

# Anglo-American cabal targets Zimbabwe

by Dean Andromidas

A joint Anglo-American operation has been launched to overthrow the government of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. The international media, particularly the London press, have been conducting a relentless propaganda campaign against “corruption,” “dictatorial excesses,” and “systematic oppression of white farmers” in Zimbabwe. Because this attempt to paint President Mugabe as another “Saddam Hussein”—minus weapons of mass destruction—portends a major political, or even military operation, *EIR* must administer a heavy dose of truth about the reality of the situation.

## Who supports the opposition?

For nine years, Zimbabwe implemented an International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment program, before a virtual cutoff of all IMF funds over the last two years. This has generated tremendous popular unrest, particularly in urban areas, where there is high unemployment and low pay scales. The last two years have seen general strikes and food riots. This ferment has been directed against the Zimbabwe government, and not the IMF, by the same forces responsible for the IMF-dictated policies.

The main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), is supported by the International Republican Institute, the U.S. Republican Party side of the National Endowment for Democracy. Most recently, the IRI has been revealed to be among the core intelligence operations involved in an attempt to overthrow Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori (see *EIR*, April 7, 2000).

Among IRI’s directors are Lawrence Eagleburger, Secretary of State under President George Bush, and founding president of Kissinger Associates; Brent Scowcroft, National Security Adviser under Bush, and founding vice chairman of Kissinger Associates; Jeane Kirkpatrick, former United Nations Ambassador in the Reagan administration; Ed Feulner, president of the British-controlled Heritage Foundation, and former president of the British ultra-free-trade Mont Pelerin Society; and other Republican Party grandees.

The IRI became active in Zimbabwe in 1993 with the stated purpose of “strengthening political party structures,” which was obviously an effort to build political networks within the ruling ZANU-PF party that would support the 1991 IMF structural reforms package and radical free-market policies. Apparently not very successful, by 1997 the IRI had shifted its programs to “helping civic organizations to serve

as a watchdog over government activities.” In simple words, to overthrow the government of President Mugabe.

Two of the so-called “watchdogs” that the IRI supports, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Group (Zimrights) and the Legal Resources Foundation, along with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, have played key roles in anti-government activities over the past years. The MDC was, in effect, a creation of these organizations. Its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, was also a leader in the trade union federation. The groups fully support the IMF “reforms,” and have channelled popular rage caused by these policies, against the Mugabe government.

Government supporters accuse the MDC of being supported by the white Zimbabwean business community, implying links to the historical forces associated with the white supremacist regime of Ian Smith, when Zimbabwe was the British colony of Rhodesia. *EIR* has been unable to substantiate this in detail; nonetheless, press reports have revealed that, despite the fact that the MDC membership is overwhelmingly black, four of its five executive members are white. One of its leaders was a Special Branch officer in the Rhodesian police.

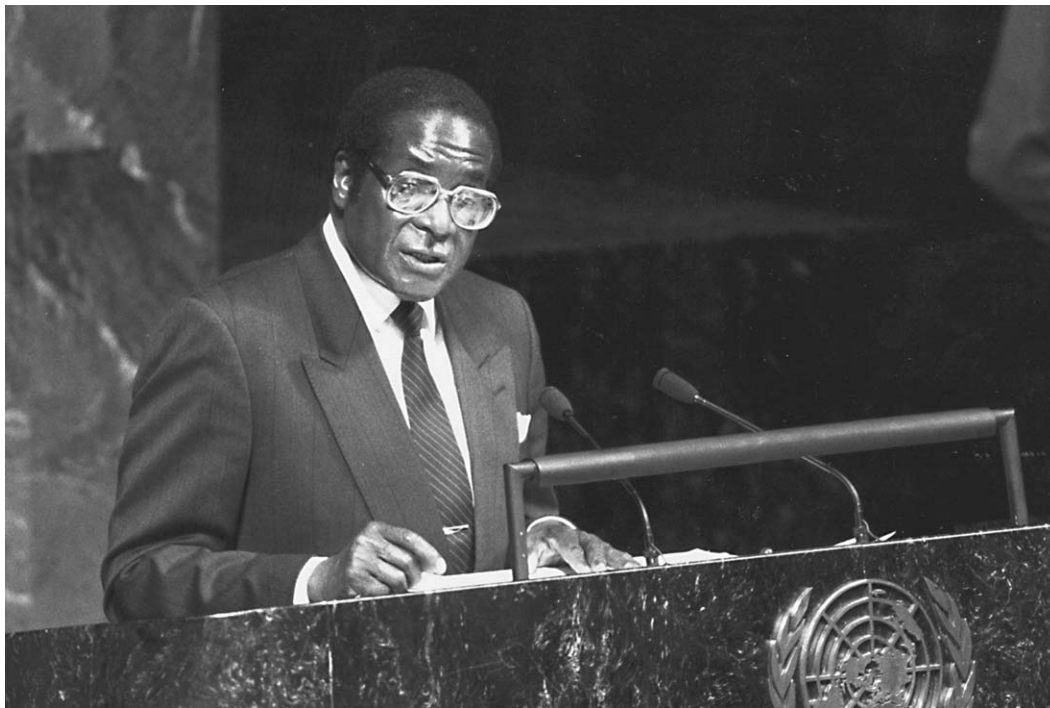
At the time of this writing, Tsvangirai was in South Africa raising funds from the business community there, before leaving for London, where he was scheduled to meet British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

## The British campaign

Cook has been conducting an international campaign against Mugabe. Although Cook failed to mobilize support for this effort at the recent European Union-Africa Summit in Cairo, he did convince the EU meeting of foreign ministers to issue a warning to Mugabe, to put an end to the seizure of white farms.

On March 15, Zimbabwe Foreign Minister I.S.G. Mudenge released a statement denying that government authorities had acted illegally when they searched a seven-ton British “diplomatic bag.” He charged that the diplomatic flap, which made headlines in the international press, was part of an international British campaign to discredit the government in Harare. Mudenge said, “It is no secret that from 1998 to 1999, British interests have been in the forefront of a smear campaign aimed at undermining Zimbabwe and its ZANU-PF-led government. It is established that meetings were convened at Chatham House [the Royal Institute for International Affairs] in London, Brussels, and other capitals and venues to discuss ways and means of toppling President Mugabe and his government by inciting political and economic instability, including sponsoring new political formations in this country. The documents and minutes of these meetings are known. Some we have previously publicly exposed, while others have been subjects of diplomatic intercourse between Zimbabwe and the countries concerned.”

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright saw to it that the United States would cut off all aid to Zimbabwe’s land-



*Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, addressing the UN General Assembly. Britain's propaganda war against the Zimbabwean government may escalate into a military intervention.*

reform program, in a display of displeasure at the seizure of white farms. This is a bit of a joke, because this aid amounted to no more than \$1 million. In fact, so much aid to Zimbabwe has been cut over the last two years, that these threats only serve to reinforce the Zimbabwe government's resolve.

Under the cover of contingency plans for the evacuation of British nationals, a military operation could be in the offing. The fact that more than 40,000 white Zimbabweans can claim British citizenship, means that such plans would necessarily take on serious military proportions. According to African intelligence sources, a British special forces team has set up headquarters in neighboring Botswana, most likely in Francistown, near the Zimbabwe border.

The United States also maintains a large logistical base at the Botswanan military air base at Maun. This sprawling, state-of-the-art base was built by the United States and France. U.S. Air Force C-5 Galaxy transport aircraft use the base to supply American forces in the region. These forces could be marshalled to support a British-run evacuation.

### **The land issue**

In his March 15 statement, Foreign Minister Mudenge elaborated on what triggered the current crisis. "The anti-Zimbabwe crusade originally started when the Zimbabwe government embarked on a land redistribution program, a program which seeks to redistribute indigenous land which was forcibly seized by the British colonial authorities early last century and distributed to the British settlers without any compensation to the indigenous Zimbabweans," he said.

The press claim that Mugabe is using the issue simply to mobilize support for his government, and to intimidate the

opposition, is mere propaganda. The land dispute is a creation of the British government, both historically and currently. Moreover, *EIR's* investigation has revealed that the same leading Anglo-American interests which are destabilizing Mugabe are planning a land grab throughout southern Africa.

Some 4,500 commercial farms, owned by white farmers, most of whom still hold British passports, control 70% of the prime agricultural land, and close to 40% of all arable land in Zimbabwe. Some 20 million people live on the rest. The white population in Zimbabwe totals 60,000. Our intention here is not to demonize the white farmers; in fact, race relations in Zimbabwe are better than in much of the rest of Africa. As we will demonstrate, the white farmers are also a target. In fact, the government policy has not been to simply seize the commercial farms, but to take over the land that is not being utilized. In general, up to 75% of the land owned by the commercial farmers is not currently utilized.

The system in Zimbabwe began with the arrival of Cecil Rhodes and his royal chartered British South African Company (BSAC) in 1889. This was prior to the British occupation of what is now Zimbabwe, a fact that is still vividly part of the historic consciousness of much of the population of Zimbabwe, both black and white. The BSAC "grand design" was to create huge agricultural estates and plantations, and to massively exploit the mineral resources of the entire region, which comprised not only present-day Zimbabwe, but also what is now Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa. Africans were simply thrown off their land, and herded into human "nature parks," called "Native Reserves," which cleared the best land for British colonialist settlement, and "freed" the male population to be thrown into working

the diamond and copper mines.

By 1930, some 50,000 Europeans occupied 49 million acres, while 1.1 million Africans were restricted to the Native Reserves, which comprised 29 million acres. By the 1970s, the only thing that had changed, was that the number of Africans restricted to the Native Reserves had increased to more than 10 million souls. The white population had peaked in the 1970s, at 250,000.

In November 1965, Ian Smith declared Rhodesia's "independence" from Great Britain in order to avert "majority rule," and simply continued the system created by the British Empire. Although "majority rule" was the official "decolonization" policy of the British Labour government, then under Prime Minister Harold Wilson, nothing was done to stop Smith, except to back highly ineffective United Nations sanctions. During the next 15 years, the Zimbabwe African National Union, under the leadership of Mugabe, and the Zimbabwean African People's Union, under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, launched a guerrilla war against the Smith regime. These two organizations eventually formed a union, to become the Popular Front, and after the signing of the Lancaster House agreement ending the war, it became the political party, ZANU-PF. The ZANU-PF won the first elections with an overwhelming majority, and it has not lost that majority since.

With over two-thirds of the land controlled by the British, land was obviously the major issue in the liberation war. The British, despite claims that they supported "majority rule," refused to redress their land seizures. The British forced the inclusion a clause in the Lancaster House agreement stipulating that the commercial farms could only be acquired on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis. As a concession to the Patriotic Front, they gave assurances that the British government, the United States, and other countries would support a multinational effort to fund land purchases, and agricultural and economic development programs.

In the first few years in the 1980s, the new government launched a major land acquisition and resettlement program, in which 52,000 families, comprising more than 1 million people, were resettled. But, by the mid-1980s, as radical free-market and free-trade policies set in, funds for the creation of, and assistance to small-holder agriculture dried up. Land redistribution programs came to a halt.

The popular idea that commercial farms are more efficient, and provide employment and foreign exchange, is vicious propaganda. These commercial farms provide a respectable return for the families or firms that own them, but the 100,000 to 300,000 workers employed on them are the lowest-paid workers in the formal economy. Professional studies have shown that conditions of life for these workers, including health, education, and mortality rates, are on average 50% worse than for any other population group in the country.

The claim that the farms have high productivity, is also a myth. In Germany, for example, the average farm is 45 acres, compared to 2,000-10,000 in Zimbabwe. No one can deny

the high living standard and productivity of German and other western European farmers. Even in the young Zimbabwe, because of the new government's support for small-holders, production in maize increased by 70%, giving the country a major food surplus for the first years after independence. Moreover, the small-holder perspective enables the creation of farm communities based around the village structure, much the way it is now in western European countries, making the delivery of health, education, and other essential services practical. This is impossible on the commercial farms, where workers mostly live in shacks and huts right on the farm.

In 1994, Mugabe appointed a Land Tenure Commission to draft recommendations on land redistribution and agricultural development. Its chairman, Prof. Mandivamba Rukuni, has been quoted saying, "It's unlikely that Zimbabwe will develop into a fully industrialized society if you have millions of poor peasants. Evidence coming in from other parts of the world, especially Asia, is that small-holders have to increase agricultural production and their incomes have to rise for them to have effective purchasing power for industrial development."

The IMF cutoff started in 1998, on the pretext that Zimbabwe had deployed troops in support of Congolese President Laurent Kabila. The international campaign against Mugabe on this question is also lying propaganda: Whereas Zimbabwe was invited in by the internationally recognized government of the Congo, neither Uganda nor Rwanda, which had invaded the Congo, was sanctioned. In fact, Uganda has been granted debt relief! Both countries were simply acting as the marcher-lords for London- and Wall Street-centered financial interests seeking to control the large mining concessions in the Congo. Mugabe's decision to enter that war was based on his convictions, whether one agrees with them or not, that if the Congo fell, his government would be next.

But the land issue was also crucial in the IMF's decisions. In 1998, Mugabe had organized a donors conference to mobilize international financial resources to implement a very ambitious land redistribution program, and the recommendations of the Land Tenure Commission. The policy was not to take over the large commercial farms entirely, but only to redistribute the land which was underutilized.

Although the conference ended with handshakes, shortly thereafter the IMF simply refused to release a promised tranche of \$180 million, thus giving the donors an excuse not to make good on their promises. The IMF move, not Mugabe, led to the disintegration of the economy, including the collapse of the currency, a general strike, and food riots.

### **The real land grab**

Meanwhile, in London, other plans were being hatched for the real land grab in Zimbabwe, similar to those aimed at the rest of Africa. By 1997-98, the imminent collapse of the global financial system was apparent to key financial groups, which began their shift into "real assets." Furthermore, to the speculators, commercial farms and plantations represented a

reliable hard-currency cash flow that could be deployed in the financial markets—those in London and New York, not in Harare or Nairobi. This fact is ignored, or covered up, when IMF propagandists claim that large farms bring “hard currency” into the country. Because the cash crops are all exported to the West, why should the “hard currency” ever come back? Located in developing countries, with labor forces that are paid slave wages with near-worthless Third World currencies—what could be more “efficient”?

The land grab is being led by the world’s most notorious speculator, George Soros. Prior to 1998, Soros had been quietly accumulating large agricultural land holdings in Argentina, buying out old family-owned ranches and estates, and setting up commercial farms. Operating through various front-men, he started doing the same in Africa. In 1998, Nikoious Roditi, manager of Soros’s Quota Fund, bought a 66% holding in the London-based Plantations and General Company, which operates tea, tobacco, and other plantations in Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and other African countries. In 1998, Roditi, who was born in Rhodesia, took a leave of absence for health reasons after losing more than \$1 billion of his \$1.9 billion fund.

Soros’s brother Paul sits on the board of directors of Africa Plantations Corp., which also has been purchasing government-owned plantations that the IMF has forced countries such as Zambia to privatize as part of their structural adjust-

ment conditionalities. Also on the board is the Soros-linked Thomas Kaplan. Soros also has major shareholdings in the British plantation company African Lakes, which has a major interest in Africa Online, Africa’s leading internet provider.

Through these companies, Soros made an unsuccessful bid to take over the infamous Lonrho Africa, which was controlled by the late Tiny Rowland, and has substantial interests in Zimbabwe. (Lonrho is an abbreviation of “London Rhodesia.”)

But the real shaper of these policies is closer to the British Crown: the Commonwealth Development Corp. (CDC). The CDC is one of the arms of the British government’s International Aid and Development Agency. In 1999, it became fully privatized, and is now called the CDC Capital Partners PLC. Although much of its share-capital is held by the British government, that will soon change, as the purpose of the privatization was to raise funds in the London capital markets for direct investment in—seizure of—privatized state companies in the developing sector. In Africa, they have been particularly active in the plantation sector.

The CDC’s current chief executive officer is Allan Gillespie, former senior partner in Goldman Sachs, London. Its chairman is the Earl Cairns. He enjoyed a banking career with S.G. Warburg, of which he eventually became chairman, and Cairns is also Receiver General of the Duchy of Cornwall. The Duke of Cornwall is Prince Charles.

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