

# Bush: Mugabe 'Threatens U.S. Foreign Policy'

by David Cherry

"The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons . . . constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States, and I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat," President George Bush declared, in an Executive Order signed March 6. The language seems very up to date in its imperial pretensions. The Order freezes all assets in the United States belonging to 77 Zimbabweans, including President Robert Mugabe, Cabinet ministers, and other leading government figures. It also bans U.S. citizens from doing business with them. Given the disparity between the language of this preamble, and what is actually ordered, other actions may be under way.

Bush's Executive Order is one more step in the war between the government of Zimbabwe and the Anglo-American powers, for control of that country. When, in the 1990s, President Mugabe was going along with the International Monetary Fund's destructive structural adjustment program, he was knighted by the Queen of England in 1994 as Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath. The IMF policy ravaged Zimbabwe, and Mugabe turned against it. He also sent troops to defend the Democratic Republic of Congo against the invasion of Anglo-American assets Uganda and Rwanda. He began the redistribution of British- and settler-owned lands. He developed a friendship with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed, an anti-IMF strategist.

Now Mugabe was a demon, and London and Washington determined to be rid of him. As Zimbabwe's elections approached in March 2002, British Prime Minister Tony Blair fumed, "There can be no question of Mugabe being allowed to stay in power," unless the elections are "free and fair." The Anglo-American oligarchs and their governments, in 1999, created the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC); fund it; and demand a fair shake—or better—for their fifth column.

In a series of articles from April through August 2000, *EIR* exposed this fraud of "free and fair" elections: The Zimbabwe Democracy Trust (ZDT) of Britain and the United States acknowledges its purposes are to fund the populist opposition and to feed propaganda into Zimbabwe and around the world. ZDT's chairman is Lord Robin Renwick of Clifton, KCMG, former ambassador to Washington, vice chairman of JP Morgan PLC, and a member of the advisory board of RAND Europe. ZDT's patrons include three former British foreign

secretaries, including Lord Douglas Hurd, who admits that some people would accuse ZDT of neocolonialism. ZDT keeps its membership roster secret.

The older Westminster Foundation for Democracy is funded by the British government, and funnels money to opposition parties abroad using Britain's political parties as conduits. It may have sent \$1 million or more to the MDC. It boasts Tony Blair among its patrons. From the U.S. side, the MDC is supported by the International Republican Institute (using funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID), and the National Democratic Institute. USAID also provides backing to the Southern Africa Media Development Fund, said to have provided the opposition's *Daily News* with \$500,000 when it was in financial trouble.

The MDC is also the party to which Zimbabwe's remaining white commercial farmers adhere. The leadership of the Commercial Farmers Union says it shares the views of the British ambassador and meets with him regularly.

## Enter France and China

But the Anglo-American powers are no longer the only significant forces on the field of battle. They lost support in Africa as they exposed their imperial ambition to invade and conquer Iraq: France is stepping into the vacuum. French President Jacques Chirac, at the Feb. 20-21 Franco-African summit (with Mugabe in attendance), offered to be Africa's international advocate. He also offered to help South Africa and Nigeria in resolving democracy, rule of law, and land ownership issues in Zimbabwe. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria accepted the offer. China is also on the field. In February, Mugabe signed a contract with the China International Water and Electric Corp., owned by the Chinese government, under which the company will prepare 247,000 acres of land in Zimbabwe for commercial-scale farming, and will build the necessary infrastructure. The project by itself could feed half the country. It gives substance to Mugabe's claim that he will no longer work with the IMF and World Bank.

The arrival of France and China has no doubt given the Anglo-American powers a sense of urgency.

As Bush's Executive Order shows, the instinct of the Anglo-American powers is to tighten sanctions against Mugabe's government. But Africa objects. President Mbeki's spokesman Bheki Khumalo said on Jan. 24, "There is no need for sanctions against Zimbabwe. We are totally opposed to it. It is not even a last resort. There will be total chaos and a meltdown that will threaten the very Zimbabweans we are trying to help." One important sanction, suspension from the Commonwealth, imposed in March 2002 by the delegated troika of Mbeki, Obasanjo, and Australian Prime Minister John Howard, came up for review last month. But Mbeki and Obasanjo informed Howard that there was no need for the troika to meet, because the two of them had decided that sanctions had to be lifted. This so enraged the Common-

## Only New Thinking Will Bring Peace

*Mr. Ben-Aharon, one of Israel's founding fathers, is a founding member of the Labor Party, and a trade union leader. He served as a minister in the government of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion. He was one of the first Israeli leaders who called for the return of all the territories occupied by Israel in the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967. At 96, his counsel is sought by many political leaders, including current opposition leader Amram Mitzna, chairman of the Labor Party. Dean Andromidas conducted this interview through written correspondence in early March.*

**EIR:** Could you please briefly tell our readers about yourself, and the role you played in the founding of the State of Israel and in its first decades?

**Ben-Aharon:** I came to Palestine in 1924 as a leader of the Zionist youth movement in Romania, and to some extent in Germany as well. I joined the kibbutz [communal farm] in Haifa and we worked for three years on the drainage of the Kishon swamps, stretching from Haifa to Akko. It was there that I started [to play] a leading role in the Jewish labor movement, in its two-pronged presentation via the Histadrut [labor federation] and the Labor Party.

[Earlier], With the founding of the State of Israel, I became a member of the Knesset [parliament], and pursued that activity for 22 years in succession. I was also the Minister of Communication in Ben-Gurion's Cabinet in the 1950s, as well as Secretary General of the Histadrut. With the outbreak of the Second World War, I joined the volunteer pioneer formations, received a commission, and then was drafted from the western desert to Greece. That move was a terrible failure of the British, and in no time, we were captured by the Germans, and I spent the duration of the war as a POW in Nazi Germany. Unexpectedly, I survived, and upon reaching my home, I was in no time declared a leader of the Haganah underground and was put on a military court trial. That was obviously the British way of remuneration for my military service, and without lauding myself, I was also a very active member of the underground intelligence.

I have been a member of my kibbutz, Givat Haim Meuhad, from its founding until today.

**EIR:** What is your assessment of the political situation within Israel and the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians?

**Ben-Aharon:** The current political situation concerning the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians appears to be a

wealth's British helmsmen, that Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon announced on March 16, at a meeting of Commonwealth diplomats in London, in an in-your-face lie, that "the members of the troika have now concluded" that continued suspension is best. Commonwealth heads of state participating in the February Non-Aligned Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were unanimous in endorsing a decision opposing sanctions against Zimbabwe.

The most potent card in the hands of the Anglo-American powers is a mobilization of the MDC to lead a strike wave that will bring the government to its knees. The International Crisis Group, an important catspaw for the U.S. and British governments, wrote in its March 10 report on Zimbabwe, "The success or failure of mass action may be the most important determining factor for the future of the MDC," and by implication, one might add, for the future of Anglo-American control. Beginning in late 2002, there was increasing pressure on the MDC from the non-governmental organizations, to overcome its fear of repression and go into action. Baroness Valerie Amos, Minister of State in the British Foreign Office, met in London with MDC parliamentarians in December and January. After some small, scattered actions, the MDC pulled off a successful two-day general strike on March 18-19, and gave Mugabe a two-week deadline to meet 15 political and human rights demands. Senior MDC officials said the strike was a "test run" to gauge the mood of the people, and the next action would take a different form if the party's demands were not met.

The MDC's deadline for the government to respond to its 15 demands, passed on March 31. The MDC is now considering its next move. Its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, told supporters, "This will be the final push that will restore our sovereignty, liberty, and freedom. . . . It will be a struggle that calls for extreme sacrifices, indeed even the supreme sacrifice. . . ." However, MDC spokesman Paul Themba Nyathi told BBC News "that the next step would have to be carefully chosen because of the 'risks involved. . . . We don't want to draw our people into an ambush.'" Richard Cornwell of the British-influenced South African Institute of Security Studies has warned the MDC not to move while the Iraq war continues, because the Mugabe government's "lethal reaction" would go unnoticed internationally.

But the government's Achilles' heel is its inability to reverse Zimbabwe's economic collapse. It is having increasing difficulty in paying for vital imports, including oil and electricity, and the outflow of workers is putting a burden on Zimbabwe's neighbors. This provides the Anglo-American powers with an opportunity to exert leverage. Indeed, when the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) foreign and defense ministers meet in Harare, Zimbabwe in the first week of April, they will reportedly consider arranging a meeting between Zimbabwean and British officials. The ubiquitous Baroness Amos has been in South Africa for a week, insisting that there will be no New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) if SADC doesn't dump Mugabe.