

THE CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION

Planning for Post-Mugabe Zimbabwe

Michelle D. Gavin

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FOREWORD

Once among sub-Saharan Africa's most prosperous and promising states, Zimbabwe has been driven by mismanagement to social and economic ruin. The plight of its people and the prospect for instability in the region make the situation deeply troubling for its citizens, its neighbors, and for the United States and the entire international community. But there appears to be little in the way of viable options to bring about favorable change.

In this Council Special Report, produced by the Council's Center for Preventive Action, Michelle D. Gavin urges the United States to look past the current government to Zimbabwe's future. She argues that by leading an international process to plan for recovery and reconstruction after President Robert Mugabe eventually departs, the United States can increase the likelihood that change, when it comes, will bring constructive reform instead of conflict and state collapse. Moreover, this planning could encourage and possibly hasten Mugabe's exit. Ms. Gavin proposes a series of multilateral steps the United States could take now, such as building consensus around post-Mugabe reform measures and establishing an international trust fund to be used for assistance. Such activities would not only provide incentives for Zimbabwe's next leaders to pursue sound governance, but would also give the United States an opportunity to strengthen its often-troubled relationship with South Africa.

Planning for Post-Mugabe Zimbabwe takes a fresh but realistic look at the situation. In so doing, it offers a way to advance U.S. interests in the region and increase the chance that Zimbabwe's eventual political transition reverses, rather than continues, that country's decline.

Richard N. Haass
President
Council on Foreign Relations
October 2007

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Michelle D. Gavin

ZIMBABWE



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ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
EU	European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act

COUNCIL SPECIAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past decade, the refusal of President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) ruling party to tolerate challenges to their power has led them to systematically dismantle the most effective workings of Zimbabwe's economic and political systems, replacing these with structures of corruption, patronage, and repression. The resulting 80 percent unemployment rate, hyperinflation, and severe food, fuel, and power shortages have created a national climate of desperation and instability. Meanwhile, often-violent repression has left the opposition divided and eroded public confidence in mechanisms to effect peaceful political change.

The human rights and humanitarian consequences of these developments have attracted the attention of the United States and others in the international community, as has the potential of the crisis to descend into civil conflict, to result in a failed state, and to trigger region-wide instability. But years of Western condemnation and targeted sanctions have done little to alter the course or speed of Zimbabwe's decline.¹

A continuation of the same painful deterioration that has characterized the country in recent years is one possible scenario for the future. Nevertheless, today internal economic and political pressures are coinciding with increased international attention and regional engagement in the Zimbabwe crisis. The United States should act now to capitalize on these developments and develop a new direction for its Zimbabwe policy—one that focuses not just on disapproval of the current regime, but also on a vision for the country's future and a plan for how to get there.

Given the limits of U.S. interests and influence in Zimbabwe, policymakers and advocates should recognize that the United States probably cannot compel President Mugabe and his loyalists to step aside. But engaging with other members of the international community now to map out a path for Zimbabwe's recovery is more than an exercise in advance planning. By working multilaterally to build consensus around governance-related conditions for reengagement, and by marshaling significant

¹ For an excellent discussion of the constraints on U.S. policy, see Princeton N. Lyman, "Zimbabwe: The Limits of Influence," *African Renaissance*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2006, pp. 8–16.

reconstruction resources in an international trust fund for Zimbabwe, the United States can help establish clear incentives for potential successors to Mugabe to embrace vital reforms. In this way, the United States can encourage and even hasten constructive forms of potential political change by affecting the calculus of those who are in a position to trigger a transition.

Sound recovery and reconstruction planning can also help the United States and others to prevent the worst-case scenarios of civil conflict, state collapse, and regional destabilization from taking hold during any future attempted political transition. Instead of scrambling to respond to unfolding catastrophe or simply setting the stage for another crisis in the future by focusing exclusively on short-term stabilization and ignoring governance, the United States can be prepared to support stabilizing efforts that create the conditions for growth and development. Once governance reforms are consolidated, the international investment in Zimbabwe's recovery should be secured with initiatives that focus on making transitional gains sustainable, including efforts to revive agriculture, reform the security sector, and provide services and opportunity to Zimbabwe's youth.

Finally, the United States can seize on the opportunity presented by change in Zimbabwe to enter a new phase of cooperation with southern Africa, and particularly to improve a somewhat strained relationship with South Africa. South Africa is an indispensable leader in regional peace and security matters, a driving force for establishing new standards of governance in Africa, and a tremendously important investment presence on the continent. These factors, combined with South Africa's influence as a leader in the global south and importance as a partner in counterterrorism efforts, make the U.S.-South Africa relationship among the most important in the region.

The course of Zimbabwe's future could continue to complicate that relationship, or, alternatively, could deepen and enrich it. By engaging in detailed consultations with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) now and developing a regional dimension to reconstruction plans, the United States can develop an approach to Zimbabwe's transition that, in the best case, complements South Africa's own efforts. Zimbabwe can move from the list of irritants in the bilateral relationship to the list of issues on which the United States and South Africa are invested in each other's success.

In fall 2006 the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization spearheaded an interagency planning exercise to prepare for a range of potential changes in Zimbabwe. The United States and others have also been part of multilateral discussions about the prospects of reengaging with Zimbabwe and the reforms that would be necessary to reestablish normal relations with the donor community. Britain has begun planning for reengagement with Zimbabwe when political conditions are ripe, and the World Bank is coordinating analytic work that will be shared among donors to help them respond to the needs of a Zimbabwe in transition. But more needs to be done to make these efforts effective.²

Zimbabwe, with its tremendous national potential and existing roster of civil society leaders who have worked tirelessly and at great personal risk to resist oppression, lends itself to the U.S. desire to see success stories emerge in Africa that are grounded in democratic governance and respect for the rule of law. This report supports continuing current policies aimed at pressuring the Mugabe government and easing the suffering of the Zimbabwean people, but also aims to encourage the United States, other major international donors, and the states of southern Africa to act now to develop viable reconstruction plans, establish the institutional infrastructure necessary to ensure donor coordination, and, critically, begin marshalling the resources necessary to help the people of Zimbabwe put their country back together again. By doing so, the United States and others can help create incentives for peaceful political change in Zimbabwe.

² Earlier, groundbreaking work on this topic was done by Todd Moss and Stewart Patrick of the Center for Global Development. Their publications *The Day After Comrade Bob: Applying Post-Conflict Recovery Lessons to Zimbabwe* (Center for Global Development Working Paper no. 72, December 2005) and "After Mugabe: Applying Post-Conflict Recovery Lessons to Zimbabwe," (*Africa Policy Journal*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, vol.1, Spring 2006) continue to inform discussions in policy circles.

NATURE OF THE CURRENT CRISIS

Zimbabwe's brief history as an independent country is marked by both horrific violence and impressive achievements. Just a few years after having gained independence in 1980 after a long and bloody struggle against the British and white rule, Robert Mugabe, the country's first elected president, led a vicious campaign to consolidate political power by suppressing the people of Matabeleland, where the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the rival to his political party, ZANU-PF, was strongest. Tens of thousands were murdered during the dark days of what was called the Gukurahundi campaign. At the same time the country maintained one of the best and most far-reaching educational systems on the continent, graduating generations of young Zimbabweans well prepared to participate in a modern economy. Combined with economic growth driven largely by the agricultural sector, this led to a growing middle class and an increasingly vibrant civil society.

But President Mugabe and ZANU-PF governed through ever-expanding patronage networks that were fundamentally incompatible with the structural reforms the economy needed. Tensions mounted. By the late 1990s, frustration with ZANU-PF's dominance and dissatisfaction with economic mismanagement and poor governance led to the emergence of a new opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which had roots in the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. In response, President Mugabe seized on the extremely important issue of land tenure to rally political support for his cause. This land reform had been desperately needed since independence and was aimed at empowering Zimbabweans, who had been disenfranchised during the British colonial period. But time and again, foreign donors and the government of Zimbabwe failed to agree on an orderly and regulated program.

In February 2000 Zimbabwe held a referendum on a draft constitution proposed by President Mugabe's government. The new constitution would have strengthened the presidency, granted government officials immunity from prosecution, and allowed the government to seize land without compensating owners. When the electorate defeated the referendum in what was widely interpreted as a rebuke to the ZANU-PF dominated

government, President Mugabe embarked on a costly campaign to shore up his power and crush opposition forces.

“War veterans” who claimed to have been part of the liberation struggle soon began a government-backed campaign of violent farm invasions on a massive scale. They displaced white Zimbabwean farm owners and cost some four hundred thousand black Zimbabwean farm workers their jobs and/or homes.³ A number of judges who rejected these violations of the rule of law were intimidated and removed.⁴ Independent journalists who questioned whether average Zimbabweans or party cronies were benefiting from land redistribution became targets of the ruling party and state security services.

In spite of serious efforts to intimidate opposition candidates and supporters, the MDC party won 57 of the 120 contestable seats in the June 2000 parliamentary elections. But that only led to further repression. President Mugabe won reelection in March 2002 over his MDC challenger, Morgan Tsvangirai, in polling marred by deeply unfair preelection conditions, political violence, and a lack of transparency.⁵

Three years later the government launched Operation Murambatsvina, which greatly exacerbated economic dislocation arising out of the chaotic land reform campaign. Ostensibly aimed at eliminating unauthorized housing and commercial activities (but more likely intended to punish the urban populations that supported the MDC), Murambatsvina led to the displacement of seven hundred thousand people in a massive, forced urban-to-rural migration.⁶ Little has materialized from government promises to help build new rural housing for these displaced citizens whose homes and livelihoods were destroyed.

By the end of 2005 the organized domestic opposition had been seriously weakened. In parliamentary elections held prior to the launch of Operation Murambatsvina, the Zimbabwean government manipulated food aid for political advantage. ZANU-PF won enough seats to amend the constitution without the

³ Most of the people participating in the land invasions were actually far too young to have been veterans of the liberation struggle.

⁴ International Bar Association, *Report of Zimbabwe Mission 2001*, April 2001.

⁵ For a discussion of the 2002 elections, see International Crisis Group, *Zimbabwe at the Crossroads: Transition or Conflict?*, March 22, 2002.

⁶ Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina*, UN Human Settlements Programme, July 2005.

cooperation of the opposition. For its part, the MDC splintered after an internal dispute about the merits of boycotting November 2005 senate elections.

Today, Zimbabwe is an economic disaster. Economists estimate that the actual annual inflation rate exceeds 10,000 percent.⁷ Four of every five Zimbabweans are jobless, and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has shrunk by over 46 percent since 1998.⁸ While all of southern Africa has experienced recurrent drought in recent years, Zimbabwe's man-made disaster has been the primary factor behind the agricultural sector's collapse. Zimbabwe used to export food to its neighbors. Now it desperately needs food aid. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme (WFP), more than one-third of all Zimbabweans will need food assistance by early 2008.⁹ The manufacturing sector, which was agro-dependent, has shrunk dramatically. Gold producers are operating below one-fifth of capacity, and an additional chill has been cast on private sector—driven growth by the government's plans to "indigenize" 51 percent of major commercial enterprises.¹⁰ The government's recent efforts to forcibly impose strict price controls have only exacerbated the scarcity of critical goods, including fuel.

By most accounts, over three million Zimbabweans have fled their country, accounting for roughly one-quarter of the total population. Most are in South Africa, though the expatriate community has a presence throughout southern Africa, parts of Europe, and North America. Remittances help the remaining population survive, as does international food aid. Both of these lifelines also help Mugabe's government cling to power by providing desperately needed foreign exchange.

The regime's survival is now tied to its capacity to deliver lucrative opportunities to elite supporters, and this patronage network has exacerbated the country's hyperinflation problem. Average Zimbabweans who cannot share in the spoils gained by manipulating the exchange rate suffer with wages that cannot keep pace with rising prices. Late last year, doctors, nurses, and teachers led strikes and said that they could not

⁷ In fact, the International Monetary Fund has indicated that the annual rate could reach over 100,000 percent by the end of 2007. See "Inflation Set to Hit 100,000 Percent," *Financial Gazette* (Harare), August 2, 2007. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200708020796.html>.

⁸ On the contraction of Zimbabwe's economy, see Michael Clemens and Todd Moss, *Costs and Causes of Zimbabwe's Crisis*, Center for Global Development, July 20, 2005.

⁹ "Zimbabwe: Urgency Needed to Avert a Humanitarian Crisis," IRIN, July 23, 2007.

¹⁰ "Zimbabwe Gold Firms Working Below Fifth of Capacity," Reuters, June 29, 2007.

continue to function under the current conditions. ZANU-PF has responded to runaway inflation with increasingly desperate efforts to control market forces, such as the imposition of price controls that would force vendors to sell goods below cost.

In the midst of this political and economic turmoil, it is important to note that HIV/AIDS has also taken its toll on the Zimbabwean population. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS reports that over 20 percent of Zimbabweans ages fifteen to forty-nine are HIV positive. Life expectancy has dropped from sixty-one in 1990 to a dismal thirty-seven for men and thirty-four years of age for women in 2006. While HIV prevalence and incidence rates have begun to decline in recent years, perhaps due to poverty-induced changes in sexual behavior, the situation remains grave.¹¹ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that well over one million Zimbabwean children have lost one or both parents to AIDS.¹² The human and economic costs of the pandemic will continue to affect Zimbabwe regardless of any changes in governance in the future.

¹¹ Craig Timberg, "Less Risk of AIDS Infection When Times Are Tight," *The Sunday Independent* (South Africa), July 22, 2007.

¹² UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2007*.

THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Zimbabwe's descent into political violence and economic collapse has been accompanied by regional ambivalence and increasing isolation from the West.

At the end of 2001, President George W. Bush signed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA), a law prohibiting U.S. support for both debt relief and any new assistance for Zimbabwe from the international financial institutions until the U.S. president has been able to certify that certain conditions relating to the rule of law, free and fair elections, and legal and transparent land reform, among others, prevail in Zimbabwe. In March 2003 President Bush issued an executive order imposing the targeted sanctions of a travel ban and assets freeze on senior figures in the Zimbabwean government and ruling party. A revised executive order issued in 2005 included family members and business associates of those officials. The targeted sanctions were renewed in March 2007. Britain, the European Union (EU), and Australia have similar targeted sanctions in place. In addition, the Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe in 2002, leading President Mugabe to withdraw Zimbabwe altogether in 2004.

The United States and other donors do, however, provide foreign assistance to the Zimbabwean people, both through the WFP and bilaterally. The Bush administration's budget request for fiscal year 2008 included \$21 million for Zimbabwe outside of food aid programs. The lion's share of U.S. bilateral assistance is devoted to anti-HIV/AIDS efforts, and the remainder is support for democracy and governance programs. Congress has demonstrated bipartisan interest in Zimbabwe in recent years, which occasionally takes the form of resolutions condemning repression and political violence.

Despite Senate testimony in 2005 in which Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice identified Zimbabwe, along with Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Burma, and Belarus, as an "outpost of tyranny," the measures adopted by the U.S. government in Zimbabwe's case have more significance as signals of disapproval than actual bite. President Mugabe and his cronies frequently claim that Western sanctions are sabotaging the Zimbabwean economy (as opposed to gross mismanagement), ignoring the fact that there are no trade sanctions on Zimbabwe. While it is true that major donors oppose extending any

additional support to Zimbabwe at international financial institutions, Zimbabwe's own deep arrears and the ZANU-PF government's unwillingness to pursue sustainable economic policies prevent this support from being extended anyway.¹³

But other important voices have expressed far less alarm about conditions in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's African neighbors have been loath to criticize President Mugabe's regime, and in 2007 Africa even successfully offered up Zimbabwe as the region's preferred candidate to chair the UN Commission on Sustainable Economic Development. African election observers have given their seal of approval to Zimbabwe's deeply flawed elections. The African Union (AU) has twice buried reports critical of Zimbabwe drafted by its own Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. When the AU did try to send their special rapporteur on refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers in Africa to Zimbabwe to investigate Operation Murambatsvina, he was deported by the Zimbabwean government. The AU's reaction to this snub was muted, to say the least.

Many within Zimbabwe and in the international community had pinned their hopes on the South African government for effective international action to help resolve Zimbabwe's crisis. South Africa has leverage as Zimbabwe's most significant trading partner and is a major supplier of electricity to Zimbabwe. It has a clear national interest in preventing Zimbabwe's collapse, which would mean not only an unstable neighbor but a flood of refugees streaming across the border. South Africa's special moral authority, and its own searing liberation struggle, added to the sense that it would be well positioned to help facilitate some resolution. During a swing through Africa in 2003, President Bush referred to President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa as the "point man" on the Zimbabwe issue.

But years of on-again, off-again attempts by President Mbeki to pursue his preferred approach of "quiet diplomacy" have yielded no improvements on the ground. South Africa has a clear national interest in preventing utter collapse in Zimbabwe, however, historical, cultural, and political factors make it difficult for the South African government to take a hard line with President Mugabe. For Thabo Mbeki, it is difficult to

¹³ The World Bank actually placed Zimbabwe on nonaccrual status in October 2000, making the country ineligible for International Development Association loans and requiring the clearance of arrears before new loans can be made—a decision taken before ZDERA was passed.

criticize a senior liberation hero, and perhaps even more difficult to accept the MDC as a serious political entity, given the opposition party's links to union forces that are a thorn in his side domestically. The African National Congress's (ANC) own status as a completely dominant political party that derives much of its legitimacy from its role in South Africa's own liberation also points to a natural affinity with ZANU-PF.

Meanwhile, desperate Zimbabweans continue to stream across the border; South Africa is currently deporting about 3,900 Zimbabweans per week.¹⁴ A 2005 South African effort to encourage reform by attaching some mild conditions to a loan requested by Mugabe's government was scuttled when Zimbabwe found funds elsewhere. For the United States and others, the tepid response by Zimbabwe's neighbors has dimmed the promise of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and tarnished the credibility of SADC and the AU. There have been exceptions to the rule of African solidarity. South African luminaries like Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu have spoken out publicly against Mugabe's repression. Occasionally the governments of Botswana and Lesotho have registered public concern. The July 2005 report by UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka regarding Operation Murambatsvina carried special weight because Tibaijuka is a Tanzanian national who was a noted scholar and civil society activist in her home country before becoming a UN diplomat. The SADC Parliamentary Forum condemned the irregularities that accompanied the 2002 presidential elections in Zimbabwe (and as a result was not invited back to observe elections in 2005). African civil society voices and prominent clerics have also been willing to condemn human rights abuses and to call for a return to the rule of law.

China, too, has been a factor. President Mugabe has trumpeted his "Look East" policy, but it is not clear that the enthusiasm is returned on the Asian side. China was ZANU-PF's patron during the Cold War, but Chinese investors today are looking for solid returns, not ideological soul mates. China has supplied arms to Mugabe's government in recent years, and Chinese firms are involved in tobacco, mining, telecommunications, and electricity in Zimbabwe. But overall Chinese support for the Mugabe regime is tepid. Chinese president Hu Jintao did not stop in Harare during his

¹⁴ Michael Wines, "Influx from Zimbabwe to South Africa Tests Both," *New York Times*, June 22, 2007.

African tour earlier this year, and despite China's energetic courting of African partners in recent years, Beijing lately seems anxious to downplay its relationship with Zimbabwe.

THE WINDS OF CHANGE?

For many years, close observers of Zimbabwe have claimed that “when the economy collapses, that’s when change will have to come.” Yet by many measures, the economy has already collapsed, and most Zimbabweans are focused on daily survival rather than affecting sweeping political change. Pessimism, and a sense that there is nothing to be done but lament Zimbabwe’s losses, has dominated much analysis of Zimbabwe since 2005. However, renewed international interest, and indicators that powerful Zimbabwean interests are increasingly uncomfortable with the status quo, suggests that change may come relatively soon, perhaps from seemingly unlikely sources. Without making specific predictions about future events, three factors are working in favor of change in the months ahead.

First, the international landscape changed in March 2007. Internationally broadcast images of a brutal government crackdown on civil society and opposition leaders appear to have embarrassed regional leaders. Zambian president Levy P. Mwanawasa famously compared Zimbabwe to “a sinking Titanic whose passengers are jumping out.” Tanzanian president Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, acting in his capacity as SADC chairman, traveled to Zimbabwe in March to discuss the situation. The president of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor, who is also the current chairman of the AU, called the events “embarrassing.” UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon condemned the Zimbabwean government’s actions. An extraordinary SADC summit was held in Tanzania in the wake of the brutality, and while southern African leaders expressed their solidarity with Mugabe and called for a repeal of international sanctions in the resulting communiqué, they also gave President Mbeki a mandate to mediate talks among Zimbabwean parties and groups—a direct rebuke to Mugabe’s claims that Zimbabwe’s problems are caused entirely by external, neocolonial meddling.

The team appointed to carry out South Africa’s mandate from SADC to mediate between ZANU-PF and the MDC appears to be serious about achieving some improvement, although it is unclear whether this good faith is reciprocated by ZANU-PF negotiators. The MDC’s own divisions also complicate negotiation efforts. Nevertheless,

the Congress of South African Trade Unions's (COSATU) longstanding sympathy for the MDC and frustration with the African National Congress's (ANC) quiet diplomacy might have particular resonance in the months ahead, as COSATU aims to make its influence in the ANC alliance felt during the selection of a successor to Thabo Mbeki. And of course South Africa has no interest in seeing some version of the China Olympics/Darfur campaign being waged in conjunction with the 2010 World Cup. August's anticlimactic SADC summit in Lusaka was inconclusive, and, if anything, suggested that the region is still unable to find consensus to meaningfully address the crisis in its midst. But reports of behind-the-scenes debates about the conditions that should be attached to any regional economic relief package suggest that some are ready to apply pressure to the Mugabe government, and the decision to endorse continued South African mediation leaves the door open to more decisive action down the road. It remains possible that an increased regional appetite for serious discussions about how to move forward could combine with other factors to create a real opportunity for a new course, even if the current mediation effort does not bear immediate fruit.

Second, the regime's survival is inextricably tied to policies that offer lucrative rewards to important regime supporters in the form of large government subsidies and arbitrage opportunities stemming from the multitiered exchange rate—the very policies that are feeding hyperinflation. But most Zimbabweans are left struggling to cover ever-rising costs for basic goods. Elites who are interested in their own long-term financial security need a more favorable investment climate, decent relations with major economic powers, and a reliable pool of high-quality labor if the private businesses and parcels of land they have acquired are to realize their full economic potential. President Mugabe's decisions make a certain kind of self-interested sense over the short term. But elites with longer-term horizons have a different set of interests. They know that the road from the present situation to a functional economy requires support of the major donors and international financial institutions.

Third, perhaps driven by this calculus, people within ZANU-PF are looking for an alternative to the party's present, Mugabe-dominated course. Emerson Mnangagwa, the current minister for rural housing and former speaker of parliament, is thought to have backing from some in the Karanga community and is frequently identified as a powerful

would-be successor to Mugabe. Retired army chief Solomon “Rex” Mujuru and his wife, Vice President Joyce Mujuru, boast Zezuru support and represent another widely cited power base within ZANU-PF. Both Mnangagwa and Mujuru, however, have extensive ties to corruption and grave human rights abuses on their résumés.

Perhaps the most important sign that the status quo is in jeopardy came at the December 2006 ZANU-PF party conference, where President Mugabe’s attempt to extend his current presidential term to 2010 was rebuffed. Allegations relating to coup plots occasionally surface in the news, although President Mugabe’s travel schedule suggests that he is not terribly worried about this scenario. While the party still contains a number of Mugabe loyalists and the competition for supremacy between the Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps could provide President Mugabe with divide-and-rule opportunities to cling to power, it is possible that one will eventually win out, or that the ruling party factions themselves will agree that a change of course need not be a zero-sum game.

ZANU-PF is not monolithic, and alongside the likes of Mnangagwa and Mujuru, one can find technocrats like former finance minister Simba Makoni or even Mugabe loyalists with less unsavory backgrounds such as current Reserve Bank governor Gideon Gono. The recent leak of documents detailing Gono’s objections to the ruling party’s price-control strategy is widely interpreted as an effort by Gono to position himself as an internationally acceptable successor to Mugabe.¹⁵ It remains to be seen whether these actors have the political muscle to operate independent of the more powerful old guard.

In some South African circles, where stability rather than abstract ideas about justice or democracy is the top priority for Zimbabwe, some form of transitional government is often proposed to help guide the country toward new elections. The MDC would have a role to play in this transitional body, and the MDC’s own road map for change calls for a version of this power-sharing arrangement (although splits within the movement could result in some portion of the party being left on the outside of this seemingly inclusive arrangement). It is unclear whether some transitional body could effectively guide Zimbabwe toward a more level playing field for rule-governed, peaceful political competition when elements of state power such as the Central Intelligence

¹⁵ Godfrey Marawanyika, “Zimbabwe Steps Up Price Blitz Despite Bank Chief’s Warning,” *Agence France-Presse*, July 13, 2007.

Organization have a history of doing ZANU-PF's bidding. Zimbabwe had a fairly unhappy history with governments of national unity, and one can imagine an unfortunate situation in which the drive for credible elections is abandoned in favor of simply promoting elections in which Robert Mugabe is not a candidate. At a minimum, it seems likely that intense international engagement and clearly defined benchmarks for transition would be required to ensure that any transitional government does not become mere window dressing for ZANU-PF's survival strategies.

The September 2007 decision of the MDC not to oppose constitutional amendment eighteen, and SADC's enthusiasm for this development, suggests that the elections currently slated for March 2008 may be the fulcrum on which political change begins to move. Among other elements, this amendment gives the parliament the authority to choose a successor to any elected president who is unable or unwilling to finish his or her term in office, while also mandating a redistricting exercise likely to strengthen the ruling party. Civil society organizations are disillusioned with the MDC's decision, which appears to set the stage for a ZANU-PF-dominated parliament to orchestrate Mugabe's eventual exit while maintaining firm political control. Opposition leaders, who possess little leverage in the SADC talks, respond by suggesting that this is one confidence-building step in a process that promises further reform. In any case, it seems plain that the endgame for the Mugabe regime is being planned in various quarters now, making this a crucial time to act for those who seek to influence the decisions of Zimbabwean and regional actors in favor of profound change rather than simply an anything-but-Mugabe approach.

With external, internal, and basic economic pressures all converging on the country at once, Zimbabwe's political future is impossible to predict. The eighty-three-year-old Mugabe cannot rule indefinitely, but he could hang on over the short term. The March 2008 elections may be postponed. It is certainly possible that the Mugabe regime could continue to cobble together a series of short-term rescues (perhaps through a short-term bailout from Libya, or by scraping together more foreign exchange from the nationalization of mining enterprises) to stay afloat for many months ahead. In addition, investors anticipating transition in Zimbabwe and looking to snap up bargains while prices are still low could unwittingly delay the very changes they are betting on.

But the time will come when the current government will have nothing left in its bag of tricks, and change will come. A chaotic, violent situation in which economic recovery must take a backseat to urgent stabilization efforts is an alarming possibility. In any case, whether set against a backdrop of conflict or not, some set of politically managed leadership changes is likely to unfold, and however President Mugabe exits the scene, it is hard to imagine a transitional scenario in which ZANU-PF does not play an important role. Before international support for recovery can begin to flow, foreign governments and private-sector actors will have to be assured that Zimbabwe's new leadership isn't going to simply deliver more of the same unsustainable, patronage-based policymaking that helped drive the country to its current crisis. Indeed, Zimbabwe watchers are already expressing concern about the prospect that the international community will embrace an "anything but Mugabe" strategy that ignores the underlying structures of repression and corruption responsible for Zimbabwe's crisis.

In any case, Zimbabweans themselves will be the drivers for any foreseeable change. Civil society and the public at large will continue to agitate for economic reforms, relief from scarcity and hyperinflation, and the right to voice their views and exercise their franchise. ZANU-PF actors will work to maintain power, and for the majority that will mean maintaining patronage networks. MDC leaders will push for free and fair elections and a seat at the decision-making table.

The international community will not determine the course of events in Zimbabwe, but the United States and others can influence the cost-benefit calculus of powerful Zimbabwean and regional actors who are in a position to affect outcomes. The next Zimbabwean leaders may not be philosophically committed to transparent good governance or necessarily inclined to appreciate a strong opposition, but they may be willing to tolerate elements of both if doing so serves their interests.

The United States and others are likely to face tough choices after President Mugabe's exit. How can they effectively push for reform without passing a tipping point that mobilizes spoilers? Is it possible to engage a new government in which ZANU-PF still plays a decisive role without supporting a recreation of the same corrupt governance that led to the current crisis? When will the timing be right for reengagement, since

multiple transitions could occur in a short space of time before some stable entity emerges?

At a point of transition—virtually any transition—the donor community possesses significant clout, because any new leadership will need to change the economic conditions that triggered change in the first place. To play its role effectively, the international community needs to organize itself and map out not only its strategy for meeting thorny economic-recovery challenges, but also for linking assistance to improved governance. Those governments and organizations that have watched the country sink into misery with such dismay have not been able to prevent the slide. But they can be ready when change happens.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

The following recommendations are ambitious and wide-ranging, and while they focus on the U.S. government, it is assumed that the United States will be part of a multilateral approach that shares the burden of assisting Zimbabwe in its recovery. Britain, due to its historical relationship with Zimbabwe, will play a central role in recovery efforts, though political sensitivities heightened by years of Mugabe's anti-British vitriol will prevent it from assuming as prominent a place in assistance efforts as it did in Sierra Leone. In any case, the U.S. portion of a robust international effort to turn Zimbabwe around will be significant. Current estimates of the overall costs of recovery in Zimbabwe fall between \$3 billion and \$4.5 billion over five years.¹⁶ Such a substantial investment makes sense because of the country's potential to become a success story once again. A number of private investors have expressed strong enthusiasm for Zimbabwe's long-term potential. Donor efforts could kick off substantial, private sector-driven growth that could lead to real and measurable progress in Zimbabwe and the broader southern African region.

These recommendations assume that the United States and others will remain committed to combating HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe. They also assume that the United States will have appropriate senior diplomatic representation in Harare to help manage the U.S. response to events on the ground. A worrying gap at the U.S. Embassy in Harare has emerged with the recent departure of Christopher W. Dell, the energetic and outspoken U.S. ambassador. President Bush has nominated a successor to Dell, Ambassador James D. McGee. McGee should take up his post as quickly as possible, and he should arrive in Harare assured of congressional support for a robust U.S. role in assisting Zimbabwe's recovery once political change occurs.

The recommendations that follow are grouped into three categories: short-term initiatives aimed at encouraging positive political and economic change, proposals to pursue in the wake of some political change, and finally long-range priorities to pursue once governance reforms have been consolidated.

¹⁶ For media discussions of the proposals in circulation, see Donwald Pressly, "Donors Will Move in When Mugabe Finally Leaves Office," *Business Report SA*, June 19, 2007, and Angus Shaw, "Zimbabwe Currency Crashes in Worsening Economic Collapse," Associated Press, June 22, 2007.

IN THE SHORT TERM: ENCOURAGING CHANGE

While only Zimbabweans themselves can effect change in their country, it is in the interests of the United States to make clear the potential gains to be made if political and economic reforms are undertaken by some future Zimbabwean government. Would-be successors to President Mugabe should not have to guess at what the benefits of pursuing a reform agenda might be.

Providing Ongoing Humanitarian Assistance

Though there is no question that humanitarian assistance helps to ease the pressure on the current Zimbabwean regime, there is also no question that a humanitarian disaster would ensue if this support did not continue. Hyperinflation has eaten away at the financial security of the vast majority of Zimbabweans, leaving much of the country even more vulnerable to hunger than it has been to date. Combined with the country's high HIV rates, this is a particularly precarious situation. Long-term security cannot be attained without addressing the most urgent needs for basic human security in the meantime. Donors should, however, take pains to do as much as they can to ensure that their assistance is not manipulated for partisan purposes.

Continuing Democracy and Governance Assistance and Targeted Pre-election Support

The prospect of a genuinely free and fair election next March is remote. The electoral commission is not independent. The millions of Zimbabweans who have fled the country are prohibited from voting. Already, reports from rural areas suggest that the voter registration process is disenfranchising opposition supporters, and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network has expressed concern that the amount of time allotted for registration is insufficient.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the United States should significantly ramp up democracy

¹⁷ "Zimbabwe: Concerns Over Voter Registration," IRIN, July 4, 2007.

and governance assistance, investing an additional \$3 million to \$5 million in the run-up to the polls, depending on absorptive capacity. In particular, the United States should support an audit of the voter registry and efforts to strengthen domestic monitoring operations, so that a baseline of the high standards embodied by SADC's Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections is applied in Zimbabwe, even though those guidelines are highly unlikely to be met in the near future. Making this kind of serious effort to support those monitoring the integrity of the electoral process also helps to mitigate the risk of equating an election in which Robert Mugabe does not stand for office, or an election in which Mugabe wins but steps down in favor of a successor selected by the parliament, with a genuinely free and fair process.

Even if the Mugabe regime manages to hang on for a substantial period of time, it makes sense to continue investing in democracy and governance activities that offer life support to Zimbabwe's civil society and provide skills to parliamentarians and others so that all power and capacity does not come to reside with the favored members of the executive branch. The Bush administration's fiscal year 2008 budget request for these programs was \$3 million, less than half of what was provided in fiscal year 2006. This is short-sighted. The status quo cannot continue forever, and it makes sense to ensure that Zimbabweans prepare to help nurse their country back to institutional, political, and economic health. Funding for these programs should be restored to \$6 million annually, and the United States should maintain strong support for public diplomacy and broadcasting programming related to Zimbabwe.

Exposing External Support

The United States should also devote more effort to exposing external sources of support for Mugabe's regime, and shaming those actors who are helping to prop up a bankrupt regime in exchange for murky mining concessions and the like. Zimbabweans were understandably frustrated by the unfair distribution of one of the country's greatest assets, its fertile land, for many years. Why should other natural resources, such as the country's rich mineral mines, now be parceled out to foreign entities in the absence of transparency

or the rule of law? More naming and shaming of external supporters, and more serious efforts to put the Zimbabwe issue on the agenda at high-level meetings with governments providing direct support to Mugabe, could help increase the costs of assisting President Mugabe such that they exceed the already-dubious benefits. For example, press reports suggesting that governments in Equatorial Guinea and Angola are helping to prop up the Mugabe regime deserve more attention.¹⁸

Signaling Incentives and Preparing for Reform

The United States and other donors should establish a trust fund for Zimbabwe, initially to signal a willingness to provide substantial assistance to reformers, and, in the event that change does come, to coordinate and leverage assistance and to ensure disbursement lines up with the country's absorptive capacity. The World Bank is already working toward this end, and the United States should signal strong support for the effort by including significant recovery and reconstruction assistance for Zimbabwe in the fiscal year 2009 budget request. Taking this step now to eliminate any uncertainty about the U.S. commitment to Zimbabwe's recovery can help to encourage other donors to take similar action, and to increase the chances that the international community will be ready with real funding when the time for reengagement comes, not just promises that must wait for a supplementary appropriations vehicle to be realized or a halfhearted contribution scraped together from raiding other accounts. Finally, it is critical that potential trust-fund contributors agree on basic reforms that must be undertaken in order to access this assistance (these reforms are discussed in more detail in the next section).

Donor unity will be vital if reform is to gain real traction, so intensive diplomacy must be undertaken now to prepare for the future. The administration of Nicholas Sarkozy in France could play a vital role in resolving old divisions and in enlisting as much donor support as possible for a strong stand on governance reforms. Overtures should also be made to China, which will have an important role to play in Zimbabwe.

¹⁸ See, for example, Jan Raath, "Angola Sends 'Ninja' Paramilitaries to Bolster Mugabe's Security Forces," *The Times* (London), March 22, 2007, and "Zimbabwe: Another Useless Venture," *Zimbabwe Independent*, May 11, 2007.

Working cooperatively with this rising power by inviting it into a community of “responsible stakeholders” makes more sense than casting it as an outlier at the outset. Even if these efforts fail, China will understand the priority other countries place on opposing practices that inhibit governance reforms in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is highly likely to rejoin the Commonwealth at some point in the future if it adheres to clear governance guidelines relating to the projection and promotion of democracy, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and the respect for fundamental human rights.¹⁹ As a new Zimbabwean government seeks to normalize the country’s international relationships, the members of the Commonwealth, particularly the many members from the developing world, could be a strong constituency encouraging governance reforms. This should not be overlooked in discussions between U.S. government officials and Commonwealth members.

Engage with SADC

Rebuilding Zimbabwe’s economy and achieving real political stability will take time and require sustained, intense engagement—not just with Zimbabwean partners, but also with SADC. The United States will need to ensure that a senior diplomat travels regularly through the region for the express purpose of advancing a Zimbabwe-related agenda, rather than tacking Zimbabwean issues onto other meetings in a haphazard fashion. While southern African states are unlikely to sing from the same songbook that other donors use in promoting governance reforms, coordination and consultation can ensure as much harmony as possible between SADC’s approach and that of the United States and others. Any effort to cooperate with SADC will require senior U.S. diplomats to exert particular effort in making the case for the benefits of a sound post-Mugabe policy to senior leaders in Angola and Namibia, the staunchest supporters of Mugabe in the region. These efforts should begin as soon as possible in order to dissuade these states from obstructing regional support for reform; they cannot be an afterthought.

¹⁹ Somewhat ironically, these criteria for membership are embodied in the Commonwealth’s Harare Principles, underscoring the strong historical relationship between Zimbabwe and Commonwealth support for sound governance.

Preparing for Disorder

Analysts have many ready examples of situations in which an oppressive regime collapses, leaving not positive reform, but rather violent disorder in its wake. The international community must prepare for the worst-case scenario, in which a power struggle spills over into civil conflict, potentially with powerful ethnic dimensions. Zimbabwe's military is politicized at the most senior levels, and even if guided by professional leadership, it may not have the capacity to restore order if conflict spreads. Weakened by a lack of resources, insufficient wages, and resulting attrition, the Zimbabwean security services are in no position to cope with widespread conflict. Quiet conversations with the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense, and Security Cooperation; with the AU; and with the UN should focus on contingency plans in the event of a real security vacuum in Zimbabwe.

AFTER A CHANGE AT THE TOP: MANAGING TRANSITION

New leaders in Zimbabwe will likely want to reengage the international community and to receive as much assistance as possible to help ease internal pressures. The United States should be prepared to work with other donors to maximize this opportunity to push for reform. One promising scenario would involve an immediate stabilization package linked to economic reforms put forth by SADC in the interests of regional security, followed by a broader package of recovery and reconstruction assistance from the United States and other donors linked to improved governance.

Articulating Clear Benchmarks for Assistance

SADC is likely to be forward-leaning on providing economic stabilization assistance linked to commitments to tighten budget controls, eliminating the central bank's quasi-fiscal activities, and working toward liberalization of the exchange rate. But the United

States should focus its efforts on developing donor consensus around clear, achievable governance reforms that need to be undertaken in order for a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe to access additional international assistance. The core set of conditions for a resumption of assistance must include respect for basic human rights and a cessation of political violence; an end to the politicization of humanitarian assistance; and a return to the rule of law coupled with the repeal of the legislation passed in recent years to legitimize some of the most extreme acts of repression (this includes the Public Order and Security Act, the Miscellaneous Offenses Act, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Private Voluntary Organizations Act, and the 2005 constitutional amendment that not only gutted private property rights but also permitted the government to restrict freedom of movement “in the public interest”). With these goals achieved, and an agreed timetable to prepare for and hold internationally monitored, free and fair elections within a specific and reasonable time frame, the international community ought to begin providing initial outlays of assistance, with continued aid dependent upon ongoing progress toward elections. Broader calls for a fundamental reworking of Zimbabwe’s constitution make sense, but sequencing is important, as constitutional conferences and reviews can be drawn out for years, effectively stifling momentum for reform and giving transitional leaders a chance to entrench themselves in power.

Institutionalizing Consultations

Major donors should be prepared to join with SADC in a contact group to help shepherd political transition forward and to emphasize the complementary nature of SADC efforts and those of others. Critically, this group should institutionalize regular dialogue with representatives of Zimbabwean civil society both within Zimbabwe’s borders and in the diaspora to ensure that transition doesn’t become merely a cozy accommodation among elites.

Addressing Current Restrictions

Currently, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act requires the U.S. president to certify that certain conditions in Zimbabwe have been met before the United States can support any new assistance for the country at the international financial institutions. Some of the conditions outlined in the law have been overtaken by events, but by and large they should fall under the rubric of clear and achievable reforms that trigger a resumption of international aid flows. However, plans to resume assistance to the government of Zimbabwe should trigger early and close consultations with Congress to avoid a counterproductive power struggle.

The United States, EU, Britain, and Australia will have to determine how and when to alter their targeted sanctions regimes as well, as many of the likely ZANU-PF successors to President Mugabe—including Solomon Mujuru, Joyce Mujuru, and Emerson Mnangagwa—appear on the targeted sanctions lists. In making these decisions, the United States should consider both the consensus that emerges within Zimbabwean society regarding accountability for past acts, and the degree to which individuals who once supported repression become constructive players in a reforming government.

Facilitating Zimbabweans' Return Home

Zimbabwe's human capital remains one of the country's greatest assets, and the sooner the entrepreneurial and professional classes return, the greater the potential for economic growth that could create jobs for less-skilled returnees. The successful efforts of the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration in encouraging skilled Afghans to return to their home country should be emulated for Zimbabwe. The desperate need for managerial skill at Zimbabwe's disastrously run parastatals underscores the urgency of this issue, as do shortages of teachers and health care workers.²⁰ The United

²⁰ A parastatal refers to a company or agency that is owned or controlled wholly or partly by the government. In Zimbabwe, there are sixteen parastatals including Air Zimbabwe, Cold Storage Company, Dairibord, National Food Holdings, National Railways of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority, Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company, and Zimbabwe United Passenger Company Ltd.

States should ensure that visa regulations do not discourage Zimbabweans currently living in America from returning home temporarily to explore future opportunities, and should encourage other countries with large Zimbabwean expatriate communities to do the same. At a minimum, the State Department should be prepared to provide maximum clarity and easily accessible answers to visa-related questions for Zimbabweans in the United States, and should be able to provide reasonable guarantees of timely visa processing to single-entry visa holders who may wish to return to Zimbabwe but are not prepared to close off their opportunity to immigrate back into the United States. Grants for small business start-ups and other incentives for return should be seriously considered by countries boasting large expatriate populations.

PROMOTING LASTING RECOVERY

The private sector may well prove to be the most important engine for Zimbabwe's long-term recovery, but donors will have an important role to play for the foreseeable future. Managing expectations and avoiding unsustainable old patterns will be important overarching themes in the efforts of the United States and other donors, but reconstruction and recovery also offer up positive opportunities to further U.S. interests by strengthening new relationships.

Consolidating Economic Stabilization and Promoting Growth

As the international financial institutions work with Zimbabwe to stabilize the economy through economic reforms, Zimbabweans will need international assistance to shore up health and education services and to ensure that basic needs can be met. The United States should be prepared to work with other donors to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach. Once international confidence in a new Zimbabwean government is strong, donors will need to consider debt forgiveness for Zimbabwe, likely

adapting mechanisms used in the past through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Reduction Initiative.

The mining sector will require a thorough and transparent audit of concessions granted by the government during the crisis period. There may be a sorting-out period during which contracts deemed dubious by the new government are canceled or renegotiated, initially adding to investor uncertainty. To promote entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe and encourage U.S.-Zimbabwe joint ventures, the United States might consider establishing an enterprise fund loosely modeled on those authorized by the Support for East European Democracy Act at the end of the Cold War (cognizant, of course, of the lessons learned from the experience of the Southern Africa Enterprise Development Fund about the importance of sound management). The United States could also work with SADC partners to provide technical assistance to ensure that Zimbabwe's diamond sector is Kimberley Process-compliant as well, and with Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative participant countries to assist Zimbabwe in establishing a sound governance regime for its mining sector.

The United States and others should be aware of nationalist and populist sensitivities as they work to foster economic growth. For years, Zimbabweans have been told by their leadership that Western powers are largely to blame for their economic woes. Those who oppose a reform agenda could deliberately try to create a perception that political change and a more favorable investment climate is leading to a selling off of valuable national resources in deals that are lucrative for foreign investors but do little for the Zimbabwean people. The United States should support sound poverty reduction initiatives from the new Zimbabwean government, and encourage foreign investors in Zimbabwe to work together on a corporate code of conduct that takes into account these sensitivities. Similarly, private investors would be wise to emphasize the importance of transparency when it comes to reengaging with Zimbabwe, and be sensitive to Zimbabwe's urgent need for job creation when considering how they might protect and nurture long-term investments.

Focusing Attention on Critical Issues

Three issues deserve extra attention in any multilateral reconstruction effort. Agriculture was at the heart of Zimbabwe's economy before the current crisis crippled the country, and it is inextricably linked to historical grievances relating to land tenure that have explosive political potency. Economic recovery and political stability will be impossible without careful attention to the agricultural sector. In turn, escaping a future as a weak or failed state will require Zimbabwe to depend upon reliable and professional security services. A great deal of recent deterioration in the security sector must be honestly acknowledged and quickly addressed. Finally, it makes sense to pursue a strategy that anticipates tomorrow's policy challenges rather than looking to unravel damage done in the recent past. This will require paying careful attention to the needs of Zimbabwe's young people.

Reviving Agriculture

Efforts to revive Zimbabwe's agricultural sector will necessarily touch on extremely sensitive land distribution and tenure issues, and the international community must tread carefully in these perilous waters. Just as there is no doubt about the disastrous consequences of the Mugabe government's land reform policies, there is no question that injustice and imbalance were real features of the land tenure system before fast-track land reform.

The agriculture sector may never be the economic engine it was in the post-independence period, but Zimbabwe should certainly be able to regain enough of what was lost to become self-sufficient in food production again. The United States should support efforts to establish conditions for rural development that will boost food production and provide small peasant farmers with opportunities to succeed while also clearing away obstacles to the private investment that will help drive the sector's recovery. Achieving both goals will require restoring property rights and paying careful attention to distribution and marketing systems.

The United States and other donors, perhaps through the World Bank, should provide technical assistance to an independent Zimbabwean entity to perform a complete land audit, establish a computerized registry of deeds and titles, and develop a credible arbitration process for dispute resolution. In exchange for this considerable assistance, a new Zimbabwean government must acknowledge that landholders will need titles to their land to gain access to capital, and commit to establishing ownership rights for private citizens and repealing the 2006 Gazetted Land (Consequential Provisions) Act that allows the government to seize farms without compensation. Security and predictability in the land tenure system are essential ingredients to economic recovery.

Those who have been resettled on former commercial farms and have attempted to be productive on the land should have an opportunity to be credited for their sweat equity as part of the process of gaining real ownership rights, and of course the previous owners should be fairly compensated for their losses. At the same time, resettled Zimbabweans should have the option of selling their rights to the land they occupy if they wish, perhaps in exchange for education and start-up entrepreneurial grants, which could help facilitate the consolidation of small parcels into more economically viable entities.

The country will need assistance to begin restoring its irrigation infrastructure, and the United States and other partners should also provide support for ensuring that extension services and vital inputs such as seeds and fertilizer are available to Zimbabwean landholders, ideally tapping into the treasure trove of knowledge possessed by former farm laborers who lost their jobs and homes in the government's settlement scheme.

Technical assistance will be vital, but so too will resources. The United States should make good on past commitments to help finance rule-governed land reform. The U.S. Congress authorized \$20 million in land reform-related assistance for 2002 when it passed ZDERA. This funding level, repeated over several years of recovery, probably still makes sense. While all of this assistance will certainly be expensive, in the end it should eliminate Zimbabwe's chronic food shortages, and the corresponding need for food aid programs paid for by the international community. While food aid does continue to be necessary, the United States should take care to ensure that it does not undermine

the market for resurgent agriculture. Food aid is vital in the short term, but in the long run, the focus should be on Zimbabwe's farmers.

Engaging the Security Services

Today the Zimbabwean security services are a powerful presence throughout the government and economy. Senior military and intelligence officers dominate the Zimbabwe National Security Council and the Joint Operations Command, both of which have sweeping authorities to oversee government operations and initiate projects outside the bounds of normal security activities, such as food production and distribution. At the highest levels, security officers have been indispensable actors in maintaining ZANU-PF control of the faltering country.

But aside from a small group of those closest to Mugabe, most military officers are thought to be loyal to their institution, not to any one person in the presidency. This group, purged of the small number of clearly political actors, should be energetically engaged by the international community in a dialogue about security sector reform in the wake of political change. In some cases, their sense of professionalism has been offended by the use of the military to suppress Zimbabwean voices of dissent. At the same time, middle-level officers have been coping with insufficient wages that seem all the more meager compared to the rewards sometimes on offer for senior loyalists, "war veterans," or youth militia who are mobilized when the ruling party wishes to project force. This further undermines the morale of those in uniform. Rank-and-file military and police officers may not be getting paid at all.

Professional police and military services will be vital to building a stable Zimbabwe in the future. The United States and the rest of the international community should encourage a new Zimbabwean government to ensure that these people are reliably paid the wages they are due in a timely fashion (donors other than the United States may be best equipped to assist with this). Alternately, if left to drift without a clear stake in a new Zimbabwe, they can be ripe for manipulation by powerful ZANU-PF figures dissatisfied with their role in the post-Mugabe future.

The United States should support good faith efforts to rethink the appropriate role for the military in Zimbabwe, an exercise that will involve rolling back the militarization of so many government functions and thinking through likely security needs and military missions in the future. Zimbabwean troops have performed admirably in the past as members of international peacekeeping forces in Angola and elsewhere; in the best-case scenario, they may be able to play a similar stabilizing role again. Training programs, exchanges, and technical assistance for developing more transparent and efficient procurement and management systems should all be extended to these forces, in addition to HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, and treatment programs. Respect for basic human rights and the rule of law must be strong elements of the training curriculum. Complementary capacity building for parliamentarians to ensure they have the tools they need to more effectively provide oversight of the military should be a part of any security assistance strategy. The police will need help as well to reestablish professionalism and discipline in the ranks.

However, prompt reengagement with the security services is likely to be a tough sell on Capitol Hill, where members of Congress need to be able to explain to their constituents why taxpayer dollars should be devoted to assisting the very forces that helped make Zimbabwe an “outpost of tyranny.” The Bush administration should start working with members active on Zimbabwe now to identify their red lines, agree on provisions for oversight and regular status reports, and ensure that satisfactory provisions for the critically important and legally required vetting of potential recipients of assistance are in place. Having consensus in place ahead of time will greatly increase the U.S. government’s capacity to be responsive to fast-breaking developments.

Responding to the Needs of Youth

More than 70 percent of all Zimbabweans today are under thirty years old. Since independence, one of the Zimbabwean government’s greatest achievements has been its educational system, which was widely recognized as one of the very best on the continent. But the past years of crisis have eroded this national treasure. Today, with insufficient resources, the flight of qualified teachers, and desperate poverty that puts

even small school fees out of reach for many families, the education system has fallen apart. Recent unrest at the University of Zimbabwe has pitted students unwilling to pay additional fees against the security services. A great deal of Zimbabwe's vast youth population has experience with the deterioration of the educational system rather than with its glory days.

Some youth have been forcibly pressed into the National Youth Service, a brutal ZANU-PF militia force sometimes known as the "green bombers." Others have joined voluntarily in search of economic opportunity. (According to some press reports, the Zimbabwean government is planning to expand this program before the 2008 elections.) These young people have been trained for serious political violence. Some youth associated with the MDC have become violent actors as well. The young Zimbabweans who have been through the worst of these experiences will need some variation of a demobilization and reintegration program, including psychosocial support services. The United States and other donors can apply experiences gained in post-conflict countries, including Liberia and Sierra Leone, to efforts aimed at engaging this traumatized group.

Zimbabwe's demographic profile and stratospheric unemployment rates create the perfect storm of conditions to fuel youth frustration—not the most stable basis for a nationwide economic recovery. Farm invasions and youth militia activities have given young people access to power and enabled them to forcibly command respect. Inevitably, they will search for similar access in the future. The United States and others should support programs aimed at improving access to training and education, jobs, and housing for young people.

The Commonwealth has particular expertise in programming for youth through credit schemes, technology-focused skill building, programs to foster entrepreneurship, and empowerment initiatives designed to give young people an ongoing, institutionalized voice in government. Nonmember countries can fund Commonwealth work, and this could be a case in which backing the institution with the greatest experience in youth development also opens the door to a new cooperative relationship for the United States. At a time when the United States is regarded with a great deal of skepticism, particularly in the developing world, this unconventional approach may well be worth exploring.

Addressing Accountability

Zimbabweans will need to decide whether they want to pursue justice and accountability for human rights abuses and financial crimes already committed. The MDC has called for some form of a truth and reconciliation commission, and others have suggested that judicial proceedings be brought against President Mugabe and his inner circle, but it certainly remains possible that Zimbabweans will conclude that forgoing such efforts is one of the prices of stable recovery.

However, frustration with corruption in government helped drive the opposition movement in the late 1990s; in the run-up to the vote on the constitutional referendum that marked the beginning of the country's political crisis, civil society groups identified official corruption as a primary concern. It is difficult to imagine that the situation has improved over the past seven years of increasingly authoritarian rule. In the meantime, the MDC has not been immune from corrupt practices. Going forward, this broad issue cannot be ignored in a misguided quest to avoid rocking the boat. The country's long-term recovery and stability depend upon the institutionalization of transparency and support for good governance. The donor community should support the establishment of a truly independent anticorruption commission with significant technical support.

Continue to Use Zimbabwe's Recovery as an Opportunity to Turn a Page with SADC

The United States should welcome the opportunity presented by transition in Zimbabwe to move from frustration and disappointment with South Africa and SADC to a new, collaborative relationship in which the United States is acting to help South Africa and SADC succeed in promoting stability and integrating the new Zimbabwe in the norms and rules of the institution.

Zimbabwe is the sick man of SADC, and once it is on the road to recovery, the entire organization has the potential to become stronger. Running parallel to a Zimbabwe-focused recovery program, the United States should join with other international donors to engage with SADC on regional initiatives that can further the

economic integration that was disrupted by the Zimbabwean crisis. Not only can this bolster Zimbabwe's economic recovery, it could also help to strengthen the rocky U.S.-South Africa relationship, and encourage regional powers to become more seriously invested in Zimbabwe's successful, rule-governed recovery. A scheme with sufficient momentum might also encourage greater international coordination of Zimbabwe recovery policies, as countries work to ensure they are not left out of a major regional initiative. SADC has been developing its regional infrastructure-development initiatives and would likely welcome U.S. interest in this sector, particularly help expanding its rail system. Transboundary wildlife management (with an eye toward reinvigorating regional ecotourism) might also make sense as a focus area.

Some may object to the notion of devoting finite resources that could otherwise be spent on Zimbabwe-specific projects to regional initiatives for a group that has not covered itself in glory in its response to Zimbabwe's crisis. But SADC is clearly an important entity from a southern African point of view, and a constructive SADC-U.S. project would be responsive to the signals that southern African leaders send about their priorities. Moreover, some SADC members, like Zambia and Botswana, have been fairly outspoken about their concerns regarding Zimbabwe. While SADC observer delegations sometimes glossed over obvious problems with Zimbabwean elections, the SADC Parliamentary Forum was often quite frank in their own assessments. SADC has the potential to be a truly positive force in the region, and seizing this opportunity for a new form of engagement makes sense.

CONCLUSION

Former UN secretary-general Kofi A. Annan has called the crisis in Zimbabwe “both intolerable and unsustainable.” He is right on both counts, and while the timing and nature of political change in Zimbabwe are impossible to predict, the tremendous needs and high expectations that will confront the international community in the wake of a transition are easy to anticipate. Having been unable to stop Zimbabwe’s slide into crisis, the United States has a much better chance of being effective in helping to point to a way forward for the country—one that might galvanize influential Zimbabweans into action by making plain that there will be tangible benefits associated with reform.

This approach can also create more space for international consensus on the Zimbabwe issue, shifting the debate away from a split between those comfortable condemning Mugabe and those who feel obliged to defend him. Right now that divide serves Mugabe’s own interests, allowing him to cast himself as a heroic figure willing to challenge a neo-imperial West. By shifting some of the international focus away from him and onto the future of Zimbabwe, the United States may be able to diminish the power of some of Mugabe’s rhetorical weapons.

In addition to aiming to influence the Zimbabweans looking for an exit strategy from the current crisis, by acting now to pursue U.S. interests in averting violent conflict, promoting democracy, facilitating development, and strengthening relations with South Africa, U.S. policymakers can lay the groundwork for a successful policy response that will promote lasting recovery in Zimbabwe and forge new partnerships at a time when many are wary of U.S. intentions and policies. This will require intense diplomatic engagement, meaningful efforts to encourage the private sector, and significant assistance resources. To succeed, U.S. policy must be a decidedly multilateral exercise. But the return on this investment could be a decisive foreign policy victory. Zimbabwe’s human and natural resources have the potential to move the country, currently a depressing man-made disaster, toward recovery in the post-Mugabe era.

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