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Full Length Research Paper

Surviving in a hostile environment: An analysis of Zimbabwe's foreign relations in 21st century international relations

Percyslage Chigora* and Didmus Dewa

Department of History and Development Studies, Midlands State University, Private Bag 9055, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

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Zimbabwe, at the turn of the new millennium has received widespread condemnation particularly following the abandonment of the Structural Adjustment programmes (ESAP), intervention in Democratic Republic of Congo and with the implementation of the controversial land reform. The image portrayed abroad has been tattered because of reports of violence, instability and abandonment of the rule of law, which has created a serious challenge to modern developments on democracy and human rights. On one hand Zimbabwe has seemingly lost many friends especially those from the West and/or West controlled institutions. On the other hand, it has sought acquaintance with countries in the East and other developing countries. From such a standpoint the paper seeks to examine the causes behind this strain in relations between Zimbabwe and Western global actors. It is the aim of this paper to analyse the underlying causes and trace the origin of the strained relations with the Western world.

Key words: Foreign policy, international relations, Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the new millennium Zimbabwe has seen its relations with the West souring. It has largely featured Zimbabwe's heated debate with Britain over the land issue, enactment of the Zimbabwe Economic Recovery and Democracy Bill by the United States Congress, suspension of Zimbabwe from the International Monetary Fund, suspension and subsequent withdrawal of Zimbabwe from the Common-wealth, suspension of aid in social services by some Nordic countries, the imposition of targeted sanctions by the European Union and damming reports on human rights abuse, non-adherence to the rule of law and massive rig-ging of elections. This paper explores these trends with an intention to analyse the causes and nature of antago-nism between Zimbabwe and Western international ac-tors. The paper argues that antagonism between interna-tional actors arises from the conflict of values, essentially "the pursuit of divergent national interests. These diver-gent views between Zimbabwe and the other powerful ac-tors, bring into focus the nexus between land reform and economic development as well as issues of governance, human rights, democracy, political stability, race relations and equity. In essence, the paper also argues that cooperation between nations exists primarily when there is a commonality of interests, of which absence of the same presents some degree of enmity, a situation depicted by the current state of relations between these Western countries and Western controlled institutions against Zimbabwe. The paper also reviews the strategies adopted by the latter in the face of animosity, thereby locating the place of other deve-loping countries in the situation obtaining in Zimbabwe. In the final analysis, the paper analyses the future of Zimbabwe in 21st century international relations.

HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS TO ZIMBABWE'S FOREIGN RELATIONS

Zimbabwe with the inception of independence saw an increase in development assistance particularly within the frame work of the 1980 UN decade for development in the Third World. Individual states had supported the new government on various fronts. At the launch of Zimbabwe on reconstruction and development (ZIMCORD) in March 1981 the United States pledged $225 million over a three-year period towards government goals of post War reconstruction, distribution and development of land, and the

*Corresponding author. E-mail: chigorap2000@yahoo.com, pchigora2003@yahoo.fr, chigorap@msu.ac.zw. Tel.: 263-54-60450/60409. Fax: 263-54- 60233.

development of skilled manpower. Of the amount contributed 94% came from western countries. By the end of 1986 the US had contributed $380 million, the majority in grants, with some loans and loan guarantees (Chigora, 2007).

Colin (1988) noted that despite the constraints which restricted growth rate, Zimbabwe has been just successsful enough from 1984 to 1987 to do without the IMF programme and therefore remain resistant to IMF leverage. This remained the situation until she succumbed in 1991 through implementation of the structural adjustment programme in dealing with the World Bank which has been the largest world donor (Colin, 1988).

The total amount of aid could be seen from the debt structure. Zimbabwe had by 1992 accumulated a debt of Z$14.2bn including the Z$1.2bn inherited at independence under the Lancaster House commitment. Tied to the aid that has continued to flow to Zimbabwe particularly in the first decade of independence, Rothchild and Foley have found that "despite dramatic changes of regime goals and values the newly emergent Afro-Marxist Regimes find themselves not capable of breaking out of a structure of dependency and unequal exchange" (Schwartz, 1999).

Issues of equitable and fair-trade system have dominated the discourse on the slow pace of growth in developing countries to include Zimbabwe. According to Clapham, (1996) "it has become impossible for most Third world states to contemplate any strategy of economic development which would involve any substantial reducetion in their participation in international trade." Foreign Minister Mangwende delivering a speech during the UN fortieth anniversary noted;

"If trade is to be beneficial to all countries, developing countries should be guaranteed just and equitable prices for their exports. Indeed, no durable economic recovery can take place unless urgent steps are taken to safeguard the incomes of commodity producers" (Schwartz, 1999).

According to Stan Mudenge, Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs Minister, Zimbabwe's foreign policy objective is fundamentally to help safeguard and enhance the security and prestige of the country. Also it is geared towards the improvement of quality of life of the Zimbabwean people. This is done through interaction with other countries at various levels in order to influence the behavior of other actors so that the international environment is conducive to the attainment of these goals. Hence, Zimbabwe is "guided by an overriding belief in and love for mankind, the sacredness and the inviolability of our national sove-reignty and the need for freedom, justice and equality for all" (http://www.gtta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html). Emerging is a major lesson that successful foreign policy is largely dependent on the ability and willingness to form coalitions and solidarity groups with other correspondingly minded states. This will bring about the critical weight needed at a particular point in order to influence the case and events in a state's own favor. In the case of Zimbabwe, such coalitions are evident with support from some fellow SADC countries. A shining example is Namibia, as evidenced by then president, Sam Nujoma's speech at the Earth Summit in Durban 2001 where he explicitly blamed the British for having caused the land crisis in Zimbabwe (Chigora, 2006).

There has been a general assumption that Zimbabwe's foreign policy is formulated at the highest level of the state apparatus with the president being the articulator of the foreign policy making process. This is attributed to the fact that different dimensions of Zimbabwe's foreign policy converge in the person who is the Head of government and the administrative structure controlled by the secretary of the president. The Head of Government becomes the focal point for decision- making and overseeing their implementation. Critics have noted that such a posi-tion reflects an undemocratic way of governing as power is vested in an individual with no checks and balances, hence the tendency for a dictatorial system of gover-nance (Chigora, 2006). However, a number of actors are involved in the foreign policy making process and they ra-nge from government ministries, to civil society groups, academia and political parties. These play a role in the policy formulation and implementation with their roles being dependent on which sphere they operate from, that is, political, economic, socio-cultural or security. Patel (1987) has noted that Robert Mugabe, the head of state and government, is an intellectual, and has an abiding and deep interest in foreign and global issues, hence has to be visible rather than being passive in foreign policy is-sues in Zimbabwe.

Contrary to the criticism that foreign policy making in Zimbabwe has not been democratic, Engels (1994) observes that foreign policy formation has not been a closed one. It has indeed been partly open to competitive societal inputs. An example can be drawn from political parties and civil society groups that are affected negatively by the land distribution and those concerned with governance issues. These civic groups have been ignored by the government owing to the sour relations between the government and most non state actors whose operations scope lie in contentious issues like governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights. To some extent, it also takes into consideration external demands largely from Britain and other countries, and other organizations concerned with land issue in Zimbabwe. An example is the Abuja Agreement of 6 September 2001 in which Zimbabwe had to comply with conditions that there be no further farm occupations and also speed up delisting of farms that do not meet set criteria among other conditions (Chigora, 2006).

FOREIGN RELATIONS IN THE 21 CENTURY

Zimbabwe and Western countries

Despite the support that exited (unclear) from Western coun-

tries and institutions at the turn of the millennium, Zimbabwe has witnessed the dwindling of resources and support. The origins of such turn in events are attributed to the end of Cold War where the world has become embroiled in "the ideological and political context within which the foreign policies of western states have been shaped by the principles of liberal democratic capitalism" (Williams, 2003).

There should be no surprise that when it comes to Zimbabwe there has been convergence of thinking between majority of EU members, partnership with the US and the western oriented states within Commonwealth. On contrast, Mugabe has positioned himself internationally as a result against neo-conservatism and neo-liberal economics. His land reform policy has been presented and widely interpreted, as a challenge to policies of the rich nations and a refusal, to conduct its economy according to the dictates of the World Bank. Consequently, Mugabe is regarded within Africa (and elsewhere) as a hero of the poor peoples of the world, standing up against the bullying by champions of liberal democracy. This contradicts the very visions of the Blair government, which among other things encourages the adherence to the tenets of neo-liberal economic policies. The visions of addressing real enemies of Zimbabweans, of ending poverty, disease, hunger, oppression and social injustice by the British government patterns well with Zimbabwean position of ensuring development. But, there have been divergence as to the way of approaching the whole issue.

With individual countries the row begun with Britain. The period following the election of the Labour Party in Britain into power has seen the relations between Zimbabwe and its former colonizer, Britain deteriorating. Deterioration of relations has been witnessed in the actions of government officials, civil society groups, media organizations, academics and citizens. The borne of contention was the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the British government to provide funds for the purchase of commercial farmland for distribution as outlined in the Lancaster House agreement. Such sentiments were a result of commitment expressed by British Foreign Minister, Geoffrey Home, to Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs Minister Witness Mangwende in 1980 acknowledging that "…Her Majesty's government is now willing to be more flexible with regard to the release of funds to be used in the land acquisition and development" (in Ulf Engels).

Despite this commitment from British authorities, there have been changes and inconsistency on this position by successive British Governments. A letter from the British Government, Department of International Development (DFID) in 1997 shows how the current crisis concerning Anglo- Zimbabwe relations was borne. According to Stan Mudenge, Zimbabwe's Foreign Affairs Minister, this led the Zimbabwean Government to resort to a policy of compulsorily acquiring land after the new Labour government under Tony Blair had reneged on the Lancaster House obligation to (financially assist Zimbabwe's land reform. (http://www.gta.gov.zw/foreign%affairs/Executive%20summary%20FA.html). An appraisal of the letter clearly shows how the problem started. It gives the background to the problem especially in relation to efforts by the Zimbabwean Government to resolve the land problem based on past agreements.

The Government and the ruling party in Zimbabwe blame the international community in general and Britain, the ex-colonial power, in particular for the breakdown in the negotiated process of land reform. The preference of donors for a redistribution process founded on market principles placed obstacles for a rapid progress in redistributing the land. Further, with Britain's failure to resume funding of the land reform the net result was the creation of a law and order vacuum, which was exploited by the veterans of Zimbabwe's guerrilla style liberation struggle who could not even approve of any attempt to reverse the land redistribution exercise. This led to a formidable alliance of some members of the international community, led by Britain, locally represented by white commercial farmers and opposition political party MDC in Zimbabwe. The British and their allies locally and internationally highlighted the violent seizures of land as a sign of the breakdown of the rule of law, an infringement on the people's rights and an attack on the democratic principles in Zimbabwe. This resulted in fatal politicization and tragic internationalization of the land issue. Thus, all these actors have had a role to play in intensifying the conflict.

The deportation of Joseph Winter, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) correspondent in Zimbabwe further intensified friction. This resulted in Roger Hazelwood, a British diplomat being summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explain his actions concerning interference with security forces that were on duty to serve deportation papers on the BBC correspondent. This incident, coupled with many other of a like manner, led to the Zimbabwe government being labeled an enemy of press freedom, which is against the fundamental principle of democracy.

At the centre stage is the question of the government's respect of human rights. The ruling party ZANU PF and its allies that comprise war veterans, youth militia and service chiefs are accused of fomenting intimidation, arson, kidnapping and murder. For its part, the US government has called on the Zimbabwean government to end human rights abuses and Washington has provided some funds to non-governmental, legal and human rights organizations.

With the USA the antagonism begun with heavy criticism of Zimbabwean government at various fora for lack of democracy in Zimbabwe and subsequent introduction of Bill S.494. The Bill declares that America supports peaceful democratic change, economic growth and the establishment of the rule of law in Zimbabwe (www.heritage.-org). It opposes giving bilateral and debt relief and assistance to Zimbabwe until government restores the rule of law, provides protection for democratic elections, implements an equitable, legal and transparent land reform program, withdraws troops from the Democratic Republic of

Congo and establishes firm civilian control of the mili-tary, police and other state security forces. For any state in the developing, that certainly contributes to state decay and overall weakening of the state.

The issue of land reform illustrates well the problems in achieving the goal of economic redistribution. The U.S and other industrialised countries want Zimbabwean, Namibian and South African independence governments to pay a fair market price for under-utilised land that is willingly offered. This sounds fair enough until one consults history. But, in America, after the war of independence, the new US government simply confiscated vast estates from Tories such as Lord Baltimore and Lord Fairfax (www.fpif.org). When the US assisted South Korea and Taiwan in their agrarian reform, America did provide hard currency to pay for the parcels of land and the US army accompanied the South Korean Army in enforcing the removal of landowners (ww-w.fpif.org). In its most outspoken statement yet on Zimbabwe, the Bush administration has made it clear that it is taking steps to bring down President Robert Mugabe's government.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner announced the shift in US policy in a statement on August 21. He told reporters that Mugabe's government was "….illegitimate and irrational. We do not see President Mugabe as the democratically legitimate leader of the country. The political status quo is unacceptable because the elections were fraudulent." The US was putting pressure on neighbouring states, Kansteiner said, to "correct that situation." At the same time it was providing Zimbabwean opposition forces—such as trade unions, pro-democracy groups and human rights organisations—with advice, training and finance to over throw Mugabe and establish a new regime (http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/nov2002/zimb-n18.shtml).

Zimbabwe and the East

Zimbabwe after receiving unfavorable treatment by the West developed a new policy of associating with the East. This developed policy is intended to discover new acquaintances in the East to enable her development processes. In essence, salvation for Zimbabwe was to look for other friends especially under the banner of South-South cooperation. Makwiramiti has remarked that "Given that Zimbabwe's traditional trading partners in the European Union and the United States have drastically scaled down on business or stopped completely, it is natural for the government to look elsewhere in order to save the country from total collapse, and there is nothing bad about that"(http://www.misa.org/pipermail/misanet/2-005-July/000000.html).

In the 21st century, the government's Look East Policy has led to closer co-operation with East Asian Countries of China, Malaysia and Iran. There has been the view that no real benefits can accrue from South co-operation especially by neo- liberal critics of the Zimbabwean government. "The country has to see the benefits of going to bed with former South East Asian Tigers as no real investment has come to Zimbabwe from that source" (www.Rhodesia.net). With India a memorandum of understanding was signed for the development of small- scale industries. Criticism has since emerged that these relationships are rather short termed. This is quite normal for a country in crisis. Mugabe believes relations with these countries are beneficial than engaging the West in the meantime. Benefits have come though little and at a cost to solve the huge gap that surmounts the crisis.

Some specific benefits have been notable. The Look East policy adopted by the Government has managed to unlock investment opportunities in some sectors of the economy. The business partnerships which emerged from the policy include the joint venture between the Government- controlled Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and the Midex Overseas Limited of India. IDC and Midex are currently constructing a multi-seed oil processor plant in Chitungwiza. The plant has a capacity to process over 20 000 tonnes of cotton seed and Soya beans per year. The project is expected to create more than four hundred jobs for Chitungwiza residents and those of surrounding areas. China and India have played a pivotal role in supplying the country with essential equipment for rural electrification programme. By 2005, 4 229 projects had been completed while 1 157 projects were at various stages of completion. The growth in numbers of tourists from Asia bears testimony that the Look East policy is beginning to bear fruit. In 2005 the country witnessed an increase in visitors from Asia, notably China, which granted Zimbabwe an Approved Destination Status (Chigora, 2008).

In the transport sector, Air Zimbabwe acquired two MA-60 aircraft from China, bringing the number of its fleet to eight. This has enabled the national airline to expand its domestic, regional and international routes. Public transport operator, ZUPCO (Zimbabwe United Passenger Company) also managed to acquire 135 conventional buses and 41 mini-buses from China. Chinese business people have established retail shops in the capital, Harare, and other major towns, mostly selling cheap electrical appliances, clothes, blankets, toys and beauty products. Retailers are enjoying thriving business, and the shops are popular with people who cannot afford to shop at the up market departmental stores. Many items, especially clothing, are sold only for the quarter of their price. While a modest television set is sold at around Z$8m (US $450) at the established shops, the Chinese ones cost as little as Z$1m (US $56) (ibid). These popular Chinese shops are thriving simply because they are cheap but other critics note the low quality of their goods as well as the short life of their products.

In the power and mining sectors trade, China's state-owned companies such as China Aero-technology Import and Export Corporation have entered into investment deals with the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) for the refurbishment of power plants. The Corporation pledged in 2005 that it would invest US$ 400 million in mining (Bayano Val). The refurbishment will go a long way in

improving power supply that has affected business as well as agricultural production as a boost to fast track land reform.

Other countries within the framework of the Look East Policy have sold equipment to the mechanization programme in Zimbabwe and that is meant to boost the agricultural sector. Brazil and a number of Asian countries like China extended a loan facility that has gone a long way in making this vision a reality (Mabasa, 2008).

Zimbabwe and developing countries

Zimbabwe shared deep solidarity with almost the entire developing countries especially those who share its worldview, that is a world of sovereign entities who firmly hold the right to unfettered, self determination without interference by the powerful nations of our time. However these developing counties have criticized publicly and privately the June 27 runoff elections in which the Mugabe regime was shown to be brutal in its attempt to remain in power. Zimbabwe hogs the limelight in the 21 st Century for several reasons. For close to a decade now, the country, especially its leadership has battled to withstand fierce vilification by powerful forces that have done almost everything to isolate it in the international community of states and nations. However, because the rhetoric coming from Harare (self-determination, sovereignty, emancipation) is largely nationalistic and pro-poor, Zimbabwe has never fallen short of sympathisers.

Despite a biting political and socio-economic crisis, Zimbabwe's foreign policy is also the reason why the state has arguably failed to sink or collapse. Strategies for successful foreign policy success have thus depended on long-term economic strategies to reduce vulnerabilities, foster greater regional integration, and diversify trade, aid, and technological sources. The distinctive problems are a result of a "decaying state", miserable domestic, regional; international constraints have precluded an effective foreign policy in the 1990s. South Africa, a member of the United Nations Security Council has on several occasions opposed US and UK sponsored drastic resolutions against Zimbabwe at the UN because of its close ties with its neighbor. Further, the support that Zimbabwe has enjoyed from its Southern counterparts continues to keep legitimate punitive international action at bay. Zimbabwe's interaction with the South is best understood in terms of changing domestic coalitions, political fractions within the state, and foreign actors. This in itself provides a vital lesson as to how weak states can exploit comparative advantages and opportunities to exert regional and continental leadership as well champion common interest.

Zimbabwe's neighbors, particularly Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana, which had already attained sovereign independence when Zimbabwe was still waging its armed struggle for freedom, immensely contributed to the achievement of this country's independence by offering political, diplomatic, moral and material as well as financial support to the liberation movements.

Zimbabwe and multilateral institutions

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have sanctioned Zimbabwe for its war (which war?) expenditures but both institutions continue to lend Uganda whose troops support rebels in DRC and thus Zimbabweans believe the U.S and international agencies are not being even-handed. They are also overwhelmingly against Zimbabwean troop involvement in the war because it diverts funds for development needs. SADC leaders have consistently been at the fore front of negotiations for peace beginning one month after the Uganda/Rwanda invasion in 1998 (Chigora, 2008).

There has been continued antagonism in the Commonwealth that led to the Zimbabwean government withdrawing from the multilateral institution. This depicts the heightened moves in the colonial era which led to the growth of the British Empire, largely representing the spread of the sphere of British influence and interest. The dominance of British influence continued not only in the colonial era but also in the post colonial period. In the post colonial era it has centered on the formulated institution of the Commonwealth which not only acts as a forum of interaction between the former colonizer and the colonized but also through which political, diplomatic, economic and socio-cultural ties are maintained and enhanced.

Zimbabwe in the 21st century has received widespread condemnation from the European Union (EU), particularly following abandonment Structural Adjustment programmes, intervention in Democratic People's Republic of Congo and with the implementation of the controversial land reform. The image portrayed by the EU has been reports of violence, instability and abandonment of the rule of law, which has created a serious challenge to modern developments on democracy and human rights (Chigora, 2008a). This was followed by the EU's imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe and denigrating policies and events organised and formulated by the Zimbabwean government. EU took a drastic shift from cooperation to open confrontation and was noticeable in almost all spheres of interaction. Compounding the problem has been the sudden turn of events in Zimbabwe at policy level as well as the political environment. Subsequently the EU had to take measures over Zimbabwe purportedly targeting some individuals thought to be at the apex of decision making and leadership as a way of punishing the wrong doers. The targeted individuals seem not to have been affected at all by the measures and have continued on a path that is antagonistic to the EU vision and propagations. Despite the foregoing conclusion by Williams it is important to note that the EU had its own framework for interacting with Zimbabwe, the EU-ACP partnership. The major borne of contention between EU and Zimbabwe has been provisions of the Lome and Cotonou agreements

that provide the framework of cooperation between the EU and all member countries of the ACP that include Zimbabwe (Chigora, 2008a).

The Cotonou agreement stipulates in Article 9 that respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law should underpin all our policies. The EU noted that the turn of events in Zimbabwe in the last three years of the 20th century had shown disregard by the Zimbabwean leadership to issues of the rule of law. This was following the move by Zimbabwe government to compulsory confiscate land from the beneficiaries of the colonialism and colonial policies. The violence associated with the land reform was an affront to democracy and the virtues of sovereignty. It pointed towards an absence of the rule of law and bad governance at local level.

In the framework of SADC, it was Foreign Affairs Minister S. Mudenge who asserted that this policy is partly a reflection of Zimbabwe's gratitude for the solidarity and support it enjoyed during the difficult period of the struggle for independence. Even today, albeit under extreme pressure from within and without the country, Zimbabwe still enjoys SADC's solidarity though in a different and limited way following the June 2008 election runoff. This was especially demonstrated during the critical phase of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Further, this solidarity has frequently been unequivocally demonstrated during several SADC Summits, like in Dar-es-Salaam in August 2003, when the Heads of State and Government called on the Commonwealth and the EU to lift sanctions imposed against Zimbabwe.

The most recent clear demonstration of the solidarity that Africans are building has been the refusal by the Africans to attend the African/EU Summit in Lisbon, Portugal without Zimbabwe's participation. Thus, the age-old tactic of divide and rule has been thwarted and it is hoped that this stance by the leaders of the African continent will become the norm in future in different situations or circumstances with regards to different countries. It can thus be seen that the AU has established a firm foundation of unity and solidarity in action in the continent.

The future of Zimbabwe in the international system

It needs to be highlighted that Zimbabwe must be allowed to choose among the various options at the Southern African nation's disposal to solve its problems. It appears Zimbabwe will remain following the same path, as there are no signs of reneging or turning back, at least in the foreseeable future. The struggle for civil liberties, economic redistribution, and regional security are still very much on the agenda of post-apartheid Southern Africa. These goals ought to be pursued while the absence of one will destroy the others. Equally to claim that history is not important and dismiss socialist paradigm as central to African society is to expose people to alien dominant ideology of liberal market capitalism and ideology. The West should not advocate respect for human rights and democracy while ignoring pervasive economic inequality, social injustice and exploitation that has its roots from colonialism and is part of the overall regional security concern

Again, key to note is that for multilateral foreign policy to work, an overall international system and its actors ought to be examined closely. Aspects of sanctioning one actor are dependent on the support of other actors for the cause. Reprisal by the sanctioned country and its cooperation with other powerful states and multilateral bodies would render the sanctioning regime useless. For Zimbabwe, collapse was not imminent as she cooperated with other powerful actors in the international system to the extent that even a United Nations Security Council resolution that was meant to punish Zimbabwe failed to pass as it was vetoed by China and Russia.

Issues of double standards have to be addressed from the countries that offer aid. When conditionalities are imposed particularly those that pertain to democratic principles, they must be universally called for and implemented in order for them to be acceptable to highly vocal countries like Zimbabwe and also to woo support from many like minded states. Often many will view the EU's actions as highly segregatory and bullish. There is clear evidence that European development aid has only fuelled patronage networks and thus perpetuated dependencies. As Official Development Assistance (ODA) continues to flow reliably, African leaders have become less dependent on their own people to ensure political and economic survival (http://www.deutscheaussenpolitik.de/newsletter-/issue24.pdf).

On the domestic scene, after close to three decades of one-party-rule that has remained consistent and certainly predictable, Zimbabwe's foreign policy faces a predicttably uncertain future given the country's contemporary domestic political dynamics. The emergence in 1999, rise (1999 - 2007) and subsequent significant political and international gains of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 2008 have heralded the undeniable arrival of a new breed of politicians. The two MDC opposition formations have collectively and individually made an impact on Zimbabwe's political scene to the extent that they are the majority in the legislature's Lower House after the 2008 parliamentary elections. Further, the opposition's link with powerful actors in the international community necessarily invites one to spare a thought for Zimbabwe's foreign policy direction from now as The Zimbabwean government project the MDC as a foreign sponsored organization in order to portray them as a foreign sponsored entity. This is important especially with regards to the fact that the opposition promises to bring a 'new, modern and progressive' way of running the country, which indicates a significant departure from the current nationalist/military alliance manning the state which has crafted and pursued the afore-discussed foreign policy. The ruling ZANU (PF) party and the two MD-C formations are currently engrossed in SADC initiated talks brokered by former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, aimed at resolving the decade long economic and political

crisis. To that end, a power-sharing arrangement is on the agenda.

In view of the possible, in fact, inevitable power - sharing compromise, it follows that for the first time in Zimba-bwe's post-independence history, the complexion of the administration will be different. The incoming politicians represent a broad- based yet contradictory set of class in-terests as diverse as labour and capital as well as local and international interests. To the extent that for 28 con-secutive years the Mugabe regime has pursued a foreign policy rigidly guided by the need to safeguard sove-reignty, total independence, self-determination, justice and equality of all and territorial integrity. In the event of power sharing with the opposition whose officials are po-pular politicians and ambassadors of the powerful globali-zation forces fronted by the capitalist neo-liberal agenda, foreign policy of Zimbabwe is going to change one way or the other.

Conclusion

Zimbabwe's Look East Policy has demonstrated that a development path without the west can be realized. For the west in this globalization era it has emerged that con-frontation, sanctions, threats and demonisation will not work in favour of western interests and have a potential of generating much more division as some more like min-ded states may soon follow the Zimbabwean path leading to a shift in terms of global power getting into the hands of China. At most the way forward is to allow African countries economic independence and the freedom to run their own political affairs in the context of the African interest. In essence Zimbabwe's Look East policy is posi-tively working out and gradually, Asian countries are pro-ving themselves capable of serving as alternatives to the rich Western nations in countries foreign policy making in Zimbabwe reveals that the domestic policy plays an im-portant role in shaping its relations amongst other na-tions. Land and sovereignty are core principles of Zimba-bwe's foreign policymaking and have a bearing on its in-teraction and actions on the international arena. It re-mains that foreign policy making in Zimbabwe is the cor-nerstone and predictable and will remain confrontational to the west rather than acceptance to its imposition until probably the change of regime. The growing trend in Afri-can politics of formation of government of national unity has a place in Zimbabwean politics were international ac-tors interest particularly the west will be represented through certain political parties. Alliances with intern-ational actors by political gladiators in Zimbabwe's domes-tic politics are likely to remain with ZANU PF leaning to the East and the MDC to the west. The battle may now be between the global forces based in the East against the global forces based in the West. Other forces might be in the East but fighting for the West and vice versa. The battle ground remains Zimbabwe.

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