

**ACTING IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL INTEREST: THE SURVIVAL STRATEGY OF ZIMBABWE IN INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN MOZAMBIQUE AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

**Percyslage Chigora**  
*Midlands State University*

**Abstract**

*Since the attainment of independence in 1980 Zimbabwe has been involved in a number of foreign interventions. Two of the central ones have been in southern African countries of Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The expectations are that such involvement has to be motivated at most by protecting the national interests of intervening state and to a lesser extent humanitarian motive. Questions have often arisen as to the motivating factors behind Zimbabwe's interventions, particularly in the DRC in which the intervention came as the country was experiencing a number of problems at home in respect to economic decline. In general terms, in such an environment a 'reasonable' government would not engage in such an adventure as it will have negative repercussions on the entire society. It is the purpose of this paper to investigate and analyze the national interests of Zimbabwe on a comparative basis that were at stake in these interventions.*

**Introduction**

Stan Mudenge, former Minister of Foreign Affairs has noted:

*In its interaction with the rest of the world, Zimbabwe is not influenced by, nor does it take any order from other states or foreign interests. It is our obligation to the people of Zimbabwe, and not to foreign interests, which inspires and influences our conduct of relations with other members of the international*

*community. It is this national vision that ... shapes our behavior with other countries.* (Mudenge I.S.G. 2003)

It is from such a background that the paper unearths the controversies surrounding the motivations and interests that Zimbabwe had in getting involved in conflict situations in DRC and Mozambique. National interest is, therefore, a key concept in foreign policy as it provides a material basis of which foreign policy is made which is intertwined again with national security and the basis for any foreign intervention.

### **The concept of national interest**

National interest as a concept can be traced back to Italy in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and 17<sup>th</sup> Century England. In America, its use by statesman began since the establishment of the constitution. (<http://fletcher.tufts.edu/research/2004/Shembilku-Rozeta.pdf>). The notion of national interest soon came to dominate European politics. States could now openly embark on wars purely out of self-interest. Mercantilism can be seen as the economic justification of the aggressive pursuit of the national interest. A foreign policy geared towards pursuing the national interest is the foundation of the realist school of international relations. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National%5Finterest>) Today, the concept of "the national interest" is often associated with political realists who wish to differentiate their policies from "idealistic" policies that seek either to inject morality into foreign policy or promote solutions that rely on multilateral institutions which might weaken the independence of the state. As considerable disagreement exists in every country over what is or is not in "the national interest," the term is as often invoked to

justify isolationist and pacifistic policies as to justify interventionist or warlike policies.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National%5Finterest>)

National interest as a concept is used in both political analysis and political action. As an analytical tool, it is employed to describe, explain or evaluate the sources of the adequacy of the nation's foreign policy. It serves as means of justifying, denouncing, or proposing policies. In simple sense, national interest is a country's goals and ambitions, whether economic, military, or cultural.

However, Rosenau argues that the concept of national interest is rooted in values, and is difficult to employ as a tool of rigorous analysis. "Politicians therefore discuss their goals in terms of national interest and are inclined to claim that their goals are the national interest" (Rosenau, J N, 1980:239). In essence, goals and interests are value laden since they involve subjective preferences. Thus culmination of national interest into a single complex of values is bound to have problems as observers use different value frameworks. Largely values are not susceptible to scientific proof; hence it is difficult to demonstrate the validity of such assessments that foreign policy actions reflect national interest.

In most cases the definition of national interest is vague and it is often defined to suit rulers, decision-makers or countries in their own way. The dispute of defining national interest either as an art or science remains at the center stage of international relations discipline. (<http://www.wam.umd.edu/~skc/200404-rajeev.htm>). Reynolds believes that there is difficulty in identifying the concept and vies this as unfortunate and on the whole unhelpful. (1984:38). He argues that national interest should relate to the

real interest of the people and these interests are not to be seen as being necessarily contained within the state context,

*State decision makers who claim to be acting in the national interest mislead the nation. They cannot have the perfect information necessary to validate their claims and so other people's eyes and possibly theirs. (1984:50).*

Largely, the actual content of national interest depends on the perception and interpretation by the decision-making elite. In fact,

*No statesman, no publicist, no scholar would seriously argue that foreign policy ought to be conducted in opposition to, or in disregard of the national interest. (Dougherty, J.E, and Pfaltzgraff, L.L, 1990: 25)*

The concept of national interest, though loaded with values, cannot be disregarded as tool for analysis. Though the question of values is important, to disregard the concept because of this problem is equally misleading. There is no nation that is founded and organized outside precepts of values.

Robinson divided interests according to whether they are of primary importance, specific, general, secondary or identical. Primary interests include protection of a nation's physical, political and cultural identity and survival against encroachment from outside.

These can never be traded and must be defended at all costs. Secondary interests are those that do not fall under primary interest but are contributory to it such as the protection of the citizens abroad. On the other hand permanent interests are those that are relatively constant over a period of time and general interests are those applied to a large geographical spectrum. (Robinson, T.W., "National Interest", in Rosenau, J.N, 1980:184-185)

According to Morgenthau (1962) the connection between interest and the nation-state is a product of history and as long as the world is politically organized into nations, the national interest is indeed the last word in international politics. Morgenthau (1962) defines national interest in terms of power. The power at a nation's command is at any moment in time, an objective reality of that nation and thus serves to determine what its true interest should be.

As alluded to earlier, there has been a question on how interests are made. It has to be noted that the nation's aspirations are obviously determined by the decision makers. They are only people capable of thinking about the whole aggregate of national interest at the operational level and are the only ones with the authority to make appropriate official declarations and statements.

Philip W. Quigg's has observed that people often speak of the national interest as though it were a sort of the enabling facts, providing answers to all the most perplexing questions of foreign policy. Foreign policies are not built upon abstractions. They are the result of practical conceptions of national interest arising from some immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective. (<http://fletcher.tufts.edu/research/2004/Shembilku-Rozeta.pdf>). At most, national interest depends on time and the political

environment in which it is pursued. For instance the foreign policy of Zimbabwe within the Southern African region is primarily and of necessity seeking to maintain its national self vis-à-vis South Africa, the other contesting powerhouse in the region.

### **Historical Background to Zimbabwe in International Interventions**

Zimbabwe has been involved in a number of operations aimed at bringing peace. Such operations include interventions in Lesotho, Angola, Somalia, Mozambique, East Timor, the former Yugoslavia and DRC. The objectives behind such interventions were/are varied.

In 1991 Zimbabwe got involved in a humanitarian mission in Somalia that was meant to bring peace to the Horn of Africa state. This was after a cumulative cost of poverty and a pattern of corrupt rule came together in tragedy shortly after the end of the Cold War in Somalia. In the power vacuum that followed the January 1991 ousting of President Mohammed Siad Barre, the ethnically, linguistically, and religiously homogeneous state exploded into clan-based civil war. ([http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-62202-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-62202-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)).

Zimbabwe also got involved in former Yugoslavia as part of the International force, UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) that was established by the Security Council in February 1992, as a peacekeeping operation born out of Resolution 743 (1992). For Zimbabwe this was largely a humanitarian service meant to bring peace in the Eastern European states.

In Lesotho Zimbabwe intervened in the 1993/94 post-electoral period to bring stability to the mountainous kingdom that had been faced with political turmoil. The opposition party members charged political fraud, suborned army supporters, sought the

King's intervention, and effectively rendered the elected government ineffective. The 1994 memorandum of understanding provided the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with a framework to intervene militarily to stabilize the situation. (<http://www.stormingmedia.us/49/4942/A494234.html>) The Local conflict management mechanisms had failed to resolve the problems.

Again as part of fulfilling international commitment to peace Zimbabwe got involved in Angola and East Timor within the framework of UN peacekeeping missions.

### **Zimbabwe in Mozambique**

For ten years, Zimbabwe deployed forces in Mozambique helping that country's government in their fight against the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo). This was as a result of the invitation and request by the Mozambican Government in 1985. The moves were supposed to protect the territorial integrity through protecting the border and Zimbabwean troops were already deployed along the two important routes namely Mutare - Beira and Nyamapanda – Zobe in 1982 before their invitation in 1985.

Thus in essence the Mozambican request only served to regularize an already existing situation, and to legitimize the presence in Mozambique of the Zimbabwean forces. Largely, Zimbabwe's military involvement in Mozambique in the decade 1982 and 1992 was mainly to protect Zimbabwe's trade routes through Mozambique. (Mlambo N 1992). These were of great importance given the fact that Zimbabwe is a landlocked country, and her imports and exports therefore depend on trade routes through neighboring countries, particularly South Africa and Mozambique. During this period the

South African routes were not feasible because of the Apartheid regime's policy of destabilization and avoiding the spread of the ideologies for black majority rule. Mozambique had only remained the only reliable source of routes and ensuring access to Beira port. (The centrality of this port dates back to the period of the scramble for Africa, Mlambo Norman gives a good coverage of this when he noted, This situation has made the quest for easy access to the sea a dominant factor in determining Zimbabwe's geo-politics for over a century. Efforts to secure the port of Beira as Rhodesia's outlet to the sea were started by Cecil John Rhodes in 1890' Blake, R., *A History of Rhodesia* (Methuen, London, 1977), p.83. Mozambique was then under Portuguese rule and an Anglo - Portuguese Convention of 1881 did not allow an independent Rhodesian route through Beira. However, after a lot of lobbying Rhodesia was granted "freedom of transit" through Portuguese territory, in 1892 Cecil John Rhodes started the construction of a railway line from Beira to Salisbury (now Harare). Griffith, I.,? The Quest for Independent Access to the Sea in Southern Africa?, *The Geographical Journal*, Vol.155(3) (November 1989), p.384.)

Economically, Zimbabwe was suffering at the hands of apartheid South Africa. As a result of its outspoken position against apartheid and the socialist rhetoric from the Zimbabwean government, by November 1980, more than 50 000 tons of Zimbabwean goods were being deliberately held at South African ports. In 1981 there was a fertilizer shortage in Zimbabwe while 300 000 tons of the country's freight was being held in South Africa, including three shipments of fertilizer. In April the same year, the South African Railways (SAR) announced the end of its trade agreement with the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), and demanded the return of 24 diesel locomotives leased



to the NRZ. A transport crisis ensued and by the end of the year, more than Z\$100 million worth of exports was being held up inside Zimbabwe for lack of transport to the ports. (Mlambo N. Opicit).

On 29 October 1981, the railway and road bridges over the Pungwe River were blown up together with Zimbabwe's oil pipeline, which runs under the road bridge. (Johnson. and Martin, D.1986:71). In December 1982, the oil storage depot at Maforga was also blown up. The resulting fuel shortage in Zimbabwe was so critical that road traffic was brought to a virtual stand still. Queues of vehicles at filling stations stretched several kilometers and at one point there was only one day's supply of petrol and two days' supply of diesel for the whole country. (Johnson. and Martin, D.1986:71). The clandestine movement of fuel only averted a national disaster by rail from Maputo via Komatipoort in South Africa to Beit Bridge. This line had been used as a sanctions-busting route for Rhodesia during the UDI era. When apartheid South Africa cut off that connection as well, the National Railways of Zimbabwe also blocked South African cargo to and from Zambia and Zaire. It was only then that Zimbabwean freight was released from South African ports and allowed to reach Zimbabwe. (Mlambo N. opicit).

The decision to disengage from the South African routes was also in line with the objectives of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), of which Zimbabwe was a member. (Pangeti, E. 1990). SADCC was formed on the 1st of April 1980 when the nine founder members (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) signed the document entitled "Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation" in Lusaka, Zambia. (Mlambo. N. opicit.).

One of the objectives of SADCC was to reduce economic dependence on South Africa. The Lusaka Declaration identified transport and communications sector as a key area and a Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC) was also established to co-ordinate regional transport projects. (Nsekela, A. in Norman Mlambo, Ibid). This regional transport co-ordination was necessary in view of the fact that six of the member states of SADCC are landlocked and were relying heavily on South African transport routes thus making them vulnerable to South Africa's acts of destabilization. (Mlambo.N.opicit).

To some extent the intervention was ideological, an issue of primary interest. According to Mlambo the involvement ended up having far-reaching political and military implications, where the political and ideological twist were expressed in terms of the Cold War in which certain governments (e.g. USA, South Africa) supported Renamo while other governments (e.g. Soviet Union, China) supported the then Marxist regimes of Mozambique and Zimbabwe. (Norman Mlambo, Ibid.). For Zimbabwe that was in the process establishing a socialist state, intervening in the conflict was a matter of high politics to be defended at all cost.

Another crucial factor that influenced Zimbabwe's decision to try and disengage from South African transport routes was the apartheid regime's concerted efforts to use its economic power to try and bludgeon Zimbabwe into political and diplomatic concessions. (Johnson P. and Martin D.1989).

For Zimbabwe, Mozambique was central to its survival particularly the three corridors. Firstly, Beira corridor which contains four transport systems linking the Mozambican port of Beira on the Indian Ocean to the city of Mutare on the eastern

border of Zimbabwe. The four systems were the railway line, the road, the oil pipeline and an electric power line. The pipeline runs parallel to the tarmac road that stretches from Machipanda on the Zimbabwean border to Beira. The electric power line is a Mozambican line, which runs alongside the road from Chicamba Real Dam near Manica all the way to Beira. (Norman Mlambo, Opicit.).

Secondly, the Limpompo corridor that comprises of a rail link from Chicualacuala on the Zimbabwe - Mozambique border to the port of Maputo. Since 1974, the railway line carried 34 percent of Rhodesia's total exports. At its operational peak in 1974, Maputo was the largest port in Southern Africa after Durban. At Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, there was an increase in trade, but the line was effectively closed in 1984 due to increased Renamo attacks. (Norman Mlambo, Opicit.).

Lastly, the Tete corridor which is a tarred 263-kilometre road running from Nyamapanda on the Zimbabwean border through the Mozambican city of Tete to Zobue on the Malawi border. After UDI in 1965, this route carried Rhodesian goods to and from Malawi, which had not applied United Nations sanctions against the Smith regime. After the independence of Mozambique in 1974, the bulk of Malawi's trade with South Africa went through Rhodesia by road via Tete. It was only in 1984 that trade via this route declined because of Renamo attacks. (Norman Mlambo, Opicit.). Hence, Zimbabwe had to intervene to ensure these corridors were secure for the survival of the Zimbabwean state.

Zimbabwe in 1980 behaved logically by moving back to use the shorter and cheaper Mozambican routes. The new government decided to disengage from the South African trade routes by reintroducing the Beira – Mutare corridor for both economic and

political reasons. As such the intervention was defending national interest expressed both in economic and political terms.

### **Zimbabwe in the DRC**

Zimbabwe got involved in the DRC war as part of SADC Allied Forces together with Namibia and Angola fighting for the protection of Kabila and the government. Unlike Angola wishing to maintain its territorial integrity and not wanting a spillover to further aggravate its own internal conflicts, the motivations for other countries, like Zimbabwe, have been questioned. The case for Zimbabwe depicts both political and economic interests that were at stake at the moment and the near future.

It is important to highlight from the onset that Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC goes back much further than the current war. In 1996 Mugabe gave Kabila US\$5 million to finance his rebellion against Mobutu. (Helen Suzman Foundation. 2000). Just before Kinshasa fell to Kabila, Zimbabwe Defense Industries (ZDI) concluded a US\$53m deal to supply Kabila that range from food to uniforms and mortar bombs. ZDI spearheaded Zimbabwe's economic penetration of the DRC. (Helen Suzman Foundation. 2000). From the beginning of Zimbabwe's involvement in the war in DRC the ZDF had provided advisors to Laurent Kabila to help him overthrow Mobutu, as part of Mugabe's general support, which included the provision of US\$5 million to Kabila. (Helen Suzman Foundation. 2000). This investment resulted in some quick returns. The Zimbabwe Defense Industries secured a \$53 million deal to supply food, uniforms, boots and ammunition to Kabila. The contract to transport these goods went to Zvinavashe

Transport, a trucking company owned by a Zimbabwean. ([http://www.globalwitness.org/projects/zimbabwe/bd\\_zimbabwe.htm#5.1](http://www.globalwitness.org/projects/zimbabwe/bd_zimbabwe.htm#5.1)).

The first was violation of territorial integrity of DRC a member of Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional body. In 1998, the D.R.C. was invaded by Uganda and Rwanda, with the tacit support of the United States of America and Britain. (Mubako Simbi. 2002). The declared aim was to overthrow the young government of President Laurent Kabila. The invading forces were to occupy, and exploit the diamond and other mineral resources of the D.R.C., on behalf of the backers from the West. Under the provisions of the SADC Organ for Defense and Politics members were supposed to assist each to confront any threats to peace in member countries. The D.R.C. appealed to SADC for help and SADC agreed to send troops from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola. The invading forces were checkmated, hence the plan to overthrow the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo failed. This brought a success to the regional body as one of its founding objectives was realized.

The desire for peace was the major motivation for Zimbabwe, more so as the chair of the SADC Organ for Peace and Security. Two and one-half million people have died in the process, in the occupied territories, as a result of war, starvation, and diseases. Great concerns have been occupation, exploitation, atrocities committed by the occupying forces, and the deaths of so many millions of people. To judge the intervention fairly, Zimbabwe's presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was an SADC decision, aimed at saving the people of the D.R.C. from imminent danger and genocide; and this was part of the wider SADC goal, to assist the African people everywhere.

*'Zimbabwe is proud of its role in the D.R.C., and we know that the Congolese people are happy and grateful for the assistance they receive from the government and people of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe will continue to stand ready to assist, and to defend and consolidate the independence and territorial integrity of the D.R.C., as long as it is necessary to do so'.( Mubako Simbi. 2002)*

Zimbabwean economic involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) focuses on commercial activities by military officials and political elites, and suggests that these groups' business interests precipitated Zimbabwe's involvement in the conflict. DRC has offered mining, agricultural and forestry concessions. The elite network of Congolese and Zimbabwean political, military and commercial interests seeks to maintain its grip on the main mineral resources, diamonds, cobalt, copper, and germanium. This network has transferred ownership of at least US\$ 5 billion of assets from the State mining sector to private companies under its control in the past three years with no compensation or benefit for the State treasury of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 16 October 2002, Afro News.).

Some have raised concern over Zimbabwe's economic ventures noting:

*Even if present moves towards peace lead to a complete withdrawal of Zimbabwean forces, the network's grip on the richest mineral assets of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

*and related businesses will remain. Zimbabwe's political-military elite signed six major trade and service agreements in August 2002 with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Reliable sources have told the Panel about plans to set up new holding companies to disguise the continuing ZDF commercial operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and a ZDF controlled private military company to be deployed in the country to guard those assets. (Ibid)*

Business ventures have been entered into by Zimbabweans and Congolese Chief figures in the Congolese branch of the network Mwenze Kongolo, a shareholder and deal-broker for both diamond and cobalt ventures; Augustin Katumba Mwanke, a former employee of Bateman's mining company in South Africa and a key power broker in mining and diplomatic deals; State diamond company, Société minière de Bakwanga (MIBA), Jean-Charles Okoto; the Planning Minister and former Deputy Defense Minister, General Denis Kalume Numbi, a stakeholder in the lucrative Sengamines diamond deal and in COSLEG; and the Director General of Gécamines, Yumba Monga, pivotal in facilitating several asset-stripping joint ventures between the State mining company and private companies. (Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 16 October 2002, Afro News.).

Oryx Natural Resources has a close working relationship with Avient Air, a military company that supplies services and equipment to ZDF and FAC. In April 2002, Avient Air brokered the sale of six attack helicopters to the Kinshasa Government. At the

same time Avient organized logistics and transportation of mining equipment for Sengamines and enjoyed security clearance as a military company working with ZDF. (Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 16 October 2002, Afro News.).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo-Zimbabwe joint venture Minerals Business Company represents Zimbabwe's interests in the lucrative diamond trade of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It buys and markets production from the joint venture Sengamines, which has attempted to conceal its links with ZDF. Military and political influence gives Zimbabwe leverage to evade the legal requirements of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to avoid paying the costly licensing fees. (Ibid). The refusal of MBC to honor its obligations to the public treasury has prompted official complaints from the Ministry of Mines demanding that MBC comply with the law. MBC officials have asserted that Zimbabwean entities are not obliged to adhere to the laws of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (Ibid).

France and the UK have long been imperialist rivals in Africa and are intent on strengthening their influence over their one-time colonies. France has preferred to work through Zimbabwe, which has provided valuable local assistance in securing France's interests against rebel forces in the three-year civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ([www.wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org)). Therefore, international alliances have helped Zimbabwe.

In the intervention process, Zimbabwe has developed a regional strategy to gain control over the region's rich natural resources, and to take over and expand the infrastructure necessary to transport and market the end product. This has resulted, so far, in several



major areas of interest: Oryx Diamonds, a joint venture between the ZDF, the late Laurent Kabila and various business interests; the New Limpopo Bridge Project, the Beitbridge Railway and the National Oil Company of Zimbabwe.

There has been expansion of Zanu PF's financial interests into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In May 1999 Zimbabwean elites introduced a Chinese arms company, two transport companies, a banking group and a power company to Laurent Kabila. (Helen Suzman Foundation. 2000). One of Zidco's subsidiaries, the First Bank Corporation, then set up in Kinshasa. In addition, two other business people went into business ferrying arms and supplies between Zimbabwe and the DRC. (Helen Suzman Foundation. 2000).

A Zimbabwean company, whose board comprises senior Zanu-PF and military figures, has effectively created the world's largest logging concession by gaining rights to exploit 33 million hectares of forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The vehicle for this resource exploitation, SOCEBO, is a joint venture between Zimbabwean military controlled OSLEG (the ironically named Operation Sovereign Legitimacy) and Kinshasa based company Comiex. The logging would actually be carried out by the ZDF, not a third party company; the Zimbabwe Forestry Commission is purely advising on the technical aspects of the project, which is headed up by a variety of senior military figures. (Helen Suzman Foundation. 2000)

Other business ventures that were formulated include, firstly, the Congo-Duka, a joint venture between Zimbabwe Defense Industries (ZDI) and its Congolese equivalent, General Strategic Reserves. It was intended that this company would supply consumer goods in DRC. ZDI received government loan guarantees totaling Z\$1.65 billion

(US\$33.6m). (www.wsws.org). Secondly, the Gecamines for cobalt mining and the operation produced around US\$6 million worth of Cobalt monthly. (www.wsws.org). These deals did not go far as they failed to maintain feasibility. Following the failure of their previous investments, the Zimbabweans saw the opportunity to recoup their losses. The ZDF were already deployed in the resource-rich Kasai Oriental and Katanga Provinces, and were ideally placed to guard these resources for their own benefit. (www.wsws.org). The elites of Zimbabwe furthermore had great financial interests to protect from their ongoing exploitation of natural resources in the DR Congo.

The interest of Zimbabwe in the DRC has remained. Growth in interactions has since led to the Zimbabwean government is also seeking investors to construct a new railway link between Lions Den north of Harare and Kafue in northern Zambia. The line will shorten the distance for cargo between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Zambia and goods from Harare and the Mozambique port city of Beira are routed through and Victoria Falls, traveling close to a thousand kilometers instead of the much reduced distance through Kafue. The Kafue link would also reduce the transit period to the DRC's third largest city, Lubumbashi three days from seven, making it attractive for the NRZ to lure more business into DRC. (Tinashe Madava, 2000).

There has been widespread condemnation of Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC from the international community. In 1999, Zimbabwe's annual application to the IMF was vetoed by Britain and the United States. (Mubako Simbi, Opicit). The reason was that Zimbabwe that had sent troops to the DRC was too poor to involve itself in the war in the D.R.C. and therefore, they should be denied any further funds, so that they could not indulge in those kinds of adventures. (Mubako Simbi, Opicit). But in a

confusing act, on the same day Rwanda and Uganda had their applications approved by the IMF. These two countries also have troops in the D.R.C, above all, as the aggressors and actually poorer than Zimbabwe. Some years after the war, they continue to receive loans and grants from the Bretton Woods institutions, while Zimbabwe is quarantined. That is the effect of the big-power monopoly of these institutions. (Mubako Simbi, Opicit). This has also exposed the sinister agenda of the West who also have interest in exploiting these resources.

The involvement of Zimbabwe in DRC has had critics from within Zimbabwe particularly on the opposition side political parties. On 20 September, Tendai Biti (MDC opposition), moved a motion on the forces in the DRC and objected to how much of Zimbabwe's activities in the DRC have been kept a secret from Zimbabweans, and argued that the troops' presence there is not even necessarily constitutional. (www.afrol.com.). Paul Themba Nyathi has noted,

*"We on this side of the House do not prescribe to, devalue the values but we believe very strongly that an adventure such as that of the DRC which has messed up our foreign policies, made more enemies for us than friends, is not worth it in terms of human lives."* (www.afrol.com.).

Such concerns are correct given that Zimbabwe's intervention has incurred heavy costs in men, materiel and money. These facts add to the government's incentive to recoup at least some financial losses, which they could use to defend their role in the country. In mid 1999 the Zimbabwean government admitted to the press that 35 troops

had been killed, although the rebel forces opposing Kabila claimed to have killed over 200.

However, it is important to outline humanitarian issues surrounding the DRC conflict. The Great Lakes region of Central Africa has a long history of division and violence and has been in constant turmoil for the last ten years. The region is hallmarked by genocide, the recruitment of child soldiers, war crimes, rape, corruption, and brutal war. Conflict in the Great Lakes has seen the killing of about one million people during the Rwandan genocide, three million people in Congo's war, not to mention hundreds of thousands in Burundi. ([www.srintl.org](http://www.srintl.org).)

Again critics need not to lose hindsight of the fact that geographically Zimbabwe is not far away from DRC and DRC as a member of SADC deserved the right as it did of getting help from other member countries within the framework of Organ for Politics, Defense and Security. Zimbabwe just like other member states in SADC had the mandate to ensure that the invading forces do not plunder the resources, as she did in Angola, Lesotho and Mozambique. Geo-politics have since taken a center stage in international security and history lays bare facts; the independence of Zimbabwe was won with the sacrifice of other nations, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, etc, some which do not share a border with her.

## **Conclusion**

The paper did argue that although politics played a big role, Zimbabwe went into Mozambique mainly to protect Zimbabwe's trade routes. That military involvement was further justified by a formal request from the Frelimo government for a regional force

that included Tanzania, Malawi and Zimbabwean forces and backed by the SADCC. The regional planners saw this as a continuing fight against the regional stranglehold by apartheid South Africa on regional trade routes for political reasons. It was also part of the Cold War between East and West in the sense that Renamo claimed to be fighting against Communism and for that reason received aid from western countries especially the United States of America. For DRC Zimbabwe undoubtedly intends to exploit DRC's natural resources to the best of its abilities. It explores the effect of poor domestic economic conditions and previous Zimbabwean military involvement (but subsequent lack of business penetration) in Mozambique, on government and business resolve to exploit opportunities in the DRC. Entrepreneurs followed military actors once military networks were in place, as entrepreneurs (and military personnel themselves) realized the commercial value of these networks.

It is important to note that that the purpose of an alliance is to explicate an existing community of interests among two or more nations and to transform them into legal obligations. Without such common or complementary interests, the alliance will not succeed. At any given moment non-complimentarity or commonality of interest means the foundation for any alliance will crumble. An alliance is a function of a variety of interests that are, primary, permanent and variable. Every statesman must make an estimation of the national interests of his own nation when he considers whether or not to engage in alliance ties.

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