

@CHAPTER = ZIMBABWE

Relations between the U.S. and Zimbabwe have improved markedly since August 1988, when \$17 million in U.S. aid was restored after a two-year cutoff, following a dispute over U.S. policy toward South Africa. The evolution of the peace process in Angola and the holding of elections in Namibia also contributed to a reduction in tensions between the United States and Zimbabwe. These improved relations provided an opportunity for the Bush administration to press the Zimbabwe government to respect human rights. That opportunity has not, unfortunately, been seized. The administration has issued no public protests on human rights violations in Zimbabwe. At best, according to a State Department official, a "continuing dialogue" was maintained on unspecified "pertinent" issues.

Although there has been a reduction in certain violent abuses in Zimbabwe, the administration's silence is not explained by an absence of rights violations. The unity agreement concluded in December 1987 between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union -- Patriotic Front ("ZANU") and the Zimbabwe African People's Union ("ZAPU") paved the way to an end of the conflict in Matabeleland and a reduction in the most severe abuses in Zimbabwe. Armed rebels had been active in Matabeleland since 1981, and the army massacred thousands of people and tortured and detained hundreds of others in its attempt to quell the insurrection. The unity agreement initially created a wider space for political dissent. There was a mushrooming of public criticism of the government -- through press reporting of corruption, student demonstrations and the formation of a new political party. But the government soon moved to close that space, using its Emergency Powers to arrest and detain critics without charge.<\$F Zimbabwe has been governed under a continuous state of emergency for nearly a quarter of a century. Since independence, Parliament has renewed the state of emergency every six months, as required by the Constitution, justifying its action by reference to the constant threat from South Africa.>

After the unity agreement, the *Chronicle* newspaper engaged in an investigative effort with far-reaching political consequences. It exposed a corruption scandal involving a number of government ministers which led to the resignation of several of them, including Defense Minister Enos Nkala. Both the newspaper's editor and deputy editor were later "promoted" out of their editorial positions at the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* has published no more corruption scoops under its new editor.

In June 1989, fifteen members of the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) were arrested in Harare. ZUM was formed in April 1989 by Edgar Tekere, the former ZANU secretary-general, who had been removed from party and government posts. Tekere criticized corruption and the size of the government, and increasingly distanced himself from the government's stated objective of moving toward a one-party state -- an objective that was brought one step closer to fruition at the first ZANU-ZAPU national congress in December when the two parties agreed formally to merge.

Also in June, Kempton Makamure, dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Zimbabwe, was arrested and detained. Makamure is not known to be a member or supporter of ZUM, but he is a prominent critic of government corruption. In 1988 Makamure had faced criminal charges for allegedly assisting students to draft a manifesto against such corruption. Makamure and the ZUM members were released on June 17, but eleven other ZUM members were arrested in October and detained without charge for several weeks.

The government crackdown on critics also encompassed students. On September 29, students at the University of Zimbabwe attempted to hold a seminar which would have marked the anniversary of a major demonstration against government

corruption in 1988. Two hundred riot police and members of the Central Intelligence Organization ("CIO") entered the campus and forced the students to disperse. On October 2, the Students' Representative Council ("SRC") issued a statement protesting the police action. Two days later, police stormed the rooms of SRC President Arthur Mutambara and SRC Secretary-General Enoch Chikweche, and arrested both men. As news of the arrests spread, thousands of students assembled in a spontaneous demonstration. Police were again dispatched and arrested more than 70 students, and the university was temporarily closed. By early October, all students had been released, but the two student leaders were charged with issuing a subversive document under the terms of the Law and Order Maintenance Act.

Trade unionists also found themselves under pressure. On October 6, soon after the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions issued a statement condemning the closure of the university, its general-secretary, Morgan Tsvangirai, was arrested. Despite two rulings by the High Court that his detention was unlawful, he continued to be held by the CIO until his unconditional release on November 14. In September, during a strike by the Posts and Telecommunications Corporation workers, one of the leading strikers, Lovemore Matombo, was also held for a fortnight under the Emergency Powers Regulations.

The situation in the eastern part of the country poses the most serious threat to human rights in Zimbabwe. There, RENAMO, a Mozambican opposition group supported by South Africa, has committed appalling abuses. In its efforts to combat RENAMO attacks, the Zimbabwean government has arrested and tortured civilians and expelled thousands of refugees on the allegation that they were RENAMO supporters. The government appears to be reacting to the RENAMO threat without distinguishing between legitimate political dissent and armed opposition, much as it failed to make the same distinction in the earlier campaign against the "dissidents" in Matabeleland.

Also of particular concern is the ongoing use of torture by the CIO, which has continued to employ many of the Rhodesians associated with gross human rights abuses of the past. Because there has never been a purge of human rights abusers from either the police or the CIO, the culture of torture has survived intact into the post-independence era.

The resumption in U.S. aid to Zimbabwe in August 1988 ended a two-year freeze imposed in July 1986 in response to a Zimbabwe official's speech that was highly critical of the U.S. policy of "constructive engagement" toward South Africa. Zimbabwean leaders generally viewed "constructive engagement" as a tacit alliance with Pretoria. For its part, the Reagan administration was suspicious of the "socialist rhetoric" of those leaders, despite the administration's often-expressed enthusiasm for Zimbabwe's political and economic direction.

President Mugabe responded to the aid cutoff in the following terms:

@QUOTENOIND = This is the behavior of a country which in one vein would want us to believe that it does not ever want sanctions [against South Africa] and in another it is imposing sanctions against us for saying it refused to impose sanctions against South Africa. I find that quite ironical....

@NOIND = Mugabe's sense of the ironical stemmed from the Reagan administration's view that an attack on its policy was more worthy of financial penalties than the systematic denial of human rights to millions of black South Africans. But it was also ironical -- or, at least, unfortunate -- that the Reagan administration chose to take umbrage over criticisms of "constructive engagement," rather than pointing to the gross violations of human rights by the Zimbabwean government between 1983 and 1986, the period of the worst human rights violations in post-independence Zimbabwe. Having failed to condemn these

abuses, and having withdrawn aid for reasons unconnected with human rights in Zimbabwe, the Reagan administration greatly lessened the possibility of moral leverage over the Zimbabwe government.

The resumption of U.S. aid in August 1988 marked a turning point in U.S.-Zimbabwe relations. The Reagan administration also gained greater moral leverage with the Zimbabwe government by a commendable study and unequivocal condemnation of RENAMO abuses.

The Bush administration's policy toward Zimbabwe in 1989 contained no new initiatives. The diplomatic climate between the two countries continued to improve with the evolution of the peace process in Angola, but U.S. aid to the South African-backed rebels of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA continues to be a stumbling block in relations with Zimbabwe.

In fiscal year 1989, with aid restored, the U.S. provided \$5 million through the U.S. Agency for International Development to promote the private agricultural sector in Zimbabwe as well as \$240,000 under the International Military Education Training program. Zimbabwe also received some assistance as a member of the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference. And in early 1989 Zimbabwe won international approval of political and economic developments in the country with a new investment package, including the prospect of U.S. government-backed insurance for U.S. investors in Zimbabwe by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

These developments, as well as the Bush administration's reassessment of "constructive engagement," provide an opportunity for U.S. leverage in Zimbabwe on human rights grounds. We hope that the Bush administration will use this leverage to persuade the Zimbabwe government to conduct a full investigation of past abuses and to introduce institutional guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom from arbitrary arrest and torture.