South Africa–Zimbabwe Relations

VOLUME 1

PRE-COLONIAL TO 2006

S A L O

Southern African Liaison Office

South Africa–Zimbabwe Relations

Volume 1: Pre-colonial to 2006

"I wholeheartedly commend what I believe is an important, constructive and helpful distillation of SALO's work, so far, on South Africa's relations with Zimbabwe… SALO is dedicated to building international consensus on Zimbabwe, thus avoiding unnecessary contestation, misunderstanding and misuse of our precious and limited time. By enabling dialogue and debate, both private and public, amongst key government, civil society and diplomatic figures from the region and abroad, SALO, benefiting from the generous contributions of all involved, helps stimulate fresh thinking leading to bold conclusions."

– BISHOP RUBIN PHILLIP:
Chair of the SALO Board, Dean of the Province of
the Anglican Church of Southern Africa

"SALO has functioned as an authentic hub of thought-provoking dialogue, where the tough questions of African diplomatic tactics and strategies have come under very close scrutiny by both the policy makers who design and implement them, and the citizens who, in calling the continent home, are compelled to live by them."

– BELLA MATAMBANADZO:
Zimbabwean Feminist Activist

"I would like to say to SALO, thank you, thank you, thank you very much for the space that you provide for the conversations that are necessary in this region of southern Africa. Thank you, because it is a space that is unique and that is very useful."

– THOKO MATSHE:
Zimbabwean Civil Society Leader and Africa Regional Coordinator
of the Olof Palme International Center

"SALO has got the capacity to engage people in dialogue, including those who are in conflict with each other. SALO's experience in dialogue is something that needs to be emulated, as dialogue is the best way of resolving any conflict. As the Presidency, we will continue to work as closely as possible with SALO, and hopefully this will result in taking the continent to a higher level of peace, security and stability."

– AMBASSADOR LINDIWE ZULU:
International Relations Advisor to President Jacob Zuma and a member
of the South African SADC-endorsed facilitation team on Zimbabwe

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific (countries)
ANC	African National Congress
ASAS	Association of Southern African States
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
AU	African Union
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CFU	Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers' Union
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DIRCO	Department for International Relations and Cooperation
DIS	Department of Intelligence and Security
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FLS	Frontline States

FRELIMO	Mozambique Liberation Front
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution economic strategy
GNU	Government of National Unity
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers Union
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in Africa
ISPDC	Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JOC	Joint Operations Command
JPCDS	Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security
LRRP II	Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDP	Mutual Defence Pact
MMD	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
MPLA	People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEC	National Employment Council
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPDS	Organ on Politics, Defence and Security
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PF	Patriotic Front
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
RPTC	Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre
SACC	South African Council of Churches

SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
SAIIA	South Africa Institute of International Affairs
SALO	Southern African Liaison Office
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SASCO	South African Students Congress
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
UANC	United African National Council
UDF	United Democratic Front
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZSF	Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum
ZTVP	Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project

Preface

The research for this book has built on the work of the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) since its inception as the Zimbabwe Liaison Office in 2004. The knowledge process specifically informing this publication began, in earnest, in late 2007. As the Zimbabwe–South Africa context and knowledge are both dynamic, we have updated this study repeatedly as the situation evolved, publishing elements of the research in different forms.[1] While the context is continuously shifting, SALO believes that this study will prove its relevance as an insightful, composite piece that provides a seminal backdrop to the ever-changing, fluid world described in this publication.

The Authors

The research for this book was compiled and the analysis written up by a Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) research team made up of mostly southern African academics, researchers and journalists drawn from its staff and board. This team examined the following:

- A review of a wide range of published and unpublished material;

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1   See www.salo.org.za for all past SALO publications.

- A series of focused interviews with key stakeholders and opinion leaders; and

- Transcripts of policy dialogue events organised by SALO.

Dr Tara Polzer Ngwato was the book's overall editor and Tawanda Sachikonye was research assistant. Editorial assistance was offered by: Professor Brian Raftopoulos, formerly of the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) and now with the University of the Western Cape; Roger Southall, then Professor of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand; and David Moore, Professor of Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Johannesburg. Further editorial input was made by: Richard Smith, SALO Board member; Clever Chikwanda, a doctoral student at the University of the Western Cape and researcher for SALO; and Joan Brickhill, SALO Director.

About SALO

SALO is a non-governmental organisation that seeks to promote policy dialogue between civil society and governments, backed by research, thereby laying the ground for greater consensus in the search for solutions to regional conflicts. Initially, SALO was focused exclusively on Zimbabwe, but is currently using similar techniques and principles to address a wider range of regional and international conflicts as well as governance challenges.

In relation to Zimbabwe, SALO's approach is informed by accepting these principles:

- That the crisis in Zimbabwe should be resolved through dialogue involving all political and civil society actors in order to build consensus;

- That the will of the people of Zimbabwe should be respected by all stakeholders;

- That the values underlying SADC's own protocols should be respected and upheld;

- That South Africa – because of its geographical, historical and economic ties with the country – has a key role to play in defusing the crisis;

- That the international community, working with African countries and institutions, also has a critically important role to play, which should complement, rather than conflict with, African initiatives; and

- That civil society has a role that should be respected and understood by governments.

Foreword

– Bishop Rubin Phillip

Having been part of the lengthy processes leading to the publication you now have before you, I feel I can justifiably and wholeheartedly commend what I believe is an important, constructive and helpful distillation of SALO's work, so far, on South Africa's relations with Zimbabwe.

We believe an essential step in the quest for the well-being of the people of Zimbabwe and the region is truth-telling. Telling the truth strengthens the resolve of those who are working for peace and justice and helps disarm the perpetrators of falsehood and violence. Furthermore, it helps underline the heavy responsibilities of regional and international communities – of us all – for our fellows in distress.

But what is the truth we have to tell? This, as you will read, SALO has diligently set out to discover and to share through rigorous research far back into the roots of history and conflict, political and economic, and through ever-continuing dialogues with all contemporary parties concerned.

While SALO is a non-governmental organisation, it enjoys good relations, based on long-standing friendships, with the South African government and the ANC/COSATU/SACP Tripartite Alliance and

with governments in the region and abroad through the diplomatic community. Its work interlinks with that of other civil society organisations in the region in stimulating public consciousness and debate through youth and media outreach programmes. It is dedicated to building international consensus on Zimbabwe, thus avoiding unnecessary contestation, misunderstanding and misuse of our precious and limited time. By enabling dialogue and debate, both private and public, among key government, civil society and diplomatic figures from the region and abroad, SALO, benefiting from the generous contributions of all involved, helps stimulate fresh thinking leading to bold conclusions.

The people of Zimbabwe have, at great personal cost, remained committed to the democratic processes of law, peace and justice. Such fortitude is an inspiration for all of us.

BISHOP RUBIN PHILLIP, 2013
Chair of the SALO Board
Dean of the Province of the Anglican
Church of Southern Africa

Foreword

– Bella Matambanadzo

Over the last ten years, the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) has devoted its convening power to bringing together diverse interest groups with the objective of facilitating constructive conversations. These have been underpinned by a commitment towards addressing the key policy questions of the southern African region, and, by extension, Africa's relationship with international centres of political, economic and other forms of power and equality.

The audience is vast. Academics, diplomats, politicians, human rights defenders, media practitioners, feminists, refugees, private sector specialists, representatives of donor and bilateral agencies, union leaders, Africa's young citizens, and those from the clergy have regularly been part of the range of attendants, as well as on the panels of expert speakers that SALO has the capacity to consistently draw together.

With offices in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and board and advisory member representatives further afield, SALO has functioned as an authentic hub of thought-provoking dialogue, where the tough questions of African diplomatic tactics and strategies have come under very close scrutiny by both the policy makers who design and implement them, and the citizens who, in calling the continent home, are compelled to live by them.

What distinguishes SALO's dialogue forum is that it is a space conceptualised and conceived by Africans. It is an agency rooted in the multiple histories, complex lessons and hopeful aspirations of the region's manifold liberation struggles. In particular Zimbabweans and South Africans formed a partnership to create a zone of understanding between those who on the one hand considered themselves aggrieved, and on the other hand those seen as aggressors. SALO facilitators functioned as both a buffer and a bridge, brokering an informal diplomatic space based on the values of equality. The credibility of SALO as a facilitator and convener brought those who ostensibly sat on opposite sides of a very clear divide to a place of mutual appreciation. The bi-monthly public conferences, supported by field work, research processes and smaller specialist briefings, feature as prominently on the diplomatic calendar of humanitarian and development practitioners as they do in the diaries of government interlocutors.

As a model for civil society, citizen and state relations and engagements, SALO's main strength lies in its human relationships. Individuals with a historical connection, and therefore credibility, brokered conversations based on trust and a desire to retain healthy relationships, even if there were, at times, acerbic differences.

SALO has also become appreciated as a place where policy makers, political party and government officials offer a modicum of accountability to those who have entrusted them with the responsibility, indeed the burden, of governance and government. At SALO a first-hand account from an experienced African diplomat negotiating the somewhat muddied international waters – be it in Burundi, the DRC, Zimbabwe, Swaziland or elsewhere – bears equal weight as the voices of their counterparts from the traditionally powerful diplomatic blocs.

For the last ten years, I have valued and continue to treasure SALO's ability to put Zimbabweans with opposing views under one roof, and around one table. This has meant that we have had

to face each other and tell each other some very difficult, different truths, in an environment safeguarded by the values that our friends at SALO offer. Where else can a veteran of the pan-African liberation struggle sit side by side with the representative from a union formation, or the survivor of torture and police brutality? There are not many opportunities that offer such a reaching out, and that attempt to narrow the divide between people who have a common destiny.

The magic of SALO is in demonstrating to all of us our inter-connectedness, our commonality and striving towards a form of consensus that – were it not for the skill deployed by those who have committed themselves to SALO's cause, mission and vision – would remain a pipe dream.

BELLA MATAMBANADZO, 2013
Zimbabwean feminist activist, writes as a key
supporter and participant in SALO's work
since its formation in 2004

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Introduction

Dimensions of South Africa–Zimbabwe Relations

South Africa and Zimbabwe have a very large set of relationships. The first one is a historical relationship which goes back to the 19th century. This is a very critical part of the relationship that doesn't really get looked into, but has a big bearing on how the present relationship works. The second part is the cultural relationship between the two countries. The third part is a political relationship between the parties in the two countries. And then of course there's a very comprehensive economic relationship between the countries.[2]

I think one of the most amazing aspects of the Zimbabwean debate in the last few years is the passionate expectation that South Africa must do something about Zimbabwe.[3]

South Africa and Zimbabwe have played central roles in each other's histories since their respective creations as states, and their people have an even longer history of interconnectedness. While South Africa has always been the much larger and more powerful neighbour, Zimbabwe has also shaped South African politics in significant ways. This has especially been the case during Zimbabwe's 'crisis years' from 2000 to the present, during which time South Africa's foreign policy positions towards its neighbour were the subject of much domestic, regional and international scrutiny.

The book is the first in a series building on more than eight years of work by the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) to facilitate dialogues concerning the Zimbabwean crisis. SALO's aim has been to support the development of a national, regional and international consensus regarding possible ways forward

2   SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, July 2007.
3   Presentation by Ibbo Mandaza at a SALO Building International
       Consensus event, Pretoria, October 2010.

in Zimbabwe. Overall, the book is a contribution towards the achievement of SALO's strategic objectives, namely:

- To promote informed debate and policy about political crises; [4]

- To build consensus among key players in political crises;

- To improve mutual understanding among decision-makers in political crises by clarifying positions and interests; and

- To facilitate dialogue among stakeholders in different sectors (government, diplomatic, civil society) and at different levels (local, national, regional, international).

Much of SALO's ongoing work relating to Zimbabwe has been targeted at the South African government and ruling party, other South African political players, international diplomats based in South Africa, and South African civil society, as well as at Zimbabwean actors. One of the challenges identified through this work has been that key actors were basing decisions on different levels of knowledge and different interpretations of historical events and relationships. According to Zimbabwean Professor Sam Moyo, who has worked as a senior advisor on land policy for the Zimbabwean and other southern African governments: "It is as if there are two versions to this story: that which is told abroad and that which is told in Zimbabwe", [5] and indeed there are many different versions within Zimbabwe and among the actors watching from abroad. One of SALO's main tasks has been to make different actors and their motivations intelligible to each other by providing a comprehensive description of the two countries' historical relations, up to today. This book and future publications in the series are partly a result of these dialogue processes and partly a contribution to further and ongoing dialogue.

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4   As contributions to informed debate, SALO regularly publishes discussion papers and reports on countries in crisis. See www.salo.org.za for all past SALO publications.
5   SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

The current volume focuses on South Africa–Zimbabwe relations from pre-colonial times up to 2006, including the years of Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis before South Africa's official appointment as mediator by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). A second volume will cover the years of mediation from 2007 onwards.

Due to its origins in SALO's dialogue work, this book series takes a particular approach in terms of its focus on the South African government, its discussion of policy positions, its historical focus, its use of unique primary data on stakeholder positions arising from SALO's dialogue sessions and interviews, and its periodisation.

The book's central question is: how has the South African government responded to, and impacted on, the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis, and what were the factors influencing these responses, including the actions of other key domestic, regional and international actors? In answering this question, the focus is on presenting a chronology of positions and decisions in relation to Zimbabwe by consecutive South African governments. The contributions of other important actors are discussed, mainly as they frame and influence the decisions of the South African government. These actors include: other governments in the region; SADC; the African Union (AU); European and other international diplomatic actors; economic actors; civil society; and last, but not least, the Zimbabwean government and other Zimbabwean actors.

The book's aim is not to evaluate or judge past or current policy choices, or to provide recommendations for future ones. Rather, the book attempts to reconstruct the conditions and contexts, and policy-makers' interpretations of these, which led to particular decisions. This approach parallels SALO's dialogue forums, which provide 'safe spaces' for institutions and individuals with different perspectives on key questions to engage with one another. As with SALO's dialogue processes, the book does not aim to present

or argue a particular SALO position or conclusion on these debates, but to let the different perspectives speak openly to one another so that actors can come to learn about each other and each other's assumptions, values and interests. We review critical public interpretations of, and debates about, South Africa's policy decisions towards Zimbabwe, including media, diplomatic and academic reactions, since such debates influence political decision-making. However, we do not make a judgement on the explanatory merits of different interpretations and theories, or weigh them up against each other and the available evidence as an academic piece might do. Such debates are rather discussed in relation to how they impacted on relationships between actors.

While the main focus of the book is on the post-2000 crisis years, it places these in the longer history of factors leading into the crisis from the early 1990s and relations between the two countries stretching back to pre-colonial times. It does not aim to present a complete account of this history, or indeed a complete account of post-2000 events, but to highlight aspects of the *longue durée* that have shaped interactions between countries, institutions and individuals to this day.

The book builds on SALO's comparative advantage of having access to a range of senior South African government and ruling party officials, as well as other regional and international actors involved and interested in relations with Zimbabwe. The perspectives of these actors have been captured both through the conversations at SALO's public dialogue events and through targeted interviews with key actors, representing a unique body of primary material. The book faces the same constraints as verbal dialogues: some perspectives are louder and better documented than others; and some voices have chosen to remain outside the conversation even when invited to contribute. This book, therefore, does not claim to be the authoritative account of South Africa–Zimbabwe relations during the Zimbabwean crisis. It does, however, bring out many

important elements of key debates that have not otherwise been collated. Therefore it helps to identify the areas of debate that require further public deliberation.

Commentators have divided South Africa's relationship with Zimbabwe into different periods, based on a range of criteria. Given our focus on the executive level of the South African government, we present our chronology broken into chapters based roughly on the various South African presidencies. After this introduction, the second chapter is a broad history of relations before South Africa attained majority rule in 1994, including the pre-colonial and colonial periods, as well as Zimbabwe's independence struggle and the first decade and a half of Zimbabwe's majority-rule from 1980–1994 while South Africa remained under Apartheid rule. This is followed by a chapter on Nelson Mandela's presidency (1994–1999) during which South Africa's new post-Apartheid foreign policy philosophy was articulated and tested. We then close this volume with two chapters reflecting on Thabo Mbeki's presidential terms. Rather than following his two terms (1999–2004 and 2004–2009), the first Mbeki chapter (Chapter 4) covers the first three years (1999–2001), during which time Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis, characterised most publicly by the 'fast track' land reform programme, established itself as a central challenge of South Africa's bilateral, multilateral and domestic political relations. The second Mbeki chapter (Chapter 5) commences with South Africa's responses to Zimbabwe's contested 2002 election and ends just before South Africa (represented by Mbeki) was appointed official mediator in Zimbabwe by SADC in 2007.

The final years of Mbeki's presidency, covering his role as mediator in Zimbabwe (2007–2009), will be described in the second volume of this series, along with chapters discussing the six-month transitional presidency of Kgalema Motlanthe (2009), followed by Jacob Zuma's presidency (2009-onward).

By dividing the book into different South African presidencies, we are not intending to overly personalise South Africa's Zimbabwe policy, or to artificially emphasise differences between presidential regimes, given that all presidents from 1994 led an ANC government, and that party processes, rather than only individuals, largely define policy. We, therefore, attempt to show how significant policy shifts have occurred within each presidential era, and not just between them.

There has been much commentary on South Africa's responses to Zimbabwe's post-2000 crisis. Extensive material has been produced by various arms of the South African government and ruling party (the Department of International Relations and Cooperation,[6] the National Intelligence Agency, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation,[7] the office of International Affairs at the African National Congress (ANC), election observer missions, etc.), by other African governments, by regional bodies such as SADC and the AU, by 'Western'[8] diplomatic missions and governments, and by the United Nations. Academics, think tanks and research non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in South Africa, Zimbabwe and internationally have observed and commented (such as the South African Institute of International

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6   This Department was previously called Department of Foreign Affairs.
7   Previously called Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs.
8   The use of the term 'West' to denote countries in Europe, North America and Australia is a politicised and generalising term, obscuring major differences in diplomatic positions towards Zimbabwe and South Africa. In the chronology chapters, we therefore refer to specific countries or alliances of countries as much as possible. In the discussion of South Africa–Zimbabwe relations, however, the rhetorical opposition of Africa and 'the West' is an important theme, which we reflect on.

Affairs,[9] the Institute for Security Studies,[10] the Institute for Global Dialogue,[11] and the Centre for Policy Studies,[12] among others), as have national, regional and international advocacy NGOs (such as Solidarity Peace Trust[13] and Human Rights Watch,[14] among others). The media in South Africa, Zimbabwe and internationally has covered South Africa–Zimbabwe relations extensively.

This book draws on and contributes to this literature. As noted by one academic observer, however, much of the public debate "is characterised by exactly what it charges [the South African government] with: a lack of factual information and a high level

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9   Some examples include Dlamini, K. (2003). "Is quiet diplomacy an effective conflict resolution strategy?" *South African Yearbook of International Affairs 2002/03*. Johannesburg, SAIIA; Rupiya, M. R. (2003). "Zimbabwe in South Africa's Foreign Policy: A Zimbabwean View". *South African Yearbook of International Affairs 2002/2003*, SAIIA: 161–170; Hammerstad, A. (2011). "Linking South Africa's Immigration Policy and Zimbabwe Diplomacy". *SAIIA Policy Briefing No 42*. Johannesburg, South African Institute for International Affairs.

10 Such as Graham, V. (2006). "How Firm the Handshake? South Africa's use of quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2006". *African Security Review: Institute for Security Studies* 15(4): 114.

11 Hartwell, L. (2011). "Contextualising South Africa's Foreign Policy Towards Zimbabwe". *InFocus Blog* 31 October. From: http://igd.org. za/home/137-contextualising-south-africas-foreign-policy-towards-zimbabwe.

12 Landsberg, C. and K. Kondlo (2007). "South Africa and the 'African Agenda'". *Policy: issues and actors* 20(13).

13 Solidarity Peace Trust (2007). "Destructive Engagement; Violence, mediation and politics in Zimbabwe". Johannesburg, 10 July 2007; Solidarity Peace Trust (2007). "A Difficult Dialogue: Zimbabwe–South Africa economic relations since 2000". Johannesburg. 23 October 2007.

14 Human Rights Watch (2009). "False Dawn: The Zimbabwe Power-Sharing Government's Failure to Deliver Human Rights Improvements". *Human Rights Watch*. 31 August; Human Rights Watch (2011). "Perpetual Fear: Impunity and Cycles of Violence in Zimbabwe". Human Rights Watch. 8 March.

of politicisation."[15] Many accounts written during the Mbeki era furthermore viewed South Africa's approach as largely constant, and often captured it by a simplified understanding of the term 'quiet diplomacy'.[16] While 'quiet diplomacy' can indeed describe a set of practices used by South African foreign policy actors since 1994 in various iterations, this obscures that "the aims and tone of South Africa's Zimbabwe policy have considerably changed over time,"[17] as have the ways in which this policy has been understood and reacted to by other actors, not least SADC, the AU, the EU and other international actors, as well as South African and Zimbabwean civil society. The detailed chronological account of South Africa–Zimbabwe relations, presented in the core chapters of this book, therefore aims to reflect a factual and independent view that traces the shifting positions and strategies over time.

A final, obvious caveat is needed. Descriptions of complex ongoing political processes will always be partial and provisional. A policy decision may have immediate, as well as medium- and long-term,

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15   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet Diplomacy; the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 254.

16   Officials in the Department of Foreign Relations (later the Department of International Relations and Cooperation – DIRCO) emphasise that the term 'quiet diplomacy' was never one they used to describe their own approach, but that it was rather coined by the media and academics. Furthermore, as academic Victoria Graham has pointed out, it is shorthand for a wide range of possible activities and forms of engagement, which South Africa has used in different ways over the years. Graham, V. (2008). "Deconstructing quiet diplomacy: Pinning down an elusive concept". *Journal of Contemporary History* 33(2): 117–135. Nonetheless, a definition proposed by Adelmann captures the basic ingredients of these various approaches: "The term describes two things: The overall framework is diplomacy, rather than sanctions or military action, while the adjective 'quiet' refers to the style of the diplomatic engagement". Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 254.

17   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet Diplomacy; the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 254.

effects that are not yet visible from the current vantage point. Writing in early 2013, the Zimbabwean crisis is not resolved. Presidential and parliamentary elections are due within the year, but the timing is hotly contested, as is the question of whether conditions for free and fair elections are in place.[18] Reports of political violence, the training of youth militias, high-level corruption and similar destabilising factors abound.[19] Key questions of regional and international relations with Zimbabwe remain uncertain, such as how SADC and others will monitor and judge eventual elections, whether and on what conditions the remaining EU and United States 'sanctions' will be lifted, what agreement will be reached on land reform, and how international investment in the reconstruction in the country will be managed in relation to economic 'indigenisation policies', among others. South Africa has been directly or indirectly involved in the multi-level negotiations around all of these questions for many years, so any discussion of South Africa's recent and ongoing interventions will necessarily be focused on process and interim impacts, rather than final effects and effectiveness. The intention of our historical analysis is in any case to provide a solid basis for discussing different options and likely reactions by a range of actors regarding Zimbabwe's open questions, rather than predicting or recommending any specific paths.

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18   Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2012). "Minimum conditions for free and fair elections". *The Standard* 16 September. From: http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2012/09/16/minimum-conditions-for-free-and-fair-elections/.

19   Human Rights Watch (2011). "Perpetual Fear: Impunity and Cycles of Violence in Zimbabwe". Human Rights Watch. 8 March; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. (2012). "First half of 2012: An Unstable Coalition, Escalation of Violence". 28 November. From: http://www.hrforumzim.org/reports/reports-on-political-violence/mid-year-political-violence-report-2/; (2013). "Zimbabwe's Mugabe denies violent campaign ahead of elections". 2 March. From: http://www.firstpost.com/world/zimbabwes-mugabe-denies-violent-campaign-ahead-of-elections-646213.html.

The rest of this introduction sets the stage for the chronological chapters by setting out the multiple dimensions and levels at which the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship functions, and which we trace over time. These dimensions include high-level diplomatic relations, party-political relations, economic relations, security, domestic political contestation, civil society relations, the diaspora, regional governance institutions, interactions with parallel foreign policy objectives beyond Zimbabwe, and global geopolitical and discursive changes. Some of these dimensions have more prominence in the chronological chapters at the core of the book, such as diplomatic and party-political relations, as well as regional institutions and parallel foreign policy objectives, and so these are only schematically presented here. The more structural dimensions – economic relations, security, diaspora impacts and global geopolitical changes – are more difficult to represent chronologically and so these are discussed in more detail below.

Diplomatic

The most prominent and publicly debated dimension of the relationship between the two countries is the diplomatic relation between the two governments, including the bilateral relations between the heads of state, their foreign affairs departments and other prominent government leaders, as well as engagements through multilateral government bodies such as SADC. Commentary on South Africa's 'quiet diplomacy' refers to this level of interaction, and often focuses exclusively on government-to-government discussions.

South Africa–Zimbabwe diplomatic relations have received the most analytical attention and public commentary of all dimensions of the bilateral relationship. Especially in the early years of the crisis, from 2000 until South Africa took on the official SADC mediator role in 2007, analysts assigned or impugned a wide range

of explanations or motivations for South Africa's foreign policy position towards Zimbabwe's government. Most were critical, while some engaged with the challenging context within which South Africa was operating:

- The ANC/Mbeki approves of ZANU-PF[20] policies and therefore does not criticise them openly;

- The ANC/Mbeki holds historical loyalties to Mugabe, meaning that open criticism is not possible;

- The ANC mistrusts the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and, therefore, prefers to back the ZANU-PF status quo, rather than support a change in regime;

- The ANC/Mbeki misjudges the root of violence in Zimbabwe as being about land or colonial legacies (as President Mugabe presents it), rather than being about 'Mugabe's declining power'[21] and therefore thinks that the responsibility for solving the crisis lies with former colonial powers;

- South Africa has an economic interest in Zimbabwe's economic collapse so that South African companies can 'colonise' Zimbabwe;

- The ANC/Mbeki believes that Mugabe and ZANU-PF cannot be influenced through threats, only through collegial encouragement and support, so that public criticism is counterproductive;

- South Africa aims to "prevent a complete collapse of authority in Zimbabwe"[22]; and

- The ANC/Mbeki aims to maintain open channels of communication with Mugabe at all costs, especially as other

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20   The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front, Zimbabwe's ruling party since 1980.

21   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): p 249–276. p. 252.

22   Peace Trust (2007). "A Difficult Dialogue: Zimbabwe–South Africa economic relations since 2000". Johannesburg. 23 October. p. 23.

international actors progressively lose access to Harare through open criticism and sanctions.

The above explanations focus on the nature of the relationships between South African and Zimbabwean actors. Other explanations pay more attention to factors internal to the South African government, either in its relations with its own citizens or in its broader national identity, self-projection and foreign policy ideology in a continental and global geopolitical frame. A South African NGO with a long history of providing research and analysis on Zimbabwe's crisis provides an example of such an understanding:

> *Mbeki's refusal to consider an alternative policy to 'constructive engagement' is rooted in several important considerations, including: a desire to shed South Africa's 'Big Brother' image; a preference for multilateral, not unilateral, approaches to conflict resolution; a belief in African solutions by Africans; a quest to cement South Africa's African identity; a sensitivity to domestic black opinion; a refusal to interfere in the internal affairs of another sovereign state; and constraints imposed by the challenge to South Africa's leadership by other regional states.*[23]

Some of the explanations for South African actions towards Zimbabwe were based on the perception that South Africa was not responding to particular government actions in Zimbabwe, or that it was acting and speaking inappropriately (e.g. by endorsing elections in 2002 and 2005 as free and fair).

The chronological chapters that follow this introduction, especially those covering the period from 2000 onward, do not seek to prove or disprove any of these proposed explanations; they seek to present an account of South African diplomatic actions and

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23   *Ibid*. p. 8f.

statements (including in public and behind the scenes) and aim to present the context in which those decisions were made.

Notwithstanding the supposed motivations for diplomatic actions, different interpretations of South Africa's approach to Zimbabwe take different explicit or implicit yardsticks for measuring the 'success' or 'failure' of a foreign policy position. Some suggest that the only criterion is whether peace and democracy were achieved in Zimbabwe. The question is, however, how much responsibility rests with Zimbabwean actors and whether this criterion is also applied to much more powerful nations who have failed to guarantee peace and democracy among their neighbours, allies or clients. Indeed, Zimbabwean writer, publisher and political analyst Ibbo Mandaza has suggested that:

> *much of what South Africa has been doing is more grandstanding with respect to Zimbabwe than a substantive factor in the process therein. Indeed I would say in fairness to the South African state, to Mbeki, to Zuma and indeed to the foreign affairs ministry, they have always insisted that the Zimbabwean situation can only be resolved by Zimbabweans themselves. It is the analysts… who have attached more importance to the role than the South Africans themselves have done.*[24]

Others argue that South Africa's foreign policy actions should be informed by a pure moral or idealist agenda, not least because the South African government has committed itself to following a foreign policy aligned with human rights. There have been occasions where South Africa took such a moral stand, not least in the 1995 public criticism of Nigeria's President Sani Abacha on the execution of writer Saro-Wiwa and others (as described in Chapter 3). The result for South Africa was isolation by other nations rather than support and collective action.

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24   Ibbo Mandaza, in a presentation to a SALO Building International Consensus event, Pretoria, 7 October 2010.

More realist commentators ask whether South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe is fulfilling South African national self-interest. The question here is how to define and measure national interest, especially when including indirect dimensions such as South Africa's reputation and role in international and continental forums. Based on decades of study of southern Africa, German political scientist Martin Adelmann's judgement, at least from the vantage point of 2004, was that South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe was "not irrational… and perceived by the South African government as the policy option that best reflects the national interest."[25] Finally, there is the question of judging the chosen policy path against the possible or probable effects of alternative courses of action, i.e. what would the impact on South Africa have been had it taken a 'louder' stance on Zimbabwe? Also, what would the impact of a different strategy have been on Zimbabweans? Where possible, the core chapters of the book trace shifts in diplomatic interactions over the years and the various internal and external influences shaping these shifting strategies as a means of answering how decision-makers answered these questions for themselves.

Party-political

In parallel to the relationship between states, the relationship between the two ruling parties has been an important dynamic, as has been the relationship between South Africa's ruling party and Zimbabwe's opposition parties. Each government has been led by one party throughout the main period under discussion (mid-1990s to 2006) – ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe and the ANC in South Africa. These parties have a relationship going back to the 1960s and 1970s when they were struggling for majority rule in their

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25   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet Diplomacy; the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 271.

respective countries. There have been different interpretations of the significance of this 'struggle history', ranging from an assumed, uncritical solidarity to deep divisions based on historical political alliances, as discussed in the chapter on pre-1994 relations. History and ideology have also been significant in shaping relations between the ANC and the oppositional Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) since the MDC's establishment in 1999.

Since 1994, ZANU-PF has been led by one leader, Robert Mugabe, while the ANC has had four leaders: Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, Kgalema Motlanthe and Jacob Zuma. While public attention is often given only to the highest executive level within political parties, this obscures important dynamics of debate and contestation within these parties and between these parties and other domestic partners and stakeholders. In the chronological chapters of this book, we seek to outline how and when inter- and intra-party dynamics have been key to South Africa–Zimbabwe relations.

Personalities

A strand of commentary about the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe revolves around the personalities and personal relationships of the countries' respective leaders. During Nelson Mandela's presidency, commentators noted the personality clash between Mandela and Robert Mugabe, as well as suggesting that Mugabe felt a sense of personal rivalry for regional leadership and recognition with the newly elected Mandela.[26] Personality-based arguments were particularly prevalent during the Mbeki era and tended to focus on Thabo Mbeki's supposed perspectives on

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26   Nathan, L. (2004). "The absence of common values and failure of common security in southern Africa, 1992–2003". Working Paper no. 50. Crisis States Research Centre: London School of Political Science and Economics.

race. Robert Suresh Roberts, in his biography of Mbeki, asked: "Why does Zimbabwe command such attention within South African and global discourse?" and quoted Mbeki:

> *The reason Zimbabwe is such a preoccupation in the United Kingdom and the United States and Sweden and everywhere… is because white people died, and white people were deprived of their property… All they say is Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe – I'm not saying the things that are going on in Zimbabwe are right [but] a million people die in Rwanda and do the white South Africans care? Not a bit. You talk to them about the disaster in Angola, to which the Apartheid regime contributed, and they're not interested. Let's talk about Zimbabwe. Does anyone want to talk about the big disaster in Mozambique from which it is now recovering? No. Let's talk about Zimbabwe. You say to them, look at what is happening in the Congo. No, no, no, let's talk about Zimbabwe. Why? It's because 12 white people died![27]*

Mark Gevisser, another of Mbeki's biographers, also wrote about Mbeki's "racialised reading of the Zimbabwean crisis" and how this "sometimes seemed to prevent him from acknowledging that Mugabe had strident black critics too, not to mention millions of black victims".[28]

There are different perspectives on how much weight should be accorded to institutions and how much to individuals (including individuals in powerful leadership positions) with relation to foreign policy decision-making. Our discussions in this volume tend to look beyond the personal and seek to locate the perspectives expressed by individuals within their broader political and structural contexts.

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27   Roberts, R. S. (2007). *Fit to Govern: The Native Intelligence of Thabo Mbeki*. Cape Town, STE. The quote is originally from Mbeki, T. (2003). "We will resist the upside-down view of Africa". *ANC Today* 3(49).
28   Gevisser, M. (2007). *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred*, Jonathan Ball. p. 440.

Economic

> *The simple facts of the matter are that should the economy of Zimbabwe fall to pieces, South Africa's main trading partner on the African continent would go down the tubes.*[29]

South Africa's and Zimbabwe's economies have been inextricably linked for centuries, especially since the beginnings of the 20th century. The economic impacts of the Zimbabwean crisis on the region are multiple: "The Zimbabwe crisis adversely affected economic and trade flows, investment and tourism in the region, as well as burdening neighbouring economies through significant flows of Zimbabwean migrants, legal and clandestine, of up to two million (about 16 per cent of the population)."[30] Trade, basic service provision and parastatal companies, investment and international investor confidence are discussed here, while the effects of migration are discussed in their own section below.

Regarding trade, South Africa is Zimbabwe's most important export market, as well as the greatest source of imports, while Zimbabwe is also an important but declining source of goods for the South African economy. "Official 2011 statistics show that South Africa, which used to account for 22% of Zimbabwe's

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29   Jordan, P. (2001). "Much Ado about Zimbabwe". *ANC Today* 1(11). Pallo Jordan is a long-standing member of the ANC National Executive Committee, a Member of Parliament, and in 2001 had been Minister for Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting (1994–1996) and Environmental Affairs and Tourism (1996–1999).

30   Sachikonye, L. M. (2005). "South Africa's quiet diplomacy: The case of Zimbabwe". *State of the Nation: 2004–2005*. R. Southall, Ed. p. 569.

exports in 2005, declined to 14% by the end of [2010]".[31] On the other hand, South Africa is Zimbabwe's main supplier of most economic inputs from retail products to raw materials to finance. The trade balance has been significantly affected by Zimbabwe's economic crisis since 2000. There have been negative effects for the South African economy through the reduced buying power of Zimbabwean consumers (including individuals, private companies and the state), but also opportunities for South African businesses. South African goods (not least in the agricultural sector) have replaced goods previously produced by Zimbabwe on the local, regional and, to some extent, world market. Trade in both directions increased in the early crisis years (2000–2003),[32] but from 2007 to 2010 the trade imbalance grew seven-fold in South Africa's favour to R13.6 billion (about US$2 billion), largely due to a reduction in Zimbabwean exports.[33]

Furthermore, as pointed out by the South African NGO Solidarity Peace Trust:

> *Official trade figures… mask the growing informal trade that has been taking place across South Africa's borders with Zimbabwe since the beginning of the economic and political crisis. A significant proportion – accurate figures not available – of trade between South Africa and Zimbabwe takes place through informal means. With 80% of Zimbabweans out of a job [by 2007], informal cross-border trade has become*

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31   Musarurwa, T. (2011). "Zimbabwe, South Africa trade deficit widens". *The Herald* (online). 20 July. From: http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15809:zimbabwe-south-africa-trade-deficit-widens&catid=41:business&Itemid=133.

32   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): p. 249–276.

33   Musarurwa, T. (2011). "Zimbabwe, South Africa trade deficit widens". *The Herald* (online). 20 July. From: http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15809:zimbabwe-south-africa-trade-deficit-widens&catid=41:business&Itemid=133.

probably the only viable source of sustenance for millions of Zimbabweans. This trade is driven by Zimbabweans abroad who provide foreign exchange for goods required by relatives at home. It is estimated that several thousand people cross the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe each day, with many carrying goods for their own use or to sell.[34]

More broadly, Zimbabwe, as a land-locked country, depends on neighbouring countries, predominantly South Africa and Mozambique, for most external goods to enter the country. An example of the potential power this gives to South Africa was shown when South African trade unionists in the Durban harbour refused to offload a shipment of Chinese arms destined for Zimbabwe in mid-2008. On the other hand, as most of the goods that South Africa supplies into the continent (including important growth markets in East and Central Africa) travel through Zimbabwe, severe insecurity such as civil war or a major infrastructure crisis such as petrol shortages or road disrepair, would directly impact on South Africa's export logistics.

A crucial aspect of the economic relationship is Zimbabwe's long-standing dependence on South Africa for the provision of electricity and oil. This is a highly political relationship at several levels. Firstly, it gives South Africa a means of applying overt or implied pressure on the Zimbabwean government. In 1976, South African President John Vorster supposedly threatened to cut off the electricity supply should Rhodesia's President Ian Smith not agree to negotiate with African opposition parties towards majority rule, as discussed further in Chapter 2. Post-Apartheid governments have not been as direct, but there is evidence that agreements about continued electricity and petrol delivery, in spite of Zimbabwe's inability to pay due to lack of hard currency during the high inflation period

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34   Solidarity Peace Trust (2007). "A difficult dialogue: Zimbabwe–South Africa economic relations since 2000". Johannesburg. 23 October 2007. p. 30.

of 2007–2009, were quietly coupled with political conditionalities.

Such negotiations are furthermore political because the electricity and oil companies in both countries are parastatals, closely tied to their governments in terms of cash flow, popular mandate and personnel. Unpaid Eskom and Sasol bills are covered by the South African tax payer in the final instance. Furthermore, South Africa's parastatals have come under pressure from their government to be self-sufficient and profitable, and Eskom, in particular, has been criticised for power outages during 2006, 2007 and 2008 due to severe capacity constraints. South Africa's shortage of electricity-generation capacity is said to reduce the economy's capacity for growth, affecting key domestic government priorities, such as employment generation and poverty reduction. A decision to continue supplying electricity (and oil) to a difficult neighbour at subsidised prices therefore has concrete domestic implications.

More indirectly, political and economic instability in the region impacts on international investor confidence, which can negatively affect South Africa's economy in terms of currency values, foreign direct investment and tourism. Attempts to calculate the overall cost of the Zimbabwean crisis to the South African economy have come to vastly different conclusions. The uncertainty regarding costs is partly due to the difficulty of estimating what level of growth the South African economy would have had if Zimbabwe had not imploded economically, and deciding on how to calculate the costs (and the often-overlooked benefits) of Zimbabwean migration into South Africa. It is clear, however, that the economic impact of Zimbabwe's crisis on South Africa has been significant at multiple levels. Trade unionist turned businessman Jayendra Naidoo estimated in 2008 that due to negative international sentiment weakening the rand by as much as 20 per cent in the early 2000s, and the loss of South African exports to Zimbabwe, the total loss in GDP of the South African economy was around R46 billion (US$ 6 billion) in 2008 alone. On the other hand, he

remarks: "in the context of a successful transition in Zimbabwe, positive sentiment would strengthen the rand and result in a reduced cost of borrowing. Another way of looking at it is that taking action to restore the Zimbabwean economy will potentially add 2% to our economy – a not insignificant number."[35]

Finally, South Africa's interests in the Zimbabwean economy through trade, parastatals and direct investment (not least in the highly politicised minerals sector, but also in retail, communications, etc.) have led some commentators to see economic self-interest as one of the driving forces behind South Africa's foreign policy of 'quiet diplomacy'. For example, Wilfred Mhanda, of the Zimbabwe Liberators Platform, noted in 2002 that "one cannot help but conclude that it is in South Africa's economic interests to allow Mugabe to continue on his self-destructive path."[36] Even academics, such as Richard Saunders and Martin Adelmann, who do not see economic self-interest as a central motivator of South Africa's political decisions on Zimbabwe, recognise the *de facto* economic outcomes, asking "who will be left in control of the Zimbabwean economy when it starts to revive?"[37]

> *Once the crisis is over, South Africa will have lost its main economic competitor in the region. The economic penetration of Zimbabwe by South African business had started long before the crisis, but it will accelerate once the crisis is over. The indebtedness of Zimbabwean companies to South African counterparts, and the need for investment after the crisis, will leave Zimbabwe no option but to sell their economy*

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35   Naidoo, J. (2008). "What the Zimbabwean crisis costs South Africa". *MJ Naidoo Foundation for Social Justice*. 13 June. from http://www. socialjustice.org.za/archives/17.

36   Mhanda, W. (2002). Relations among liberation movements: SA and Zimbabwe. *South African Yearbook of International Affairs 2001/2002*. South African Institute of International Affairs. Johannesburg, SAIIA: 151–159. p.157.

37   SALO interview with Richard Saunders, April 2007.

southwards… Despite Mbeki's continuing pledge that "we will never treat Zimbabwe as the tenth province of South Africa", economically this will be the long-term effect of the non-intervention policy.[38]

From the perspective of South African companies active in Zimbabwe, however, their continued presence in the country, in spite of its economic and political instability, is in both South Africa's and Zimbabwe's interests and continues to make basic economic sense:

> *Despite the deterioration of the economic situation, many [South African] companies believe Zimbabwe is still a better and easier place in which to do business than many other African countries, because of its strong business sector and relatively good infrastructure. Established business links have not been disrupted by the current economic problems… South African companies have found ways to negotiate Zimbabwe's largely dysfunctional economy in order to maintain a presence there in expectation of eventual political change and economic recovery.*[39]

Based on interviews with South African business associations, the Solidarity Peace Trust claims that:

> *In broad terms, the business sector in South Africa has supported the South African government's policy of 'quiet diplomacy' towards Zimbabwe. Organised South African business, represented by Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) and Business Leadership South Africa, recognises the intractability and multi-dimensional nature of the Zimbabwe crisis and has*

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38   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet Diplomacy; the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 267f.

39   Solidarity Peace Trust (2007). "A Difficult Dialogue: Zimbabwe–South Africa economic relations since 2000". Johannesburg. 23 October 2007. p. 32.

backed the government's efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution of the political stalemate in the country.[40]

On the other hand, the business sector also "wants the government to take a much tougher line and speak out more forcefully about the breakdown of the rule of law, human rights abuses and economic chaos in Zimbabwe."[41]

Domestic Political Contestation

South Africa's relationship with Zimbabwe has been at various times deeply embroiled with South Africa's domestic political processes. 'Zimbabwe' has had a major impact on South Africa's domestic political relationships, both within the ruling alliance made up of the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU, the country's largest trade union coalition), and between the ruling party and opposition parties. This is because many of the subjects under violent contestation in Zimbabwe are far from resolved in South Africa, including land ownership, economic transformation, corruption, media freedom, independence of the judiciary, and the role of military veterans.

The invocation of 'Zimbabwe' has been used by various political actors in South Africa to score political points at home. In the process, the complex realities of Zimbabwe's situation are often glossed over as it is either presented as the ultimate model or the ultimate anti-model. During the Mbeki presidency, 'Zimbabwe' was a regular battleground between the ANC and the opposition Democratic Party (later the Democratic Alliance). Much of the battle was waged over the style and process of foreign policy engagement, i.e. the alleged lack of public discussion and debate, rather than the

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40   *Ibid.*
41   *Ibid.* p. 36.

content of the policy. An example is a statement by then-opposition leader Tony Leon to European liberal and democratic members of the European Parliament in May 2000 in which he presented South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe as being essentially personal to President Mbeki and therefore un-transparent:

> *Normally, it would be extraordinarily disrespectful for me to go abroad and speak in the European Parliament, and disparage and criticise South African foreign policy regarding Zimbabwe or anywhere else. This would undermine the diplomatic convention which expects a bipartisan approach on such issues, especially before a foreign audience. However, even as Leader of the Opposition, not I, nor anyone else outside President Mbeki's magic circle, has the slightest idea about our foreign policy towards Zimbabwe.*
>
> - *Are we giving comfort to the superannuated authoritarian, Robert Mugabe?*
>
> - *Are we putting pressure on him to obey the rule of law and restore order?*
>
> - *Are we demanding a democratic outcome to the political crisis across our border?*
>
> - *Are we providing a bushel of carrots, but a paucity of sticks?*
>
> *We are literally in the dark. This inexplicable situation happens because President Thabo Mbeki doesn't trust his own Department of Foreign Affairs. And he never, ever, not a single time, trusts the broad mass of the people of South Africa – or lets them into his confidence. So our posture towards Zimbabwe has to be gleaned from events, gestures and symbols.*[42]

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42   Leon, T. (2000). "Human rights without borders: President Mugabe has behaved like an outlaw – his Government must be treated as an international outcast: Speech to European Liberal and Democratic MEPs, European Parliament". 3 May. From: http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/tony_leon.html.

In other cases, differing assessments of the details of Zimbabwe's condition and differing interpretations of an appropriate South African response have been the drivers of severe domestic political upheaval. Most significantly for South Africa, the critical stance of governing alliance partners SACP, COSATU and some ANC leaders towards Mbeki's approach to Zimbabwe's political crisis (not least his endorsement of the 2002, 2005 and 2008 elections),[43] fed into a growing discontent with Mbeki's leadership. This situation eventually contributed to Mbeki being voted out as party president at the 2008 ANC National Conference in Polokwane and then being recalled from government, leading to him stepping down early as president of the country.[44]

Security

The security dimension of the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship has two main aspects: relations between national security agencies (particularly the military), and South African domestic security considerations as a result of the Zimbabwean crisis.

South Africa and Zimbabwe have collaborated on security issues since South Africa attained majority rule in 1994. This was epitomised by the establishment of the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCDS). This committee has remained in operation throughout the crisis years. The JPCDS has facilitated information sharing between security agencies; training of South Africa Air Force pilots, air force technicians and support staff by Zimbabwe; and joint operations in managing the Beitbridge border

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43   Raftopoulos, B. (2008). "Background brief: Zimbabwe's political decline: Democratic challenges for South Africa". *South African Futures – Zimbabwean Futures Forum*. T. Polzer. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

44   Chikane, F. (2012). *Eight Days in September: The Removal of Thabo Mbeki*. Johannesburg, Picador Africa.

post between the two countries.[45] There is also a long history of exchange programmes for armed forces instructors and students.[46]

This collaboration occurred in spite of the different security paradigms adopted by post-independence South Africa and Zimbabwe. These differences arose partly from differences in the cultures and objectives of the ANC and ZANU as national liberation organisations, and partly due to post-struggle leadership choices. For the ANC, Umkhonto We Sizwe's armed actions represented only one of four pillars of the struggle to end Apartheid. The principle of the subordination of military structures to the political leadership was never seriously challenged. The ANC's Department of Intelligence and Security (DIS) in some respects resembled a military counter-intelligence organisation rather than a civilian strategic intelligence service, but both strands were always present. After 1994, democratic South Africa adopted a human security approach, limiting the roles of the military and the police, placing them firmly under civilian control, and directing them towards the protection of the population.[47]

By contrast, it can be argued that ZANU and its military wing ZANLA were virtually indistinguishable. As Robert Mugabe consolidated his power over ZANU in the course of the 1970s, he repressed any democratic currents within the guerrilla army. This authoritarian-militarism continues to be a core feature of ZANU-

45   Mollo, S. (2008). "The Zimbabwean crisis and security sector transformation". *South African Futures – Zimbabwean Futures Forum*. T. Polzer. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

46   Onslo, S. (2008). "Interview with former South African Foreign Minister RF 'Pik' Botha (15 July 2008)". Retrieved 27 August 2012. From: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/programmes/africaProgramme/ pdfs/bothaInterview.pdf.

47   Ferreira, R. and D. Henk (2008). "'Operationalizing' Human Security in South Africa". *Armed Forces & Security* 35(3): 501–525; Onslo, S. (2008). "Interview with former South African Foreign Minister RF 'Pik' Botha (15 July 2008)". Retrieved 27 August 2012. From: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/programmes/africaProgramme/pdfs/ bothaInterview.pdf.

PF in government. Post-independence Zimbabwe maintained the Ian Smith-era Joint Operations Command (JOC) structure, which controls all security-related aspects of government and is a highly partisan extension of ZANU-PF.[48] The 2000 land invasions were allegedly coordinated and partly carried out by the military, as were intimidation campaigns against rural voters and direct threats against opposition politicians such as the 2002 pre-election statement by military chiefs that they would never serve an MDC-led government.

Moeletsi Mbeki – South African scholar, political activist, former political exile based in Zimbabwe and brother to Thabo Mbeki – describes the different security cultures:

> *ZANU is… not a sophisticated party like the ANC; it is a physical force party. Bending over backwards to ZANU actually makes them have contempt for you. They do not admire you for doing it, they despise you for doing it, because they believe in physical force. That is one of the problems the ANC has with ZANU. They are talking past each other. ZANU being a party of force with very weak social conscience, if you wish, other than a… strong… material self-interest in its leadership. The ANC is totally the opposite. The use of force in the ANC is a very minor part of its way of seeing the world. In 1990 the ANC's analysis of the armed struggle in South Africa was that it was never an armed struggle, it was armed propaganda, so even in its own analysis the ANC never fought an armed struggle. Now ZANU fought a real armed struggle.*[49]

In spite of these differences, however, the security agencies of the two countries continued to conduct joint operations as part of bilateral relations throughout Zimbabwe's crisis years. This included collaborating on cross-border issues such as

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48   Mollo, S. (2008). "The Zimbabwean crisis and security sector Transformation". *South African Futures – Zimbabwean Futures Forum*. T. Polzer. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

49   SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, June 2007.

organised crime, international terrorism and smuggling, but also on potentially political content such as exchanging assessments of regional and continental issues and carrying out technical cooperation.[50]

South Africa's security agenda at the regional level was also affected by Zimbabwe's crisis, which is discussed below in the section on regional integration. In terms of the implications of Zimbabwe's crisis for South Africa's domestic security, this goes beyond the often-stereotyped view of 'Zimbabwean migrants as perpetrators of crime'. Norman Mlambo, security expert at the Africa Institute of South Africa, also identifies other domestic security concerns that see Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa as part of the broader body politic and whose security is therefore included within 'national' security, namely:

- Zimbabweans as victims of crime;

- Interactions between immigration policing and crime policing where police divert time and resources to immigration policing which should be oriented towards more security-relevant crime policing;

- Human smuggling and border crime that opens avenues for various kinds of organised crime;

- Xenophobic violence as crime and as a public security threat that affects all residents of a community as well as South Africa's international reputation; and

- Migrants and the criminal justice system where the marginalisation of migrant crime victims leads to impunity and disregard for the rule of law.[51]

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50   Mollo, S. (2008). "The Zimbabwean crisis and security sector Transformation". *South African Futures – Zimbabwean Futures Forum*. T. Polzer. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

51   Mlambo, N. (2008). "The Zimbabwe crisis: Impact on South African domestic security and crime". *South African Futures – Zimbabwean Futures*. T. Polzer. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

This perspective on domestic security sees the influence of Zimbabwe's collapse not as necessarily undermining South African domestic security, but as testing the robustness of South Africa's domestic security institutions. This is particularly the case since exempting or marginalising certain groups (such as Zimbabwean migrants) from the right to security has implications for the institutions mandated to protect such security, including the integrity of the police and trust in the justice system.

Various levels of the South African government have expressed concern about the national security implications of Zimbabwe's crisis, particularly related to Zimbabwean migration into South Africa. It is, however, significant that this has not been publicly expressed as a central motivating logic for the way in which the presidency and international relations actors have addressed Zimbabwe's crisis over the years. This stands in stark contrast to the ways in which many other countries hosting large numbers of migrants and refugees from a neighbouring country have politicised and securitised such flows.[52]

Migration and Diaspora

This links to the next dimension of relations between the two countries, namely the presence of a large Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa. While there has been a long history of migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa, both the scale and nature of movement changed significantly after the Zimbabwean economic crisis started in 2000.[53] There was another surge in migration in 2005,

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52   Jacobsen, K. (1996). "Factors influencing the policy responses of host governments to mass refugee influxes". *International Migration Review* 30(3): 655–678.

53   Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project (2005). "Between a rock and a hard place: A window on the situation of Zimbabweans living in Gauteng, Johannesburg". IDASA.

related to the state's violent expulsion of hundreds of thousands of informal (and formal) residents and traders from Zimbabwe's main cities in *Operation Murambatsvina*.[54] The migration flow peaked in 2008 and 2009, as the violence accompanying the 2008 elections was followed by the complete collapse of Zimbabwe's economic and social welfare infrastructure, including some of the highest inflation rates in global history. Annual flows have been slowly reducing since then, but have remained at very high levels.

From being mainly composed of young men prior to 2000, Zimbabweans in South Africa are now almost 50% female. In continuity with pre-2000 migrations, the majority of Zimbabweans in South Africa have moved mainly for economic reasons, but the challenges of basic survival and the collapse of social welfare services at the height of Zimbabwe's economic implosion meant that humanitarian migration became common, including vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children, the disabled, people requiring chronic medication, and the elderly. Targets of political persecution also sought refuge in South Africa.[55]

Accurately estimating migration flows is notoriously difficult, especially given the constant back-and-forth movement of large numbers of Zimbabweans between the two countries. It is, however, likely that between 1.5 and 2 million Zimbabweans have been spending significant amounts of time in South Africa since the

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54   Tibaijuka, A. K. (2005). "UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe: Report of the fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina". New York, United Nations; Vambe, M., Ed. (2008). *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*. Harare & Pretoria Weaver Press & African Institute of South Africa; SPT (2010). *Fractured Nation: Operation Murambatsvina five years on*, Solidarity Peace Trust.

55   Polzer, T. (2008). "Responding to Zimbabwean migration in South Africa: Evaluating options". *South African Journal of International Affairs* 15(1): 1–28.

mid-2000s,[56] representing possibly as much as a third of the global population of adult Zimbabweans, and making Zimbabweans by far the largest single migrant group in South Africa and the largest migration into the country since the nineteenth century.

The diaspora impacts on the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship in several ways. Firstly, it has been argued that part of South Africa's 'soft' approach to the Zimbabwean crisis has been motivated by the desire to prevent a collapse of the country into civil war or 'failed state' status, as this would result in, among other things, high levels of Zimbabwean migration into South Africa. Thus, Mbeki in September 2003 argued that if South Africa followed critics' advice by 'switching off the lights' in Zimbabwe, "you have a million Zimbabweans crossing the border to us. Is that the outcome we want? Of course it's not."[57] The counter-argument is that "a million Zimbabweans crossing the border" has in fact been the outcome after twelve years of diplomatic engagement, but one must allow that Mbeki was considering the consequences of this happening in a compressed period of time.

Secondly, as discussed further in the next section, Zimbabweans have formed a wide range of civil society organisations in South Africa (as well as joining South African organisations), which have played various roles in trying to influence the South African government's policies towards Zimbabwe. Thirdly, Zimbabweans in South Africa, due to their numbers, have a significant potential impact on Zimbabwean election outcomes if they vote. In previous elections, many have returned to Zimbabwe to participate. Discussions about changing Zimbabwean electoral laws to enable the diaspora (not only in South Africa) to vote while outside

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56   Polzer, T. (2010). "Silence and fragmentation: South African responses to Zimbabwean migration". *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival*. J. Crush and D. Tevera, Eds. Cape Town, Ottawa, SAMP, IDRC.

57   Slevin, P. (2003). "Mbeki says diplomacy needed for Zimbabwe". *Washington Post*. 25 September.

the country have been part of party-political contestations in Zimbabwe, due to the perception that the majority of Zimbabweans in the diaspora are MDC supporters. The voting patterns of the South Africa-based diaspora are also less easily influenced by political parties than Zimbabwe-based voters, as they are removed from some of the intimidation tactics employed (especially by ZANU-PF in rural areas) in the run-up to elections since 2002.

Remittances are another means by which South Africa-based Zimbabweans impact on processes in their home country. During the height of Zimbabwe's economic crisis from 2005–2009, remittances and material transfers from the diaspora (including food, clothes, medicines, etc.) probably played a key role in mitigating the worst effects of food shortages and the collapse of welfare services on households in (especially southern) Zimbabwe.[58]

The diaspora also impacts on the process of Zimbabwe's economic recovery. As South Africa-based political analyst Shadrack Gutto argues:

> *Zimbabwe is a very rich country. It is rich in agriculture, rich in minerals, rich in its intellectual capital. Unfortunately, that intellectual capital is no longer fully represented in Zimbabwe itself and a lot of it is scattered. South Africa has a very large share of that intellectual capital, as does Britain, and the rest is spread all over the world. How can Zimbabwe reclaim and recapture that intellectual capital to come back, or to connect with Zimbabwe, even if it is not back physically? In the modern world, you don't need to simply be in a place to be able to make an impact. How is Zimbabwe targeting that intellectual capital or, put differently, how is Zimbabwe connecting with its Diaspora? I believe that the future of Zimbabwe depends a lot*

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58   Solidarity Peace Trust (2009). "Gone to Egoli; Economic survival strategies in Matabeleland: A preliminary study". Johannesburg, Solidarity Peace Trust.

on how it is going to handle the Diaspora question. Probably its future will rely more on that than on the so-called 'development aid' from donor countries.[59]

The impact of Zimbabwean 'intellectual capital' on South Africa's economy is not well documented, but has been substantial. The trajectory of Zimbabwe's political stability and economic opportunity therefore impacts directly on South Africa's economy, depending on whether numbers of Zimbabweans in South Africa increase due to resumed crisis, remain at current levels, or significantly decrease due to return to Zimbabwe. Popular debates tend to focus on migrants, including Zimbabwean migrants, as competing with or 'replacing' South Africans in the labour market, but it is likely that educated Zimbabweans are also providing crucial skills to South Africa's skills-poor economy, thereby generating employment. As noted by Miriam Altman, employment expert in South Africa's Human Sciences Research Council, "Zimbabweans, whether with tertiary degrees or not, are more likely to have entrepreneurial, artisanal and agricultural skills than South Africans." She continues:

> *If Zimbabwe recovers, it is probable that many professionals, entrepreneurs and farmers might return. It is also possible that lower-skill migrants might continue to work in South Africa. This could impact on South Africa in a number of ways:*
>
> • *Critical skills will be lost from key parts of the private sector, and possibly parts of the public service. This may constrain South Africa's employment expansion, especially where supervisory and entrepreneurial skills are lost.*
>
> • *Employment and growth may be negatively affected by a loss of consumer income, especially if there is a large departure of skilled labour with disposable income spent in South Africa.*

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59   Shadrack Gutto, presentation at SALO Building International Consensus meeting, Pretoria, 20 April 2009.

> • *There may be continued low-skill competition in a context that is already highly pressurised. This will be particularly the case for as long as [Zimbabweans] are undocumented and treated differently to South Africans.*[60]

Professor Sam Moyo also argues that South Africa, at least in the early 2000s, had an economic interest in Zimbabwean migration:

> *[The Zimbabwean political and land crisis in 2000–2001] had the effect of more people migrating seeking jobs, but this was a lesser evil to South Africa because South Africa had started growing at such a rate that they actually wanted this migration. Despite the criticism, xenophobia and so forth, private capital and business wanted this; it got all these middle-class professionals from Zimbabwe, lecturers at university... So because there was economic expansion, there was also demand for a pool of skilled labour, a pull as much as there was some kind of push [from Zimbabwe]. South Africa was managing the immigration problem to its advantage. It couldn't block the movement of people, not just because of humanitarian reasons, but on economic logic. [Historically], every time when the South African economy has grown, it has always drawn in more labour, from everywhere. This is not a new thing, so analytically, it is wrong to interpret these [recent] relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe outside of this general logic.*[61]

Civil Society

The prolonged nature of the crisis in Zimbabwe and the accompanying migratory settlement has led to the emergence of

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60   Altman, M. (2008). "South African employment and labour market impacts of the Zimbabwean crisis". *South African Futures – Zimbabwean Futures Forum*. T. Polzer, Ed. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
61   SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

a number of Zimbabwean and joint South African/Zimbabwean civil society organisations, ranging from those focused on lobbying and advocacy with the South African government and building support for Zimbabwean political campaigns to those working to alleviate the conditions faced by exiled Zimbabweans. Most have an explicit political agenda, predominantly critical of ZANU-PF and Mugabe's rule, but favouring an agreed transformation process creating the climate for free and fair elections. However, these unifying factors belie significant divergence over policy, strategy and tactics. There are divisions based on ethnicity, class/professional status, region of origin and political orientation, among others.

Civil society organisations have been particularly caught up in debates on whether direct criticism of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe is a 'Western' agenda. As noted by Zimbabwean civil society activist Elinor Sisulu:

> *I take exception to people who talk about 'quiet diplomacy' and criticise a 'megaphone solution', because we grew up with megaphone diplomacy, anti-Apartheid diplomacy, where day and night from the time we were little children to the time we grew up as adults we were told that the rights of South Africans are being violated, that South Africans are being forcibly removed, that they have been detained without trial, all these wrong thing are happening to South Africans. To me that was megaphone diplomacy, but when we do the same thing for Zimbabwe we are criticised as western sponsored civil society and I must say I feel quite bitter about that.*[62]

Even though the Zimbabwean community in South Africa has rarely acted as a coherent or strategic grouping in relation to policy formation, there are individuals and organisations whose

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62   Elinor Sisulu at SALO event The Zimbabwe Situation, SADC and Consensus on Regional Policy, SALO Workshop, Pretoria, 30 March 2009.

perspectives have had an influence on South African government policy decisions. This is partly due to a long history of personal relationships between the two countries, including within prominent ANC families and among 'struggle veterans' and former exiles who spent time in Zimbabwe. There are also long-standing institutional relationships, for example in the trade union movement and in religious organisations. Such civil society voices played significant roles in shifting South African government policy toward Zimbabwe at key points, whether through lobbying or through direct public action. An example of the latter was the 2008 boycott of the transport of Chinese arms to Zimbabwe by South African dock workers and their unions. Other important examples were attempts by COSATU to send independent election monitoring delegations to Zimbabwe in 2005. The delegations were rebuffed by the Zimbabwean authorities at the border, leading to public criticism of the South African government's acceptance of the election outcomes from within the ruling alliance.

Regional Governance

The South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship and regional governance mechanisms have impacted on each other in both directions. On the one hand, the nature of the relationship between the two countries from 1994 onward fundamentally shaped how the region's emerging institutional framework was designed and implemented. This was most evident in relation to SADC's security infrastructure, as discussed in Chapter 3 on Mandela's presidency. An example is the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), intended as the regional mechanism for a common security regime including the prevention and resolution of inter- and intra-state conflict. Initially based in and led by Zimbabwe, the Organ was effectively inoperable from its inception due to disputes between Zimbabwe and South Africa (as well as other SADC member states). As South African academic and peace expert

Laurie Nathan noted, "perversely, a vehicle intended to promote confidence [in the region] had exactly the opposite effect."[63] SADC was also institutionally hamstrung by the Zimbabwean crisis in other ways. SADC's Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre (RPTC) was originally hosted in Zimbabwe, but donors became reluctant to provide funding to the Zimbabwean government for its upkeep, leaving SADC with no active peacekeeping training facility.[64]

Commentators have argued that the contestation between the two countries for influence over regional institutions can be understood at several levels, including personal rivalries between the country's leaders, the expression of different political and struggle histories, and the representation of different broad conceptions of governance, with South Africa advocating for a more democratic, and Zimbabwe a more authoritarian perspective.[65] At this last level, the two countries have been merely the most vocal proponents of a debate also present among other countries in SADC and therefore represent a basic structural tension within the region. The broad 'culture' of security debates in the southern African region generally continues to be, it has been argued, a legacy of 1970s and 1980s Apartheid destabilisation (and Frontline States' responses to it), placing the 'new' South Africa's position as 'reformer' on complex historical ground:

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63   Nathan, L. (2004). "The absence of common values and failure of common security in southern Africa, 1992–2003". *Working Paper no. 50*, Crisis States Research Centre: London School of Political Science and Economics. p. 2.

64   Tambo, A., Ed. (1987). *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks*. London Heineman. See also SADC. (2003). "Profile: Southern African Development Community (SADC)". From: http://www.africa-union.org/recs/sadcprofile.pdf.

65   Nathan, L. (2004). "The absence of common values and failure of common security in southern Africa, 1992–2003". *Working Paper no. 50*, Crisis States Research Centre: London School of Political Science and Economics.

Apartheid destabilisation resulted in a particular form of regionalisation: one which privileged state security over human security, one which stressed solidarity above all else, and one which viewed external intervention as fundamentally hostile to its own interests. This form of regionalisation was fundamentally anti-democratic as it viewed state elites as legitimate on the basis of their historical struggle for independence and their anti-Apartheid credentials (no matter how chequered the latter was). It was this legacy which continued to haunt the region even after the dissolution of the SADCC[66] and its replacement by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), in 1992. This legacy was also to haunt the new SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security that replaced the FLS[67] as the premier vehicle for security cooperation in the region. So one of the first challenges towards a new security architecture is how to make a paradigmatic shift from state to human security. A second legacy of Apartheid destabilisation was the fact that it reinforced national sovereignty and in so doing stunted the development of a collective regional identity. This, then, is the second challenge for SADC: how does one move from national security considerations towards considerations of common security?[68]

Once SADC was more established, however, the influence also flowed in the other direction, with SADC becoming an important space within which relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe were managed. From 2007 onwards, the South African government changed its strategy towards Zimbabwe from a largely bilateral engagement to one almost entirely channelled through multilateral regional structures. Since March 2007, South Africa has used its role as SADC's official mediator in Zimbabwe's

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66   Southern African Development Coordination Conference.
67   Frontline States.
68   Solomon, H. (2004). "Introduction". *Towards a Common Defence and Security Policy in the Southern African Development Community*. H. Solomon. Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa: 1–13. p. 5–6.

process of political negotiation and the resultant Government of National Unity (GNU) to frame most of its dealings with its neighbour (as discussed in future publications in this series). The shifting significance of SADC within South Africa's approach to Zimbabwe is a key theme, which is traced through the main chapters of the books.

Surrounding Political Relationships and Agendas

Bilateral relationships between countries never exist in isolation, but always evolve in the context of other relationships and agendas. In this case, the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe is bracketed by the relationships both countries have, and seek to have, with other African countries (and institutions such as the Organisation of African Unity/African Union) on the one hand, and with the 'West' (particularly Britain and the EU) on the other. South Africa's role straddling these two spheres of influence – "South Africa's unique position of simultaneously being the Western foothold in Africa and Africa's foothold in the West"[69] – has been the key opportunity as well as the key challenge in defining its foreign policy. Zimbabwe has been the main testing case for this balancing act, with both African and 'Western' observers often judging South Africa's positions on Zimbabwe as either confirmation or betrayal of loyalty to one side or the other, rather than on substantive merit. In particular, the question of land redistribution in Zimbabwe has illustrated how South Africa's positions reverberated beyond the two countries or the region during the Mbeki era, causing periodic tensions in South Africa's relationship with the UK and the EU more broadly, including on issues not directly related to Zimbabwe.

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69   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 265.

Apart from acting as a foil for such broad contestations about South Africa's dominant alliances and (in effect) its identity, South African foreign policy decisions on Zimbabwe have been influenced by a range of other, parallel foreign policy objectives. Particularly during Thabo Mbeki's presidency, South Africa was centrally involved in the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union and the establishment of NEPAD[70] as a new vehicle for continental growth. These grand projects simultaneously drew South Africa's foreign policy attention away from the immediate crisis next door, increased the urgency of a resolution, and demanded an 'African solution' rather than one seen to be dictated by 'Western' interests.

South Africa's involvement in other conflict arenas – such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – at times also shaped relations with Zimbabwe. Convincing Zimbabwe to withdraw its troops from the DRC in the late 1990s was crucial to negotiating peace in that country, and South Africa may have made some concessions to Zimbabwe in return for its agreement to disengage.

Finally, political analyst William Gumede has argued that the rivalry between Mbeki and Libya's Colonel Gaddafi in the 1990s also provided a backdrop for understanding South Africa's Zimbabwe position. Gaddafi challenged Mbeki's vision for the African Union and an African Renaissance with a United States of Africa under Gaddafi's leadership.[71] In light of Gaddafi's extensive financial and rhetorical support to Mugabe, "South Africa's economic and diplomatic assistance to Mugabe must also be understood as an effort to contain Gaddafi's influence and to secure regional and continental support for South Africa's position [on continental integration]."[72]

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70   New Partnership for Africa's Development.

71   Gumede, W. (2005). *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 224.

72   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

Changing International Context

Most broadly, both South Africa and Zimbabwe individually, as well as their relationship to each other, were shaped by evolving international geopolitical, discursive and institutional developments. Geopolitically, the end of the Cold War, the security orientation of international relations after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001,[73] and the rise of Chinese influence in Africa have all been significant factors. In terms of shifting international 'development discourse', Zimbabwe experienced the impacts of the 1980s' 'Washington Consensus' through the imposition of a World Bank Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, which precipitated economic crisis, the decline of President Mugabe's power, the emergence of an opposition, and Mugabe's resort to land distribution and repressive violence to shore up his regime.

This was soon followed by the new 'good governance' paradigm,[74] against which Zimbabwe was judged internationally and which newly democratic South Africa was expected to uphold in judging its neighbour. Institutionally, this paradigm was captured in the EU's 2000 Cotonou Agreement which regulates EU aid to governments based on an assessment of their performance in terms of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law[75] and which was used to justify cutting off most aid to Zimbabwe

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73   Zimbabwe was included in US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice's 2005 grouping of 'outposts of tyranny', but did not merit inclusion in US President George W. Bush's 'axis of evil'.

74   The 'good governance' paradigm refers to a new focus by Western donor countries in the 1990s on the quality of political processes and the transparency and rule-based nature of decision-making institutions of aid recipient governments. This approach saw governance as a prerequisite for socio-economic development and therefore led to the reallocation of aid away from fragile or unstable states.

75   Europe Aid (2010). "Consolidated version of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, signed 2000", revised 2005, revised 2010. Brussels.

and imposing other sanctions.[76] It is also present in the AU and NEPAD, specifically in the African Peer Review Mechanism.

In conclusion, this chapter set out the complexity of intersecting dimensions in the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe, as indeed between any two neighbouring and deeply inter-dependent countries. The following chapters present in more or less chronological fashion the ways in which these dimensions developed and interacted over time.

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76   Council of the European Union (2002). "Council decision concluding
      consultations with Zimbabwe under Article 96 of the ACP-EC
      Partnership Agreement". 15 February 2002. Brussels. 6285/02, ACP
      30, COAFR 19, PESC 64.

2

Pre-colonial to 1994

Establishing Ambivalent Interdependence

Introduction

This chapter sets out those aspects of Zimbabwe's and South Africa's historical relationship which continue to shape today's political interactions. As with any two closely related countries, selective interpretations of each other's histories and historical dealings have become integrated into the respective national narratives and identities, as well as into the institutional identities of ruling groups and parties. These identities are shaped by whom 'we' were 'with' and whom 'we' were 'against'. These 'memories' (often only partly based on historical fact) remain politicised and contested among different groups in each country and institution, but contribute to shape levels of trust and forms of association, and therefore substantive political decisions.

A second important aspect of the two countries' recent relationship with a long history is their economic and infrastructural interdependence. Transport networks and economic investments made in times of minority rule (still in living memory for many in the region, in contrast to the more distant colonial period in other parts of the continent) were largely maintained after majority rule was attained.

As noted in the introduction, this chapter does not provide a detailed or comprehensive history of either country or of their relationship before South Africa's democratic elections in 1994. It only aims to present those aspects of history that continued to reverberate in the political debates of Zimbabwe's post-2000 crisis. It also does not aim to 'set the record straight' on any of these debates by providing a definitive historical account set against the politicised selective accounts of recent years. These tasks have already been undertaken by others.[77]

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77   See among others Raftopoulos, B. and A. Mlambo, Eds. (2009). *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*. Harare, Weaver Press; Alexander, J. (2006). *The unsettled land: State-making and the politics of land in Zimbabwe, 1893–2003*. Oxford, James Currey.

Pre-colonial, Colonial and Minority-Rule Periods (1840s to 1980)

Though Zimbabwe has a long history comprising the rise and fall of various kingdoms such as "Great Zimbabwe, the Mutapa, Torwa, Rozvi and Ndebele states",[78] the present-day Zimbabwe state only came into being in the 1890s. The modern South African state was founded in 1910. Before the two states were established and their current border set along the Limpopo River, people from south of the Limpopo had long interacted with those to the north. A particularly significant movement occurred in the context of the 19th century's regional upheavals – often referred to as the *Mfecane* – during which large population groups were displaced around much of southern Africa.[79] Around 1840, a large Ndebele-speaking group moved from what is now South Africa to the south-west part of the Zimbabwean plateau.[80]

According to South African scholar-activist Moeletsi Mbeki, there is an interpretation of this history according to which:

> *Mzilikazi [the Ndebele king] created a caste system… at the bottom of which were the Shona… in the middle of the 19th century. The new Shona nationalists who eventually created ZANU in the early 1960s carried this grievance against South Africa: the subjugation and the oppression of the Shona. This undercurrent doesn't get spoken about, but it is actually a major reason why ZANU will never listen to the African National Congress. They see the ANC as having been a conqueror. In their view South Africa and the ANC potentially have an ambition to re-conquer Zimbabwe.[81]*

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78   Mazarire, G. C. (2009). *Reflections on Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe, c.850–1880s. Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*. Raftopoulos, B. and A. Mlambo, Eds. Harare, Weaver Press.

79   *Ibid.*

80   *Ibid.*

81   SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, July 2007.

Amplified by colonial historiography, a more prominent 'conquest' originating in South Africa (even though generally associated with Britain) occurred in the 1890s, when a former Cape Premier and imperial businessman, Cecil John Rhodes, occupied what came to be Southern Rhodesia under the British South Africa Company (BSAC) in search of the mineral wealth of a 'second rand'. The conquest was a combination of violence and legal trickery, which led to a revolt by both the Ndebele and Shona populations in the mid-1890s. This revolt became known as the 'First Chimurenga',[82] a central motif in later Zimbabwean nationalist rhetoric and mobilisation. When the dreams of finding gold proved illusory, the BSAC turned towards a longer-term settler colonial project entailing evictions and the exploitation of indigenous populations.[83]

With the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 there was the expectation among South Africa's ruling elite that Southern Rhodesia would join the Union and become an additional province. In 1922, however, the whites of Southern Rhodesia voted in a referendum to turn down the option of joining South Africa. Instead Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing British colony in 1923. Three decades later, in 1953, Britain created the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, effectively under Southern Rhodesian dominance. A decade after coming into being the federation fell apart, and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Nyasaland (Malawi) became independent majority-ruled states. In response, the government of Southern Rhodesia, then under the leadership of Ian Smith, issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from the United Kingdom in 1965, and declared

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82   *Chimurenga* means 'revolutionary struggle' in Shona. Ranger, T. (1968). "Connexions between 'primary resistance' movements and modern mass nationalism in East and Central Africa". *Journal of African History* Parts I and II (9, 3 and 4): 631–641.

83   West, M. O. (2002). *The rise of an African middle class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 25.

Southern Rhodesia an independent state, called Rhodesia.[84]

As adjacent countries in southern Africa, with minority populations determined to hold onto their minority self-governing status, while other nations in Africa achieved their independence from the 1960s onwards, the white populations of Rhodesia and South Africa could have been expected to be closely allied.[85] In practice, however, the relationship was an ambiguous mixture of dependence and autonomy, within a broad framework of economic, political, social, cultural and sporting links. Even as the trade and financial links between the two economies grew, the younger-settler Rhodesia sought to assert its own particular identity. The Rhodesian state, particularly after World War II, sought to give preference to British immigration into the colony and attempted to develop a particular 'etiquette' of settler domination to distinguish it from what it regarded as the cruder Afrikaner attitudes of post-1948 National Party-led Apartheid South Africa. Nevertheless, the Rhodesian state developed an industrial base that was crucially dependent on the mining, commercial and financial activities of British and South African capital.[86] Furthermore, when Rhodesia was the target of United Nations sanctions, "its survival… was through the largesse of the Union of SA, a country that continued to trade, invest and relate to Rhodesia until 1980."[87]

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84   *Ibid*.
85   South-West Africa, mandated to South Africa under a League of Nations mandate after World War I, was to all intents and purposes incorporated into South Africa by the 1960s, though this was opposed with increasing determination by the United Nations. Mozambique and Angola were directly ruled colonies of Portugal until both gained their independence in 1975.
86   Bond, P. and T. Kapuya (2006). "Arrogant, disrespectful, aloof and careless: South African corporations in Africa". *OpenSpace* 1(4). p. 27.
87   Coady, A. and S. Hussein (2009). "Deconstructing constructive engagement: Examining Mbeki's South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe". *World Affairs: Journal of International Issues* 13(1).

As white Rhodesian politics was influenced by white South Africa, so too was African Rhodesian politics shaped by black South African politics. Migrant labour to South Africa, which numbered up to 8 000 black Rhodesians per year from 1940–1945,[88] exposed these workers to South African labour organisations.[89] During the 1920s, organisations such as the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), founded by Clements Kadalie in Cape Town in 1920, had already spread beyond the borders of the Union, including into Southern Rhodesia. Moreover, as the Southern Rhodesian nationalist liberation movements emerged, they drew on examples of South African liberation politics, as well as the intellectual influences of the University of Fort Hare where some of their leaders (including a young Robert Mugabe) studied alongside future South African liberation fighters.

As described by West:

> *The first African protest movements in Southern Rhodesia were organisations by black South Africans, a number of whom had assisted the white 'pioneers' who established the colony in the 1890s. Other black South Africans subsequently emigrated to Rhodesia in search of land and other economic opportunities, which became increasingly scarce at home after the South African War of 1899–1902, and especially the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910.*[90]

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88   Crush, J., V. Williams, et al. (2005). "Migration in Southern Africa". Paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration. p. 3.

89   Van Onselen, C. (1976). *Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia*, 1900–1933. London, Pluto Press; Van Onselen, C. and I. Phimister (1978). *Studies in the history of African Mine labour in Colonial Zimbabwe*. Gweru, Mambo Press.

90   West, M. O. (2002). *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p. 121.

According to historians like Barnes, South Africa was "firmly implanted in the consciousness of the Southern Rhodesian [black] proto-elite" in the 1940s and 1950s:

> *It was their lodestar, the source of education, of, in all senses of the word, mobility itself. For the first generation of conquered, yet unbowed, Africans in Southern Rhodesia, there was guidance on how to stand up and be human beings, and it came from fellow Africans in the south.*[91]

As liberation politics grew in the 1960s and 1970s in both Rhodesia and South Africa, cooperation developed between the liberation organisations. In the late 1960s this included the joint military operation in Wankie and Sipolilo (now Hwange and Guruve) by ZIPRA[92] and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the army wings of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and South Africa's African Nationalist Congress (ANC) respectively. Even though the operation was defeated by the Rhodesian state, it solidified military and political relations between the liberation movements.

The Wankie and Sipolilo episode illustrates that the ANC in South Africa had close relations with ZAPU, and not the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) which split from ZAPU in 1963. This history of institutional relationships was to influence later South Africa–Zimbabwe relations significantly. ZAPU, along with the ANC in South Africa, MPLA[93] in Angola, FRELIMO[94]

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91   Barnes, T. (2002). "Virgin territory? Travel and migration by African women in twentieth century Southern Africa". *Women in African Colonial Histories*. J. Allman, S. Geiger and N. Musisi, Eds. Chicago, Indiana Univeristy Press: 164–190. p. 178.

92   Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army.

93   People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola – Labour Party (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – Partido do Trabalho*).

94   Liberation Front of Mozambique (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*).

in Mozambique, SWAPO[95] in Namibia and PAIGC[96] in Guinea Bissau, were regarded by the Organisation of African Unity as the authentic liberation movements on the continent.[97] Tor Sellstrom, historian and one of the key contacts between Sweden and the ANC during the liberation struggle, has described early attitudes towards ZANU and the PAC:

> *In the mid/late 1980s, there was a book…[98] with speeches by [ANC President from 1967–1993] O.R. Tambo [including] a [1969] speech…[99] where he talks about "spurious and stooge organisations" mentioning ZANU and the PAC[100] and some other organisations, saying that even if they did not have a local constituency, imperialism would have invented them. That book was re-edited [some] years ago in a new edition and that sentence has been taken out of that very speech.*[101]

The ANC changed its view on ZANU somewhat before Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, although it remained suspect and kept at arm's length. Nonetheless, such utterances are unlikely to have been forgotten by ZANU leaders.

Moeletsi Mbeki recalls the birth of ZANU as a split from ZAPU, explaining its impact on later developments:

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95   South West African People's Organisation.

96   African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde *(Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde)*.

97   SALO interview with Tor Sellstrom, Durban, May 2007.

98   Tambo, A., Ed. (1987). *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks*. London Heineman.

99   This speech was made at the first National Consultative Conference of the ANC at Morogoro, Tanzania, from 25 April to 1 May 1969. The conference has become known as the 'Morogoro Conference'. Tambo's words were recorded in the "Extracts from the Political Report of the National Executive Committee". From: http://www.anc.org.za/show. php?id=143).

100 The Pan-Africanist Congress, which split off from the ANC in 1959.

101 SALO interview with Tor Sellstrom, Durban, May 2007.

The ANC is an old party [established in 1912], so instinctively does not like new parties. Many people do not realise this. It has nothing to do with ideology; it is just to do with the fact that if you are a new party, the ANC thinks you are an upstart and therefore nothing good can come out of you. ZANU's case was even worse because ZANU broke off from an offshoot of the ANC, the old Rhodesian ANC. It kept changing its names, but essentially ZAPU had its roots in the [original Rhodesian] ANC. The ANC saw ZANU as a breakaway [from the original liberation movement] in the same vein as the PAC, so as far as they were concerned, no good would come out of that particular project. Thus, they never took ZANU seriously. As a result they never really understood what ZANU was doing. Their whole view of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe was seen through ZAPU's eyes, which in any case was based in Zambia [where the ANC in exile was also based], so the ANC had more access to them, unlike ZANLA[102] which was based in Mozambique where the ANC was operating, but not on the scale of its presence in Zambia. The interaction in Zambia was much more comprehensive between ZIPRA and MK,[103] [the military wings of ZAPU and the ANC] and the ANC and ZAPU leadership. There was a much more thorough relationship going on, and there was a military alliance at some stage.[104]

ZANU made several approaches to the ANC, but these were rejected. One proposition for military cooperation with MK was made in 1977. MK Chief of Staff Joe Modise's response was "we can't be on both sides,"[105] further illustrating the ANC's perception of the opposition between ZAPU and ZANU. According to Mbeki's biographer Mark Gevisser, however, Mbeki did not agree

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102 Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANU military wing).

103 MK is the common abbreviation for Umkhonto We Sizwe, meaning 'Spear of the Nation'.

104 SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, July 2007.

105 Gevisser, M. (2007). *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred*. Johannesburg, Johnathan Ball. p. 434.

with this policy at the time, and was "frustrated… that MK could not see the value of cooperating with ZANU, which had access to the South African border."[106]

Horst Kleinschmidt, former director of the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa,[107] explains the broader geopolitical context within which relations between liberation movements were forged, and the implications for the intellectual and institutional cultures within different liberation struggle parties:

> *Political dominance in this period [1960s–1980s] was determined by Cold War politics. ZANU was a creature of Chinese communism. On the African continent there were few places where China fared better than with ZANU. For most of the rest of Africa you were either in the colonial/post-colonial pockets or you were aligned to Soviet (Moscow) communism. Mugabe was treated as the 'junior', the odd man out throughout Africa... He was, or is, deeply vengeful that he was treated as the outsider, yet could demonstrate that he got the majority vote in the first elections... If you link this to his party, ZANU was much more defined by rural dwellers deprived of their land... compared to ZAPU and ANC, which were modelled on popular support but with a clear vision for a programme for an urban working class, and for an intellectual elite as a component of the party. Mugabe's Maoism was anti-intellectual elite and pro-peasant control and leadership.*[108]

The role of South Africa's Apartheid government during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle was crucial. As noted in obituaries of Ian Smith after his death in 2007, "in the end it was not diplomacy which wore Smith down, but armed black opposition and, decisively, South Africa's decision to withdraw

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106   *Ibid.*
107   Kleinschmidt is now a member of the SALO reference group.
108   SALO interview with Horst Kleinschmidt, Cape Town, 2007.

support."[109] South Africa's stance was informed by the South African government's strategic opposition to 'communism' and not only by its belief in white minority rule. South Africa had previously provided various forms of support to the Smith regime, including arms shipments to its army.[110] By the mid-1970s, however, international and regional pressures on the Smith regime to concede to majority rule increased. The stated motivation for actors like the United States was that a resolution to Zimbabwe's war would create sufficient political and economic stability in the country to resist 'communist' influences. In this ideological and strategic context, South African President John Vorster, backed by President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and within the broader strategy of then-United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, started to campaign actively for peace through political transition in Rhodesia towards the end of 1974. Reportedly, part of Vorster's means of applying pressure on Smith was Rhodesia's infrastructure dependence on South Africa and the threat of being able to cut off Zimbabwe's electricity and water supplies.[111] Ian Smith's own interpretation of South Africa's actions, set out in his memoirs, was that Rhodesia was being offered as the 'sacrificial lamb' in Vorster's policy of 'détente' with neighbouring Black African states in order to buy more time for South Africa's white ruling elites.[112]

Kissinger initiated a series of talks with Smith, hosted by Vorster in Pretoria. At the third meeting on 19 September 1976, Smith accepted the principle of majority rule and made the public announcement on 24 September that his government had agreed to Kissinger's proposal of a black majority government within two

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109 Chitiyo, T. K. (2000). "Land, violence and compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans' debate". *Track Two* 9(1).

110 Binda, A. and C. Cocks (2008). *The Saints: The Rhodesian Light Infantry*. Johannesburg, 30° South Publishers.

111 SALO interview with Peter Vale, Nelson Mandela Chair of Politics at Rhodes University, 2007.

112 Smith, I. (1997). *The Great Betrayal*. London, Blake Publishing Ltd.

years. The war in Rhodesia continued, however, as the nationalist movements in Rhodesia and the leaders of neighbouring states (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana) "would only consider a settlement on their terms and Smith refused to make any more concessions".[113]

The destructiveness of the armed contestation eventually brought the government to attempt an 'internal settlement' in March 1978 with the moderate black-led United African National Council (UANC), led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Elections in April 1979, which were not recognised by ZANU and ZAPU, produced a transitional government led by Muzorewa as prime minister, and included a name-change for the country to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. A key aim of South Africa's strategy of engagement up to that point, in relation to Pretoria's stated intention to limit the spread of communism, was doubtless to be able to influence who would come to lead the country after a transition to majority rule. Pretoria openly supported Bishop Abel Muzorewa in the transitional government[114] and Vorster immediately recognised the new government and expressed his willingness to cooperate with it on a good-neighbourly basis.

Academic Roger Southall describes the weakness of the 'internal settlement':

> *The internal settlement left power firmly and squarely in the hands of the existing police, security forces, civil service and judiciary, whilst assuring whites of around a third of the seats in parliament. Hence, even while they were sympathetic to Muzorewa, the UK and US recognised that in the absence of the support of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth and Frontline States (FLS), let alone ZANU and ZAPU, the internal settlement – which was formally*

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113   Chitiyo, T. K. (2000). "Land, violence and compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans' debate". *Track Two* 9(1).

114   Tambo, A., Ed. (1987). *Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks*. London Heineman.

recognised only by South Africa – offered no prospect of long-term security and stability.[115]

In this context, observers have argued that the Lancaster House constitutional conference, proposed and hosted by the British government in London in December 1979

> *suited everyone to a greater or lesser degree: the Smith-Muzorewa grouping, because they needed to bring a halt to a war which might overwhelm them; South Africa, because it might legitimise (via an election victory for Muzorewa) the internal settlement and buy time for a restructuring of Apartheid; the British and US, both of whose establishments were determined to stabilise capitalism in the region; the PF*[116]*, as yet unable to defeat the settler regime but which was confident of popular support, wanted to marginalise Muzorewa and establish itself as the legitimate African nationalist leadership; and the FLS, which were desperate for an end to the war.*[117]

Sam Moyo brings out another element of the Lancaster House Agreement relating to Apartheid South Africa's interests:

> *The settlement in 1979 at Lancaster House kind of guaranteed the security of South Africa. The thing that most people do not comment on is that that agreement was meant to guarantee a transition that was to prevent and pre-empt any kind of further military incursion into South Africa [by South African liberation*

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115 Southall, R. (2010) "Post-colonial Zimbabwe: Nationalism, authoritarianism and democracy". Unpublished paper.

116 Patriotic Front, which unified ZANU and ZAPU in 1976.

117 Southall, R. (2010) "Post-colonial Zimbabwe: Nationalism, authoritarianism and democracy", drawing on Mandaza, I. (1987). "Introduction: The Political Economy of Transition". *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition 1980–1986*. I. Mandaza. London, Codesria: 1–20; Mandaza, I. (1987). "The state and politics in the post-white settler colonial Situation". *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition 1980–1986*. I. Mandaza, Ed. London, Codesria: 21–74.

groups]. In that period you have a compromise in Zimbabwe on most issues in terms of land, and the degree to which the ANC could be present and operate there.[118]

The Lancaster House Agreement would shape Zimbabwean politics for decades to come. It included an agreement to hold inclusive democratic elections by the following year. Furthermore, the United Kingdom committed to financing a land reform programme based on a willing-buyer willing-seller basis, committing the new Zimbabwean government to this principle for ten years.[119] Reference to UK land reform commitments in the Lancaster House Agreement would become a central theme of political rhetoric around land reform from the 1990s onwards.

In spite of South Africa's continued support for Bishop Abel Muzorewa in the election in early 1980, Mugabe's ZANU-PF swept to power. The result of Pretoria's (and Kissinger's and London's) facilitation in Rhodesia's transition to majority-ruled Zimbabwe was therefore what they had been most trying to avoid and "the one thing Smith had promised [white Rhodesians] they would never have – a black Marxist government run by the man they most abhorred, Mugabe."[120]

ZANU-PF's and Robert Mugabe's rise to power was characterised not only by the armed struggle against colonial and white-rule oppression, but also by violent internal ruptures within nationalist politics. The 1963 split between ZAPU and ZANU was marked by a series of violent clashes and mutual demonisation, continuing even after the formation of the Patriotic Front (PF), a unified front of ZANU and ZAPU, in October 1976 shortly after Smith's reluctant concession of the inevitability of majority rule. Despite

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118   SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

119   Chitiyo, T. K. (2000). "Land, violence and compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans' debate". *Track Two* 9(1).

120   *Ibid.*

the PF's formation, the two parties maintained their separateness. Historians have documented how Mugabe consolidated his power within his movement, eliminating internal opposition in this period. From 1977, for example, Mugabe ordered the detention of all the ZANLA field commanders save for Solomon Mujuru.[121] A year later, a group within the 'enlarged' ZANU Central Committee was arrested. These internal struggles were not generally known outside the external wing of ZANU-PF at the time or for many years subsequently.

Zimbabwean writer and political activist Judith Todd,[122] a prominent critic of both Ian Smith and Robert Mugabe, has argued that Mugabe's power has been consistently based on the marginalisation of dissent from the liberation struggle onwards.

> *Mugabe's strategy is clear. First he dealt with any opposition within his own party. Then, step by step, he proceeded with the stealthy hijacking of Zimbabwe. First there was the construction of the first 1980 election results through his ZANLA fighters being kept out of the Assembly Points and being used in the electoral field. Then there was the use of violence in the 1985 elections culminating in the destruction of the main opposition party ZAPU, which was concluded by the end of 1987. For some years after that, although there was also violence used in the 1990 and 1995 elections, life seemed relatively calm as there was little viable opposition. But then came the emergence of the MDC*

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121 Martin, D. and P. Johnson (1981). *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War*. Faber/ZPH.

122 Judith Todd is the daughter of Sir Garfield Todd, erstwhile prime minister of colonial Southern Rhodesia and later appointed a senator by Mugabe. As director of the Zimbabwe Project Trust, Judith Todd worked for many years with members of former liberation armies, the so-called war veterans. In 2003 she became one of the hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans stripped of their citizenship by the Mugabe regime. She is also SALO's Zimbabwe representative and is currently based in Bulawayo.

and the rejection by black and white voters alike of a planned new constitution in 2000. Then came the deliberate and planned destruction of commercial agriculture, the base of our economy, and the dispersal and disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of people from this sector. This massive social reconstruction was then compounded by Operation Murambatsvina, the assault on the urban poor, the so-called informal sector from May 2005. The violence continues until today. [123]

Nonetheless, Mugabe took power as an extremely popular leader, both at home, in the region and among many constituencies internationally.

1980 to 1994

The new Zimbabwean state under the leadership of Robert Mugabe had an ambivalent relationship with Apartheid-ruled Pretoria through the 1980s. Zimbabwe took on a leading role in the 'Frontline States' (FLS) – South Africa's close neighbours Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – which attempted to coordinate policies to support South African liberation groups and to resist Pretoria's attempts at military and economic destabilisation of the region. In 1980, on the initiative of the Frontline States, nine southern African states – adding Malawi, Lesotho and Swaziland to the FLS members – formed the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), whose principal objective was the extrication of its member states from the domination of the regional economy by South Africa.[124]

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123 Judith Todd, speech at the 4 October 2007 Cape Town launch of her book Todd, J. (2007). *Through the Darkness*. Cape Town, Zebra Press.

124 Schoeman, M. (2001). "From SADCC to SADC and beyond: The politics of economic integration". From: http://www.alternative-regionalisms.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/schoemar_fromsadcctosadc.pdf.

On the other hand, Zimbabwe remained economically dependent on South Africa. "It needed South African harbours as well as preferential trade access to the Apartheid state,"[125] and therefore could not cut off all ties. A trade agreement in existence between Smith's Rhodesia and Apartheid South Africa remained in place after 1980, at independent Zimbabwe's request.[126] Stoneman has proposed that in 1980 the newly independent Zimbabwean government faced an unenviable choice between accepting the inheritance of economic dependence (which would allow the offer of only token compensations to the mass of the population impoverished by colonial oppression and war); or risking a potentially disastrous head-on clash with international capital and South Africa; or locating a third way between those two options.[127] His judgement is that a strategy of confrontation was avoided and that, in spite of ZANU-PF's supposed ideological commitment to the pursuit of socialism and the transformation of the economy, which might have suggested the desire to find a middle road, the new governing elite pursued the first option of maintaining an economy structured around dependence.[128]

This economic dependence was used by Pretoria to put pressure on Zimbabwe economically, seeing the threat Zimbabwe's leadership of the FLS posed to the Apartheid state's attempts to bring the

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125　Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): p 249–276. p. 255.

126　*Ibid.*

127　Stoneman, C. (1988). "A Zimbabwean Model?" *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa.* London, Macmillan 2–7; Stoneman, C. (1988). "The economy: Recognising the reality". *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa.* London, Macmillan: 43–62.

128　Stoneman, C. (1988). "A Zimbabwean Model?" *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa.* C. Stoneman. London, Macmillan 2–7; Stoneman, C. (1988). "The Economy: Recognising the Reality". *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa.* London, Macmillan: 43–62.

region further under its control. It restricted credit for exports to Zimbabwe, abrogated a trade agreement that granted preference to Zimbabwean manufacturing exports to South Africa, stopped the contracts of Zimbabwean migrant mine workers, restricted oil exports to Zimbabwe, withdrew technical assistance to Zimbabwean railways and generally interrupted transport routes, culminating in major crisis in August 1981. The strategy eventually backfired by alienating Zimbabwean, South African and transnational companies, notably the US. Nonetheless, the immediate cost to the Zimbabwean economy was considerable.[129]

In addition to its economic vulnerability, Zimbabwe was affected by South African military destabilisation (along with other Frontline States in the 1980s),[130] including through:

> *disinformation…; attempted assassinations of the Prime Minister and senior Government/Party members (e.g. 18 December 1981 bomb attack on ZANU-PF HQ in Harare); assassinations/murders of [exiled ANC] liberation movement leaders; attacks on military installations (e.g. Inkomo Barracks and Thornhill Air Base in Zimbabwe August 16, 1981 and July 25, 1982 respectively); and training, supplying, directing surrogate armies… (e.g. Super-ZAPU in Zimbabwe).*[131]

The financial cost of direct and indirect destabilisation damage in

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129   Johnson, R. W. (2001). "South Africa's support for Mugabe". *Focus* 21(30). Retrieved 22 August 2012. From: http://www.hsf.org.za/resource-centre/focus/issues-21-30/issue-21-first-quarter-2001/south-africas-support-for-mugabe. p. 7.

130   Human Rights Committee (1989). "Anatomy of Repression". *Crime Against Humanity: Analysing the Repression of the Apartheid State*. M. Coleman. Johannesburg, The Human Rights Committee of South Africa.

131   Johnson, R. W. (2001). "South Africa's support for Mugabe". *Focus* 21(30). Retrieved 22 August 2012, from http://www.hsf.org.za/resource-centre/focus/issues-21-30/issue-21-first-quarter-2001/south-africas-support-for-mugabe. p. 7.

Zimbabwe amounted to an estimated total of US$1 400 million between 1980 and 1986, which was about 5% of GDP and equivalent to the total aid received.[132] This excludes the more subtle impact on the militarisation of Zimbabwe's political affairs in response to the destabilisation, shaping Zimbabwean politics far into the future.[133] In addition, by increasing Zimbabwean trade imbalances, South African strategy pushed the new government into eventual dependence on aid (with its attendant conditionalities) from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and away from 'socialist' policies.

Relations between the ANC and the new ZANU government were also affected by Harare's ambivalent stance towards Pretoria. Invited by a friend and ZANU minister to live in Zimbabwe in exile, Moeletsi Mbeki had personal experience of the reluctance of the new Zimbabwe government to allow MK soldiers passage through the country. As he recalls:

> *They were arrested by the CIO [Central Intelligence Organisation], locked up, interrogated and deprived of food, deprived of a change of clothes. I was a friend of the cabinet minister Herbert Ushewokunze, so whenever our MK guys were arrested, my assignment was to go and plead with Herbert to have them released. On the whole he was supportive of our struggle. Instinctively he was pro-PAC but ZANU leadership's love of force meant that even though they didn't agree with the ANC, they liked its military activity – but not to come out of Zimbabwe! As far as they were concerned, they owed the ANC nothing, so they were not going to antagonise the South African government on account of the ANC.[134]*

132 Hanlon, J. (1988). "Destabilisation and the battle to reduce dependence". *Zimbabwe's Prospects: Issues of Race, Class, State and Capital in Southern Africa*. C. Stoneman. London, Macmillan: 32–42.
133 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.
134 SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, July 2007.

The 1980s were the height of covert intelligence and counter-intelligence operations in the context of both the Cold War and the anti-Apartheid liberation struggle. This murky field of strategic alliances and uncertain trust complicated relations between the ANC and the new Zimbabwe government. In this climate of distrust and obstruction, it was not until the mid-80s that the ANC opened a recognised office in Harare. South African government operatives were active in Zimbabwe, trying to show that the ANC was working against the ZANU government.[135] The geopolitics of southern Africa and the Cold War also provided opportunities for fighting domestic political battles within Zimbabwe with external support. According to historian Timothy Scarneccia, based on a reading of diplomatic documents from South African, British and USA archives:

> *faced with a much more powerful South African military and economy, Mugabe found it more convenient to cooperate with the South African Defence Forces against Nkomo's ZAPU given the historic ties between ZAPU and the African National Congress (ANC)... Mugabe and others in Zimbabwe's new government therefore worked with [Apartheid] South Africa to keep ZAPU from providing bases for the ANC's Umkhonto We Sizwe... in Zimbabwe.*[136]

The continued contestation between ZANU and ZAPU also drew in South African actors in other ways. After the 1980 elections, ZANU deployed the state's military against ZAPU and its (largely Ndebele-speaking) support base in increasingly violent ways, culminating in the *Gukurahundi*[137] massacres of an estimated

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135 SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, July 2007.

136 Scarneccia, T. (2011). "Rationalizing Gukurahundi: Cold War and South African Foreign Relations with Zimbabwe, 1981–1983". *Kronos* (online) 37(1): 87–103. p. 88.

137 *Gukurahundi* in Shona means "the early rain which washes away the chaff before spring".

20 000 people in Matabeleland and the Midlands in 1983–85. Sam Moyo notes that "this conflict is mostly simplified by people: they talk about it in terms of Ndebele-Shona and Matabeleland; they don't talk about it as an international relations matter. Everybody knows that Apartheid South Africa was financing an element of that dissident movement... and you had Rhodesian and South African operatives within Zimbabwean security – in the intelligence, the police and the army – who became part and parcel of stoking certain elements of that conflict."[138] Scarneccia (again using diplomatic archives as his sources) claims that there were links between *Gukurahundi* and Pretoria's fight against the ANC in that

> *high-ranking ZANU-PF officials negotiated with the South African Defence Forces in 1983 to cooperate in their efforts to keep ZAPU from supporting South African ANC operations in Zimbabwe. The 5th Brigade's campaign*[139] *therefore served the purposes of South Africa, even as ZANU-PF officials rationalised the* Gukurahundi *violence in international and anti-Apartheid circles as a campaign against South African destabilisation.*[140]

Tor Sellstrom recounts that "Umkhonto We Sizwe cadres who had stayed underground in Zimbabwe were rounded up, a number of them were jailed and some were tortured."[141] Ex-MK cadre Joyce Sikhakhane-Rankin remembers:

> *At the time of the* Gukurahundi, *one of my tasks was to trace*

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138   SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

139   The 5th Brigade was the infamous North Korean-trained army unit which carried out the *Gukurahundi* massacres.

140   Scarneccia, T. (2011). "Rationalizing Gukurahundi: Cold War and South African Foreign Relations with Zimbabwe, 1981–1983". *Kronos* (online) 37(1): 87–103.

141   Sellstrom, T. (2002). *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Volume II –Solidarity and Assistance 1970-1994*. Stockholm, Elanders Gotab.

ANC cadres who had disappeared, who were no longer linking up with their command structures, and some of them I was able to find. They had been beaten up badly because they were taken for being Ndebele speakers.[142]

This massive deployment of state violence in Matabeleland was followed by the formal absorption of ZAPU into the ruling ZANU-PF through the 1987 Unity Accord and the formation of a merged ZANU-PF. In addition to violently weakening and incorporating opposition within the nationalist movement, ZANU-PF eliminated parliamentary resistance by constitutionally removing the historically white seats in parliament in 1986. The power of the executive presidency was entrenched by 1987.[143]

In the early 1990s, as South Africa's negotiated political transition gained momentum with the unbanning of liberation movements in February 1990 and then the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela at the end of the same month, Zimbabwe was preoccupied with domestic crises. In 1991, Zimbabwe took on an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) of financial austerity measures under the tutelage of the World Bank.

Zimbabwe's financial woes that led to this were largely due to domestic decisions in the 1980s, such as post-war social spending (including impressive gains in public health care and education) and demobilisation pay-outs, but also partly due to the above-mentioned costs associated with South African destabilisation, including Zimbabwe's involvement in the conflict in Mozambique. Zimbabwe had also only very partially implemented the land reform programme envisioned in the Lancaster House Agreement, even though the British had contributed over 44 million pounds to

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142   SALO interview with Joyce Sikhakhane-Rankin, June 2007.

143   Moyo, J. (1992). *Voting for Democracy: Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe*. Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications.

the 1980s' phase of land resettlement.[144] In 1988, the UK stopped payments for land reform, however, due to criticism of how and to whom land was being allocated.[145]

The ESAP induced an even greater economic and social crisis in Zimbabwe, including cuts in free education and health care, reversing many of the developmental gains made in the 1980s; sharp price increases for basic commodities including food; a significant weakening of the currency; and extensive job losses and wage cuts.[146] ESAP coincided with a sharp increase in HIV/AIDS infections, resulting in Zimbabwean life expectancy falling from 59.5 years in 1991 to 43.5 years in 2002.[147] As the country's manufacturing output fell, South African (and other foreign-owned) chain stores and franchises became increasingly dominant in the economy.[148]

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144 See Cliffe, L. (2000). "The politics of land reform in Zimbabwe". *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects*. T. Bowyer-Bower and C. Stoneman, Eds. Ashgate, Aldershot. For an insider's view of the British policy, see in the same book Cusworth, J. (2000). "A review of the UK ODA evaluation of the land resettlement programme in 1998 and the land appraisal mission of 1996."

145 De Villiers, B. (2003). "Land reform: Issues and challenges – a comparative overview of experiences in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa and Australia". *KAS Occasional Papers*. Johannesburg, Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

146 Mhone, G. (1994). "The impact of structural adjustment on the urban informal sector in Zimbabwe". *Issues in Development Discussion Paper*. Geneva, Development and Technical Cooperation Department, International Labour Office.

147 http://www.google.co.za/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bncppjof8f9_&met_y=sp_dyn_le00_in&idim=country:ZWE&dlen&hl=en&q=zimbabwe+life+expectancy.

148 Coady, A. and S. Hussein (2009). "Deconstructing constructive engagement: Examining Mbeki's South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe". *World Affairs: Journal of International Issues* 13(1). p. 343ff.

There was very little policy discussion between Harare and the ANC in the period leading up to South Africa's 1994 majority-rule elections, and limited attempts to calibrate the policy priorities of the two countries.[149] Thabo Mbeki, in his role as Chairperson of the ANC, was tasked to build a better relationship with the Zimbabwe government during this period. His work to this effect eventually had some effect. Tor Sellstrom recalls that during the latter part of the 1980s, once the ZANU-PF government recognised the ANC presence with an office, the Zimbabwe government facilitated many meetings between the ANC leadership in Lusaka and the internal opposition, the United Democratic Front (UDF); the trade unions; and various groups like teachers, lawyers and women:

> *They would meet in Harare on neutral ground. Some ZANU people were very active, like the present minister Didymus Mutasa… He was very involved in facilitating dialogue between the 'inziles'[150] and the exiles, which was extremely important for the ANC; so it's a very mixed picture actually."[151] Nonetheless, the Zimbabwe government was one of the last to recognise the 1994 political settlement in South Africa.*

In conclusion, the pre-1994 relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe were characterised throughout by an uneasy and ambivalent interdependence. Seemingly obvious alliances, whether among white minority-rule or majority liberation movement groups, were complicated by factionalism, Zimbabwe's attempts to maintain an independent identity in the face of actual and perceived South African 'invasion' and South Africa's self-perception as the more powerful big brother.

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149 *Ibid.*

150 "Inzile" was a term used to refer to South Africans involved in the liberation struggle who had remained in the country, and were not exiles. This included those from ANC structures in South Africa, as well as the UDF and certain civic movements aligned with the ANC and the UDF.

151 SALO interview with Tor Sellstrom, 20 May 2008.

3

1994 to 1999

The Mandela Years – Framing Independent Relations

Introduction

Although both Zimbabwe and South Africa were connected by a history of settler-colonialism, minority rule and independence struggle, as described in the previous chapter, the different timelines of this history meant that the two countries only met as majority-ruled, independent nations in 1994. This means that there were only five or six years of bilateral relations before Zimbabwe's political and economic crisis started to escalate in the late 1990s.

This was a period of radical political realignment in the region. Not only did all the countries in the region have to adjust to the global shifts that accompanied the end of the Cold War after 1989, but South Africa's transformation from common enemy to regional leader fundamentally reconfigured regional political relationships. This was especially the case for Zimbabwe, which had occupied the regional leadership role in the Frontline States and the South African Development Cooperation Conference as well as having the largest and most developed economy in the region, apart from sanctions-hobbled Apartheid South Africa. Commentators have noted the ambivalence with which Zimbabwe's leaders saw South Africa's independence:

> *Despite the end of Apartheid, the former enemy [South Africa] did not become a new friend. Instead, for Zimbabwe, the New South Africa remained the 'bully' in the south, a challenger against which Zimbabwe was unable to compete.*[152]

The ANC in government also needed to find its feet and decide on what the country's regional (and continental and global) role would be. The years of Nelson Mandela's presidency were significant for the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe, and

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152 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 255.

particularly for South Africa's later response to Zimbabwe's political crisis, because these were the years in which democratic South Africa's foreign policy principles were established and tested. They were also the years in which key regional institutions, particularly the Southern African Development Community (SADC) were established and shaped.

This chapter, therefore, traces the changes in how South Africa articulated and revised its foreign policy position as part of its quest for regional, continental and global legitimacy, as well as how both South Africa and Zimbabwe interacted with regional institutions. It places this in the context of domestic challenges in both countries, particularly in terms of economic relations.

Transition to Legitimacy

> *South Africa is nothing more than a (small- to) medium-role player in world politics, from which much is expected.*[153]

During South Africa's transition period and the unbanning of nationalist political parties and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in February 1990 to the first majority-rule elections on 27 April 1994, the country was predominantly pre-occupied with its internal conflicts and negotiations. However, the ANC considered foreign policy as an immediate and important aspect of the 'new South Africa'. This was due to the experience of international solidarity with the anti-Apartheid movement and support received in exile, as well as the need to make a clear

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153 Henwood, R. (1997). "South Africa's Foreign Policy: Principles and Problems". *In Monograpgh No 13, Fairy Godmother, Hegemon or Partner?* H. Solomon, Hanns Seidel Foundation.

distinction with the Apartheid government's unilateral and violent relationship with its neighbours, and to recover from the isolation of Apartheid-era sanctions.

To this effect, in 1993, ANC President Mandela set out six principal guidelines that would underpin South African foreign policy: "the centrality of human rights; promotion of democracy worldwide; promotion of justice and respect for international law; peaceful resolution of disputes; the centrality of Africa; and regional and international cooperation."[154]

As South African academic Chris Landsberg notes:

> *While the Apartheid state was one of the most isolated in the world by 1989, when the transition began, and the country had virtually no formal relations with Africa, Asia and South America, South Africa seized the opportunity to articulate North-South and South-South strategies through the promotion of cooperation. Rejecting the old unilateralist, go-it-alone postures of Apartheid-era governments, the Mandela government committed the country to multilateral cooperation.*[155]

Once the ANC was in government from 1994, however, the contradictions of a foreign policy based on high ideals became evident. Professor Landsberg, speaking at a May 2011 Centre for Conflict Resolution seminar in Cape Town explained the outcome of turning ideals into implementable policy:

> *The Nelson Mandela government struggled to adapt to the hurley-burley of the post-Cold War, post-Soviet, post-Apartheid world. In an attempt to break with the Apartheid past, the new*

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154 Mandela, N. (1993). "South Africa's Future Foreign Policy". *Foreign Affairs* 72(5), as summarised by Adebajo, A. (2010). *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 109.

155 Landsberg, C. (2011). *The Diplomacy of Transformation: South African Foriegn Policy and Statecraft*, Macmillan. p. 96.

government developed a new 'good world citizen' posture,
based on highly idealistic, principle-driven foreign policy, but
the Mandela government struggled to define an identity, and
in the end a highly eclectic foreign policy identity prevailed.[156]

Some of the contradictions emerged through the means of engaging in foreign policy, e.g. the methods of engagement applied, rather than through the idealistic principles and intended ends. The dominant means that emerged in the Mandela era, and which have largely endured to contemporary times, include: a preference for preventive diplomacy; an emphasis on African solidarity at a regional and sub-regional level; use of constructive engagement approaches such as 'quiet diplomacy' rather than critical or punitive approaches; and the promotion of an 'integrated economic foreign policy',[157] meaning the integration of growth, trade, aid and market access.[158]

An important episode in testing, and thereby developing, South Africa's human rights-based foreign policy approach, with particular relevance to its later dealings with Zimbabwe's political crisis, was Nigerian President Sani Abacha's execution of author and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow activists in November 1995. Mandela had initially tried to intervene with Abacha in a 'quiet' diplomatic manner, sending envoys to Abuja to plead for clemency and the release of other political prisoners. Mandela had received what he thought was a genuine assurance from Abacha that the activists would not be executed and had given

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156 Chris Landsberg, 3 May 2011, speaking at Centre for Conflict Resolution Seminar on *Diplomacy of Transformation*, Cape Town.

157 Pahad, A. (1995). "Reply during the debate in the National Assembly, 18 May 1995". *Policy Guidelines by the Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs*. Pretoria, Department of Foreign Affairs: 22–26.

158 Landsberg, C. (2011). *The Diplomacy of Transformation: South African Foriegn Policy and Statecraft*, Macmillan. p. 100f.

other Commonwealth leaders reassurance on this basis.[159] Only when this assurance had been broken did South Africa express its condemnation publicly. The lessons from this strategy, and reactions to it, were articulated by the ANC's Pallo Jordan in 2001:

> *When on the eve of a Commonwealth Summit, Sani Abacha ordered the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, then President Mandela moved swiftly to break off relations and called for tough measures against the Nigerian military junta. While Britain, France, the USA, Germany and others verbally applauded his actions, not one of those countries followed South Africa's example. British oil multinationals continued business as usual; the USA kept up a vigorous dialogue with Abacha while the US corporations expanded business contracts; France sought to exploit the tension between London and Abuja to its own advantage. South Africa held the moral high ground, but in isolation.*[160]

This event left a lasting imprint on South African international relations. International relations scholar Adebajo argues:

> *Mandela was about to learn the dismaying intricacies of African diplomacy. Even his iconic status failed to rally a single southern African state to take action against Nigeria. The fuse of the volcano that 'Madiba' (Mandela's clan name) had threatened to explode under Abacha had spectacularly failed to ignite. Instead, it was South Africa that was being accused by many African leaders of becoming a Western Trojan horse, sowing seeds of division in Africa and undermining African solidarity.*[161]

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159 Adebajo, A. (2010). *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 149.

160 Jordan, P. (2001). "Much ado about Zimbabwe". *ANC Today* 1(11).

161 Adebajo, A. (2010). *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 149–50.

Adebajo also notes the range of international and domestic actors attempting to influence South Africa's still fledgling foreign policy position, and the sometimes competing pressures associated with the various foreign policy aims South Africa was pursuing simultaneously.

> *The UN Secretary-General at the time, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, reminded Mandela of Nigeria's peacekeeping sacrifices in Liberia and Sierra Leone. South Africa's diplomats soon became concerned that Pretoria would become diplomatically isolated within Africa, adversely affecting its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. ANC stalwarts also reminded Mandela of the country's debt of gratitude to Nigeria during the anti-Apartheid struggle, as well as Nigeria's continued campaign contributions to the party. These voices eventually drowned out the efforts of South African trade union, business, environmental, women's and youth groups that were lobbying their government to take even stronger action against Nigeria.*[162]

The 'Abacha debacle' in many ways defined the ways in which the ANC's early idealistic foreign policy principles were soon mediated (although not entirely replaced) by an increased pragmatism. Then Deputy President Thabo Mbeki was central in revising both practice and presentation of South Africa's foreign policy position. In an attempt to mend relations and re-engage Nigeria, Mbeki pulled South Africa out of the Commonwealth Action Group on Nigeria; "refused to sanction Nigeria at the UN Commission on Human Rights; and cancelled a major conference of Nigeria's once-welcomed pro-democracy groups scheduled to take place in Johannesburg".[163] By 1996 relations between South Africa and Nigeria had somewhat normalised. Mbeki's justification for South Africa's pragmatism in Nigeria was articulated when he addressed Parliament in 1996. Mbeki bluntly stated: "[w]e should not

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162 *Ibid*. p. 150.
163 *Ibid*.

humiliate ourselves by pretending that we have a strength which we do not have."[164] Since South Africa did not have the power to dictate to Nigeria, it would rather find ways of supporting Nigeria's transition to democratic rule, Mbeki argued.

Many scholars, including Adebajo, have stated that "it is probably not an exaggeration to note that this single incident would shape Mbeki's future policy of 'quiet diplomacy' towards Zimbabwe."[165] A similar range of actors, interests and competing foreign policy projects would later also inform South Africa's diplomatic stance toward human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, as discussed in later chapters. Furthermore, Adebajo argues that Mbeki drew direct strategic lessons:

> *Having felt that Mandela had been set up for failure on Nigeria by the West, Mbeki was determined not to suffer the same fate over Zimbabwe. Unlike Mandela's reaction to Abacha, Mbeki pointedly ignored calls by Western leaders to sanction Robert Mugabe, judging that such sanctions would not only be ineffective but could also result in a loss of leverage within both Zimbabwe and the broader African context.*[166]

These lessons were consolidated in the influential ANC foreign policy discussion document drafted in July 1997 entitled "Developing a strategic perspective on South African foreign

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164 *Ibid.*

165 *Ibid.* See also Johnson, R. W. (2001). "South Africa's support for Mugabe". *Focus* 21(30). Retrieved 22 August 2012. From: http://www.hsf.org.za/resource-centre/focus/issues-21-30/issue-21-first-quarter-2001/south-africas-support-for-mugabe; Landsberg, C. (2005). *The Quiet Diplomacy of Liberation: International Politics and South Africa's Transition.* Johannesburg, Jacana Media; Sachikonye, L. M. (2005). South Africa's quiet diplomacy: The case of Zimbabwe. *State of the Nation: 2004–2005.* R. Southall.

166 Adebajo, A. (2010). *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War,* University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 150.

policy."[167] Mbeki 'heavily influenced'[168] the slant of the paper. The paper explicitly draws from the Nigerian experience:

> *One of the very first test cases for us in the area of promoting democracy and human rights in Nigeria highlighted the potential limits of our influence if we act as an individual country. This further highlighted the importance and need to act in concert with others and to forge strategic alliances in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. The search for such alliances needs to take place, in part, within existing multilateral institutions and forums like the OAU and United Nations. We need to become an increasingly active participant in these organisations, recognising that acting multilaterally almost always involves negotiations and compromise.*[169]

The discussion document thus represents the subtle shift in foreign policy formulation that was to become more overt during the Mbeki era, namely a recommitment to the importance of the universal principals set out at the beginning of Mandela's term, but tempered with a pragmatic approach to turning those principles into practice.

> *The identification of these principles cannot be considered idealistic, which shifts our focus away from the harsh realities of 'national interest'. Rather, the identification of such principles should be seen as an essential part of defining the national interest. Nevertheless, with the benefit of three years of experience, it is becoming more and more clear that the difficult challenge is to translate these principles into effective governmental policies and actions in our relations with particular countries and within various international forums.*

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167 Landsberg, C. (2011). *The Diplomacy of Transformation: South African Foriegn Policy and Statecraft*, Macmillan. P. 115.

168 *Ibid.*

169 ANC. (1997). "Developing a strategic perspective on South African foreign policy". From: http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2348.

> *Universally accepted human rights, for instance, are often disputed in their interpretation and relevance among different societies and cultures, and among countries at different levels of development. Answering the question of how to translate our call for human rights into effective policies requires an analysis of the current international situation and South Africa's place and role in it.*[170]

Importantly, the discussion document also portrayed SADC and African relations as a key priority for South African foreign policy, particularly through the vehicle of parties rather than through state structures and through previously allied liberation parties rather than new parties.

> *We must prioritise the SADC region and the continent as a whole and this requires the strengthening of party-to-party relations with progressive parties in the region and the continent. Our priority in this regard should be towards our former allies in the liberation struggle in South Africa, though not excluding issue-based alliances with a wider range of other forces.*[171]

While it can be argued that the proposals and principals articulated within the 1997 paper set the tone for years to come and formed the 'blueprint' for Mbeki's later approach to foreign policy when he became president, foreign policy debates continued to develop even before the end of Mandela's term, illustrating South Africa's continual balancing act between its roles as "simultaneously being the Western foothold in Africa and Africa's foothold in the West",[172] as noted in Chapter 1. For example, a 1998 Department of Foreign Affairs policy review suggested a shift in foreign policy priorities towards wealth creation and security, rather than the protection of human rights. Evidence of this was that the negotiation of the

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170 *Ibid.*
171 *Ibid.*
172 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39 (2): p 249–276. p. 265.

free trade agreement with the EU was given precedence over the free trade agreement in the SADC area.[173] As noted by Sam Moyo:

> *South Africa was… trying to open out because they had been under sanctions, to develop relations with the West… like with the EU. They put a lot of weight into rebuilding that relationship and the special agreement between the EU and South Africa. This really upset all the Africans, actually the whole SADC: that the first thing this new South African government does is to get into a special relationship with Europe. The point is that it was not necessarily bad faith by the ANC, but the strategy caused concern.*[174]

Contesting Regional Leadership

The establishment and institutionalisation of southern African regional organisations was, therefore, a key arena for South African foreign policy. SADC was also an arena in which relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe were developing in the mid- to late-1990s, and which continued to be a key showground in later years.

In 1994, South Africa joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which had been renamed from the South African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1992. SADCC had been established by Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (and joined in 1990 by newly independent Namibia) in reaction to Apartheid South Africa's destabilisation of the region and as an attempt at regional projects and programmes to reduce economic dependence on South Africa. South Africa's inclusion in the club therefore required a complete reorientation of the organisation, at a time when the brutal destabilisation of the region was fresh in the

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173 *Ibid*. p. 265.
174 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

minds of SADC member states, as was the continued prospect of South Africa's economic dominance. As the *raison d'etre* of having a common enemy evaporated, varying conceptions of national interests and differing approaches to regional security policy and methods of conflict resolution quickly emerged among SADC states. Nonetheless, they committed to the mandate "to promote economic integration, poverty alleviation, peace, security and the evolution of common political values and institutions."[175]

The early years of SADC's development were characterised in various ways by the struggle for political dominance between "the old (Zimbabwe) and the new (South Africa) regional leaders."[176] While some analysts have pointed to Mugabe's personal rivalry with Mandela, or have seen a continuation of Zimbabwe's long-standing national rivalry with its 'big brother', the contestation reflected deeper political disagreements about the nature of regional integration and the appropriate values of regional governance.[177]

> *One camp [in SADC], comprising Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania, viewed [SADC's institutions] as a common security regime whose primary basis for multilateral cooperation and peacemaking would be political rather than military. The other camp, comprising Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, favoured a mutual defence pact and prioritised military cooperation and responses to conflict."*[178]

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175   Baregu, M. L. and C. Landsberg. "Introduction". *From Cape to Congo: Southern Africa's evolving security challenges*. New York, International Peace Academy: 1–8.

176   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 257. See also (2012) "ANC weapons triggered Gukurahundi". *ZimEye* 29 May. From: http://www.zimeye.org/?p=54314.

177   Nathan, L. (2004). "The absence of common values and failure of common security in southern Africa, 1992–2003". *Working Paper no. 50*, Crisis States Research Centre: London School of Political Science and Economics.

178   *Ibid*. p. 6.

This disagreement reflected the different conceptions of security in the South African and Zimbabwean governments, as discussed in the Introduction chapter.

When the SADC Secretariat convened a Ministerial Workshop on Democracy, Peace and Security, in Windhoek, Namibia, in July 1994, it recommended to the SADC Summit the adoption of an anti-militarist agenda, the preparation of a protocol on peace, security and political cooperation, the establishment of a SADC Sector on Conflict Resolution and Political Cooperation, and the creation of an independent human rights commission. The Frontline States coalition, however, opposed this peace and cooperation-oriented approach and instead proposed the formation of a new entity, the Association of Southern African States (ASAS), to serve as the regional security body. As noted by South African peace and conflict scholar Laurie Nathan:

> *Whereas the SADC Sector on Conflict Resolution and Political Co-operation was envisaged as a formal structure linked to the Secretariat, ASAS would function independently of the Secretariat and have an informal and flexible* modus operandi… *[Furthermore, there was disagreement over] Zimbabwe's insistence that ASAS should follow the tradition of the Frontline States and be chaired on a permanent basis by the longest-serving head of state in the region, namely President Mugabe; other countries preferred the option of a rotating chair… Although the ASAS option was eventually rejected, antagonistic and recriminatory debates around the security body's status and structure persisted over the next seven years as manifestations of underlying political and strategic differences among member states.*[179]

In 1996, SADC had initially attempted to balance the two powers by naming Mandela as SADC chairman and Mugabe as chairman

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179 *Ibid*. p. 6–7.

of the newly established SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), which was structured more along the lines of the SADC Sector suggested at the Windhoek Workshop than following the ASAS model, but whose founding arrangements left much space for confusion and contestation. The main point of contestation was whether the Organ would be independent of, or accountable to, the SADC Summit, its highest decision-making body. According to Nathan:

> *The decision that the Organ would operate at a summit level but independently of other SADC structures gave rise to the anomalous prospect of two separate entities at the level of heads of state being responsible for addressing conflict. South Africa argued that while this responsibility fell within the Organ's mandate, in terms of the SADC Treaty it was also a core function of SADC and therefore of the Summit. During his tenure as the SADC Chair, Mandela became so exasperated with Mugabe's rival authority as the Chair of the Organ that he threatened to resign if the Organ were not made accountable to the Summit.*[180]

Zimbabwean officials' reasoning for the Organ's independence further illustrates the mistrust present between the countries at the time. South Africa was accused of being "morally incompetent to challenge the substance of the Treaty," given its Apartheid history, and "SADC was considered an inappropriate body to preside over sensitive security matters since it was funded by foreign donors."[181] Similar legitimacy questions, including those about the role of foreign donors, would dog later negotiations during Zimbabwe's crisis as well.

At the SADC Malawi Summit in August 1997, Mugabe resisted pressure to pass on chairmanship of the OPDS and to subjugate the

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180 *Ibid*. p. 6.
181 Quoted in ibid.

OPDS to the overall SADC structure, leading to a clash between Mandela and Mugabe. In the end, South Africa declared the ODPS as illegitimate, rendering it effectively defunct.[182] This illustrates how significant the manoeuvring between the two countries (and the individual leaders) has been on the shape and functioning of SADC from its beginnings.

The conflict over OPDS, and over regional leadership overall, intensified in 1998 when Zimbabwe (together with Namibia and Angola) intervened militarily in the Democratic Republic of Congo in June. According to Adelmann's academic history, Zimbabwe's actions were not authorised by SADC:

> *Mugabe, in his capacity as (illegitimate) OPDS chair, justified the intervention [in the DRC] as a SADC action, even though no formal Summit decision had been taken. Mandela made it clear that South Africa preferred a negotiated solution to the DRC war and demanded the withdrawal of all foreign forces.*[183]

According to Theo Neethling, senior researcher at the Centre for Military Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, however, the initially 'ad hoc' undertaking in the DRC which was "not organised under SADC auspices" did "receive retroactive endorsement from SADC."[184]

A somewhat different interpretation of the DRC intervention is presented by Sam Moyo, reflecting some of the grievances that Zimbabwean actors may have felt against South Africa regarding this episode:

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182 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 257.

183 *Ibid*. p. 257.

184 Neethling, T. (2000). "Conditions for successful entry and exit: An assessment of SADC allied operations in Lesotho". *Monograph No 44: Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension*. M. Malan.

> *In 1998, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia go into the DRC
> to defend the DRC government from the invasion led by the
> eastern group of Tutsis with Rwandan soldiers supported by
> Uganda… It had been agreed, when they went in, that South
> Africa was supposed to go in too, but South Africa pulled out
> a very few days before they actually went in… Zimbabwe was
> heading the SADC's security organ, and the other two liberation
> movement governments, South Africa's and Mozambique's,
> [were] committed to stopping this thing. This was a whole huge
> problem in terms of its eventual costs: the Congo [government]
> did not pay up as much as it should have and Zimbabwe had
> to meet costs, which would have been less for Zimbabwe if
> South Africa had stayed in… Zimbabwe was left in the lurch
> in the DRC while acting on behalf of SADC, because if they
> had pulled out, the invaders would have walked all over the
> DRC.*[185]

It is significant, in light of later relations, that South Africa's
response to Mugabe's intervention in the DRC, and his attempt to
use SADC to legitimise this, was open criticism rather than 'quiet
diplomacy'.

South Africa's position in defending SADC-based, collective
decision-making on regional security was, however, complicated
by its own role in *Operation Boleas*, a seven-month military
intervention in Lesotho commencing in late September 1998, very
soon after South Africa had declined to participate in or endorse
the 'SADC' intervention in the DRC. *Operation Boleas* took
place in the context of unrest after opposition parties accused the
incumbent government of falsifying election results. Officially,
the operation was an agreed-upon SADC intervention (involving
troops from South Africa and Botswana), aimed at preventing a
supposed military coup against the incumbent regime and creating
"a stable environment for the restoration of law and order to

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185 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

enable negotiations to take place between the political parties in Lesotho."[186]

The decision to engage in the intervention was taken by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, acting president of South Africa during Mandela's absence abroad,[187] and was later confirmed by Mandela. Among the justifications given at the time were that there was a "moral obligation on South Africa and Botswana to intervene… that the intervention was based on agreements reached in SADC; [and] that all attempts at peacefully resolving the dispute had failed."[188] Furthermore, South Africa argued that the prime Minister of Lesotho had directly requested the intervention,[189] but this was also the case in the DRC where President Laurent Kabila had asked for SADC assistance in fighting rebels. Critics of the intervention immediately noted that there was neither clear international law nor a clear SADC framework in place to justify such an intervention, while there were clear issues of South African national interest, such as protecting the Katse Dam water scheme which supplies the heartland of South Africa's economy. Many commentators also noted that "propping up a shaky regime, unable to represent Lesotho as its government, could not be regarded as a proper response in terms of international law."[190] The Zimbabwean government was highly critical of the

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186 SANDF. From: http://www.mil.za/SANDF/Current%20Ops/Boleas/Boleas-2.htm.

187 Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, was Minister of Home Affairs in Mandela's Government of National Unity. Mandela selected him to act as president on a number of occasions.

188 Republic of South Africa Department of Defence (1998). Bulletin. Pretoria. 57/98, 22 September. Quoted in Neethling, T. (2000). "Conditions for successful entry and exit: An assessment of SADC allied operations in Lesotho". *Monograph No 44: Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension*. M. Malan.

189 SANDF, http://www.mil.za/SANDF/Current%20Ops/Boleas/Boleas-2.htm.

190 Barrie, G. (1999). "South Africa's forcible intervention in Lesotho". *De Rebus*, January.

intervention in Lesotho, denying its SADC provenance, given Zimbabwe's continued chairmanship of the SADC Organ which had not agreed to the step.

While 'lessons from Lesotho' are less commonly referred to than 'lessons from Nigeria' in the international relations literature on South Africa, including by leading South African politicians, the experience of being criticised for intervening after a contested election and being seen as propping up a regime, as well as following national economic interests, may well have resonated with South African decision-makers when later faced with demands to intervene more forcefully in Zimbabwe.

By 1999, therefore, a series of encounters on the regional stage had led to a relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe characterised by "brinkmanship and frustration".[191] In parallel to the contestations over SADC, the DRC and Lesotho, however, South Africa was playing a leading role in supporting and facilitating one of the Zimbabwean government's key concerns: land reform.

In June 1998, the Zimbabwe government published the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme Phase II (LRRP II) framework, which envisaged the compulsory purchase of 50 000 square kilometres of land over five years from white commercial farmers and other landowners including public corporations, churches, non-governmental organisations and multinational companies.[192]

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191 Rupiya, M. (2002–3). "Zimbabwe in South Africa's foreign policy: A Zimbabwean view". *South African Yearbook of International Affairs 2002–2003*. Johannesburg, South African Institute of International Affairs. p. 161.

192 Zimbabwe Institute. (2004). "Zimbabwe land policy study". From: http://www.kubatana.net/docs/landr/zim_institute_land_policy_0508.pdf.

Mbeki looked back at 1998 (when he was still deputy president) in a speech he gave as president in 2000.[193] He noted that he played a key role in facilitating the UK's participation in the September 1998 donors' conference in Harare at which LRRP II was discussed. At this conference, the land programme was unanimously endorsed by forty-eight countries and international organisations, including commitments by the UK, even though British Prime Minister Tony Blair's then recently elected Labour Government had previously denied that it had any "special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe".[194]

The Zimbabwe Institute, an independent think-tank based in Cape Town, which focuses on facilitating political dialogue, consensus building and policy development in Zimbabwe,[195] notes that the pledges at the donors' conference were made

> *on condition that the Government of Zimbabwe first produced a clear land policy and established transparent and accountable mechanisms for land acquisition and redistribution. The government saw the issues of transparency and accountability as infringements on its sovereignty and hence did not act accordingly. As a result LRRP II was never implemented.*[196]

The pledges, therefore, did not materialise. Mbeki, however, continued to publicly and prominently remind the UK of its colonial debt, reinforcing Mugabe's perspective on land reform by presenting "the land question [as] a direct product of the colonisation of Zimbabwe".[197]

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193   Mbeki, T. (2000). "State of the Nation Address, 4 May 2000".
194   Clare Short, Letter to Kumbirai Kangai (Zimbabwe's Agricultural Minister), 5 November 1997.
195   http://www.zimbabweinstitute.net/About/.
196   Zimbabwe Institute. (2004). "Zimbabwe Land Policy Study". From: http://www.kubatana.net/docs/landr/zim_institute_land_policy_0508. pdf. p. 8.
197   Mbeki, T. (2000). "State of the Nation Address, 4 May 2000".

The British government emphasised that it had, in fact, already committed significant resources towards earlier phases of land reform in Zimbabwe, on the basis of the Lancaster House Agreement.[198] As the British High Commissioner to South Africa, Paul Boateng noted in 2008, looking back at the late 1990s:

> *Britain has not, and will not, renege on its responsibilities under Lancaster House. We will make available funds to support pro-poor agrarian reform in Zimbabwe, together, I have no doubt, with other members of the international community… [I]t is a fact that Britain has been a consistent and strong advocate of land reform.*

> *Since 1980 we have provided £44 million for land reform as well as £500 million for development in Zimbabwe, more than any other donor, but that is the past… We will support land reform that really addresses the needs of the poor and landless in Zimbabwe and that is carried out subject to transparency, accountability, the rule of law, those very SADC principles which, it seems to me, need now to be applied in Zimbabwe.*[199]

Land reform would continue to be a conflictual issue between Zimbabwe, South Africa and Britain (and 'Western' governments more broadly), as discussed in later chapters.

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198   See Cliffe, L. (2000). "The politics of land reform in Zimbabwe". *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects*. T. Bowyer-Bower and C. Stoneman, Eds. Ashgate, Aldershot. For an insider's view of British policy, see in the same book Cusworth, J. (2000). "A review of the UK ODA evaluation of the land resettlement programme in 1998 and the land appraisal mission of 1996".

199   Rt Hon Paul Boateng, SALO meeting, 27 February 2008. Building International Consensus on Zimbabwe. Cape Town.

Economic Crisis and Land Reform

The wider context for the land reform process in Zimbabwe, and South Africa's roles in relation to it, was Zimbabwe's brewing economic crisis, including but not limited to the implementation of land reform. Zimbabwe's economic fortunes were intimately entwined with its politics. As the country's formal economy waned, leaving fewer resources available for political distribution, the country's leadership sought alternative means of retaining power and resources.

After a period of expansive state spending on development in the 1980s, as discussed in the previous chapter, the early 1990s saw increasing economic crisis in Zimbabwe, due to "macroeconomic mismanagement… a corrupt clientelistic system… IMF and World Bank programmes [which] increased the debt"[200] as well as a drought in 1991–92. This led to dramatic falls in both agricultural and industrial production, a contraction of GDP in 1992–93 and resultant inflation.[201]

In addition, "the awakening economic giant South Africa strangled the Zimbabwean economy from the outside."[202] As soon as South Africa's economy was freed from anti-Apartheid sanctions, South African economic growth impacted on Zimbabwe's economy, and not only positively. As noted by Sam Moyo:

> *And at the very time Zimbabwe liberalised and South Africa was opening up and ceasing to be a pariah, many companies in Zimbabwe moved into or back to South Africa; these included*

200 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 250.

201 Southall, R. (2012). "Post-colonial Zimbabwe: Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Democracy". *SALO Working Paper*. Cape Town, Southern African Liaison Office.

202 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

textile companies. One talks about de-industrialisation: what happened in Zimbabwe in the 1990s is that the balance of economic opportunity for business shifted to South Africa, and with that the relationship of import-export tilted further towards South Africa, in whose favour it was already tilted anyway.[203]

Trade between the two countries increased quickly from the early 1990s, but largely to South Africa's advantage. From a balance of trade of 1:2 at the beginning of the decade, it reached 1:7 towards the end.[204] This was partly due to direct South African actions, such as South Africa's 1992 unilateral cancellation of the 1964 preferential trade agreement, which immediately tripled tariffs on Zimbabwean goods,[205] and partly due to indirect effects such as South Africa's attraction of foreign direct investment after 1994, which might previously have gone to Zimbabwe. Finally, South Africa benefited from brain drain from Zimbabwe. As Adelmann argues, "the Zimbabwean economic crisis of the 1990s was to some extent South African-made, though unintentionally so."[206]

In addition to structural readjustment and South Africa's influence, however, the Zimbabwean government made several political decisions in the late 1990s, aimed at bolstering Mugabe's waning domestic popularity and power, which 'plunged'[207] the economy

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203 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

204 Soko, M. and N. Balchin (2009). "South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe: A nexus between foreign policy and commercial interests?" *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16(1): 33–48, p. 36.

205 Mayihlome, L. (1997). "Impact of Zimbabwe–South Africa trade relations: A bilateral, regional or multilateral approach?" Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School. Masters. This trade agreement was renewed in 1996, but only partially.

206 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 256.

207 Bond, P. and M. Manyanya (2002). *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice.* Scottsville, University of Natal Press.

into free fall by 2000. The first was the government's changing approach to the land question. In the early 1990s, popular reactions to economic stress had included land occupations of both state and private land by peasants, sometimes led by traditional chiefs and war veterans. Such land occupations were generally forcibly repressed by the state, representing the interests of property ownership. Nonetheless, this created a dilemma for government. The ten-year moratorium on land expropriations after the Lancaster House Agreement (through which land could only be bought through a willing buyer-willing seller arrangement), had expired in 1989, and growing land hunger among the population made an unchanging protection of the privileged position of white commercial farmers increasingly untenable.

On the other hand, as academic Roger Southall noted, "retaining the support of white farmers and western donors was essential if the latest structural adjustment plan (launched in 1991 to run for five years, backed by donor pledges of [US]\$700 million in the first year and more to follow) was to succeed."[208] The Zimbabwean government attempted to address the challenge with the passage of the Land Acquisition Act of 1992, which did away with the 'willing seller-willing buyer' principle by empowering the government to compulsorily acquire land for resettlement. However, targets of resettling 110 000 families on 5 million hectares of land never materialised, partly due to inadequate allocation of government resources.[209]

By 1997, however, this fragile balancing act around land was falling apart under increasing popular pressure, particularly from 'war veteran' organisations. Mugabe announced in 1997 that the

208 Southall, R. (2012). "Post-colonial Zimbabwe: Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Democracy". *SALO Working Paper*. Cape Town, Southern African Liaison Office.

209 Zimbabwe Institute. (2004). "Zimbabwe land policy study". From: http://www.kubatana.net/docs/landr/zim_institute_land_policy_0508.pdf.

hitherto slow pace of the national land resettlement programme would be accelerated, and white commercial farmers would not receive compensation for confiscated land. Mugabe promised the 'war vets' 20% of the 1 471 commercial farms that had been identified for expropriation.

The second factor towards economic collapse was the September 1997 decision by the Zimbabwean government, with ZANU-PF under pressure by veterans associations, to give a once-off unbudgeted payment of Z$50 000 (approximately US$4 000 at the time) and a monthly pension of Z$2 000 (US$160) to more than 50 000 veterans of the liberation struggle.[210]

The existing weakness of Zimbabwe's economy, the unbudgeted expenditures for 'veterans', and international disquiet about land expropriations led to the "Black Friday" crash of 14 November 1997 when the Zimbabwe dollar lost 74% of its value in four hours, as well as wiping 46% off the value of Zimbabwe's stock exchange.[211]

The third decision was the above-mentioned intervention in the DRC in 1998, costing the Zimbabwean fiscus US$1 million a month from already depleted public coffers. The war also caused the IMF to suspend further funding. Michael Nest, an expert on the DRC, offers two reasons for Zimbabwe's engagement in the DRC. Firstly, many military leaders became rich.[212] ZANU-PF and the Zimbabwe Defence Forces' aligned companies came out of the war owning diamond mines as well as timber plantations in the

210 Chitiyo, T. K. (2000). "Land, violence and compensation: Reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans' debate". *Track Two* 9(1).

211 Chimhowu, A. (2012). "Moving forward in Zimbabwe: Reducing poverty and promoting growth". Manchester, Brooks World Poverty Institute. p. 17.

212 Nest, M. (2001). "Ambitions, profits & loss: Zimbabwe's economic involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo". *African Affairs* 100(400): 469–490.

DRC.[213] This cemented the army leadership's loyalty to ZANU-PF and President Mugabe. Secondly, according to Nest, Mugabe wanted to upstage President Mandela in SADC.[214]

In conclusion, by the end of Mandela's presidency, therefore, Zimbabwe's economy was in crisis, partly due to the government's dependence on and patronage to the military elite (benefiting from the intervention in the DRC) and the military 'veterans' on the ground (benefiting from state pay-outs and promises of land).

Diplomatic relations with South Africa were not cordial, due to the DRC disagreement and contestation within SADC. The South African government's responses to 'Black Friday' and promises of land expropriation were muted, without much public commentary by either state officials or the ANC.

Soon after the change in leadership from Mandela to Thabo Mbeki in April 1999, however, the Zimbabwean crisis came to a head and demanded more active engagement. This shift is described in the next chapter.

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213 RAID. (2004). "Unanswered questions: Companies, conflict and the Democratic Republic of Congo: The work of the UN panel of experts on the illegal exploitation of national resources and other forms of wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises". From: http://www.raid-uk.org/docs/UN_Panel_DRC/Unanswered_Questions_Full.pdf.

214 Nest, M. (2001). "Ambitions, profits & Loss: Zimbabwe's economic Involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo". *African Affairs* 100(400): 469–490.

4

1999 to 2001

The Early Mbeki Years –
Building Cautious Engagement

Introduction

In June 1999, the South African electorate returned the ANC to power for another term. Nelson Mandela having stepped down as president of the ANC and of the country, Thabo Mbeki, formerly deputy president, was inaugurated as president in the same month. Zimbabwe would be one of the defining challenges of Mbeki's presidency, and a key factor in his domestic and international reputation throughout his two terms of office.

Internationally and domestically there has been a strong association between Mbeki as an individual and South Africa's foreign policy positions in this period, including large foreign policy projects such as the African Renaissance, NEPAD and the African Union, as well as South Africa's Zimbabwe policy specifically. In an interview with SALO in 2007, Tim Hughes, research fellow at the South Africa Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), summed up the significance of South Africa's Zimbabwe policy thus far in relation to these other foreign policy aims:

> *[Mbeki's] government has done (so much) work to advance the agenda of Africa... It has been so constructive with respect to the DRC, with Rwanda, with Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire for example. It has been absolutely exemplary, and yet it may well still be measured historically in terms of its failure to offer credible leadership on Zimbabwe.*[215]

South African International Relations scholar Chris Landsberg notes that "there was a great deal of continuity between the domestic and foreign policies of the Mandela and Mbeki governments", not least because Mbeki already had extensive influence on foreign policy development while he was Mandela's deputy. Significantly, the policy of 'quiet diplomacy', which was to become closely

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215 SALO (April 2007) interview with Tim Hughes, Cape Town, April 2007.

associated with Mbeki, was already evident in many of Mandela's political engagements, rather than being a 'new political style' put in contrast to Mandela's perceived policy of 'public criticism'.[216] However, "there is little doubt that Mbeki introduced significant modifications to both national and international strategies".[217]

This chapter covers the period from Mbeki's inauguration in 1999, up to 2001, ending just before the highly contested Zimbabwean elections in 2002. This is followed by a chapter on the years 2002 to 2006, ending just before SADC appointed South Africa, and Mbeki, as official mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis. The years from 2007 to 2009, covering Mbeki's mediation role, as well as the brief presidency of Kgalema Motlanthe and then Jacob Zuma's presidency, will be addressed in the next volume of this series.

There were several developments in Zimbabwe that shaped the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe in the first two years of Mbeki's presidency. These include the emergence of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as opposition party in Zimbabwe; a constitutional referendum and parliamentary election in 2000; and the escalation of violent land expropriation, including the large-scale displacement of farmers and farm workers from 2000 onwards.

South Africa had to respond to these developments for multiple overlapping reasons. Zimbabwe's economic woes affected South African businesses which either supplied to, or received goods from, Zimbabwe. Particularly, electricity and oil deliveries by parastatals Eskom and Sasol were often not paid from 2000 onward. The government also had to take into account strong and polarised views held by South African citizens about Zimbabwean issues. As COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi told the Third

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216 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276, p. 258.

217 Landsberg, C. (2011). *The Diplomacy of Transformation: South African Foriegn Policy and Statecraft*, Macmillan. p. 156.

Zimbabwe Solidarity Conference in Pretoria in 2005, reflecting sentiments also held in the early 2000s:

> *ZANU-PF and President Mugabe are absolute heroes in the minds of ordinary South Africans, absolute heroes – in any South African township, in any black residential area, you can think about any song [and it's] in praise of President Mugabe, of ZANU-PF, and the liberation movements of the entire region.*[218]

On the other hand, however, public pressure to manage migration pushed in other directions, and in 1999 the visa regime with Zimbabwe was tightened, and an electric border fence erected along some parts of the South Africa–Zimbabwe border.[219]

In addition, Mbeki's government was actively trying to build new governance mechanisms for the region (SADC) and the continent (NEPAD and the African Union), which involved forging consensus among a variety of African stakeholders on the values of democratic and accountable governance. It also meant maintaining relations with traditional bilateral and multilateral donors such as European countries and the United Nations by arguing that Africans could and should manage their own affairs, but requesting funding to set up the institutions to allow them to do so. The Zimbabwean government's increasingly violent means of retaining power, as well as its use of Africanist, anti-'Western' rhetoric to justify its actions, divided African countries, making wider consensus-building difficult. It also provided ammunition for doubters of African self-policing of governance standards, who asked "Why should the world take efforts such as the NEPAD

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218 Zwelinzima Vavi, speech at Third Zimbabwe Solidarity Conference, Pretoria, 24–25 February 2005.

219 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy the reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

seriously against this background [of 'silence' on Zimbabwe]?"[220] The institutionalisation of the 'African Renaissance' not only drew particular attention *to* Zimbabwe as a problem, it also drew South Africa's foreign policy attention *away* from its neighbour. As South African political analyst Richard Calland has put it:

> *There was the initial phase of so-called quiet diplomacy where Mbeki or Pretoria was trying to apply a certain degree of pressure on Zimbabwe, but any efforts were dwarfed by a bigger project on the table at that time… the project around the creation of the new African Union, and secondly attendant to that the creation of the African Peer Review Mechanism process and NEPAD. So there were big things happening on the continent at that time, and South Africa was playing a leading role in developing those projects, conceptualising them, giving them a vision, and then pushing through the politics. Mbeki himself had a very hands-on approach to that, it was something he associated himself closely with, and therefore he wanted to do the utmost to see that the vision was turned into reality.*[221]

Only five years after its own transition, South Africa was attempting to claim such a regional, continental and global leadership role while memories of Apartheid were still fresh. According to Zimbabwean academics Alois Mlambo and Brian Raftopoulos, "The Mbeki government was… concerned about being viewed as a regional bully, pushing its own agenda in conflict situations, and continuing the hegemonic ambitions of the Apartheid state."[222] As under Mandela, the South African government continually

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220 Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The saga continues... The Zimbabwe issue in South Africa's foreign policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4): 177.

221 SALO interview with Richard Calland. Cape Town, 2008.

222 Mlambo, A. and B. Raftopoulos (2010). "The regional dimensions of Zimbabwe's multi-layered crisis: An analysis". *Election processes, Liberation movements and Democratic change in Africa Conference, 8–11 April 2010.* Maputo, CMSE and IESE. p. 7.

emphasised its difference from the past and the legitimacy gained from the peaceful manner of its own political transformation. As noted by Chris Landsberg and Kwandi Kondlo:

> *Both the Mandela and Mbeki governments emphasised the need for regional reconciliation, following decades of tension and destabilisation by the Apartheid state. Until 1999, the ANC-led government ruled out the military option in international affairs and the preferred strategy was that of brokering peace pacts amongst belligerents in conflict situations. Such pacts were often promoted along the lines of South Africa's own so-called 'miracle', the Government of National Unity (GNU) of 1994. This approach has been followed through into South Africa's 'African Agenda'.*[223]

In sum, the policy of 'quiet diplomacy' towards Zimbabwe has been linked with what has been called the 'Mbeki doctrine': "the belief that while South Africa cannot force its own views on others, it can assist in dealing with regional instabilities by offering its leadership to bring opposing groups to the negotiating table."[224]

In addition to building regional institutions, the South African government under Mbeki was working to position itself as the representative of African and broader 'southern' interests in global fora such as the United Nations, and as a key peacemaker on the continent. 'Western' powers were therefore watching South Africa especially carefully, and expressed high expectations of the country's ability to influence a conflict in its 'back yard'.

International pressure on Mbeki over Zimbabwe was also heightened during Mbeki's first term due to shifts in the broader

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223 Landsberg, C. and K. Kondlo (2007). "South Africa and the 'African Agenda'". *Policy: Issues and actors* 20(13): 8.

224 Solidarity Peace Trust (2007). "A difficult dialogue: Zimbabwe–South Africa economic relations since 2000". Johannesburg. 23 October 2007. p. 28.

'Western' approach to Africa. In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attack on New York, USA, there was increased international concern about 'failed states' as possible vectors for terrorism, including in Africa. A new international focus on the paradigm of 'good governance', as expressed most directly through the 2000 Cotonou Agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries, linked development aid and trade more explicitly to political and economic governance conditions. "As a result of this awareness, Europe could not turn a blind eye to Zimbabwe, [and] Zimbabwe became the test case for the good governance approach."[225]

As described in the last chapter, political relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe at the end of Mandela's presidency were frosty. As soon as Mbeki became president, he intensified the efforts he had been making since 1980 to establish a better relationship between the ANC and President Mugabe and his party. Within ten months of Mbeki taking office, however, Zimbabwe was embroiled in a major crisis, and Mbeki's government had to respond in the highly complex international and domestic environment described above, while simultaneously continuing to find its feet in addressing the ongoing challenges of domestic development and post-Apartheid transformation. Furthermore, as Zimbabwean defence and security scholar Martin Rupiya describes it, Harare's response to Pretoria's tenacious advances was consistently "unpredictable, non-consultative and focusing away from mutual calibration".[226]

The result, according to Rupiya, was that from early 2000:

> [I]n response to the twin pressures of the international community's demand that South Africa adopt a hardline policy

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225 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 251.

226 Coady, A. and S. Hussein (2009). "Deconstructing constructive engagement: Examining Mbeki's South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe". *World Affairs: Journal of International Issues* 13(1).

> *towards Zimbabwe and the alarming deterioration in the socio-*
> *economic, political and security situation in Zimbabwe (which*
> *has increased the latter's dependence on South Africa), a twin-*
> *track policy of constructive engagement and containment was*
> *adopted.* [227]

The rest of this chapter sets out the 'twin pressures' and then discusses the nature of the South African government's 'twin-track' or even more multiple responses.

Relations with the MDC

Before discussing the chronology of political engagements from late 1999 onwards, it is necessary to discuss the relationship between the South African government and Zimbabwe's new political stakeholder, the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change. The MDC was founded in September 1999, only five months after Mbeki took office as South African president. The MDC arose from a coalition of trade unions (especially the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions) and civil society groups who were campaigning against the revised constitution, proposed by ZANU-PF, which was to be put to a referendum in February 2000. Since the Unity Accord of 1987, which merged ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU, thereby abolishing the latter as an independent party, there had not been any significant opposition party, although several small opposition parties created the semblance of electoral contestation in elections throughout the 1990s. As an example, in the 1996 presidential elections, ZANU-PF won 92.7% of the votes, as compared with Bishop Muzorewa's United African National Council at 4.7% and Reverend Sithole's ZANU-Ndonga

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227 Rupiya, M. (2003). "Zimbabwe in South Africa's Foreign Policy: A Zimbabwean view". *South African Yearbook of International Affairs 2002–2003*. Johannesburg, South African Institute of International Affairs.

at 2.4%.[228] In contrast to such previous opposition parties, the new opposition movement immediately showed its muscle. The new constitution, which included the expansion of presidential powers, was rejected by the electorate in the February 2000 referendum.[229]

As discussed in Chapter 2, the ANC's relationship with ZANU-PF was shaped by its historical links with ZAPU in the 1960s and 1970s. The ANC's relationship with the MDC was also characterised by distrust, but for other reasons. Political analyst Moeletsi Mbeki, drawing on his family's long history in the ANC and his understanding of internal ANC culture, explains:

> *The ANC hates new parties. In this case MDC is now the new party. Before, ZANU was the new party. ZANU then clobbered ZAPU on the head and forced the merger. Now ZANU carries the mantle of ZAPU, so it acquired that legitimacy. Now here comes up another new party, the upstart MDC. That's one element.*

> *But there is another side to it that needs much more investigation, which is the emergence of trade union-inspired parties in southern Africa. MDC was the second trade union-inspired party. The first one was the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) in Zambia which unseated the ANC's old buddy Kaunda, in an open, free and fair election in which Kaunda himself ran. Then the MDC, also trade union based, cropped up against Mugabe and defeated him in the constitutional referendum. In the meantime, the ANC government itself was faced by a very noisy trade union opposition to GEAR [Growth, Employment and Redistribution economic strategy] and to the [government's] bad HIV/AIDS*

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228 Commonwealth Observer Group (2000). "The Parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe, 24–25 June 2000: The report of the Commonwealth Observer Group". London, Commonwealth Observer Group.

229 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 250.

policies – which is COSATU in South Africa.[230] *So these are all the dimensions: first, a new party, then a trade union-inspired party, and then the trade union opposition within South Africa itself to the ANC government. These elements make the ANC prefer ZANU to MDC.*[231]

After the Unity Accord of 1987, many of the leaders of the ANC's liberation war ally ZAPU joined the 'new' united party ZANU-PF. President Mugabe was, therefore, able to draw on the ANC's long memory by deploying senior government ministers, officials and diplomats taken from the leadership of the old ZAPU to ANC meetings and diplomatic postings in South Africa. The MDC, on the other hand, had to start from scratch in South Africa's political landscape, with only its trade union links. In addition, the MDC made a few political mistakes in its early contacts in South Africa, which heightened the ANC's distrust of the newcomer. These included a meeting with South Africa's official opposition, the Democratic Alliance, characterised by the ANC as a 'predominantly white' and 'liberal' party opposed to post-Apartheid socio-economic transformation, lending support to ZANU-PF's attempt to tar the MDC as a creation of neo-colonial external funders.[232] Some in the ANC also had reservations about the MDC's relations with the largely white Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU). As an example of such sentiments, at the end of March 2002, ANC national executive council (NEC) member Dumisani Makhaya called on the ANC to support Mugabe's 'liberation struggle' against Western powers, and then obliquely mentioned

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230 The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is part of the ANC's ruling alliance, but retains significant autonomy on various policy issues. GEAR was a macro-economic policy adopted by the South African government in 1996 for five years but it remained the prevailing policy framework until 2005 when it was replaced by ASGISA (Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative).

231 SALO interview with Moeletsi Mbeki, June 2008.

232 Gumede, W. (2005). *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC.* Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 179.

proxy parties, which he portrayed as being intent on re-colonising Africa. He stated:

> *The West wants to impose presidents of their choice in our region. Zimbabwe is only a strategic hill. The real objective is SA. The gross interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe by Western powers is a dress rehearsal for SA. Their strategy is to weaken governments and parties of the former liberation movements in southern Africa.*[233]

A less extreme perspective, while critical of ZANU, shows how many in South Africa's ruling party questioned the opposition's credentials. In November 2000, a senior ANC policymaker, under the pseudonym 'Denga', wrote an article in *Umrabulo,* the quarterly journal of the ANC:

> *Zimbabwe… is experiencing a crisis of balancing between the genuine aspirations of the poor and meagre state resources. It is also a crisis reflected in the behaviour of self-satisfied sections of the middle strata who, by hook or by crook, seek to extract maximum benefit from positions in government. It is a crisis of social distance between leaders of a historically transformative movement and the forces it is meant to lead. It is also a crisis of an obsession that comes with such social distance: to persist in wasteful expenditure, such as continued commitment of a large military force in the DRC, despite the serious consequences of such action.*

> *But critically it is a crisis that comes with globalisation and a unipolar world: the dominance of dictates of those who control global resources, whose starting point in relations with the African state is not the conditions of the poor, but how they*

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233 Arenstein, J. (2002). "ANC accuses West of undermining African Presidents". *African Eye News Service*, 3 April. The comments were made in a keynote address delivered to a closed Mpumalanga provincial party conference of 800 delegates.

can shape this state after their own economic, ideological and political image. Under these circumstances true transformers would think long and hard before making political choices that have far-reaching implications. This is the essence of the weakness of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Its approach reflects an abject failure to identify the roots of the crisis and find a solution that would take Zimbabwe forward.[234]

Similarly Jeremy Cronin, Deputy Secretary-General of the South African Communist Party (SACP), which is part of the ruling alliance with the ANC, considered how the ANC's assessment of the MDC shaped its strategic objectives concerning ZANU-PF before Zimbabwe's 2002 elections, and also how the assessment of ZANU-PF eventually changed:

[the MDC was viewed by the ANC as] both a symptom of weaknesses and errors committed by ZANU-PF, and as a challenge that could (and should) be warded off [by ZANU-PF]. Pretoria encouraged a combination of sustainable and stabilising macro-economic policies, pushed by the 'reformers' in ZANU-PF, combined with a modernised electoral strategy that would avoid violent tactics. This, it was hoped, would avoid the danger of 'regime change' via the ballot box. This strategy soon confronted the resistance of key ZANU-PF factions to any reform strategy, as well as ZANU's preference for violent, patronage-based mobilisation geared towards maintaining the ethnic balance in ZANU-PF. It also failed to account for the opportunities for rapid accumulation that the economic crisis presented for the ruling party leadership.[235]

With time, and through civil society support from South Africa, the MDC built a relationship with the ANC Alliance and South

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234 Denga (2000). "Zimbabwe: Anatomy of a crisis". *Umrabulo* 9.

235 SALO interview with Jeremy Cronin, March 2004. Cronin expressed similar views in Cronin, J. (2007). "Zimbabwe must be helped to break impasse". *Sunday Independent*. 22 February.

African government, but the legitimacy, constituency and support base of the MDC would always remain points for debate in the ANC.

Economic Diplomacy

As described in the previous chapter, economic conditions in Zimbabwe had been progressively worsening throughout the 1990s, culminating in the 'Black Friday' Zimbabwe stock market crash of November 1997, which resulted in the severe devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar. In early 1999, the IMF and World Bank suspended funding to Zimbabwe, citing poor macro-economic policy, participation in the war in the DRC, corruption and cronyism.[236] Zimbabwe's economy reached 'crisis' conditions in early 2000 and continued spiralling down from there until 2009, in essence throughout Mbeki's entire period in office.

> *Between 1998 and 2001, foreign direct investment in Zimbabwe dropped by 99%. The risk premium on investment jumped from 3.4% in 2000 to 153.2% by 2004. Zimbabwe… experienced a tremendous drop in agricultural production, with maize, groundnuts, cotton, wheat, soybean, sunflowers and coffee production contracting between 50% and 90% between 2000 and 2003.*[237]

ZANU-PF's actions to maintain political power in the face of rising opposition also took on new levels of violence from this time onward. Late 1999 and early 2000 were therefore characterised by two main themes in the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship: the

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236 Geldenhuys, D. (2004). "The special relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe". 1 November 2004. From: http://www.thefreelibrary.com/_/print/PrintArticle.aspx?id=131321559.

237 Solidarity Peace Trust (2007). "A difficult dialogue: Zimbabwe–South Africa economic relations since 2000". Johannesburg. 23 October 2007. p. 18.

start of South African economic 'aid' to Zimbabwe (in contrast to previous relationships of more or less collegial trade), and the escalation of Zimbabwe's 'fast track' land reform.

The Constitutional referendum of February 2000 and the parliamentary election in June 2000, the first electoral contestations in which ZANU-PF was faced with a credible opposition, set the tone for later election violence, even if they did not yet attract significant bilateral or multilateral engagement in the way later elections would. As Chris Maroleng notes:

> *In each successive election since independence, the gun has been the 'security officer', the 'guarantor' of the votes for Mugabe and ZANU-PF who have not hesitated to use it. ZANU-PF's commitment to the use of the gun has increased as its popularity has decreased, particularly since the party was defeated in the referendum held in February 2000 and the advent of a formidable opposition party in the MDC.*[238]

As Zimbabwe's economic situation continued to deteriorate, South African economic self-interest and measures to shore up the Zimbabwean economy became increasingly intertwined. To protect its struggling textile industry, South Africa imposed a 100% tariff on textile imports in 1999. This particularly affected the Zimbabwean textile industry, but conflict was averted by the entry into force of the SADC Free Trade Agreement in January 2000, which South Africa implemented from September by reducing most tariffs for countries in the region, including Zimbabwe.[239]

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238 Maroleng, C. (2005). "Zimbabwe: Increased securitisation of the state?" *ISS Situation Report*. Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies. September 7. Footnote 22.

239 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276; Mbola, B. (2008). "SADC launches free trade area". *BuaNews*. 18 August. From: http://www.southafrica.info/africa/sadc-fta.htm.

More complex and politically controversial was the 14 February 2000 commitment by South Africa to provide a R800 million (US$133 million) 'rescue package' to Zimbabwe's ailing economy.[240] Some commentators on this period wrote as if this money was indeed paid, noting that most would go towards paying Zimbabwe's outstanding electricity and oil bills to South African parastatals Eskom and Sasol, both of whom were owed hundreds of millions of rand.[241] Others noted that the South African government later "withdrew the loan proposal and instead offered to guarantee a Zimbabwean bond issue",[242] but then realised that "were South Africa to guarantee Mugabe's debts, there would be dire consequences for South Africa's own credit rating".[243] South African government officials later denied that any such loan or guarantee had been offered or committed.[244]

The politics of the loan have been interpreted in different ways, reflecting broader debates about whether South African policy towards Zimbabwe was motivated by political allegiance, economic self-interest, or a calculation of national interest through attempts to contribute to regional stability. The most critical voices, such as R.W. Johnson, argued that the loan was announced on the eve of Zimbabwe's February 2000 constitutional referendum to "shore up Mugabe" as "every petrol or diesel queue [due to petrol

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240 IRIN (2000). "Zimbabwe: SA economic aid". 14 February 2000.

241 McKinley, D. (2006). "Commodifying oppression: South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe under Mbeki". *South Africa's Role in Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Africa*. R. Southall, Ed. Pretoria, HSRC Press. From: http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000263/P254_McKinley.pdf

242 Lodge, T. (2005). "Quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe: A case study of South Africa in Africa". *Polity*.

243 Johnson, R. W. (2001). "South Africa's support for Mugabe". Focus 21(30). Retrieved 22 August 2012. From: http://www.hsf.org.za/resource-centre/focus/issues-21-30/issue-21-first-quarter-2001/south-africas-support-for-mugabe.

244 *Ibid*.

shortages in Zimbabwe] was in effect a recruitment agency for the opposition and its campaign for a No vote in the referendum".[245] Johnson interprets the withdrawal and later denial of the loan agreement as a result of ZANU-PF's defeat in the referendum, rather than as an economic decision.

Others have focused on the economic relationships discussed in the context of the loan. As reported by media at the time, "the two countries had identified about 20 joint investment projects in Zimbabwe to stimulate regional trade and help stave off economic collapse. The report [by *Business Day*] added that the projects are in infrastructure, tourism and natural gas exploitation in Zimbabwe and would involve South Africa's state-owned corporations such as the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the Industrial Development Corporation".[246] Dale McKinley, a political analyst based in South Africa, argued that these investment projects represented a conscious attempt at South African 'sub-imperialism' and were aimed to "secure the economic (read: class) interests of an emergent Black South African bourgeoisie, in both the state and private sectors, through the auspices of a 'foreign policy' smokescreen".[247]

An alternative interpretation of these attempts at 'economic diplomacy' (including the loan commitment, continued supplies of electricity and petrol in spite of rising debts by Zimbabwe, and joint investment agreements) sees them as a legitimate attempt to prevent the complete economic collapse of a neighbour, given that

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245 *Ibid.*

246 IRIN (2000). "Zimbabwe: SA economic aid". 14 February 2000. From: http://www.irinnews.org/printreport.aspx?reportid=12273 (story originally appeared in *Business Day*, 14 February 2000: http://allafrica.com/stories/200002140012.html).

247 McKinley, D. (2006). "Commodifying Oppression: South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe under Mbeki". *South Africa's Role in Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking in Africa*. R. Southall Ed. Pretoria, HSRC Press. p. 5.

"the absence of a functioning economy" in Zimbabwe would not be in the interest of the South African government or business.[248]

Finally, authors like South Africa-based political scientist Tom Lodge interpreted these measures as another means for South Africa to maintain lines of communication with the Zimbabwean government so as to exert 'quiet' pressure on the Mugabe regime to reform, through imposing conditions for economic support such as the withdrawal of troops from the DRC and changes in the leadership of Zimbabwe's public oil and electricity companies.[249] Such 'quiet' economic engagement continued in the following months and years, with South Africa in December 2000 approving a 25% reduction in electricity tariffs and continuing electricity and oil deliveries in spite of Zimbabwe's rising debt to suppliers. South Africa also tried to mediate with the World Bank and the IMF to resume assistance to Zimbabwe.[250]

A further contested economic decision by South Africa in 2000 was the non-renewal of South Africa's preferential short-term trade credit agreement with Zimbabwe. As noted by Zimbabwean academic Sam Moyo:

> *In one interpretation this was seen as sanctions on Zimbabwe under the Mbeki government. In another interpretation, since your Reserve Bank [in South Africa] is a private entity, it was not [a decision] by government but by the banks... The state wanted to continue to support [trade with Zimbabwe] but it did not have the instruments to enable it to do so, since this*

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248 SALO interview with Anders Mollander, former Swedish ambassador to Pretoria, 2008.

249 Lodge, T. (2005). "Quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe: A case study of South Africa in Africa". *Polity*. See also Coady, A. and S. Hussein (2009). "Deconstructing constructive engagement: Examining Mbeki's South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe". *World Affairs: Journal of International Issues* 13(1).

250 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

[trade credit] agreement had lapsed and trade credit had become a private affair, so this option was closed. But whatever interpretation one prefers, South Africa… reduced its financing of trade with Zimbabwe… and objectively made a South African contribution to the difficulties that were happening in the economy of Zimbabwe.[251]

Land Reform

The second, related, 'crisis' (both in terms of Zimbabwean domestic politics and its bilateral and multilateral relations) of 2000 was the commencement of Zimbabwe's 'fast track land reform process'. The details of Zimbabwe's land reform processes since 2000 (and before) have been documented extensively by various authors, taking different perspectives and interpretations.[252] The focus here is, therefore, on South Africa's reactions to developments in Zimbabwe, rather than on the details of the land reform process itself. It is important to note that for the first two decades following independence, Zimbabwe's land reform policy had a relatively low public and political profile.[253] From 2000, however, land reform and electoral politics in

251 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

252 Cliffe, L. (2000). "The politics of land reform in Zimbabwe". *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects*. T. Bowyer-Bower and C. Stoneman, Eds. Ashgate, Aldershot; Mbola, B. (2008). "SADC launches free trade area". *BuaNews*. 18 August. From: http://www.southafrica.info/africa/sadc-fta.htm; Scoones, I., N. Marongwe, et al. (2010). *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*. Suffolk and Harare, James Curry and Weaver Press; Moyo, S. and P. Yeros (2004). "Land occupations and land reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution". *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. S. Moyo and P. Yeros, Eds. London, Zed Books.

253 Mbola, B. (2008). "SADC launches free trade area". *BuaNews*. 18 August. From: http://www.southafrica.info/africa/sadc-fta.htm. p. 5.

Zimbabwe were closely connected, both increasingly violent and both increasingly difficult questions for South African diplomatic interactions.

The initial round of violent land invasions of white-owned farms closely followed the above-mentioned February Constitutional referendum, which ZANU-PF felt it lost. Even though Mugabe claimed to have instructed the security forces to stop the land invasions being carried out by groups identifying themselves as 'war veterans' (even though many were too young to have participated in the liberation war themselves), the security forces refused to act against the occupiers. Although Mugabe initially denied that his administration was behind the occupations, he made no secret of his support for them. The invasions became increasingly violent: over 30 people were killed and many more were injured. According to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, seven white farmers who were "perceived MDC supporters"[254] were among those killed, while at least 26 of the victims were farm workers.

In June 2000, the National Employment Council (NEC) for the Agricultural Industry (a tripartite body of government, employers, and unions) published a report documenting that, in addition to those killed as a result of the first months of farm occupations, at least 3 000 farm workers were displaced from their homes, 1 600 assaulted, and eleven raped. The largest number (47.2%) were supporters of the MDC; nearly as many (43.6%) had no political affiliation; a few (4.7%) were ZANU PF supporters.[255]

On 6 April 2000, Parliament passed the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (No. 16), approving the land reform programme even though it had been rejected by the population in the February

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254 Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2010). "Land reform and property rights in Zimbabwe". Harare. April. p. 10.

255 *Ibid.*

referendum. This was followed on 11 April by a presidential proclamation dissolving Parliament, which required the holding of elections within four months.[256] ZANU-PF's campaign slogan for this election was 'the land is the economy and the economy is the land'[257] reflecting the extent to which the land issue was politicised. In election campaigning, Mugabe associated land owners with the MDC, and both with 'imperialist forces' and especially the United Kingdom. MDC supporters and those assumed to be sympathetic to the opposition were among the targets of violence in the run-up to the elections.

Land remains a defining issue in the relationship between Zimbabwe and South Africa bilaterally, as well as via the two countries' respective relationships with the UK and other 'Western' countries. South Africa's (and SADC's) perceived failure to speak out against the violent land invasions of 2000 in Zimbabwe was the cause of much tension within its relationships with the 'West'. In fact, Mbeki took an immediate and very public interest in the land invasions and worked actively and through a wide range of forums to find a resolution. The nature of his statements and his actions (reflecting his seeming interpretation of the root causes of the land occupations and what, therefore, should be done about them), however, were highly contested within South Africa, among international observers and within Zimbabwe, as discussed further below.

Given that much of the debate about the appropriateness of South Africa's response to Zimbabwe's post-2000 land reform process rests on disagreement about what actually occurred in Zimbabwe, on whose instigation and for what motivations,

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256 Commonwealth Observer Group (2000). "The Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, 24–25 June 2000: The report of the Commonwealth Observer Group". London, Commonwealth Observer Group.

257 David Moore, "Is the land the economy and the economy the land? Primitive accumulation in Zimbabwe". *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 19(2) (July 2001): 253–66.

some of these different perspectives are briefly reviewed before returning to the South African government's interpretation and response. Commentators have noted the following possible aspects of the land invasions and 'reform' process: the 'failure' of the British (as the former colonial rulers) to fully honour their supposed Lancaster House commitment to pay for a significant redistribution of land on the willing seller-willing buyer principle; growing popular pressures for land invasions due to economic hardship and impatience with unfulfilled land promises, which caught the Zimbabwean government by surprise and could not be controlled; growing pressure from organised 'war veterans' for land invasions due to economic hardship and impatience with unfulfilled land promises; and the government's use of land redistribution to garner political support against the MDC threat, including through patronage and violent intimidation of voters. Different authors sometimes combine different elements, but often disagree on the key motivating factors.

It is worth quoting Sam Moyo at some length, as he was closely involved in land processes in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s and therefore presents one interpretation of an inside view:

> *Up to 1997, even 1998, the Zimbabwean government believed that the British would come back to their original commitments of supporting Zimbabwe to solve its political problems, including the land problem, even though the British had denied that they had ever signed any commitment to this. There was a tacit understanding that the ZANU-PF government would protect white farmers and businesses, most of which were British, and South African businesses. So even when in 1997 [the citizens] started expropriating [land], the [government] response was to call for a framework [to stop land invasions]. This was before the MDC entered the picture.*
>
> *Meanwhile ZANU-PF was coming under a lot of internal pressure, not only from war veterans but also all sorts of people*

around land reform... By 1998 [ZANU-PF] realised that they were on their own [and would not get British support and that] there was a regime-change agenda here... So at this point the Zimbabwean government moved on.

Within the Zimbabwean government there was a lot of division as to how far they should go with the expropriation, carefully or not... So starting in 1998, war veterans and others went out to mobilise people to do some occupations, but they didn't go and mobilise them from thin air, they mobilised people who were already being active on the ground. In fact, in 1998, it was more of a demobilisation: because of the divisions in ZANU-PF, what was actually being said to the people was, "No, wait, we are still negotiating, maybe we will get money to pay for the land".

By 1999, they realised that that was not going to happen and so their attitude changed to one of supporting radical land reform and they condoned, even supported, some of the land occupations. But, from the evidence that I have, they thought that this would be a very shallow and limited set of occupations. They themselves underestimated how much people were mobilised on their own. As a matter of fact, the war veterans themselves were overwhelmed by the response on the ground. ZANU-PF had no way out.

Moyo continues:

At this point [in 2000] there was the escalation of sanctions and economic pressure, when the West was saying no to the land redistribution... Politically, there was a shift [within ZANU-PF] – to allow for a radical land reform in terms of expropriation – without realising that in fact this thing would go way beyond what [ZANU-PF] expected. They actually became worried about security: how to control matters should another political force come from these occupations and lead to more violence.

One thing played into another: mobilisation from the war veterans, then… the popular response which kept shifting. By 2001, lots of people in the middle class had also joined in. I know that ZANU-PF thought in 2002–3 that they would stop, that it would be enough if two million hectares were redistributed, but on the ground, people have occupied four million, five million. So the process was more interactive. I believe that if the dominant force in ZANU-PF had been fully in control, they would have limited it to the years 2001, 2002. They were becoming radicalised, I think, in response to demands and popular mobilisation, but also in response to the isolation that they were facing [from the international community].

One of the major failures of the policy of the West on Zimbabwe is that it reinforced a very sharp, radical reaction. All those sanctions and pulling out meant that a lot more people, as time went on, began to see land as their solution. This caused job numbers to go down, incomes to decline, and created the conditions for a more broadly based mobilisation that escalated… The point is that the land occupations were condoned, then partially encouraged, and then fully condoned; but they actually went way beyond what the ZANU-PF people expected. In fact, the conditions in the isolation of Zimbabwe forced a further radicalisation.[258]

On the other hand, other commentators, including academics like Richard Saunders, suggest that the highly militarised land invasions were more intentionally state-sanctioned and had a direct political agenda tied to the maintenance of power and the manipulation of elections:

Seven years after the 2000 land invasions, there's increasing evidence, documented evidence, that these invasions were not spontaneous, nor did they benefit those who ZANU claimed

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258 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

they were benefiting at the time, the rural, landless peasantry. What seems to be much clearer now is that these invasions were organised by the military, by ZANU-PF militants, but particularly by the security branch in the president's office, Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), using the so-called war veterans and the youth militia.

ZANU knew in 2000 that to win the parliamentary elections, which were postponed until June 2000, it needed to keep those commercial farm workers and others in the rural areas who had not voted for ZANU from voting; if they could not do that, they would lose the parliamentary elections. The only effective way to shut down that rural vote strategically was to encircle those commercial farms and move those commercial farm workers out of harm's way of the voting booth. This has actually since been admitted by Jonathan Moyo, who became a strategic advisor and central operative in the election campaign and the military campaign of the June 2000 parliamentary elections. He actually told me that he was told to "make sure those people don't vote".[259]

Similarly, in documenting the details of land allocations in Chiping District, Zimbabwean academic Phillan Zamchiya shows how land reform was key to sustaining ZANU-PF's patronage networks:

Due to corrupt administrative practices in land allocation and the politicised and autochthonous nature of the land invasion, civil servants, war veterans and traditional authorities were the major beneficiaries of Fast Track. Though these beneficiaries had diverse claims to land that were not entirely political, the vehicle to realise such was linked to political loyalty, connection and patronage under the ZANU-PF umbrella... The authoritarian and partisan nature of the state excluded many farm workers, white commercial farmers, ZANU Ndonga and

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259 SALO interview with Richard Saunders, Cape Town, April 2007.

MDC supporters and some ordinary people in the communal areas in Chipinge who never had a chance. A new agrarian structure has emerged but one shaped mainly by socio-political dynamics rooted in the ZANU-PF ruling elite.[260]

While from the beginning there were consistent themes in the South African government's official response to the Zimbabwean 'fast track' land reform process, Mbeki's interpretation of, and response to, the land reform process also shifted in the course of 2000. He consistently spoke publicly against the violence of the land invasions, including in Zimbabwe, as when he stated at the opening of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo on 5 May 2000:

We have to end the violence in Zimbabwe. We have to end the confrontation around this land question; we've got to abandon an approach which does not seek a solution which benefits all the people of Zimbabwe, and you can't address this land question by generating conflict, and therefore we need to end that conflict.[261]

Mbeki made at least four visits to Zimbabwe before the June 2000 elections. According to Jo-Ansie van Wyk, a South African academic, when Mbeki visited Harare a few days before the June 2000 elections, it was notable that Mugabe reduced his inflammatory statements against his opposition.[262]

Furthermore, Mbeki was consistent in not expressing this criticism of the land reform process by openly attacking or rejecting Mugabe.

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260 Zamchiya, P. (2011). "A synopsis of land and agrarian change in Chipinge District, Zimbabwe". *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38(5): 1093–1122. p. 1120.

261 The Presidency. (2000). "Edited highlights of the conversation between BBC News (online) users and President Mbeki, 18 May 2000". From: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=1968.

262 Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The saga continues... The Zimbabwe issue in South Africa's foreign policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4).

Bilateral meetings at presidential, ministerial and party level continued, as did public handshakes at multilateral forums. While this was interpreted by various observers as a sign of Pretoria's approval of Mugabe's methods, Adelmann argues that it was aimed at maintaining "South African influence on Zimbabwe".[263] The goals were "moderating between the Zimbabwean parties and… positively influencing Mugabe to conduct the land reform in a legal way".[264]

The shift occurred in Mbeki's stated interpretation of the root of the land problem in Zimbabwe. He initially placed the responsibility for the Zimbabwean land invasions squarely at the door of the British for failing to implement the 1979 Lancaster House and 1998 Harare donor conference agreements around land reform financing. The solution, as expressed by Mbeki at this time, was to convince the UK (and other countries) to provide the Zimbabwe government with the necessary funding to complete its land reform process peacefully. By mid-2000, however, various historians have identified a shift in Mbeki's diplomatic approach from a focus on bilateral pressure around the land reform process to more open criticism of violence and a more regional approach to diplomacy.[265]

An example of the earlier approach is Mbeki's May 2000 State of the Nation address. In response to public criticism, especially by Western commentators and international and domestic media, for not speaking out immediately and openly on the February land invasions (his State of the Nation address at the opening of Parliament on 4 February 2000 focused exclusively on domestic issues and did not mention Zimbabwe[266]), Mbeki started his

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263 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 259.

264 *Ibid*.

265 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

266 Mbeki, T. (2000). "State of the Nation address, 4 February 2000". From: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/president/sp/2000/tm0504.html.

4 May State of the Nation address[267] by complaining that his repeated public statements about "events in the neighbouring state of Zimbabwe" had been ignored by the local and international media, creating a perception of silence. He particularly noted his meeting with President Mugabe at Victoria Falls on 21 April, together with Mozambican and Namibian presidents Chissano and Nujoma, at which the land issue was discussed and a public statement was made to the media. He then proceeded to outline his efforts towards the 1998 Harare Donors conference (discussed in Chapter 3), concluding that:

> *for various reasons things did not proceed as had been agreed. Consequently, the land question, a direct product of the colonisation of Zimbabwe, essentially and substantially, remained still to be addressed. The results of the failure to deal with this matter, in the manner agreed in 1998, is what has led to the events which, as we have said, have dominated our media in the recent period.*[268]

In addition to the State of the Nation address, Mbeki brought up the issue of UK responsibility for funding land reform at high profile public forums throughout the year, including the G77 Summit in Cuba in April, the SADC Summit at Victoria Falls also in April and the SADC Summit in Windhoek in August.[269]

Noting that the land invasions should end, Mbeki presented an active process towards facilitating this:

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267 The State of the Nation address usually takes place in February. However, when there are general elections, two addresses take place: one to mark the final session of the outgoing Parliament, and the other after the elections. From: http://www.parliament.gov.za/live/content. php?Item_ID=1426.

268 Mbeki, T. (2000). "State of the Nation address, 4 May 2000". From: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/president/sp/2000/tm0504.html.

269 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. Footnote 8.

> *To address both the fundamental and central land question,*
> *which has to be solved, and the consequences that have derived*
> *from the failure to find this solution, we have been in contact*
> *with both the Zimbabwe and the British governments to get a*
> *common commitment to solve the Zimbabwe land question,*
> *according to the framework and programme agreed at the*
> *1998 Conference and thus, simultaneously, to speak to such*
> *questions as the rule of law; to end the violence that has*
> *attended the effort to find this solution; to create the conditions*
> *for the withdrawal from the farms they have occupied of the*
> *demonstrating war veterans; and, to pursue these issues in a*
> *manner that would be beneficial for all the people of Zimbabwe*
> *and the rest of southern Africa.*[270]

Mbeki's speech also illustrates how domestic political sensitivities
were at play. Referring to the "valuable contribution" made by
"our own former South African Agricultural Union…[271] to help
resolve the land question in Zimbabwe", he noted that

> *it is to us a matter of great pride that these South Africans,*
> *conscious of our common responsibility to contribute what we*
> *can to help ensure a better life for all in our country, region and*
> *continent, have resisted the temptation to assume a counter-*
> *productive, holier-than-thou attitude. By this means, they have*
> *also contributed to the fight against the mischievous effort to create*
> *and feed a psychosis of fear in our own country, based on nothing*
> *else but racist prejudices, assumptions and objectives. This they*
> *have done while recognising the challenges we face with regard*
> *to the land question in our own country as well as the troubled*
> *human and labour relations on some of our commercial farms.*[272]

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270 Mbeki, T. (2000). "State of the Nation address, 4 May 2000". From:
     http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/president/sp/2000/tm0504.html.

271 The South African Agricultural Union was predominantly made up of
     white commercial farmers.

272 Mbeki, T. (2000). "State of the Nation address, 4 May 2000".

The significance of the SADC position on the land invasions in early 2000 is contested. At the April 2000 SADC Victoria Falls Summit, public statements did not express any concern or criticism of the land reform process, prompting one analyst to conclude that "the solidarity with Mugabe and the support for the land reform were stronger than the concerns over the mishandling of the reform".[273]

On the other hand, South African journalist Allister Sparks points out that Mugabe was put under pressure to control the land reform process at the SADC meeting, but reneged on an agreement.

> *Mugabe felt that he could twist Mbeki around his little finger. He seemed to enjoy publicly humiliating him. He did so right after the Victoria Falls summit of 2000. At that meeting, Mbeki thought he had negotiated a deal in which Mugabe agreed to withdraw the war veterans from the farms they had started invading and occupying, in return for South Africa interceding with Britain to reinstate a 1998 donors' agreement to provide money to compensate those whose land was to be expropriated. But a few days later, Mugabe reneged on the deal by publicly encouraging the war veterans to continue occupying white farms.*[274]

The 24–25 June 2000 parliamentary election in Zimbabwe took place while the land occupations were ongoing. The election was won by ZANU-PF, but narrowly. Less than a year after its establishment, the MDC won 46 per cent of the votes against ZANU-PF's 48 per cent. Out of 120 elected seats, the MDC took 57 to ZANU-PF's 62, although ZANU-PF added another 30 seats directly appointed by Mugabe.[275] As described by Deon Geldenhuys, Professor of Political Science at the University of Johannesburg:

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273 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 261.

274 Sparks, A. (2003). *Beyond the miracle*. Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball. p. 268.

275 Geldenhuys, D. (2004). "The special relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe". 1 November 2004. From: http://www.thefreelibrary.com/_/print/PrintArticle.aspx?id=131321559.

Foreign observers were deeply divided about the freeness and fairness of the poll – a division that corresponded largely with the North-South divide. Observer missions from the EU, the Commonwealth (albeit split in its verdict), Amnesty International and a host of other international non-governmental observer teams pointed out that the contest could not be judged free and fair due to the officially sanctioned campaign to harass, restrict and intimidate the opposition in the run-up to polling day. By contrast, observer missions from the South African parliament, SADC and the OAU gave the election a free-and-fair rating. The South African government likewise endorsed the Zimbabwe poll as "substantially free and fair".[276]

In spite of the public endorsement of the election results, soon after the elections there was a significant shift in both Mbeki's and SADC's stance on land reform. At the time, one school of thought held that until mid-2000, Mbeki misunderstood the root of the violence in Zimbabwe by "not initially realising that not land, but Mugabe's declining power, was the real reason for the crisis".[277] As noted by Zimbabwean journalist Tendai Dembutshena:

Right from the onset South Africa's reaction to the farm invasions and political violence was fatally flawed because it swallowed the line that land was the root of the crisis. President Mbeki genuinely believed that if he could persuade the British to fund the land programme, the crisis would end… But the problem was that Mugabe was unwilling to meet the conditions set by the British and other donors because they threatened his political agenda.[278]

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276 *Ibid.*

277 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 260.

278 Quoted in Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): p. 249–276.

In a BBC interview on 5 August 2000, Mbeki announced a tougher stance on Mugabe, commenting that "Mugabe is not listening to anyone".[279] While the August 2000 SADC meeting in Windhoek publically congratulated Mugabe on winning the election, Jo-Ansie van Wyk quotes Zimbabwean political scientist John Makumbe as observing that "it was alleged that behind the closed doors the leaders basically read old Mugabe the riot act, but decided not to publicly express their legitimate views through the media".[280]

SADC also

> *made it clear that SADC's support [was] conditional on the peaceful resolution of the land question… The SADC Summit delegated President Mbeki and Malawi's President Muluzi to negotiate with Britain to finance land distribution schemes... The Mbeki-Muluzi mandate included the qualification that the rule of law [had] to be restored and invaders removed from farms.*[281]

This plan was supported by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the head of the UNDP.[282] Other high-level, but ultimately abortive, attempts by Mbeki to broker internationally supported land reform packages for Zimbabwe included discussions with Norway, Saudi Arabia, the IMF and other donors to mobilise money to finance land reform in Zimbabwe. Sam Moyo argues that this was done

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279 Sparks, A. (2009). *First Drafts: South African history in the making.* Johannesburg & Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 15.

280 Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The Saga Continues... The Zimbabwe Issue in South Africa's Foreign Policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4). p. 187.

281 *Ibid.* p. 190f.

282 Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "Quiet diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument: South Africa's response to the Zimbabwe issue". *South Africa Since 1994. Lessons and Prospects.* S. Buthelezi and E. le Roux, Eds. Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa: 95–124. p. 108; Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The saga continues... The Zimbabwe issue in South Africa's foreign policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4).

intentionally to avoid Zimbabwean leaders radicalising the 'land reform movement' even further in response to being isolated.[283]

South Africa's early attempts to negotiate and broker regional and multilateral agreements in relation to Zimbabwe already evidenced two aspects which would characterise most later negotiations. Firstly, agreements depended fundamentally on the cooperation of the Zimbabwean government, which, even when promised, never materialised. Violence and farm seizures continued, undermining confidence in any statements made by the Zimbabwean government that it would return to the 'rule of law'. Second, the 'behind-the-scenes' nature of discussions around these agreements, e.g. that they took place without input and knowledge of the Zimbabwean, South African or global publics, attracted controversy.

The complexity of the ANC's position on, and engagement with, ZANU-PF's options for governing Zimbabwe is evidenced by an important document addressed to ZANU-PF and circulated in 2001, which is worth summarising at length. "How Will Zimbabwe Defeat Its Enemies?" was published anonymously,[284] but was drafted at a high level within the ruling party and distributed widely among ANC branches. The document stated on its first page that although Zimbabwe "was confronted by a number of problems that require urgent solutions... the party of

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283   SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

284   Kagwanja, P. (2005). "When the locusts ate: Zimbabwe's March 2005 elections". *EISA Occasional Paper* 32. The section on Zimbabwe is pages 370–399 of a larger document. A similar text was published in 2008 in *New Agenda* (Anonymous (2008). "The Mbeki-Mugabe papers: A discussion document". *New Agenda* (30): 56–75.) The re-publication in 2008 suggests that from 2001 to 2008 the document was circulating through the ANC foreign policy-making circles. There are some differences between the 2001 and the 2008 *New Agenda* versions. For example, the 2001 version does not include the line "we must make the point that the challenges that ZANU-PF has faced over the last 20 years are qualitatively no different from the situation we face", while it is in the 2008 version. The quotes used in this book are from the 2001 version.

the revolution must carry out this task; that is ZANU-PF". The paper characterised the "challenges of the second phase of the National Democratic Revolution in Zimbabwe" as resulting from relying on the public sector and borrowing in the government's efforts to deliver welfare to its citizens, in the context of too many 'sunset clauses' guaranteeing white power in the Lancaster House constitution of 1979. This resulted in savings feeding into debt service and social service expenditure ("put crudely" the paper suggested, "the party of the revolution sought to use the fact of its being the ruling party to use public resources to buy the allegiance of the masses… It sought to… bribe the people [and]… the bribes were unaffordable") rather than "financing new investments in the productive sectors of the economy".

"How Will Zimbabwe Defeat…" continued to explain the 'laws of supply and demand', the need not to alienate 'white capital', and the fact that ZANU-PF had lost democratic legitimacy. The document describes the 'war-vets' as "declassed individuals" among "the lumpen proletariat" who "accept the illegal use of force as a necessary element in their mode of existence," and that they became "elevated… to the position… as the 'true' representatives of the people," forcing the ruling party to follow their lead, legal or otherwise. In order to regain lost democratic legitimacy – which, the document is clear, is paramount – the ruling party should distance itself from the war-vets and defend "democratic institutions and processes". On the international front, it must think carefully about its relations with the IMF and the UK, "bearing in mind the international balance of forces", which had changed since the end of the Cold War.

The South African advisors to the 'party of revolution' in Zimbabwe made harsh recommendations: the party would have to mobilise all the sectors of society that had lost faith in it – including the white minority and "white commercial farmers" and others against which it had fought during the National Democratic Revolution's 'first phase'. The strategies of 'reaching out' to gain the allies

needed to implement the necessary economic policies included not "driving away anyone both in Zimbabwe and internationally… on the basis that they are… involved in 'neo-imperialist machinations aimed at limiting national sovereignty'" and having "free and fair elections in the presidential elections next year [2002]". In other words, the document advocated that ZANU-PF adopt policies generally associated with the MDC, and is reflective of the ANC's own choices in its first seven years in power.

Throughout 2001, violent land invasions continued in Zimbabwe. Between June 2000 and February 2001, the government listed 2 706 farms, covering more than 6 million hectares (14.83 million acres), for compulsory acquisition.[285] In light of the continued violence and associated economic disarray, several statements by different South African government actors in early 2001 illustrate both the continued commitment to engagement, and an increased awareness of damage to South Africa's own interests, especially its economy.

At the beginning of the 2001 parliamentary programme, the then South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma responded to questions about her department's Zimbabwe policy by explaining that the Zimbabwean government and president were treated as 'legitimate':

> *One goal of foreign affairs is good neighbourliness, we build bridges across countries. Don't advocate war with Zimbabwe; we won't do it. Our aim is to assist, not to be an adversary. We will speak out, but in a way that encourages good neighbourliness… Do not try to push us into a combative mood with Zimbabwe, it will not help. I did not say we would do nothing about Zimbabwe, but that our approach would not be*

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285 Online *NewsHour* (2004). "Land distribution in Southern Africa: Zimbabwe's land program". 14 April. From: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/land/gp_zimbabwe.html.

combative. We will continue trade… We won't condemn... We want to achieve results.[286]

Domestic economic pressure was building from early March/April 2001. Since January 2001, the presidency had been receiving a number of local and international business people on the situation in Zimbabwe in the context of the International Investment Council, established by Mbeki in February 2000. This council outlined the effects of Zimbabwe's crisis on South Africa's attractiveness to foreign direct investment. According to Jo-Ansie van Wyk, "upon advice from his international investment advisors it was also emerging that President Mbeki, while retaining a public 'quiet diplomatic' approach, was allowing his government to pursue a much harder line behind the scenes."[287] The South African Reserve Bank governor, Tito Mboweni, also made a public statement in August 2001 that the lawlessness and collapsing economy in Zimbabwe were major causes of the decline of the South African rand. He was blunt regarding the situation in Zimbabwe: "I wish to call a spade a spade. The wheels have come off in Zimbabwe. In a globalised world, no country can behave as if it was an island."[288]

The responses to this statement, and to critical statements by Mbeki later in the year, from the Zimbabwean government and the government-controlled media in Zimbabwe are illustrative of the sensitivity to any kind of explicit or implied criticism from South Africa. Zimbabwe's Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo rejected Mboweni's statement as "gibberish" in a strongly worded statement. When Mbeki made his critical statements, in

286   Dlamini-Zuma, N. (2001). "Minister of Foreign Affairs briefing". 16 February. From: www.pmg.org.za/Briefings/010216International. htm.

287   Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The saga continues... The Zimbabwe issue in South Africa's foreign policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4): 194.

288   Muleya, D. (2001). "Zim crisis costs SA US$1b in investment". 14 September. From: http://www.zwnews.com/print.cfm?ArticleID=2607.

December (2001), Zimbabwe's state-owned daily *The Herald*'s headlines declared "Mbeki's shock u-turn", and editorials and articles accused South Africa of "betrayal" and of "complicity in the plot to overthrow the ruling ZANU-PF government". The newspaper claimed that "President Mbeki's alleged utterances neatly dovetail into Britain's grand plan for a global coalition against Zimbabwe"[289] and that South Africa was "mobilising other SADC states, notably Botswana, Mozambique and Malawi, in this fight to justify a regional and international onslaught".[290]

In 2001, South African leaders also continued to push for regional diplomacy through SADC and the Commonwealth. In contrast to the largely supportive (public) stance of the 2000 SADC Summits, the August 2001 SADC Summit in Blantyre noted that Zimbabwe must respect democracy, the rule of law and the independence of judiciary and the press. On 6 September 2001, the Commonwealth, of which Mbeki was chairman at the time, held a special meeting in Abuja to discuss "the land issue and other matters relating to Zimbabwe". This meeting was called at the initiative of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, but had been prepared with the support of Mbeki and the new British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw.[291] The meeting was attended by representatives from Australia, Canada, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe was represented by its Foreign Minister Dr Stan Mudenge and the Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Resettlement, Dr Joseph Made.[292]

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289 Sapa-AFP. (2001). "Zimbabwe: State media lash out at 'Mbeki betrayal'". 3 December. From: http://allafrica.com/stories/200112040027.html.

290 Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The saga continues... The Zimbabwe issue in South Africa's foreign policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4): 198.

291 Sparks, A. (2009). *First Drafts: South African history in the making*. Johannesburg & Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 15.

292 http://www.thecommonwealth.org/press/31555/34582/34845/commonwealth_secretary_general_to_attend_a. htm.

Sparks claims that the 'Abuja Agreement' presented a package of strong threats to the Zimbabweans, including:

> *the threat of suspending Zimbabwe's membership [of the Commonwealth]… sharpened threats of European Union and United States sanctions plus international travel restrictions on members of the Mugabe Cabinet and senior ZANU-PF officials, and toughest of all, the freezing of their personal assets abroad.*[293]

To avoid such measures, Zimbabwe would have to commit to

> *halt all further occupation of farm lands, to speedily de-list farms that don't meet agreed criteria for redistribution, to move occupiers from farms that are not designated on to legally acquired land, and – most important of all – to restore the rule of law to the process of land reform. In return, Britain… pledged to honour a commitment to pay GBP36 million… towards a programme that would compensate white farmers transferring land to black farmers – and to encourage other developed countries to help financially.*[294]

Mudenge signed this agreement, and Mugabe announced a few days later that he accepted the agreement in principle. In the end, however, the Abuja Agreement went the way of the previous attempts at negotiation and was not implemented by the Zimbabwean government.

Regional and Continental Diplomacy

As discussed in Chapter 3 under Mandela's presidency, the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe continued to impact on wider processes of regional and continental governance.

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293 Sparks, A. (2009). *First Drafts: South African history in the making.* Johannesburg & Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers. p. 15.
294 *Ibid.*

Zimbabwean academic Lloyd Sachikonye points out the continuous consideration of both global and regional alliances and counter-alliances in responses to the Zimbabwean crisis:

> *The dilemma of SADC states, including South Africa, was how to admonish the Mugabe government on these issues without appearing to side with the West against it. This partly explained the muted nature of their criticism of the government, and partly the divisions between them over a collective approach on Zimbabwe. Some countries, such as Namibia, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), were in support of the Zimbabwe government on most issues, apart from being allies in the Congo war.*[295]

The fraught question of SADC's joint security infrastructure remained unresolved at the end of Mandela's presidency, and once again came to a head in 1999. The bilateral contestation between Zimbabwe and South Africa was so significant to this question that it is even explicitly and unusually frankly addressed in the African Union's official 'Profile' of SADC as a member regional block:

> *Over time the issue of the chairing of the Organ [on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS)], the permanency of that position and its status vis-á-vis SADC become hotly contested, particularly between South Africa and Zimbabwe. By the time of the August 1999 SADC Summit of Heads of State or Government in Maputo, events in the DRC and Lesotho demonstrated the extent to which the dispute regarding the Organ had to be resolved. The subsequent communiqué read, in part, as follows:*

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295 Sachikonye, L. M. (2005). "South Africa's quiet diplomacy: The case of Zimbabwe". *State of the Nation: 2004–2005*. R. Southall, Ed. p. 573.

"The Summit decided that the Council of Ministers should review the operations of all SADC institutions, including the Organ on Defence, Politics and Security [sic], and report to the Summit within six months. The Summit further agreed that the Organ on Defence, Politics and Security [sic] should continue to operate and be chaired by President Mugabe of Zimbabwe."

The structure and functions of the Organ were eventually finalised during an extraordinary ministerial meeting on the Organ in May 2000 in Swaziland. However Zimbabwe snubbed the meeting and a decision to adopt the Protocol was yet again delayed at the August 2000 SADC Summit in Windhoek. The Protocol was eventually adopted by the SADC Heads of State in Blantyre, Malawi, in 2001.[296]

In parallel to the contestation about, and with, Zimbabwe in the region, South Africa was busy establishing continental governance structures, including working towards the transition of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU), as well as developing Mbeki's flagship New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a vehicle for continental economic growth and development. NEPAD was officially adopted as OAU policy in July 2001 and the policy framework established in October 2001. The contestation with Zimbabwe was present even here, as Zimbabwe was one of the particularly vocal opponents of NEPAD, seeing it as a vehicle for neo-liberal capitalism. Furthermore, much 'Western', and some African, commentary on NEPAD questioned whether it would be effective in relation to crises such as Zimbabwe, creating an immediate

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296 SADC (2003). "Profile: Southern African Development Community (SADC)". From: http://www.africa-union.org/recs/sadcprofile.pdf.

legitimacy challenge to the new institution.[297] Denis Venter from the South African Institute of International Affairs noted ironically:

> *Even though the protracted crisis in Zimbabwe is demonstrably infecting the southern African region, collective self-deception seems to have become the official norm in Africa and elsewhere: Zimbabwe can be quarantined so its contagion does not infect the process towards a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).*[298]

At the same time, South Africa continued to walk its leadership tight-rope in relation to the continent, where seeking acceptance as a leader meant allaying fears of its desire for continental hegemony. While showing more 'muscle' in relation to Zimbabwe might therefore have fulfilled the expectations of some observers of NEPAD, it would have confirmed the fears of others.

In conclusion, by the end of 2001 there was no resolution in sight for Zimbabwe's domestic political or economic woes, in spite of two years of extensive multi-level engagement, negotiation and pressure through bilateral, regional, continental and international

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297 Amosu, A. and C. J. Cobb (2002). "Africa: 'Don't hold NEPAD hostage over Zimbabwe' says Minister". 27 March. From: http://allafrica.com/stories/200203270498.html?viewall=1 (2002). "Leon Wishes Mbeki success with NEPAD at G-8 summit in Canada". *Africa News Service* 28 June. From: http://business.highbeam.com/3548/article-1G1-87910712/leon-wishes-mbeki-success-nepad-g8-summit-canada; IRIN. (2002). "AFRICA: NEPAD should not be judged by Zimbabwe, SA". *IRIN*. 10 June. From: http://www.irinnews.org/fr/Report/32389/AFRICA-Nepad-should-not-be-judged-by-Zimbabwe-SA; (2003). "Zimbabwe NEPAD's 'acid test'". *Mail & Guardian*. 4 July 2003. From: http://mg.co.za/article/2003-07-04-zimbabwe-nepads-acid-test; Venter, D. (2004). Peer Review and NEPAD: Zimbabwe – The Litmus Test for African Credibility. Johannesburg, South African Institute for International Affairs.

298 Venter, D. (2004). "Peer Review and Nepad: Zimbabwe – The Litmus Test for African credibility". Johannesburg, South African Institute for International Affairs.

channels. While maintaining a 'constructive' rather than 'combative' stance throughout, the South African government's interpretation of the conflict, and therefore the messages and strategies it applied, changed significantly within this time period. The contradictory tensions pulling South Africa in multiple directions on Zimbabwe remained strong:

> *First, it had to contend with the issue of regional solidarity vis-à-vis the wider international community; second, with the need to ensure that the political and economic situation did not become more unstable within Zimbabwe; and third, that it could still play a catalytic leadership role despite the divisions within SADC.*[299]

In the meanwhile, the impacts on South Africa and the region continued to grow. One estimate put the combined cost of Zimbabwe's crisis to the overall SADC economy at US$36 billion in potential investment by 2001,[300] Africa's new 'Renaissance' institutions had started off on a shaky footing, and SADC remained without an effective joint security infrastructure.

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299 Sachikonye, L. M. (2005). "South Africa's quiet diplomacy: The case of Zimbabwe". *State of the Nation: 2004–2005*. R. Southall, Ed. p. 574.
300 *Ibid*. p. 572.

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2002 to 2006

The Middle Mbeki Years – The Crisis Deepens

The years 2002 to… the middle of 2008, were the height of the confrontation between [the Zimbabwean] government and capital and the West: the years of shortages.[301]

Introduction

Writing in 2002, South African political scientist Jo-Ansie van Wyk lists a wide range of strategies which South Africa had been using in relation to Zimbabwe:

> *By October 2002, South Africa had mainly applied non-coercive diplomatic measures and non-violent strategies such as international appeals (moral persuasion to conflicting parties), fact-finding missions, observer teams, bilateral negotiations, third party informal diplomatic consultations, track two diplomacy (by non-official, non-governmental parties), third party mediation, conciliatory gestures and economic assistance. South Africa also followed development and governance approaches such as policies to promote national economic and social development via continued economic trade and Zimbabwe's economic integration in the region as well as recommending economic reforms and standards. South Africa also upheld all bilateral cooperative agreements and programmes between these states. Lastly, South Africa attempted to promulgate and enforce human rights, democratic and other standards via its participation in monitoring most of Zimbabwe's elections since 2000.*[302]

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301   SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.
302   Van Wyk, J.-A. (2002). "The saga continues… The Zimbabwe issue in South Africa's foreign policy". *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1(4): 178.

This broad repertoire of forms of engagement would be tested in the context of ever-deepening crisis in Zimbabwe's domestic developments between 2002 and 2008. The Zimbabwean economy continued on its route towards complete collapse, with record levels of inflation and unemployment peaking in 2008 and 2009. In the space of a few years, "Zimbabwe… moved from being the second most important trading partner with SA, to what can only be described as a dependent state."[303] Furthermore, the preparations for elections in 2002 and 2005 were increasingly violent, with Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 – during which hundreds of thousands of residents of Zimbabwe's main cities saw their informal and formal businesses and accommodation destroyed – representing a particularly egregious form of political violence by the state against its own citizens.

South Africa was most immediately affected by these developments because South Africa increasingly became a destination for the many Zimbabweans whose lives were being disrupted by the growing difficulty of earning a living, feeding a family and accessing basic health care and education. Waves of cross-border migration to South Africa (as well as internal displacement) followed the large-scale farm expropriations in 2000, Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 and the economic collapse of 2008–2009.[304] Individuals persecuted politically for (actual or assumed) opposition activities in Zimbabwe also sought refuge in South Africa, particularly in relation to violence accompanying the run-up to elections in 2002, 2005 and 2008.[305]

303 Coady, A. and S. Hussein (2009). "Deconstructing constructive engagement: Examining Mbeki's South African foreign policy towards Zimbabwe". *World Affairs: Journal of International Issues* 13(1).

304 IDMC and NRC (2009). "Internal displacement: Global overview of trends and developments in 2008". From: http://www.acnur.org/biblioteca/pdf/7076.pdf?view=1. p. 48.

305 *Ibid.* p. 49.

Elections and Sanctions (2002 to 2004)

The year 2002 was dominated by Zimbabwe's presidential elections of March 2002, including its run-up and aftermath. One South African academic summarised the pre-election intimidation of the opposition as follows:

> *Government interference forced the MDC to cancel over 100 rallies in the… two months [preceding the election]; voters were intimidated with more than 100 politically inspired murders and countless cases of torture, assault and rape; thousands of urban (pro-MDC) voters were disenfranchised through a manipulated registration process; local and foreign election monitors worked under tight restrictions; emergency legislation stifled independent media coverage and criminalised non-violent political protest; and the opposition was denied access to the state broadcasting media that was blatantly biased in favour of Zanu-PF.*[306]

Political violence targeting actual and assumed opposition activists and supporters was documented extensively by Zimbabwean and international human rights organisations. Physicians for Human Rights, Denmark, for example, reported that in 2001 and early 2002, "mutilating torture was being practised by government supporters against the political opposition, and that perpetrators operated on the assumption of total impunity".[307] Furthermore, they document that

> *the political manipulation of food, including at times of donor food, continues to this day [November 2002] in Zimbabwe,*

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306 Geldenhuys, D. (2004). "The special relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe". 1 November 2004. From: http://www.thefreelibrary.com/_/print/PrintArticle.aspx?id=131321559.

307 "Physicians for Human Rights (2002). Vote ZANU-PF or Starve. Zimbabwe: August to October 2002". Copenhagen, Physicians for Human Rights, Denmark. 20 November.

and that the threat of being deliberately starved by the government if the opposition won votes was used to profoundly influence vulnerable rural voters in recent [March] elections in Zimbabwe.[308]

The violence also had a specifically gendered dimension in that

women [experienced] rape and sexual violations on the basis that they are referred to as the prostitutes of imperialists. Women [were] targeted because of who they are married to, who their brothers are, what the political affiliation of their male relatives, or perceived political affiliation of their male relatives are.[309]

Furthermore, in early 2002, generals in the Zimbabwean army stated categorically that they would never salute a president who had not fought in the liberation struggle, suggesting that they would not serve an MDC government were it to win the forthcoming election.[310]

The army's statement was taken seriously by the South African government, and the belief that a coup could be staged if the MDC won elections, possibly degenerating into a civil war, was a scenario which informed South African policy towards Zimbabwe at the time. Speaking in 2011, Pallo Jordan, senior ANC member and at various times Minister of Communications, Environment & Tourism, and Arts and Culture, who also chaired the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs, described South Africa's foreign policy dilemma regarding Zimbabwe:

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308 *Ibid.*
309 Isabella Matambanadzo at SALO event, The Zimbabwean Roadmap: Building International Consensus, Pretoria, 9 May 2011.
310 Thornycroft, P. and T. Butcher. (2002). "Military 'will not accept Mugabe defeat'". *The Telegraph*. 10 January. From: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/zimbabwe/1381018/Military-will-not-accept-Mugabe-defeat.html.

You might aspire to a foreign policy that is human rights based, to pursue, defend and promote human rights, and no one can fault you on that. It's a very good foreign policy, but the real world doesn't work like that. It's tough out there and I can give you tough examples. It's an open secret that the security services in Zimbabwe will not submit to the authority of the MDC government. Everyone knows that. They know it in Washington DC, they know it in London, everyone knows that. Everyone also agrees that the last election [in 2008] was won by the MDC.

Now you are pursuing a human rights foreign policy. You insist: nonsense, these guys won, they must be the government. What is the outcome? You have a mutiny by the security services in Zimbabwe. What is going to be the outcome? Civil war, unrest. It is going to entail the loss of life, it is going to entail terrible disruption on South Africa's borders, it is going to entail massive immigration into South Africa by Zimbabweans. Now what decision makes sense for South Africa in that situation? Do you dogmatically insist on human rights or do you strive for a shoddy, unprecedented, even indecent compromise? One that brings peace and maintains stability in the region? Which is the humane choice?[311]

At an extra-ordinary summit in Blantyre, Malawi in January 2002, SADC also expressed unusually open concern about the statement by the Zimbabwean army, and urged the Zimbabwean government to prevent the military from making political statements. The summit's public statements included a list of concrete demands to the government of Zimbabwe, including:

- *full respect for human rights, including the right to freedom of opinion, association and peaceful assembly for all individuals;*

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311 Pallo Jordan, comments at the launch of Chris Landsberg's book, *Diplomacy of Transformation*, at the Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, 3 May 2011.

- *the commitment to investigate fully and impartially all cases of alleged political violence in 2001 and action to do so;*

- *a Zimbabwean Electoral Supervisory Commission which is adequately resourced and able to operate independently;*

- *the accreditation and registration of national independent monitors in good time for the elections;*

- *a timely invitation to, and accreditation of, a wide range of international elections observers;*

- *commitment to freedom of expression as guaranteed by the constitution of Zimbabwe;*

- *reaffirmation by Zimbabwe of its practice of allowing national and international journalists to cover important national events, including elections, on the basis of its laws and regulations;*

- *commitment by the government of Zimbabwe to the independence of the judiciary and to the rule of law; and*

- *the transfer by the government of Zimbabwe of occupiers of non-designated farms to legally acquired land.*[312]

While South Africa was continuing its engagement with the Zimbabwean regime through bilateral and regional channels, the USA and the EU cited pre-election violence as a reason to apply sanctions to Zimbabwe.

In December 2001, the United States enacted the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act, which included broad-ranging limitations, not only on US bilateral funding to Zimbabwe, but also instructions to US decision-makers in "international

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312 SADC (2002). "Final Communique on SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government, January 2002, Blantyre, Malawi." from http://www.gov.za/search97cgi/s97_cgi?action=View&VdkVgwKey=..%2Fdata%2Fspeech02%2F020115945a1005.txt&DocOffse.

financial institutions" (meaning multilateral development banks and the International Monetary Fund) to oppose the extension to financial support to Zimbabwe.[313]

The EU applied 'smart sanctions' on 18 February 2002, including an arms sale ban, a travel ban and a freeze of overseas assets for leading figures in Mugabe's regime in response to concerns about "recent escalation of violence and intimidation of political opponents and the harassment of the independent press."[314] This was justified by the need to apply the conditions of the 2000 ACP-EC[315] Partnership Agreement (known as the Cotonou Agreement), which required that ACP-EC relations be contingent on the maintenance of certain standards in terms of "human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law" (Art 9(2)), and that relation must therefore be severed if these conditions were contravened, after an attempt at 'constructive dialogue' (Art 96).[316]

In addition to the sanctions targeting the upper echelons of ZANU-PF, the decision of the EU Council on the suspension of Cotonou Agreement-related budgetary support to the Zimbabwean government was formulated so as not to affect resources flowing directly to the Zimbabwean population, "in particular in the social sectors" and "of a humanitarian nature", and indeed proposed the reorientation of "financing… in direct support of the population, in particular in the social sectors, democratisation, respect for

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313 Congress of the United States of America (2001). "S. 494 (107th): Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001". From: http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/s494/text.

314 Council of the European Union (2002). "Council Common Position of 18 February 2002 concerning restrictive measures against Zimbabwe". 2002/145/CFSP.

315 ACP stands for African, Caribbean and Pacific States; EC stands for European Commission.

316 Europe Aid (2010). "Consolidated version of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement", signed 2000, revised 2005, revised 2010. Brussels.

human rights and the rule of law."[317] In practice, however, the application of the Cotonou Agreement resulted in the suspension of development aid and the limitation of trade agreements, which contributed to a further decline in the general economy and social welfare services.[318] This form of direct censure, while claiming the moral high ground, resulted in a "deadlock"[319] in relations between 'Western' powers and Zimbabwe.

In spite of the various attempts to apply political pressure from outside, Mugabe's ZANU-PF claimed victory in the 9–10 March elections, despite strong evidence that the MDC had won more votes. Responses to the outcome of the elections show that South Africa was operating in several different forums simultaneously. A fifty-member South African government delegation of election monitors declared that the elections were free and fair.[320] Official missions from Nigeria and the AU were in agreement.[321] In contrast, the Commonwealth team, led by former Nigerian President General Abdulsalami Abubakar, recorded high levels of politically motivated violence.[322]

A report by the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, drawing on monitoring by the Human Rights NGO Forum, listed "675 reports

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317 Council of the European Union (2002). "Council Decision concluding consultations with Zimbabwe under Article 96 of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, 15 February 2002". Brussels. 6285/02, ACP 30, COAFR 19, PESC 64.

318 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 251.

319 *Ibid.*, p. 251.

320 Statement by Dr Sam Motsuenyane, leader of the South African Observer Mission to Harare (13 March 2002). "Interim statement by the South African Observer Mission to the Zimbabwean presidential Elections". From: http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2002/zimb1303.htm.

321 EISA. "Zimbabwe: Excerpts from 2002 African Observer Mission". From: http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/zim2002om1.htm.

322 Commonwealth (2002). "Meeting of Commonwealth Chairperson's Committee on Zimbabwe, 19 March 2002". From: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=34929.

of torture, 196 kidnappings, 132 cases of intimidation or threats, 114 cases of unlawful detention, 26 disappearances, 5 reports of rape, 40 schools were closed and about 1 000 identity cards were confiscated"[323] as part of structured and organised political violence and intimidation in advance of the election. The March 2002 Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group furthermore noted the paucity of polling booths in urban areas (where the greater number of MDC supporters were based), necessitating queues lasting longer than the allocated voting time, thus requiring an extension of voting days. The Commonwealth report also identified gerrymandering, intimidation, and crooked counting as marring the conduct of the elections.[324]

The South African government's response to the election outcome was widely criticised as being biased towards ZANU-PF and as shoring up the legitimacy of the regime.[325] On the other hand, however, South Africa was a core member of the Commonwealth Chairman's Committee (along with Australia and Nigeria), which met immediately after the elections, on 19 March, and decided to suspend Zimbabwe from the Councils of the Commonwealth for one year with immediate effect, due to the "adverse report from the Commonwealth Observer Group to the Zimbabwe Presidential Election, in accordance with the Harare Commonwealth Declaration and the Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme". The Committee furthermore "expressed its

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323 Zimbabwe Election Support Network (2002). "2002 Presidential and local authority elections report". April. From: http://archive.niza.nl/docs/200211191322567176.PDF.

324 Commonwealth Secretariat (2002). *Zimbabwe Presidential Election 9 to 11 March 2002: Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group.* From: http://www.kubatana.net/docs/elec/commwrep0203.pdf.

325 Disquiet among the observers is indicated in (2002). "SA observers split over poll report". *Sunday Times.* 31 March. From: http://www.sadocc.at/news2002/2002-103.shtml. A later expedition led by two judges resulted in a report that was never released (2008). "Mbeki ignored judges on 2002 poll". *Business Day.* 14 May. From: http://mg.co.za/article/2008-05-12-mbeki-ignored-judges-on-zims-2002-poll/.

determination to promote reconciliation in Zimbabwe between the main political parties. To this end the Committee strongly supported the initiatives of the president of Nigeria and the president of South Africa in encouraging a climate of reconciliation between the main political parties in Zimbabwe, which they considered essential to address the issues of food shortages, economic recovery, the restoration of political stability, the rule of law and the conduct of future elections."[326]

Some analyses have interpreted Pretoria's recognition of the election results as a continuation of its long-standing approach of "containment and diplomacy",[327] i.e. as a means of maintaining an open dialogue and a measure of influence with the Harare regime. For example, soon after the elections, South Africa started a diplomatic initiative together with Nigeria to broker a government of national unity. Emphasising how South Africa was drawing on its own past experience of political conflict transformation, defence minister Mosiuoa Lekota stated hopefully in May 2002, "(w)e have now persuaded the government of Zimbabwe to adopt the approach that we did in this country, and have asked them to talk to the opposition. We have also suggested the formation of a government of national unity like we did."[328] Under South African pressure, MDC (represented by Welshman Ncube) and ZANU-PF (represented by Patrick Chinamasa) met, but "talks soon broke down, as both parties were unwilling to compromise".[329]

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326 Commonwealth (2002). "Meeting of Commonwealth Chairperson's Committee on Zimbabwe, 19 March 2002". From: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=34929.

327 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 262.

328 Ngidi, 2002. "Silent diplomacy failed in Zimbabwe". *IOL News*. From: http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/silent-diplomacy-failed-in-zimbabwe-1.86402#.UMXX90JpuCc.

329 Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 262.

In December 2002 and January 2003, there were further attempts by the ANC to secretly broker an 'exit plan' for Mugabe by turning his presidential position into a purely titular one, so he could serve out his five-year term, and bringing Emmerson Mnangagwa (speaker of parliament and Mugabe's chosen heir) in as prime minister with executive authority to manage the country. The following chronology of events, published by news agency *IOL News* at the time, shows the number of actors involved and the complexity of South Africa's multiple roles: as host and intermediary to the talks, partner of the Zimbabwean government on joint projects like Transfrontier Parks, political party and member of the Commonwealth Troika.

- July/August 2002: Retired Zimbabwean military officer, Colonel Lionel Dyck, begins talks with two leading Zanu-PF politburo members, Emmerson Mnangagwa, the speaker, and General Vitalis Zvinavashe, the defence force chief.

- Late November 2002: Dyck approaches Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC leader, with government of unity offer.

- December 6 2002: Complex shuttle talks between ZANU-PF and MDC get under way in Johannesburg with a South African intermediary.

- December 9: President Thabo Mbeki flies to Mozambique for a meeting with Mugabe and Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano and to launch the Transfrontier Park as Johannesburg talks come to a head.

- December 12: David Coltart of the MDC submits detailed report of Johannesburg talks to Tsvangirai.

- December 12–13: Mnangagwa is given prominent role at ZANU-PF conference in Zimbabwe.

- December 18: Tsvangirai reveals approach by Dyck in public address to MDC.

- December 19: Mnangagwa is given prominent platform and hero's welcome at ANC conference in Stellenbosch. Zimbabwe's *Sunday Mirror* publishes cryptic report about Mugabe exit plan.

- January 16: Approach to Tsvangirai goes public in South African and international media.

- February 7: Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo meets Mbeki in Pretoria and discusses forthcoming visit to Zimbabwe.

- February 9: Obasanjo meets Mugabe and Tsvangirai briefly and tries to persuade MDC to drop court case [relating to 2002 elections].

- February 11: Publication of Obasanjo letter to Australian Prime Minister John Howard, in which he accuses Howard of being a dishonest broker and says he and Mbeki see no point in holding a meeting of the troika as Australia had unilaterally imposed sanctions against Zimbabwe.

- February 18: Tsvangirai discloses his letter to Howard, in which he accuses Mbeki and Obasanjo of complicity in Zanu-PF bid to marginalise the MDC and prop up Mugabe dictatorship.[330]

The 'retirement' deal to be offered to Mugabe reportedly included "immunity from prosecution for Mugabe for alleged human rights offences, and the MDC dropping its court challenge to the 2002 presidential elections – both of which the MDC said they would reject".[331] According to journalist Allister Sparks, on the basis of discussions with all the major players, the idea of a government of unity with the inclusion of the MDC as part of the 'retirement

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330 Battersby, J. (2003). "Chronology of Mugabe 'exit plan'". 22 February. From: http://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/chronology-of-mugabe-exit-plan-1.101954#.URjtWKWkpUh.

331 IRIN (2003). "ZIMBABWE: Government calls exit plan reports 'wishful thinking'". IRIN 29 April. From: http://irinnews.org/Report/43277/ZIMBABWE-Government-calls-exit-plan-reports-wishful-thinking.

deal' was due to ANC pressure on the ZANU-PF players and the army, although MDC participation in the proposed government was to be minimal. Tsvangirai's reported response to the approach was that "we will not be party to any political arrangement that seeks to sanitise Mugabe's violent legitimacy, and that includes Mugabe's retirement plans and the so-called government of national unity".[332]

A further interpretation of South Africa's recognition of the March 2002 election results pertains to South Africa's understanding of its own history and lessons from its own recent political transition. South African political analyst Steven Friedman, writing in the context of a wider assessment of foreign policy under Mbeki, wrote that: "South Africa continues to play a role in democracy promotion but influence and intervention are tailored not to confront African leaders and are justified on grounds other than democracy's merits."[333] In light of this Friedman argues that the basis of intervention becomes "conflict resolution" as opposed to measures calling for reform and democratisation.[334] Marais (in Friedman) observes:

> *The most consistent thread in South Africa's post-1994 foreign policy forays lay in its efforts to 'export' its model of conflict resolution to other situations: this consisted of painstaking compromise and consensus building and the assimilation of rivals into new, democratic systems.*[335]

In spite of their recognition of the election results, by 2002, SADC leaders were in various ways showing their reduced support for

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332 Staff reporter (2003). "Old soldier sent to discuss Mugabe exit plan: MDC". *Mail & Guardian*. 16 January. From: http://mg.co.za/article/2003-01-16-old-soldier-sent-to-discuss-mugabe-exit-plan-mdc.

333 Friedman, S. (2008). "We met the enemy and he is US': Domestic politics and South Africa's role in promoting African democracy". *African Journal of International Affairs* 11(2): 35.

334 *Ibid*.

335 *Ibid*.

President Mugabe. As an example of a strong SADC statement against the Zimbabwean leader, the October 2002 SADC Summit in Luanda denied Mugabe the position of SADC Vice-Chairman (and therefore the automatic position of later Chairman), even though this had been previously promised him. At the time, newspapers reported officials saying that "the SADC leaders have been criticised by Europe for turning a blind eye to Mugabe's excesses. By keeping him away from the leadership of SADC, they hope they can diplomatically make the world understand that they disagree with his policies."[336]

Public reactions and interpretations of South Africa's, and particularly President Mbeki's, stance on Zimbabwe were diverse, and became an important part of the dynamics of bilateral and multilateral engagement from 2002 onwards. On the one hand, there was some indication that South Africa's conciliatory position towards Zimbabwe was appreciated by international actors (as noted more or less privately by US President George W. Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on visits to South Africa in 2002), because it kept communication channels open. Ibbo Mandaza notes that in 2003:

> … *both George Bush and [UK Prime Minister Tony] Blair on their visit to Pretoria … gave South Africa the mantle of a regional super power and agreed that whatever happens in Zimbabwe would happen primarily through South Africa.*[337]

On the other hand, there was strong criticism from European parliamentarians and the European media and calls to put more

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336 Peta, B., Reuters, et al. (2002). "Mugabe snubbed by SADC peers". IOL News. From: http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/mugabe-snubbed-by-sadc-peers-1.95588#.URj46aWkpUh.

337 Ibbo Mandaza, in a presentation to a SALO Building International Consensus event in Pretoria, October 2010.

pressure on Mbeki to change his policy towards Zimbabwe.[338] Not least, the Zimbabwe question became an element of domestic political contestation. Opposition leader Tony Leon of the Democratic Party equated Mbeki's 'quiet' stance with policy approval: "[T]he ANC is not really interested in reform in Zimbabwe, or in democracy, or in human rights."[339] Other commentators, in turn, criticised the oppositional stand as opportunistic, failing to allow for the realities of diplomacy and instead attempting to demonise the ruling party: "The Democratic Party of South Africa, especially, has exploited the Zimbabwe issue for political gain, using this issue to incite South African citizens and to attempt to discredit Mbeki's government by playing on the fears of its white constituents."[340]

The broader continental context was also important at this point in that the African Union was launched in early July 2002, after years of personal engagement by Mbeki. This took up the president's and his foreign affairs team's time and attention, as well as making Zimbabwe an important test-case for new AU principles and policies, especially as it was a crisis in the AU champion's back yard. Furthermore, the ongoing contestation between South Africa

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338   Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276. p. 252. Also see: Development Committee voices concern over Zimbabwe. From: http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/demgg/050621europarl. asp?sector=demgg&year=2005&range_start=811.

339   Leon, T. (2003). "Road map to democracy in Zimbabwe". Speech at South African Institute of International Affairs, 2 December 2003. From: http://www.wits.ac.za/saiia/LeonSpeech.htm. Quoted in Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

340   Hlela, N. (2002). "Domestic constraints and challenges to South Africa's foreign policy in South Africa". *South Africa since 1994: Lessons and Prospects*. S. Buthelezi and E. le Roux, Eds. Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa: 161–182. Quoted in Adelmann, M. (2004). "Quiet diplomacy: The reasons behind Mbeki's Zimbabwe policy". *Afrika Spectrum* 39(2): 249–276.

and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi regarding continental leadership and the shape of continental governance systems such as the AU also played into the Zimbabwe scenario. As noted by William Gumede in his book, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*:

> One of Mugabe's most powerful weapons was his close association with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi… Gaddafi had bankrolled ZANU-PF's 2001 election campaign and pledged USD900 000 to boost Mugabe's bid to win the 2002 presidential election, notwithstanding a legal ban on foreign funding for political parties in Zimbabwe. Gaddafi had also donated USD360 million to alleviate Zimbabwe's chronic fuel crisis… In continental forums, Mugabe and Gaddafi routinely derided Mbeki and his plans for an African Renaissance, placing him in an invidious position as calls mounted for South Africa to support Zimbabwe's eviction from the Commonwealth.[341]

Finally, South Africa was deeply involved in the Angolan and DRC peace processes, which required support for South Africa's role from the rest of the region and, not least, the withdrawal of Zimbabwean troops still active in the DRC.[342] This meant that South Africa's decisions regarding what actions to take towards Zimbabwe were made in consideration of how these would be interpreted by a wide range of regional and continental actors and what knock-on effects these interpretations would have for other, larger foreign policy projects underway.

Throughout 2003, South African attempts to negotiate a resolution to Zimbabwe's political situation continued, still with a focus on finding an 'exit' for Mugabe and a transformation of ZANU-PF policies and practices. This occurred in the context of

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341 Gumede, W. (2005). *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 224.
342 Zimbabwean troops were indeed withdrawn by the end of 2002.

increasing international pressure on the regime. In May 2003, the Commonwealth Troika Mbeki, Obasanjo and Malawi's President Muluzi allegedly discussed strategies for Mugabe's political exit.[343] At the 2003 Heads of Government summit in Abuja, the Commonwealth decided to uphold its suspension of Zimbabwe, in spite of Mbeki's attempts to defend Mugabe, "insisting that [Mugabe] needed incentives, not disincentives… and constantly confirming that he had given assurances that we would work towards a settlement of the Zimbabwe dispute".[344] In protest against the continued suspension and discussions of expulsion, Zimbabwe withdrew from the Commonwealth. The SADC foreign ministers task force visited Harare in April 2003 to keep up pressure.[345] Various statements were made to the press that South Africa, together with other regional leaders, had negotiated an imminent resolution to Zimbabwe's crisis, including Mugabe's own commitment to retire that year, 2003.[346] In early December, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) moved to expel Zimbabwe, citing a lack of cooperation and arrears of more than $270 million running back almost three years.[347] At the December 2003 ZANU-PF party congress, however, Mugabe did not step down as expected (and confidently predicted) by some.

As the threatened IMF suspension illustrates, Zimbabwe's economic

343   Moellers, H. (2003). "Einen Wegeplan fuer den Ausstieg aus der Krise?" *Afrika Sued* 3: 10.

344   Landsberg, C. (2011). *The Diplomacy of Transformation: South African Foriegn Policy and Statecraft*, Macmillan. p. 158.

345   VOA. (2003) "Southern African Task Force to probe Zimbabwe violence". From: http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-a-2003-04-04-59-southern/303973.html.

346   (2002). "US, Britain in Bid to Oust Mugabe". 2 May. *Cape Argus*. Cape Town; (2003). "Zimbabwe Nearing Solution". *Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique, 27 June*. From: www.allafrica.com.

347   (2003). "IMF to expel Zimbabwe". *Mail & Guardian*. 4 December. From: http://www.mg.co.za/article/2003-12-04-imf-to-expel-zimbabwe.

situation had deteriorated significantly by 2003, continuing the above-discussed trend from the 1990s. This increasingly had humanitarian consequences for its citizens. The country's gross domestic product had declined by about 40% between 1999 and 2003, and inflation rose to 526% in October 2003.[348] Furthermore, by March 2003, some 6.7 million people (49% of the population) were estimated to require emergency food aid, both due to absolute lack of food in the country and lack of access to food.[349] "Once the breadbasket of the entire region, Zimbabwe was now importing basic foodstuffs to feed its population",[350] and indeed did not have enough foreign currency to import sufficient food.

Many analysts, including the UN, the IMF, the US Department of Agriculture and the Government of Zimbabwe attributed the food shortages to "severe drought" in 2001, but the Centre for Global Development argues that 2001 rainfall was not significantly under the 50-year average and would not have led to food shortages if the pre-land reform irrigation systems and agricultural production patterns had remained operational.[351] Throughout 2003, the land reform process in Zimbabwe was continuing and consolidating. In Sam Moyo's analysis, which sees the ZANU-PF leadership as not entirely in control of the land occupations process initially (although they condoned and strategically supported it), from 2003 ZANU-PF was fully in control of land issues.[352]

Developments in regional governance institutions continued to both impact on, and be shaped by, Zimbabwe's crisis. SADC structures on security and regional mutual military relations had undergone

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348 *Ibid.*

349 Vulnerability Assessment Committee (2002). "Emergency Food Security Assessment Report: Zimbabwe". September.

350 *Ibid.*

351 Richardson, C. (2003). "What about the droughts?" *Centre for Global Development*. Retrieved 13 September 2012. From: http://www.cgdev. org/section/initiatives/_archive/zimbabwe/landreform/droughts.

352 SALO interview with Sam Moyo, June 2012.

a range of changes from the 1999 decision to bring the OPDS directly under the SADC wing to the 2001 signing of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security (hereafter referred to as the Protocol) in Blantyre, to the OPDS's renaming in January 2002 to the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC), and finally to the signing of the Mutual Defence Pact at the SADC Summit in Dar es Salaam in August 2003. The objectives of the SADC Organ reflected a comprehensive approach to regional security cooperation, emphasising human security and the pre-emption of conflict.

> *In principal the Protocol appears to affirm a conflict management regime that favours political, rather than military, solutions. It establishes an Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC) to counterbalance the long standing and powerful Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) and contains specific references to the need for political cooperation and the promotion of democratic institutions and practices.*[353]

Interpretations of the new Mutual Defence Pact (MDP) were mixed. On the one hand, it would prevent abuse of the Organ by any one state for its own perceived interests in the region and did not oblige any state to come to the assistance of another if attacked. "A watered-down version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Pact which obliges members to respond to an attack on a member state as an attack on all, the MDP merely calls upon member states to 'participate in such a collective action in any manner it deems appropriate'."[354] On the other hand, Botswana-based analyst Van Schalkwyk criticised the MDP as it "recommits states to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs

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353   Van Schalkwyk, G. (2005). "Challenges in the creation of a Southern African sub-regional security community". *Journal on Science and World Affairs* 1(1): 33–43. p. 35.

354   *Ibid*. p. 36.

of any of its members and opens the door for collective action in support of a non-democratic regime."[355] The SADC Organ has no enforcement mandate, and states can only become involved in the internal affairs of another if invited by that member state.

An escalation of repression and political violence was seen in 2004 in Zimbabwe in advance of the 2005 parliamentary elections. As noted by security expert Peter Kagwanja:

> [t]he possibility of creating a political environment in which all parties could compete on an equal basis was minimised by the restrictive law regime that exists in the country, which undermined the basic freedoms of association, movement and assembly. In the aftermath of the controversial elections in 2002, the government used the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) to prohibit and shut down public meetings of the MDC and civil society organisations, to repress dissent, persecute its opponents, and muzzle and even outlaw sections of the media. In August 2004, the MDC made efforts to seek redress from the courts when POSA was employed to bar its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, from addressing party and public meetings, but the courts were not sufficiently free to pass a non-partisan and meaningful verdict.[356]

The Solidarity Peace Trust documented 268 cases of political arrest under POSA in 2004, rising to 526 cases in 2005, often accompanied by torture.[357] As with the 2002 elections, the political manipulation of food was widely documented, including by the Solidarity Peace Trust:

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355 *Ibid*. p. 36.

356 Kagwanja, P. (2005). "Zimbabwe's March 2005 elections: Dangers and opportunities". *African Security Review* 14(3). From: http://www. iss.co.za/pubs/ASR/14No3/FKagwanja.htm.

357 Solidarity Peace Trust and Institute of Justice and Reconciliation (2006). "Policing the State: An evaluation of 1 981 political arrests in Zimbabwe: 2000–2005". Johannesburg. 14 December 2006. p. 34.

The government has consistently throughout 2004 claimed a bumper harvest, and has informed [the World Food Programme] that they do not need food aid during 2004/5. Yet UN agents predict a 50% food deficit. The [Grain Marketing Board] reports having purchased from farmers only 288 000 tonnes of maize, a shortfall of 2 000 000 tonnes. Commentators fear the probability of food becoming a political weapon ahead of the 2005 elections is great, in a situation where the ruling party now effectively controls all food in the country.[358]

In terms of South Africa–Zimbabwe relations, 2004 was characterised by South African civil society taking a more high profile and public position aimed at influencing South African policy on Zimbabwe in the run-up to Zimbabwe's 2005 parliamentary elections, with heightened activism continuing throughout 2005. This included high-profile actions by the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The SACC has strong historical links with its counterpart in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. Among the best publicised of its activities was a letter sent to President Mbeki in February 2004 urging him to put pressure on the MDC and ZANU-PF to renew negotiations, an action that followed a year of efforts by the churches.[359]

With close ties to the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), COSATU had long protested the Harare regime's treatment of workers and the poor. In October 2004, and again in February 2005, delegations of COSATU officials who went to Zimbabwe hoping to monitor the state of the country ahead of the elections were expelled from the country. Both regional and international media covered these events, interpreting them as a

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358   Solidarity Peace Trust (2004). "No war in Zimbabwe: An account of the exodus of a nation's people", Solidarity Peace Trust. November 2004.

359   IRIN (2004). "Clerical task team to kick-start talks". 2 March.

direct challenge to the ANC (with whom COSATU was in official partnership within South Africa's governing alliance) and to the government's position on Zimbabwe.[360]

The Pressure Rises: Elections, Operation Murambatsvina, Exodus (2005 to 2006)

The year 2005 brought a step-change in Zimbabwe's crisis, including another contested election and a state campaign of urban displacement (*Operation Murambatsvina*). The effect on South Africa was significantly increased levels of Zimbabwean migration, even though this had been rising steadily since 2002, as well as increased domestic and international pressure on the South African government to take a harder line on the Harare Regime. This pressure, however, took a largely constructive, rather than denouncing, form, with South Africa-based civil society (including Zimbabwean diaspora groups), 'Western' nations, and the international financial institutions all engaging with South Africa as a key player in relation to Zimbabwe's crisis, and one of the few actors retaining any access in Harare.

This access was not perfect, however. After years of South Africa's careful husbanding of bilateral relations and communication channels, in the face of widespread criticism, a diplomatic misstep before the March 2005 elections illustrated the fragility and complexity of relations. Mbeki's South African foreign policy-makers continued to believe, as in 2002, that if the MDC won elections, the Zimbabwean army would stage a coup which could ultimately lead to civil war. The best strategy, it was thought, would therefore be to encourage reform within ZANU-PF, what analyst Chris Maroleng has called 'regime reconstitution' in contrast to

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360 Masiko, P. (2005). "Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum Report, January to
      October 2005". Johannesburg, Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum.

the supposed Western agenda of 'regime change'.[361] Thus, South Africa's foreign intelligence wing, the South African Secret Service (SASS), was sent to gather information from agents recruited in Zimbabwe to promote the fortunes of the Mnangagwa faction within ZANU-PF. The operation ended disastrously when the SASS agent, Aubrey Welken, and six senior ZANU-PF members in the network were arrested.[362] As a result, attitudes between Harare and Pretoria hardened and the distrust in Harare heightened.

Before the March elections there was some indication that South Africa would take a stronger position in terms of its election monitoring. As noted by African governance expert Professor Peter Kagwanja:

> *In January [2005], the ANC Secretary General, Kgalema Motlanthe, publicly censured the ZANU-PF for not levelling the electoral playing field: We have been concerned about several things. The MDC is a party that participates in Parliament and it controls several municipalities. This [barring of political meetings] impairs their ability to interact with their constituencies.*[363]

South Africa's official Observer Mission to the 31 March 2005 parliamentary elections, however, declared that:

> *All organisations and political parties were unanimous in the view that, in comparison with the 2000 and 2002 elections, the political environment for free elections was much improved. In this regard, political parties were able to campaign freely everywhere in the country without hindrance. During these*

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361 Maroleng, C. (2008). "Zimbabwe: Looking beyond the horizon". *Mail & Guardian Thought Leader*. From: http://www.thoughtleader.co.za/chrismaroleng/2008/04/18/zimbabwe-looking-beyond-the-horizon/.

362 (2005). "Zimbabwe releases S African spy". *BBC News*. 13 December. From: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4523944.stm.

363 Kagwanja, P. (2005). "When the locusts ate: Zimbabwe's March 2005 elections". *EISA* Occasional Paper 32. p. 13.

elections, the people of Zimbabwe and political parties in particular, demonstrated a great degree of political maturity and tolerance.[364]

The Observer Mission therefore found that:

it is the view of the mission that the 2005 parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe reflect the will of the people. The mission wishes to commend the political parties, independents and the people of Zimbabwe in general for their conduct during these elections.[365]

In contrast to 2002, there were fewer opposing voices since fewer official election monitoring organisations had been allowed into the country. As noted by Kagwanja: "countries in the European Union bloc and United States were not invited. The ruling party argued that these countries were pre-disposed to be biased."[366] A column in *The Star* newspaper described the South African team as "observing with a blind-fold",[367] and noted that:

Voices from South and southern Africa dominated the recent salvo of election observation reports. The South African Parliamentary Mission, the South African Government Mission, and the South African-dominated SADC Mission, used phrases that affirmed what was, in reality, severely flawed electoral practice… cherry-picked selection of observer missions. Regional stalwarts of professional election observation were absent. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) called off its mission because an invitation was

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364 Mdladlana, M. (2005). Statement by the leader of the South African Observer Mission to the Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe. 2 April. From: http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2005/05040414451001.htm.

365 *Ibid*.

366 Kagwanja, P. (2005). "When the locusts ate: Zimbabwe's March 2005 Elections". *EISA* Occasional Paper 32. p. 6.

367 Booysen, S. (2005). "Observing with a blindfold". *The Star*. 10 April.

not forthcoming. The SADC Parliamentary Forum, after having observed 13 elections in ten countries, was snubbed. It was told that its invitation was restricted to its being part of a general SADC mission. In the past, these two missions had divergent verdicts – the one offering systematic observer assessments (which included criticisms); the other delivering fraternal affirmation.[368]

Independent civil society missions from South Africa, which attempted to cover the elections, were rebuffed. The SACC was to have led a group of six South African civil society organisations, including the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and the Centre for Policy Studies, on an observer mission to Zimbabwe. However, the Mugabe regime denied them observer status and refused their leaders, including SACC's general secretary Molefe Tsele and general secretary of the SADC NGO Council Abie Ditlhake, entry into the country, even though they had been invited by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches to participate in an ecumenical observer delegation. SACC's final statement on the election, written in cooperation with other civil society groups, had this to say:

Based on the present evidence and analysis of the SADC guidelines, the coalition cannot pronounce the elections as being free and fair without qualification. We particularly regard as morally questionable the pronouncement by the South African Observer Mission that primarily due to the peaceful climate that prevailed during the elections, the elections are necessarily free and fair.[369]

Further increasing international and domestic civil society criticism towards Pretoria was the sale of spare helicopter parts

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368 *Ibid.*

369 SACC, SACB, et al. (2005). "Statement of the Zimbabwe Observer Consortium". 7 April. From: http://www.sacc.org.za/news05/zimobcon.html.

to Zimbabwe in early 2005. Tim Hughes of the South African Institute of International Affairs found

> *the sale… a violation, not just of international sanctions on Zimbabwe, but… a contradiction to our efforts at a peaceful and negotiated settlement… This is… not the sort of role we would expect from South Africa and particularly because South Africa has been so… judicious in terms of the control of its arms sales.*[370]

These concerns were sharpened when the repaired helicopters were used to intimidate would-be protestors from the air during *Operation Murambatsvina* later in the year (discussed on pages 175–6). The sale of arms and weapons parts was furthermore in contrast to the South African National Defence Forces' submissions during their Strategic Business Plan presentations to the National Council of Provinces committee on Security and Constitutional Affairs on 13 April 2005. The Department of Defence's programme of action indicated that, as South Africa was Chair of the SADC Organ and in support of the AU security architecture, the country would endeavour to support the process for ensuring free and fair elections in Zimbabwe.[371]

After the disputed elections, the attention of both civil society and the international community remained on Zimbabwe. On 18 May 2005, the Zimbabwean government launched *Operation Murambatsvina,* destroying the homes and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean citizens, and outraging international

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370 SALO interview with Tim Hughes, Cape Town, April 2007.
371 Department of Defence. (2005). "Strategic Business Plan FY05/06 – Presentation to the NCOP Committee on Security and Constitutional Affairs – 13 April". From: https://www.google.com=en&sclient+DOD +Strategic+Business+Plan+Presentation+to+the+NCOP+Committee+on +Security+and+Constitutional+Affairs-13+April+2005.

opinion.[372] While the Zimbabwean Government translated 'Murambatsvina' to mean 'Operation Clean-up', or 'Operation Restore Order', the more literal translation of the term is 'Drive out the Filth'. Solidarity Peace Trust has noted:

> *In May 2005, the Zimbabwean government embarked on a massive, highly systematic programme of demolitions of all informal housing in urban and peri-urban areas across Zimbabwe. Combined with a total clampdown on the informal trading sector, including the destruction of official vending areas and confiscation of all wares, Operation Murambatsvina… caused direct havoc in the lives of millions. The sheer scale and thoroughness of OM set it apart from previous demolitions, not just in Zimbabwe, but in Africa.*

> *Three million people countrywide, directly and indirectly, suffered as a result of the demolitions; an estimated 100 000 vendors were arrested – many of them legally licensed and selling from legal vendors' markets; 560 000 people lost their shelter countrywide, with some small centres losing as much as 60% of their housing. A further 2.4 million lost markets for their goods and/or remittances from the urban areas.*[373]

African government was perceived to have reacted inadequately

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372   Tibaijuka, A. K. (2005). "UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe: Report of the fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe to assess the scope and impact of Operation Murambatsvina". New York, United Nations. See also Moore, D. (2008). "Coercion, consent, context: Operation Murambatsvina and ZANU-PF's illusory quest for hegemony". *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe, Harare & Pretoria: Weaver Press & African Institute of South Africa*. M. Vambe. Harare & Pretoria, Weaver Press & African Institute of South Africa.

373   SPT (2010) "A fractured nation: Operation Murambatsvina, five years on". Solidarity Peace Trust. See also Vambe, M., Ed. (2008). *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*. Harare & Pretoria Weaver Press & African Institute of South Africa.

to *Operation Murambatsvina*. As described by Elinor Sisulu, Zimbabwean civil society activist:

> *I go back to 'Operation Murambatsvina'… I think that the scale of that catastrophe really did not impinge on the leaders of this region. It just happened under the radar… I remember, President Mbeki [was asked] what the response was to this operation and President Mbeki said: 'we'll wait for the UN Special envoy's report'. We're still waiting for his response to the actual report.*[374]

In July 2005, an SACC delegation visited Zimbabwe to assess the impact of *Operation Murambatsvina* and was sharply critical of the Zimbabwean government.[375] Following this trip, the SACC met with Thabo Mbeki to express its concern over the operation. At this meeting, Mbeki expressed support for a humanitarian relief campaign, which the SACC subsequently launched but which was frustrated by the Zimbabwean authorities. Following a second trip to Zimbabwe, the SACC met again with Mbeki and other high-ranking members of the South African government. They reported that the president was trying his best to resolve the situation in Zimbabwe and that "there was a lot going on that people did not know about, given the nature of diplomacy".[376]

The elections and *Operation Murambatsvina* also galvanised civil society in South Africa more broadly around Zimbabwe's crisis, and raised civil society's profile in terms of its access to

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374   Elinor Sisulu at SALO Event Building International Consensus: International Relations – Looking into the Future, 28 May 2008, Pretoria.

375   SACC (2005). "SACC Central Committee Resolution on Zimbabwe". July 14. From: http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/urbdev/050720sacc.asp?sector=URBDEV&year=2005&range_start=181.

376   (2005). "SA church leaders return to Zim". *Mail & Guardian*. 18 July. From: http://www.mg.co.za/article/2005-07-18-sa-church-leaders-return-to-zim.

government decision-makers, after years of gradual organisation and network building. The Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum (ZSF) is an example of a civil society grouping that came of age at this time. A heterogeneous network of South African civil society organisations, including youth, women, labour, faith-based, human rights and student formations, the ZSF cohered around the principle of solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and engaged in the promotion of solidarity for sustainable peace, democracy and human rights in that country. The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) was also formally established in this period. SALO, the Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDASA), the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) and Action for Conflict Transformation, among others, played a key role in the formation of the ZSF in an attempt to give South African civil society a collective voice on Zimbabwe.

An example of building civil society momentum was the Third Zimbabwe Solidarity Conference, which took place on 24–25 February 2005 on the eve of the elections. This conference rallied South African civil society in preparation for elections that were expected to be deeply flawed due to the violence preceding them. As noted in the conference's official statement:

> *The Zimbabwean elections of 2000 and 2002 deepened the political crisis, rather than contributing to a progressive resolution. Since 2002 democratic space has been further eroded. What Zimbabwe needs now is not another gravely flawed election but a SADC-facilitated negotiated transition towards democracy.*[377]

That gathering brought together scores of civil society groupings, including the mass-based organisations linked to the ANC such as the university and school students' movements, South African

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377 (2005). "Africa: Zimbabwe: Solidarity Newsletter". 2 March 2005. From: http://allafrica.com/stories/200503020642.html.

Students Congress (SASCO) and Congress of South African Students (COSAS). It marked a significant shift in attitude in South African society. The Zimbabwe conflict was no longer an issue that divided South Africans along racial or political party lines, as the new, mainly black and ANC-allied, solidarity movement demonstrated.

Tim Hughes highlighted the important role civil society played in relation to the crisis:

> *Civil society was quite effective, to some significant degree. Moreover, it's been a great disseminator of information… that's credible, intelligible and intelligent; and it's been quite balanced in its positions; often civil society is able to go back to its own roots of credibility and struggle credentials – be it membership of the party, the UDF, or progressive formations – and to say: "we're uncomfortable about Zimbabwe". This is not an attack on the ANC, this is not an attack on the government, but is actually a pro-Zimbabwe position entirely in accordance and consistent with the very same values for which they prosecuted the liberation struggle in South Africa. They are predicated on the exact same values of justice, of equality, of freedom, and the rejection of brutality and violence and the rejection of oligarch tyranny, and that's perfectly legitimate.*[378]

Hughes equally identifies a rapprochement in relations between South Africa and European and Commonwealth countries in and after 2005, after a period of estrangement over Pretoria's Zimbabwe approach:

> *[Zimbabwe] has tested the relationship with the Commonwealth very severely. Both parties have gone back to regroup, because they've realised that somewhere between 2003 and 2005 there was a stand-off between South Africa, the EU and Britain and the Commonwealth, and no progress was being made. However,*

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378   SALO interview with Tim Hughes, Cape Town, April 2007.

there are new efforts to think creatively about working with people within Zimbabwe, working with South Africa, allowing South Africa and SADC and possibly the AU to take a lead on these issues and rather moving from a position of pressure to one of constructive support on the question of Zimbabwe. [379]

The interaction between the IMF and South Africa regarding Zimbabwe in 2005 is illustrative of South Africa's standing as partner of 'last resort' in the eyes of many international actors in relation to Zimbabwe. In June 2005, the IMF threatened to expel Zimbabwe in August if it did not start paying off a US$300 million loan, on which it had been in arrears since 2001. As reported in a South African Treasury memo to the South African presidency in early 2006, the IMF approached the Treasury Minister Trevor Manual and "suggested that South Africa consider assisting Zimbabwe in avoiding expulsion from the Fund".[380] Expulsion, the memo argued, would have

serious consequences for Zimbabwe, because of the extremely negative signal it would send to investors and donors. The last remnants of Zimbabwe's credibility with the international community would be destroyed… Moreover, it would likely take many years for Zimbabwe to rejoin the Fund once it had been expelled. External resources from the IMF, coupled with economic reforms, could greatly assist Zimbabwe in rebuilding its economy, so an expulsion from the Fund could prejudice the country's prospects for recovery.[381]

On this basis, South Africa negotiated with Zimbabwe, significantly reducing the loan amount Zimbabwe's government

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379 *Ibid.*

380 National Treasury (2006). "Cabinet Briefing on Zimbabwe: Input for the Presidency Republic of South Africa National Treasury". Pretoria. 17 January. From: http://www.treasury.gov.za/publications/other/MinAnsw/2005-2/dp_ncop.pdf.

381 *Ibid.*

requested and changing its uses, with the final proposal amounting to "a US$412 million credit facility, to be used to partially settle Zimbabwe's arrears with the IMF and for the revitalisation of the agricultural sector, coupled with US$58 million in food aid."[382] This agreement, however, was never finalised, as "the area of negotiation between the two countries [was] focused on the political and economic conditions, which South Africa wants to attach to the loan."[383] The Cabinet Briefing closes by noting that in August Zimbabwe paid US$120 million into the IMF coffers to avert expulsion, but that this was not South African funds and that Treasury was not aware of the source of these monies.

There was extensive public discussion, mostly critical, of the idea that South Africa might extend a loan to Zimbabwe at this time, especially as the details of the negotiations were not public and the media and civil society thought such a loan would be unconditional.[384] In the end, Zimbabwe's refusal to accept the loan, precisely because of the political conditions attached by South Africa, contributed to the tension and distrust between the two southern African governments.

Even as formal bilateral relations between the two countries continued, such as through the establishment of a new South Africa–Zimbabwe Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (inaugurated in November 2005, in Cape Town),[385] an anecdote from engagements in such a forum illustrates some of the differences and tensions between the two countries. Zimbabwe's

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382 *Ibid.*

383 *Ibid.*

384 (2006). "Manuel pours cold water on loan reports". *IOL News.* 7 June. From: http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/manuel-pours-cold-water-on-loan-reports-1.280657#.URngHqWkpUg.

385 Kasrils, R. (2005). "Opening of Ministerial Session of SA–Zimbabwe Joint Permanent Commission". 17 November 2005. From: http://www.polity.org.za/article/kasrils-opening-of-ministerial-session-of-sazimbabwe-joint-permanent-commission-17112005-2005-11-17.

Minister for State Security Didymus Mutasa reportedly had said at a bilateral meeting that the greatest threat to the southern African region's security came from "outside influences whose aim is to effect regime change, especially with regard to countries led by former liberation movements".[386] At a dinner held after the bilateral meeting, Mutasa gave his hosts a lengthy lecture, telling them they were letting Africa down by promoting gay rights and non-racialism. The head of the South African mission, then Defence Minister Mosioua Lekota, allegedly responded tersely that the South African constitution protected the rights of all citizens, since white South Africans had no other home.[387]

In addition to the shifting discursive space within South Africa about Zimbabwean politics, a further dynamic which saw significant developments in 2005 was cross-border migration. While there was a long history of cross-border movements between Zimbabwe and South Africa, Zimbabweans had been leaving the country in larger numbers from 2000 onward due to the increasing economic difficulties and the displacement caused by the land reform programme. Political repression related to the 2000 referendum and the 2002 elections also led to some individuals from the political opposition (and people who were targeted due to their assumed association with the opposition) leaving the country. The combination of increasing repression, deepening economic crisis and the displacement (and economic vulnerability) caused by *Operation Murambatsvina*, led to a notable increase in migration numbers from 2005 onwards.

In 2004 already, the Solidarity Peace Trust, referring to Zimbabwean government numbers, noted that:

> *An estimated 25% to 30% of Zimbabwe's population has*

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386 (2005). "SA, Zim strengthen ties". *News24*. 17 November.

387 (2005). "Mutasa's diplomatic gaffe riles SA delegates". *The Standard*. 12 August. From: http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2005/08/12/mutasas-diplomatic-gaffe-riles-sa-delegates/.

left the nation. Government's own analysts put the number at 3.4 million. Out of a population of 12 million, around half is under the age of 15, and out of the remaining 6 million adults, 1 million is retired. Out of 5 million potentially productive adults, 3.4 million are outside Zimbabwe. This is a staggering 60% to 70% of productive adults.[388]

The South African government was aware of the link between political unrest in Zimbabwe and the potential for large migration flows across the border, but only reflected this through emergency preparedness planning exercises conducted in Limpopo Province in advance of the 2002 and 2005 Zimbabwean elections. These plans expected there to be a 'mass influx' of Zimbabweans across the border, triggered by election violence and potentially creating a humanitarian emergency on the South African side.[389] In both 2002 and 2005, the 'mass influx' did not materialise in the days immediately preceding or following the elections and so the planned humanitarian assistance and registration of new arrivals was never implemented.[390]

Apart from these very short-lived and localised planning exercises, there was no coherent government response to the hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans who 'trickled' into the country on a daily basis, particularly from 2005 onwards, cumulatively reaching far greater numbers than ever imagined in the emergency preparedness exercises. Migration expert Tara Polzer argued that there is a "key paradox in relation to Zimbabwean migration into South Africa. While Zimbabwean migration since 2000

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388 Solidarity Peace Trust (2004). "No war in Zimbabwe: An account of the exodus of a nation's people". Solidarity Peace Trust. November 2004.

389 Del Valle, H. and T. Polzer (2002). "Emergency preparedness in South Africa: Twenty-four lessons from the Zimbabwean elections". Acornhoek, Refugee Research Programme, University of the Witwatersrand.

390 *Ibid.*

has been the largest concentrated flow in South African history, South Africa's reaction to this movement has been characterised by the attempt to continue with 'business as usual' and 'no crisis' responses." Polzer continues:

> *Compared with most other developed and developing countries, where an inflow of tens or hundreds of thousands of people is usually treated as a political crisis, such a non-response to over a million immigrants requires explanation. The lack of commensurate responses is especially noticeable within the various departments of the South African government, but also within much of organised civil society. The scale and range of responses has addressed neither the scale nor the specific nature of Zimbabwean migration. In practice, therefore, addressing migrant needs and migration impacts is left to social networks among Zimbabweans, (often poor) South African citizens and local level public service providers such as local clinics. As a result of this fragmented and inadequate set of responses, there are two major gaps: firstly, between the needs of Zimbabwean migrants and the formal institutional frameworks and services provided to them; and secondly between the impacts of Zimbabwean migration on South African society and its ability to manage these impacts.*[391]

Part of South Africa's 'business as usual' approach to Zimbabwean migration was that the documentation options for Zimbabweans seeking to enter the country were the same as for all other nationalities, with no specific provisions, and with no changes to take into account the changed circumstances or volumes of Zimbabwean movement. The legal entry options available were to apply for a visitor's visa or a study or work permit before entering South Africa, or to apply for asylum once inside the country. The visitor's visa and work permit required that the applicant have

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391 Polzer, T. (2008). "South African Government and Civil Society Responses to Zimbabwean Migration". *SAMP Policy Brief* 22. p. 1.

a valid Zimbabwean passport, which was expensive and difficult to acquire. The permits were furthermore only available from the South African Embassy in Harare and the application processes were expensive, complex and slow. According to Zimbabwean researchers Tevera and Zinyama, in 2002 a visitor's visa cost R2 000 (the equivalent of US$350 at the time) and required proof that one would be able to sustain oneself while in South Africa, a letter from an employer, proof of residence while in South Africa, and a letter from a spouse in the case of married couples.[392] These conditions remained essentially the same until 2009, when free visitors' visas were introduced, which could be applied for at the border. Work permits were only granted to skilled professionals, and only on the basis of an existing job offer for which the employer had to prove they could not find a qualified South African applicant. Even with a concrete job offer, the permitting process was expensive, time consuming and uncertain.

The South African Refugee Act of 1998, in contrast, gave any individual entering the country the right to claim asylum once they arrived at the border, and to have their claim considered through a status determination process, at no (official) cost to the applicant. This system was intended for individuals who had experienced political persecution, and while some politically active Zimbabweans who had been violently attacked or threatened were able to make use of the asylum system's protection, many others did not know about this option, could not access it due to the system's administrative shortcomings,[393] or did not trust that they would be safe from the Zimbabwean secret services if they came

392 Tevera, D. S. and L. Zinyama (2002). "Zimbaweans who move: Perspectives on international migration in Zimbabwe". *SAMP Migration Policy Series* 25. p. 31.

393 Amit, R., T. Monson, et al. (2009). "National survey of the refugee reception and status determination system in South Africa". Johannesburg, Forced Migration Studies Programme.

forward with their cases.[394] A 2005 study by the Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project (ZTVP) found that many of the Zimbabweans they interviewed in Gauteng had either been direct victims of violence or torture, or had been threatened or intimidated. The majority of these did not have asylum or refugee permits. As the ZTVP reports:

> *The experience of most of the Project's clients has been a litany of failed attempts to access the asylum process… [t]he vast majority of people who might be considered as 'most eligible' for securing asylum applications (i.e. they have left as a result of violence/political reasons) have either been unable or (possibly) unwilling to secure these permits.*[395]

On the other hand, many Zimbabweans who had not experienced direct political persecution did use the asylum system to regularise their legal status in South Africa due to the lack of other avenues for legal entry into the country. The ZTVP research asked, "So, are these people refugees or economic migrants?" and answered:

> *The situation is by no means clear-cut, especially as South Africa's refugee legislation incorporates the African Union definition of refugee, which allows for the consideration of refugee status for persons fleeing from "events seriously disturbing or disrupting public order in either a part or the whole of his or her country" – a situation that many would argue has characterised the contemporary circumstances that many Zimbabweans now find themselves in, and undoubtedly complicated by the impact of Operation Murambatsvina.*[396]

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394 Polzer, T. (2010). "Silence and fragmentation: South African responses to Zimbabwean migration". *Zimbabwe's Exodus; Crisis, Migration, Survival*. J. Crush and D. S. Tevera, Eds. Cape Town, Ottawa, SAMP, IDRC.

395 Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project (2005). "Between a rock and a hard place: A window on the situation of Zimbabweans living in Gauteng, Johannesburg". *IDASA*. p. 7.

396 *Ibid.*

The ZVTP furthermore noted that many Zimbabweans who cited economic reasons for coming to South Africa also reported having been denied food assistance in Zimbabwe[397] in the context of widespread food shortages and the political manipulation of food aid,[398] showing how political and economic reasons for leaving Zimbabwe were increasingly difficult to separate after 2000. Nonetheless, the Department of Home Affairs, which is responsible for managing the migration and asylum systems, repeatedly claimed that the vast majority of Zimbabweans entering South Africa were not *bona fide* asylum seekers and did not put in place any other measures to enable legal entry and residence or any humanitarian assistance.[399]

Polzer hypothesises possible reasons for why the South African government remained mostly 'silent' on Zimbabwean migration flows, and why policy responses remained 'fragmented' in this period:

> *Political reasons for the seeming paralysis within government concerning Zimbabweans in South Africa include a combination of domestic pressures for service delivery to poor citizens and South Africa's 'quiet diplomacy' foreign policy stance towards the government of Zimbabwe. Humanitarian (shelter and food) and refugee rights (blanket legal recognition) approaches are domestically sensitive, while refugee rights and security-based (control and segregate) approaches would sit uncomfortably with South Africa's role as 'neutral arbiter' in Zimbabwe. The key characteristic of 'business as usual' approaches is that they do not require the government to make an open policy statement to either its domestic or regional constituencies. Many mainstream civil society organisations, including a number*

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397 *Ibid*.

398 Human Rights Watch (2003). "Not eligible: The politicization of food in Zimbabwe". Human Rights Watch.

399 Vigneswaran, D. (2007). "Fact or fiction: Examining Zimbabwean Cross-border migration into South Africa". *Migrant Rights Monitoring Project* Occasional Report, 2007/B. Johannesburg FMSP.

of social movements (with some notable exceptions), also see service provision to and advocacy on behalf of Zimbabweans as incompatible with their domestic poverty alleviation mandates and the 'South Africans first' expectations of their members. Furthermore, there has been an antagonistic relationship between government and civil society on Zimbabwean issues generally, counteracting the possibility of joint interventions.

Finally, institutional factors have played an important role in delaying and undermining effective coordinated responses. South Africa's general policy of urban self-sufficiency and self-settlement for refugees means that there are no institutions in place to provide large-scale shelter and welfare assistance. There has also not been a previous comparable large-scale migration flow in democratic South Africa's institutional experience. Other factors include a lack of leadership willing or able to galvanise the required multi-departmental commitments within government; and a fragmented civil society with limited capacity to scale-up localised welfare interventions or to coordinate a unified position on Zimbabwean migration.[400]

In spite of continued official 'fragmentation' of responses to Zimbabweans in South Africa, by 2006 public and political recognition of the extent of Zimbabwe's internal collapse was clearly evident in South Africa. According to the United Nations World Health Organization, the life expectancy for Zimbabwean men had dropped to 37 years and the life expectancy for women was 34 years of age, the lowest in the world in 2006.[401] The trend line in Chart 1 shows what a radical decline this was from a high of 42.5 years in 1990, which was well above the average for Sub-

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400   Polzer, T. (2008). "South African Government and Civil Society Responses to Zimbabwean Migration". *SAMP* Policy Brief 22. Para. 1.9 and 1.10.

401   The World Health Organization (2007). "Annex Table 1 – Basic indicators for all Member States". *The World Health Report 2006*. Geneva, World Health Organization.

Saharan Africa and countries in UNDP's 'low human development' bracket. From 2000 onward, life expectancy in Zimbabwe was significantly below these comparable groups of countries.

Chart 1 – Trends in Zimbabwean Life Expectancy[402]
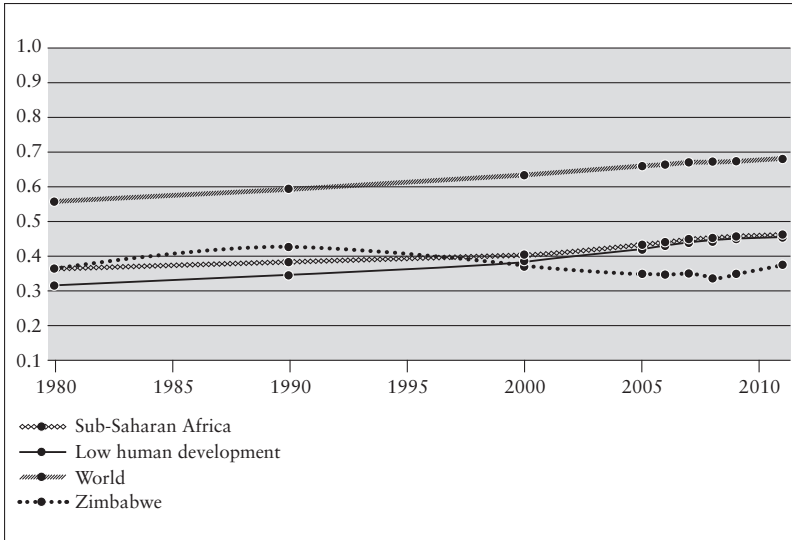
These conditions brought with them increasingly open discussion of appropriate strategies for South African action, in contrast to the largely 'off-record' debates earlier in the decade. This also included a more favourable political terrain for the MDC to build links with the ANC. Most white farmers had been driven out of Zimbabwe so that black-on-black oppression became more evident as the fundamental content of the conflict. Also, the MDC and civil society organisations had distanced themselves from white opposition party and business interests in South Africa. They asserted their identity as a workers' party that grew out of trade union, student and civil society opposition to structural adjustment in the 1990s.

The result of this deliberate realignment of the opposition's

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402 UNDP. "Country Profile: Human Development Indicators". From: http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ZWE.html.

relationships in South Africa, combined with lobbying and political mobilisation by South African civil society activists, was a more balanced Zimbabwe policy on the part of the South African government and ruling party, and a South African solidarity movement which included many black members of the ANC, Cosatu and SACP.

According to Lucian Segami, a founder member of SALO, who was prominent within the solidarity movement and active in the ANC Alliance:

> *There have been very important policy shifts in as far as the ANC is concerned, going back to the 2004 ANC national general council. Also, at the 2007 ANC policy conference, there was a groundswell expression of deep solidarity with the struggling people of Zimbabwe, of which three million are political and economic refugees here,*[403] *so even the political leadership in the ruling party appeared quite frustrated at times that there was no resolution on this matter and that South Africa did not play the role that it could have played to get the protagonists to reach a settlement on the differences and... all the rights that have to be restored to the people of Zimbabwe including workers, women, youth.*[404]

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403   The estimate of three million Zimbabweans in South Africa, widely quoted between 2005 and 2009, was never supported with empirical calculations. More well-founded estimates converged at between one and two million. Landau, L. B. (2007). "Drowning in numbers: Interrogating new patterns of Zimbabwean migration to South Africa". Johannesburg, briefing prepared for Centre for Development and Enterprise; Makina, D. (2007). "Survey of profile of migrant Zimbabweans in South Africa: A pilot study". Pretoria, University of South Africa; Centre for Development and Enterprise (2008). "Immigrants in Johannesburg: estimating numbers and assessing impacts". Johannesburg, Centre for Development and Enterprise; Polzer, T. (2010). "Migration fact sheet: Population movements in and to South Africa". *Migration Fact Sheets*. FMSP. Johannesburg, FMSP.

404   SALO interview with Lucian Segami, Cape Town, 2007.

6

Conclusion

The account of the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship in this book has looked at the choices South African actors, and especially its governmental leaders, have made in context. The contexts have been given by a combination of history (including institutional identities, relationships and lessons learned from past foreign policy engagements), structural factors (such as bilateral and global economic relations and geopolitics), and broader political processes within South Africa, the region, the continent and globally.

Peter Vale, Nelson Mandela Chair of Politics at Rhodes University, gives a good example of the importance of context:

> *I am not one of those who universally condemn Mbeki. I think that he has operated under enormous constraints. I am not one of those who believed that he could do to Mugabe what Vorster did to Smith: "As jy dit nie doen nie, gaan ek jou water en ligte afsny" ["if you don't do this, I will cut off your lights and water"]... Vorster was acting within a Cold War context. Vorster would only do that because Kissinger told him to do it; it was the big hand of the United States behind it, which allowed it to happen within the Cold War context. This doesn't exist anymore. And Mugabe has shown he can go to China. He has had a range of options. So I am not one of those who believe in 'die water en ligte afsny'.*

A context is, however, never static and political actors can interpret and manipulate it through their choices. We have, therefore, tried to avoid accounts that present South Africa's interactions with Zimbabwe as supposedly automatic reactions to structural pressures.

Of course, political choices are also not always made easily. The institutions that hold political decision-making power are themselves complicated, may have multiple and divergent interests and may simply not be very well coordinated. In analysing South

African foreign policy generally, given the country's status as a young developing democracy, South African political analyst Steven Friedman warns against

> *expecting a coherent approach from states whose democracy is far from established and who will inevitably filter their role abroad through their own ambivalence and uncertainty about their future.*[405]

South African Professor Chris Landsberg, however, disagrees, arguing that the ANC's foreign policy (and therefore South Africa's foreign policy) has been quite coherent. He identifies the policy's consistent characteristics as being "based on a pro-African, South-South orientation, seeking a 'strategic partnership' with the industrialised North with the goal of consolidating an African and South-South agenda." This, according to Landsberg, resulted in "an engagist, internationalist foreign policy strategy – not an isolationist or confrontational one".[406] South Africa's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe can therefore, in Landsberg's view, be explained in relation to this fundamental policy backdrop.

In any case, the actual foreign policy outcome at any point in time is always an interaction between a shifting context and changes in the choices made by political actors. Shifts in observable foreign policy may, therefore, be due to either changes in context, changes in choices, or both. The account of the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship throughout the chapters above has, therefore, attempted to cover both continuity and change.

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405 Friedman, S. (2008). "'We met the enemy and he is US': Domestic politics and South Africa's role in promoting African democracy". *African Journal of International Affairs* 11(2): 49.

406 Chris Landsberg, presentation to SALO Conference, Pretoria, June 2007.

This volume ends at a point of change. On 11 March 2007, opposition and civic leaders were subjected to public beating, arrest and torture by ZANU-PF supporters, and MDC structures were directly attacked. A combination of internal resistance by pro-democracy groups in Zimbabwe, the media exposure of police brutality against Morgan Tsvangirai and other leading figures, international pressure, and concerned voices in SADC led to the Extra-Ordinary SADC Heads of State summit in Tanzania at the end of March 2007. The South African government was officially appointed as mediator in the Zimbabwe crisis there and then.

Future publications by SALO will recount South Africa's role as mediator, including the rest of Mbeki's presidency from taking on the official mediator role to leaving office in September 2008, the interim presidency of Kgalema Motlanthe from September 2008 to May 2009, and the presidency of Jacob Zuma.

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This book addresses the central question: how has the South African government responded to, and impacted on, the post-2000 Zimbabwean crisis and what were the factors influencing these responses? In answering this question, the focus is on presenting a chronology of positions and decisions in relation to Zimbabwe by consecutive South African governments, as well as elucidating the historical foundations of these decisions and the influence of other key domestic, regional and international actors.

The current volume focuses on South Africa–Zimbabwe relations from pre-colonial times up to 2006, including the years of Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis before South Africa's official appointment as mediator by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). A second volume will cover the years of mediation from 2007 onwards.

"The Southern African Liaison Office's book South Africa–Zimbabwe Relations; Volume 1: Pre-colonial to 2006 provides a significant contribution to the international relations and foreign policy of southern Africa. The text grapples with the complexity of relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe on many fronts – societal, bilateral and several multi-lateral instances – as well as in a macro-historic perspective. It is bolstered by a fluent and easy-to-grasp writing style that grabs the reader's attention on a vexing issue: the South Africa–Zimbabwe relationship. Thematic chapters are augmented with historiographical analyses, and a thicket of information is balanced with a sophisticated analysis and narrative that runs through the manuscript. This is a welcome and timely contribution. Volume II should follow soon."

– CHRIS LANDSBERG, *Professor and Chair:*
African Diplomacy and Foreign Policy, University of Johannesburg

"This is a very well-researched study that clearly sets out the parameters of South Africa–Zimbabwe relations from the pre-colonial period to 2006. The book succeeds in exploring the complexities of this changing relationship, drawing on a wide range of secondary literature and enriched by a series of well-placed interviews. Much has been written on Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy', and opinions are sharply divided on the efficacy of this strategy. The SALO publication provides an excellent overview of the origins and determining factors of this policy, resulting in a balanced assessment of Mbeki's position. This study will make a valuable contribution to an understanding of the long history of relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe, and serves as an excellent example of the sterling work that SALO has conducted in developing a forum for critical discussion on the Zimbabwean crisis."

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