

Africa Report by Douglas DeGroot and Mary Brannan

Behind the strife in Zimbabwe

The country's potential to spark regional economic development has made it the target of destabilization.

The insurgency against the government of Zimbabwe in Matabeleland Province in the western part of the country is being fraudulently portrayed as a "tribal conflict." This is one of the favored terms used by the British and allied European interests to cover up their covert operations in Africa.

The Western media, following the lead of the British media, are depicting a clash between Prime Minister Robert Mugabe and opposition leader Joshua Nkomo, both leaders of groups from their respective regions during the 1970s war for independence. They had formed a loose alliance; Nkomo received Soviet arms, and at the same time was well-connected to British colonial circles, such as Tiny Rowlands of Lonrho. Nkomo's forces saw little fighting during the war. Mugabe is from the majority Shona ethnic grouping, while Nkomo is from the Matabele group, which accounts for about 17 percent of the population.

When the Zimbabwe government clamped down on the campaign of terror and crime carried out by former members of ZIPRA, Nkomo's force during the war for independence, who either never joined the unified army established at the time of independence in 1980, or have subsequently deserted, the Anglo-American press began to play up the so-called tribal conflict.

When Nkomo went into exile on March 8 in neighboring Botswana, and subsequently in London, the press saw "impending civil war" and an "irre-

versible tribal split" in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is often referred to as the economic powerhouse of the black nations in southern Africa, and the ongoing operations are a deliberate targeting of the black nation in southern Africa with the fastest development potential. Though small—the population is only 7 million—Zimbabwe could lead the way out of the economic disaster that neighboring Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique find themselves in. These countries, along with Zaire and Angola, could become a growth area for heavy industry and large-scale agriculture, if a regional rail network and electrical power grid were developed. The first year after independence, Zimbabwe had a large agricultural surplus; it sold food and provided food aid to other countries in the region that were suffering shortages.

Neighboring South Africa is a willing pawn of the neo-colonial networks who are trying to destroy Zimbabwe, since South Africa's only strategy for survival at this point is to keep all neighboring countries weak, by means of subversion.

Those networks include neo-Nazis in Europe and South Africa, along with people like Robert Gayre of Scotland, who had numerous connections with Rhodesia. Gayre is a racist eugenicist, disguised as an anthropologist, who said recently that "Population is absolutely out of hand, and the problem is that it is the wrong type that is growing fast, the type that on the social scale is least likely to con-

tribute." Of underpopulated Africa, he stated, "It is very, very true of the countries in Africa. The population explosion there is a true thing, especially in Zimbabwe. . . ." He advocated sterilization as a solution.

Similar networks which operate out of Switzerland specialize in fomenting regional rebellions against central governments. The *Tribune de Lausanne* in mid-1982 was already talking about a Matabeleland separatist movement in Zimbabwe.

Mugabe became prime minister by winning the post-Rhodesia elections by a large margin. At that time, he brought Nkomo and his party into a unity government. In February 1982, Nkomo was ousted from his cabinet position after arms caches were discovered on farms belonging to his party faction.

His ouster was followed by sporadic violence, which escalated dramatically around last Christmas. This provoked the government crackdown.

While the local population views the former ZIPRA guerrillas with little sympathy, they are forced to aid the guerrillas, and thus find themselves caught between the terrorists and government forces. The government has evidence of these terrorists training in South Africa, and reports that these forces have carried out many of the atrocities blamed on government forces. Last August, Zimbabwe forces killed three South African soldiers who were leading a group of black troops inside Zimbabwe.

South Africa is also training 5,000 members of former Ian Smith ally Abel Muzorewa's group, according to Zimbabwe officials. It cannot be ruled out that elements of this Shona-speaking force are involved in carrying out atrocities that are blamed on the government by those who are trying to whip up a tribal conflict.