

**CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

“ZIMBABWE: HUMAN RIGHTS IN CRISIS”

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J. STEPHEN MORRISON: Hi. Good afternoon. And thank you all for joining us today on short notice. I'm Steve Morrison. I direct the Africa program here at CSIS. I think we're very fortunate today to have such a distinguished group here at this particular moment in time to talk about such an important and pressing issue as the human rights climate within Zimbabwe. We're approaching the EU-AU Africa summit. This week we're approaching the rollout of the electoral process. There's plenty of mounting evidence coming from various directions around the sort of continued disturbing trend line within the human rights environment within Zimbabwe, and our ability to sort of turn our attention here today to this is, I think, quite important

There has been far too little activity, I regret, here in Washington focused on Zimbabwe over the last several years, which has been a source of frustration to many of us. I want to extend special thanks to Elizabeth Sullivan from CSIS staff, to Todd Moss, Carol Thompson from the State Department on African affairs, bureau of African affairs, for helping us put this all together very rapidly.

The way we're going to proceed this afternoon, assistant secretary Jendayi Frazer is going to open up with a short address, and she will then invite comments and remarks from the audience, and that will be the first half of our program this afternoon. When we're done with that part of the program, we will shift to more of a roundtable style discussion and I will introduce our speakers. At that point we're joined by John Makumbe, Otto Saki, and Sidney Chisi (ph), along with Jeff Krilla from the Department of State. We have three very acclaimed human rights activists from Zimbabwe here with us today, which I think is this very special import.

Jendayi is known to most if not all of you here at this gathering. She's the assistant secretary of state for African affairs. She's served in that position since the end of August in 2005. She's been with this administration since even before it was elected. She was a key figure during the first Bush campaign in advising the campaign and the incoming secretary on African matters. She's a long-time friend of CSIS and has been very helpful to us at many points over the years. She's served as the senior director and assistant to the president for African affairs at the National Security Council in the first administration. She took a brief break to be ambassador to South Africa before ascending into her position her today.

She's a political scientist, BA, MA and Ph.D. from Stanford, and faculty member at the Harvard Kennedy School. When we first met she was a fellow at the joint staff working a range of Africa security issues, so she brings quite a remarkably broad portfolio to this. And a remarkable level of continuity in African policy in this period of the Bush administrations. So Jendayi, welcome. Thank you for being with us today. I know this is an extremely busy week for you and busy month. So please come, and welcome.

JENDAYI FRAZER: Thank you, very much, Steve, for the introduction. I'm very happy to be here at CSIS today. And I want to thank our panel members for coming so far to participate in this discussion on this very important issue. All across Africa there is increasing prosperity, promise and freedom. It's a continent on the march. This year the region is forecast to grow by 6.2 percent by the IMF. Inflation is at historic lows, and the prevalence of poverty is falling. In 1990 Freedom House characterized 28 countries as not free. Today that number is only 15. Africa is commanding significantly more attention by international business people as an attractive place for trade and investment.

In stark contrast, a very few imploding countries remain a powerful blight on sub-Saharan African. They have problems that demand international and regional attention. Most of those problems are about fundamental issues like democracy versus oppression, freedom versus tyranny, economic opportunity versus kleptocratic rule, human rights versus political violence.

The good news is that marked progress has been achieved in recent years to dramatically reduce the number of these crisis spots. The bad news is that millions of people continue to live daily with the threat of violence, starvation, and political oppression. Zimbabwe is one of those places. The economic data are staggering. Over 80 percent of the population is unemployed, and private sector experts put inflation at over 60,000 percent, now the world's highest by a huge margin.

After seven years of severe economic decline, one-quarter of the population has left the country, seeking better opportunities elsewhere, and more than one-third of the remaining population is food insecure. The U.N. human development index shows that Zimbabwe's score is lower today than it was in 1975. Last June the government attempted to vanquish this hyper-inflation environment by fiat. It ordered all businesses to freeze prices immediately. Not surprisingly, the shelves were emptied within days and numerous businesses suspended operations or went bankrupt.

Today the shelves are still largely devoid of basic commodities such as bread and meat. The primary victims of the accelerating political repression and economic collapse are the ordinary people of Zimbabwe. They are finding it increasingly difficult simply to get by on a day-to-day basis. At one time many Zimbabweans looked to Mr. Mugabe as a liberator. But he has now failed the people of Zimbabwe and the region as a whole. Twenty years ago Mugabe sent many children to school. Now he is beating and brutalizing them as free-thinking adults. This regime uses brutal repression and political violence to vanquish any form of dissent.

This year has been the worst yet for defenders of freedom in Zimbabwe. Over 6,000 instances of human rights abuses have been reported by Zimbabwean NGOs since January 2007. We are all familiar with the brutal assault on the peaceful prayer gathering on March 11, and subsequent beatings of Movement for Democratic Change, MDC, and civil society leaders by Zimbabwean security forces and government supporters. The

images were graphic and abhorrent. The international community was rightly outraged by the blind belligerence of the perpetrators.

As President Bush has said, quote, “In Zimbabwe, ordinary citizens suffer under a tyrannical regime. The government has cracked down on peaceful calls for reform, and forced millions to flee their homeland. The behavior of the Mugabe regime is an assault on its people,” end quote.

The attacks, arrests and abductions continue unabated, with over 500 instances of human rights abuses reported each month. The number of victims requiring medical treatment this year, 3,463, nearly tripled from the 2000 number of 1,185. The intent is clear. The Mugabe regime has acted to systematically destroy all groups opposing its continued oppressive rule, including opposition political parties, civil society, students, private business people, and other groups. Mugabe’s tyranny needs to end.

Meanwhile, the southern African development community has worked hard to address the ongoing crisis, establishing a negotiating process intended to establish free and fair elections and resolve the country’s economic difficulties. However, the ongoing human rights abuses during the course of the sad-ick (ph) process call into question the Mugabe regime’s true commitment to that process. For example, Zanno PF (ph) cadres severely beat 22 members of the National Constitutional Assembly, a pro-democracy civil society organization, on November 22nd, the very day the South African President Thabo Mbeki visited Harare to press for resolution of the crisis.

Nonetheless, we support without reservation a sad-ick initiative to bring together the ruling and opposition parties for talks on resolving the country’s political and economic crisis. Specifically, we commend President Mbeki for his leadership and public commitment to deliver free and fair elections in Zimbabwe. However, to be successful, the rhetoric of any political agreement between the involved parties must be matched by reality on the ground. That is why we have repeatedly called for the Mugabe government to end immediately the violent attacks against democratic activists and civil society organizations, to respect the rule of law, and to allow the Zimbabwean people to exercise their political rights peacefully.

We look forward to seeing whether the two sides are able to reach a final agreement. If they do, implementation will take time. In planning that implementation, it is important to note that after sustaining years of ruthless and escalating attacks, the democratic opposition will need time to reorganize for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, likely several months after an agreement is reached and fully implemented.

Without such a period in which the MDC is free to present its case to the Zimbabwean people, there can be no truly democratic election. We urge all parties to allow for that time to rebuild in advance of what we hope, and the Zimbabwean people demand, will be a free and fair election process. There is also a clear need for robust monitoring of the agreement’s implementation, including human rights, the pre-election

campaign period, and the election day voting process. The sad-ick parliamentary reform as an independent and pro-democracy regional body, is well positioned to mount an extensive monitoring effort. Other international groups such as the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, and relevant nongovernmental organizations must play a large role as well.

Mis-rule in Zimbabwe has created real burdens for its neighbors. We recognize that the leaders of southern Africa have a special role to play in pressing for a solution. At the same time, our conscience as a nation dictates certain measures to deny human rights abusers access to our markets, our universities, and our territory.

Given Mugabe's escalating use of violence, the United States will be imposing additional sanctions against the worst perpetrators of the regime's brutality. Financial sanctions will be imposed in the coming days against several additional Zimbabweans not yet sanctioned who played a central role in the regime's escalating human rights abuses, and two additional companies that are owned or controlled by specially designated individuals. The United States also will impose travel sanctions today against 38 additional individuals, including nine state security officials involved in human rights abuses and anti-democratic activities in recent months.

The affected individuals will include at least five adult children of Zimbabwe government officials implicated in similar activities who are currently studying in the United States. It is intolerable that those closest to Mugabe are enjoying the privilege of sending their children to the United States for an education when they have destroyed the once outstanding educational system in their own country, thereby depriving ordinary Zimbabweans of a decent education.

We continuously review the need for adding new names to our targeted sanctions. If the violence fails to cease, we will be expanding our sanctions further. We are particularly watching those people and the firms they control who are using their position to enrich themselves at the expense of suffering Zimbabweans. If necessary, we will take additional measures against those who have been profiting from the current crisis.

Let me be clear. We can reverse these actions once the politically motivated violence ceases and the government implements the reforms needed to restore Zimbabwe to what it once was, a democratic and prosperous country that was a jewel of the region. These are very high goals that sad-ick and other international actors seem to achieve, but Zimbabwe and the world can settle for nothing at all less.

In the meantime, the United States will continue to provide food and other humanitarian assistance, as well as assistance for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. In 2007, we delivered over \$170 million in food aid. This will feed over 1.5 million Zimbabweans until the hunger season ends next March. We are prepared to do even more. We stand ready to augment substantively our development assistance to a government that makes credible and significant progress towards genuine economic and political reform, such as full and equal access to humanitarian assistance, restoration of

the rule of law, including enforcement of contracts, an independent judiciary, the respect for property rights. Third, a commitment to the democratic process and respect for applicable international human rights obligations, including a commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. Fourth, a commitment to macro-economic stabilization in accordance with guidance from relevant international agencies, and fifth and most importantly, timely elections held in accordance with international obligations, and in the presence of international election observers.

The government of Zimbabwe can set a course to meet these principles easily enough. The choice is there. It requires that the government concede one very fundamental point, that it serves the people of Zimbabwe and that the people may freely express ultimate authority over those who govern them. The people of Zimbabwe deserve our collective attention and action in support of their brave struggle for a just and prosperous future. We cannot abandon them in their noble quest and the time of need. We will stand with the people of Zimbabwe. Thank you very much. (Applause)

I'll stand to take your questions.

MR. MORRISON: I'm going to put forward one question, and then I'd like to take two or three around, two or three from the floor as well. One question, what's your operating assumption around the direction that the economy is moving right now? We hear the discussion around rampant runaway inflation, that this is unsustainable. We see the migration figures, we see the impoverization figures and the like. But we also know that there are places like Zimbabwe – Burman and others – that have external props, that have, in the case of Zimbabwe, a platinum sector that still ticks over, that is able to disregard the interests of the larger population and keep going forward and be able to fend off opposition from within the region, if that rears its head, or these kinds of sanctions you've proposed.

So can you comment just a little bit about how you see the bigger picture of the direction of what's happening economically for Zimbabwe, and how that is entering the calculus of this government right now, and how these sanctions might begin to change, one hopes, begin to change the political behavior that's moved Zimbabwe to this point.

Let me ask for two other questions or comments. Michelle, would you like to offer any? Michelle Gavin is here with us, who just recently authored an excellent study for the Council on Foreign Relations special report. Michelle?

MICHELLE GAVIN: Ambassador Frazer, thank you so much for those remarks. They're so forthright and very helpful, I think to everyone, very clear. I was wondering if you could speak a little bit about what kind of planning was going on in the U.S. government and at the multi-lateral level for eventual recovery, when those conditions that you laid out so clearly are met and there's a government with whom we can work.

MR. MORRISON: Let's take one other. There's a hand in the rear. Please identify yourself.

Q: My name is Masipo Nsetole, Jr. (ph). Student at – (inaudible). I'm wondering in the case of Zimbabwe, a lot of the Mugabe benefits from the international community continuing to recognize Zimbabwe as a sovereign state, and I'm wondering, given the occurrence of a state failure, whether Zimbabwe presents a case where maybe the international community should be heightening its role, and maybe not respecting sovereignty in a case where this is actually part of the problem.

MR. MORRISON: Thank you. So we've got the economy, the level of planning, and this question around respect of sovereign interests.

AMB. FRASER: Yes, thank you. I think that the direction of the economy obviously is very much failing. People are leaving. Those who are staying home are becoming more impoverished. Some are adjusting. But I think that in the medium term to long term, clearly the more the economy fails, the more cracks there will be in the regime.

That said, I think that there are opportunities for the government to get assistance from outside, and I am speaking specifically about regional countries helping to prop them up. So I think it requires not only the U.S. government but the international community to put pressure, to keep pressure on those regional countries, the neighboring countries, who may choose to prop them up because of, you know, this whole notion of African solidarity. Or even because they are concerned about Zimbabweans leaving, coming into their country, so a failed state right on their border.

But I do think that we have to urge against that instinct of the neighboring countries that would try to rescue, or if not rescue, because I think it can't be rescued, but rather extend the life of what is becoming a dead and failing regime.

So overall, the big picture, the economy – I think that we've waited for – the collapse of the economy we all thought would bring down the regime. I think we learned that this economy has collapsed and a regime continues. But that said, it's in crisis. The political situation is in crisis, and so I think that we need to, as I said, try to prevent those who would try to prop it up.

And that gets to the point about planning for eventual recovery, where we do have the Zimbabwe democracy and recovery act. And I continue to see that as a guidepost for what we could do if the reforms that I laid out, and we had a free and fair election, would actually take place. I think it's a good piece of legislation, and I'm afraid to say that I think as assistant secretary I'm not going to see it come into effect in terms of the actual appropriation of the money because I think that we have a ways to go in terms of increasing and supporting democratic action to have a change in Zimbabwe. I think we're looking at mid-2008 to the end of 2008 to really see a point where this – that we've had a change for democracy in that country. Obviously the people continuing to fight for

that every day builds that resilience, builds that democratic resilience. But the actual governmental change I think will take some time.

As for the issue of sovereignty, I believe very strongly in sovereignty. But I also believe very strongly in responsibility to protect as well. In the case of Masapule (ph), in the case of Zimbabwe and the issue of state failure, I don't think that that should be an excuse for not intervening. But I think the intervention needs to be the way in which we're doing it diplomatically. I think that continuing to assist democratic opposition, civil society groups who respect human rights internally is critically important. Zimbabwe I think can recover quickly. I really do believe that. I think that you do have certain institutions which certainly are being destroyed but are still there.

So it's a matter of getting that free election on a level playing field, so truly free and fair. So I think that we have to keep moving toward isolating the government diplomatically and supporting civil society internally. And putting pressure on the region as well to recognize the significant crisis which is taking place in Zimbabwe.

MR. MORRISON: Thank you. I'd like to bring us to a second round here. I'll get to you in just one second, please, and you can ask a clarifying question.

Sir?

Q: Thank you. Richard Klein from NDI. I enjoyed your presentation very much. My question is, it was already mentioned, the EU-AU summit going on and I'd be interested if you could talk a little bit about how the change going on in the EU is likely to affect U.S. foreign policy in Zimbabwe. And related as a follow-up to an earlier question, to what extent do you think if money was made available or set aside clearly at this point as a carrot under the Zimbabwe Democracy Act, as people know that that is there, available for when the transition happens, whether that might push the process forward. Thank you.

AMB. FRAZER: When you say change in the EU, do you mean Zimbabwe is being invited to the EU? I think the important thing there is, you know, obviously we didn't agree with that invitation, but it certainly provides an opportunity to discuss Zimbabwe's human rights record, and I would hope that the EU and the African countries would make it a central issue of discussion at their summit. And we certainly believe that that would be appropriate, given that the African countries have bought into the NAPAD (ph) principles. And this is a peer in crisis and they need to address it.

As for money as an incentive, that legislation has been there for some time, and so they know it's there. So I don't believe that in fact – I mean, I think that this is a regime that's holding on for dear life and it's not going to – it hasn't responded to positive incentives. So I don't think that – the incentive is there already.

Q: (Off mike.)

AMB. FRAZER: I certainly do think that the opposition will have to speak to that themselves, right, but it is our sense that here we are in December, and the repression continues. I just mention that when President Mbeke was in Harare, they were still beating activists, democracy activists. So I don't think that between now and March or so that there is going to be a level playing field that can allow for free and fair elections. So yes, I do believe that there needs to be some more time. But that's my own view.

I think that some of our panelists here would probably have a better sense of that, as well as those who would be contesting the elections. And obviously we would follow their lead.

MR. MORRISON: We'll take those two, and the person in the back, and then we'll come back to Jendayi. Please be very succinct.

Q: Thank you, Madam Secretary. Sam Zarifi (ph) from Human Rights Watch. I want to just follow up on your discussion about the role of the regional countries, and especially South Africa. It is our experience that in fact these countries are acting as enablers. I was wondering if you could go into some more detail into your kind of second level strategy in terms of engaging with those countries and pushing them toward re-thinking their Zimbabwe policy.

MR. MORRISON: Right behind you.

Q: Charles Smith, -- (inaudible) -- South Africa. I'd just like your comments on President Mbeke's role from sad-ick's point of view. It seems like President Mbeke's got his own problems right now. Will he be able to help Zimbabwe? It seems he's not able to help himself right now.

MR. MORRISON: Thank you. There's a gentleman in the back.

Q: Constance Ikokwu (ph), Nigeria. I just want to ask, you just announced new sanctions. Do you think that the sanctions you've announced will jeopardize talks or any successes that have already been achieved, because the president is already in talks and elections will be held next year. Do you think that the sanctions, or the way that the U.S. is going about it will jeopardize that?

And second, permit me to ask a question on that country which I have just returned from, Nigeria. You did mention in April, after the elections, that in spite of the problems that they had, you still have confidence in the Nigerian government, and that all the groups should go through the courts.

Right now about three states, elections have been -- (inaudible). I want to have your comment on that. Do you think that is a positive development? Thank you.

AMB. FRAZER: Yes, thank you very much. The first question, the second one are somewhat similar, about South Africa as enabler. I mean, what are we doing to get

the countries to – we continue to engage South Africa directly, as well as the regional countries, to talk to them about how we can achieve what I believe is our common goal, which is to see Zimbabwe return to democracy. I think we all agree on that.

We differ, however, in our strategy, and we believe that the approach needs to be pressure. That's why we're going to keep our sanctions on. As you know, they've called for us to get rid of our sanctions. We just disagree. We didn't always agree with the ECOWAS (ph) countries about Charles Taylor either. But we did share a common goal. I think that that's the important point. We think that we know how to deal with governments that keep repressing their own citizens and we've had success in doing so.

We hope that, you know, clearly if talks can work, we want those talks to work, which is why we continue to support the sad-ick initiative, but we also have to prepare for something else. We've been these talks fail over and over again. There was, you know, this Chin-a-masa (ph) and others were working on a new constitution. Well, there's nothing of it. So we are supportive, but we also believe that we need another approach, which is to be tough and to keep the sanctions on.

That goes to the point about can President Mbeke help Zimbabwe, given his own political troubles at home, or political issues at home right now. Clearly he continues to play a leadership role on the continent. And he is one of the authors of the new partnership for Africa's development. So very much his own image and his own reputation rests on what's going on in Zimbabwe. And to the degree that that regime is embarrassing him by continuing to attack and continuing to beat human rights activists, then he has to have an interest in what's taking place. That many people are fleeing to his country, trying to get out of the tyranny of their own government says that he has to have an interest in Zimbabwe. And we hope that he will succeed, but it's implementation on the ground that matters, and we haven't seen it yet. I think that at some point President Mbeke will also listen to some of his own constituents who have said that South Africa needs a tougher approach to Zimbabwe.

Will the new sanctions jeopardize the talks? I don't think so, but it is certainly possible. But the talks haven't led to any change on the ground, so I think it's a risk that we are prepared to take because we think that, as I said, we worked to get rid of tyrannical governments previously and we think the sanctions are a part of that strategy and an important part. At the same time, we think that there should be continued talks. This is a matter of trying to bring some pressure to bear on those who continue to use brutal tactics against civil society.

I said that I had confidence in the Nigerian institutions, particularly the parliament and judiciary, to manage what was not a free and fair election. We all know that. And in fact, we have seen that those courts have indeed, as you said, turned over some of those elections, which I think demonstrates that in fact we could have confidence in the independence of the judiciary in Nigeria. It's actually working.

MR. MORRISON: Two questions. Who else is going to join us in expanding sanctions of this kind, financial and travel sanctions? And you mentioned in our speech also that we will expand sanctions if there's continued violence of this kind that we've seen. Can you say any more than that as to what's on the horizon in terms of additional measures, if we assume continued recalcitrance and resort to violence against the opposition, and others?

AMB. FRAZER: Well, we hope that everyone will join us, and some have already joined us. The U.K. and others, the EU members have travel sanctions on. We would like them to extend financial sanctions, we would like multi-lateral sanctions, so we have to work to that end.

The step that we're taking today is we have the spouses of some of the regime supporters, we're now moving toward those who have visas, the children who are coming to school in the United States, and so we're going to increase that pressure. And that's our next ratcheting up as such. They should not benefit from an education here when their parents are denying that education at home. But that's the next level, and that's about all I will say on that point here. We don't want to give them – let them anticipate.

MR. MORRISON: Shall we take one more round?

Right there, the gentleman. And then up front. Please identify yourself.

Q: This is Masipo Nsetole again, and my question is, in the midst of this crisis that's been escalating, really ever since I guess 1997, increasingly so, legitimacy, the legitimacy of domestic leadership and also international leadership has been fractured and fragmented. I'm wondering, what are the initiatives, what is the approach, what is the strategy in place going forward to try to restore this sort of legitimacy, especially in terms of leadership? And how can we ensure that people are part of the process in terms of picking the leaders? That might aid legitimation.

MR. MORRISON: Thank you. All right, we have a question right here in the front.

Q: My name is Rubito – (inaudible). I work with USAID in Zimbabwe, and I come from Zimbabwe. I commend your implementation of the sanctions for change, but we have seen it has been implemented before and it hasn't been very effective because right now, okay, they know about it. They know that the sanctions are going to be implemented on their kids and they already say, okay, our kids will go to Malaysia. They are going to come up with a scholastic fund for their kids to go to Malaysia. They can go to South Africa, they can go to Malaysia. So okay, that strategy can be implemented, but the success – I don't know about the success of that strategy.

But I was thinking, coming from the mission, that what we need is more funding for the CSOs because having discussed with some of the CSOs what is needed in funding, funding, information dissemination, and for education. There is so much that

needs to be done. And the need for funding in those kind of areas. So I would think maybe that's one strategy that would help to put pressure on the regime.

AMB. FRAZER: Yes, to both of your questions. Legitimacy has to come from the people, the people electing their leadership. So that's the whole point of our policy towards Zimbabwe. That's the only point of our policy toward Zimbabwe. That's the only way. That's why I said not from outside, but by supporting from inside, without outside being facilitators, helpers. And yes, to help, you have to provide resources. So I agree 100 percent, more resources would be very helpful. I think so, yes. Congress has the power of the purse. We can make a request, but frankly, I think that Congress often gives us money for initiatives that they want us to do. They have the power. We can't – all of the money that we have in the administration comes from Congress giving it to us, deciding that they want to fund certain initiatives.

They funded the Sierra Leone court, for example. They earmarked and funded the Sierra Leone court and other things, and so Congress has the power of the purse. But I agree with you. More resources to the civil society organizations is key because that is ultimately the recovery of society is in the people themselves.

MR. MORRISON: Jendayi, thank you. This has been a long, intense, rich discussion here. We're very grateful that you've joined us. On behalf of everyone here, I'd like to thank you.

AMB. FRAZER: Thank you. (Applause.)

(End of segment.)