always been the implicit, and sometimes explicit, notion of some form of 'independent' alternative for the Third World. This theoretical alternative never existed, in fact – certainly not on the noncapitalist path and now apparently not even through so-called socialist revolutions. The new crisis of real world development now renders such partial development and parochial dependence theories and policy solutions invalid and inapplicable.⁴

Coping with compromise

It should not be assumed that all constraints are accepted with bad grace. Even overt foreign policy derives from the interplay of a range of factors which do not necessarily pull in the same direction. The

aggregation of these factors will result in some action which will reflect certain influences more than others. Competing opportunities and objectives are inevitably constraining. The more the ultimate course of action followed can be seen to reflect a deliberate choice from a range of competing alternatives, the less such constraints will be resented.

States are also likely to prioritise their international objectives. Where they involve what Utete refers to as “core values”⁵, such as territorial integrity, vast resources will be invested to safeguard them. Regional issues, such as economic integration or a dispute between two neighbours may also absorb substantial diplomatic resources, since they are perceived as having a significant impact, direct or indirect, on domestic affairs.

Where, on the other hand, a global issue is concerned, involving numerous participants with divergent aims – many of which are symbolic rather than instrumental – then compromise is more likely to be acceptable. Utete⁶ points out that, at a continental and global level, African involvement tends to be multilateral. This in itself requires compromise.

What foreign policy?

There is an argument expounded by Dr. Ibbo Mandaza, one of the most prolific Zimbabwean political analysts, that Zimbabwe and countries like it do not have a foreign policy in the full sense of the word, but rather react to situations and developments. Such a view is echoed by Wright:

One or two individual [African] states have been able to maintain a high profile in world affairs because of national economic conditions. The best example in sub-Saharan Africa is Nigeria, whose oil wealth in the late 70s allowed it a very active role in world politics and gave the

country some semblance of being the “champion” of Africa. But even this apparent leadership was illusory, as Nigeria was unable to marshal Africa's diversity of opinions into a consolidated stand on policy. . . . By the mid-1980s, Nigeria itself [had] succumbed to harsh economic realities and [had] reorientated its foreign policy to concentrate on regional - rather than global - affairs.⁷

While recognising that individual acts by LDC governments may not impact on world events in the same way as those of industrialised nations, such governments nevertheless intend to have an impact and do have an impact on how their country and its citizens relate to the outside world. It is in that context that Zimbabwe's foreign policy is addressed. Furthermore, regional affairs can in themselves have global implications. Southern Africa itself provides several examples.

Rites of remembrance

At Chimoio, Mozambique in 1977, ZANU adopted the position that its socialism would be based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.⁸ Such principles were not the driving force behind the liberation movements, whose active struggle against the political and economic status quo long pre-dated the adoption of this particular ideological umbrella. It nevertheless reinforced a set of solidarity links with other independence movements and supporters of anti-colonialist positions. Post-independence foreign relations have - on a formal level - expanded to take these into account. There has, however, been no concomitant downgrading of relations with “metropolitan” countries. Despite much domestic criticism of the historical role of these states in maintaining the “Rhodesian” system, they remain Zimbabwe's bread-and-butter relations.

For some, this situation is inevitable. Mandaza states bluntly that, since the Lancaster House agreement, “international finance capital” has been “the major factor in the character of the internal and external policies of the state in Zimbabwe.”⁹

He is equally blunt on the government's ability to develop a dynamic approach to its foreign relations:

..it is in the field of foreign policy that the government is most keen to project the impression of independence of action, even though it should be obvious that international relations by definition prescribe and proscribe the limits of that ‘independent’ action on the part of the individual state. The major powers define the arena and control it; the small states respond.¹⁰

Patel appears to accept the structuralist assessment of Zimbabwe's position in the international system, while playing down the deterministic implications of dependency theory. He points out that the attainment of independence itself was a “historically significant remedial action” by the colonised countries in the then-existing and seemingly perpetual system of colonial domination:

Even though Zimbabwe is still primarily dependent on the West...[its] foreign policy already exhibits, at the very least, meaningful attempts at the dispersal of dependence.¹¹

The notion of a dispersal of dependence is a novel one, suggesting that if it can be spread across a sufficient number of metropolitan countries, this dispersal can somehow provide increased leverage for the LDC. Although competition for the favour of small

states does not currently appear on the agenda of the industrial North to any visible degree, the attraction of potentially viable markets in developing countries could yet change that perception as trade barriers are reassessed. However, the absence of such leverage removes a bargaining chip for the advancement of an LDC's international goals and weakens a potential line of defence to external pressures.

The Uses and Abuses of National Interest

While national interest is commonly cited by governments in explanation of their actions on the international stage, this is not necessarily in contradiction with recognition of imposed constraints. National interest can include action to avoid harm as well as pursuit of positive gain. Even white flags can be seen in certain circumstances to be in the national interest. On the other hand, a government is unlikely to promote its acceptance of constraints as a reason for any particular foreign action or policy.

Witness Mangwende, Zimbabwe's foreign minister during the "formative" post-independence years, has provided a convenient example of the uses of national interest as an explanation for government action:

It is worth making a clear distinction between non-alignment and neutrality in world politics.....The essence of non-alignment (or "positive neutrality" as it is sometimes called) is a deliberate and calculated refusal to enter into any military or political commitment with any of the major powers or to permit the establishment of foreign military bases on a state's territory. The critical point is that the state must not automatically take sides on the critical issues of world politics, rather, a country's position should be dictated by its own national interests first and foremost.¹²

Such an approach creates the framework for any action to be presented as a deliberate step in the national interest. Yet on the same occasion, Mangwende recognised the limitations on the Zimbabwean government's room for manoeuvre:

It is, of course, true that economic dependence often imposes severe constraints on the extent to which an under-developed and dependent state – particularly a land-locked state like Zimbabwe – can pursue a genuine policy of non-alignment without compromising, even if temporarily perhaps, some of its most cherished ideals. It is also an accepted fact that while nations are free to choose their friends (and occasionally their enemies too), they cannot, however, choose their neighbours.¹³

Mugabe himself pointed to non-alignment as the key to explaining Zimbabwe's post-independence pattern of relationship management:

On a bilateral basis, Zimbabwe has signed co-operation agreements with several African countries, as well as with Eastern and Western countries. Our policy of non-alignment enables us to be friendly on a bilateral and mutual basis, with Eastern as well as with Western countries, without jeopardising our sovereign will and freedom. To date, we have opened missions in some nine countries: Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, Britain, the United States, Ethiopia, Sweden, Belgium and West Germany. Several other missions will no doubt be opened in 1981 in socialist and non-socialist countries.¹⁴

Speaking 11 months before Mangwende, he was, however, adamant that this diplomatic openness was a result of choice rather than compromise:

As we enter into bilateral relations, of either a diplomatic nature or by way of trade, economic or technical agreements with any nation, we are always careful to emphasise these principles, even though we may be the principal beneficiary in the relationship. It is important that we do not allow our benefactors to become our masters. Our independence and sovereignty are, accordingly, not matters for mortgage.¹⁵

Exercising choice

There are bound to be some constraints that are effectively more powerful than others at any point in time. In the case of Zimbabwe, the value of US aid and goodwill was not deemed sufficient to inhibit the government's condemnation of the US intervention in Grenada or its refusal to support the US in the Korean airlines incident (see Chapter Seven). Both actions led to a cut in US aid.

Two regional organisations, SADC and PTA, provide examples of attempts to reduce economic dependence on existing trade patterns (see Chapter Five). Yet a South African trade mission with quasi-diplomatic status remained open in Harare after independence, despite occasional threats of enforced closure.

Lancaster House

Mandaza has suggested that on the eve of Lancaster House, the national liberation movement, largely as a result of the paternalism of the front-line states who were keen for a settlement, was less than resolute in its revolutionary priorities. Britain wanted a constitutional compromise and got it; Lancaster House produced a settlement

which left the machinery of government largely intact. Promises of massive aid from the US and UK held the country in the Western sphere of influence.¹⁶

While it is true that Britain came out of the conference happier than any of the participants, subsequent events did not bear out the implication that Zimbabwe was “in the bag”. The British government was as surprised as Bishop Muzorewa that his UANC did not sweep to victory in the pre-independence elections. The economic embrace of Zimbabwe by western industrialised countries including Britain predated Lancaster House and was simply confirmed by it. Greater resolution in the negotiations would more likely have led to a breakdown in the talks than a more revolutionary rearrangement of economic links.

The most direct constraining impact of the agreement was on the new government’s ability to re-order internal economic relations, specifically the distribution of land. The procedures established for land acquisition depended on funding from UK and US for a willing seller/willing buyer approach. Although some may see this as a deliberate locking in of Zimbabwe to the western dominated international economic system, the Patriotic Front must have been convinced either that it had no achievable medium term alternative or that it would eventually inherit a copy of the key along with the lock.

Part of the argument about the constraining impact of Lancaster House relates not to specific clauses of the resulting constitution, but to the compromises inherent in constitutional rather than military conflict resolution. It is certainly true that the Patriotic Front was tempted on more than one occasion to walk away from the conference and that Mugabe subsequently described himself as “not a happy man” as he signed the agreement:

I felt we had been cheated to some extent...that we had agreed to a deal which would to some extent rob us of the victory that we hoped to have achieved in the field.¹⁷

Whether such a victory would have allowed greater room for manoeuvre is debatable. Samora Machel, who did achieve a battlefield victory in neighbouring Mozambique, apparently did not think so and, along with the other front-line presidents, exerted considerable pressure on the Patriotic Front to see the negotiating process through. Ultimately, Mugabe too made the judgement that he could live with the ensuing constitution. He described it as:

a necessary compromise of the interests of our people for the sake of international peace and security. The basic framework it provided is despite its imperfections, flexible enough to allow for our programme for the next phase of our national struggle aimed at the consolidation of our independence and the social transformation of our country and people.¹⁸

Debt

Heavy debt burdens are often considered the ball and chain on third world economic development regardless of the particular path chosen by the individual country. Mugabe has himself spoken eloquently and forcefully on this issue.¹⁹ Unlike many of its neighbours, Zimbabwe has not been saddled with crippling debt repayments.

Debt inherited at independence amounted to Z\$1.6bn (approx. US\$2.5bn based on 1980 exchange rates). This included loans incurred both locally and abroad. Of the total inherited, over Z\$1.2bn had been

repaid by March 1992, a commitment to take over these loans having been assumed at Lancaster House.

In the first twelve years of independence, Zimbabwe borrowed just over Z\$14.6bn, both internally and externally. External borrowings that had been disbursed by March 1992 amounted to Z\$8.4bn plus a further Z\$2bn committed under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme introduced in January 1991, making a total equivalent to US\$2bn. The debt service ratio in March 1992 was 22% of exports, down from a peak of 35% in 1987. Total disbursed debt was less than 170% of one year's exports compared to a 1991 sub-Saharan African average of 340%.²⁰

During 1987, there was some pressure exerted by creditors and bankers for Zimbabwe to reschedule. This would have been favourably regarded, given Zimbabwe's scrupulous repayments record. The pressure was nevertheless rejected.

The desire to maintain its credit standing obviously requires a government to consider measures which it believes will allow it to generate funds to service its debt. So long as this is achieved, the country's existing obligations are likely to be less of a rein on foreign policy initiatives than trading links, which require more frequent renewal.

Where, however, the need for further borrowing is envisaged, there is likely to be an implicit if reluctant recognition that competition for funds is strong and that potential creditors need wooing. In the case of Zimbabwe, that process has gathered momentum over the past decade.

Trade

Clapham has observed that the most important political fact about the revenues of third world governments is their dependence on

international trade, since the domestic revenue base is insufficient to meet government spending needs. Revenue can be gathered in the form of duties on imports and exports, levies on MNCs, taxing of foreign exchange transactions and the formation of parastatal trading monopolies. (Aid and loans are also an obvious source of revenue.)

The most basic political consequence of this reliance on international trade is, says Clapham:

that it becomes almost impossible for most third world states to contemplate any strategy for economic development which would involve any substantial reduction in their participation in international trade.²¹

For third world states, international trading relations are thus of political consequence in a directly tangible way. Despite a desire to promote a convergence between economic and political relations, the Zimbabwean government early on recognised the constraints imposed by the international trading system. In fact, customs and excise duties increased as a percentage of central government revenue from 9.5% in 1979/80 to 25.1% in 1984/85.²²

Addressing the Zimbabwe Economics Society in September 1980, Mugabe described the country's trading ambitions thus:

We are currently trying to find an accommodation of our beef, sugar and other products in the Common Market, as we, at the same time, are making appeals for grants, soft loans, and investments. As a third world country, the constraints analysed and indicated by the Commonwealth experts in terms of their sum total effect upon economies will soon catch up with us.²³

Faults in the system

Systemic iniquities are regularly highlighted by Zimbabwe's representatives to international fora. On the occasion of the UN's fortieth anniversary, an address delivered by Foreign Minister Mangwende on Mugabe's behalf dwelt in large measure on the impact of the mid-eighties global recession:

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 primary commodity producers.²⁴

Zimbabwe has consistently argued the case for a return to multilateralism in revitalising the global economy and in fashioning systemic change. It has nevertheless made efforts at a bilateral level to overcome inflexibility in trading patterns. These have met with very limited success, as individual cases addressed in later chapters, illustrate.

Direct impact

The constraints outlined above, whether internal or external, fall into one of two categories: those which impact on a state's ability to implement foreign policy in general; and those which influence the nature of the policy itself.

In summary, Zimbabwe shares many of the constraints associated with developing countries. Scarce internal resources and competing objectives provide a fiscal rein on foreign policy ambitions as a whole. The budgetary needs of the foreign affairs ministry must compete with often more compelling domestic priorities such as education and health and more demanding constituencies such as the defence establishment.

Popular attitudes to such spending will, however, only be constraining to the extent that the government considers itself accountable to its electorate. Mugabe has, for example, acquired the none-too-respectful nickname of 'Vasco da Gama' for the frequency of his foreign trips, but they have not become any less frequent for that.

Counterparty perceptions of the importance of a relationship can also limit a country's ability to project its international concerns. Zimbabwe benefited in the first decade of independence from a view that its geopolitical and economic role was at least potentially significant both regionally and in international fora. Zimbabwean government representatives therefore found it easier than many of their peers to put their positions across on the international stage. There is, however, little evidence that such advocacy was ultimately persuasive to the target audience.

The formulation of specific policy was constrained by trade considerations. The need for the government to protect revenues derived from trade meant an unwillingness to inhibit existing trade patterns, though this could be seen as a logical consideration of the broader national interest and therefore a foreign policy objective in itself.

Prior to Zimbabwe's independence, trade was largely in the hands of the private sector, with the state acting as a regulator of foreign transactions. Lancaster House, with its entrenched clauses on property rights, has been posited as a further constraint on the government's ability to refashion economic relations through a radical restructuring of ownership and control of the economy.

Negotiated settlement involves compromise by its nature. These compromises should not be measured against the demands of the parties on the battlefield. If there were a serious chance that they could have

been achieved, the ultimate decision to negotiate would have been obviated. This does not necessarily imply that the war was unwinnable in theory, but that the necessary support structures to ensure long term victory were either absent or declining. Even without Lancaster House, it is a matter of speculation whether the new government would have launched headlong into restructuring the economy.

We are primarily concerned here with how Zimbabwe's international relations have been fashioned in the light and knowledge of the constraints faced both by the government and by the array of national economic actors. The extent to which these relations reflect coherent policy will depend partly on the ability of policy makers to recognise the limits of their influence.

¹ T. Callaghy, Africa and the World Economy, in Harbeson & Rothchild, Africa in World Politics

(Boulder: Westview) 1991, pp39-40

² in Keller & Rothchild, pp286-287

³ S. Chan, Issues in International Relations: A View from Africa (London: MacMillan) 1987, p140

⁴ cited in Chan, p143

⁵ Utete, in Ojo, Orwa and Utete, CH 3

⁶ Utete in Ojo, Orwa and Utete, p48

⁷ S. Wright, Introduction: Africa in World Politics — Changing Perspectives, p2 in Wright &

Brownfoot, Africa in World Politics, (London: MacMillan) 1987

⁸ Sithole in Keller & Rothchild, pp85-86

⁹ Mandaza, p62

¹⁰ Mandaza, p63

¹¹ Patel HH, No Master No Mortgage No Sale, in Shaw & Tandon (eds), Regional Development at the International Level (University Press of America) 1985, p221

¹² Press statement - 2/11/81- on the occasion of Mangwende's address at a reception for graduating diplomatic trainees

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Policy Statement No. 2: PM's New Year Speech to the Nation, December 31, 1980 (Harare: Ministry of Information & Tourism) January 1980

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ see Mandaza pp38-41

¹⁷ interviewed in Grenada Television programme, End of Empire, cited in Mandaza, p38

¹⁸ Policy Statement No. 2: Prime Minister's New Year Speech to the Nation (Ministry of Information) December 31, 1980

¹⁹ see for example Chapter 10 for his addresses to the UN General Assembly and OAU Summit

²⁰ Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero addressing Parliament, Hansard 4/3/92

²¹ Clapham, Third World Politics, pp93-94

²² Zimbabwe: Socio-Economic Review 1980-1985 (Harare: Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning & Development) 1986

²³ Herald, 26/9/80

²⁴ Policy Statement No. 16: PM Mugabe's Address to the 40th Session on the United Nations General Assembly, New York, October 7, 1985 (Harare: Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications), October 1985

Chapter three: Policy making

Competition and co-ordination among Ministries, Cabinet, Party and the President. Explicit policy guidelines and their applicability.

As a political case study, Zimbabwe provides researchers with a number of attractions. Herbst cites three: the government's aim to use the state apparatus to correct the inequities of the past; the ability to investigate the original decisions and gain access to the decision-makers; and thirdly, the fact that "Zimbabwe provides dramatic contrasts in organisations that seek to influence the state".¹ To this may be added a fourth: that many of the same decision makers are still in positions of power within the state or government apparatus. Studying their public discourse both over time and before different audiences helps to provide a useful composite picture of policy development and change.

Foundations

The first official declaration on Zimbabwe's foreign policy principles was made by President (Rev.) Canaan Banana at the opening of the first post-independence parliament on May 14 1980. The speech identifies four key support pillars for the state's external relations: non-alignment; Africa; free exchange of ideas, culture and trade; and reordering the International Economic Order.

On 26 August 1980, in a speech before the General Assembly on the occasion of Zimbabwe's admission to the UN, Robert Mugabe, then Prime Minister, identified five political principles guiding the country's foreign policy:

(1) belief in "national sovereignty and equality among nations". Zimbabwe would establish relations with all countries "large or small, socialist and capitalist" which "respect our right to an independent socio-economic development".

(2) since Zimbabwe was “dedicated to the attainment of a socialist, egalitarian and democratic society”, it welcomed assistance from socialist states in reconstruction and development, while recognising that Zimbabwe's socialism “will have to take place in full cognisance of the concrete situation in our country and in the sub-region”.

(3) the right of all peoples to self-determination and independence, and consequent support for liberation movements, of which SWAPO, PLO and Polisario had already been cited on several previous occasions.

(4) “non-racialism at home and abroad”, support for South African liberation movements, attempts to disengage from South Africa and increasing ties with the rest of Africa.

(5) “positive non-alignment and peaceful coexistence among countries having different socio-economic systems”. Zimbabwe would co-operate with other countries to uphold the principles of independence and self-determination among nations, big or small and would not wish “to have our friends choose for us who should be our other friends”.²

Of the above five principles, the fifth and last provides the greatest room for manoeuvre. The extent of its application has varied, however. Patel argues for example that:

On questions of liberation, Zimbabwe clearly cannot be non-aligned and therefore ...supports a number of liberation movements in Africa and elsewhere.³

Although he regards the symmetry between principle and practice as high, Patel recognises a number of “asymmetries” which illuminate certain constraints and contradictions. Among these constraints are size,

geographical situation, dependence and underdevelopment. Nevertheless, the principles outlined above allow for ample freedom of movement in foreign policy on a case-by-case basis.

Any apparent contradiction between Zimbabwe's commitment to socialism and its support for positive non-alignment and peaceful coexistence has usually been resolved in favour of the latter. In 1987, Mugabe produced a vigorous defence of Zimbabwe's acquisition of military hardware from "the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Asia" who, he argued:

are willing to give us weapons to defend ourselves against Apartheid's onslaught. And when they do so there are those who question our non-alignment. This is mischievous and inaccurate. None of us fought for our independence to become the proxy of anyone else. Nor are we. The vast bulk of our trade is with the Western countries, and they also provide most of our development aid, but this does not make us a proxy of the West any more than arms from the socialist countries make us their proxy.⁴

The Impact of the Party

Developing a theory of the locus of decision making is, says Herbst, particularly important in Africa because of the problem of the party. The Western concept of party puts it outside the state: parties are, at most, groups of people who occupy the state for certain periods of time.

However, in Africa and elsewhere in the third world, he argues, some parties must be considered part of the resource allocation process. He cites Mugabe's claim in 1984 that ZANU(PF):

is more important than the government, and....the Central Committee is above the cabinet because Ministers derive their power from ZANU(PF)....In the future there will be no separation of the party from state organs, because after the national congress in August, government programmes will be based on the resolutions of the ZANU(PF) Central Committee.⁵

Mugabe had already asserted the primacy of the party long before that. In his New Year's address to the nation on 31 December 1981, he declared that:

The policies that my government pursues emanate from the ruling party. ZANU(PF) has adopted socialism as its ideology. The last meeting of our central committee has taken fundamental decisions in respect of the relationship between the party and the government. Government in the sense of the cabinet will in future only adopt and influence those policies which the central committee of the party has approved.⁶

The party's positions as outlined by Mugabe contained no reference to foreign affairs. Nevertheless, his belief in a correct hierarchy of policy decision making had been clearly expounded in Pyongyang, North Korea, on the occasion of his official visit there in October 1980. At a state banquet in his honour, he told Kim Il Sung:

It cannot be doubted that the basic political instrument for the formulation of your politico-socio-economic goals and the identification of the correct means of achieving them has been the Workers' Party of Korea.⁷

He expressed admiration for the way the party had become both an instrument for galvanising the masses and for developing programmes for government.

For, if the people are truly to be masters of their destiny in the exercise of their sovereignty, then the party which is the expression of the mind of the people as well as their collective voice must also comprise a dominant instrument of government policies.⁸

While Mugabe continued, at least rhetorically, to place the mantle of ultimate decision maker on ZANU(PF) throughout the first decade of independence, there was little evidence of the party playing such a role in practice. Certainly those occupying the most “ideological” ministerial posts of foreign affairs and information came from the higher echelons of the party hierarchy. Yet no clear consultative framework was put in place to subject government action to regular party scrutiny, either proactively or in retrospect. Party primacy thus remained a rhetorical fiction, in much the same way as did the people’s collective voice within the party. Until its abolition in 1992, the Ministry of Political Affairs served as a conduit for the flow of public funds to party structures but with little apparent consequence for state governance. Its replacement with a Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Co-operatives can in fact be seen as an implicit, if reluctant, response to pressure for a process of delinking state and party.

ZANU(PF) did, however, continue to forge its own links with foreign counterparts in the first decade after independence. These were often affirmed through reciprocal delegations to fraternal meetings, but had little impact on the ties established at government level. The ruling party still retains a nominal involvement in foreign policy formulation

through the Central Committee's secretary for foreign affairs. It is difficult to detect any practical impact from this quarter. Its own fraternal party relations notwithstanding, ZANU(PF)'s role on the international stage now appears largely ceremonial - cynically put, the keeper of the flame.

Pyramid selling

In contrast to Mandaza, Patel observes an apparently deliberate and conscious decision to engage in an active or visible rather than passive or reactive foreign policy style, attributing this to Mugabe's deep interest in global issues.

In a speech to trainee diplomats in November 1981, Foreign Minister Witness Mangwende explained the foreign policy hierarchy as follows:

All Zimbabwe's diplomats must understand that the Prime Minister defines foreign policy...; the Minister of Foreign Affairs articulates that policy; and under the Minister's direction, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implements the policy or the dispensation from the top.⁹

Zimbabwe's Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore has little of the domestic clout within the machinery of government that might be traditionally attributed to institutions such as the American State Department and the British Foreign Office. Its primary functions might be described as research, collation and distribution. It is also tasked with carrying out what Holsti refers to as the "noncritical transactions between states."¹⁰

The only apparent internal tension over foreign policy has been on the implementation of economic directives resulting from political policy statements. Throughout the 1980s, the most sensitive area of

disagreement was the approach to the application of sanctions against South Africa. On more than one occasion, the political will to implement sanctions was restrained by economic arguments for a more gradual and selective disengagement. These were, however, advanced at cabinet level by other ministers rather than by officials within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Chapter Five).

One road?

Frequent reference has been made in official speeches by Mugabe and others to the organic link between the independence struggle, domestic policies and foreign policy. Addressing the Zimbabwe National Army at a Staff College graduation ceremony, Foreign Minister Mangwende reiterated his definition of foreign policy as essentially the pursuit of the national interest:

[A] nation's foreign policy emanates, in large part, from its own domestic environmental conditions and represents the strategy by which [it] seeks to express abroad, the substance of its internal, domestic policy, and by which it seeks to reconcile internal policy objectives with conditions prevailing in the international arena....In defining that foreign policy, we are strongly influenced by those same beliefs that so inspired us as a liberation movement, and which guided us to a successful victory over the forces of oppression and reaction.¹¹

Of prime importance, said Mangwende, was “a continuing belief in ourselves as a people in charge of our own destiny — aligned to and controlled by no other power”. Second, he cited respect for other nations and peoples and their right to chart their own destiny free from any interference from external sources, “or internal forces working against the wishes of their broad masses”.

This fear of internal subversion is reflected in the Zimbabwean government's UN voting pattern.¹² It has generally abstained in resolutions concerning human rights violations, other than in countries where the regime is regarded as the legitimate target of a liberation struggle.

In domestic policy, the articulation of socialism as a goal was central throughout the first decade of independence. How did this translate into international affairs? At one level – largely symbolic – declarations of solidarity and fraternity were given great prominence. Mangwende spoke of:

..continuing co-operation with other nations who, like ourselves, are actively engaged in the struggle to preserve an independent identity and to match our political freedom with an economic freedom from superpower colonial control. Thus the co-operation and understanding we established as a liberation movement with all the world's progressive forces is maintained by government and will continue to develop.¹³

He described as of over-riding importance, the Government's continuing commitment to the socialist ideology "adopted by ZANU(PF) so very long ago". The means of production and the distribution of wealth should be controlled by the workers and peasants and the capitalist mode of production should be exorcised. At an international level, this has meant support of "beleaguered brothers and sisters around the globe", still struggling. Mangwende cited specifically SWAPO, ANC & PAC, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Palestine, and East Timor.¹⁴ He also expressed the government's opposition to external interference and the presence of foreign troops in Kampuchea, Afghanistan and the Southern part of the Korean peninsula, as well as

“imperialist intervention in the internal affairs of El Salvador and Nicaragua.” At the regional level, he described SADCC and the PTA as key along with disengagement from South African economic colonialism.

Mangwende’s interpretation of non-alignment owes as much to perceptions of national interest as it does to the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement:

We refuse to become attached to either the Eastern or Western world’s blocs. We are not neutral. By non-alignment we mean that we reserve the right to examine issue areas of foreign policy on the basis of merit, and within the context, on each occasion, of either promoting or protecting our own interests.¹⁵

This has meant disengagement from certain conflicts where established relations exist with both sides, such as the Iran/Iraq War¹⁶ and the Falklands/Malvinas conflict:

Despite our close historical ties with one side, and our understanding of the frustration of the other, we nevertheless made known our opposition to the use of force by both sides in the conflict and let them know that we were bitterly disappointed by the failure to take full advantage of the possibilities offered it to reach a peaceful negotiated solution.¹⁷

Guns and butter

Foreign economic and political relations are rarely perceived to fall under the same degree of central control other than in command economies. The Zimbabwean government has nevertheless been at pains to highlight its independence from economic pressure on the one hand

and its goal of congruence between economic and political relations on the other. Mangwende illustrated the former by a rejection of aid tied to political favours and the latter by the Government's commitment to changing the international economic system:

Some countries may try to use economic assistance to us as a lever to gain political influence over our government. They would be foolish not to do so, but we would be equally foolish if we allowed them to succeed....[The] government, as yet another major element of its foreign policy, has placed itself in the forefront of those developing nations seeking to establish a new international economic order.¹⁸

In his first address to the UN, Mugabe made a clear connection between political and economic policy. The guiding principles of Zimbabwe's foreign political and economic policy were, he said, organically linked both with the principles guiding domestic policies, and with those principles "which have guided our struggle."¹⁹

One method of refashioning economic relations to allow for increased trade with friendly countries was the use of barter and counter-trade, since it reduced, if not eliminated the hard currency element of a transaction. Initial enthusiasm for such arrangements, favoured by a number of potential new trading partners was short-lived, however. In March 1984, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, John Landau, announced that the government would not normally enter into barter deals with countries able to pay in cash. The government preferred cash deals and had strict criteria for barter:

There are certain exceptions we would consider. For example, if a country normally buys a million dollars worth of tobacco in cash, and

they wanted another \$5m worth on a barter deal, we would certainly consider that.²⁰

He stressed that barter deals had always to be conducted at government level through the barter committee. The only goods eligible for import through barter trade were vital imports such as machinery, spare parts and raw materials for industry. For goods going out of the country, the important criterion was that “they must be of a type we are not selling easily. Such goods vary from time to time.” Examples of bilateral trade commission discussions reviewed in later chapters reveal a diminishing interest in pursuing such arrangements, much to the disappointment of some potential trading partners.

Private Investment

One of the government’s difficulties in influencing the direction of trade was its lack of control over the mechanisms of negotiation and sale in individual transactions, other than those carried out through parastatals. Not only was industry in private hands, but significant assets were owned by non-resident corporations. In 1980, the total value of foreign capital in Zimbabwe was estimated at ZWD2.5bn, while domestic investment in 1980 was estimated at ZWD1.5bn, of which half was private and half state-owned.²¹ South African interests have traditionally owned considerable swathes of the Zimbabwean economy, including majority stakes in many of the publicly quoted companies on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange.

Attempts to change this ownership profile have had marginal results despite an expressed intention to gain control of the commanding heights of the economy.

One route to this end is to encourage domestic private and public capital to buy out foreign interests. Unless the proceeds of the sale can

be repatriated, however, the foreign capital remains in the economy. Until mid-1993, strict exchange controls limited the scope of this option.

A second approach, encouraging a diversification in foreign ownership, has been constrained by an ambivalent attitude, most often expressed at party level, to foreign ownership in general, by cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, and by the availability of alternative investment opportunities for such capital.

The former Danish ambassador to Zimbabwe, Hans Biering was appointed head of the Danish industrialisation fund for developing countries in January 1983. On the subject of Danish investment in Zimbabwe, he noted that only one Danish company had managed to set up shop since independence. "It is difficult to start new ventures here," he commented, adding that he hoped more projects would materialise, involving joint ventures and the transfer of technologies.²²

The prominence of foreign capital, whether South African or other, in the Zimbabwean economy perhaps accounts for the somewhat esoteric definition of socialism provided by one formerly prominent cabinet minister: the struggle of national capital versus international capital.

Structural adjustment

In mid-1990, the attitude to trade and investment underwent a major revision with the announcement of an economic reform programme designed to open the economy to market pressures. January 1991 saw the publication of an economic reform programme, which for all the protestations of the government that it was home grown, resembled an IMF-inspired structural adjustment programme.²³ The acronym ESAP (Economic Structural Adjustment Programme) was

soon in common usage with a variety of unflattering alternative definitions, Extended Suffering for African People being one.

In July 1993, foreign exchange control restrictions were significantly eased. The initial response by foreign portfolio investors drove the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange Industrial Index up over 60% in three months. The increase in foreign participation has not, however, heralded a significant change in ownership profile in Zimbabwean industry, as existing corporate and institutional holdings are, on the whole, not traded.²⁴

Summary

At the outset, the Zimbabwean government set itself an overt task of using the tools at its disposal to rectify domestic socio-economic iniquities and to extend its fundamental concerns to the international arena. In that regard, the government's commitment to non-alignment, socialism and a new international economic order have been declared in various public fora.

At the same time, however, national sovereignty and the right to make decisions in the national interest have been stressed along with promotion of a free exchange of ideas and trade. These allow considerable room for manoeuvre in formulating policy on specific issues. While there has been some recognition of contextual constraints, they have not been offered as inhibiting factors in individual policy decisions.

ZANU(PF) has been presented as the ultimate decision-making body, but in practice, all major foreign policy is formulated in a top-down fashion with Robert Mugabe, first as prime minister and then as president, exercising full control over its design. The fact that he and his senior cabinet ministers are also high ranking party officials has allowed for the continued fiction of the party's predominance.

Although Mugabe has argued for a congruence between political and economic relations, this has involved attempts at extension rather than substitution of existing international economic links. Even in this modest respect, the results have been mitigated, particularly in respect of efforts to introduce alternatives to hard currency transactions.

While foreign portfolio investment has increased, there is no evidence that this has altered the basic ownership structure of Zimbabwean industry. With the government's commitment to liberalisation of the economy in the course of structural adjustment, the option of increasing economic influence through nationalisation has been abandoned.

¹ Herbst, State Politics in Zimbabwe (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications), p11

² cited in Patel, p229

³ Patel, p224

⁴ Robert Mugabe, Struggle for Southern Africa, in Foreign Affairs Vol.66 No.2 (Council on Foreign Relations) 1987

⁵ Herbst, p7

⁶ Zimbabwe Government Press Statement 1115/82/DB, January 4, 1982

⁷ Policy Statement No. 1 (Ministry of Information) 9/10/80

⁸ Policy Statement No. 1

⁹ Zimbabwe Government Press Statement 931/81/RM, November 2, 1981

¹⁰ K. Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis (London: Prentice Hall International) 1983, p334

¹¹ Press Statement 330/83/AM, May 12, 1983

¹² see Chapter 10

¹³ Press Statement 330/83/AM, May 12, 1983

¹⁴ The last of these did not retain its status over the decade. Mugabe was one of the first leaders to visit Indonesian President Suharto in 1991 after the massacre in East Timor

¹⁵ Press Statement 330/83/AM, May 12, 1983

¹⁶ see Chapter 9

¹⁷ Press Statement 330/83/AM, May 12, 1983

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ PM Addresses United Nations: August 26, 1980 (Ministry of Information and Tourism) September 1980

²⁰ Herald 1/3/84

²¹ D. Clarke, Foreign Companies and International Investment in Zimbabwe (Gwelo: Mambo Press) 1980, Ch. 1

²² Herald 29/1/83

²³ Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development), January 1991

²⁴ In late 1996, the Zimbabwean government announced the establishment of a National Investment Trust, which would warehouse shares bought as a result of privatisation of parastatals for subsequent distribution, through unspecified mechanisms, with the aim of extending the local ownership base of quoted stocks. The exact form of such a privatisation programme has yet to be announced.

Chapter four: Patterns of Involvement

A panoramic view of Zimbabwe's international links as they have developed since independence.

The political dimension

At the time of independence, the government set out to establish a far broader range of relationships than either the Rhodesian regime or the liberation movements had historically entertained. Some of these were forged out of solidarity, some out of expediency and a few out of necessity. All were rhetorically described as friendships. At the same time, identifiable enemies were few. South Africa and Israel were the only two receiving frequent attention in public pronouncements.

Yet other conceptual enemies - imperialism, constructive engagement, nuclear proliferation, the international economic order - were strengthened by the behaviour of states and governments who, in a bilateral context, were considered friends. Over the first decade of independence, some of the tensions between bilateral ties and multilateral positions reached breaking point. In other cases, initially promising bilateral relationships lost their shine as their potential impact on the bigger picture diminished.

The strength of particular friendships can be assessed in two ways: by the priority assigned to the establishment of formal relations; and by the endurance of the relationships themselves. After independence, the first head of state to pay an official visit to Zimbabwe was Samora Machel of Mozambique (4/8/80), followed by Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (2/12/80), Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia (7/5/81) and Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia (18/2/82).

All except Mengistu were honoured by having streets in central Harare renamed after them. He and his delegation were nevertheless

received “with fraternal warmth and enthusiasm.” An official report had the residents of Harare providing a welcome of:

ardent fervour which demonstrated the indestructible friendship and solidarity binding the Zimbabwean people to their Ethiopian comrades and their enormous admiration and respect for Chairman Mengistu Haile Mariam and the Ethiopian people.¹

(Mengistu reciprocated this supposed admiration by choosing Zimbabwe as his place of exile after his overthrow.)

These relationships reflected a solidarity born of the independence struggle as well as ties of friendship between Mugabe and the leaders concerned. Relations with Kaunda were not however without friction since he was regarded as an ally of Joshua Nkomo, having harboured ZAPU’s headquarters-in-exile and provided bases for ZIPRA.²

By the end of 1980, Mugabe’s embrace of non-alignment enabled him to announce to the nation a policy of diplomatic contact based on inclusivity:

On a bilateral basis, Zimbabwe has signed co-operation agreements with several African countries, as well as with Eastern and Western countries. Our policy of non-alignment enables us to be friendly on a bilateral and mutual basis, with Eastern as well as with Western countries, without jeopardising our sovereign will and freedom.³

He cited Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, Britain, the United States, Ethiopia, Sweden, Belgium and West Germany as countries in which missions had already been opened, adding that “several other

missions will no doubt be opened in 1981 in socialist and non-socialist countries.”

Priorities

The key issue in Zimbabwe’s foreign relations from the outset was the nature of the relationship with South Africa (see Chapter Five). Despite a subsequent hardening of tone, initial signals were mixed. Zimbabwe’s policy of good neighbourliness had, said Mugabe, been reciprocated by all its neighbours except South Africa:

whose aggressive intentions continue to manifest themselves as she goes on recruiting our men, adding them to over 5,000 whom she continues to harbour and prepare for aggression.⁴

He demanded that South Africa cease “her aggressive and delinquent behaviour in our region.”

Over the course of the following year, solidarity with liberation movements became a very visible touchstone of foreign policy. Mugabe spoke of continuing to give full political and diplomatic support to the Palestine Liberation Organisation which, in due course, he said, would be permitted to open a mission in Salisbury (Harare). He also confirmed his support declared at the previous OAU Summit in Sierra Leone for the Polisario and expressed the readiness of the Zimbabwean government to accord diplomatic status to the Saharawi Republic in conformity with the recognition already given it as a sovereign state.

He reiterated support for SWAPO as the only authentic representative of the people of Namibia, insisted on the implementation of Resolution 435 of the Security Council on Namibia and stood firm behind the PAC and the ANC “in their revolutionary endeavours to bring democracy to South Africa.”

At an oratorical level, solidarity with the PLO, SWAPO and the Polisario was consistently maintained. Other relationships have been described with varying degrees of warmth, depending on the occasion. During the first congress of the united ZANU(PF) in 1989, Mugabe took the opportunity to highlight certain aspects of the country's international links, as seen through the eyes of the party. Focusing on Africa, he named those parties and movements with which ZANU(PF) had "long-standing relations of solidarity and co-operation." They included FRELIMO of Mozambique; UNIP of Zambia; the Botswana Democratic Party; the MPLA Workers' Party of Angola, Chama Chamapinduzi of Tanzania; the Workers' Party of Ethiopia; the Malawi Congress Party; the Kenya African National Union; SWAPO which, had recently won an electoral victory in Namibia; and the ANC and PAC of South Africa.

At the time, all these parties except for the last three were in power, heading regimes ranging from democratic to dictatorial and from Marxist to ultra-conservative. The common link appears to be their pre-eminent role in the fight for national independence, rather than any obvious ideological affinity.

Mugabe went on to salute the victory of SWAPO in glowing terms but was the only regional head of state not to attend the Namibian independence celebrations three months later. His reference to the two South African movements meanwhile suggested a shift in position. ZANU had historically favoured the PAC, while ZAPU was closer to the ANC, with which it established in 1966 an ill-fated and short-lived military alliance for joint action. Mugabe's statement of support was, however, non-partisan, possibly reflecting the fact that ZAPU was now incorporated in the united party:

We of the united ZANU(PF) fully support the people of South Africa in their struggle for democracy and against the heinous apartheid system. We do so because this is just and moral. We do so because the people of South Africa are our brothers and sisters and comrades-in-arms. We support them also because the South African regime, which fought us alongside the Ian Smith illegal regime during our war of liberation, never really reconciled itself to the reality of a majority-rule government here in Zimbabwe or, for that matter, elsewhere in our region. Hence, the myriad acts of sabotage, aggression, terrorism and murder which the South African regime has perpetrated against us in virtually the entire period since our Independence.⁵

Diplomatic arrivals

No sooner had the Lancaster House Agreement been concluded than the process of renewing or establishing diplomatic links was underway. Most of these initial links were at consular level or lower; effectively, what Holsti has called “diplomatic substations.”⁶

In January 1980, Mozambique, New Zealand and Australia announced the establishment of liaison offices. On 25 January, a seven member Mozambican team led by Fernando Honwana, a close adviser to President Machel, who had played a key role behind the scenes at Lancaster House, came to Harare to observe the cease-fire and liaise with representatives of all facets of the economy.

On the same day, the opening of an Italian consulate general with a staff of four was announced to the delight of the sizeable Italian community in Zimbabwe.

By 10 February, 14 countries had appointed official representatives: France (Consul), Sweden (Liaison Officer), West Germany (Liaison Officer), Switzerland (Consul), Netherlands (Consul

General), Australia (Liaison Officer), New Zealand (Liaison Officer) Italy (Consul General), Portugal (Consul General), USA (Consul), India (Liaison Officer), Britain (Liaison Officer), Greece (Hon. Consul), Zambia (Liaison Officer), and Mozambique (Liaison Officer). On 13 March, the Dutch government announced its intention to recognise the new Zimbabwe government and assist in reconstruction immediately on independence. The next day, France announced the same.

By the 24 April 1980, six days after independence, more than 25 countries had requested permission to set up embassies or high commissions. On 30 April, the first eight ambassadors and high commissioners presented their credentials to the President. The first – an intentional honour – was the Mozambican ambassador, followed by the Tanzanian High Commissioner, the British High Commissioner, the Egyptian Ambassador, the Zambian High Commissioner, the Guinean Ambassador, the Swedish Ambassador and the Canadian High Commissioner. This group included, symbolically, the most active front-line states but also Britain, the colonial enemy which was nevertheless the central functional power in the transition to independence.

Foreign legations

Zimbabwe's representation abroad did not mirror this diplomatic influx. The first postings were announced in late June, two months after independence, and on 1 July, Zimbabwe's first High Commissioners and Ambassadors were to take up their postings at six foreign missions. These were London, Brussels, New York, Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa, and Maputo, involving a total of some 40 diplomats.

The list of first appointments reflects a desire to lock into regional hubs. London remained significant not only as the former colonial power with a crucial role in bringing the country to

independence through the Lancaster House process, but also as the site of the Commonwealth apparatus. Brussels was the centre of the European Community; New York had the UN, and Addis Ababa the OAU. Only Tanzania and Mozambique appear to have been chosen primarily for reasons of political affinity. Even then, the desire to explore regional alternatives to dependence on South Africa provided an additional spur. Witness Mangwende, Deputy Foreign Minister at the time, expressed a hope that a seventh mission would open in Lusaka subject to availability of funds and manpower. "I can say with confidence", he commented, "that we have a bunch of fine chaps for these diplomatic postings."⁷

The training of a second batch of 40 diplomats was set to begin in July. These, said Mangwende, would be posted to Beijing, Stockholm, Bucharest, and Lagos – all providers of support to ZANU and its ZANLA army during the war. By January 1981, the first phase of diplomatic accreditation would be complete with the posting of ambassadors and high commissioners to Belgrade, Dakar, Bonn and Algiers. Apart from Yugoslavia's support for the struggle, it was seen as a critical member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Dakar was a key point of contact with francophone Africa. The choice of Bonn reflected the economic importance of West Germany, a traditional trading partner, while Algiers provided a friendly point of entry to Arab countries. Diplomatic ties with South Africa were meanwhile described as being "under review".

In the event, the initial postings were delayed. The first three - London, Washington and Addis Ababa - were finalised in late August. Diplomats finally flew out to UK and Brussels on 8 October. The ambassador to Belgium also served as permanent representative to the EC. One of his first major tasks was to finalise Zimbabwe's accession to

the Lomé Convention, which would afford easier entry for Zimbabwean exports to the Community.

On 23 October, leaders of missions were named for Mozambique, Tanzania, West Germany and Sweden. A counsellor was also named for Lusaka, which already had a high commissioner in Harare. In mid-November, the dispatch of a mission to the Zambian capital was announced for very practical reasons: to process the applications of large numbers of exiled Zimbabweans wishing to return home. By 21 January 1981, Zimbabwe's High Commissioner-designate was in Lusaka, searching for suitable office accommodation, with 300 Zimbabweans a day queuing for travel documents. The appointment of ambassadors-designate to Senegal and Algeria finally took place in late June 1981.

The initial choice of foreign missions was debated in parliament in September 1981, when PK van der Byl, a former Rhodesian Front foreign minister in Ian Smith's cabinet, questioned the need for diplomatic representation in countries "of no use" to Zimbabwe, singling out Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania and Algeria. He also pressed Mangwende, by then foreign minister, for a government position on Afghanistan. Mangwende replied that diplomatic representation could not be confined to areas of security and economic interest. Cultural, sporting and political factors had also to be considered. He stressed that relations with the rest of Africa took priority and that trade attachés would soon be appointed. A desire to follow political ties with closer economic links was evident.⁸

Despite the prudent pace of selection of foreign mission sites, the flood of diplomats to the Zimbabwean capital did not subside. In the first year of independence, presentation of credentials became a regular event. May 15th saw the reception of the Australian high commissioner

and the West German ambassador. Five days later the ambassadors of Romania and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) were at the President's residence.

In June, the credentials of the ambassadors of India, USA, and Guyana were accepted, while the establishment of diplomatic relations was announced with Togo and the Vatican. Libya established a People's Bureau. The Danish foreign minister, meanwhile, told the Danish parliament's finance committee that good prospects existed for trade with Zimbabwe involving inflows of coal, minerals and tobacco and exports of manufactures and industrial plant. He called for the rapid establishment of diplomatic relations. On 23 June, US ambassador Robert Keeley announced that the US aid plan for Zimbabwe was the second largest in Africa after Sudan and that it involved cash grants rather than loan funds.

Shadow boxing

The issue of South Africa's links was raised in an indirect exchange earlier that month. On 4 June, South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha declared that South Africa was in the process of establishing what Zimbabwe's attitude was towards diplomatic ties. The following day, Foreign Minister Mangwende announced that the Zimbabwean government had no "political relationship" with South Africa and that the future of the South African diplomatic mission in Harare was under "active consideration".⁹ On 27 June, Mugabe told parliament that only a trade mission would be allowed to remain, but that the continuation of trade and economic relations was inevitable.¹⁰

Relations with South Africa continued to deteriorate. On his return from an OAU summit in Freetown, Sierra Leone in early July, Mugabe declared that he had ordered the South African mission to "wind up their affairs, pack up and go", following reports of

involvement in mercenary recruitment.¹¹ On 4 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the closure of Zimbabwe's diplomatic mission in Pretoria and consulate in Cape Town. The Trade Mission in Johannesburg was to remain open. The Zimbabwean government asked South Africa to close its diplomatic mission in Harare with the exception of the trade section. The two trade missions would then provide consular assistance (an arrangement which obtained until April 1994).

Other embassy openings meanwhile continued apace. On 11 July, the Chinese ambassador presented his credentials as did the Austrian ambassador. The same month, diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level were announced with Greece and Algeria. Zaire, Gabon, GDR, Ghana, Bulgaria, and Finland followed. By the end of the year, the absentees were more noticeable than the countries represented. Prime among the former was the USSR.

After a hiatus of several months, a new round of Zimbabwean appointments abroad was made in January 1982. Ambassadors were assigned to China, Romania and Yugoslavia, bringing the total number of Zimbabwean diplomatic missions to 15. Four weeks later, a trade representative to Mozambique was appointed, followed by an economic counsellor to Bonn with responsibility for promoting trade with Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania. On 24 March, an ambassador was posted to France, with additional responsibility for UNESCO.

High commissioners to Nigeria and Tanzania (the latter a replacement for a cabinet appointee) and ambassadors to the USA and Japan were all dispatched the same month. The opening of more foreign missions was, said, Mangwende, hampered by lack of funds and personnel. An economic counsellor to Washington was nevertheless appointed in mid-June.

Opening the fourth session of the first parliament in June 1983, Mugabe told MPs that over 20 diplomatic and consular missions had been established abroad, while over 60 countries and international organisations were represented in Zimbabwe. He referred to Zimbabwe's election to the United Nations Security Council for 1983/84 as:

clear proof of the high esteem with which our young republic is viewed by the international community and of the faith placed in us by our friends.¹²

By April 1985, seventy four countries, including the PLO and Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic had diplomatic representation in Zimbabwe. Of these, 12 ambassadors were based in other countries in the region. In eight cases, the ambassadorial post was vacant. Twelve international organisations had also by then opened offices in Harare.

Some of the early diplomatic arrivals reflected a formalisation of pre-independence support given to ZANU(PF). Beyond that group, the inward flow of diplomats could be seen partly as "keeping up with the Joneses" but more seriously as reflecting a perception of Zimbabwe's coming importance both regionally and within Africa and the non-aligned movement.

The economic dimension

At the end of 1980, the practical implications for foreign economic relations of the government's commitment to socialism still remained to be addressed. The government, said Mugabe, had been working on its economic policy for quite some time and an official statement would soon be published, encompassing government's view on foreign investment and the role of private enterprise:

The path of our socio-economic policy is decidedly socialist. What remains to be worked out is the mode of application of socialism and not its reality.¹³

Other members of the government had previously been more precise. In a speech at the University of Zimbabwe, the Minister of Home Affairs, Herbert Ushewokunze proposed that “our ideas of socialism are closest to those of the scientific type” rather than the British Labour Party version or European social democracy.¹⁴ However, Zimbabwe’s first Minister of Trade & Commerce, David Smith had been a Minister in Ian Smith’s cabinet and was a “reconciliation” appointment. In September 1980, he set out Zimbabwe’s foreign trade position as follows:

Before the coming to power of the new government, we had already entered into trade agreements with Botswana and South Africa. The free trade arrangement with Botswana is an important regional co-operation agreement, while the trade preferences we enjoy from the agreement with South Africa are invaluable to our industrial exporters.

Since the coming to power of the new government, a number of countries have submitted proposals to enter into trade agreements...In accordance with the country's policy of non-alignment, we have already signed agreements with Mozambique, Bulgaria, Romania and Iraq on the basis of most favoured nation treatment. Agreements are currently being negotiated with Zambia, Malawi and Yugoslavia. Trade contacts have also been established with China, North Korea, Pakistan and Tanzania. Zimbabwe is listed as a beneficiary of GSP (generalised system of preferences) schemes by US, Canada, Norway, Australia, Austria, New Zealand and Sweden.¹⁵

From the outset, there was therefore a recognition of the importance of existing trade links, coupled with a policy of exploring the potential of alternatives. The first trade representatives appointed to take up their posts at the end of November in London, Bonn, Maputo and Washington reflected the former, as did the next two postings to Lusaka and Brussels. At the same time, a desire to develop new economic links was explicit. Speaking in Pyongyang in September 1980, Mugabe declared to Kim Il Sung that:

The anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggle must continue until both our regions are rid of the remaining imperialist forces in their southern parts. Yet we have, in our case, now to use our independence as an instrument for achieving the economic goals of our revolution....It is in pursuance of this objective that we would wish to see our friendship and alliance being consolidated.¹⁶

The need to expand trade relationships was explained thus by Minister of Trade and Commerce Richard Hove in 1982:

Almost everything produced in Zimbabwe has a foreign exchange input and to earn the foreign exchange to provide this input, it is necessary that Zimbabwe has good and effective trade relations with the rest of the world.¹⁷

Trade patterns and political will

Since independence there have been some shifts in the direction and composition of trade (see tables 4.1 and 4.2). Yet attempts to fashion bilateral trade ties to reflect political friendships have rarely

resulted in mutual satisfaction for the parties involved. In some cases, initial obstacles prevented progress. In December 1981, for example, soon after the opening of a Libyan People's Bureau in Harare, its secretary Omar Dallah offered to supply oil to Zimbabwe if an alternative transport route could be found. It wasn't.

Other relationships began with promise but the potential remained unfulfilled. In late November 1984, a meeting of the joint committee on trade between Zimbabwe and India attempted to identify factors hindering trade between the two countries.¹⁸ In 1981, Zimbabwe's exports to India - asbestos, wattle, low carbon ferro-chrome, nickel and nickel alloys - came to ZWD4.03bn. In 1983, this was down to ZWD1.72bn. Indian exports to Zimbabwe - packing, washers and sealing rings, synthetic fibres, engines, diesel tractors, industrial lathes, machinery, air and gas compressors and food processing machines - came to ZWD1.53bn in 1981 and ZWD2.68bn in 1983.

While subsequent years showed improvements in both directions, bilateral trade in 1990 accounted for roughly the same proportion of trade flows (0.6%-0.7%) as it did in 1981.

Some progress was made in reducing South Africa's share of trade flows, though it remained significant as a trading partner and key as a conduit (see Chapter Five). In 1985, South Africa slipped into second place in the export market, buying 11.4% of total exports and subsequently competed with UK and Germany for the top position. Since the removal of sanctions on South Africa, however, it has once again clearly re-established its position as top trading partner. In the import market, South Africa, UK, USA and West Germany remained the top four suppliers throughout the period under review.

TABLE 4.1

EXPORTS				
Composition (%)				
	1981	1983	1985	1986
food prods.	15	15	16	19
beverages/ tobacco	25	23	24	25
crude materials	19	18	19	16
fuels/electricity	1	2	1	1
oils/fats	-	-	-	-
chemicals	2	1	1	2
manufactures	27	33	32	32
classified by materials				
machinery/ transport	2	1	2	2
misc. manu	10	7	4	4

IMPORTS				
Composition (%)				
	1981	1983	1985	1986
food prods.	2	2	4	2
tobacco/ beverages	-	-	-	1
crude materials	3	4	4	6
fuels/electricity	21	21	24	15
oils/fats	1	1	1	1
chemicals	14	14	15	16
manufactures	19	15	16	14
classified by materials				
machinery/ transport/ equipment	32	34	29	38
misc manu	8	9	7	7

source: CSO

TABLE 4.2

EXPORTS				
DIRECTION(%)				
	1982	1985	1987	1990
South Africa	17	11	10	9
UK	10	13	13	11
USA	8	6	6	7
West Germany	8	10	10	12
Japan	3	5	5	5
Botswana	3	4	6	6

IMPORTS				
DIRECTION(%)				
	1982	1985	1987	1990
South Africa	22	19	21	20
UK	15	10	12	12
USA	10	10	9	11
West Germany	8	7	9	7
Japan	5	3	4	5
Botswana	3	3	6	4

Source: CSO

Aid and Investment

In January 1989, President Mugabe was awarded the Africa Prize for Leadership in London. In his address, he described the task of reconstruction at the time of independence:

Massive financial and material resources were urgently needed to address both the immediate and long-term problems facing the country. The most pressing task was the mammoth task of restructuring the basic socio-economic infrastructure which, inter alia, included destroyed roads, bridges, lines of communication, homes, schools and health centres. There were hundreds of thousands of returning refugees and war-displaced communities and individual persons all in dire need of resettlement into viable and productive societies.¹⁹

While several bilateral aid agreements were forthcoming in the first year of independence, a co-ordinated response to the rebuilding needs of the country was lacking. In March 1981, the government therefore convened a special conference on reconstruction and development, known as ZIMCORD, to attract the desperately needed assistance, particularly in the form of grants and soft loans.

The Government successfully explained Zimbabwe's case and requirements to the international community....We felt deeply indebted and grateful to all our friends for the generous and timely response to our appeal for assistance.²⁰

At the time, the need for ZIMCORD was presented in somewhat starker terms by Economy Minister Bernard Chidzero. What was

required, he said, was a one time massive injection of resources into the economy:

The response of the international community in providing assistance to Zimbabwe has so far been very disappointing. Since independence, a total of ZWD196.9m (USD300m) in the form of loans and grants has been pledged. Of this, ZWD131m is grants of which only ZWD52m or 39.7% has been received. ZWD65.2m represents loans, of which only ZWD462,000 or 0.7% has been received.²¹

Zimbabwe, said Chidzero, was approaching donors with an urgent appeal for aid totalling ZWD1.2bn, covering public sector programmes over the period 1981 to 1984, as specifically outlined in the ZIMCORD agenda. The estimated total financial investment requirements, both private and public, of the economy over the same period were put at ZWD4bn of which approximately half was in the public sector.

The conference, which was regarded as a success, indicated the degree of goodwill existing towards the newly independent country (see table 4.3). Almost ZWD1.3bn was pledged, rising to ZWD1.8bn with post ZIMCORD pledges. Confirmation of pre-ZIMCORD commitments accounted for ZWD365m. Of the initial sum, 53% came in soft loan form and 47% as grants. Some 94% came from Western sources: ZWD177m from UK and ZWD172.6m from USA.

The rejection of either explicit or implicit political conditions on aid has been rhetorically firm from the outset. Yet where such rejection has occurred on occasion, it has been *ex post facto*. The most significant example concerns the suspension of the US aid programme in the mid 1980s (see Chapter Seven).

TABLE 4.3

ZIMCORD PLEDGES			
DONOR	PLEDGE (ZWD)	DONOR	PLEDGE (ZWD)
African Development Bank	39.8m	Iraq	1.9m
Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa	31.3m	Ireland	0.045m
Australia	14.6m	Luxembourg	1.9m
Belgium	8.0m	Netherlands	16.2m
Canada	33.3m	New Zealand	0.174m
China	17.5m	Nigeria	12.4m
Denmark	12.5m	Norway	11.3m
EEC	120.0m	OPEC	6.3m
Egypt	1.3m	Saudi Arabia	3.1m
Finland	5.2m	Sierra Leone	0.056m
France	71.4m	Sweden	55.4m
West Germany	62.3m	Switzerland	66.3m
Ghana	0.63m	UK	177.0m
Holy See	12.5m	UN	26.4m
Italy	23.1m	USA	172.6m
Japan	3.08m	World Bank	287.5m
Jersey	0.075m	Yugoslavia	2.8m
Kuwait	32.5m	Commonwealth	2.9m

source: Status Report on External Development Assistance to Zimbabwe (Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development) 1986

The largest multilateral donor at ZIMCORD was the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, whose presence in Zimbabwe's donor profile has remained high. From 1980 to 1989, the government signed 15 loan agreements with the World Bank amounting to USD541m in direct assistance. Most of the World Bank loans have in turn attracted co-financing grants from bilateral donors.

Summary

The Zimbabwean government's approach to foreign relations since independence could be described as one of extension and attempted reordering rather than substitution.

Formal relations were forged with a wide spectrum of countries. South Africa and Israel were the only two singled out for blanket vilification. Africa received initial priority in terms both of official visitors and the establishment of Zimbabwean missions abroad. Beyond that, however, the first non-African missions were to UK, USA, Belgium, West Germany and Sweden. Of these, only the last could be said to have actively supported ZANU(PF) in the independence struggle.

Arguably, the economic aspect of ties with this group of countries – whether as trading partners, investors or donors – was more important to the Zimbabwean government than political affinities. These links were consolidated as new links were forged.

While attempts were made to bolt an economic dimension on to many of the newer bilateral political relationships, primarily through the establishment of trade commissions, these efforts had little sustained impact on overall trade patterns.

South Africa presented a special case demanding a continuation of economic ties in the face of overt political hostility. This was achieved through the reciprocal maintenance of trade missions serving, at the same time, a quasi-consular role.

Aid was sought and received from a variety of sources, both multilateral and bilateral. Beyond the actual establishment of diplomatic relations, aid programmes do not seem to have influenced Zimbabwe's policy positions. On occasion, the government has been prepared to jeopardise certain bilateral aid flows in defence of its position on specific issues.

¹ Ministry of Information Press Statement, 23/2/82

² However, by the time of Kaunda's defeat by Frederick Chiluba in the general election of 1991, the relationship had warmed sufficiently for Mugabe to regret Kaunda's departure.

³ Policy Statement No. 2: PM's New Year Speech to the nation, December 31, 1980 (Ministry of Information and Tourism) January 1981.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Report to the Central Committee, 1989 (Not published; copy obtained privately)

⁶ K Holsti, International Politics: A Framework for Analysis 4th ed. (Prentice Hall International: London) 1983, pp168-169.

⁷ Herald 27/6/80

⁸ reported in Herald, 18/9/81

⁹ Herald 6/6/80

¹⁰ Hansard 27/6/80

¹¹ Herald 8/7/80

¹² Herald 21/6/83

¹³ New Year Speech, 1980

¹⁴ Ministry of Information Press Statement, 5/8/80

¹⁵ Ministry of Information Press Statement, 5/9/80: Speech (read on his behalf) to International Economic Conference on Zimbabwe

¹⁶ Policy Statement No 1: PM Addresses State Banquet in North Korea, October 9, 1980 (Ministry of Information and Tourism) October 1980

¹⁷ Herald 9/11/82

¹⁸ Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting, in India File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

¹⁹ Speech on receiving Africa Leadership Prize, Royal Commonwealth Society London, January 1989.
(Author's notes - present as journalist)

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ Ministry of Information Press Statement, 11/2/81

Chapter five: Zimbabwe in the Region

a) South Africa

The conflict between political and economic imperatives; changing trade patterns; transport links; advocacy of sanctions; sanctions and the Zimbabwean economy; relations since the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and SACP.

b) Mozambique

Mozambique's special role in the independence struggle; Samora Machel's influence on government strategy at independence; Beira Corridor and Maputo rail link; Rhodesia and RENAMO; Zimbabwe and RENAMO; limits of solidarity

c) Regional Organisations

Southern African Development Community; Preferential Trade Area; SADC v. PTA; trade with other SADC countries

a) South Africa

During the 1980s, it was on the issue of South Africa that the Zimbabwean government was most often accused of policy inconsistency. While supporting sanctions against South Africa and chiding countries which did not apply them, Zimbabwe continued to trade with South Africa. This was pointed to as a sign of hypocrisy.

Defenders of the frontline states argued that Zimbabwe did not so much trade with South Africa as remain dependent on it as a result not only of trade flows but of infrastructural links. The maintenance of such a relationship was itself seen as part of a South African strategy to inhibit greater commitment by frontline states to active support of liberation forces. In defence of the apartheid system, following the collapse of Portugal's colonial rule in Africa in 1974, the South African Ministry of Defence under the then Minister P W Botha developed a

Total Strategy for the region. The strategy advocated, *inter alia*, economic and other action in relation to transport services, distribution and telecommunications, with the objective of promoting or enforcing political and economic co-operation in the southern African region.

A concerted sanctions policy coupled with support for the SADCC countries was seen by South Africa's neighbours as a way of lessening this dependency. Sanctions were one way of raising the price of apartheid both economically and psychologically.

Writing in the Winter 87/88 issue of Foreign Affairs, Mugabe outlined both the economic and military dimensions of the crisis. Although Zimbabwe did not allow military operations against South Africa to be launched from its soil, Mugabe defended the right to fight for independence, citing the half-century of non-violent struggle by the ANC from its foundation in 1912 and the precedent of the US and Europe under occupation. He also pointed to incursions into neighbouring countries by South African Defence forces to highlight the direct impact of apartheid on the region. At the same time, then, Mugabe exposed the dilemma behind the rhetoric: on the one hand, action against the apartheid system was imperative not only for the well-being of the South African population as a whole but for the security and health of the other countries in the region; on the other, the limits of action by these countries were defined by the very dependence they sought to address.

Economics

The Zimbabwean economy depends on South Africa not only for a substantial percentage of its trade, but more significantly as a conduit. Key transport and telecommunications traffic passes through South Africa, indicating the extent to which the country's economic infrastructure is built on the existence of close links with its powerful

neighbour. Disengagement was therefore both slow and partial, limited by the ability of its regional allies to construct collective viable alternatives.

Although South Africa's diplomatic mission was closed in 1980, diplomacy of a kind continued through the presence of trade missions. Zimbabwe inherited a foreign debt of ZWD353.3m of which over ZWD38m was owed to South Africa. Staggered payment was agreed upon. Sports ties were severed but tourism continued, with the trade commission in each country assuming responsibility for the issue of visas.

The rapid pace of change in South Africa which the 1990s ushered in eased the pressure for economic disengagement, while at the same time posing a challenge of political and rhetorical adaptation: how to acknowledge that the situation was dynamic without yielding to the euphoria that the abolition of apartheid was imminent.

A new charge arose that Zimbabwe had been slow to recognise new realities. Mugabe insisted that diplomatic relations were unthinkable until a transitional democratic government was established. On the question of sanctions, he maintained an ambivalence, arguing the need for relentless pressure on the South African government, while recognising the vital nature of bilateral economic links.

Early signals

During the first decade of independence, it is on the question of relations with South Africa that constraints were most overt and painful as they clearly worked counter to government objectives.

Although a final and definitive rupture was avoided and, some would argue, impossible anyway, relations between South Africa and newly independent Zimbabwe rolled rapidly downhill. Speaking in

Pyongyang on his first state visit abroad in 1980, Mugabe struck a note of pragmatism in reference to South Africa:

My country has, in spite of South Africa's aggressive activities, committed itself to a policy of peaceful coexistence with all its neighbours including South Africa itself. Acting, however, on the basis of principle and in accordance with the OAU Charter and Resolutions, our young republic has refused to maintain any political and diplomatic relations with South Africa, though recognising as all our other neighbours have done, the reality of existing economic ties with and dependence upon South Africa.¹

At the same time, however, he hinted at how unpalatable he found that link:

It is our belief that political independence cannot have any real meaning and significance to our people unless it were accompanied and reinforced by economic independence as well.²

South African pressure on Zimbabwe, designed at the very least to illustrate the latter's dependence, if not actually effect a regime change, drove home the potential ramifications of all-out bilateral conflict, but also led to a hardening of political positions. Chan outlines a variety of actions undertaken by the South African government in 1981 to put the economic squeeze on its northern neighbour:

First Pretoria threatened to terminate a trade agreement that provided significant benefits to the Zimbabwean economy (preferential customs duties for Zimbabwean exports to South Africa, as well as guaranteed

quotas for some products). Next it threatened to send home the approximately 40,000 Zimbabweans who work in South Africa. Then it precipitated a transport crisis and squeezed Zimbabwe's supply of essential fuel by withdrawing a large number of locomotives, freight trucks, and tanker cars that were on loan to Zimbabwe's railroad. Although the South African government claimed these actions were dictated by its own domestic needs, the foreign policy purposes in respect to neutralisation of neighbouring states were in fact quite clear.³

Subsequent actions, both covert and overt, continued to give the issue of apartheid a regional dimension. In October 1985, before the UN General Assembly, Mugabe criticised the complacent attitude of the major western powers to the need for radical change in South Africa. Unity of purpose, he argued, was particularly vital when dealing with hotbeds of tension and conflict in the world:

Regional conflicts have, if incorrectly handled, the capacity to engulf us all in a major catastrophe. And of the many regions of tension and conflict today, few challenge the United Nations system with such poignancy as the tragic situation prevailing in Southern Africa....The hallowed principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and the cardinal principles that states shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state are all violated by the apartheid regime of South Africa....The Pretoria regime's continued existence poses a threat to international peace and security. Apartheid is in every sense and meaning a crime against humanity and a threat to international peace and security of the same genre and origin as nazism, its spiritual and philosophic ancestor.⁴

Mugabe described the unwillingness, of those great powers that “wield such obvious influence over South Africa” to flex their muscles in support of change as one of the greatest betrayals to the United Nations system and the concept of the brotherhood of man. He accused the major powers of indifference and cynicism which emboldened the South African regime, singling out the United States and the UK, appealing to them to “stop being the misguided protectors of this evil regime.”

Attitudes to South Africa became a significant yardstick in relations with other countries. Of all the strains that appeared in relations with the UK and the USA in the 1980s, disagreements over South Africa were responsible for the nadirs. Zimbabwean ire at perceived indifference was based not only on a declared abhorrence of apartheid but on the destabilising impact of South African policy in the region. In the case of Zimbabwe, said Mugabe, South Africa had a dual strategy:

The first is to recruit, train, finance, equip and deploy dissidents and malcontents whom they infiltrate back into Zimbabwe to spread destruction and fear. A special radio station has been installed in the Northern Transvaal for use by these bandits which daily beams hostile propaganda against my Government. The second is to use the bandits in Mozambique known as Mozambique National Resistance Movement to cut all of Zimbabwe's outlets to the sea through Mozambique, whether by rail, road or pipeline. South Africa's continued use of rebels in Mozambique is a flagrant violation of the solemn and binding undertaking she entered into at the time of the signing of the Nkomati agreement. Besides trying to overthrow the Government of

Mozambique, the second aim of these bandits as directed by Pretoria is to make Zimbabwe and other landlocked Southern African states become totally dependent on South Africa.⁵

The strategy was designed to make hostages of the frontline states in any moves to impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa. The argument could then be made that the black people of South Africa and the majority-ruled independent States surrounding South Africa would be the first to suffer if sanctions were imposed against South Africa.

Mugabe rejected the argument and urged UN members to apply sanctions without hiding behind the vulnerability of the frontline states:

We accept that there is a price to be paid for the liberty of our brothers and sisters in South Africa and Namibia. For our part, we are prepared to play our full role. But equally we expect the international community to shoulder its responsibility to the region for the consequences of any decision and action it may take, including mandatory sanctions, in fulfilment of its duties and obligations to the people of South Africa.

Throughout the 1980s, Mugabe fought an uphill battle to give practical effect to this commitment. Internationally, he had the task not only of persuading countries to impose sanctions at some cost to themselves but to compensate the frontline states which would certainly suffer as a result. Domestically, it was not clear that the rest of the cabinet was willing to back complete severance of economic ties.

In November 1985, Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero outlined in detail the nature of Zimbabwe's economic interaction with South Africa.

Because of the long existing trade, investment and financial arrangements, there was, he said, an almost umbilical relationship between the two economies, although significant achievements had been made since independence in reducing the high degree of dependency on South Africa.

Even so, the economic fortunes of the two countries are closely intertwined. To begin with, Zimbabwe has very high trade ratios - the country is closely and almost inextricably linked to developments in the outside world. In 1984, our total exports including to South Africa were 25.5% of our GDP, compared to 28.2% in 1979 and 1980 respectively, representing a slight decrease in dependence on the outside world. But it is still significant.

Similarly, our imports as a percentage of total consumption stand at about 20% compared to 23% and 27% in 1979 and 1980 respectively. This is the more significant considering the nature of the imports: fuel, industrial raw materials, machinery and equipment, etc.⁶

Imports from South Africa consisted mainly of basic items such as machinery and transport equipment, chemicals and manufactured goods and mineral fuels. Exports to South Africa were largely from the secondary sector, particularly textiles and clothing, but also included tobacco, cotton and other crude materials.

The Zimbabwean economy, said Chidzero, was vulnerable to actions which might disrupt trade relations. Although it would not collapse, it would function at a reduced rate, generating unemployment, shortage of goods and general hardship.

In all this, access to the sea was vital. If Beira and Maputo, the two main ports in Mozambique, had been open and fully functioning,

these routes would be preferable but “unfortunately, as things stand at the moment, the Chiqualaquala line is virtually inoperable because of disruptions and sabotage by the MNR and we are forced to concentrate on the use of Beira, which can only carry a maximum of 30% of our total trade and that at fairly high cost in view of the defence and security arrangements.”

In 1982, lines through Mozambique carried 53% of Zimbabwe’s exports and imports and South African routes 47%. In 1983, the figures were 46% and 54% respectively. In 1984, due largely to deterioration on the Maputo line, the figure was 33% for Mozambique and 67% for South Africa. In 1985, the bulk went via South Africa.

Chidzero singled out transport as a critical area if sanctions were imposed. If South Africa closed routes and increased disruption on the Chiqualaquala line, appropriate anticipatory measures would be necessary to ensure traffic through Beira. Although plans were afoot to rehabilitate both the port and the transport route itself, the implication was that Beira could not be considered a realistic alternative for the bulk of Zimbabwe’s trade traffic.

Financial relations perhaps provided greater room for manoeuvre, with a two way relationship in terms of financial flows: in 1984, in respect of total services (freight insurance etc), South Africa received over ZWD83m. To this could be added ZWD19m in terms of profits, dividends and interest remitted to South Africa plus another ZWD63m in pensions, annuities and pension commutations, giving a combined total of ZWD165m. Inflows from South Africa amounted to ZWD23m. Chidzero suggested that some leeway could be available with skilful handling. In addition Zimbabwe owed South Africa some ZWD200m. Yet, he suggested, it was unlikely that withholding such flows would cripple the South African economy.

As Table 5.1 indicates, trade flows with South Africa did not in the event suffer any significant disruptions despite political intentions. On the other hand, the figures do reflect a modest degree of success in another policy choice: that of denting South Africa's relative dominance as a trading partner.

From the beginning in earnest of the reform process in South Africa, the priority given to this policy choice declined. In 1990/91, South African exports to Zimbabwe rose by 40%, stabilising at around ZAR1.55bn in 1992, according to figures from the South African Department of Customs and Excise (see table 5.2). Zimbabwean exports to South Africa meanwhile grew by 62%.

TABLE 5.1

SOUTH AFRICA					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWD m	% of total	year	ZWD m	% of total
1980	59.4	17.1	1980	104.7	27.4
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	192.2	21.6	1981	279.7	27.5
1982	137.8	17.1	1982	239.4	22.1
1983	192.0	18.7	1983	259.9	24.5
1984	232.2	18.3	1984	231.8	19.3
1985	166.5	10.8	1985	273.2	18.9
1986	211.1	12.4	1986	351.2	21.4
1987	185.4	9.8	1987	361.5	20.8
1988	248.1	9.8	1988	393.5	19.2
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	321.7	8.9	1990	902.1	19.9

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

TABLE 5.2

South Africa - Zimbabwe trade 1992 (Rand millions)

MAJOR SECTOR	Zim to SA	SA to Zim	Zim trade deficit
Base metals	97	384	281
Machinery	38	301	263
Chemical prods	13	252	239
Transport equip.	9	155	146
Plastics, rubber	25	97	72
Textiles	139	79	[60]
Food, tobacco	167	30	[137]
Mineral prods.	80	50	[30]
Wood prods.	52	11	[41]
All goods	763	1,553	790

source: South African Department of Customs & Excise

b) Mozambique

Mozambique has been intimately linked with political developments in Zimbabwe since UDI, initially in supporting sanctions evasion during the UDI years, then in harbouring ZANU(PF) and ZANLA during the crucial years of the independence struggle, and finally in exerting its influence to ensure that the Patriotic Front saw the Lancaster House process through to the end.

Opening the first Zimbabwe-Mozambique friendship week in June 1980, Mugabe said that the two countries had discovered each other on the battlefield. The relationship was, he said, deepened in the north-eastern offensive in 1972-73, "which we were able to launch from the liberated areas of Mozambique."⁷

It was a friendship that grew out of a change of appreciation by FRELIMO of the differences between ZANU and ZAPU. Machel initially considered ZANU to be a breakaway from the legitimate liberation movement. Even then, the decision in 1974 to replace Ndabaningi Sithole as leader of ZANU was not initially well received by the frontline states whose presidents were making strenuous efforts to unite the Zimbabwean nationalist movements under a single banner. The late Maurice Nyagumbo, a veteran nationalist involved at every stage of the movement's development, describes a meeting in Lusaka in late 1974, soon after the decision to suspend the Rev. Sithole had been taken:

We parted company with Dr Nyerere at midnight. We then went to see President Samora Machel but could not get him at his house. He later arrived at our lodge at about one o'clock Friday morning. At the beginning he was very hostile towards us. Through an interpreter, he too expressed his disgust over the decision of the executive in prison to suspend Rev. Sithole. He minced no words as to what he intended to do

if we had maintained our decision: he was going to order the arrest of our two thousand five hundred men-of-war who were at present in their reserve bases in Mozambique. I must admit that he was the only man who succeeded in intimidating me.⁸

As the military operations from Mozambican bases intensified, the relationship warmed, By the time of independence, Mozambique was seen as a steadfast ally, which had endured significant pain for its policy of solidarity.

The Rhodesian government was meanwhile nurturing the Mozambican National Resistance Movement, alternatively known as the MNR or RENAMO. In 1976, Voz de Africa Libre began broadcasting to Mozambique from Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation transmitters. In August and September of that year, the first MNR received military training at Bindura. The radio station went off the air in February 1980 and by the middle of the year was transmitting again from the Transvaal in South Africa.⁹

After independence the relationship between the Mozambican and Zimbabwean governments remained close. When in March 1984, the Mozambican government reached the Nkomati non-aggression accord with South Africa, involving the removal of the ANC as an effective force from Mozambique, there was some consternation from anti-apartheid forces. Mugabe nevertheless defended the Mozambican decision. While expressing understanding of ANC disenchantment with front-line state support for the Nkomati accord, he said that the latter were too weak to provide the ANC with the bases it needed.

Trading places

From a geographical perspective alone, Mozambique would provide greater attractions than South Africa as a conduit for

Zimbabwe's trade. The ports of Beira and Maputo are both nearer than any South African alternatives and served by parallel road and rail links. The railway line from Harare to Beira was put through in 1900 and has traditionally played a key role in moving Zimbabwe's overseas trade. Since the mid 1980s, therefore, Zimbabwe has invested considerable resources in rehabilitating Mozambican routes as alternatives to South Africa. Priority projects have been the upgrading of port facilities and defending the transport routes themselves from attack. In November 1982, Zimbabwe sent troops into Mozambique to help defend the Beira corridor. They remained in that role until the negotiation of an accord between FRELIMO and the MNR in the early 1990s .

To rehabilitate the line and the port, a tripartite project was initiated in 1986. The Beira Corridor Group Ltd (BCG), registered in Harare, represented the business sector in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Botswana. The International Beira Group, registered in Oslo, was to represent international business interests, while Beiracor Ltda, registered in Beira would act as a co-ordinating company. The BCG officially began trading in April 1987. At its first AGM in September 1987, the ability of the Corridor to carry cargo was put at 30% of Zimbabwe's overseas trade.

Rehabilitation under the aegis of the Beira Corridor Group was, however, under constant threat from the MNR - ironically created by the Rhodesian intelligence service for sabotage against the Mozambican government and then taken over and nurtured by South Africa in 1980.

The independence and integrity of Zimbabwe has been described by Mugabe as inseparable from that of Mozambique. Apart from genuine solidarity and gratitude for Mozambican sacrifices to the

Zimbabwe liberation struggle, Zimbabwe has a vital interest in seeing a functioning infrastructure in Mozambique. As Mugabe put it in 1987:

An early decision of my government was to maximize Zimbabwe's usage of our most convenient trade routes through Mozambique.

At the time of our independence no Zimbabwean trade passed through the Mozambican rail and port system, but by the end of 1983 almost half of our trade was transiting Mozambique. Today South African-instigated sabotage has cut that figure back to less than 20 percent.....South Africa has set out to destroy systematically our alternative communication routes to the sea and ensure our continued dependence on their ports and railways.¹⁰

In October 1992, a truce was eventually signed between the Mozambican government under Joaquim Chissano and the MNR leader Afonso Dhlakama. Mugabe's personal involvement alongside that of co-intermediary Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya (considered closer to the MNR) was seen by both sides as an essential element in bringing the process to that stage. By the end of 1992, the process was sufficiently advanced for Dhlakama to pay an officially reported visit to Harare to discuss implementation of the truce of with Mugabe.

Peace in Mozambique was clearly seen as essential for the future prosperity both of Zimbabwe and the region as a whole. The MNR had wreaked havoc not only in Mozambique but in Zimbabwe's eastern region, which had also begun to absorb large numbers of Mozambican refugees. Mugabe's involvement indicated a recognition of these imperatives rather than a change of heart towards a man who he had previously described as a "senseless bandit and puppet of imperialism."¹¹

Trade flows

Alongside a deepening political and strategic relationship, efforts have been made to increase the level of trade between Zimbabwe and Mozambique. They have not been particularly successful (see table 5.3).

A series of agreements was concluded in August 1980, covering energy, electricity, trade and payments mechanisms. Under an arrangement between the respective central banks on 7 August 1980, each was to open a freely convertible account in local currency with the other.

A detailed trade agreement with Mozambique was signed on 20 August 1980. The two sides agreed to do their utmost to increase trade especially in a list of goods mentioned in two attached schedules. Most Favoured Nation treatment was to be granted. To avoid the possibility of abuse of the treaty, each side could ask for a certificate of origin for the goods concerned. A joint commission was established to monitor progress.¹²

By the time of its fourth session (26-28 November 1986), the permanent joint commission still had little positive to report. Since the implementation of the trade agreement, there had been very little improvement in trade figures between the two countries. Hope was expressed that a new trade plan, signed on 19 June 1986 and operational from 15 July 1986, would improve the situation. The commission exhorted the two governments to encourage trade. To that end, Zimbabwe agreed to extend a ZWD50m line of credit to Mozambique.¹³

At the 5th session (7-8 December 1987), the Mozambican delegation indicated that exporters of meat, fruit, cotton and tobacco were not utilising the port of Beira. The Zimbabwe delegation explained that the facilities prevailing did not meet the requirements for these products.¹⁴

TABLE 5.3

MOZAMBIQUE					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWD m	% of total	year	ZWD m	% of total
1980	n/a	n/a	1980	1.4	0.4
1981	11.2	1.3	1981	18.8	1.8
1982	17.2	2.1	1982	9.5	0.9
1983	15.3	1.5	1983	9.1	0.9
1984	10.5	0.8	1984	0.1	—
1985	20.6	1.3	1985		
1986	54.4	3.2	1986	n/p	n/p
1987	70.3	3.7	1987	n/p	n/p
1988	75.6	3.0	1988	n/p	n/p
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	132.8	3.7	1990	n/p	n/p

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

The commission also noted that a tripartite road authority including Sweden had not materialised because the Swedish development authority SIDA had not provided money for vehicles. The Mozambican side said that in view of the delays it would prefer bilateral arrangement with SIDA.

As far as bilateral trade was concerned, ZWD40m of the line of credit had so far been disbursed. However, the Mozambicans indicated that they had internal difficulties due to the shortage of complementary products necessary for utilising those goods imported under the line of credit. The Zimbabweans complained for their part that the commodities listed under the trade plan were not all available.¹⁵ The Mozambican members of the commission said they were having trouble running the trade plan and the line of credit simultaneously.

The Commission noted that the Zimbabwean government had decided to classify displaced Mozambicans as refugees solely for the purpose of obtaining donor funding, notably from the UNHCR. Zimbabwe continued to receive displaced Mozambicans and planned to set up a fifth camp, near Chiredzi. The rate of influx was increasing and the monthly expenditure was well above ZWD340,000.

By end-1987, there were some 40,000 displaced Mozambicans in the camps. The strain on the Zimbabwean economy of coping with a growing refugee problem while maintaining a costly military presence in Mozambique itself was no doubt an additional factor that encouraged Mugabe to respond positively to Chissano's entreaty that he take up the role of intermediary in arranging a negotiated settlement.

c) Regional Organisations

The two regional organisations, SADC (formerly SADCC) and Comesa (formerly the PTA), were initially at the core of Zimbabwe's strategy of weaning itself as far as possible off its dependence on its Southern neighbour. Although broader opportunities such as those provided by Lomé have been grasped, the greatest effort has gone into strengthening regional opportunities.

As early as September 1980, Mugabe explained to a meeting of SADCC ministers that over-dependence on South Africa in respect of transport, communications and a variety of goods and services was neither a natural phenomenon nor the result of a free market economy:

The future development of our economic systems must aim at reducing economic dependence not only on the Republic of South Africa but also on any single external state or group of states.¹⁶

The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was consolidated into the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in 1992. It has been regarded as one of the most efficient regional organisations in Africa. Its four initial objectives, set out in Lusaka in December 1980, were:

(1) to co-ordinate the reduction of dependence on metropolitan powers, and especially on South Africa.

(2) to create and operationalise equitable economic integration among member countries.

(3) to be the unit for mustering internal and external resources important to affecting national, interstate, and regional policies useful in reducing dependence and in establishing genuine co-operation among members

(4) to be the bargaining unit for securing financial and technical support from private and public sources in the international arena.¹⁷

Mugabe has described the creation of SADC as a recognition of regional and economic reality. With six of the members (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe) landlocked, the only alternative transport routes to those provided by South Africa are through Mozambique, Tanzania and Angola. Much of South Africa's trade surplus with the region depends on rail and port revenues. The upgrading of alternative routes and ports, in particular the Mozambican ports of Beira and Maputo, was therefore seen as central to the reduction of dependence on South Africa.

The mutuality of interests among the member countries derived from an abhorrence of apartheid. To the extent that that produced a common desire to reduce economic ties with South Africa, the nine founders, subsequently joined by Namibia, set about constructing the necessary pillars for such a reduction, with each country taking responsibility for one aspect of regional infrastructure and providing the resources to maintain its obligations. The transport function of SADC was, for example, overseen by Mozambique through the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC). Zimbabwe oversaw the SADC food security programme.

The formation of SADC was an attempt to fashion an economic reality from a political imperative. In 1991, Simba Makoni, then Executive Secretary of SADC, described "reduction of dependence" as the organisation's first objective.¹⁸ Economic dependence on South Africa was above all politically unpalatable.

While SADC remains perhaps the best example of a functioning regional IGO in Africa, its continued relevance has depended on a re-definition of its objectives. Even prior to the emergence of an

acceptable South Africa, Mufune identified three factors which had the potential to subvert the common interest that bound the ten members together:¹⁹

(1) The BLS group of countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland) as well as Malawi maintained a special status with South Africa and needed to compete for the maintenance if not enhancement of that status through SACU (the South African Customs Union) and/or the Rand Monetary Area.

(2) The members had differing abilities to apply sanctions. In this respect, three groups could be discerned: those in closed preferential systems with South Africa (above), those trying to diminish contacts (Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe) and those with minimal trading contacts (Angola and Tanzania).

(3) The similarities in export structures presented a barrier to the creation of a genuine economic community.

Appreciations of Zimbabwe's role within SADC vary. Sylvester passes a globally positive judgement:

It is generally acknowledged today that Zimbabwe is a good SADCC partner. The country has lived up to its commitments in food security and agricultural research and has been known to extend assistance over and beyond its formal SADCC obligations.²⁰

In other respects, however, the Zimbabwean role in SADC has come in for criticism. Until South Africa joined SADC in 1994, Zimbabwe was the member with the strongest industrial infrastructure. It also accounted for by far the highest proportion of regional trade: almost half of the intra-SADC trade originated there and another 30%

of the trade consisted of imports into it. Zimbabwe was thus a partner to almost 80% of the total intra-SADC trade.²¹

Zimbabwe with its significant industrial base has tended to see the region as an alternative market to South Africa, but has been less keen to import from it. This criticism is perhaps more applicable to the PTA (see below), which set out to provide a common trading area. SADC did not include this as one of its formal goals. It is nevertheless a logical extension of the type of economic realignment which the Community sought to promote and the fact that Zimbabwe was a net exporter within both gave rise to a degree of resentment among other member states.

The imminence in 1992 of a negotiated settlement in South Africa and the ANC's subsequent election victory in April 1994 led to a great deal of introspection within the organisation. The name change signalled a change of emphasis. SADC is now a trading bloc with the ultimate aim of inclusive regional economic integration, with South Africa playing a full part.

The Preferential Trade Area

The Treaty establishing the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) was signed on 21st December 1981 as a first step towards the creation of a common market. In November, 1993, a new Treaty, founding the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA) was signed in Kampala, Uganda by sixteen PTA countries, including Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The COMESA Treaty entered into force on 8 December, 1994, upon its ratification by eleven signatory States. The PTA was formally dissolved on that date being replaced by COMESA.

Unlike SADCC, the PTA structure was, from the outset, much more in line with conventional attempts at building an economic

community. The PTA treaty was modelled on that of ECOWAS, the West African economic community, with economic union to be achieved through the elimination in stages of both tariff and non tariff barriers.

In 1983, some 5.7% of Zimbabwe's total exports went to PTA countries, while imports from PTA members amounted to just over 3.2%²². The PTA (now Comesa) Clearing House, a multilateral netting facility for trade payments, operates from and through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Final settlement is done through the Federal Reserve Bank, New York.

Many of the constraints on intra-SADC trade apply with a vengeance to the PTA. In addition, there is a perception among members that Zimbabwe and Kenya, the two economies with the largest manufacturing base stand to benefit unduly.

Although it achieved some limited success in encouraging intra-regional trade, the success of the PTA in the first decade of its existence was not resounding. Lancaster suggested that it may have been a victim of its own ambition:

It is not yet clear whether the PTA will follow ECOWAS in the latter's failure to implement fully its economic integration policies and simply become something of a political umbrella under which member states conduct regional diplomacy. Although an increasing number of states have joined the PTA, members have thus far used it relatively little as a venue for regional diplomacy. The PTA may already be too large to serve such a purpose effectively, as its nineteen member states represent central, southern and East Africa.²³

Apart from running the Comesa Clearing House, Zimbabwe has given greater prominence to SADC in the resources it commits to it.

The establishment of Comesa, to which South Africa does not belong, has brought a greater degree of incompatibility to the aims of the two organisations. With the reinvention of SADC as an engine for the economic integration of the entire Southern African region, members of both organisations, including Zimbabwe, as coming under pressure from both bodies to choose on over the other.

In tandem with efforts to promote regional trade through multilateral initiatives, the Zimbabwean government has entered bilateral treaties with other SADC members. Case studies of Zimbabwe's trade with Tanzania, Botswana and Angola suggest that these efforts have been hampered by a lack of hard currency and the absence of a mutual coincidence of wants.

Tanzania

In the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence, Tanzania had played a crucial role as a source of support and training. Once independence had been achieved, a desire to convert political goodwill into effective trading links was therefore understandable.

At the second session of the Zimbabwe-Tanzania joint commission of co-operation in Harare in 1983, what was described as a temporary set-back in trade between the two countries was attributed by Economy Minister Bernard Chidzero to the "inadequacy of foreign exchange". At the end of the session, a joint action programme was signed to attack the inadequacy.²⁴

A detailed Trade Plan was to be operational from 1 January 1984. The Zimbabwe Banking Corporation (Zimbank) and National Bank of Commerce of Tanzania (NBC) opened reciprocal accounts for the purpose. Under the plan, Tanzania would supply sea foods, hardwood, sisal, twine and cordage, spices, common salt, meerschaum products, aluminium circles, cold rolled steel sheets, aluminium coils, textiles and

berets. Zimbabwe would provide foundry coke, dairy cattle, hurricane lamps, baby napkins, dried yeast, animal drawn implements, blair pumps, sanitary-ware, baby foods and copper oxychloride.

The implementation procedure provides an illustration of why bureaucrats and entrepreneurs are often at loggerheads as a struggle develops between detail and simplicity:

Zimbabwean exporters interested in participating had to make a specific application through Zimbank to the Export Payment Section of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe. Where commodities for export required an export licence or permit, a separate application was to be submitted through the relevant ministries.

Tanzanian importers of Zimbabwean goods would open Letters of Credit in Zimbabwe dollars with the appropriate branch of NBC where they would hold their accounts. The branches of NBC would then advise the LoCs to Zimbabwean exporters direct through Zimbank. On shipment date, the Zimbabwean exporter would present export documents to Zimbank, which would verify them, pay the exporter and debit the account of NBC maintained in its books.

For imports of Tanzanian goods, an application was required to the Ministry of Trade and Commerce for an import licence. Once approved, the reverse of the above procedure was to be followed.

Although Zimbabwe was chosen to supply building materials, ceramics and sanitaryware for a major Tanzanian construction project in February 1984, the volume of trade actually decreased for the year as a whole (see table 5.4). Thereafter, Tanzania has not even featured in the published trade statistics.

TABLE 5.4

EXPORTS TO TANZANIA

year	ZWDm	% of total
1980(Aug-Dec)	n/p	n/p
1981	1.4	0.2
1982	5.9	0.7
1983	3.3	0.3
1984	3.0	0.2

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

Angola

In November 1982, the Angolan ambassador to Zimbabwe, André Miranda commented that since the signing of a co-operation agreement a month earlier, trade between the two had more than doubled.²⁵ Angola had imported more than ZWD1m of tobacco and ZWD18,850 of agricultural equipment. Zimbabwe was meanwhile said to be studying which commodities it wished to import from Angola. Whether that decision was ever made is not recorded, but imports from Angola have not featured in the published trade statistics (see table 5.5).

Botswana

Diplomatic relations at High Commissioner level were only established at the end on May 1983. Trade between the two has grown but has not been promoted with any great enthusiasm (see table 5.6). Relations were strained by the continued existence of a large Zimbabwean refugee population in Botswana and government accusations that ex-ZIPRA members were launching dissident attacks from bases in Botswana. President Quett Masire made a solidarity visit in October 1982, but the Minister of Home Affairs, HH Ushewokunze raised the issue of ex-ZIPRA combatants crossing into Botswana for refuge. A Botswana High Commissioner to Harare was only appointed on 11 October 1985.

Report card

Ultimately, political affinity at a government level appears to have had little impact on economic relations as far as regional trade is concerned, though it has allowed for the rehabilitation of transport routes through Mozambique.

In the case of South Africa, political antipathy encouraged the development of an economic agenda which explored alternatives to the maximum.

TABLE 5.5

year	ANGOLA exports to	
	ZWDm	% of total
1980		
1981	2.3	0.3
1982	2.8	0.3
1983	0.5	0.0
1984	12.4	1.0
1985	10.8	0.7
1986	3.2	0.2
1987	6.4	0.3

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

TABLE 5.6

BOTSWANA					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	11.7	3.4	1980	5.0	1.3
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	28.7	3.2	1981	17.4	1.7
1982	25.5	3.2	1982	34.1	3.2
1983	40.8	4.0	1983	44.9	4.2
1984	61.6	4.9	1984	38.5	3.2
1985	59.4	3.8	1985	39.1	2.7
1986	73.3	4.3	1986	77.9	4.7
1987	104.9	5.5	1987	99.2	5.7
1988	128.6	5.1	1988	168.2	8.2
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	213.5	5.9	1990	159.2	3.5

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

These initiatives, whether regional or bilateral, did for a time, succeed in lessening South Africa's relative dominance as a trading partner and carrier for Zimbabwe, though economic ties remained crucial to the latter's survival.

The Zimbabwean government's support for FRELIMO in Mozambique was partly a practical manifestation of the above policy and partly a result of political solidarity. Rehabilitation and defence of transport routes through Mozambique were high policy priorities as was the subsequent brokering of a peace deal between FRELIMO and the MNR. These were among the relative successes of Zimbabwean foreign policy in its first fourteen years. Expansion of bilateral trade with Mozambique was less successful.

Two regional organisations, SADC and PTA/Comesa, played some role in the Zimbabwean strategy of dispersal of dependence. However, Zimbabwe's imports from other SADC and Comesa countries did not achieve anything like significant levels, though their importance as export markets grew in the early 1980s.

Despite regional co-operation within these two bodies, bilateral initiatives with other front-line states failed to boost trade ties in the long-run. Even where the government was investing energy as in the creation of SADCC and the maintenance of aspects of its programmes, efforts to boost bilateral economic relationships with other members foundered on an absence of sufficient coincidence of wants and an inability to drive the private sector down a politically pre-determined trade path.

SADC, to which Zimbabwe has demonstrated greater commitment, has now revised its *raison d'être* and is set to develop as a regional trading bloc with South Africa as its engine.

¹ Policy Statement No 1: PM Addresses State Banquet in North Korea, October 9, 1980 (Ministry of Information and Tourism) October 1980

² *ibid*

³ S. Chan, Exporting Apartheid (London: MacMillan) 1990, pp158-159

⁴ Policy Statement No. 16: PM Mugabe's Address to the 40th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, October 7, 1985 (Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications) October 1985, as read by Foreign Minister Mangwende

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ Zimbabwe Government Press Statement: Finance Minister Chidzero's Address to Liaison Officers' Conference in Harare, 22/11/85

⁷ Press statement 23/6/80

⁸ Maurice Nyagumbo, With the People (London: A&B) 1980, p221

⁹ Paul Fauvet, in Herald 27/12/80

¹⁰ R. Mugabe, Struggle for Southern Africa, in Foreign Affairs Vol.6, No. 2 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations) 1987, p315

¹¹ Chris Chanaka - Reuters wire, 18/12/92

¹² Minuted in Mozambique File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

¹³ Minutes of Joint Commission Meeting in Mozambique File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

¹⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵ The goods concerned under the original trade agreement were: from Zimbabwe to Mozambique - cattle, beef and veal, canned meat and meat preparations, dairy products, wheat, maize, flour, flue cured tobacco, seed, pharmaceutical products, disinfectants and insecticides, rubber tyres and tubes in sizes not manufactured in Mozambique, paper and cardboard for printing and products, iron and steel, textiles, and clothing; from Mozambique to Zimbabwe - fish, prawns, pineapples, dessicated coconut, salt, petrol, diesel oil, sawn timber (non conifer), railway sleepers, sulphate of ammonia, copra oil, rubber tyres and tubes in sizes not manufactured in Zimbabwe and marble

¹⁶ Herald 12/9/80

¹⁷ Ngwenya, SADCC's Transport and Communications in the 1990s?, in Southern African Political and Economic Monthly (SAPEM), November 1991 vol 5 no 2, p18

¹⁸ interviewed in SAPEM (Harare) November 1991 vol 5 no 2, pp3-5

¹⁹ Mufune, Potential for Economic Conflict within SADCC, in SAPEM, May 1988 vol 1 no 8, pp12-15

²⁰ Sylvester p.168. Since those words were written the region has suffered a catastrophic drought and Zimbabwe's own strategy for food security was found wanting.

²¹ see Stoneman & Cliffe, p.161

²² extrapolated from ZIMBABWE Socio-Economic Review of Zimbabwe 1980-1985 (Harare: Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development) 1986; and ZIMBABWE Statistical Yearbook (Harare: Central Statistical Office) 1987

²³ C. Lancaster, The Lagos Three, in Harbeson & Rothchild (eds), Africa in World Politics (Boulder: Westview) 1991, p.259

²⁴ Herald 3/11/83

²⁵ Herald 10/11/82

Chapter six: Zimbabwe and Britain

Adversity and co-operation in the transition to independence. Bilateral links. Clashes and co-operation on the international stage.

After years during which she progressively contributed by acts of commission or omission to the consolidation of white minority rule in my country, [Britain] rose to the occasion after the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka....We recognised the significance and courage of her final act and join hands with her in reconciliation and friendship as we face the future. A job well done is a job well done, whatever the wrongs and inconsistencies of the past might have been.¹

In this extract from his address to the UN on Zimbabwe's admission to the Organisation, Mugabe summed up much of the ambivalence in the relationship between Britain and its former colony.

It is a relationship whose course, post-independence, has received comparatively little attention in existing literature. There are three possible explanations for this neglect. First, as the former colonial power, many aspects of the relationship were familiar to both sides and therefore lacked the novelty of some of the developing diplomatic ties. Secondly, and more cynically, the British agenda at the Lancaster House Conference won the day.² Despite the shock of the ZANU(PF) victory to the British government, it had nevertheless successfully inserted the safeguards it advocated in the Constitution and therefore saw little need for aggressive promotion of its interests. Thirdly, the Commonwealth provided a multilateral forum in which the concerns of both parties could be addressed, thereby diminishing the significance of purely bilateral contacts.

Yet apart from engineering the success of the Lancaster House Conference, the British impact on post-independence Zimbabwe has been crucial in three other respects: it has been the largest bilateral aid donor; has regained its pre-UDI position as one of the two largest trading partners (see table 6.1); and has been responsible for the welding of the disparate and conflicting military forces into a national army.

Even when conflict has arisen on other issues, the success of this last role has been acknowledged. In his first New Year's Eve address to the nation, Mugabe singled out this achievement:

I wish to express my government's gratitude to the British Government for generously coming to our aid with a team of most able instructors. And to the British instructors themselves, I wish to say thank you for the role you have magnificently played in helping us to form a single army.³

On 25 October 1984, Zimbabwe radio reported an announcement by the secretary of defence James Chitauro that the British government had agreed to Zimbabwe's request to keep the British Military Advisory Training Team "a little longer". BMATT was subsequently retained for training Mozambican forces on Zimbabwean territory (see below).

Even during the transition period, a pre-eminent British role in the post independence era was virtually assumed as a result of the Lancaster House Agreement. In late March 1980, some three weeks before independence, undersecretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth office, Frank Mills arrived for discussions on the training of the expanded diplomatic service, a task to be undertaken in conjunction with the Commonwealth secretariat. In May, a course was started under the

TABLE 6.1

			UK		
year	ZWDm	exports to % of total	year	ZWDm	imports from % of total
1980	18.7	5.4	1980	32.2	8.4
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	61.3	6.9	1981	101.9	10.0
1982	76.9	9.5	1982	162.0	15.0
1983	119.4	11.6	1983	121.7	11.5
1984	162.6	12.8	1984	143.5	11.9
1985	200.3	13.0	1985	151.1	10.4
1986	209.7	12.4	1986	179.6	10.9
1987	244.5	12.9	1987	200.3	11.5
1988	289.7	11.4	1988	220.5	10.7
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	394.9	10.9	1990	521.4	11.4

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

directorship of E.M. Debrah, Ghanaian High Commissioner in London, funded by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation.

The new glow in the Anglo-Zimbabwean relationship had dimmed somewhat by the time of the first anniversary of independence. An early and brief spat concerned the terms of British aid. In February 1981, Finance Minister Enos Nkala complained that Britain should turn its GBP75m three-year aid package into a grant or take it back. British officials expressed disappointment at the outburst. "We consider our aid programme is really substantial, given the economic constraints" said a foreign office source.⁴ The GBP75m, he pointed out, did not include GBP22m in debts written off, GBP34m in rescheduled debt, GBP3m in military assistance, GBP11m for student training and GBP7m for railway electrification. Nkala more or less apologised and the matter was closed.

Another bone of contention was the perceived lack of enthusiasm on the part of the British government for the provision of funds to enable the purchase of commercial farm land for redistribution, as outlined in the Lancaster House Agreement. At a luncheon for British Foreign Minister Geoffrey Howe in January 1985, Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Witness Mangwende said he was encouraged to note that:

Her Majesty's Government is now willing to be more flexible with regard to the release of funds to be used in land acquisition and development.⁵

Ironically, cordial relations between the UK and Zimbabwe were most disturbed by issues outside the narrow context of their formal bilateral ties. In 1983, for example, a number of Zimbabwe Air Force officers were redetained on suspicion of complicity in sabotage,

following their acquittal by the courts on the grounds that their confessions had been obtained through torture. The UK attempted to get the matter of the officers, who were dual nationals, raised by USA, Canada and Ireland during official visits by Mugabe in September 1983. Patel describes Mugabe's response as "a passionate defence of Zimbabwe's sovereignty even at the cost of British aid:"

We cannot, merely because a person is of British stock, where such a person is a threat to our security, fear to arrest him because to do so is to provoke Margaret Thatcher and her government. My government is not made of that kind of weak steel.....if that aid is given to us so that we don't exercise our rights as a sovereign state, a sovereign right in defence and protection of our own security and not arrest those we believe to be a security risk, then that aid can go.⁶

Even if the original motive for UK government involvement was the origin of the four officers, the grounds for concern – human rights violations and the overriding of the judiciary by the executive – were not addressed by the Zimbabwean reaction. The potential for a deepening dispute was evident. In the event, aid was not withdrawn and relations were patched up at the Commonwealth Conference in New Delhi in November of that year.

The southern spoke

As with the United States, the low point of the relationship was reached not as a result of any strictly bilateral dispute but over the unwillingness of Britain to impose comprehensive sanctions on South Africa. On his return from a Commonwealth mini-summit in London in early August 1986, Mugabe announced that Zimbabwe would impose a complete sanctions package before the end of the year. This would

involve a severing of air links and a ban on overflights of Zimbabwean territory by airlines serving South Africa. Although this package was never implemented, the threat of it led to an immediate deterioration in Anglo-Zimbabwean government cordiality. The UK press reported that the British government had threatened to retaliate against Air Zimbabwe flights to London if the overflight ban was imposed. Mugabe meanwhile accused the British government of racism and of acting out of economic self interest.⁷

Mugabe's strength of feeling on the issue was heightened by South African destabilisation tactics against the frontline states, both directly and through the surrogate MNR in Mozambique. In the case of Zimbabwe, these had involved economic measures and direct sabotage, not to mention direct attacks on ANC members in Harare and Bulawayo.⁸

The sense of frustration was fuelled not only by abhorrence of apartheid *per se* but by a seeming insouciance on the part of the UK and US – usually bracketed together in this regard – about the impact of South Africa's regional policies on its neighbours.

Mugabe's public militancy on the sanctions issue was not necessarily mirrored by his SADCC counterparts, even if they tacitly approved of it. His approach therefore placed him in the front line of the conflict with Britain when the matter came before multilateral or international fora such as the Commonwealth and the UN General Assembly.

When, however, in mid-1986, some Commonwealth voices were urging withdrawal from the organisation in protest at the British position on sanctions, Mugabe advised caution. He suggested that the disintegration of the Commonwealth would reduce pressure on South Africa for change.⁹

Limiting the dispute

Although Britain and Zimbabwe remained on different sides of the fence over the treatment of South Africa throughout the first twelve years of independence, the sparring remained verbal.

Unlike with the US, differences over South Africa did not lead to a breach in the aid programme. Visiting Harare in February 1987, Chris Patten, UK Minister for Overseas Development offered a new development grant of GBP10m. One quarter of this sum was to be spent on British goods and services and the remainder on mutually agreed development projects. The previous month, Minister of State at the Foreign Office Linda Chalker had offered support in Harare for a diversification of frontline states' transport routes. The shift in emphasis coincided with the UK's overtaking of South Africa as Zimbabwe's principal export market.

When Margaret Thatcher arrived in Harare for an official visit in March 1989, she received a warm welcome from Mugabe. British prestige in the region had been boosted by the success of the training programme for Mozambican infantry run by British soldiers at a Zimbabwean military camp in the eastern districts. To some extent, the training programme dampened criticism of Thatcher's vehement opposition to sanctions, which became less of an obstacle to improved bilateral ties. Britain's bilateral aid to Zimbabwe in 1990 was USD50.2m, up 29% from its 1989 contribution. This was by a long way the largest bilateral donation, accounting for 19.4% of all bilateral contributions received that year from 23 donors.¹⁰ In July 1991, Linda Chalker announced a GBP10m grant for economic reforms in addition to the GBP30m in aid and soft loans committed for that year. In 1993, Zimbabwe accounted for Britain's fourth largest bilateral aid programme.

As Zimbabwe's largest aid donor via the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), the UK has, perhaps not surprisingly, tried to steer Zimbabwe's development in directions of which it approves, notably political pluralism and a key role for the private sector. Even at times of tension, however, and the broader north-south context notwithstanding, it has done this essentially as a back-seat driver.

The ambivalence in the relationship between Britain and Zimbabwe stems on the one hand from the former's historical role as coloniser and, in the eyes of ZANU(PF), midwife to the Smith regime and on the other, as the catalyst for a non-military resolution.

Of all Zimbabwe's bilateral ties after independence, the relationship with the UK has followed the most predictable path. Given the long past relationship, the British government was inured to even the most forceful expression of disagreement on Zimbabwe's behalf.

Despite harsh words over the UK policy on sanctions against South Africa, Britain remained one of Zimbabwe's two largest trading partners and its largest bilateral donor. The entrusting of the delicate task of creating a unified army to British military officers was an indication that, past conflicts notwithstanding, the Mugabe expected administration expected Britain to play a major role in supporting the post-independence dispensation.

¹ PM Addresses United Nations: August 26, 1980 (Ministry of Information and Tourism) September 1980

² see Sylvester, p63

³ 31/1/80, official transcript

⁴ Herald, 2/2/81

⁵ Herald, 7/1/85

⁶ in Patel, pp246-247

⁷ Times, Financial Times, Daily Telegraph, 9/8/86

⁸ Such measures were numerous and have been well documented elsewhere. See for example, J Hanlon, Apartheid's Second Front (Harmondsworth: Penguin) 1986 and S Chan, Exporting Apartheid, (London: MacMillan) 1990.

⁹ Times, 18/7/86

¹⁰ Zimbabwe 1990 Report (UNDP) October 1991, p.22

Chapter seven: Zimbabwe and the Major Powers

a) USA

Diplomatic and trade links. Aid: generosity and manipulation. Bilateral quarrels on third issues.

b) The USSR

c) People's Republic of China

Contrasts, pre- and post-independence. Trade and aid agreements.

a) The USA

There is a perception which has not quite reached the level of axiom that American presidents who are unpopular at home are often popular abroad and vice versa. In the case of Jimmy Carter and Zimbabwe this was certainly true. On a visit to the United States in August 1980, Mugabe paid tribute to the Carter Administration and to the people of the United States for their support in Zimbabwe's hour of need:

It may not have been obvious to the rest of the world, but it was quite obvious to some of us that in your administration here we had a true friend.¹

The US was the first country to provide bilateral assistance in 1980 to the newly independent country with USD46m in cash transfers for immediate reconstruction of schools, clinics, dips, wells, roads as well as health, education and training. Although this sense of goodwill did not carry over to the Reagan Administration, the US remained alongside the UK one of the two main bilateral donors in the first five years of independence. Disagreements accumulated but ironically it took

a diplomatic incident involving ex-President Carter in 1986 for the aid programme to be suspended (see below).

Much of the deterioration in relations was a result not of disagreements on bilateral issues but of the perceived softness of the Reagan administration on the questions of South Africa and Namibia. In November 1982, then vice president George Bush visited Zimbabwe. At the ensuing state banquet, Mugabe thanked him for the US assistance received to date, but added that the USA, as a country which fought its own war of independence, should strongly support the principle of independence and side with Africa in the struggle to achieve independence for Namibia. He argued that the question was strictly one of decolonisation and rejected any attempt to create a link with other issues such as the presence of Cuban troops in Angola.

Some months earlier the same point had been made more emphatically during the state visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia, when the two leaders in a joint statement:

..emphatically rejected attempts by the Reagan administration and the racist South African regime to hold to ransom the independence of Namibia by linking the presence of Cuban Internationalist forces in Angola with the process of decolonisation in Namibia.²

Zimbabwean government rhetoric began to hint not only at acquiescence on the part of the US administration to the South African regime but at tacit collaboration. At a banquet in Dar es Salaam in January 1983, Mugabe complained that the independence process in Namibia was being frustrated by the joint insistence of the United States and South Africa on the withdrawal of Cubans from Angola as a condition.

The phrase “constructive engagement” coined by Chester Crocker, Reagan’s Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, never caught on in the region either as a term or a concept. It was widely regarded in the frontline states as a cloak for inhibiting radical change which might upset US strategic interests and was bracketed with the administration’s support for Jonas Savimbi’s UNITA guerrillas in Angola as an obstacle to progress.

As a central plank in US regional strategy, constructive engagement may well have led on its own to a reassessment of US-Zimbabwe relations by both sides. Yet two unrelated disagreements served as a trigger for US retaliation in the form of aid cuts. In December 1983, American aid to Zimbabwe was cut by USD35m to an amount of USD40m. As Patel explains:

The publicly-articulated reasons were budgetary cuts in the USA and Zimbabwe’s attitude a) to the USSR downing of a Korean airliner in September 1983 and b) to the American invasion of Grenada in October 1983; i.e., Zimbabwe had abstained in the Security Council on a resolution condemning USSR and had co-sponsored a resolution with Nicaragua against the American invasion of Grenada.³

KAL007

The Korean Airline incident was one of the most controversial issues considered by the Security Council during Zimbabwe’s first stint on the Council in 1983/84. Following the shooting down of the passenger plane for violating a sensitive strip of Soviet airspace, world reaction was largely polarised between utter shock and condemnation and support for the position of the USSR in defending itself against a suspected spying mission.

In the Security Council, a draft resolution tabled by USA, South Korea, Canada, Japan and Australia, joined by Belgium, Fiji, France, Italy, West Germany, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Philippines, Thailand and UK sought *inter alia* to condemn the USSR for violating international civil aviation regulations. The USSR and Poland voted No; Zimbabwe, China, Guyana and Nicaragua abstained.

Given the lack of warmth in the relationship between Zimbabwe and USSR at that stage, the vote does not reflect any particular leverage that the USSR had on Zimbabwe nor was it an expression of solidarity. The overt reason given for Zimbabwe's abstention was that it was simply expressing the consensus of the Africa Group which it represented on the Security Council.⁴ Two further factors may have had an influence: a desire to steer clear of what was shaping up to be a superpower confrontation; and a distrust of the flag under which the aircraft was flying (Zimbabwe had no diplomatic relations with South Korea at that point.)

The Zimbabwean position provoked a call for a strong, clear response from elements of Congress and USAID. Mugabe had stressed in a visit to the USA that Zimbabwe's vote on KAL007 was the result of a collective decision of Southern African countries. However he also told Parliament in Harare that had Zimbabwe been able to act independently, it would have had to consider the situation on its merits. Once the issue had assumed the nature of a rivalry between superpowers, he argued, non-aligned countries like Zimbabwe would necessarily stand aloof because they could not be seen to take sides with either the USA or the USSR. The US administration was not impressed.

Grenada

Two days after US troops entered Grenada to remove Bernard Coard and his co-conspirators who had seized power from Maurice

Bishop, Mugabe condemned the invasion as “an act of wanton aggression carried out in complete defiance of the UN Charter and the sovereign right of the people of Grenada”, who, it must be said, were not in a position to exercise their sovereign right. However, Mugabe extrapolated to draw an unfavourable comparison between US actions in Latin America and Southern Africa. He accused the US of arrogating to itself the role of universal watchdog of democracy, through its actions in Latin America and the Caribbean, while at the same time, lending support to the apartheid regime through its acquiescent policy of constructive engagement.⁵

The resulting cut in aid was greeted with disappointment but defiance. In his New Year’s Eve broadcast to the nation at the end of 1983, Mugabe declared that:

..we firmly refuse to mortgage our Zimbabwean personality to any grants or form of aid, for to do so is not only to become a mercenary state but also to turn the voice of Zimbabwe into that of a resonant megaphone, and its actions at home and abroad into the guided dancing steps of a manipulated puppet state.⁶

Relations over the next two years were difficult. In February 1985, the Acting US Ambassador Gibson Lanpher was reasonably frank with a Rotary audience in Bulawayo. The USA had, he said, given more than USD350m in assistance. The past five years had been a positive educational process for both. There had, however, been disappointments:

We are troubled by your government's erratic course when it comes to the human rights question. And thick-skinned as we may be, we would

have hoped for a more balanced treatment of the US in Zimbabwe's media. To refer to President Reagan as a naked imperialist is too much. Everyone knows he wears clothes.⁷

The USA had, he said, been unable to convince Zimbabwe of the wisdom of the American approaches to the twin problems of Namibia and South Africa. Further afield, Zimbabwe and the US had differed "more than we would have liked to" in the arena of the Security Council. He added that the USA would like to see more encouragement to domestic and foreign investment.

In May, US meddling in Nicaragua brought forth overt condemnation from Zimbabwe's permanent representative to the UN, Stan Mudenge. The US embargo of Nicaragua violated the UN Charter, OAS Charter and UN resolutions. The USA, he said, was showing inconsistency in applying sanctions against Nicaragua but not against South Africa.⁸

Mugabe turned up the heat in an address to the UN General Assembly in October, read on his behalf by Foreign Minister Witness Mangwende:

We are appalled at the repeated interference in the domestic affairs of other states by some states members of this Organisation. In the case of Nicaragua, we witnessed the open threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of that country. There is a military and economic siege of that country, all because it has decided to be free to choose a socio-economic political system most suited to its own peculiar situation. The USA. Government finances, trains, equips, and deploys the contras into Nicaragua where they are committing

murders, rape, and economic sabotage and making the lives of the people of that country a real nightmare.

We condemn in no uncertain terms such barbaric actions perpetrated against a small nation that can in no way pose any threat to the security and interests of the mighty United States. We call on the USA to observe the rule of international law in its relationship with Nicaragua and leave that country to pursue its chosen course.⁹

Mugabe called for full support for the efforts of the Contadora Group from all interested parties including the USA and reiterated Zimbabwe's opposition to the invasion of, interference or intervention in the internal affairs of one country by another "be it in Grenada, El Salvador, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Mayotte, East Timor, Chad or Western Sahara." He called on the interventionist states to withdraw their troops and let the peoples of those countries run their affairs free from any interference. He singled out for special mention the situation in the Korean peninsula, where, he argued:

...there will be no peace or security in the Korean peninsula as long as foreign troops and missiles remain stationed in South Korea, and Korea remains divided. Foreign interference must stop to facilitate and encourage South and North Korea to engage in meaningful discussions aimed at the peaceful reunification of that country. Reduction of tension and potential conflict is in the interest at us all. We therefore call for the start of negotiations involving all the concerned parties, including the United States.¹⁰

In July 1986, a seemingly trivial diplomatic incident occurred which was to cause the final break in US tolerance of Zimbabwean criticism. Ex-President Jimmy Carter and acting ambassador Gibson Lanpher walked out of a lunch-time Fourth of July reception in Harare during a speech read by the Minister of Youth Sport and Culture David Karimanzira on behalf of the Foreign Minister. According to Lanpher, who had been Carter's personal representative at the Lancaster House talks and was considered one of Zimbabwe's strongest defenders within the State Department, a prior agreement had been obtained with the foreign ministry that the two governments would confine themselves to toasts at the reception, with Carter making a brief speech as a special guest. In the event, the Zimbabwean speech attacked US policy on South Africa, accusing it of platitudes and apologies for apartheid.

Having praised Carter's daughter Amy for being arrested at a demonstration outside the South African embassy in Washington, Mangwende drew attention to the discrepancy between the declaration at the statue of liberty and the situation prevailing in South Africa. After the walkout, the speech continued to argue that South Africa's aggression was a result of an unwillingness by UK and US governments to impose immediate and effective sanctions against South Africa in contrast to a more active approach in four other cases: Poland and Nicaragua, which were, in Zimbabwean eyes, internal matters; Afghanistan, with a grain embargo on the USSR; and aggression against Libya. Earlier, the minister had commended, in a muted manner, US development aid to Zimbabwe.

At a press conference that evening, Carter said he regarded the speech as an insult to him personally and to the American government and people. The official responsible for such an inappropriate attack should apologise. Although admitting that he disagreed with many

aspects of administration policy on South Africa and favoured strong economic and political sanctions, he said that a Fourth of July reception was the wrong place for an attack which would be interpreted as aimed at the United States as a whole rather than at a particular administration.

Noting that the USA had given Zimbabwe USD370m in aid since independence, Carter said that the speech would make it much more difficult for the Reagan administration to deliver the financial aid it would like to.¹¹ No apology was forthcoming and US aid to Zimbabwe was suspended.

Injury to insult

In January 1988, a row broke out over a personal incident involving the family of a Zimbabwean diplomat in New York. On 12 January, Foreign Minister Shamuyarira, who had swapped his information portfolio with Mangwende, demanded that the US release Terence Karamba, who had been held in foster homes over the previous month since being taken from school in Queens by the Department of Social Services Special Services for Children, following allegations of abuse by his father, an executive officer at Zimbabwe's UN mission. The matter was finally resolved when Terence arrived back in Harare in March in the company of a Zimbabwean social worker after the US Supreme Court had cleared the way for him to leave the US.

It took a further year for fences to be mended sufficiently for the US aid programme to resume. This was done with a USD5m grant for small farm development, part of a larger three-year pledge of USD17m. Commented US ambassador James Rawlings at the time:

Political relations between our two governments have improved over the past two years. Today's signing would not have taken place in the atmosphere of two years ago. ¹²

Attempts had meanwhile been underway to repair relations. In an address to the Britain Zimbabwe Society in April, Foreign Minister Shamuyarira, who had been appointed since the Carter débâcle, spoke of fundamental differences on Southern Africa, the Middle East, Central America and Afghanistan, but suggested that they should not prevent the two countries from working together. He compared the impact of disagreements on Zimbabwe's relationship with Britain:

What I say to the American government is that we should, as we do with the British, accept our differences.¹³

From then on official relations began to show signs of improvement. On presenting his credentials to Bush in October 1989, Zimbabwe's new ambassador to the USA called on US business to invest in Zimbabwe. He said that Zimbabwe was satisfied with the level of aid to date, but hoped for more. Bush, in reply, said that Zimbabwe was a crucial leader in Southern Africa and provided a good example of mending divisions. He recognised, however, that Zimbabwe and the USA differed on the tactics to end apartheid.¹⁴

Aid

In the first decade of independence, total US aid to Zimbabwe amounted to USD417.5m, of which USD354.5m (85%) took the form of bilateral aid. USD60m was channelled through SADCC, while NGOs provided a further USD3m. The largest item in the aid programme was the Commodity Import Program (CIP) totalling USD168m. The CIP had a dual purpose of funding critical imports and channelling local counterparty funds to development projects.

Imports from the US consisted mainly of manufacturing equipment, tractors, combines, heavy construction and lift equipment, data processing equipment and raw materials. Some 90% of CIP resources went to the private sector. Firms receiving such allocations were required to deposit an equivalent sum in local currency to the project concerned.

A letter from Foreign Minister Mangwende to Ambassador Robert Keeley on 22 March 1982 set out the understandings which were to govern economic, technical and related assistance. The government of Zimbabwe, said the letter:

..will take such steps to ensure the effective use of such assistance; it will co-operate with the US government to ensure that procurement will be at reasonable prices and on reasonable terms.

Will without restriction permit continuous observation and review by US representatives; will provide the US government with full and complete information concerning such programmes and operations.¹⁵

Zimbabwe would also bear a fair share of the costs of co-operative technical assistance. The nature of these understandings was less conditional than some other bilateral aid programmes (see chapter eight), but as in the case of Swedish programmes, required tighter audit procedures.¹⁶ It is worth noting that even when political relations were at a low point with the aid programme suspended, the level of bilateral trade remained significant (see table 7.1)

TABLE 7.1

USA					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	10.7	3.1	1980	27.8	7.3
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	69.8	7.9	1981	74.4	7.3
1982	63.6	7.9	1982	103.5	9.6
1983	68.7	6.7	1983	100.4	9.5
1984	79.0	6.2	1984	111.5	9.3
1985	125.8	8.1	1985	146.7	10.1
1986	97.4	5.7	1986	135.9	8.3
1987	129.5	6.8	1987	163.5	9.4
1988	186.1	7.3	1988	120.2	5.9
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	235.9	6.5	1990	516.4	11.4

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

Investment

Despite an ideological aversion to multinationals, the only example of a local acquisition by a US company was greeted with great approval. In 1984, Heinz bought Olivine, an edible oils manufacturer. At a luncheon in his honour hosted by the Heinz executive committee on 3 October, Mugabe paid tribute to the company, which, he said:

...is viewed as an American pioneer in our young nation, because to date it is one of the few major USA companies that have confounded those profits of doom who lack confidence in our country, by responding to our call for foreign investments.¹⁷

b) The USSR

The USSR backed ZAPU, or more specifically Joshua Nkomo, during the independence struggle. It had limited success in overcoming the negative impact of this position on relations with the ZANU(PF)-dominated administration. The presence of ZAPU ministers in the first post-independence coalition government was not sufficient to create a climate of rapprochement between ZANU(PF) and the Soviet Union, which was not represented at the independence celebrations.

Relations took several years to warm up despite tentative forays by Soviet diplomats. On 20 November 1980, the Herald reported that:

Mystery surrounds the presence in Salisbury of the Russian ambassador to Zambia who arrived for one week's visit. 'I just came to rest and to see Salisbury,' he said. 'I like your city. It is very beautiful.'

At the end of his visit, the ambassador, Dr Vassili Solodovnikov said that his country now only had “diplomatic” relations with ZAPU and that he hadn't managed to meet the foreign minister.

Three months later, on 21 February 1981, an agreement was announced to establish Soviet/Zimbabwe diplomatic relations on a government-to-government basis only. A date was not, however, set for the establishment of embassies. The Soviet government did not send a delegation to ZIMCORD the following month, despite an invitation. The reason given by Valentin Udovin, the Soviet ambassador to Mozambique, was that diplomatic relations had only been established one month previously and that there was therefore no time to prepare.¹⁸

In early June, a four member diplomatic team arrived to set up an embassy. The Chargé d’Affaires Vladimir Silkin declared that his country welcomed “the victory of the Patriotic Front forces of your country.” This was clearly a compromise formula, allowing for recognition of historical links while acknowledging new realities, though not the most recent reality that the patriotic front now survived solely as an appendage in the names of the parties ZANU(PF) and PF-ZAPU.¹⁹

A trade agreement with the Soviet Union was reached in January 1984, providing for most favoured nation status, in particular with respect to customs duties and formalities, except where preferences were granted under a customs union, free trade area or bilateral treaty with a developing country. Unlike most similar agreements, this particular one included an article whereby:

Each contracting party guarantees non-divulgence of documentation, information and other data received during the period of implementation

of this agreement to any third party without the consent of the other contracting party.²⁰

This appears to be an attempt to ensure that relations were maintained strictly at an inter-government level, with no room for party involvement, particularly on the part of ZAPU.

A subsequent agreement on economic and technical co-operation took an inordinately long time to implement. Signed on the occasion of Mugabe's first visit to Moscow in December 1985, it was ratified by the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet on 30 March 1987 and by the government of Zimbabwe on 9 November 1987. The exchange of instruments finally took place on 16 February 1988.

A group of experts from various ministries of the two governments had meanwhile met from 17-28 February 1986. The minutes²¹ indicate an attempt to identify concrete areas of potential co-operation. Specific offers were to be made on the following projects, subject to the approval of the competent authorities on both sides:

Energy: Technoprom Export would prepare and forward for consideration a technical and commercial offer for the expansion of Kariba hydroelectric power station and for the construction of the second phase of Hwange II power station; Zimbabwe would submit a list of projects for consideration by the Soviet side for the construction of power transmission lines.

Metallurgy: The Soviet side offered its involvement in training and geological investigation and the construction of various shops at ZISCO steel works, along with machine building.

The Zimbabweans were told that Soviet credit could be available for the supply of machinery and equipment and for carrying out the

surveying and design works “on financial terms and conditions to be determined on a case by case basis.”

Pointing to what they claimed were Zimbabwean problems with servicing its foreign debt, the Zimbabwean experts expressed a wish to be provided with credits on softer terms and conditions as well as the possibility of repayment of credits through Zimbabwean export goods. There is no evidence that either side left the meeting with a sense of urgency.

A joint commission for economic, trade, scientific and technical co-operation held its first session from 29 May to 2 June 1989. The Zimbabwean delegation was headed by the deputy minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications. Such a choice of delegation leader suggests that the Zimbabwean government did not attach the highest priority to the meeting.

After analysing the volume of trade between the two countries, both sides agreed that the level of trade exchange was low. There was, they suggested, a need for sustained efforts to make trade organisations aware of possibilities. It was agreed that both sides would agree to the exchange of information through visits and exhibitions.

On the question of industrial co-operation, the Soviet side renewed its interest in participating in international tenders for rehabilitating ZISCO steelworks, when these were put out. The Soviet delegation also renewed its interest in power engineering projects, though they were informed by the Zimbabwean side that projects of this nature were also subject to international tender.

Even unilateral offers of a non-commercial nature were not received with great enthusiasm. An offer of ten doctors to be financed under the Africa Fund was accepted. An offer of technology in eye surgery was noted, but the Zimbabwean side indicated the need for a

feasibility study before it could be implemented. What was really required, they suggested, was the basic technology for cataract operations. The Soviet side also offered orthopaedic technology, which the Zimbabweans said was not required at that time. The Commission agreed that the offer could be explored further at a later date.²²

Attempts continued to breathe life into the agreements reached, with a plan of action on cultural, educational, trade and scientific co-operation signed on 11 December 1990.²³ By then, however, a relative thaw in political relationships coincided with a downgrading by the Soviet Union of the importance of economic links with the frontline states and little progress ensued.

Since the break up of the USSR, Zimbabwe has opened diplomatic relations with a number of CIS and Baltic states, though these remain low profile.

c) People's Republic of China

Sino-Zimbabwean relations post-independence have been rather low-key and do not reflect the importance of China to ZANU(PF)'s liberation struggle. In January 1982, on the occasion of a visit by Chinese Premier Zhao Ziang, ZANU(PF) National Organising Secretary and Minister of Mines Maurice Nyagumbo told a party meeting that Zhao should receive a rousing welcome "because of all the countries that helped ZANU(PF), China contributed most."²⁴ It was, he said, the first country to give assistance to ZANU(PF) and ZANLA. In the event, five people died and 30 were injured in the welcoming crush at the airport.

Apart from gratitude for significant help during the struggle, two other factors served to maintain Zimbabwe's friendship with China. On the one hand, China is regarded in much of the third world as what

Mazrui describes as “a kindred spirit”, having suffered similar humiliations.²⁵ To that extent, China has the tacit status of an honorary non-aligned country. On the other hand, it was regarded in the 1970s and early 1980s as an alternative socialist model for countries not attracted to the Soviet camp. Speaking on 9 January 1982 at a banquet in Zhao’s honour, Mugabe described China as:

...a model socialist state, whose level of development and distribution of wealth is a source of inspiration to those of us who are only now beginning to embark on a socialist course.²⁶

China’s support for ZANU(PF), both before independence and once in power, was repaid politically when the Zimbabwean government supported China’s repression of the Tienanmen Square protests in 1989, while ZANU(PF) and the Communist Party of China agreed a protocol at the same time.

The document, signed on 8 November 1989, set out a wide ranging agenda for future co-operation.²⁷ “Reaffirming the historic ties and friendship existing between the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front and the Communist Party of China, encouraged by the development of relations between the two parties in recent years, desiring to promote their mutual understanding, solidarity and co-operation,” the two parties agreed to a nine point set of aims, whereby they would:

(1) endeavour to develop their ties of friendly co-operation on the basis and principles of independence, complete equality, mutual respect and non interference in each other’s internal affairs

(2) exchange delegations and share views on issues of common concern

- (3) exchange publications and documentation
- (4) promote friendly relations and co-operation between the mass organisations of the two countries
- (5) endeavour to consolidate and promote existing friendly relations between the two republics
- (6) exchange reporters, give lectures and provide research personnel
- (7) exchange views in international arenas
- (8) invite members of the central committee of the other party for working holidays
- (9) support National Liberation Movements in Southern Africa.

In retrospect it appears as if the protocol was at most a symbolic expression of solidarity, since there is no record of any of these aims being carried out in any formal sense.

At a government level, however, agreements have been far more tightly focused resulting in a comparatively high completion rate. Least successful has been the original trade agreement signed on 14 May 1981. This set out to develop trade relations between the two countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit; to “provide the widest facilities for the exchange of their products with a view to promoting reciprocal trade”; to grant MFN treatment in respect of customs, duties and other trade formalities (except where advantages are granted to neighbouring countries to facilitate frontier traffic, as a result of a customs union, free trade area or trade agreement or where the goods and services do not originate in either country); and to allow re-export without prior approval. The parties agreed to take measures to ensure that prices for goods to be traded under this agreement be established on the basis of world market prices, “with payment in accordance with foreign exchange regulations in any freely convertible currency to be

agreed upon.”²⁸ Although the Zimbabwean delegation obtained substantial orders for tobacco and contracted to buy Chinese chemicals, the lack of sustained impact of the agreement may be gauged from Table 7.2.

Other agreements which depended largely on fulfilment of pledges by the Chinese government produced more tangible results. At ZIMCORD, China pledged some £12m. A protocol on economic and technical co-operation signed on 18 September 1981 provided for China to construct a 60,000-seat stadium, with expenses to be paid out of a previous loan agreement concluded in September 1980. On 11 January 1983, China agreed to provide a further five-year interest free loan of Yuan 60m without any strings attached to finance additional expenses for construction of the stadium or other projects to be decided by consultation.

The used portion of the loan would be repaid in ten equal annual instalments over 10 years from 1 January 1993 to 2003 with export commodities or convertible currency as may be agreed between the two governments. The time limit for repayment could be extended. Further five year interest free project loans of 15m Yuan were agreed on 28 August 1985 and 20 January 1987.

On 17 September 1985, a protocol was signed for the gratuitous supply of military equipment. China agreed to provide military equipment for 5000 troops with no strings attached. Such equipment included pistols, machine guns, submachine guns, anti-aircraft, rocket launchers and mortars.²⁹

TABLE 7.2

CHINA					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	8.6	2.5	1980	0.7	0.2
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	24.6	2.8	1981	1.2	0.1
1982	1.5	0.2	1982	1.5	0.1
1983	8.0	0.8	1983	2.4	0.2
1984	26.1	2.1	1984	4.2	0.4
1985	58.5	3.4	1985	13.6	0.9
1986	48.0	2.8	1986	6.0	0.4
1987	30.4	1.6	1987	30.4	1.6
1988	30.2	1.2	1988	n/p	n/p
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	59.6	1.7	1990	n/p	n/p

source: extrapolation from CSO data

Reviewing progress

The first session of the Sino-Zimbabwe joint commission on economic, technical and trade co-operation met in June 1986.³⁰ Unusually for such gatherings, it could express satisfaction at the co-operation achieved, without being accused of gross exaggeration. Construction of the Zimbabwe National Sports Stadium had proceeded smoothly; and a garment factory in Chitungwiza, near Harare, had been completed and handed over with the requisite training programmes in place. It was agreed that a feasibility study on fresh water fish farming and small- to medium-sized water conservation projects be undertaken, while discussions considered the possibility of using the balance of the existing loan to finance another garment factory.

Zimbabwe agreed to provide preferential treatment where possible in the following projects where the Chinese felt competent: ZISCO rehabilitation project; coal-based ammonia manufacturing project; technical personnel to PTC; Kariba South power station project; road and railway linkage system in Harare, party headquarters in Harare, Connemara gold dump recycling; bicycle manufacturing; copper mining and processing; nickel mine prospecting; asbestos spinning plant; joint venture construction corporation; glassware plant, spark plug plant; and manufacture of machine tools.

On the question of trade the parties agreed to diversify commodities and expand volume on the basis of equality and mutual benefit in accordance with the needs and possibilities of both countries, with the aim of minimising the trade imbalance between the two.

On one score, the parties diverged, although not formally. Wherever possible, barter trade or countertrade was to be encouraged between the two countries. The Chinese submitted a draft of a protocol on barter trade, but by that stage, the Zimbabwean attitude to such

forms of exchange had undergone a reassessment and now showed a clear preference for hard currency (see Chapter Four).

A new agreement on economic and technical co-operation signed on 5 June 1987 referred to the guiding principles of equality, mutual benefit, emphasis on practical results, and diversity in form and common development.³¹ The possibility of co-operation was envisaged in light industry, mining and metallurgy, energy including hydroelectric power, machinery, agriculture, construction, telecommunications, communications, chemical industry, alongside other areas that might arise. Forms of co-operation would include contracting for engineering and construction work, provision of technical services and transfer of technology, joint ventures, personnel training, provision of equipment, and other forms of co-operation acceptable to both sides.

Meeting again in August 1988, the commission expressed satisfaction at the completion of the sports stadium and noted that a new project, the Chinoyi Teachers College had started. The Zimbabwe side undertook to provide its Chinese counterparts with a definite proposal in connection with the construction and ancillary works of Kwasine gold dam by end-December 1988. The Zimbabweans stated that the construction of seven garment factories in different sites was under consideration.

A consultancy for the rehabilitation of ZISCO steelworks was awarded to China International Engineering Consulting Corporation, the fee being met for the most part out of the loan provided by China in 1985. The remaining 25% of the fee was to be paid by ZISCO in local currency. Much of the rest of the meeting was given over to Zimbabwean requests for Chinese personnel including agronomists and doctors.

On bilateral trade, the two sides expressed satisfaction, while acknowledging scope for growth. Forty percent of the receipts from the sale of Zimbabwean tobacco to Chinese corporations in 1988 was to be used by Zimbabwean companies to purchase Chinese commodities. Consideration would be given to a Chinese request that 50% of the total value of tobacco purchases for 1989 be used by Zimbabwean importers to purchase Chinese goods. However, the Zimbabwean side emphasised that this request was subject to further negotiations after a formal request had been submitted to the relevant Zimbabwean authorities.³²

Sino-Zimbabwean relations since independence have not had the high public profile that might have been expected from pre-independence affinities. Attempts by the Zimbabwean authorities to exhibit political support for the Chinese position in the 1989 uprising did not receive popular backing. Rhetorical expressions of solidarity notwithstanding, however, Chinese aid to Zimbabwe has been project-based and most of the projects have been completed. Trade patterns, as expected, have been slower to change.

Three paths

The USA, USSR and China provide comparative contrasts in the relative importance of political will and economic imperatives in structuring Zimbabwe's international relations.

Both China and the USA serve as examples where political action did produce a tangible economic result. In the case of the USA, rhetorical accusations of dubious motive for US policy in Southern Africa and Central America led to reductions and the temporary suspension of official US aid. Throughout the period 1983 to 1988, however, when relations could be described as troubled, the USA never accounted for less than 5.7% of exports and 5.9% of imports and was

consistently among the top five export and import markets for the Zimbabwean economy.

The profile given to political relations with China in the first fourteen years of independence was lower than might have been expected, given the strength of Chinese support for ZANU(PF) in the pre-independence struggle. Nevertheless, the relationship was always praised as fraternal and efforts to create economic ties did yield some fruit.

Apart from economic assistance provided by China, trade increased in the first five years of independence. At its high point, in 1985, the PRC was Zimbabwe's 10th largest export market, accounting for 3.4% of total exports. Paradoxically, however, it was overtaken by Taiwan the following year. Taiwan – to which ZANU(PF) was ideologically hostile – was also a more significant source of imports than the PRC throughout the period under review.

The Soviet Union was never seen as a priority for intensifying either political or economic ties. Efforts by Soviet representatives to develop closer co-operation were largely resisted and as a country it featured little in government declarations of its foreign ties.

Relations with the United States were, when positive, presented as a series of bilateral events. Criticism of the USA, on the other hand, was largely contextualised in the framework of north-south tensions or the struggle against imperialism. The potential impact of such criticism on bilateral aid was acknowledged, but no deliberate attempts were made by Zimbabwe to disrupt its flow. Bilateral trade was, in the meantime, not an issue on which the government ever chose to pass public judgement.

¹ Herald, 27/8/80

² Ministry of Information Press Statement, 23/2/82

³ Patel, p247

⁴ Background interview with officials at Zimbabwe Mission to UN, November 1990

⁵ Herald, 29/10/83

⁶ Patel, p248

⁷ Bulawayo Chronicle, 23/2/85

⁸ Herald, 16/5/85

⁹ Policy Statement No. 16: PM Mugabe's Address to the 40th Session on the United Nations General Assembly, New York, October 7, 1985 (Harare: Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications) October 1985

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Atlanta Journal & Constitution, 5/7/86

¹² Reuter, 31/8/88

¹³ Reuter, 6/4/88

¹⁴ Sunday Mail, 29/10/89

¹⁵ USA File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Ministry of Information Press Statement, 11/10/84

¹⁸ Herald, 26/3/81

¹⁹ After independence, the 'PF' prefix fell into disuse for ZAPU, but was retained in common use as a suffix for ZANU, largely to distinguish the latter from ZANU-Ndonga, the party of Ndabaningi Sithole.

²⁰ Article 5, Trade agreement 18/1/84, in USSR File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

²¹ in USSR File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

²² *ibid*

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ Herald, 7/1/83

²⁵ A. Mazrui, Africa's International Relations (London: Heinemann) 1977, p121

²⁶ Press unit to PM, 11/1/82

²⁷ in China File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

²⁸ as minuted in China File, Bilateral Treaties Section

²⁹ in China File, Bilateral Treaties Section

³⁰ minuted in China file

³¹ *ibid*

³² *ibid*

Chapter 8: Zimbabwe and Europe

Western and Eastern Europe: changing patterns of involvement. The cases of Sweden, France and Romania.

European countries cannot comfortably be grouped into convenient sub-categories when describing the warmth or otherwise of their relationship with Zimbabwe. Throughout the 1980s, central and eastern European states had varying degrees of success in fashioning close ties with the ZANU(PF) government. Romania and Yugoslavia both translated their pre-liberation war assistance to the winning party into strong bonds of friendship, the practical consequences of which were, however, limited. Other countries which were closer to the Soviet Union had more work to do to break through the residual distrust. Some, such as East Germany and Bulgaria, were more successful than others.

Among the non-communist countries, Scandinavia as a whole was considered historically sympathetic to the independence struggle. Other western European countries were suspected of having been less than rigorous in their opposition to the Smith regime.

In trade and aid terms, however, the latter group was potentially extremely significant. At the ZIMCORD conference, for example, EC members and the European Commission together contributed some 40% of total pledges.¹ The spirit of reconciliation allowed them to receive a warmer welcoming embrace than some of their eastern European counterparts, which had backed the wrong part of the right side.

Sweden

In August 1981, the Swedish deputy minister of foreign affairs Lief Leifland said that Sweden had singled out Zimbabwe as one of the

countries to which extensive Swedish aid and co-operation had been made available.² Of all Zimbabwe's bilateral donors, Sweden has exhibited perhaps the least concern for any visible return to its own coffers, while maintaining strict conditions of accountability for the way its funds are spent.

A specific agreement on co-operation between the Swedish and Zimbabwean governments, signed in January 1982, provides an illustration:

For education, Sweden shall make available on a grant basis an amount not exceeding SEK58,500,000 for the period 1 July 1981 to 30 June 1983, to be financed out of the total amount made available by Sweden for development co-operation with Zimbabwe in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding of 7 October 1981.

Zimbabwe undertakes to submit to Sweden each year not later than 1 September a progress report and a financial report on the utilisation of the resources made available under this agreement, during the previous financial year. Annual consultations shall be held between the parties in order to review the progress of the programme and to prepare plans on the basis of the reports mentioned under paragraph 1 for the future utilisation of Swedish resources...

The object of the programme is to reach the population in the rural areas, especially to meet the needs of primary and lower levels of secondary education in the communal areas. The programme includes the following activities:

Zintech college in Sinoia including vehicles and paper - SEK9,200,000;
Science kits for rural secondary schools - SEK8m; Teachers quarters,
rural secondary schools - SEK12.8m; Adult education, literacy, rural

skills training, staff training - SEK7m; Paper - SEK8m; Reconstruction of primary schools - SEK13.5m.³

Sweden was also among the first donors to link aid to human rights issues. In March 1983, adverse press reports on massacres in Matabeleland, resulting from army action which was ostensibly against armed dissidents but which was either negligently or deliberately indiscriminating, led Sweden to postpone scheduled aid discussions.

Consultations on development co-operation between the two governments finally took place in Harare from 14 to 17 June. Tom Mswaka, heading the Zimbabwean delegation, painted a sober picture of Zimbabwe's economic performance in 1982, with a very sharp drop in all indicators compared to 1981. In addition, the balance of payments was under strain and disbursement of ZIMCORD resources had been slower than planned. The overall result of these developments was failure of the economy to generate export earnings for the purchase of imports in quantities adequate to support satisfactory levels of growth and development.

The Swedish ambassador, Bo Heinebach, provided a brief review of relations since independence. He emphasised the close relations between Sweden and Zimbabwe in all fields of activity. This did not preclude the possibility of problems in some fields, but the excellent relations made it easier to solve these problems in a spirit of mutual confidence.

A wide range of bilateral activities had taken place in various fields, said Heinebach, with a development co-operation programme taking a central role. He also mentioned that a large number of Swedish companies had shown great interest in the Zimbabwean market. Some had established Harare offices.

The head of the Swedish delegation Mr Bo Goransson meanwhile reviewed the principles of Sweden's development co-operation policy in Southern Africa. He was critical of the way the Swedish aid programme had been implemented in the previous year. The Swedish government had decided to propose to Zimbabwe a two-year programme with a total SEK250m for 1983-85; he estimated that the balance to be carried over from the financial year 1982/83 was SEK85m, which meant that over 50% of the available resources would have to be carried over. He considered this unsatisfactory. Valuable resources for development co-operation remained idle when the country most needed them. This, Goransson suggested, was due to inadequate planning capacity, though to a certain extent, it reflected the ambition on both sides to scrutinise new and ongoing projects carefully. Sweden, he said, was willing to help Zimbabwe with personnel in the fields of monitoring and planning of projects.

Turning to the specifics of the Swedish programme, Goransson emphasised that co-operation would continue in the sectors of rural health and rural education in order to assist people in the communal areas. Assistance in the modern sector would continue through use of the personnel and consultancy fund as well as through the import support programme. This would make it possible for Zimbabwe gradually to increase its independence from South Africa. He also mentioned transportation as a new sector for support and reiterated the significance of NGOs as a natural and efficient supplement to government aid.

The two sides agreed that funds should be released quarterly in advance based on requests from Zimbabwe. They further agreed an import support programme of SEK25m for each of the financial years,

tied to the import of equipment from Sweden. A procurement plan was promised before August for the following financial year.

The delegations discussed the combinations of Swedish concessional credits and import support funds. They agreed that when Swedish concessional credits were considered by Zimbabwe, the use of import support funds should not be considered when evaluating the tenders.

Distinguishing features

Goransson outlined the importance that the Swedish side attached to the proposed general agreement on terms and procedures already submitted to the Zimbabwean authorities for consideration. These were essentially designed to ensure transparency and accountability in the application of any aid disbursed and were not designed to influence procurement decisions. A number of significant terms distinguished the Swedish approach from other bilateral donors:

(1) When financial resources made available by Sweden were utilised for the procurement of goods and services, the responsibility for procurement would rest in principle with Zimbabwe. Sweden would assist, if the parties so agreed. However, to ascertain that resources made available by Sweden for procurement were used with due attention to economy and efficiency, procurement would wherever practicable, be based on formal competitive international bidding.

(2) When financial resources were tied to procurement in Sweden of Swedish goods and services, procurement would be made from the most competitive source of supply in Sweden and wherever practicable be based on formal competitive bidding.

(3.) Sweden would be given all appropriate information regarding procurement financed out of Swedish contributions and would have access to all relevant records and documents. Swedish

suppliers of goods and services would whenever feasible be granted the opportunity to participate in the bidding for contracts financed out of Swedish contributions.

(4) Zimbabwe would furnish to Sweden all such information as it might reasonably request relating to the use of Swedish contributions and enable Sweden to visit the various activities and have access to the relevant documents.⁴

In parallel to aid disbursement, trade with Sweden did, in fact, increase. By mid November, 1984, Swedish trade with Zimbabwe had grown from some ZWD3m in 1980, when Sweden was one of the first countries to send an industrial delegation, to around ZWD16-17m. Private Swedish firms in Zimbabwe included Alfa Laval, Atlas Copco, Ericsson, Saab-Scania, ASEA and SKF.

Over the decade as a whole, however, trade between the two countries never attained levels reflecting the strength of the relationship in other areas. In fact, Sweden declined as an export market for Zimbabwe in relative terms, though its share of Zimbabwe's imports reached a relative peak of 1.5% in 1988 (see table 8.1).

Though Sweden has been singled out for illustration as its approach is well recorded, other Scandinavian countries responded to opportunities and requests. In 1980/81, Finland was Zimbabwe's largest buyer of sugar, but by 1984, it had stopped imports of Zimbabwean sugar as it had become uncompetitive on world markets.

TABLE 8.1

SWEDEN					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	6.3	1.8	1980	2.4	0.6
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	6.4	0.7	1981	7.1	0.7
1982	5.9	0.7	1982	8.8	0.8
1983	5.1	0.5	1983	8.5	0.8
1984	13.0	1.0	1984	16.6	1.4
1985	12.2	0.8	1985	16.0	1.1
1986	20.2	1.2	1986	18.4	1.1
1987	10.5	0.6	1987	20.4	1.2
1988	27.8	1.1	1988	31.5	1.5
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	22.2	0.6	1990	61.3	1.4

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

France

The victory of François Mitterrand in May 1981 was seen in Zimbabwe as a welcome development. At a reception in honour of the French Ambassador on 3 June 1981, Bernard Chidzero, then Minister of Economic Planning and Development gave an indication of one of the competing models of socialism being promoted in government circles.

We would like to establish socialism not through imposition but out of satisfaction, and I think we will draw inspiration from the French.⁵

Trade and aid volumes both grew significantly in the early post-independence years. Much of the trade was, however, aid-related and in contrast to Sweden reflected French concern that aid outflows should return to swell French order books. Taking stock in late 1983, the French commercial counsellor in Harare stated that in the previous four years, Zimbabwe's exports to France had doubled while imports had increased sixfold. Zimbabwe's exports consisted mainly of minerals (nickel, chrome and other non-ferrous metals) and agricultural commodities (tobacco, coffee, cotton) amounting to ZWD21m in 1982. Imports from France - worth ZWD54m at the end of 1982 - included electrical equipment, machinery, cars, spare parts, metals and chemicals.

Initial protocol

The first financial protocol between the Zimbabwean and French authorities was signed on 18 February 1981, before the May elections which brought Mitterrand to power. It contained the following notable provisions:

(1) The French government extends to the government of Zimbabwe credit facilities of an amount not exceeding FRF250m to finance the purchase in France of French goods and services as follows:

[a] FRF25m for the purchase by the government or parastatals of light equipment not tied to specific projects

[b] FRF225m for the execution of projects approved by both parties on a case by case basis.

(2) The financial facilities referred to are composed of:

[a] a loan from the French Treasury not exceeding FRF100m

[b] bankers credits guaranteed by the Compagnie d'Assurance pour le commerce exterieur (COFACE) not exceeding FRF150m.⁶

The following conditions applied for the purchases mentioned in (1)[a] above:

If the project was to be implemented directly by the government of Zimbabwe the loan and credits were extended to the government. If the project was under the aegis of a parastatal the same would apply, provided the government guaranteed the servicing of interest and repayment of capital.

In the case of (1)[b], a further possibility applied, if the project was undertaken by a private company. In that case the treasury loan would be extended to the government of Zimbabwe, while the bankers credits could be extended to the private company, provided the government guaranteed servicing and repayment.

The contracts would be financed through joint use of the loan and credits. Drawing rights on the treasury loan were fixed at 40% of the French content of orders for French goods and services. The use of the treasury loan was reserved for the financing of the downpayment to French suppliers. A downpayment of not less than 10% of the amount

of each contract FOB was to be made when the order was placed, by drawing on the treasury loan. The bankers credits would cover the remaining 60% of the French content of the contract.

Each treasury loan under a specific contract carried interest at 3% per annum on the outstanding balance and was redeemable over 25 years by 36 successive and equal semi-annual instalments, the first one falling due 90 months after the end of the quarter during which the first drawing was made.

Interest accrued on each drawing on the treasury loan from the date of drawing.

The guaranteed bankers credits would be redeemable in seven years in 14 successive and equal semi-annual instalments for contracts under (1)[a] and 10 years under (1)[b], the first instalment falling due either on delivery or on the contractual date of competition of the project. The usual rates of credit for this type of agreement were to apply at the time of signing, to which the COFACE insurance premium would be added.

To be eligible for the above facilities, individual contracts with French suppliers had to be concluded at the latest on 30 June 1982. The amount could be not less than FRF150,000 for contracts under (1)[a] and FRF5m for (1)[b], except in exceptional cases such as consulting services. No drawing on the Treasury loan could take place later than 30 June 1984.

The French financial protocols dwelt more on the loan terms than on the purposes of the loan. They nevertheless proved particularly popular with the Zimbabwean government and were repeated. Of the seven Franco-Zimbabwean bilateral agreements archived for the first 11 years of independence, six took the form of financial protocols, with the example above serving as a model.

Certain of them were for specific projects such as the Protocol of 27 January 1987 for a joint project on tractor mechanisation in communal lands, whereby the government of France granted FRF800,000 to the government of Zimbabwe. Others contained a mixture of targetted and non-targetted loans.

On 10 November 1987, a protocol was signed to provide financial support for economic development and specifically, "to finance projects included in the development priorities of Zimbabwe." Although following the model of the first protocol, the terms were somewhat softer. The loan would not exceed FRF410m and was to be used to finance the purchase of French goods and services as follows:

(a) A grant from the French Treasury for FRF10m to finance an urban transport study for Harare-Chitungwiza (the latter being essentially a dormitory town).

(b) FRF400m credit facilities for the execution of projects agreed by both parties mentioned in the Annex below and for light equipment not tied to specific projects.

The financial package for (b) consisted of a loan not exceeding FRF198.03m from the French Treasury. COFACE credits could not exceed FRF201.97m.

The urban transport study was to be financed by the French government, while other projects were to involve joint use of loan and credit. Drawing rights on the Treasury loan were fixed at 50% of the French content for the orders of French goods and services, with credits covering the balance. The Treasury loan was to be used to finance the whole of the first instalment on each contract covered by the protocol, equal to at least 10% of each contract.

The loan was guaranteed for 30 years including a grace period of 10 years and was repayable in 40 equal six monthly instalments. The

interest rate was 2.5% per annum. The first instalment would be due 126 months after the end of the calendar quarter during which each drawing was made.

Credits were given for 10 years, repayable in 20 instalments, the first six months after delivery or on completion of project. The interest rate applicable was to be the normal interest rate at the date of contract plus an insurance premium.

The latest date for contracts with French suppliers was 30 September 1988, just under 11 months from the date of signature of the protocol. Contracts could be not less than FRF7m for main projects (see annex A)⁷, FRF2m for microprojects (see annex B)⁸ and FRF150,000 for light equipment. No drawing on treasury loan and grants could take place after 30 September 1990.

On 27 June 1990, a protocol was concluded providing a maximum of FRF9.2m as a grant to finance the purchase of French goods and services related to a range of projects, including technical assistance for a vocational training centre (FRF1.2m), a dam feasibility study (FRF6m), and a Harare-Chitungwiza urban transport study (FRF2m). An implementation deadline of 31 July 1992 was set. The transport study received a further FRF10m under a protocol of 6 November 1991, provided the commercial contract was completed by 31 December 1991. The very short delay suggests a rather desperate attempt to move the project along.

The attempts to tie French aid to French sourcing of project inputs did feed through into the trade figures (see table 8.2). France was significantly more important as a supplier than as a market, though both import and export levels remained consistently above the relative levels (1% in each case) recorded in 1965.

TABLE 8.2

FRANCE					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	9.4	2.7	1980	7.8	2.0
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	13.1	1.5	1981	37.1	3.6
1982	21.1	2.6	1982	54.1	5.0
1983	16.3	1.6	1983	49.6	4.7
1984	23.0	1.8	1984	50.9	4.2
1985	20.1	1.3	1985	47.8	3.3
1986	21.1	1.2	1986	54.4	3.3
1987	21.1	1.1	1987	64.0	3.7
1988	28.9	1.1	1988	64.4	3.2
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	58.8	1.6	1990	93.7	2.1

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

Germany: West

Prior to UDI, West Germany was a significant trading partner. After independence, this position was officially re-established. On taking up his appointment in February 1983, Zimbabwe's new ambassador to West Germany Dr Eubert Mashaire said that West Germany was Zimbabwe's fourth largest trading partner. "My role", he said, "is simply promoting our interests in the economic and political fields and to maintain the good relations which now exist between the two countries."⁹

At the same function, his counterpart in Zimbabwe, Dr Richard Ellerkman, said that since the establishment three years previously of diplomatic relations, there had been favourable developments in political, economic and commercial co-operation. West Germany bought tobacco, cotton, and other raw materials and sold machinery and other products. In the area of economic co-operation, he said Germany had concentrated on reconstruction of war damage in rural areas and on the provision of educational facilities. There were 700 young Zimbabweans studying in Germany in technical and vocational fields. By 6 November 1983, West Germany had given ZWD40m in financial aid.

East Germany

East Germany, having backed ZAPU, made an effort to come to terms with the new power networks and apart from Romania was the most successful of the CMEA countries at creating warmer ties. It was also willing to promote barter trade a time when the Zimbabwean government was receptive to the idea. As the latter's attitude to such trade cooled, however, the level of exchanges dropped off. The volume

of barter between Zimbabwe and the GDR declined from ZWD15m in 1983 to ZWD10m in 1989.¹⁰

Comparison

In the absence of barter deals, trade flows between East Germany and Zimbabwe did not achieve significant levels. West Germany on the other hand was a major supplier and purchaser of Zimbabwean products and one of the few trading partners to show a relative growth throughout the decade as a destination for Zimbabwean exports (see tables 8.3 and 8.4).

Italy

Although it has never achieved a high political profile in the country, Italy has had a more significant economic role than many of the more prominent political allies. In mid-1981, Italy's ambassador to Harare observed that if all the projects under preparation were successfully implemented, Zimbabwe would be second only to Somalia on the African continent in the volume of aid received from Italy.¹¹

With no prior political history in the region either to invoke or live down, Italian firms appear successfully to have exploited new commercial opportunities with the encouragement of the Italian government. By mid-1982, Italy ranked fifth as an importer from Zimbabwe, buying cotton, hides, asbestos, metal alloys, and tobacco, and ninth as an exporter, principally of agricultural and industrial machinery, electrical equipment, yarns and cloth. Although trade fluctuated, throughout the 1980s, Italy remained a net importer in the relationship rarely accounting for less than 5% of Zimbabwe's sales abroad (see table 8.5).

TABLE 8.3

WEST GERMANY					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	37.5	10.8	1980	25.7	6.7
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	73.0	8.2	1981	73.8	7.2
1982	64.6	8.0	1982	88.6	8.2
1983	79.3	7.7	1983	78.1	7.4
1984	109.2	8.6	1984	82.3	6.9
1985	153.4	9.9	1985	100.4	6.9
1986	146.1	8.6	1986	163.2	9.9
1987	193.6	10.2	1987	152.0	8.7
1988	235.6	9.3	1988	194.4	9.5
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	426.1	11.8	1990	332.5	7.3

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

TABLE 8.4

EAST GERMANY					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980(Aug-Dec)	n/p	n/p	1980(Aug-Dec)	n/p	n/p
1981	1.2	0.1	1981	1.2	0.1
1982	0.7	0.1	1982	1.5	0.1
1983	5.0	0.5	1983	1.8	0.2
1984	11.1	0.9	1984	4.2	0.4
1985	21.1	1.4	1985	13.6	0.9
1986	48.0	2.8	1986	12.4	0.8
1987	7.4	0.4	1987	5.7	0.3

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

TABLE 8.5

ITALY					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	15.9	4.6	1980	6.4	1.7
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	44.0	5.0	1981	21.1	2.1
1982	35.7	4.4	1982	24.7	2.3
1983	53.0	5.2	1983	19.1	1.8
1984	64.3	5.1	1984	36.6	3.0
1985	91.5	5.9	1985	43.8	3.0
1986	100.3	5.9	1986	70.4	4.3
1987	83.7	4.4	1987	52.5	3.0
1988	168.5	6.6	1988	34.4	1.7
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	166.4	4.6	1990	99.6	2.2

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

Romania

As a supplier of military aid and training during the liberation struggle, Romania ranked as a special friend in the post-independence period. Nikolai and Elena Ceaucescu received the rare honour on their state visit to Zimbabwe in July 1983 of being awarded the freedom of the city of Harare. The nature of the relationship at all levels, personal, party and national, was warmly lauded on every available occasion.

In September 1980, President Banana conducted an official visit of friendship to Bucharest. Talks were conducted in an atmosphere of “warm friendship, mutual understanding and respect.” Banana conveyed his government and people’s deep gratitude for the:

...solidarity, political, diplomatic, moral and material support given during the hard years of struggle for national liberation and for the friendship and co-operation shown since independence.¹²

Ceaucescu expressed “the deep satisfaction of the Romanian people in the brilliant victory in the heroic struggle for national liberation.”¹³ The two leaders signed long term agreements on economic and technical co-operation.

The Agreement on long term economic, industrial and technical co-operation was designed to facilitate the diversified development of such co-operation. Payment would be made in freely convertible currencies, with prices to be world market prices. A joint commission would be set up to examine ways of implementing the agreement. An accompanying long term trade and payment agreement provided for Most Favoured Nation status, with no quantitative restrictions on mutual trade. Goods to be exported to Romania under the agreement included: beef, veal and other meats; maize, wheat, soya beans, coffee, tea, sugar

tobacco, copper, textiles, metals and minerals, crafts. Romanian goods earmarked for sale to Zimbabwe included tractors, combine harvesters and farming equipment, machine tools, metalworking and woodworking machines, textile machines, vehicles, aeroplanes, electrical and electronic goods and components and power transmission equipment, telecommunications equipment, road building equipment, medical equipment, and wine.

The search for common interest

Serious ambition was evident at the outset. At the first session of the joint commission in April 1983, the Zimbabwean side expressed its desire to set up an agro-zoo-technical and industrial complex in the Kadoma area. As a first step, this would involve the setting up of a dairy farm. The need for a detailed study was agreed.

In the field of industry, the commission reported that discussions had taken place on the assembly of Romanian vehicles in Zimbabwe. One or two Romanian vehicles were to be sent for technical assessment in Zimbabwe. If the result was satisfactory, both sides would act. The parastatal Industrial Development Corporation had already expressed an interest in two tractor models that had been tested. Studies were also underway on the manufacture of locomotives and rehabilitation of the oil refinery. Negotiations would meanwhile be speeded up in the field of civil air transport co-operation. Tests were being carried out on the possibility of assembling Romanian TV sets in Harare.

Reviewing the level of bilateral trade, both parties noted that the volume of bilateral trade had not developed to the desired level. It was further noted that the items listed for trade needed to be diversified. The competent trade organisations would therefore advance concrete proposals for developing the level of trade in the course of 1983 "in line with the good political relations." The commission expressed satisfaction

at the first barter deal recently concluded between the two countries and declared itself in favour of future deals, encompassing diversification.

To promote economic co-operation and trade, it was agreed that the government of Romania should consider establishing a development line of credit or protocol; that other financing be made available outside this; that barter trade be encouraged and that double tax treaty negotiations be undertaken.¹⁴

On the occasion of the Ceaucescu's state visit, a joint communiqué was issued reaffirming the affinity between the two countries. The two leaders highly commended the peoples of the two countries for implementing the national programmes of economic and social development and the construction of a new society; recognised the lasting basis for co-operation; and agreed to increase efforts to expand economic links. A new agreement on long term economic and technical co-operation was signed, along with an understanding on co-operation between Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and Romanian radio and television, and agreements in the fields of geology and mining, science, sport and mass media. The communiqué laid some emphasis on the importance of inter-party relations:

The president of ZANU(PF) and the secretary-general of the Romanian Communist Party highly appreciated the existing militant solidarity and co-operation between the two parties established during the years of the heroic struggle waged by the Zimbabwean people for independence. It was agreed that on the basis and in the spirit of the agreement of co-operation between ZANU(PF) and the Romanian Communist Party, signed in Bucharest on 17 November 1981, the two parties promote the collaboration between them by promoting the exchange of experiences and continuing consultations on bilateral and international problems of

mutual interest. They reaffirmed the resolution of ZANU(PF) and the Romanian Communist Party on strengthening co-operation of communist and workers parties, socialist and social democratic parties and other progressive forces and movements for national liberation; unity of these forces will ensure social progress and peace in the world.¹⁵

The communiqué further pointed to a convergence of views between the parties and states on international issues. Serious concern was expressed about the arms race and nuclear war. South Africa was condemned and support reaffirmed for the Palestinian struggle under the PLO with agreement on the need for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories.

The state visit provided the occasion for the elaboration of a programme of long term development of co-operation. Relations would be expanded on the basis of militant solidarity. The two sides noted “significant progress” in the following areas: technical assessment of Romanian tractors and vehicles; technical assessment of TV sets; preparation of a pre-feasibility study for the Kadoma agro-industrial complex; exchange of TV programmes; training and technical assistance in civil aviation, mining, geology and drilling, and in bilateral trade. They agreed to support the finalisation of negotiations of contracts in the agreed areas between 1983 and 1984. At the same time, they agreed to consider practical co-operation in the following areas: preparation by the end of 1983 of the project for the manufacture of locomotives; co-operation in the development of coal resources (In this regard, the Zimbabwean side would communicate the decision to the Romanian side pertaining to co-operation in this area as soon as possible); co-operation in the field of energy development; co-operation in the establishment of

mining co-operatives; exploration of tin ore deposits; co-operation in iron and steel industries; and an industrial and agricultural project. These areas were to be indicative, with a non restrictive character.

Zimbabwe expressed an interest in technology for gold extraction in areas of high antimony and arsenic content. Any other projects which would improve productivity, open new mines, and increase the beneficiation of raw materials before they were exported would also be seriously considered.

A substantial expansion in the volume of bilateral trade was envisaged. As regards trading in minerals, however, all negotiations would have to be through the government's Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ). Accordingly, barter trade would have to be directed to the relevant committee which would decide on its viability.

Paradise postponed

From such big oaks did little acorns grow. Discussions continued until after the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime on the potential for co-operation, but the potential defined was never realised. Addressing the opening session of the Zimbabwe Romania Joint Commission for Economic Technical and Industrial Co-operation in Bucharest in June 1984, the Deputy Prime Minister, Simon Muzenda surveyed progress to date. Since the first session in April 1983, he said, one barter deal exchanging ferrochrome for urea had been concluded; a second exchanging Zimbabwean ferrochrome for urea and glass had been approved and a third exchanging asbestos from Zimbabwe for Romanian soda ash, caustic soda, synthetic rubber and carbon black was under negotiation.¹⁶

During the course of the next five days, the meeting reviewed the projects launched at the previous session. A proposal on the export and

assembly of Romanian tractors had been finalised and submitted. The Zimbabwean side had not approved the project, but agreed to re-examine it. Romania's continued interest in the rehabilitation of the ZISCO steel plant was to be met through Usinimportexport's participation in a competitive tender.

In the mining field, Zimbabwe had still to take a policy decision on coal co-operation. Samples had, however, been sent to Romania from Empress nickel dump to test the possibility of extracting further nickel. New areas of possible co-operation were mentioned including a drawn glass sheet factory, oil products storage facilities, a caustic soda factory, and extraction of aluminium silicate and kyonite. On the trade front, it was appreciated that further efforts were necessary to increase the volume of trade and diversify the range of goods.

The third session of the joint commission reporting on 6 September 1985 declared that little progress had been achieved over the past year and agreed to intensify efforts. In order to speed up negotiations on certain tractor models that had been found suitable, Romania proposed that payment be made in asbestos.

The commission noted that further tests had been done on the Romanian ARO 244 cross country vehicle. Taking into account the performance of this vehicle and the interest shown by Zimbabwean end-users, the Romanian delegation asked the Zimbabweans to grant the necessary approval for the importation and local assembly of this type of vehicle. The Zimbabwean side responded that they were currently carrying out a vehicle rationalisation and standardisation programme with a view to reducing the models of vehicles in the country. A decision on the importation of the ARO 244 would therefore only be taken after this exercise was completed. The Romanian representatives

meanwhile reconfirmed the availability of a USD15m credit facility for the delivery and assembly of tractors, cross country vehicles and trucks.

The drawn sheet glass factory project was taken one step further with an agreement to send a Zimbabwean delegation to Romania the following month for further observation and discussion. Detailed discussion on the Kadoma agro-industrial complex was to follow a feasibility study. The Empress nickel dump tests proved negative and that particular project was shelved. Further sustained efforts on bilateral trade were called for as was the expediting of import and export procedures for goods already contracted. When trade figures were released, 1985 proved to be the worst year since independence for bilateral trade between the two countries (see table 8.6).

The fourth session of the joint commission met in Bucharest in October 1986 and was able to report a degree of progress¹⁷. Export and assembly of Romanian tractors in Zimbabwe had been implemented. The Zimbabweans agreed that import should be accelerated. The Romanians agreed to look at expanding the local content of the tractors. TV sets were to be subject to the next barter deal. The sheet glass factory project was described as ongoing. Usinimportexport was meanwhile said to have pre-qualified for the international tender for ZISCO rehabilitation.

No progress was achieved in the negotiations on the import of cross country four wheel drive vehicles and trucks, the motor rationalisation exercise being the culprit. The Romanian side was informed that when the implementation of the types and models came into effect, the already tested Romanian vehicles would receive due consideration. The ambitious Kadoma complex had meanwhile been put back, while the Romanians considered a revised feasibility study presented by Zimbabwe.

TABLE 8.6

ROMANIA					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1981			1981	1.0	0.1
1982	2.7	0.3	1982	0.2	0.0
1983	9.5	0.9	1983	2.9	0.3
1984	9.8	0.8	1984	4.1	0.3
1985	4.2	0.3	1985	2.6	0.2

source: *Extrapolation from CSO data*

The fifth session, in November 1987, showed signs of Romanian disenchantment.¹⁸ The tractor export and assembly was reported to be progressing well. The sheet glass factory, while still in construction, was now no longer on a joint venture basis though Romania agreed to supply a line of credit. Part of the Kadoma project had been implemented, though the dairy aspect was lacking resources. Zimbabwean representatives urged the Romanians to plug the gap. The Romanians said they would extend a line of credit rather than proceed with the project as a joint venture. The Zimbabweans, however, indicated that the Kadoma complex was originally planned on a joint venture basis and could only continue on that basis. The Romanians agreed to reconsider.

Romania offered to take Zimbabwean students on a commercial basis. The Zimbabwean side said that owing to economic constraints they could not take up the offer. On trade, the commission optimistically discerned a gradual trend and agreed to try and raise the level of exchange to ZWD15m on each side in the following year. In fact, since 1985, trade levels between Romania and Zimbabwe had been too low to appear in either the annual or quarterly published summaries of trade statistics.

The downfall of the Ceaucescus and the Romanian Communist Party did not herald the complete demise of efforts to stimulate bilateral economic exchange. There was, however, a change in underlying spirit. At the seventh session of the joint commission in May 1991, the use of hard currency was recommended wherever possible.¹⁹ Barter/countertrade deals could only be negotiated on an *ad hoc* basis. To improve trade flows, it was declared that exporters in both countries should ensure that their goods were internationally competitive. It was announced that the sheet glass factory was now operational, but that the

export of tractors to Zimbabwe in kit form had been discontinued. New projects were proposed but in no great detail. Without the fuel of party affinity, a decade of experiments to create economic sparks from a political dynamo ground to a halt.

Yugoslavia

The Yugoslavian contribution to Zimbabwe's post-independence landscape is highly visible in Harare in the form of the gold coloured Sheraton Hotel and conference centre, which has been the site of numerous international meetings including the 1986 NAM conference and the 1991 meeting of Commonwealth heads of state and government. The hotel and conference centre, built by Energoprojekt of Yugoslavia at a cost of USD60m, was jointly financed by the governments of Yugoslavia, France and Zimbabwe and opened in late 1985.²⁰ Yugoslavia's prior ZWD2.8m Zimcord pledge had already been fulfilled and the centre was regarded as a special gift (which can now double as a memorial to the country that gave it).

Before its disintegration, Yugoslavia's relationship with Zimbabwe rested on three pillars: its help during the pre-independence struggle; its attractions as a model, initially of a successful guerrilla campaign and subsequently of an independent socialist line; and thirdly as a founder of the non-aligned movement.

Trade, however, did not flourish. Yugoslavia does not feature in any of the published export statistics since independence and managed to reach a peak of 0.4% of Zimbabwe's imports in 1984, before tailing off over the rest of the decade in both absolute and relative terms.²¹

Following the break up of the Yugoslav Federation, Zimbabwe retained some residual attachment to the rump regime in Belgrade. Security Council Resolution 713, adopted at ministerial level, urged the parties to the conflict in former Yugoslavia to stick to a ceasefire and

imposed an arms embargo. Speaking at the Council meeting, Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira said that the crisis was of concern to the non-aligned movement as Yugoslavia was both a founding member and current chairman. Zimbabwe, he said, was greatly disturbed by the tribal conflict in the country. It regarded Yugoslavia as a close friend which had supported its struggle for independence and on which it had tried to model itself in many ways. He supported the call for the arms embargo but urged caution about any future action, which should be in the area of humanitarian assistance only and taken within the context of the charter.²²

Commenting on this vote in a subsequent interview, Shamuyarira explained:

On Yugoslavia, first and foremost, we felt that the EEC powers had precipitated the disintegration of the Balkans by recognising Slovenia and Croatia too quickly, at the instigation of Germany....We supported the resolution in the UN to stop arms going into Yugoslavia because Slovenia and Croatia were being armed by Austria, Hungary and, some would even say, by Germany through these countries.²³

He also touched on ethnic, religious and economic complications and reiterated that "Serbia alone should not be held responsible."²⁴

When in September 1992, Security Council Resolution 776 was adopted to enlarge the United Nations Protection Force for convoys transporting humanitarian aid and released detainees, Zimbabwe abstained along with China and India. Zimbabwe's UN ambassador Simbarashe Mbengegwe emphasised Zimbabwe's opposition to operative paragraph 2 of Resolution 770, reconfirmed in the present resolution, which called for the use of all means necessary to ensure delivery of

humanitarian aid. This, he argued, gave legitimacy to any party wishing to intervene to do so under the pretext of delivering humanitarian aid.²⁵

Eastern Europe

Romania, despite its CMEA membership, maintained an independent policy of assisting ZANU during the independence struggle. Those countries more intimately bound in to the Comecon structure had mixed results in building meaningful ties with post-independence Zimbabwe. Once a way had been found to overcome the political obstacle of these countries' traditional support for ZAPU, relationships were spurred by the potential for trade exchanges which were not reliant on hard currency. Some barter deals were successfully completed notably with Hungary. However, as the Zimbabwean government's attitude to such trade exchanges cooled, so the relationships lapsed into formal courtesy.

The political formula which allowed diplomatic ties to be established in the first place can be found in the principles set out to guide Polish-Zimbabwean relations when these were officially cemented in February 1981 and subsequently duplicated in agreements with the Soviet Union:

“Non interference in each other's internal affairs. On this principle, the two delegations emphasised that diplomatic relations between the Republic of Zimbabwe and the Polish People's Republic will be on a government-to-government basis only and that the two governments will not enter into any agreements, arrangements or negotiations with any organisation without prior consultation and explicit approval of each government.”²⁶

Diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and Zimbabwe were established on the same principle, the following month. An appropriate model had clearly been found to deny any leverage to these party-based governments' historical ties to ZAPU . Foreign Minister Mangwende's double-edged welcome to the Czechoslovak delegation recognised that "we can never forget the moral, political, diplomatic and - most important of all - material support that we received from progressive governments and movements the world over. For that, Zimbabwe shall ever be grateful to her socialist friends." He was, he said, also happy that the Czech government "unreservedly recognised the popularly elected government of Zimbabwe."²⁷

Limits on the expansion of the relationship appeared early. On signing trade agreements with the Czech minister of foreign trade in March 1982, Richard Hove, Minister of Trade and Commerce commented:

I am glad to learn that the Embassy will have a trade section...Unfortunately, financial and other factors preclude Zimbabwe from posting trade officials in Czechoslovakia at the present time.²⁸

Bulgaria made the boldest attempt to move the relationship forward with four separate co-operation agreements signed between 1980 and 1983. These initially generated some interest on the Zimbabwean side.

A further set of protocols governing extensive agricultural co-operation between Zimbabwe and Bulgaria was signed in Harare in January 1984. Speaking in his capacity as party secretary for external affairs, Richard Hove had this to say about why certain aspects of the first two year old protocol had not been implemented:

The reason for this is that Zimbabwe is a young country, and there is so much to do here at home that we could not completely fulfil the agreement. But please don't think we are not interested in this agreement. We are very, very interested. We take particular pride in developing our relations with socialist countries.²⁹

The first session of the Bulgaria-Zimbabwe joint commission was held in June 1984. Both sides reviewed the development of trade and noted with satisfaction an improvement in bilateral trade. The agreed to make endeavours to expand the volume of trade in convertible currency. *Ad hoc* barter was to be considered and credits were to be extended on a case by case basis for individual projects.³⁰

By the time of the third session two years later, optimism had been somewhat tempered. Small scale rural industries proposed by the Bulgarian side as joint ventures were not necessary, Zimbabwe's delegation explained, as such technology was already available in the country. On barter and countertrade, both sides noted the current Zimbabwean government policy that barter and countertrade should be considered on an *ad hoc* basis. Hence the Zimbabwean government could not engage itself in long-term barter deals. The draft protocol submitted by the Bulgarian side on long term co-operation was rejected as not in keeping with current Zimbabwean government policy on barter trade.

A specific wheat-for-maize barter deal proposal had been under consideration. However, the Bulgarian side announced that the wheat crop intended for the deal had apparently been sold out following the Zimbabwean government's delayed response on the matter. The two

sides agreed that the deal should be finalised once the two crops became available. No record appears in the archives of its completion.³¹

Footnote

In January 1990, Bulgaria's outgoing ambassador Alexander Atanassov urged his audience to steer clear of empty socialist slogans. "Let those who benefit from socialism say so, rather than those who make the slogans," he told guests at a farewell lunch in Harare. "When shops are empty, when people are not allowed to say what they want, what kind of socialism is that?" he asked. In reply, Witness Mangwende, then Information Minister, referred to the lesson of events in Eastern Europe for countries like Zimbabwe. "We are", he said, "particularly keen to see how your country strengthens socialism, democracy and the economy."³²

Summary

The European countries considered here fell into three distinct categories: those which had supported ZANU(PF) in the struggle for independence and which were consequently candidates for closer economic ties (Sweden, Romania, Yugoslavia); those which were regarded as at best ambivalent during the struggle (France, Italy, West Germany) and those which were seen as close to ZAPU (East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria).

Of these, the middle group of western European countries was the most successful at establishing strong economic links, combining both aid and trade. In the case of France, the financial protocols negotiated had a tangible impact on its relative importance as a supplier to the Zimbabwean economy. In public pronouncements by Zimbabwean government representatives, these countries were presented as friends on a bilateral basis, but were also considered as of dubious multilateral intent.

While much effort was put into cultivating ties with the first group, only Sweden managed to establish any sustained economic links, though at levels below Swedish expectations. Despite effusive declarations of solidarity both at party and state level with Romania, attempts at deepening the economic relationship foundered in the meeting rooms of the bilateral commissions themselves. Public declarations of solidarity were restricted to the political plane. Yugoslavia meanwhile made a tangible contribution to the Zimbabwean economy through a major prestige construction project, but this did not form the basis of a growing economic relationship. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe continued to support Yugoslavia in political fora, when its territorial integrity was in serious doubt.

The CMEA countries were perhaps the least well-placed to develop meaningful bilateral ties, in the absence of either political kinship or historical trade links. The most tangible results of bilateral negotiations on economic co-operation were agreements to convene more meetings.

¹ T. Chimombe, Foreign Capital, in Mandaza (ed) p132

² Herald, 20/8/81

³ in Sweden File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

⁴ Terms and conditions as set out in the minutes of bilateral consultations, 14-17/6/83, in Sweden File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁵ Copy of speech provided by Zimbabwean embassy, Paris

⁶ in France File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

⁷ Annex A: main projects

Kadoma powder milk plant FRF50m to Dairy Marketing Board (DMB)

Additional equipment for the Bulawayo dairy plant: FRF30m to DMB

Power lines and substations in the Triangle-Moynezi-Beit Bridge area to Zimbabwe Electricity Supply

Authority (ZESA)

Equipment for ZESA training centre: FRF7m

Telex printers for PTC: FRF22m

Telephone lines and concentrators for rural areas to PTC: FRF7.2m Additional equipment for the

Harare digital exchange to PTC: FRF20m Additional maintenance and ground handling equipment for

Air Zimbabwe: FRF50m

Rehabilitation of the coke oven battery for the ZISCO steel: FRF130m

TOTAL = FRF321.2m

⁸ Annex B: Industrial microprojects - FRF39.4m

Light equipment not tied to specific projects - FRF39.4m

Grant for urban transport study - FRF10m

⁹ Herald, 4/2/83

¹⁰ Herald, 7/10/89

¹¹ Herald, 4/6/81

¹² Official report on visit (19-23/8/80) filed with ensuing Agreements at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare.

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Memorandum of Understanding on 1st Session of the Joint Commission, 27-29/4/83, filed at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare.

¹⁵ Joint Communique, 18/7/83, filed at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare

¹⁶ Press statement, 20/6/84

¹⁷ Minutes of meeting of 4th session of joint commission, 16-20/10/86, filed at Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Harare

¹⁸ 17-20/11/87 at MFA

¹⁹ 6-8/5/91 at MFA

²⁰ Stoneman & Cliffe, p152

²¹ Statistical Yearbook 1989 (Harare: Central Statistical Office) 1989, pp209-210

²² SC5309, 25/9/91

²³ interview conducted by Dr Ibbo Mandaza, published in Southern Africa, July 1992 (Harare: SAPES)

²⁴ ibid

²⁵ SC5468, 14/9/92

²⁶ Press Statement of Ministry of Information, 20/2/81

²⁷ Herald, 26/3/81

²⁸ Press statement, 9/3/82

²⁹ Herald, 19/1/84

³⁰ Bulgaria File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

³¹ ibid

³² Reuters, 17/1/90

Chapter 9: The Middle East

a) Israel/Palestine

Support for PLO positions. Trade with Israel.

b) Iran/Iraq

Responding - or not - to pressure. Constraints of the NAM environment.

c) Iraq/Kuwait

Taking sides.

a) Israel and Palestine

Since independence, Israel/Palestine has been one of the highest profile issues in Zimbabwean foreign policy and has received more media coverage than any other international issue bar South Africa. Official Zimbabwean policy is total support for the PLO under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. In the past this has involved condemnation of diversionary pressures - Syria has been named - and support for UN resolutions implying a two-state settlement. Occasionally, however, oratory and semi-official editorial comment have dismissed the legitimacy of the state of Israel.

The rejection of Israeli policy has been two-pronged, focusing on the one hand on Palestinian rights and on the other on Israel's ties with South Africa. This was the common position of many African states in the 1980s. The two issues were cited by Peters as the main obstacles to a resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel:

For African states the question of Palestinian self determination is now the crucial issue in the conflict and many have made the restoration of their relations dependent on that issue.

Of equal concern to Africans has been the development of Israel's relations with South Africa and its contacts with the Bantustan Homelands. Since 1973 relations between Israel and South Africa have rapidly expanded. In 1976 the then Prime Minister of South Africa John Vorster made an official visit to Israel during which a series of agreements on economic, scientific and industrial co-operation were signed. Israel's co-operation with South Africa in both the economic and military spheres has hardened African attitudes towards her and has made the question of the resumption of relations more difficult.¹

For Zimbabwe, which came to independence when Israel's pariah status was at its nadir, these two issues have had a special significance.

Perceptions of liberation are central to Zimbabwean foreign policy. Support for recognised liberation movements has been coupled with castigation of those countries whose support is seen as lukewarm. In both regional and international fora, much of Zimbabwe's stage time has been taken up with expressions of solidarity. Furthermore, as the PLO was, until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, financially self-supporting to a large degree, it required only moral support. While the feelings of solidarity expressed by the Zimbabwean government were no doubt genuine, a combination of PLO financial independence and geographical remoteness from the struggle itself obviated the need for rationalisations of the limits of support as were required in the same period in relation to the South African liberation movements.

Israel and South Africa

Although during the 1980s, Israel and South Africa were often bracketed together in international political fora, there has been little made in Zimbabwe of the functional links between them. Official pronouncements have on the whole been limited to rhetorical

comparisons between Zionism and apartheid rather than the perceived consequences of the so-called unholy alliance. Israel's attitude to the issue of Palestinian self determination may well have been a more determining factor in frontline dealings with Israel than the latter's relations with South Africa. With South Africa's re-emergence from diplomatic isolation, memories of past behaviour are likely to fade even further.

Track record

Zimbabwe has been among the handful of countries to grant the State of Palestine full diplomatic recognition. Diplomatic relations were established with the PLO at ambassadorial level in March 1983. The following month, Ali Halimeh, the PLO's representative in Harare, presented his credentials as chargé d'affaires. On 26 October 1983, Zimbabwe announced that Israeli passport holders would from then on require a visa prior to entering the country. Up till then they had, in the absence of diplomatic relations, been able to obtain such visas at the border.

Zimbabwe remained steadfast in its public support for the PLO throughout the 1980s. In December 1983, Foreign Minister Mangwende condemned "disruptive and reactionary forces sowing seeds of discontent within the ranks of the PLO". This was at a time when Arafat's leadership was seriously threatened. Mangwende urged the Palestinian masses to unite under Arafat.²

In late August 1984, Yasser Arafat landed in Harare on a state visit receiving a 19 gun salute on arrival. At the banquet the following evening, Mugabe described Zionism and apartheid as having become "birds of a feather". In November, Ali Halimeh was upgraded to ambassador.

The occasion of Mugabe's address to the UN General Assembly (read on his behalf by Mangwende) provided an opportunity for an extended elaboration of Zimbabwe's position on the Palestinian question. The Middle East, he said, continued to be a cause of great concern:

Peace in that region remains elusive and will continue to be so as long as Israel is permitted to defy United Nations resolutions, calling for its withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the Golan Heights. We condemn in the strongest terms possible the recent Israeli gross violation of Tunisia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the cold blooded murders and maiming of defenceless Palestinian refugees. We warn that Israel's bellicose behaviour and hegemonistic tendencies pose a serious threat to the stability of the region as well as to international peace and security. We call upon Israel to end its expansionist policies and to start negotiations with the PLO, the legitimate and sole representatives of the Palestinians.³

Israel was in the Middle East, Mugabe stressed, and if peace was to come to that part of the world, all the people of that area, including the Israelis, had to observe, in good faith, the principles of good neighbourliness. He addressed the issue of nuclear capability, on which he had already spoken at some length in general terms:

We are aware that Israel has now acquired nuclear weapons technology and that it may already have the deadly weapon. We are also informed that some may have been deployed in the Golan Heights. This brings a new and more dangerous dimension to the area, as it may not be long

before other states in the region also acquire the same capability and world peace will then be faced with a very grave threat.

This Body cannot wait until such a crisis arises. We therefore strongly support the call for an urgent international conference on the Middle East at which all concerned and involved in the dispute would participate. We believe that such a conference without the full participation of the PLO, is like trying to stage Shakespeare's Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.⁴

On 13 July, 1990, the government of Zimbabwe and the State of Palestine concluded an agreement on Economic, Industrial, Scientific and Technical co-operation.⁵ The contracting parties confirmed their common struggle against imperialism, Zionism, racism and apartheid, affirmed the usefulness of concluding long term contracts and agreed to make every effort to deepen and develop co-operation in the fields specified.

For that purpose, the contracting parties shall support activities of the competent enterprises, organisations and institutions and within the framework of the respective valid internal legislation shall grant all facilities necessary for such co-operation. The contracting parties shall within the scope of the economic possibilities and requirements of their two countries promote projects within their economic, industrial, scientific and technical co-operation, including those which are suitable for contribution to the development of the exchange of goods and services between the government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and the State of Palestine. The contracting parties shall promote in particular the co-operation in the fields of industry, agriculture, animal husbandry,

education and training, energy and mining, science and technology, and any other fields which may be agreed upon by the contracting parties.

Co-operation was to comprise *inter alia* the following forms and methods:

(a) co-operation in the exploration, development, research, preparation, use and marketing of economically important raw materials

(b) promotion of industrial projects; the delivery and assembly of complete industrial plant and equipment

(c) technical and economic studies and preparation for investment projects as well as the necessary technical assistance, including the sending of Palestinian experts, especially in connection with the delivery of plant and equipment on the basis of commercial contracts

(d) exchange of scientific and technical results and purchase of technical information, especially in connection with the delivery of plant

(e) vocational training and upgrading of skills in connection with the implementation of projects

(f) inviting Palestinian executives for courses and symposia, scientific and technical activities, special exhibitions and trade fairs in Zimbabwe

(h) other forms and methods to be agreed.

The delivery of goods and services resulting from co-operation under the agreement was to be effected in accordance with the provisions of a separate trade agreement to be entered into. The parties agreed to meet alternately at appropriate levels in the capitals of the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and the State of Palestine as and when desired.

A letter from Ali Halimeh, Palestinian Ambassador to Harare, dated 20 February 1990, to the President of the State of Palestine and Commander in Chief of the Palestinian Revolutionary Forces, requested approval for the signing of the joint co-operation agreement. It would, the letter argued, “be a great political achievement and allow us to perform further economic joint agreements with the government of the Republic of Zimbabwe.”⁶

Reassessment

Between 1990 and 1992, despite the reopening of diplomatic relations between Israel and most of the other front-line states, Zimbabwe showed no inclination to change its attitude in the absence of discernible movement towards the achievement of Palestinian self determination.

The first sign of change came during the 46th Session of the UN General Assembly. Resolution 4686 proposed to revoke the determination contained in Resolution 3379 of 10 November 1975 that Zionism was a form of racism and racial discrimination. Zimbabwe abstained.

Following the signing of the peace agreement between Israel and the PLO in Washington in September 1993, much of the previous hostility dissipated. In late November, Nawaf Salamheh, Israeli Deputy Minister of Health, undertook a tour of Southern African countries as a special envoy of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. During his visit to Harare, the establishment of diplomatic relations was announced.

Trade

Given the political will for closer ties with the Middle East, it is ironic that Israel is the only Middle Eastern country to feature in Zimbabwe’s published trade statistics (see table 9.1). In 1985, Zimbabwe's exports to Israel amounted to ZWD8.83m, almost double

Romania and more than any other country in the Middle East. This figure accounted for 0.57% of total exports, up from 0.5% in 1983. Israel does not feature in the 1985 import statistics. In 1983, however, Zimbabwe imported ZWD6.18m of goods from Israel, just under 0.6% of the total. Of this, 71% was in the chemicals sector. In ZWD terms, imports from Israel declined in 1984 and then rose continuously to the end of the decade. In 1988, ZWD17m worth of imports accounted for 0.85% of the country's total import bill. Although ZWD33.2m was imported in 1990, this represented only 0.73% of total imports - still more than all other Middle Eastern countries, most Scandinavian countries (Sweden being the exception) and, closer to home, Kenya, Zambia and Mozambique.

Throughout this period, Israel and Zimbabwe did not have diplomatic relations and intergovernment contact was minimal. The recorded trade growth may have been facilitated by contacts between Israeli officials and businesses and the local Jewish community, which were tolerated by the Zimbabwean government. Alternatively, such trade may have been a "spin-off" from the well-developed commercial links between Israel and South Africa during this period.

TABLE 9.1

ISRAEL					
exports to			imports from		
year	ZWDm	% of total	year	ZWDm	% of total
1980	n/p	n/p	1980	1.2	0.5
(Aug-Dec)			(Aug-Dec)		
1981	3.1	0.4	1981	9.0	0.9
1982	7.9	1.0	1982	7.5	0.7
1983	5.1	0.5	1983	6.2	0.6
1984	8.9	0.7	1984	3.8	0.3
1985	8.8	0.6	1985	5.1	0.4
1986	n/p	n/p	1986	8.7	0.5
1987	n/p	n/p	1987	12.3	0.7
1988	n/p	n/p	1988	17.4	0.9
1989	n/a	n/a	1989	n/a	n/a
1990	n/p	n/p	1990	33.2	0.7
n/p not published					

source: Extrapolation from CSO data

b) Iran/Iraq

The Zimbabwean approach to the Iran/Iraq war and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is a study in contrasts. In the former case, the Zimbabwean government was neutral to a fault. In the latter, it was from the outset a vocal advocate of tough action against the aggressor.

Iraq was the first of the two countries to open diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe, the ambassador presenting his credentials in November 1981. When relations with Iran were established in early 1983, the ire of the Iraqi government was evident. Zimbabwe reiterated its stance of strict non-involvement in the conflict between the two. Foreign Minister Mangwende told a ZNA Staff College audience:

By non-alignment we mean that we reserve the right to examine issue areas of foreign policy on the basis of merit, and within the context, on each occasion, of either promoting or protecting our own interests. It is within this context that, despite pressures from external sources - and in particular, from one non-aligned nation [Iraq] with whom we have always enjoyed a close relationship - our Government decided to establish diplomatic relations with another sister developing country within the non-aligned movement [Iran], with whom we also share many common revolutionary aims. The reason for the pressure upon us was that these two sister, non-aligned nations are currently at war with each other, and there have been attempts by both sides, and their various supporters, to sway us to support either one side or the other. Instead, we have chosen to steer a middle, neutral course between the two, faithfully adhering to our own principles and those embodied in the meaning of non-alignment.⁷

Neither Iran nor Iraq were major trading partners of Zimbabwe. The decision to adopt a neutral position therefore did not reflect any economic imperative. Nor, however, was Mangwende's explanation entirely convincing, based as it was on a dubious reinterpretation of the term non-alignment, divorced from its cold war origins. It is more plausible that Zimbabwe's reserve on this issue derived from an attachment to the Non-Aligned Movement as a positive force in the international system, rather than any principle of neutrality *per se*. Deep divisions in NAM over the Iran/Iraq war, if publicly aired, would have weakened the movement's ability to play an effective role on other international issues.

Throughout the conflict, Zimbabwe never deviated from this position. In his UN address on Mugabe's behalf in October 1985, Mangwende expressed concern at the continued conflict, but little else:

Mr. President, my Government is seriously concerned at the continuing war between the two sister countries, Iran and Iraq. We urge them to peacefully resolve their dispute and concentrate on rebuilding their war-ravaged economies.⁸

c) Iraq and Kuwait

In early June 1992, Zimbabwe's foreign minister Nathan Shamuyarira explained thus Zimbabwe's abstention in the Security Council resolution condemning Libya's refusal to hand over two men suspected of planting the bomb which blew up a Pan-Am airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland:

On the question of Libya, we felt that...the international community had not exhausted all channels of resolving the issue before Chapter Seven of the Charter could be applied. The latter is a very extreme section in the Charter. And we also felt that the big powers, here the United States, Britain and France, were pushing a small power unfairly, were harassing (that is the word we used) a small power. We felt strongly about that and that is why we abstained from supporting the UN resolution on it. But we are against terrorism, we are against air terrorism and we have made this clear to the Libyans....But on this particular case we supported the principle of fair play for a small third world country.⁹

Similar arguments had been advanced by opponents of UN-sanctioned military action against Iraq, following that country's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. On that occasion, however, Zimbabwe was not among them.

On 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait. That same day, Zimbabwe condemned the invasion and called on Iraq to withdraw its forces without delay. Shamuyarira described Iraq's action as "in flagrant violation of the UN Charter, principles and objectives on non-alignment and all norms of international law." He pointed to the negative impact of the invasion on the Palestinian cause:

This sudden action by Iraq against its Arab neighbour can only serve to divert the attention of the international community from the worthy Arab cause of seeking for a solution to the plight of Palestinian people in their struggle for nationhood.¹⁰

In an indication of the fora which he considered most appropriate to address the issue, he went on to urge the Arab League, the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations “to exert maximum effort to find a peaceful solution to the problem, thus ensuring that the situation doesn't deteriorate further.”

The Herald ran a particularly vigorous editorial, where it suggested that:

The best hope for Kuwait is that the world is sufficiently incensed and has the backbone to back up condemnation with whatever is needed to make Iraq see sense and back off. As a bully, bullying tactics are all Hussein can be expected to understand.¹¹

It soon emerged that Kuwait, despite a lack of diplomatic relations with Harare, supplied two-thirds of Zimbabwe's fuel needs. Nevertheless the government assured the country that it would find alternative sources and would suspend existing trade and educational agreements with Iraq until it had withdrawn from Kuwait.¹² These included an Agreement on Economic, Trade and Technical Co-operation, signed on 17 July 1980 and an Agreement on Cultural, Technical, Scientific and Educational Co-operation, signed on 10 January, 1990. Shamuyarira said that although the two had been allies

since the days of the liberation struggle, Zimbabwe supported the trade ban imposed by the UN.

Zimbabwe meanwhile made efforts to bring the matter to what it felt were the appropriate fora. On 7 January 1991, despite Zimbabwe's position on the Iran/Iraq conflict, President Mugabe bemoaned the lack of influence of NAM on the situation in the Gulf. He had, he said, suggested to the Yugoslav president, then in the chair of NAM that a delegation be sent to Baghdad to persuade Iraq to withdraw. That, Mugabe said, "might have done the trick."¹³

Speaking at a civic reception in Kaduna, Nigeria the following day, Mugabe alluded to the possibility of military action. "We share the view that Iraq must withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait if war is to be averted in that part of the world," he told his audience.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Zimbabwe remained hopeful of a negotiated solution and recognised that the Middle East would remain a dangerous place "unless efforts are made to find a permanent solution to the Palestinian problem."

The Zimbabwean position drew public approval from the exiled Kuwaiti government. On 10 January, Yahya al Sumait, Kuwaiti Minister of Housing, at the head of a three-man delegation to Harare, declared that "we recognise the important role that Zimbabwe plays on the African continent and in the international community and we have come to express our gratitude and appreciation for Zimbabwe's support."

In the meantime, the issue of linkage between Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories was being raised by Iraq as a possible way out of the impasse. Opponents of military intervention, including the PLO, embraced such linkage enthusiastically. Despite solid support for PLO positions since independence, the Zimbabwean government rejected linkage, all the while arguing that it would continue to support the just cause of the

Palestinians. On 26 January, Mugabe made another plea for Iraq to reconsider and withdraw.

In February, Zimbabwe took the chair in the Security Council. Meanwhile on 14 February, 15 NAM foreign ministers met in Belgrade to discuss the Middle East. Shamuyarira emphasised that the Ministers were not accepting linkage of Kuwait and Palestine but felt that efforts to solve the two crises could continue in parallel.

On 16 February, Zimbabwe along with fellow Security Council members Yemen, Cuba, India and Zaire argued that Iraq's offer of withdrawal, despite its conditions, should be considered. Ten days later, however, Zimbabwe's UN representative and Security Council chairman Simbarashe Mbengegwe argued that "there is little we can do without a definitive reply from the Iraqis". He called for a categorical and direct statement of withdrawal.

On 2 March, the Senior Secretary of Foreign Affairs Tichaona Jakonya, who together with the Minister was the key micro-policy maker in the Ministry said that the government welcomed the general outline of the US draft on the Gulf but that several issues needed clarification before the draft was tabled at the Security Council.¹⁵ Jakonya identified four areas requiring further work: the call for withdrawal of foreign troops should apply not only to Iraq but to all foreign troops; there should be clarification of the need for a post-war settlement of other Middle East problems such as the Palestinian issue; the question of reparations should be more clearly addressed; and the reconstruction programme should be more comprehensive. Zimbabwe, he said, would help in the redrafting.

Resolution 686, demanding that Iraq comply with the Council's previous 12 relevant resolutions, was passed on 2 March by 11 votes to 1 against (Cuba) and 3 abstentions (Yemen, India and China).

Reservations were expressed during the debate about Resolution 678 of November 1990, which authorised member states to use all necessary means to restore international peace and security. In supporting the resolution, Mbengegwi argued that it was an important first step in normalising the situation in the Gulf and the Middle East as a whole. The Security Council having acted in this case with such speed, resolve and singlemindedness, should now do the same with the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹⁶

Resolution 687 which set the terms for a formal ceasefire, found Cuba voting against and Yemen and Ecuador abstaining. Explaining Zimbabwe's positive vote, its representative Raisedon Zenenga argued that the actions taken by the Security Council and the entire international community since 2 August equalled a justified response to a unique situation created by the invasion and illegal occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. The measures in the resolution had to be seen in that light. Some of the provisions of the document, which ordinarily would have caused enormous discomfort for the Zimbabwean government, were, he said, designed to ensure that there would be no recurrence of the tragedy. As far as the disarmament measures were concerned, however, he would have preferred the measures to apply to the region as a whole.

Regarding the requirement that Iraq inform the Council that it would not commit or support international terrorism, Zimbabwe understood that nothing contained in that provision referred or applied to the struggles of peoples under occupation for self-determination. This is presumably a reference to the Palestinian struggle¹⁷.

When, however, two days later Resolution 688 was put to a vote, demanding that Iraq immediately end repression of its civilian population, particularly in Kurdish-populated areas, and allow

international humanitarian organisations immediate access, Zimbabwe abstained along with Cuba and Yemen, while China and India voted against.

Zenenga told the Council that a domestic political conflict lay at the core of the situation in the areas of Iraq referred to in the draft resolution. Although a serious humanitarian situation had arisen it was, he said, purely an internal matter as defined in paragraph seven of Article Two of the Charter. Prescribing specific measures for a government to take in resolving a domestic conflict was beyond the parameters of the Council's competence as laid out in the Charter. The question of refugees should be dealt with by the appropriate organs of the UN.¹⁸

This abstention reflected Zimbabwe's sensitivity to infringements on sovereignty rather than any softening in attitude towards a fellow NAM member. In August, Resolution 706 set the terms for the sale of Iraqi oil, including compensation requirements, to allow for the provision of civilian needs. Cuba voted against and Yemen abstained, both expressing grave reservations that the harsh terms would exacerbate a human tragedy. Mbengegwi, however, welcomed the step of creating a mechanism designed to address the needs of the victims of war both in Iraq and Kuwait as well as elsewhere. He did say that Zimbabwe could not fail to register its reservations regarding the provisions encroaching on national sovereignty. It recognised the need to ensure transparency in carrying out the terms of the resolution but believed that monitoring arrangements could have been put into place which did not encroach on national sovereignty.

In the final analysis, however, the Zimbabwean delegation took the view that no opportunity which offered the possibility of alleviating the suffering of innocent civilians should be allowed "to slip through

our fingers.”¹⁹ This view did not apparently extend to situations which Zimbabwe regarded as internal. Resolution 712 confirming the ceiling on Iraqi oil sales also received Zimbabwe’s assent.²⁰

Divergence and consistency

Although Zimbabwe’s position on the Gulf War was at variance with several of its NAM allies, Patel identifies five strands of Zimbabwe’s foreign policy, beyond the key principles on which it is based, that impacted on its attitude to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.²¹ First, it is “anchored in the animus of armed struggle, at great human and non-human cost, as a revolutionary method for gaining independence”, resulting in a “jealous guarding of independence and sovereignty”. Secondly, there is a high attachment given to “organisational machinery for collective action”, particularly the UN, which is seen as a sound option for the protection of the sovereignty of small states. Thirdly, especially within the OAU, there is the acceptance as valid of all colonial borders of African States. Fourthly, Zimbabwe has opposed regional destabilisation activities. Fifthly, Zimbabwe has supported movements for liberation from occupation. Of these perhaps the most important is the third point, since it explains Zimbabwe’s basic distaste for irredentist actions, particularly where the target is a member of the non-aligned movement.

What Zimbabwe’s response to the Gulf crisis shows is that attempts to portray the conflict as one pitting the imperialist west against the third world, and the consequent expectations of solidarity, were not convincing enough to override perceptions that the actions of Iraq as the initial aggressor against Kuwait were in themselves sufficiently inimical to the interests of the third world and individual countries within it to warrant decisive action to reverse them.

Summary

The Middle East has been regarded by the Zimbabwean government as essentially an arena for political rather than economic involvement, formal trade co-operation agreements notwithstanding. Support for Palestinian independence has been vocal and consistent. Until the signing of the Oslo accords and subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Zimbabwe, the former was regarded as a pariah, with criticism of Zionism and of Israel's relations with South Africa a constant theme in government-owned media. Trade with Israel, more significant than with any other country in the region, received no public comment.

In adopting a position of neutrality in the Iran-Iraq conflict, Zimbabwean representatives drew on the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose influence on wider global issues it was keen to preserve. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, however, elicited strong condemnation from Zimbabwe, whose views and voting record on this issue diverged from many of its traditional political allies.

¹ J. Peters, The Return of Israel to Africa, in Wright & Brownfoot, Africa in World Politics

(Basingstoke: MacMillan) 1987, pp189-190

² Herald, 3/12/83

³ Policy Statement No. 16: PM Mugabe's Address to the 40th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, October 7, 1985 (Harare: Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications) October 1985

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ Palestine File, Bilateral Treaties Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Harare (accessed by formal request)

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Herald, 11/5/83

⁸ Policy Statement No. 16

⁹ I. Mandaza, Interview with N. Shamuyarira, in Southern Africa Political and Economic Monthly

(Harare: SAPES) June 1992

¹⁰ Herald, 3/8/90

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Herald, 17/8/90

¹³ Herald, 8/1/91

¹⁴ Herald, 9/1/91

¹⁵ Sunday Mail, 3/3/91

¹⁶ SC5261, 2/3/91

¹⁷ SC5267, 3/4/91

¹⁸ SC5268, 5/4/91

¹⁹ SC5298, 15/8/91

²⁰ SC5304, 19/9/91

²¹ HH Patel, Zimbabwe's foreign policy and the Gulf crisis, in Social Change and Development

(Harare) No 25, first quarter, 1991

Chapter ten: Zimbabwe in IGOs

The OAU, UN General Assembly and Security Council

Zimbabwe's membership of a wide range of international governmental organisations passes for the most part unnoticed in the domestic political arena with three significant exceptions: the UN, NAM and the Commonwealth. A fourth body, the OAU, which might be expected to feature prominently in Zimbabwe's international activities, is not in fact a focus of great attention.

The OAU

The most significant impact of the Organisation of African Unity on the organisation of Africa has been the recognition of existing colonial boundaries enshrined in its Charter. This far sighted and often unpalatable commitment has had a restraining effect on the military expression of secessionist and irredentist sentiment – itself an inevitable legacy of arbitrary colonial carving. Where such sentiment has led to conflict, however, the OAU has been ill equipped to take a managing role in resolving the dispute. Nor is the OAU, with its diverse membership and underfunded executive in a position to bring a collective African voice to the world stage.

While paying lip service to the ideal of African unity, Zimbabwe has tended to use the OAU as a forum in which to pursue its pre-defined international agenda or as a mechanism for removing inconvenient disputes from the glare of stronger international lights. It has not, however, taken a leading role in the revitalisation of the OAU itself.

At the beginning of July 1980, prime minister Mugabe led the Zimbabwean delegation to the OAU Summit of Heads of State and Government in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In his maiden speech before the

summit, he did not shy away from the issue of the day. His government, he said, stood behind “the gallant people of Western Sahara...My government has no qualms about recognising Polisario and their country.”¹ In March 1982, Zimbabwe walked out of an OAU Information Ministers meeting along with Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania and Mozambique, when the Polisario delegation was barred.

The Chadian civil war was another continental conflict which spilled over into the deliberations of the OAU itself. However, the failures of the OAU were not laid at the door of the members themselves. In November 1982, Mugabe appealed to the Chadian contenders to withdraw to allow a long delayed OAU summit to start. After the failure to reconvene, Mugabe, back in Harare, commented that “just a handful of people being manipulated from outside Africa” could not be allowed to “dash the hopes of the African people and prevent the OAU from fulfilling its obligations.”² On the other hand, Zimbabwe has argued at the UN, that the OAU is the appropriate forum in which to address inter-African disputes, though where it has so argued, it has not been at the forefront of those seeking to place such disputes on the OAU agenda.

Committee work

One area of the OAU in which Zimbabwe took an active role from the start was the Liberation Committee, which had previously been a major focus of OAU work on pre-independence Zimbabwe. Southern Africa remained the Committee’s key concern. In January 1981, Zimbabwe made its first contribution to a special OAU Namibia fund of USD50,000, handing a cheque to the SWAPO representatives at a Liberation Committee meeting chaired by Witness Mangwende.

On 8 July 1982, Mangwende spoke before the 39th Ordinary Session of the OAU Liberation Committee in Arusha. He also presented a cheque of USD331,050 to the Special Fund for Namibia. He used the occasion to address the issue of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. In an emotional anti-semitic outburst, he declared:

It is not easy to be silent on the genocide of our Palestinian and Lebanese brothers which is now being perpetrated by a people whose thirst for and pleasure in spilling blood appears to be unquenchable. We are witnessing now the commission of crimes no less heinous than that suffered by Jews at the hands of fascists in the gas chambers and concentration camps only a few years ago.³

Lip service

Although the OAU has not on the whole been the arena of choice for Zimbabwe's public interventions on the world stage, it has nevertheless been an object of warm praise. The attachment to what might otherwise appear as an ineffectual organisation can be explained in terms of its historical significance in sustaining the drive to independence across the continent. Speaking to the nation on Africa Day, 25 May 1987, Mugabe highlighted its success in this regard:

As we celebrate it, we are also celebrating the achievements of the OAU, especially in regard to the process of the total decolonization of the African continent. Whereas in May 1963, there were only 30 independent African States, there are at present fifty-one member States of the OAU, with South Africa and Namibia as the only two countries still to be liberated.

As you are aware, the decolonization process is promoted by the OAU through the Co-ordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, known in brief as the Liberation Committee with which all African Liberation Movements, including ZANLA and ZIPRA, have worked. The Liberation Committee has left no stone unturned in seeking and raising material assistance for Liberation Movements and we ourselves derived immense assistance from it.

Today we must therefore also remember that our own Independence was assiduously worked for by the OAU and express to it our debt of gratitude.....

The oppressed broad masses of South Africa and Namibia can, together with the Liberation Movements which lead them, derive inspiration and comfort from the fact that the OAU cherishes their objective of freedom and democracy in the same way as they cherished our own and that the Liberation Committee continues to be active in assistance of the just struggle they are waging.⁴

The OAU has often been an arena for rhetorical flourish. At the OAU summit of Heads of State on July 1986, Mugabe used the occasion to launch an attack on the what he perceived as the hijacking of the UN. The west had turned the UN forum into a “lecture hall”, castigating Africans for inappropriate development policies and economic mismanagement. “Some of us”, said Mugabe, “are fighting capitalism which to us represents or means a continuous outflow of our economic wealth to Europe.”⁵ He asserted that African countries should refuse to discuss their debts and economic problems individually with their creditors. This would weaken their position. While arguing for a collective approach in international fora, however, Zimbabwe has always been scrupulous in avoiding any upset to its creditors.

Of all the international organisations in which Zimbabwe is active, therefore, the OAU does not appear to feature as one in which the country seeks an enhanced role. In an interview published in June 1992, foreign minister Shamuyarira had this to say about suggestions that Zimbabwe was seeking the OAU chairmanship:

We are not angling for the chairmanship of the OAU...The Secretary-General asked a number of states if they could host the next summit and we said we were sorry we could not do it because we had just hosted the CHOGM, and we felt we could not host another meeting.⁶

The UN

Zimbabwe was admitted to the UN on 25 August 1980. It has twice served on the Security Council, where it took seriously the role of representative of the Africa Group and consequently was more often than not a seeker after a consensus position. In the General Assembly by contrast, its voting pattern has been individual, but with more than a passing nod to bilateral friendships.

Security Council

In 1983, Zimbabwe began its first term on the Security Council. Its position on specific issues considered by the Council was retrospectively explained as founded on two broad approaches:⁷

(1) Zimbabwe always strives for consensus or unanimous decisions or resolutions.

(2) On the Namibian question, insisting on the implementation of SC Res.435 of 1978 without amendments, preconditions or prevarications.

Consensus therefore is not a codeword for compromise on issues deemed of national importance.

The following issues were dealt with during Zimbabwe's first term and reviewed in an official summary of Zimbabwe's positions in the Council:⁸

Chad

As this issue was on the OAU agenda, Zimbabwe considered it most appropriate that the Security Council lend its support to regional initiatives. Given the lack of effective action by the OAU at the time, this position in all probability owed more to a desire to keep an intra-African conflict off the world stage.

Central America

Res.530 was unanimously adopted as it called for Security Council support for peaceful efforts to find peaceful solutions in Latin America by the Contadora Group and called for close cooperation between the Security Council and the Contadora. However, in March 1984 Nicaragua again appealed to the Security Council. On a draft resolution, 13 members agreed (UK abstaining, US veto) that external intervention in Central America was an inadmissible violation of the UN Charter. All but three of the 34 countries that addressed the UN Security Council on the issue condemned the mining of Nicaraguan territorial waters. Zimbabwe's voting on Central America was consistent with the position of the Non Aligned Group in rejecting external, provocation and aggression.

Grenada

Following the military invasion and occupation of Grenada on 25 October 1983 by a joint force of US and Caribbean troops, the situation was considered at the request of Guyana, Nicaragua and a number of Caribbean members:

During the formal debate, almost every representative who addressed the Security Council, including our own, expressed deep indignation and revulsion at this violation of the UN Charter and international law. A draft, vetoed by the US was put to the Security Council by Guyana, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua, deeply deploring the armed intervention and calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops.

Zimbabwe's action on this issue was explained as stemming from a “commitment to the UN Charter which makes no provision for military intervention in the affairs of a sovereign state”.⁹ Two days after the invasion Mugabe condemned the US led operation as “an act of wanton aggression carried out in complete defiance of the UN Charter and the sovereign right of the people of Grenada”. Since the violent overthrow of Maurice Bishop’s government, the people of Grenada were hardly in a position to exercise their sovereign right. However, Mugabe drew an unfavourable comparison between US interventionism in Latin America and detachment from the real problems of Southern Africa

Palestine

Zimbabwe supported the “valiant liberation struggle and is opposed to foreign intervention in Lebanon.”

Iran/Iraq

This was clearly an issue on which Zimbabwe did not wish to be seen to be taking sides (see chapter nine). It therefore proclaimed impartiality:

Our own approach has been guided by the fact that we enjoy equally good relations with each of the conflicting parties, which are also valuable members of the NAM.

Zimbabwe therefore limited itself to supporting the Secretary General's efforts to find a just and lasting settlement. Security Council Res.552 of 1 June 1984 which called upon all states to respect the right of free navigation and the territorial integrity of States not party to the hostilities and condemned recent attacks on commercial ships en route to and from the ports of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, saw Zimbabwe abstain along with Nicaragua, arguing that the resolution failed to take an even handed approach to the wider issue of the war.

Cyprus

In 1983, Res. 541 was adopted, calling for the revocation of the Declaration of the Republic of Northern Cyprus. Resolution 554 of 1984, which Zimbabwe supported, argued that:

Secessionism, on the grounds of ethnicity, or on any other grounds cannot be entertained by the international community as no single country in this world can boast complete ethnic racial or cultural homogeneity.

KAL007

Its position on this issue was to cost Zimbabwe dear. It was "one of the most controversial issues considered by the Security Council". A draft resolution tabled by USA, South Korea, Canada, Japan, Australia joined by Belgium, Fiji, France, Italy, West Germany, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Philippines, Thailand and UK sought, inter alia, to condemn the USSR for violating international civil aviation regulations.¹⁰ The USSR and Poland voted No; Zimbabwe, China, Guyana and Nicaragua abstained. This vote, as explained in chapter seven, does not reflect any particular leverage that the USSR

may have had on Zimbabwe, since relations between the two states were not particularly warm. The official summary concludes that Zimbabwe's voting in any international forum is a deliberate and sovereign expression, based on its perceptions of the issues. "Our foreign policy", it argues, "is genuinely non-aligned". Nevertheless, it continues, independence and sovereignty do not imply non-cooperation with other nations:

On the contrary, we co-operate with other members of the security council, especially the seven members of the Non Aligned Caucus. We consult closely with them, as we also do with fellow African members and those of the socialist group. On such issues as the Namibian question, apartheid, destabilisation of our region and the occupation of Angolan territory, we naturally consult very closely with other Frontline states, whose views we take very seriously. However, the line of action which we finally take is our own, and one that will have benefited from our friends' views.¹¹

Second chance

Zimbabwe's second term on the Security Council ran from January 1991 to 1992. On the agenda at the outset was the situation in the Gulf. For part of the war - in the month of February - Zimbabwe's UN representative Simbarashe Mbengegwe was President of the Council. Zimbabwe's approach to that conflict is discussed in more detail in chapter nine. It is perhaps, worth noting here, however, that Zimbabwe's deviations from the majority vote in all the Iraq-Kuwait resolutions concerned not the substance of the conflict itself, but what it perceived as dilutions of the doctrine of non-interference in internal affairs.

Other issues dealt with during Zimbabwe's second security council term included the overthrow of the Aristide government in Haiti. The Council condemned the grave events in Haiti and called for the restoration of the legitimate government. Supporting this view, Mbengegwe said that the OAS was committed to helping the people of Haiti and Zimbabwe supported these efforts.¹² This is in keeping with the approach that regional conflicts where possible should be addressed by regional bodies and also suggests a desire to keep large powers at bay.

At the first ever Security Council summit meeting on 31 December 1992, Foreign Minister Shamuyarira, in his capacity as special emissary of President Mugabe called for the Charter to be re-examined. A new world order could best be constructed by rectifying flaws, closing gaps and updating provisions rendered obsolete by new international circumstances.

General assembly

An analysis of Zimbabwe's voting patterns in the General Assembly confirms that consultation does not necessarily mean agreement or convergence. The following General Assembly Resolutions indicate a divergence in Zimbabwe's voting record from that of other members of NAM and the Socialist camp (Y=yes; N=no; A=abstention):

46/86: Vote to revoke the determination contained in Resolution 33/79 of 10/11/75 that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination: Y111-N25-A13. Y votes included: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Yugoslavia, Zambia. N votes included: Algeria, Cuba, DPRK, Iran, Iraq, Libya. Abstentions included: *Zimbabwe*, Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania.

46/134: on the situation of human rights in Iraq: Y129-N1-A17. Y votes included Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Yugoslavia, Zambia. Abstentions included: *Zimbabwe*, China, Cuba, Indonesia, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania.

35th session: Rejection of the credentials of the representatives of Democratic Kampuchea (Pol Pot): Y35-N74-A32. *Zimbabwe* abstained.

36/5: urges countries of South East Asia to exert renewed efforts to establish a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in South East Asia, once a comprehensive political solution to the Kampuchean conflict is achieved: Y100-N25-A19. Y votes included *Zimbabwe*, China, UK, US, Israel, Lesotho, Swaziland. N votes included USSR, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Libya, Angola, Ethiopia. Abstentions included Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda.

37/6: on the principles of self determination of the Kampuchean people; authorises the ad hoc committee to carry out its mandate: Y105-N23-A20. Y votes included *Zimbabwe*, China, US, UK, Zambia, Kenya, Yugoslavia. N votes included USSR, Mozambique, Cuba, Libya, Syria. Abstentions included Tanzania, Algeria.

35/27: The right of East Timor to self-determination & independence: Y58-N35-A46. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

36/50: the right of self-determination for the East Timorese: Y54-N42-A46. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

35/124: invites member states to contribute suggestions on international cooperation to avert new flows of refugees: Y105-N16-A14. Y votes included China, Zambia. N votes included Mozambique, USSR. *Zimbabwe* abstained, as did Tanzania.

35/185: to ensure respect for human rights in Bolivia: Y83-N9-A47. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

35/188: concern for human rights in Chile: Y95-N8-A39. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour as it did on 36/155 and 36/157 concerning El Salvador and all subsequent resolutions on human rights in Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala.

37/3: considers the armed conflict between Iran and Iraq to be endangering international peace and security; affirms the necessity of an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of forces as a preliminary to peaceful settlement of the dispute: Y119-N1-A15. Y votes included Iraq, USSR, US, Tanzania, Mozambique, China. Iran voted against. *Zimbabwe* abstained, along with Zambia, Syria, Nicaragua, Cuba and India.

37/200: Emphasises the indivisibility and inter-relatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; stresses the responsibility of governments to secure the human rights of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups; urges concomitant efforts to establish a new world economic order: Y81-N38-A20. Y votes included Tanzania, UK, US. N votes included *Zimbabwe*, Mozambique, Iran, Ethiopia, Syria, Libya, Comecon countries. Abstentions included Iraq, Jordan, China, Nigeria.

The following resolutions were voted with the vast majority of members of NAM and the Socialist camp:

35/75: condemns Israeli policy in occupied territories: Y118-N2-A26. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

35/167: calls on states to accord to national liberation movements recognised by OAU and League of Arab States with observer status in international organisations, facilities, privileges and immunities necessary for the performance of their function: Y97-N10-A29. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

35/190: for a study of the criteria for voluntary aid distribution to victims of gross and flagrant violations of human rights: Y57-N39-A46. *Zimbabwe* voted against.

36/27: condemns Israel for bombing the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Tammuz: Y109-N2-A34. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

Second thoughts

The following resolutions reflect an evolution in *Zimbabwe*'s voting patterns:

Afghanistan

Zimbabwe's opposition to the presence of Soviet troops became more overt.

35/37: calls for immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; appeals for aid for refugees: Y111-N22-A12. *Zimbabwe* abstained, Zambia in favour, Mozambique against.

36/34: calls for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan; renews the call for humanitarian relief assistance; reaffirms the Afghans' right to self-determination: Y116-N23-A12. Y votes included *Zimbabwe*, China, Albania, Botswana, Kampuchea, Israel, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia. N votes included Comecon countries, Mozambique, Cuba, Libya. Abstentions included Nicaragua.

37/37: reaffirming 36/34. *Zimbabwe* voted in favour.

South Africa

35/206c: for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa: Y115-N10-A20. Y votes included Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire. *Zimbabwe* abstained, along with Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Sweden.

35/206d: for an oil embargo on South Africa: Y123-N7-A13. *Zimbabwe* abstained.

35/206: commends all governments who have implemented UN resolutions on apartheid; condemns those who continue to collaborate with South Africa; urges the international community to continue to isolate South Africa: Y114-N10-A22. *Zimbabwe* abstained.

After its first year of membership, Zimbabwe's stance at the UN on South Africa hardened considerably and consistently. This may be a dual result of its assumption of a key role in explaining the position of the frontline states on the one hand and the net deterioration in its relations with South Africa on the other (see chapter five).

Mazrui, in considering the role of African countries in the UN, observed in 1977 that:

..while there have been occasions when the United Nations has made a contribution towards moderating the danger of war or facilitating the process of peace-making, it has been on the whole more effective in the struggle against colonialism, the campaign against certain forms of racism, and the quest for a more equitable global economic system. The tangible results in this third area are still very modest indeed, but the United Nations has definitely become one of the battlefields for the war against economic injustice and underdevelopment.

However, clouds of uncertainty continue to hang over the destiny of the world body. Its ambition is much greater than its capacity, its potential more impressive than its accomplishments, its ideals more profound than its standards.¹³

Mazrui's observations remain valid and are likely to continue to be so, since the UN by its very universality provides one of the most accessible international fora in which to declaim, but one of the most difficult in which to drive forward a particular course of action.

In his wide ranging address to the General Assembly in 1985, Mugabe, through his foreign minister, assessed the challenges facing the UN and its success in responding to them. Despite lack of progress in conflict resolution, arms control, the debt crisis and economic development, he argued that the effort of working through the UN was still worth making:

There is no alternative to multilateralism - it is a fact of life dictated by the reality of interdependence, a reality that can only be ignored at our peril. A consensus for development is also a consensus for resuming dialogue on the institutional obstacles to the launching of the global negotiations on the establishment of a new economic order. Indeed the people of the world and their governments have the potential of rising up to such a challenge and this solemn occasion should generate the necessary political will that would sustain that renewed commitment to development.¹⁴

¹ For the Record No.2: PM's Address to OAU, July 1980 (Ministry of Information, Immigration and Tourism) July 1980

² Herald, 25/11/82

³ Press Statement of the Ministry of Information, 2/7/82

⁴ Official transcript, Ministry of Information, Harare

⁵ Herald, 31/7/86

⁶ Southern Africa Vol5 no9 pp3-7

⁷ Press Statement 593/84/SD/ME, Ministry of Information files

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ SC meeting 2476, 12/9/83

¹¹ PS593/84/SD/ME

¹² SC5314, 3/10/91

¹³ A. Mazrui, Africa's International Relations, (London: Heinemann) 1977, p213

¹⁴ Policy Statement No. 16: PM Mugabe's Address to the United Nations, October 7, 1985 (Harare: Ministry of Information, Posts & Telecommunications) October 1985

Conclusion

Reasons for reticence. Provisional assessments

Few of the accounts thus far published of post-independence Zimbabwean development have been able or willing to make definitive judgements. Part of the problem is in delineating the government's own targets against which to judge its performance.

This study has attempted to explore the principal factors, whether individual or common to other third world states, that shaped the way Zimbabwe forged its international links in the first fourteen years after independence.

Chapter One examined the economic and political legacy of the struggle for independence and the network of relations formed by the nationalist movements. This provided a broad indication of the degree to which the first post-independence government, dominated by ZANU(PF) might wish to refashion the country's international relations. While maintaining an overt allegiance to Marxism-Leninism, Mugabe's appointment of a broad-based cabinet in the interests of reconciliation indicated that transformation of the country's economic ties would not be an initial priority. Nevertheless, there was a clear contrast between ZANU(PF)'s political friendships and the trade and investment patterns inherited at independence.

The second chapter outlined the constraints facing the new government in pursuing foreign political and economic policy. Some were identified as common to many LDCs. These included a scarcity of available resources, competing fiscal objectives, and the need to interact with the world market. Constraints specific to the Zimbabwean situation included the Lancaster House constitution, with its entrenched property clauses, and the country's trade patterns themselves. The need to protect

revenues derived from trade resulted in a reticence in tampering with existing trade patterns, though preservation of these ties could be seen as a consideration of the national interest and a foreign policy objective in itself. In the case of Zimbabwe, debt was considered of comparatively less significance as a constraint.

Counterparty perceptions of the importance of the relationship, which can be a limiting factor, actually worked in Zimbabwe's favour in the first decade of independence as its geopolitical and economic role was seen by many countries as potentially significant both regionally and in international fora. This meant that Zimbabwe was often listened to, even if its exhortations were not acted upon.

The extent to which foreign relations reflect coherent policy will depend partly on the ability of policy makers to recognise the limits of their influence. Chapter Three explored the foreign policy making process in Zimbabwe. Despite official reference to ZANU(PF) as the ultimate decision-making body, the importance of Robert Mugabe, initially as prime minister and then as president was indicated, with the foreign minister providing commentary and the ministry supplying the functionaries. Economic relations were shown to have come under less direct central control.

The Zimbabwean government's declared aim was to use the tools at its disposal to rectify domestic socio-economic iniquities and to extend its fundamental concerns to the international arena in the form of a commitment to non-alignment, socialism and a new international economic order.

At the same time, however, national sovereignty and the right to make decisions in the national interest have been stressed along with promotion of a free exchange of ideas and trade. These positions allow considerable room for manoeuvre in formulating policy on specific

issues. While there has been some official recognition of contextual constraints, they have not been offered as inhibiting factors in individual policy decisions.

Publicly, Mugabe has argued for a congruence between political and economic relations. In practice, this has involved attempts at extension rather than substitution of existing international economic links. Yet results, even in this respect, have been modest.

The pattern of relations resulting from the Mugabe government's attempts at diversification was set out in Chapter Four. This included the sequence of establishment of diplomatic relations, a geographical profile of sources of economic assistance and the role of private investment.

Formal relations were forged with a wide spectrum of countries. South Africa presented a special case demanding a continuation of economic ties in the face of overt political hostility. While attempts were made to develop an economic dimension to many of the newer bilateral political relationships, these efforts had little sustained impact on overall trade patterns.

Aid was sought and received from a variety of sources, both multilateral and bilateral. Beyond the actual establishment of diplomatic relations, aid programmes do not seem to have influenced Zimbabwe's policy positions. On occasion, the government has been prepared to jeopardise certain bilateral aid flows in defence of its position on specific issues.

Chapters Five to Ten highlighted specific elements of Zimbabwe's network of international relations. Chapter Five discussed Zimbabwe in the Southern African region. South Africa and Mozambique were examined in some detail as presenting its two greatest dilemmas in the first decade of independence.

Ultimately, political affinity at a government level has had little impact on trade relations with Mozambique, though common infrastructural commitments have yielded progress. The rehabilitation of the Beira Corridor and the brokering of a peace deal between FRELIMO and the MNR were among the relative successes of Zimbabwean foreign policy in its first fourteen years.

In the case of South Africa, active efforts were made to reduce that country's relative dominance as a trading partner and carrier for Zimbabwe, though economic ties remained crucial to the latter's survival.

Two regional organisations, SADC and PTA/Comesa, played some role in the Zimbabwean strategy of dispersal of dependence. However, efforts to boost bilateral economic relationships with other members of these groups foundered on an absence of sufficient coincidence of wants and an inability to drive the private sector down a politically pre-determined trade path. SADC, to which Zimbabwe has demonstrated greater commitment, has now revised its *raison d'être* and is set to develop as a regional trading bloc with South Africa as its engine.

Chapter Six focused on the Mugabe government's ambivalent relationship with the UK. This ambivalence stems from Britain's historical role as coloniser on the one hand and as the catalyst for a non-military resolution on the other.

Despite harsh words over the UK policy on sanctions against South Africa, Britain remained one of Zimbabwe's two largest trading partners, its largest bilateral donor and, significantly, the provider of expertise and assistance in creating a new unified army.

Chapter Seven examined the nature of relations with the USA, the USSR; and China, providing contrasts in the relative importance of political will and economic imperatives.

In the case of the USA, Zimbabwean accusations of bad faith on a number of non-bilateral issues led to reductions in official US aid, though trade links remained strong. The USA was consistently among the top five export and import markets for the Zimbabwean economy in the period under review.

Relations with the United States were, when positive, presented as a series of bilateral events. Criticism of the USA, on the other hand, was largely contextualised in a broader framework, be it regional, multilateral or global. The potential impact of such criticism on bilateral aid was acknowledged, but bilateral trade with the USA was not an issue on which the government ever chose to pass public judgement.

Sino-Zimbabwean relations were less publicly promoted than might have been expected, given the strength of Chinese support for ZANU(PF) in the pre-independence struggle. Nevertheless, ties were never presented as less than fraternal. Economic assistance notwithstanding, bilateral trade increased in the first five years of independence to the point where the PRC was Zimbabwe's 10th largest export market in 1985. Yet it was overtaken the following year by Taiwan – to which ZANU(PF) was ideologically hostile.

Closer ties with the Soviet Union, meanwhile, were never seen as a priority. Efforts by Soviet representatives to develop closer co-operation were largely resisted.

Chapter Eight considered Zimbabwe's ties with the rest of Europe, and in particular, the cases of Sweden, France and Romania. Sweden was one of ZANU(PF)'s few active western supporters during

the independence struggle and subsequently served as the model of a conscientious donor. France more overtly melded aid with self-interest, while Romania attempted to translate declared ideological affinity into meaningful economic links.

The European countries considered fell into three groups: supporters of ZANU(PF) in the struggle for independence and consequently candidates for closer economic ties (Sweden, Romania, Yugoslavia); those regarded by ZANU(PF) as at best ambivalent during the struggle (France, Italy, West Germany) and those which were closer to ZAPU (East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria). The last group, like the USSR, suffered from an absence of either political kinship or historical trade links.

The “ambivalent” cluster of western European countries was the most successful at establishing strong economic links. These countries were presented as friends on a bilateral basis, even where they were considered as of dubious multilateral intent.

Of the first category, only Sweden managed to established any sustained economic links, though at levels below expectations. The relationship with Romania produced many warm words and detailed trade plans, but few of the latter were ever implemented in earnest. Yugoslavia at one point appeared to be laying a foundation for economic ties, but this was not sustained. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe continued to support Yugoslavia in political fora, when its territorial integrity was in serious doubt.

In Chapter Nine, aspects of Zimbabwe’s relations with the Middle East were considered in the context of three conflicts: Israel/Palestine; Iran/Iraq; and Iraq/Kuwait. Support for Palestinian independence has been vocal and consistent. Israel was regarded as a pariah until the Oslo Accords and was frequently castigated for its oppression of the

Palestinians and for its relations with South Africa. Trade with Israel, more significant than with any other country in the region, received no public comment.

Zimbabwe's neutrality in the Iran-Iraq conflict was posited on the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose broader influence it did not wish to jeopardise. By contrast, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait elicited fierce condemnation from Zimbabwe, which took a different stance from many of its traditional political allies

Chapter Ten examined Zimbabwe's participation in the OAU and the UN. Although Mugabe has often suggested the OAU as the most appropriate forum for the resolution of specific disputes, Zimbabwe has invested comparatively few resources in its OAU participation. The United Nations – both the General Assembly and the Security Council – has, on the other hand, been the chosen forum for some of the Zimbabwean government's strongest verbal interventions.

In all its international affairs, whether bilateral or multilateral, Zimbabwe, principally through Robert Mugabe, has expressed its commitment to an active political agenda. Periodically, the need for that agenda to have a consistent economic component has been declared.

With the "commanding heights" of the economy still largely in private hands since independence, the failure of evident efforts to bring Zimbabwe's international economic relations within the government's operational ambit is, in itself, not surprising. Yet it remains largely unexplained.

Any regime which values its standing among what it sees as its constituency will be subject to diverse pressures. Responding to these pressures is bound to bring conflicting statements of aims. Zimbabwe inherited a set of political and economic expectations deriving from the

nature of the struggle for independence and a set of imposing constraints.

Nevertheless, in dissecting the Zimbabwean government's approach to building its own set of relations, small markers of success or failure can be set up along the way.

Discrepancy in context

The argument has been advanced here that a discrepancy between political rhetoric and economic reality is inevitable for a developing country and that the task of state actors is to develop a coherent and credible explanation of their behaviour as they come to face the realisation that the fence around their field of action is too high to vault. In the case of Zimbabwe's international relations, however, there is little evidence that the ZANU(PF) administration has attempted the kind of internal political audit that such an explanation would require. On the other hand, it is far from clear that a coherent explanation is available other than *ex post facto*.

As for the management of Zimbabwe's international relations at an operational level, this has been accomplished with as much leeway as the particular forum in each case would allow. Where power has been perceived, it has been enjoyed. Where power has been lacking, there has been a tacit if grudging acceptance of its absence. Whether the whole process has been handled to the benefit of Zimbabwe's citizens is a matter on which multiple juries are still out. If Mao thought it too early to judge the success or failure of the French revolution, it would be foolhardy to rush to judgement on the first decade and a half of Zimbabwe's independence.

Confronted with unpalatable realities, the Zimbabwean administration began in 1980 with some sense of its limitations in the international arena. Others have subsequently become evident. Both the

government and citizens of Zimbabwe are still grappling to come to terms with the limits of their autonomy. That in itself is a dynamic and protracted struggle.

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