

Zimbabwe Under Siege

by Dr. Simbi Mubako

With Zimbabwe's March 9 scheduled Presidential elections only days away, Dr. Mubako, the Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the United States, gave this report of the country's fight for sovereignty against a global British campaign. The speech was delivered to the Presidents' Day weekend national conference of the Schiller Institute, on the Feb. 16 panel keynoted by U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche.

These days Zimbabwe is always in the news, but rarely do you ever get news about anything positive. A wise person has said, bad news is better than no news at all. However, as Ambassador for Zimbabwe these days, I would gladly swap anybody's "no news at all," if he will accept my "bad news."

There has been a veritable media blitz on Zimbabwe by the Western powers in the last three years. Yet for the previous 19 years, the West showered endless praises on Zimbabwe and its President, as a beacon of stability and democracy in Africa. Zimbabwe won many international awards for its advanced agriculture and economic management. American universities awarded President [Robert] Mugabe several doctorates, adding to his own six very good degrees in education, economics, law, and international relations. Now, suddenly, the West condemns the country, and portrays Mugabe as a leader who has developed the horns of a demon, and a tail. He is called a tyrant, a thief, and a corrupt monster, with all the epithets that the West heaps upon Third World leaders.

Why This Sudden Assault on Mugabe

What are the reasons for this sudden turn of events? The reasons are not far to seek. They are mainly two.

The first one was the intervention of Zimbabwe troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.). In 1998, the D.R.C. was invaded by Uganda and Rwanda, with the tacit support of the United States of America and Britain. The declared aim was to overthrow the young government of President Laurent Kabila. The D.R.C. appealed to SADC [the Southern African Development Community] for help; SADC agreed to send troops from Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola. The invading forces were checkmated, and the plan to overthrow the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was foiled. The invading forces are still occupying, and exploiting the diamond and other mineral resources of the D.R.C., on behalf of the West. Two and one-half million people have died in the process, in the occupied territories, as a result of war, starvation, and disease. There has been no outcry in the West about the occupation, exploitation, and

atrocities committed by the occupying forces, and the deaths of so many millions of people. The West singles out Zimbabwe for vilification, because of their own failure to plant a puppet regime in Kinshasa [the D.R.C. capital].

Zimbabwe's presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was a SADC decision, aimed at saving the people of the D.R.C. from imminent danger and genocide; and this was part of the wider SADC goal, to assist the African people everywhere. Zimbabwe is proud of its role in the D.R.C., and we know that the Congolese people are happy and grateful for the assistance they receive from the government and people of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe will continue to stand ready to assist, and to defend and consolidate the independence and territorial integrity of the D.R.C., as long as it is necessary to do so.

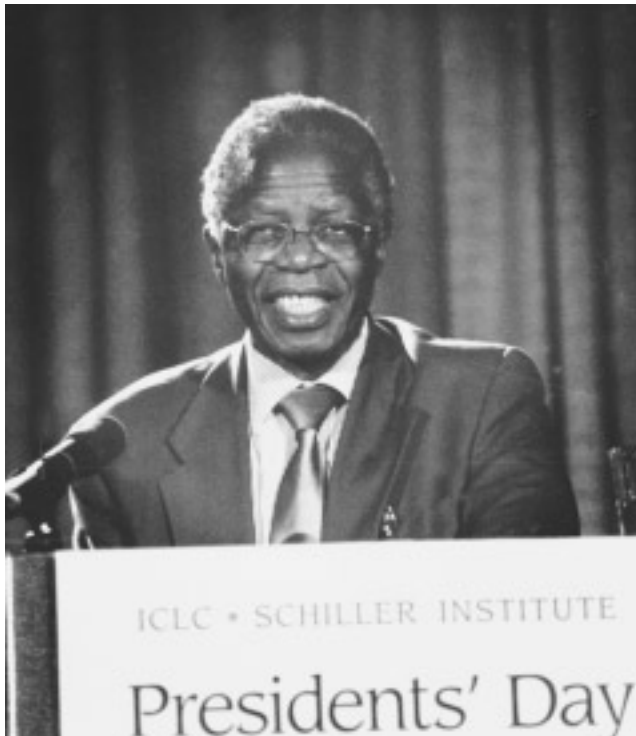
Land reclamation: The second and even more important reason for the West's assault on Zimbabwe, is that the Zimbabwe government decided to take control of its land; of the land which remained the monopoly of a small racial monopoly from the days of British colonialism. Land was one of the principal objectives of the war of liberation, through which Zimbabwe gained independence from Britain in 1980. Yet, 19 years after independence, that land was still in the hands of British settlers. The colonial racial division of the land left the white farmers owning 65% of the best farmland of the country, while over 9 million blacks [of the 11.7 million population] were crowded on small, infertile, sandy plots, or were made landless and jobless.

Moreover, [British Prime Minister] Tony Blair's Labour government decided to abrogate the pledge, which the previous government had made before [Zimbabwe's] independence [at the 1980 Lancaster House Conference], that they would fund a resettlement program, a land reform in Zimbabwe. Tony Blair's government unilaterally announced, that they had stopped funding the land reform and resettlement program in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe government, therefore, was left with no choice, but to announce its own plan of land reclamation, at an accelerated pace. They embarked on that; and, as of now, 7,000 farms—or about 90% of the land which was formerly occupied by the white farmers—has now been acquired for African settlers. Most of the people who are being resettled had been landless, or jobless. And by the end of December 2001, over 360,000 families had been resettled on new land.

The government of President Mugabe acted with determination. This is the reason, why the West is punishing Zimbabwe. This is why the West is demonizing President Mugabe. The campaign against my country has nothing to do with democracy, the rule of law, or elections, as they tend to allege. Zimbabwe has always practiced these things, and is committed to democracy and good government.

In reality, the West itself does not care about these matters in Third World countries. If you look, their closest allies are the greatest offenders against democracy and human rights. I shall not name names, but you know the military regimes, and



Simbi Mubako, Zimbabwe's Ambassador to the United States, gave an urgent report to the Schiller Institute conference, with Zimbabwe's Presidential elections threatened by a global British pressure campaign to bring down President Mugabe. EU sanctions were added to that pressure on Feb. 18.

the one-party states, and theocracies, and so on, with whom they are in bed.

Escalation of the Vilification Campaign

President Mugabe has repeatedly said that there is no going back on the land reforms. Zimbabweans know that Mugabe is a man of his word. The British know this as well. So, they have decided to escalate their campaign of vilification against the people and the economy of Zimbabwe. The object is to make the people disaffected against their government, and to make the country ungovernable. This was all in preparation for the elections, which they knew were coming. They imposed informal sanctions on the country, including attempts to prevent oil deliveries from reaching Zimbabwe. We had gasoline queues, and closures of some factories, leaving thousands of people unemployed. They withheld spare parts for our machinery and aircraft bought in Britain, including parts for incubators and respirators for newborn babies.

They called on their cousins in Canada, the United States, Australia, and some European countries, to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe. As you know, the right wing in the United States jumped at the opportunity to punish an African country, whom they saw as being a "cheeky" one. They introduced the so-called Zimbabwe Democracy Bill, which was passed by

Congress last year. In so doing, they ignored the protests and advice from Zimbabwe itself, from all states of the whole of the SADC region, and from all the African states. All the African states were united against any form of sanctions.

In particular, they keep trying to divide Africans, to get some Africans to break off from opposition to the line they are taking. They keep on blaming President [Thabo] Mbeki, for example, of South Africa, for refusing to be used against a friendly African government, which has impeccable pan-Africanist credentials.

Last week, President Mbeki voiced his exasperation with the West, for treating African states like little children, who were either ignorant, or did not know what was good for them. He said that in Zimbabwe, the West's *interest is clearly not about democracy, but about their wish to control the country.*

Africa has decided that there is no case whatsoever, for sanctions of any kind against Zimbabwe; rather, there is a case for economic assistance, if anyone is inclined to assist.

Within Zimbabwe itself, Britain and its allies are trying to destabilize the elected government of President Mugabe in any way they can think of, in order to install a puppet government that will dance to their tune. They have now admitted, that through organizations such as the Westminster Foundation, the Amani Trust, and others, they—together with the white farmers, and white interests in South Africa—bankrolled the main opposition party in Zimbabwe, for a long time now.

You have, today, an opposition party, led by people who were formerly poor trade union leaders, which has now, arguably, more resources than the party in government. The leaders have become instant millionaires. They have managed to establish short-wave radio stations in Britain and the Netherlands, that nightly beam propaganda to Zimbabwe, in favor of the opposition and against the government.

However, all this does not seem to be working, at least in the estimation of the British government. The British fear that their three-year-old Zimbabwean baby might fail to win the election; hence, they have decided to interfere directly in the elections themselves. They demanded that the European Union monitor Zimbabwe's elections. This arrogant demand was made under threat of economic sanctions, and in complete disregard of Zimbabwe's laws and its sovereignty. They saw in this, an opportunity for them to be able to rig the elections, in favor of their favorite party.

The Zimbabwe government had no choice, but to reject this *diktat* out of hand. Next . . . the European Union is trying to impose a Swedish election observer, who was not invited by the Zimbabwe government. He just took the plane from New York, the United Nations, and flew into Zimbabwe, and said, "Here, I've come to observe your elections, on behalf of the European Union."

All these tactics will not succeed. They will not succeed in their attempt to break the resolve of the people of Zimbabwe, to be masters in their own house.

Continued British Colonialism

What emerges here, is that the British have not abandoned their old ideas of imperial domination over their old colonies. They now want to dominate by economic manipulation, and by installing puppet regimes, all in the name of democracy, human rights, and good governance. If they cannot do it alone, they summon the Americans and fellow Europeans, to subdue the disobedient developing country.

At the Berlin Conference of 1895, European powers signed a treaty, to partition and colonize Africa. We are now witnessing a process whereby Britain, a former colonial power, is turning the European Union into an instrument of neo-colonialism. The British regard the Commonwealth—their own Commonwealth of nations—as their same old British Empire, only by another name. Hence, their attempt (which failed) to use the Commonwealth to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe, even during the current Presidential election campaign itself.

No other country would tolerate a situation, where a foreign power would come and threaten sanctions against a party or government which is taking part in an election—clearly, they are showing that they are not an impartial group.

In all this, the public in the West is told, that their governments are intervening in the name of democracy. The British cannot now come back to Africa to teach us democracy, which they, themselves, didn't practice in 100 years of their own colonial rule.

What lies behind this continued arrogance and bullying, is the continued belief by the West in their inherent superiority over the developing nations. That belief is reinforced by the undemocratic and unfair economic order in which the young nations find themselves.

Unjust Economic Order

We are members of a United Nations in which nations are declared equal, but which is dominated by only a handful of powers, that won the Second World War. Hence, the United Nations serves the interest of those powers first, before the rest of humanity. That is the system, which condemns and punished aggression in Kuwait, very swiftly, but condones aggression in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is the system, which intervenes to stop wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, but did nothing to stop genocide in Rwanda; and now, does little to end the ongoing atrocities and genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The injustice of the international political order, rests on the injustice of the international economic order, represented by the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank. Zimbabwe is a long-standing member of both organizations, and had come to rely on them for its vital development projects. We thought that we had rights in these institutions, provided that we followed the rules and paid our dues. However, we have since discovered, to our cost, that we were deluding ourselves. We are only insignificant pawns, that can

be cast away at the whim of the great powers.

In 1999, after our diplomatic quarrels with Britain had started, our annual application to the IMF was vetoed by Britain and the United States. The reason given, was that Zimbabwe—which had sent troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo—was too poor to involve itself in the war in the D.R.C.; and therefore, they should be denied any further funds, so that they could not indulge in those kind of adventures.

Yet, at the same time—in fact, on the same day—Rwanda and Uganda had their applications approved by the IMF. These two countries also have troops in the D.R.C.; they are the aggressors; and both countries are actually poorer than Zimbabwe. Yet, they received, and continue to receive, loans and grants from the Bretton Woods institutions, while Zimbabwe is quarantined. That is the effect of the big-power monopoly of these institutions.

Life After the IMF

The lessons to be learnt are two, for us: First of all, that even if you are a member of the IMF and the World Bank, you should not build your economy on the IMF prescriptions. Young and poor nations should rely on their own meager resources. Then you will not be blackmailed politically. This is a surer way to steady economic development, even if it is slower economic development.

Second, we have learned that we should encourage everybody to join the movement for the establishment of a New International Economic Order. That movement is already afoot. And it is in our interests as developing countries, to join these progressive forces, which already exist. We should join hands with the progressive forces of thinkers and policy-makers here in the United States—such as Mr. LaRouche; I have read some of his works. And we should join those in other countries, as in Russia, Italy, Malaysia, who have all shown that they are willing to embrace the establishment of a new international order. There is no long-term solution in the present system of international order.

Zimbabwe values its independence and sovereignty above all else. There is no going back on our land reform program, which is now almost complete.

Our economy has been under siege for about three years now. But now, there are signs of recovery and stability. We have learned a bitter lesson. We have learned that, after all, there is life after the IMF. We are beginning to realize, that the threatened sanctions against Zimbabwe, may actually turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

As for our Presidential elections, to take place on the 9th and 10th of next month: I am confident that they will proceed well, despite the threatened interference by our former colonial “masters.” The elections will be held freely and fairly, just as they have been held before.

I thank you all for listening to me.