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## MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by wingco - 22-06-2008 13:11

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7467990.stm>

Strategic in any way or a gesture of sheer despair?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by TonTon - 22-06-2008 13:21

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I can't see it as anything other than sheer despair. Maybe there's a faint hope from some that by doing so it may force some others to act, I don't know.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Purves Grundy - 22-06-2008 13:27

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My immedaite reaction was to wonder exactly how many of Tsvangerai's family members had a gun pointed at them when he made his announcement.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by E10 Rifle - 22-06-2008 14:44

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Can I just link this one up to my nil thread, if I may:

[http://www.wsc.co.uk/component/option,com\\_fireboard/Itemid,35/func,view/id,51070/catid,28/](http://www.wsc.co.uk/component/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,35/func,view/id,51070/catid,28/)

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by TonTon - 22-06-2008 14:53

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Oh, I meant to say that I'd done that, the other day.

E10's groovy thread

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 22-06-2008 21:58

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I think it almost certainly is strategic. There was no chance of the election being "free and fair" (that boat sailed a couple of months ago), and Mugabe has said that he would not accept an election defeat anyway.

By participating in an election, Tsvangirai would have legitimised, in the eyes of cuntbuckets like Mbeki, the process. It's clear that pulling out is not a stunt by somebody who believes he has insufficient support. Everybody can see that the election couldn't have been regarded as fair. By pulling out, Tsvangirai is placing pressure on the SADC and on Mbeki, who know not only that the current situation is untenable, but that their friends in the West are going to be pissed off at the rape of democracy. Tsvangirai, who needs external engagement in Zimbabwe (of better quality than hitherto), is now hoping for such diplomatic pressure.

If his cause was concern for the victims of Zanu-PF's violence, he should have pulled out a long time ago. Absent a free and fair election, the regime's brutality served him.

Let it be clear that Tsvangirai is no Mandela. He is much better than Mugabe, which is a desperately low base to elevate

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oneself from.

To be honest, I think Mugabe has ceased to be the problem. By all accounts, the military now rules Zimbabwe, with Mugabe as a figurehead. I've heard from very good sources that North Korean military officers have appeared on the scene.

The SADC remains a key player in finding a resolution in Zimbabwe -- and Mbeki cannot be trusted to lead its diplomatic endeavours (though someone like Jacob Zuma would be well placed to mediate). Another key player is China. The West has leaned on China to change its policy on Darfur; it should do likewise to persuade China to intervene in the Zimbabwe crisis. The chance of that is, as they say, fat.

Right now, I'm not optimistic about Zim.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by wingco - 22-06-2008 23:23

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I quite agree with you, Yogi, that the real problem and real power is not Mugabe. It dismays me that this whole situation is being presented as if to suggest that it's all down to the vanity and evil desperation of one 84 year old man. Quite clearly, other people, significantly a Burmese-style cabal of Generals, are not exactly running the show, but basically running the show.

Whatever, I agree entirely with your last para. What kind of pressure is being brought to bear on Mbeki within South Africa, given the leverage he could have if he chose and given the impact of this situation on South Africa, what with the number of refugees only likely to increase in the next few weeks and months?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 23-06-2008 07:26

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Refugees which are then attacked, beaten, raped, dispossessed and burnt to death by xenophobic thugs in South Africa.

Fucking Thabo Mbeki is a disaster on almost every level.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by The Purple Cow - 23-06-2008 07:46

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"To be honest, I think Mugabe has ceased to be the problem. By all accounts, the military now rules Zimbabwe, with Mugabe as a figurehead."

The story goes that Mugabi wanted to resign after the election defeat, so the army had to step in and apply heavy pressure to ensure that he would carry on. I'm sure they'll dump him after the election has been 'won'. He will be of no further use to them after that.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 23-06-2008 08:19

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I don't think so. The junta will still need Mugabe as a figurehead. He has a cult following which the military needs -- war veterans, green bombers youth etc. And they need Mugabe to put on a façade of legitimacy when dealing with the likes of Mbeki, who is respectful of Mugabe as an elder and "father of liberation". I don't think even Mbeki will let himself be wanked along by faceless military rulers or unelected Mugabe flunkies.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 23-06-2008 08:33

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Yogi, at what point does Jacob Zuma - whom I understand is somewhat less tolerant of Mugabe's antics than Mbeki - get to step in and say "right, that's it - clear off in 24 hours or we cut the power"? What's the timeline for him taking power?

And is there any good reason to think that MDC MPs - who now at least theoretically have a majority of seats - aren't going to get beaten senseless when they return to try to take their seats? Is there any chance that something like that would persuade Mbeki (or others in the SADC) to start exerting more pressure?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 23-06-2008 11:03

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Zuma won't be president, if at all, until next May. What I hope for is that the ANC will tell Mbeki that the government should review its policy on Zim, and appoint Zuma mediator. Zuma has done some good (if not necessarily lasting) work in Burundi in that capacity.

How hardball Zuma would play it, I don't know. His faction in the ANC-led alliance would expect strong action, and Zuma might relish the opportunity to sort out Zim to ingratiate himself with the West.

SADC has to review its policy, too. Botswana and Zambia (as well as Tanzania), are very vocal about Zimbabwe; mostly because as border countries they have seen a huge influx of migrants. If Mbeki's government changes direction, the rest of SADC — except perhaps Angola and possibly Namibia — would fall into line.

The MDC's withdrawal gives Mbeki the opportunity to do so. His policy has been predicated on the supposed legitimacy of Mugabe's government. Surely he cannot claim in all seriousness that the regime continues to have any legitimacy whatsoever. With that, he could abandon his quiet diplomacy.

The key is last week's meeting in Zim between Mbeki and his delegation and the Zanu-PF gang (the South Africans apparently did not meet with the MDC). The whole thing – agenda, outcome – has been kept under wraps. It may be that Tsvangirai's timing is related to that meeting, in some way or other. I hope Mbeki gave an ultimatum to legitimise the election (but I'm not particularly confident that he did do so). If so, Mugabe bitchslapped that idea by claiming that he is ruling by divine right.

Perhaps the MDC's decision is linked to whatever transpired at that meeting in some way.

And is there any good reason to think that MDC MPs - who now at least theoretically have a majority of seats - aren't going to get beaten senseless when they return to try to take their seats?

There is very good reason to think they will be beaten. I expect mass arrests for treason, sedition and incitement. Already the MDC secretary-general is in detention, facing a treason trial for announcing election results and bribing election officials. I expect the regime will blame the beatings, mass rapes and murders of MDC supporters on the MDC, and have the party's officials arrested on trumped up charges.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Ginger Yellow - 23-06-2008 11:28

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His policy has been predicated on the supposed legitimacy of Mugabe's government. Surely he cannot claim in all seriousness that the regime continues to have any legitimacy whatsoever. With that, he could abandon his quiet diplomacy.

Surely he couldn't claim that in all seriousness after the last elections - didn't stop him then. I'm deeply fatalistic about the situation. I can't see anything serious happening from the outside and the opposition is too demoralised and physically oppressed - it's going to have to come from within Zanu-PF or the military, which is deeply worrying in itself.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Izbušen dana Ples - 23-06-2008 13:34

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I see Barclay's didn't learn their lesson from Apartheid

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 23-06-2008 14:02

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Apparently Tsvangirai is now hiding in the Dutch embassy in Harare.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Yogi Lurve - 23-06-2008 19:05

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Surely he couldn't claim that in all seriousness after the last elections - didn't stop him then.

He persuaded himself that Mugabe had won the elections, even if these were "flawed", and therefore had a mandate. Mbeki cannot claim that Mugabe has a mandate in any shape or form. The marshmallow foundation for his justification of the quiet diplomacy police has now melted, leaving Mbeki with a sticky situation.

And, yeah, I share your fatalism, GY. As I said, the SADC must now muster the political will to find a solution to the crisis, and China must be persuaded to exert pressure on Zimbabwe. What are the odds for either happening, never mind both.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 29-06-2008 22:24

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They managed to count the ballots quickly for the runoff, didn't they?

Must be because they had so much practice from the first round.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 30-06-2008 11:57

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Apparently there were loads of spoiled votes bearing messages that were none too kind about Mugabe.

That appeasing cunt Mbeki is now working to persuade his colleagues in Africa to recognise Mugabe's election as valid. He really is a colluding cunt's cunt, that Mbeki.

Mugabe has publicly acknowledged that there must be negotiations. He is banking on being recognised as the legitimate winner of the Friday Farce, and thus in a position to dictate the conditions under which negotiations can take place. When the MDC reject these conditions, Mugabe and the Cunting Cunt's Cunt can lift their arms in mock innocence as if to say: "What me ref?"

Tsvangirai has said that the starting point for negotiations must be the March elections, which for all purposes produced an inconclusive result (as president, Mugabe has the right to appoint 30 MPs of his choosing, diluting or overturning the MDC's majority).

That is why it's so absolutely crucial that the AU and SADC reject Friday's "election", in the absence of a military or peacekeeping option. Of course, if they take that path, Mugabe and his junta might just give the world the finger and continue on their merry genocidal way.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 30-06-2008 12:03

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I see Mugabe's swearing-in speech included a long thank you to Little Thabo for all his hard work.

I've been perusing the Mail & Guardian on and off the last few days and while there is plenty of Zim coverage, there doesn't seem to be much discussion of Mbeki's role. Is it really not much of an issue within South Africa? Is there a large body of opinion that thinks Mbeki is doing the right thing?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by The Chubby Cyclist - 30-06-2008 12:44

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Is Mbeki just trying to make that rapist cunt Zuma look like a palatable alternative?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 30-06-2008 12:53

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Is it really not much of an issue within South Africa? Is there a large body of opinion that thinks Mbeki is doing the right thing?

No, it is very much an issue, and Mbeki will find few enthusiastic supporters for his policy (least of all in his political analyst brother, who is very good). But it is an issue that has been dealt with to death over the past six or so years.

Chubby: Zuma was found not guilty. You'll be pleased to learn then that the ANC would like his accuser to issue a public apology to Zuma. It leaves you speechless, doesn't it?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Mr Beast - 01-07-2008 09:59

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I agree that Mbeki has been a fucking disgrace.

And after all Maggie Thatcher did to rid SA of apartheid. Oh wait a minute..

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 01-07-2008 11:23

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Ha, I just made a point of that in an editorial on Mandela I've drafted:

"...Mandela was labelled a "terrorist", even by the likes of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (whose appeasement of the apartheid regime was not dissimilar to President Thabo Mbeki's acquiescence in the tyranny in Zimbabwe today)."

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by gerontophile - 01-07-2008 11:26

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who won?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 01-07-2008 11:44

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I watch the worlds interest in Zimbabwe and the hypocracy of it all.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 01-07-2008 14:04

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There is no hypocrisy in objecting to human rights abuses. I think that matters have moved beyond notions of white farms being taken over to a whole region being destabilised through the madness in one country where the regime is using hunger, mutilation, rape and murder as weapons of war against the people it is suppose to protect.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by TonTon - 01-07-2008 14:21

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Is there not at least a possibility of hypocrisy in objecting to human rights abuses while supporting/condoning/commissioning them elsewhere? I assumed that's what TG was referring to, though I could be wrong.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Bill Poster - 01-07-2008 14:24

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Yeah I assumed the same. Still, two wrongs don't make a right. And if Mkebi spoke out as he should, Brown et al could (should) keep out of it.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 01-07-2008 14:38

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I assumed that's what TG meant, too. Though I really dislike that term. One can presumably be inconsistent without being hypocritical.

And simply because one does not denounce all cases of abuse doesn't make it illegitimate to denounce any particular case, does it?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Mr Beast - 01-07-2008 15:20

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I condemn all human rights abuses even when the country in question has no oil to plunder

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Wyatt Earp - 01-07-2008 15:25

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It's a point worth making, though. I don't think for a microsecond that Brown etc shouldn't condemn Mugabe for

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intimidation, imprisonment without trial, and torture of those thought to oppose him, but what's sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander, yet somehow never is.

I'm not normally all that into Clash lyrics, but that one that goes "If Adolf Hitler flew in today, they'd send a limousine anyway" has always been pretty wise and true.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 01-07-2008 16:07

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What Gramsci said.

In any case, when the US and Europe make statements about Zimbabwe, they are setting a standard to which we hold them subsequently. It doesn't mean that they will then invariably stick to that standard themselves, obviously, but we have something to work with.

Besides, in the case of Zim there is such a broad coalition of condemnation that one cannot say that the US and Britain are providing any kind of leadership.

I was interested to note that Condoleeza Rice said she would ask China to use its (in my decisive) influence on Zimbabwe's junta to re-establish peace in Zim. Loath as I am to commend the neo-cons for anything, that is a very constructive move.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Bill Poster - 01-07-2008 16:26

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The reason I thought Brown should not make public statements is that they will be ceased upon by Mugabe to justify his actions. See also scrapping his knighthood.

In this case, you should get others to fire the bullets instead, if you pardon the metaphor.

That Adolph Hitler lyric is spot on...

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by E10 Rifle - 01-07-2008 16:30

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Yeah, I think there's a spoken and unspoken consensus that Mugabe's a cunt. The central question is how you stop his tyranny. Empty sabre-rattling from Brown would be near the bottom of the list of Things That Would Actually Help (as would be Mbeki's disgraceful stance too, obviously).

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 01-07-2008 18:06

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"Is there not at least a possibility of hypocrisy in objecting to human rights abuses while supporting/condoning/commissioning them elsewhere? I assumed that's what TG was referring to, though I could be wrong."

the real reason for the press coverage

And this is not lost on Africans which is Why (amongst) other reasons the SADC are unwilling to take a harder stance against Zimbabwe as they will be labelled as the White Mans puppet an accusation that has harm Tsvangari majorly. Plus there are far worse things going on in Africa at the moment than in Zimbabwe such as the Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia\Somalia.

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Like it or not, Mugabe's regime are here to stay for as long as they want and there is very little we can do about it. Any forced removal will cause a power vacuum and probably a long and very bloody Civil war. Most AU leaders have enough on their plate in their home countries than go and tidy up something in a country with little strategic interest.

South Africans owe a debt of gratitude to many in the Mugabe leadership and he is calling in those debts big time. The tipping point is coming where the ANC leadership will feel they can no longer support him and the criticisms will become louder. The evidence of this is Zuma and Mandela (somewhat less forcefully) voicing criticism. However there is not really much SA can do anyway. Sending in troops uninvited is political suicide and sanctions will just increase the flow of refugees (whose numbers are already causing political unrest).

Mugabe knows all this of course.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 01-07-2008 19:34

And this is not lost on Africans which is why (amongst) other reasons the SADC are unwilling to take a harder stance against Zimbabwe as they will be labelled as the White Man's puppet and an accusation that has harmed Tsvangirai majorly.

SADC is deeply divided over Zim. Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and, to some extent, Malawi are anti-Mugabe. Angola flip flops. Mozambique's government is losing its patience (and ex-president Chissano, a genuine liberation leader) has spoken out against Mugabe and the junta. I don't know about Lesotho. Swaziland, an absolute monarchy, is worried about pro-democracy movements in that kingdom. And in Namibia, SWAPO think Mugabe is peachy, and democracy there is not in a healthy state. For the most part, the SADC let SA run with ball. But patience with Mbeki is running out.

The white-man's-puppet slur against Tsvangirai is a potent weapon in terms of giving people a reason to overlook the repression in Zimbabwe. That's why the world should let the white farms thing rest. The victims of repression in Zimbabwe are black. The anti-Mbeki faction in the ANC understands that, and objects to the Mugabe junta on those grounds. Ditto the like-minded countries in the SADC.

The reason many African countries are hesitant to act against Mugabe/junta is that their house is not clean, and holding Mugabe accountable is going to raise expectations of governance which they might not wish to have examined too closely. The whole neo-colonialism thing is just a smokescreen.

Plus there are far worse things going on in Africa at the moment than in Zimbabwe such as the Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia\Somalia.

Different kinds of conflict altogether. What it means is that even if the AU wanted to send peacekeeping forces to Zim, they would not have the resources to do so.

Like it or not, Mugabe's regime are here to stay for as long as they want and there is very little we can do about it. Any forced removal will cause a power vacuum and probably a long and very bloody Civil war. Most AU leaders have enough on their plate in their home countries than go and tidy up something in a country with little strategic interest.

Almost a good pun in the first sentence. Zimbabwe is of immense strategic interests for Southern Africa, which in turn is immensely important to Africa, particularly economically.

I think there is a consensus that a MDC for Zanu-PF deal is not feasible. To start with, there is indeed the question of a power vacuum, as well as the MDC's inexperience in governing. That is why everybody, including Mugabe and Tsvangirai, have accepted that a negotiated deal which will accommodate both sides will need to be struck. The question is from what premises such talks would proceed. The MDC thinks this will take years.

I don't think the danger of a civil war comes from a potential removal of Mugabe from power, but from his remaining in the presidency. I expect that the large-scale violence of the past few months will cease, while low-scale repression will continue. But as long as Mugabe, Zanu-PF and the army are in power, there will be no funding made available to rebuild a thoroughly fucked economy. Study the history of civil war, and you'll find that they are usually ignited by a mixture of political frustration and poverty, with other specific ingredients coming into the mix. Zimbabwe's disenfranchised and hungry masses might well arise spontaneously.

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As the various roleplayers try to prepare the grounds for negotiations from an optimal starting positions, the MDC might decide that a low-level civil war would further their interests (I'm not saying it's on the agenda).

So it is not the departure of Mugabe that is a danger here. Indeed, I expect that before too long Mugabe will be made to fall on his sword by his own henchmen. The alternatives to succeed him are nit much better, though less likely to wear ghastly shirts adorned with their own faces.

South Africans owe a debt of gratitude to many in the Mugabe leadership and he is calling in those debts big time. The tipping point is coming were the ANC leadership will feel they can no longer support him and the criticisms will become louder. The evidence of this is Zuma and Mandela (somewhat less forcefully) voicing criticism.

I think Mbeki has sucked Mugabe's cock long enough. He is isolated in the ANC. When Zuma (or his proxy) assume power next year, the policy will change fundamentally. And the hard left in the ANC-led alliance will very much back the trade unionist Tsvangirai.

However there is not really much SA can do anyway. Sending in troops univited is political suicide and sanctions will just increase the flow of refugess (who's number are already causing ploitical unrest).

Mugabe knows all this of course.

Nobody is talking about military action. Targetted sanctions, however, would affect the self-interest of Zanu-PF's leadership. The threat of limiting or cutting the supply of electricity, transport routes (especially the east coast harbours), military assistance - and South Africa is continuing to supply arms to Zimbabwe and assisting its army infrastructure -- and so on would place immense pressure on the regime. Add to that diplomatic pressure which would isolate Zimbabwe further, and possibly also persuade China to exert pressure on Zim (which, as I have said, is crucial).

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 01-07-2008 20:53

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Some interesting and well made points there G-man.

However , i have to pack as i have to make a 200 mile drive to St Asaph and i will need plenty of time to form a reply that would do justice to them (many of which i disagree with BTW).

I'll reply tomorrow.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by 1890 - 01-07-2008 21:00

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I drop past St-Asaph on sunday. That's it...

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Bill Poster - 02-07-2008 10:51

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I don't think the coverage is anything to do with white farmers. Most of the whites with money or connections left years ago. The ones that are left are useful when Mugabe needs to stir some shit about white-owned land. Ignoring the fact that he gave the land he did 'grab back' to his cronies. It's all a bit Animal Farm.

If there is any racism here it is in the view that what was bequeathed by the "whites" as a well-functioning, prosperous country exporting food has been turned into a poverty ravaged basket-case where most of the population need UN food aid to survive by the "blacks". I'm sure there are many whites who think Zimbabwe is a useful pointer to what will happen to South Africa in about 20 years. I'm met a few SA whites for business recently and they moan about the lack of investment in the intrastructure, the power outs and the country generally "going to the dogs" these days.

It's not like you need to look hard to find examples of very poor African\* leadership. But then Africa as a continent hardly has a monopoly on bad government.

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\*I'm always amused by talk of "African" issues and "African" spokespeople like TG claims to be. It would be like trying to find a common voice for Europeans, Asians and South Americans. They are large diverse continents with diverse views.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by TonTon - 02-07-2008 11:03

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And simply because one does not denounce all cases of abuse doesn't make it illegitimate to denounce any particular case, does it?

Not necessarily, no. But I was talking about

supporting/condoning/commissioning them elsewhere

which isn't quite the same, is it?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 02-07-2008 12:32

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Sorry, TT, was that directed at me? I agree with you - that sentence was more directed at the more general charge of "hypocrisy" in criticizing events in Zim, not anything you said.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by TonTon - 02-07-2008 15:46

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Fair dos. It's hard to know what's aimed at what often here. A threaded board would....

No, sorry.

Is there a major "Western" leader who hasn't supported/condoned/commissioned human rights abuses elsewhere?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 02-07-2008 18:58

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I would think there's a few who haven't supported or commissioned them (Spain? Sweden?).

"Condoned"...that's a tougher one, and would depend on how you defined it. I mean - what constitutes condoning human rights abuses in, say, China? Does buying chinese goods constitute condoning? Having diplomatic relations? Not making critical statements at the UN? Inviting Hu Jintao round for tea?

Or, to flip the question, what would a country have to do in order to avoid being labelled as condoning a human rights abuse in a particular country?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 03-07-2008 15:59

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Gman.

"SADC is deeply divided over Zim. Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and, to some extent, Malawi are anti-Mugabe. Angola

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flip flops. Mozambique's government is losing its patience (and ex-president Chissano, a genuine liberation leader) has spoken out against Mugabe and the junta. I don't know about Lesotho. Swaziland, an absolute monarchy, is worried about pro-democracy movements in that kingsom. And in Namibia, SWAPO think Mugabe is peachy, and democracy there is not in a healthy state. For the most part, the SADC let SA run with ball. But patience with Mbeki is running out."

Thanks for your level of detail there, most of which is new to me as British media don't tell you that much.

"The white-man's-puppet slur against Tsvangirai is a potent weapon in terms of giving people a reason to overlook the repression in Zimbabwe. That's why the world should let the white farms thing rest. The victims of repression in Zimbabwe are black. The anti-Mbeki faction in the ANC understands that, and objects to the Mugabe junta on those grounds. Ditto the like-minded countries in the SADC."

I think the west have realised that as well, hence why there is less mentioned about the farmers issue. When Mugabe became an evil tyrant in 2001, the Farmers issue was what was being played in the western media. When it was pointed out that the British government was responsible for compensating the farmers as part of the peace settlement in the early 80's (a responsibility they did not honour, it was quickly and quietly dropped).

"The reason many African countries are hesitant to act against Mugabe/junta is that their house is not clean, and holding Mugabe accountable is going to raise expectations of governance which they might not wish to have examined too closely. The whole neo-colonialism thing is just a smokescreen."

Of course, which is what i was talking about, Mugabe knows this as well and has factored this into his behaviour. Even the African democracies have to be careful of how they criticise him so as not to embarrass their friends in other African countries who are not democracies.

"The whole neo-colonialism thing is just a smokescreen."

I would not go as far as to say that. Giving the impression that you are not being dictated to by the white man can gain you alot of political kudos, especially in southern Africa.

"I think there is a consensus that a MDC for Zanu-PF deal is not feasible. To start with, there is indeed the question of a power vacuum, as well as the MDC's inexperience in governing. That is why everybody, including Mugabe and Tsvangirai, have accepted that a negotiated deal which will accommodate both sides will need to be struck. The question is from what premises such talks would proceed. The MDC thinks this will take years."

Well for a start there would have to be mass pardons, not just for Mugabe, but his ruling cabal right down to their enforcers on the street who have been doing the brunt of the bullying. can the MDC and the population in general stomach that?

Speaking on the subject of pardons, it has to be watertight so that they are not arrested and brought before the Hague when they fly to Switzerland to visit their dentist.

The recent arrests of a few high profile dictators might please the Amnesty International and other human rights organisations but it makes the likes of Mugabe less willing to step down for fear of ending up like Milosevic et all.

"But as long as Mugabe, Zanu-PF and the army are in power, there will be no funding made available to rebuild a thoroughly fucked economy. Study the history of civil war, and you'll find that they are usually ignited by a mixture of political frustration and poverty, with other specific ingredients coming into the mix. Zimbabwe's disenfranchised and hungry masses might well arise spontaneously."

From my studies of civil wars (espeically in Africa), they only really kick off when the opposition is funded militarily by external forces. In other cases, when the populace rise up, they are brutally repressed. maybe you could point me to specific examples where this isn't the case.

"As the various roleplayers try to prepare the grounds for negotiations from an optimal starting positions, the MDC might decide that a low-level civil war would further their interests (I'm not saying it's on the agenda)."

The MDC would need a sponsor for that. I doub't any members of the SADC would provide arms for that (and if they though about it SA wouldn't allow them) nor would they allow any western Government to traffic arms to the MDC. If this was to become an armed conflict, it would have kicked off a while ago.

"Nobody is talking about military action. Targetted sanctions, however, would affect the self-interest of Zanu-PF's leadership. The threat of limiting or cutting the supply of electricity, transport routes (especially the east coast harbours), military assistance - and South Africa is continuing to supply arms to Zimbabwe and assisting its army infrastructure -- and so on would place immense pressure on the regime. Add to that diplomatic pressure which would isolate Zimbabwe further, and possibly also persuade China to exert pressure on Zim (which, as I have said, is crucial)."

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Stronger action from south Africa could fuel more anti-SA feelings in Zimbabwe which must be running high due to the treatment of refugees. Something no doubt that Mugabe can make more political capital out of.

The more Mugabe is isolated, the more he is likely to fall into bed with the Chinese isn't it?

Bill Poster

"I'm always amused by talk of "African" issues and "African" spokespeople like TG claims to be. It would be like trying to find a common voice for Europeans, Asians and South Americans. They are large diverse continents with diverse views."

I don't know what you point is here, but its tone disturbs me.  
I have never claimed to be a spokesman for Africa or all Africans.

I freely give my opinion as an African and i do on here express opinions of Africans i speak to on a variety of subjects (some opinions i do not share btw).

I am actually very hostile towards anyone in the media spotlight who proports to claim to speak for all black people. If you ever bother to read my posts properly, you would of course know this.

search for any post i have made on OTF with regards people like Trevor Phillips for example.

Also

"The ones that are left are useful when Mugabe needs to stir some shit about white-owned land. Ignoring the fact that he gave the land he did 'grab back' to his cronies"

How do you know this, are you aware of exactly who his has given the land to and what their political affiliations are? or is it what you have read and have accepted as fact?

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Bill Poster - 03-07-2008 16:36

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Quick response to TG:

OK, I probably went a bit far with the claiming you spoke on behalf of all Africans but it was prompted by the "Africans know this" phrase you used.

I know you don't claim to speak for all black people any more than I speak for all whites. Neither did I accuse you of it. Read my posts properly.

As for what happened to the land, I've read what appear to be reliable reports of cronies of Bob building large houses with proceeds from dodgy dealings on land he gave them. As for what happened to all of the farm land, I think we'd all like to know that. If you have better (any) information on that I would be pleased to see it.

Anyway if it was all just about reclaiming land from the white farmers, why are there are left at all?

On another point, you seem to be advocating pardoning all those responsible for brutal behaviour so that they give themselves up as they wouldn't want to find themselves on trial in the Haig. I think the point of international law is kinda to stop that sort of thing happening in the first place. Pardoning anyone and everyone who has engaged in such crimes negates the deterrent.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 03-07-2008 16:37

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Yeah, I wouldn't have many quibbles with most of your response to my points, TG. Your point about the nature of civil war in Africa and their requiring (external) sponsorship is fair. I suspect though that were the MDC to lead a low-intensity

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civil war, they'd get such support. I'm not sure that the left in the ANC would dissuade the MDC from taking that route. Of course, the regime's response would be very brutal.

I don't think it will come to that. But a spontaneous uprising is a possibility. It is difficult to predict how a Zuma-led South Africa would respond to a brutal crackdown.

Regarding sanctions, many in Zimbabwe are calling for these themselves if it means getting rid of the regime.

Anyway, I don't think it will come to all that. For the next while there'll be lots of jockeying for position, diplomatically and on the ground, where the regime will seek to entrench itself by all means necessary.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 03-07-2008 18:14

On another point, you seem to be advocating pardoning all those responsible for brutal behaviour so that they give themselves up as they wouldn't want to find themselves on trial in the Haig. I think the point of international law is kinda to stop that sort of thing happening in the first place. Pardoning anyone and everyone who has engaged in such crimes negates the deterrent.

This is a very serious debate in international relations right now. A lot of people think the International Criminal Court is indirectly responsible for a lot of the carnage in Zimbabwe.

Lots of people in Zim might be prepared to swap Justice (in the western, court-based conception of the word) for peace - that is, let Mugabe and his cronies retire somewhere with their money, as long as they get out and leave Zimbabweans alone. But the ICC's decision to capture and try Charles Taylor after he had already left Liberia and retired means no despot wants to risk relinquishing power under an circumstances, because no matter what kind of deal is struck to get them out of power, no matter what kind of immunity is granted, the ICC can still show up and bring you to the Hague.

A similar situation is occurring right now in Uganda, where Museveni and the LRA leadership are very close to terms, but the LRA doesn't want to give up while there is an ICC warrant out for his arrest and the government of Uganda doesn't seem able to convince the ICC to drop charges.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by TonTon - 03-07-2008 18:19

"Condoned"...that's a tougher one, and would depend on how you defined it. I mean - what constitutes condoning human rights abuses in, say, China? Does buying chinese goods constitute condoning? Having diplomatic relations? Not making critical statements at the UN? Inviting Hu Jintao round for tea?

Or, to flip the question, what would a country have to do in order to avoid being labelled as condoning a human rights abuse in a particular country?

I dunno, AG, I think you're over-complicating things here. Let's just go with "support/commission" if that's easier.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 04-07-2008 10:07

Bill Poster,

"Where did i say, "Africans know this?"

Because I cannot find where my second post in this thread that i made such a comment.

Once you respond to that, then i will tackle the rest of your strawman ladened post.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 04-07-2008 10:30

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Gman, It seems like we agree that things are sadly looking grim in that country for the medium term at least.

For every positive suggestion, there are about 10 reasons how that could make matter longer and more bloody.

Unfortunately, it seems that we can only cross our fingers and hope Mugabe and his mates get bored of the international attention and bugger off, but it seems that they are revelling in the publicity.

Antonio.

"This is a very serious debate in international relations right now. A lot of people think the International Criminal Court is indirectly responsible for a lot of the carnage in Zimbabwe."

I am not sure that i agree with that, but I think there is a very strong argument to be made there.  
The long arm of the ICC would not doubt give dictators second thoughts about retiring to a neutral country and spending their millions in peace and tranquility.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 04-07-2008 11:51

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An excellent article on the subject of the ICC and Africa.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Bill Poster - 04-07-2008 11:53

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OK I was paraphrasing "And this is not lost on Africans ". The meaning is the same.

Feel free to patronise away. I'm on holiday for a week.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Tactical Genius - 04-07-2008 15:21

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"OK I was paraphrasing "And this is not lost on Africans ". The meaning is the same."

Well if you thought the meaning was the same, why the paraphrasing?

You basically made up comments, attributed them to me then started to attack me on them.  
Then when i call you out on this, you accuse me of being patronising.  
Classy.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by G.Man as Trotaconventos - 04-07-2008 16:33

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Useful round-up of the AU's approach on Zimbabwe.

Seems like Nigeria and Senegal aren't fans of Mugabe either. And Ethiopia suggested that Mbeki might ask others to "help" him in mediation.

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## Re:MDC pull out of Zimbabwe election

Posted by Antonio Gramsci - 04-07-2008 17:31

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Now mind you, this is where the double standards problems kick in. Senegal has genuine democratic bona fides . Nigeria sees a lot of ballot-box chicanery (though not, to my knowledge, political violence and murder). Ethiopia's ruling party killed quite a number of oppositionists last year (shooting into a crowd at a protest, wasn't it?).

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