

Image Repair: Analysis of President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's Rhetoric Following Sanctions on Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the image repair rhetoric used in Zimbabwean President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's speeches against sanctions. It focuses on part of his speeches at international forums (2002 to 2007) in his capacity as the president of Zimbabwe. The analysis relies on Benoit's image restoration theory as a methodological impetus. It is concluded in this paper that Mugabe mostly uses attack the accuser rhetoric to repair his image following accusations of misgovernance and the political sanctions by USA, Australia and the European Union on Zimbabwe. President Mugabe mainly focuses his attack on Tony Blair and George W. Bush

whom he accuses of being the chief architects of the sanctions on Zimbabwe. Attack the accuser rhetoric is used to counter the accusations proffered by President Mugabe's accusers to justify the existence of sanctions. There is also the use of denial of wrong doing, expression of good intentions and offer of corrective action in the speeches. In addition, President Mugabe questions the sincerity of his accusers as champions of democracy themselves. This study concludes that Mugabe, using image repair rhetoric as a strategy, is successful in denying wrong doing and in attacking his accusers. It is also concluded that the rhetoric strategy is a vital persuasive device seen in the manner in which Mugabe's speeches managed to compel the African Union to maintain its support for the Zimbabwean government.

Keywords: Image repair, Sanctions, Robert Gabriel Mugabe

1. Introduction

Political rhetoric can be traced back to such Greek philosophers as Aristotle, Sophocles and Plato (Brent and Stuart, 1998; Parrish, 1993; Zafefsky, 2004). This genre of persuasive language was used to participate in political debates where the rhetor's intention was to influence people to take certain decisions favorable to the rhetor. Today's politicians continue to use rhetoric for various purposes. One of the purposes of the rhetoric is image repair. Image repair from a rhetorical point of view involves using language to attempt to manage the impression that an audience might have had emanating from a face threatening act. Many studies on image repair have tended to focus on public figures from the Western world. Notable such studies are on leaders such as Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and George William Bush. Rhetorical analysis has shown that politicians and other public figures utilize several strategies that include denial, mortification or evasion of responsibility (Benoit, 1982). This paper focuses on President Robert Gabriel Mugabe's "attack the accuser" rhetoric in response to United States of America, European Union and Australia sanctions on Zimbabwe. The rhetoric surrounding sanctions is worthy of study because it has courted much controversy with some arguing that rhetoric on sanctions has been used to obfuscate real motives. It is only when statements on sanctions are subjected to an analysis that the various rhetorical purposes can be unraveled. The USA, EU and Australian sanctions on Zimbabwe take different forms: economic restrictions, arms embargo and prohibition of individuals seen as working closely with Mugabe from entering European countries (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimbabwe_DemocracyandEconomicRecovery_Act_of_2001). These countries and the regional block accuse Mugabe and his party of stifling democracy in Zimbabwe through the use of violence. Mugabe disputes this and argues that sanctions are being used to force him out of power because his government repossessed land from White commercial farmers who happen to be kith and kin of the Europeans. This paper therefore takes a critical look at the image repair strategies that Mugabe uses in response to the sanctions and the subsequent media onslaught. In order to be able to do this, the paper utilizes Benoit's image repair theory of rhetoric to analyze one of the strategy(s) used by Mugabe in his speeches against sanctions. The analysis is guided by the following questions: How has President Mugabe utilized Benoit's "attack the accuser" rhetoric and what is the intended communicative effect of the strategy? To what extent has Mugabe's rhetoric been successful?

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper utilizes Benoit's image repair theory of rhetoric as its guiding framework. According to Benoit (1984), human beings attempt to repair their image whenever their reputation or face is at stake. According to the theory the individual or organization must be held responsible for an act and the act must be considered offensive. The theory was considered an appropriate framework for this study because the rhetoric analyzed arises out of a situation that Mugabe is perceived to be responsible for, that is, a politically and economically unstable and undemocratic Zimbabwe. This is considered offensive in a world that is increasingly encouraging democratic values to be the pillars of any government in the world.

3. Methodology

The paper uses a qualitative approach to analyze the data that constitutes Mugabe's rhetoric on sanctions. The corpus of data is made up of Mugabe's international speeches between 2002 and 2007. The speeches analyzed were selected from speeches Mugabe gave at international forums during this period. The period constitutes the era when the issue of EU, USA and Australian sanctions on Zimbabwe was very topical in Zimbabwe and abroad. During this epoch Mugabe used every international forum to speak against them. The speeches were chosen on the basis of their coverage of Mugabe's response to USA, Australia and EU sanctions on Zimbabwe. Considering the fact that an analysis of whole speeches is not possible for this study, the analysis is limited to only those sections covering the issue of sanctions. The analysis is organized around Mugabe's response to accusations of lack of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe. A textual analysis using the Critical Discourse Analysis was employed. CDA was considered appropriate because of its holistic nature. Thus the analysis considers historical, social, psychological and economic contexts to interpret the motivation driving the rhetoric.

4. Literature Review

Rhetoric according to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000) 'is speech or writing that is intended to influence people, but is not completely honest or sincere' (p1010). Implied by this definition is that rhetoric is persuasive language and its main purpose is to persuade people by offering a different point of view, especially when there is a contested issue. Language is therefore deliberately used to proffer a contrary view to the contested issue. Fujishin (1996) observes that there are three different purposes why people use rhetoric; these are to reinforce an already held belief, change a belief and motivate the recipients to take action. American and European Union sanctions on Zimbabwe present a rhetorical situation in which Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic- Front (ZANU PF) government and his personal image are at risk. Sanctions threaten his government's existence, hence the emergency of Mugabe's sustained campaign through speeches to repair his image and that of his government.

Benoit (1995) suggests a series of rhetorical strategies that an individual or organization can use to maximize reputation after an attack. These are denial, evasion of responsibility, reduction of offensiveness, corrective action and mortification. Denial and shifting blame according to him is used to restore the accused's image if it is accepted by the audience. Evasion of responsibility involves the use of provocation, defeasibility, accidental and good intentions. Provocation or scape-goating (Scott and Lyman 1968) occurs when the alleged offender tries to justify his or her actions as a response to previous wrongful acts that provoked him/her. Defeasibility, on the other hand, is when the accused claims lack of control over the situation. A politician, for instance, may claim to have been ignorant of some information. The politician may also claim good intentions if he or she is blamed for a situation, for instance, an economic program that fails to work. The politician may claim that whatever happened was accidental.

The third strategy available to the rhetor is to go on the offensive. Benoit (1995) says a rhetor

can employ some or all the six variations he proposes. These are: bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser and compensation. This allows the individual to reduce the act to be perceived in a favorable light. A rhetor bolsters his image by honestly admitting responsibility but emphasizing that he has learnt more out of the experience. Minimization entails downplaying the severity of a bad situation. The third variation is differentiation where the rhetor associates his condemned act with more offensive acts. For instance, associating land repossession on post colonial Africa with land dispossession in colonial Africa (Benoit 1995).

Offensiveness may also be minimized by attacking one's accuser. This strategy involves impairing the opponent's image in order to bolster one's own. The politician uses language to discredit his opponent or opponents. In this way, his actions are meant to be seen in a more favorable way. This is quite widespread in politics (Benoit 2007; Pfau and Kenski 1990; Sheldon and Shallot 2007). Lastly, according to Benoit, the rhetor may offer to compensate victims of an action associated with a bad action that may be attributed to the rhetor. This theory is considered appropriate to the analysis of President Mugabe's rhetoric in defense of his government as land repossession generated some kind of a crisis for his government and damaged his reputation, a situation requiring image repair according to Benoit (1995).

Pfau and Kenski (1990) focusing on attack rhetoric identified three broad options that are available to politicians if their image is under threat. These are attacking first, counter attack and preventing an attack (refutation). According to the available literature, attack consists of two basic elements: an act must be committed by one person or group that appears to be offensive to another. This may be an act of omission, commission or poor performance of an action. Attack can also be based on a trait or characteristic (i.e. a person may be accused of possessing offensive qualities (Pomerantz 1978). For the rhetoric to be effective the accused or target, in the rhetor's view, must be directly or indirectly responsible for the act; the accused may be thought to have performed, authorized, ordered, encouraged, or permitted the offensive act to occur. Rhetors also use presence, that is, making present through words what is actually absent yet the speaker considers to be important to the argument (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tycca 1969). An understanding of such use of rhetoric to repair one's image provides an angle through which Mugabe's rhetoric on sanctions persuades his audience to see things from his point of view and thus repair his image and that of his party and government.

Mugabe's rhetorical situation is not without precedence as history is awash with politicians who have attempted to repair their images following a threat to their reputations. Richard Nixon (former president of USA) could not deny responsibility for Watergate and his attempts to shift blame to subordinates, such as chief counsel John Dean, led to his impeachment (Benoit 1982). Former United States Speaker, Newt Gingrich, attacked his accusers when they vilified him for making a lucrative book deal (Kennedy and Benoit 1997).

George W Bush faced with a damaged reputation and re-election had to defend accusations that he had lied to the American people and the world when he led America to invade Iraq

using intelligence information that turned out to be inaccurate (Benoit 2007). Democrats also accused him of instituting policies that had seen Americans losing jobs and the unemployment rate sky rocketing. Bush used defeasibility and transcendence to stave off the criticism in the Meet the Press interview in 2005 (Benoit 2007). In the study of Bush's image repair strategies in response to these accusations, Benoit (2007) notes that Bush pled defeasibility on the accusation that he had lied to the American public about Saddam possessing weapons of mass destruction. He argues that his decision to invade Iraq had been based on the best intelligence information at the time. On the accusation regarding loss of jobs and a deteriorating economy, Bush shifted blame by arguing that the recession which he was blamed for started well before or just about when he got into power. According to Benoit, Bush may have registered some success though polls went on to suggest his efforts were somewhat not convincing.

While the above studies present different rhetorical situations they have one thing in common, that is, threatened reputations. Similarly, Mugabe's reputation is at stake as his government and policies were being criticized for lack of legitimacy. For this reason Benoit (1984)'s rhetorical strategies are quite pertinent to the analysis of President Mugabe's rhetoric against sanctions. The rhetoric emerges out of a situation in which Mugabe accuses those who have imposed sanctions as undermining his credibility and threatening his political survival. An analysis of his rhetoric therefore reveals the rhetorical patterns prevalent in his speeches and the intended communicative effect of the techniques he employs.

5. Data Presentation and Discussion

5.1 Attack the Accuser

President Mugabe makes use of "attack the accuser" rhetoric in his messages against European Union and United States sanctions on Zimbabwe. According to Benoit (1995) attacking one's accuser has the rhetorical effect of impairing the credibility of the accuser thus limiting the damage to the accuser's reputation. His attack seeks to impair the credibility of his opponents with the aim of persuading his audience to support him. This is meant to downplay accusations levelled against him and his government, for instance, the claims that he is holding on to power illegitimately, has mismanaged the economy, abuses human rights and is undemocratic (www.newzimbabwe.com).

An analysis of the attack the accuser rhetoric reveals four ways through which President Mugabe uses this rhetorical device: attack his opponents as individuals, attack his opponents' actions and attack the opponents' ideology. For instance, he attacks the Western World's concept of human rights, rule of law, good governance and democracy. To achieve this, he attacks Tony Blair, George W Bush, British and American governments, the European Union, the opposition in Zimbabwe government and the White Commercial farmers.

President Mugabe attacks Tony Blair and George W Bush as individuals. He frames them as war mongers and neo-colonialists, "Bush and Blair have, apparently developed similar warlike dispositions deriving from similar ideologies of new imperialism"(25 February 2003). He also brands them as international terrorists, who are drunk with power,

Must we allow these men, the two unholy men of our millennium, who in the same way as Hitler and Mussolini formed an unholy alliance, form an alliance to attack an innocent country...Is this the world we desire? The world of giants and international terrorists who will use their state muscle in order to intimidate us? We become midgets (17 October 2005).

Labelling Tony Blair and George W Bush as war mongers and neo-colonialists is negative. In the message President Mugabe suggests that Tony Blair and George W Bush's policies are driven by "ideologies of a new imperialism". According to him, they have a fascist mentality like Mussolini and Hitler in the 1930s as they are abusing their new found unipolar power by threatening and attacking small states. Adolf Hitler of Germany and Benito Mussolini of Italy provoked the Second World War by initially attacking small states in defiance of the League of Nations (United Nations predecessor). What President Mugabe insinuates to the audience is that Tony Blair and George W Bush, by attacking Iraq, are replaying that history because the United Nations did not approve the invasion. In this way he suggests that Tony Blair and George W Bush do not respect international law, the same accusation that the two leaders have leveled against him. The rhetoric thus situates the attack on Iraq and sanctions on Zimbabwe in the context of Tony Blair and George W Bush's alleged abuse of power and imperial ideologies. The audience is therefore encouraged to understand sanctions on Zimbabwe in that context of imperialism.

Speaking at Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome in October 2005, Mugabe labels Tony Blair and George W Bush, "unholy men". Through such name calling Mugabe suggests to the audience that Tony Blair and George W Bush exhibit evil characteristics. Thus George W Bush and Tony Blair are presented as afflicted by evil, and thus persuading the audience to conclude that Bush and Blair's arguments for sanctions on Zimbabwe are not justified but motivated by evil intentions.

As observed by Kennedy and Benoit (2009) the language directs attention to the shortcomings of the opponents rather than Mugabe's own weaknesses. In the message, Mugabe undermines Tony Blair and George W Bush credibility persuading the audience not to believe their arguments for sanctions on Zimbabwe. President Mugabe appeals to the audience's desire for peaceful co-existence between nations, their fear of war, revulsion of manipulative tactics, distaste of neo-colonialism and value for independence. The hyperbolic effect of calling the United States and Britain "international terrorists", "giants" and Zimbabwe and other countries "midgets" is rhetorical. The adjectival phrase "international terrorists" suggests that the two countries are responsible for terror in many countries of the world. The giant and midget exaggeration suggests a disproportionate power distribution where two adversaries face each other with one of the two opponents having excessive power which it abuses for its own benefit. This presents Zimbabwe as a victim of very powerful adversaries who want to impose their will on Zimbabwe through sanctions. In this way President Mugabe appeals to victim psyche persuasively making his views on sanctions to be widely supported.

President Mugabe also attacks the actions of the British, the Americans, some White commercial farmers and the opposition in Zimbabwe. An analysis of the rhetoric reveals that the British, Americans and the Europeans are attacked for using the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to deny the Zimbabwean Government to access loans for its development programs, “The extraneous conditionalities of the Bretton Woods institutions imposed by powerful countries for the qualification and disqualification of beneficiaries are intended to further the interests of big powers and justify wanton interference in the affairs of small nations.” (26 September 2003). He also accuses them for particularly denying AIDS funds, “...regrettably we continue to see the unfortunate and futile tendency to use assistance in this area as reward for political compliance and malleability, making it unavailable to countries whose governments are considered inconvenient”. President Mugabe also attacks Tony Blair’s foreign policy activities on Zimbabwe as being motivated by a regime change agenda;

Mr Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister has arrogantly and unashamedly announced in his Parliament that his government was working with the opposition party to bring about regime change. Once again the lawless nature of this man who all along with his Washington master believes he is God-ordained to rule our world has shown itself (21 September 2004).

Mugabe implicitly accuses Tony Blair and George W Bush and their governments of using their influence to deny the Zimbabwean people access to International Monetary Fund and World Bank loans. He accuses them of manipulating these donor agencies to disqualify Zimbabwe from getting assistance for its HIV and Aids programs. He also accuses Tony Blair of meddling in Zimbabwean politics by sponsoring the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change. The alleged interference in international institutions is a calculated rhetoric meant to expose what Mugabe perceives to be the undemocratic nature of his accusers in international relations. Further, the rhetoric persuades the audience to view Tony Blair, George W Bush, British and American governments as manipulative, insensitive, callous and insincere to use people’s health to further their political agendas by denying them AIDS fighting assistance. The rhetoric also suggests that Tony Blair and George W Bush are “lawless” to disregard the sovereignty of Zimbabwe through, “working with the opposition party to bring about regime change” in Zimbabwe (21 September 2004). Referring to the legality of Tony Blair and George Bush’s actions on Zimbabwe, President Mugabe insinuates to the audience that the sanctions on Zimbabwe are illegal. Such rhetoric encourages the audience to conclude that sanctions on Zimbabwe are illegal and reasons given by the Western World for imposing them as false.

The opposition party in Zimbabwe, that is, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai, is attacked in the same message for being stooges of the West. President Mugabe uses Tony Blair’s admission in the British parliament to malign the Zimbabwe opposition party as being British sponsored. The rhetorical intent is to make the opposition party MDC appear as part of the British, American and European Union conspiracy to topple his government, therefore making it unpatriotic. The rhetoric

demonstrates what Kangira (2004) calls conspirator-traitor-rhetoric which President Mugabe uses to cast the MDC party as a traitor party that is selling the independence of Zimbabwe to the British, Americans and the European Union. These accusations add force to President Mugabe's claims that sanctions are intended to remove his government from power. While the rhetoric accuses Tony Blair and the British Government of conspiring to remove his government from power, it also depicts Tony Blair and the British government as "lawless". Implied therefore, is that the British's admission to working with the opposition in Zimbabwe is against international law as it is interference in a sovereign state. This is persuasive as the audience is encouraged to judge Tony Blair and the British Government as failing to observe the rule of law which they are accusing President Mugabe of doing in Zimbabwe.

In a similar attack President Mugabe criticizes the British and American Governments' invasion of Iraq on 26 September 2003 as another example of what he alleges to be the lawless nature of these governments. According to him, the invasion was not sanctioned by the United Nations and it was opposed even in the British and American domestic constituencies. He says,

It was and remains an unjust and illegitimate war: unjust to the extent that it was founded and prosecuted on falsehoods. Illegitimate war to the extent that it was not sanctioned by the United Nations, has transformed itself into effective occupation of sovereign people.

On 31 September 2007 President Mugabe repeats the accusations of alleged failure by the United States and Britain to observe the rule of international law when he says, "This forum did not sanction Blair and Bush's misadventures in Iraq. They rode roughshod over United Nations and international opinion".

The use of these attacks is a calculated rhetorical strategy for a number of reasons. Firstly, the rhetoric exposes the British and American Governments as guilty of failing to observe the rule of international law making them to look like they do not have moral grounds to accuse Mugabe's regime of failure to apply the rule of law. Secondly, it casts them as liars as it alleges that their reasons for going to war in Iraq were later proved to have been based on lies that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. This subtly suggests to the audience that, in the same way Mugabe's accusers lied on Iraq they cannot be trusted, making their real reasons for imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe suspect. Thirdly, the rhetoric suggests that the sanctions on Zimbabwe are illegal because they were not sanctioned by the United Nations. It persuades the audience to make these associations of how the British and American governments misled the international community on Iraq and failure to observe the rule of international law by ignoring the opposed views in the United Nations and their domestic constituencies. This persuades the audience to form a bad image of the British and American Government. Attacking the accuser rhetoric used thus persuades the audience to support him as it presents the activities of President Mugabe's opponents with regard to sanctions as not noble, but unjustified and having a hidden agenda. This has the effect of eroding Mugabe's accusers' credibility.

President Mugabe attacks what he perceives to be the British, Americans and Europeans' ideology motivating the sanctions on Zimbabwe. He alleges that the ideology is not philanthropic but arises from an imperial and racist agenda. Speaking at the Earth Summit in Johannesburg on 25 February 2002, President Mugabe accuses the Americans and Europeans of using human rights to promote an imperial ideology. He says:

...we join our brothers and sisters in the Third World in rejecting completely, manipulative and intimidatory attempts by some countries and regional blocks that are bent on subordinating our sovereignty to their hegemonic ambitions and imperial interests, falsely presented as matters of rule of law, democracy and good governance.

According to him sanctions on Zimbabwe have hidden motives that are far from being motivated by the love of Africans. He alleges that the real motive is to weaken his government and further the interests of Western governments. Again speaking in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 25 February 2003 (at the Non-Aligned Movement Summit) President Mugabe explicitly attacks the imperial ideology he perceives to be the ideology driving sanctions on Zimbabwe. He says: "Colonialism now assumes a varied form, and seeks to garner all of us of the Third World as we get globally villagized under false economic pretences". Such rhetoric encourages the audience to see sanctions as a neo-colonial tool used to perpetuate imperialism former colonies thus making sanctions a conspiracy against Zimbabweans.

It is clear that the countries and regional blocks Mugabe refers to are the USA, Britain and European Union. President Mugabe attacks globalization and sustainable development ideologies which in his view are being fronted to facilitate exploitation of Third World countries. The statement presents the Western World as dishonest in the way they relate with Third World countries. The rhetoric is designed to achieve two purposes, that is, rally the Third World against those who have imposed sanctions and possibly making the Western world feel exposed and ashamed for having imposed the sanctions. Thus the audience is encouraged to see sanctions on Zimbabwe as being designed to achieve that objective.

Similarly, attacking the accuser rhetoric is evident in President Mugabe speech to the United Nations General Assembly on 31 September 2007. President Mugabe attacks Tony Blair, George Bush and Gordon Brown (British Premier after Tony Blair) for being motivated by racism to impose and continue sanctions on Zimbabwe, "Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair and now Mr. Brown's sense of human rights precludes our people's right to their God-given resources, which in their view must be controlled by their kith and kin". Here Mugabe criticizes Tony Blair and George W Bush as selective and racist in the way they choose to apply Human Rights because he claims sanctions on Zimbabwe are meant to deny the right of indigenous Zimbabweans to the land that was forcibly taken from them at the onset of colonialism in 1890. Mugabe is quite aware that the issue of racism is frowned upon in the modern world and casting Bush, Blair and Brown as racist weakens their argument for imposing the sanctions. To the Third World audience it invokes a past that they would like to forget. He is

also aware that the past arouses anger and revulsion in those who have suffered under colonialism. In this way he is able to make present issues that do not endear his accusers with the audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tycca, 1969).

These attacks serve to highlight and expose what President Mugabe argues are sinister motives behind sanctions on Zimbabwe. By pointing to what, in his opinion, is the ideology or ideologies behind the sanctions, President Mugabe depicts the Americans and Europeans as serial racists and imperialists who are punishing Zimbabweans to protect their imperial interests. The rhetoric questions the American President's concept of human rights which President Mugabe explicitly suggests means denying the rights of black Zimbabweans' right to what is naturally "God-given" theirs, that is, the land.

The rhetoric according to Karsh (2000), is *ad populum* (appeals to the public). Through using the rhetoric President Mugabe appeals to the audience values of duty, solidarity and patriotism in the Zimbabwean audience. The audience in the Western World is also being persuaded to sympathize with Zimbabweans and in the Third World the rhetoric appeals for sympathy and solidarity against what President Mugabe seems to imply is a common enemy. President Mugabe therefore uses attack the accuser rhetoric to indict the Western World and persuade the audience to agree with him that sanctions on Zimbabwe have a covert imperial ideological agenda which is meant to benefit the Western World and not Zimbabwe.

Attack the accuser rhetoric therefore is a rhetorical strategy which President Mugabe uses, as Benoit (1995) suggests, to accentuate what he views as his opponents' weaknesses. The rhetoric allows him to create images of his opponents that are not favorable to the audience thus undermining their credibility. It also enables him to present a bold and defiant stance towards his opponents, encouraging those in the audience who may be frightened of having opposed views to President Mugabe's opponents on sanctions.

President Mugabe largely uses attack the accuser rhetoric to undermine his accusers and persuade his audience to support his government against USA and European Union sanctions on Zimbabwe. He attacks his opponents' history, participation in world politics and performance regarding the issues of human rights and democracy. The purpose of President Mugabe's use of attack the accuser rhetoric is to undermine his accuser's reputation and hence persuade his audience to support him and his government against sanctions that he sees as being driven by an imperial agenda.

5.2 Denial

Mugabe does not deny the offense. He admits that they have taken the land. He however, blames the British colonialism for inequitable land distribution. He blames the Americans and the Europeans for siding with the British and the MDC party in Zimbabwe for fronting the interests of the British. He is quite emphatic that sanctions are a means to regime change in Zimbabwe and a tool of liberal politics that seeks to globalize economies for the benefit of the rich North.

5.3 *Good Intentions*

In his rhetoric president Mugabe also employs good intentions as an image repair strategy. He argues that the land reform at the centre of his government's fall out with American and European governments is actually intended to redress inequitable land distribution, a legacy of colonialism in Zimbabwe. He says "... my government has decided to do the right and just thing by taking back land and giving it to its rightful indigenous, black owner who lost it in circumstances of colonial pillage," (2 February 2002). He further argues that this "repossession (White owned farms) is in pursuit of true justice as we know and understand it." (2 February 2002). The rhetorical intent is quite clear here. President Mugabe presents his government land expropriation as a necessary and fair thing in the circumstances of injustices brought about by colonialism.

5.4 *Corrective Action*

Arguing that his government land reform is not a wholesale dispossession of White farmers he says: "We have said as we acquire land, we shall not deprive the White farmers of land completely. Every one of them is entitled to at least one farm, but they would want to continue to have more than one farm" (2 February 2002). Such discourse is meant to present Mugabe's government as fair in its handling of the land reform. He argues that white farmers, despite the information in the media, are not being completely dispossessed as they will remain with pieces of land to do some farming on. What Mugabe is countering are claims that land redistribution in Zimbabwe is vindictive.

6. Conclusion

In his rhetoric against sanctions Mugabe defends his government actions in Zimbabwe. Mugabe uses attack the accuser rhetoric to question the sincerity of his accusers when they talk about democracy when, he alleges, their past and present does not present them as democrats, champions of the rule of law and good governance in world affairs. He points at lack of democracy in international institutions such as the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund to reveal what he considers as double standards on the party of his accusers. He also accuses them of having an unsavory history during Zimbabwe's struggle for independence. Thus, he is able to present himself as a victim of a new form of imperialism championed under the guise of globalization. His rhetoric seems to have been persuasive to some of his audiences, for instance, the African Union (AU) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) as these bodies have continued to call for the removal of the sanctions and refused to support the American, Australian and European sanctions on Zimbabwe. Despite spirited efforts by the EU, denying that it imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe, people have come to realize that sanctions on the country exist. Attempts to extend the already existing sanctions by roping in United Nations sanctions have also been resisted.

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