

**‘ZIMBABWE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS’: ZIMBABWE’S FOREIGN POLICY  
TRAJECTORY UNDER EMMERSON MNANGAGWA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Zimbabwe’s foreign policy under Emmerson Mnangagwa has shifted from focusing on the political towards the economic. The country’s foreign policy has been designed in such a way that aids Zimbabwe’s economic recovery, facilitates economic growth, creates employment and encourages a climate conducive to attracting investors into the country. The paper argues that Zimbabwe’s foreign policy under Mnangagwa is a combination of pragmatism, realism and neoliberalism. It is informed by the dichotomy of change, conservatism and continuity with the old order whilst trying to chart and carve a new course. It identifies the patterns of change and continuity over both space and time analysing Zimbabwe’s relations with Africa, China, and Russia which continue in the tradition of the previous regime. In terms of change, Zimbabwe realises the centrality of the Western countries such as Britain, United States of America, countries of the European Union. On the other hand she is mindful of the need for new alliances, new investment partners and the need to be reintegrated into global society.*

**Key Words:** *Zimbabwean foreign policy, Zimbabwean diplomacy, re-engagement, open for business, sovereignty, Commonwealth*

**Introduction**

This paper analyses Zimbabwe’s foreign policy since the ouster of President Robert Mugabe in November 2017. Since 1980, Zimbabwe’s domestic policy and foreign policy was dominated by Robert Mugabe. However, his ouster in November 2017, meant that the new administration had to realign its foreign policy priorities. The military-inspired ouster of the Mugabe brought to power his long-time ally and enforcer Emmerson Mnangagwa who was his Vice-President before being dismissed by Mugabe. Following the intervention of the military in November 8, 2017 and his swearing-in on November 24, 2017, Mnangagwa assumed the reins of power. He has been keen to demonstrate that despite having been a close ally and confidant of Mugabe, he is his own man

and that his handling of foreign policy will be different from that of Mugabe. Mnangagwa's strategy has been to engage Zimbabwe's neighbours, strengthen regional ties, engage, re-engage and strengthen Zimbabwe's relations with her traditional allies such as China, Russia as well as to re-set relations with Britain, United States of America, the European Union (EU) and the West following a decade of toxic relations under the Mugabe regime. His foreign policy can be described as the Mnangagwa doctrine of 'Zimbabwe is open for business.' This paper provides an analysis and overview of Zimbabwe's foreign policy under Emmerson Mnangagwa. It identifies the patterns of change and continuity over both space and time analysing the implications that the 'Zimbabwe is open for business' mantra means for Zimbabwe's engagement with the world at large.

The ouster of Robert Mugabe as President of the Republic of Zimbabwe has led to a re-engagement, strategic rethink and a major foreign policy and diplomacy shift in the country. Mnangagwa inherited a Zimbabwe whose relations with the international community were less than cordial. The international community, China included had grown weary of Mugabe and had grown uncomfortable with his administration. The new dispensation as it is often referred to have adopted the mantra of 'open for business' which is a framework and concept of paradigm shift from the previous ways of the Mugabe administration. This is interesting as the current President Emmerson Mnangagwa was Mugabe's right-hand man since independence. It is also interesting because this volte-face or re-alignment has taken place despite the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) still being the party in power. Mugabe's foreign policy had the blessings of Zanu PF which had a say in the country's foreign policy direction and the hardliners within the party seemingly anti-Western. It is also of interest that the military which no doubt wields considerable influence in what is a quasi-civilian government has acquiesced to rapprochement of the West as well as that it managed to get one of its own to be Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The Mnangagwa administration is keenly aware that the belligerent, bravado-filled and verbally acerbic attitude towards the West of the Mugabe era where he antagonized the West, adopted a siege mentality and isolated Zimbabwe from the West was disastrous for the country economically, made her isolated, and made the Zimbabwe brand less than attractive. The intonation 'Zimbabwe is open for business' is a strategy to be relevant to

the international community, a break with the Mugabe policy of telling the West to go hang a thousand times as well as an indication of a new foreign policy direction of openness, dialogue, engagement, and a call towards business and capital to invest in Zimbabwe. The Mugabe decade and a half or so of a foreign policy towards the West of verbal barbs, taunts, jibes, political grandstanding and rhetoric on the international stage, telling the West to go hang and that the sun sets in the west therefore she is history-the harsh reality is that the Zimbabwe brand and her standing on the international stage was suffering and diminishing (Abwao and Cowelly, 2008). It is a truism and somewhat a cliché in foreign policy that state's care about self-interest, self-preservation and advancing its own interests. At the heart of foreign policy is survival and security in a chaotic as well as anarchic global environment.

Zimbabwe's current President Emmerson Mnangagwa is regarded as a pragmatist unlike the previous President Robert Mugabe who was dogmatic. His approach to matters of state and foreign policy under the mantra of a 'new dispensation' has led to optimism and expectation that the country could be on the path to economic reform, economic prosperity and rapprochement with the West. Mnangagwa came to power on the back of a military-inspired and military-backed ouster of Robert Mugabe in November 2017 and has adopted a rational foreign policy which at its cornerstone includes mending fences with the West. The circumstances which led to his ascension to power have meant that Mnangagwa and his regime have had to pay considerable attention to foreign policy as opposed to domestic policy. As of April 2018, Mnangagwa had visited 13 countries, a demonstration of the centrality of foreign policy and diplomatic relations to his regime. A major consideration for this is the desire to legitimise not just the circumstances but to garner support and economic aid for Zimbabwe. Under Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's foreign policy increasingly was anti-West and pro-China.

### **Conceptualizing Foreign Policy**

It is important to understand how Zimbabwe conceptualizes foreign policy. Stern (2000) conceives foreign policy as a sequence of positions or courses of action in pursuit of objectives. Foreign policy is about actions, reactions, and interactions to situations, events, issues, demands, and pressures from the international arena (ibid). It is observable that under Mnangagwa,

Zimbabwe's foreign policy has shifted from isolationism and belligerence towards the West to a policy of re-engagement. Kegley and Wittkopf (2001) posit that, state's foreign policy is determined by interrelated factors such as international, inter-domestic and domestic. Rosenau (1976) views foreign policy from three dimensions that is, orientations, foreign policy as commitments and foreign policy as activities (behaviors). Through orientation, one delves into the core issues guiding Zimbabwe's foreign policy under Mnangagwa which include its political traditions, experiences and aspirations. Secondly, foreign policy as commitments, explores how the administration has adopted strategies and made decisions towards achieving the goal of total re-engagement by translating Zimbabwe's principles into norms. Thirdly, foreign policy as practice refers to the concrete behavior of States *vis a vis* the situation and events in the international system in accordance with the orientation, plans and commitments. Zimbabwe's foreign policy can be understood from George Modelski conception of foreign policy as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their activities to international environment. In addition, the definition considers the role played by the policy makers who are entitled to act on behalf of their community, it must also shed light on the ways in which the state attempts to change and whether it succeeds in changing the behavior and attitude of other states. We argue that Mnangagwa's foreign policy is an attempt by Zimbabwe to influence other states to change their behavior towards Zimbabwe and embrace it as a 'new' progressive sovereign state willing to play by the rules of the international system and also respecting the global order of great powers. Modelski also notes that, foreign policy should aim at minimizing all costs of adverse effects and maximize opportunities and regulate the behavior of states by ensuring continuity of their favorable actions (ibid). Therefore it stands to reason that, by adopting Zimbabwe is open for business doctrine, Mnangagwa's administration seeks to minimize Zimbabwe's adversities created by the Mugabe regime and maximize opportunities for Zimbabwe through an open door policy of re-engagement.

In Zimbabwe, the formulation of foreign policy is guided and informed by the President. This is spelt out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade which states that 'the creation and enunciation of Foreign Policy is a prerogative of the Head of State or Government

(Chan and Patel, 2006). It is then articulated either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.’ Mnangagwa has been adopted the mantra of ‘a new dispensation’ as well as ‘Zimbabwe is open for business’ as his catchphrases and buzzwords. One therefore may posit that in foreign policy the country would pursue a foreign policy which would be markedly different from that of Robert Mugabe. The rational actor approach is useful in helping understand the goals and intentions of Zimbabwean foreign policy. Mnangagwa and his administration are rational, pragmatic actors making calculated, informed decisions for the benefit of Zimbabwe and by extension the survival of the regime. The President and the various government ministries and actors such as Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Finance, the military identify the problem, analyse the desired outcomes which the policy should achieve, analyse and evaluate the consequences of the policy then finally decision-making which must bring the desired outcome. The rational actor approach enables an understanding of the goals and intended outcomes behind a foreign policy action.

Zimbabwe’s foreign policy objectives are informed by the following principles; a belief in ‘self-determination and support for liberation movements; adherence to the principle of national sovereignty; respect for territorial integrity of all countries; promotion of the principle of equality among nations; belief in non-discrimination, whether based on colour, creed, religion or other forms; and the promotion of peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states (Zimbabwean Constitution Amendment No. chapter 2 Section 12). The objectives are in essence still the same as the ones pursued by the Mugabe regime; in this case one quickly discerns the continuation in principle of the fundamental values that have informed Zimbabwe’s foreign policy since her independence in 1980. The major deviation is that the Mnangagwa administration has placed a major emphasis on the economic aspects of diplomacy whereas the Mugabe regime largely viewed foreign policy in political terms.

### **Open For Business: A Mnangagwa Doctrine in Zimbabwe’s Foreign Policy?**

Any discussion of Zimbabwe’s conduct of foreign policy under the new regime of Mnangagwa requires out of necessity a brief historical overview of foreign policy during the Mugabe era (April 1980-November 2017). Zimbabwe’s foreign policy was driven by a desire to see Africa

achieve independence hence her support for liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia as they fought for their liberation from apartheid South Africa. Following the liberation of the two countries, Zimbabwe shifted her focus towards the continent at large where she was a proponent of pan-Africanism, support for the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as well as an active role in the Non Aligned Movement (NAM). In 1991, she hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Harare an indication that she believed that the Commonwealth of Nations was an important entity as well as the fact that she was held in high esteem by the Commonwealth itself. Relations with the West, Britain in particular were fairly warm and cordial. Matters appear to have come to a head when Zimbabwe embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) as well as Claire Short's letter which angered Mugabe. From the year 2000, Zimbabwe's foreign policy under Mugabe was framed around the existential threats posed by the West, Britain and her ally the United States of America. Her foreign policy therefore was driven by what SabeloGatsheni-Ndlovu (2009) terms 'Mugabeism' a doctrine which informed Zimbabwe's foreign policy till his capitulation. In foreign policy, Mugabeism was a loose doctrine which was adopted by the regime which identified and mapped Zimbabwe's enemies who were regarded as a threat to the country's sovereignty, as they sought to effect regime change and to reverse the gains of the revolution. A cornerstone of Mugabeism was embarking on land reform, as well as rallying African states to band together. Mugabeism espoused a form of Pan-Africanism and was visible at international forums such as the United Nations General Assembly where his fiery speeches often lambasted the West.

Ending Zimbabwe's isolation is an integral part of Mnangagwa's foreign policy strategy. Relations with the West under Mugabe were poisoned and toxic. Re-establishing and normalizing relations with the West has emerged as a key cornerstone of the Mnangagwa regime. To this end therefore, active diplomacy to end isolation by the West has assumed great importance. His administration realises that improved diplomatic ties with the West will ameliorate Zimbabwe's standing and perception in the world. In 2015 when he was still Vice-President of Zimbabwe, Mnangagwa gave an indication that Zimbabwe needed to re-engage with the West, he stated that "we cannot remain isolated; we wish to engage the international community and also be part and parcel of the forward-looking international

community”(Nyangeni, 2015). One gleans that even as Vice-President, his policy towards the West was at odds with Mugabe’s, Mnangagwa was expressing a pragmatic view where he realised that without the West, Zimbabwe’s economy would not recover whereas Mugabe’s stance was informed by politics. Crucially, re-engagement of the West will help the country access foreign capital and investment which she needs to resuscitate her economy.

Furthermore, Mnangagwa is acutely aware of how noxious relations with the West and international community negatively affected Zimbabwe’s economy and international standing. He is quoted as saying;

*‘let us remember where we were, and how we suffered as an isolated nation. In this new era, Zimbabwe is open to the world, and governments, businesses and individuals all are looking to do business with us. The new Zimbabwe must embrace the international community in order to secure crucial foreign investment. These projects will create jobs, and foreign investment will inject crucial cash into our economy’* (Maodza, 2018)

Zimbabwe’s economy has been stagnating and she has been facing a downturn in her economic fortunes. Economic sanctions by the West on Zimbabwe have been in place since 2000/2002 when Mugabe embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), issues of poor governance and human rights abuses as well as pernicious relations with the West combined to estrange Zimbabwe from the international community. Western imposed sanctions and ill-informed policy decisions by Mugabe had anegative impact on Zimbabwe’s economy. Mugabe’s regime pulled Zimbabwe out of the Commonwealth in 2003 after the grouping had condemned the 2002 Presidential elections which were deemed to have been less than credible due to voter intimidation and violence, relations with Britain were at their lowest ebb under Mugabe, the EU was also a constant target of attack by the regime so were countries such as Australia and the United States of America (USA). The new dispensation is sentient of the import of cordial relations with the West. Not only does it provide much-needed economic aid but also offer trade and investment opportunities for Zimbabwe hence the administration is conscious of the importance on mending fences with the West. Fundamentally, as a pragmatist, Mnangagwa realises that for his regime to be accepted by the West, he has to go on a charm offensive and

demonstrate that his regime is not just a case of ‘same script, different cast’ a case of the continuation of the same Mugabe-era policies.

Mnangagwa has taken steps to re-engage Britain in a bid to normalize relations. Affable relations with Britain are crucial in his foreign policy and it was inevitable then that one of his major tasks was to restore the country’s relations with Britain. Mnangagwa has chosen to steer his ship in a more rational, pragmatic and sensible direction mindful that ‘in the globalised and interdependent world, an egocentric pursuit of foreign policy would be both blind and defeatist’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,2017). This realization shows his administration as one that is departing from the confrontational, hostile and conflictual diplomacy pursued by Mugabe to a more conciliatory, friendly one keen on re-engagement. Zimbabwe and Britain had tense, strained and frosty relations during the Mugabe-era. Mnangagwa on the other hand has been pursuing a moderate foreign policy predicated on constructive engagement, rapprochement and pragmatic. Mugabe placed emphasis on the ‘Look East Policy’, self-reliance and inward looking policies as opposed to engagement with the West particularly Britain and the United States of America (USA). One would not be far off the mark to term Mugabe’s relations with Britain as toxic, ruinous, negative and antagonistic as seen in his ‘Blair keep your Britain, I keep my Zimbabwe’ comment as well as saying ‘the Blair I know is a blair’(Battersby and Grice, 2002). Mnangagwa on the other hand has been pragmatic and rational to realise that Zimbabwe needs Britain for trade, investment, markets, aid and its influence in the globe. In his inauguration speech, Mnangagwa pledged that his administration ‘...will take definite steps to re-engage those Nations who have had issues with us in the past’ (Mnangagwa, 2017). This was backed up by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Sibusiso Moyo who pointed out that ‘re-engagement shall also be part of my core focus. I have already begun serious and focused dialogue with key constituent countries of the west amongst them, our erstwhile coloniser, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, France and Sweden, with the objective of normalizing our relations. We seek an honest, respectful and forthright dialogue that will let go the past and explore and pursue mutually beneficial economic opportunities’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2017). It was in light of Mnangagwa’s pledge and the pronouncements from the Minister



that overtures towards normalizing ties and mend fences to mark the beginning of a new era saw Minister Sibusiso Moyo meeting the British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) where discussions centred on Zimbabwe seeking readmission into the Commonwealth. In a meeting on the sidelines of the CHOGM meeting held in London in April 2018, Zimbabwe indicated that she would like to be readmitted into the Commonwealth. She also sought observer status which unfortunately does not exist in the Commonwealth. This indicates the importance that she places on rejoining the Commonwealth which is a departure from the view of his predecessor who viewed it as a colonial vestige. The Minister also spoke at Chatham House, a prestigious British think tank where once again he was selling the message of the Mnangagwa regime that ‘Zimbabwe is open for business.’ What emerged from Minister Moyo’s trip was the message that Zimbabwe under Mnangagwa seeks convivial relations with Britain; this is a sharp break from Mugabe’s policy towards Britain which was characterised by confrontation, pugnacious and belligerence. Furthermore, the regime has been proactive in seeking to improving relations as it has engaged in public diplomacy in its bid to sell its message and engaging influential think tanks such as Chatham House as well as holding interviews with influential global media houses such as The Economist, Consumer News and Business Channel (CNBC), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Cable News Network (CNN).

The Mnangagwa administration would like to have sanctions lifted. To this end it is critical to normalize relations with the United States of America (USA). This has not yielded any significant dividend at this point as the USA’s attitude towards Zimbabwe has been lukewarm as the USA has pointed out that the military which backed Mnangagwa’s seizure of power was behind state-sanctioned violence in the past and that as one of Mugabe’s henchman he was privy to these operations. The Trump administration is only prepared to lift sanctions if substantial reforms are made by the Mnangagwa administration, this has presented a conundrum for Harare as she knows the importance of Washington but instituting reforms may upset the military element which wields power and influence in the state. Traditionally Zanu PF relations with Republican-led administration have often been poor no doubt the Ronald Regan era still fresh in the minds of the old guard who saw America turn a blind eye to apartheid South Africa’s

destabilisation of Southern Africa during the Cold War era. Despite this, Harare would like to have the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) of 2003 repealed. Under this Act, the George Bush (Jnr) Republican administration imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe stating that US financial and economic institutions were not to provide any assistance to the Zimbabwean regime unless it democratizes. It also imposed targeted sanctions upon the elite within the ruling party Zanu PF party as well as their companies. Mnangagwa is on record as saying ‘those who cling to the sanctions are stuck in the old Zimbabwe-the Zimbabwe of poverty and international isolationism’ (Mnangagwa, 2018). This is an indirect plea to the USA to lift sanctions but with the Trump administration’s mantra of America first and making America great again, Zimbabwe will have to make tangible reforms if she is to re-establish ties with the USA or if she were to convince the USA to lift sanctions. This will prove difficult as the USA is occupied with the North Korean issue, Iran nuclear deal and the Middle East.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe has been excluded from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) introduced in 2000 promoting trade between Africa and the USA. Mnangagwa realises that for Zimbabwe to benefit from AGOA meaningfully Zimbabwe she has to make progress towards fulfilling the eligibility requirements for African countries to be a member of AGOA, this include improving the democratisation process and observing human rights. The USA is looking to measure Zimbabwe’s state of human rights by how the Mnangagwa administration is going to conduct the 2018 harmonised election. The administration is aware that that by not being part of AGOA, Zimbabwe’s economy in a highly globalised and intertwined economic environment will continue to suffer. It is to be observed that part of the challenge is that since 2000 Zimbabwe has remained an uncompetitive investor destination, hence contributing to international investors boycotting to invest in Zimbabwe because of the inability to competitively export to the United States market (The Periscope Report, 2016). By normalizing relations with the USA, the administration hopes to tap into the USA market and hopefully joining AGOA. Additionally, Zimbabwe’s exclusion from AGOA impacts negatively on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) opportunity to tap into the USA market, SME’s are pivotal to Zimbabwe’s economic revival.

In addition, the exclusion of Zimbabwe from AGOA has negatively affected Zimbabwean businesses to competitively access the USA market using electronic commerce. Contrary to the negativities associated with the exclusion of Zimbabwe from AGOA, Zimbabwe has shielded herself from the exploited nature of AGOA on African Economies. It is observed that African countries part of AGOA have suffered deep trade deficits as the bilateral arrangement benefits the US more than the African countries by ensuring that all trade barriers are removed for US products that contributing to African countries losing out on revenue to be generated through import duties.

Economics has emerged as the centerpiece of the government's foreign policy. An indication of the move towards this direction and orientation was noticeable in the rebranding and renaming of the Ministry which since independence in 1980 was previously known as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The ministry was renamed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to reflect the centrality that trade and economics would be the metronome and the heart of Zimbabwe's foreign policy and diplomacy. Zimbabwe's foreign policy has 'a heavy economic bias,' this was underscored by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade who stated that his ministry would '...pursue a comprehensive economic diplomacy' underpinned by 're-engagement with nations that we have differed with in the past, nurturing and consolidation of old friendships, exploring new investment frontiers and partnerships, ensuring the creation of favourable conditions that make Zimbabwe an attractive investment destination' (Mugauri, 2017). That being said, Zimbabwe would want to be respected and treated as an equal instead of being lectured to, it would like to retain its sovereignty and not be mortgaged to foreign capital at any cost. This was the case as China had seized control of diamond fields and almost made Zimbabwe an extension of Beijing. Furthermore, the Minister remarked that 'the economic diplomacy we seek to pursue will ride on the successes and accomplishments of the past, realignments in other areas and a complete departure from frustrations and failures of the past. Government intends to facilitate economic development and industrial revival' (ibid). If ever there was any indication that Zimbabwe was open for business, one need not look further than the name of the ministry. A close look reveals that neoliberal economic policies would be pursued by the country resonating well with global capital as well as with both the Western

world and China. To achieve this the Mnangagwa government has been cognisant of the importance of re-establishing cordial ties with Britain, mending fences with the European Union, the United States as well as counter-balancing and continuing to appease China whilst renegotiating the terms of the relationship.

Economics particularly pursuing a free market system is one of the features of the Mnangagwa government. It is in this context that one has to understand Mnangagwa's speech at the World Economic Forum meeting at Davos. The World Economic Forum meeting at Davos, Switzerland provides the clearest indication of how Mnangagwa's regime views foreign policy. Mugabe's position was informed by anti-Western rhetoric as well as abhorrence towards neo-liberal economics especially the configuration of the international economics. Being invited to Davos a forum where Mugabe was never invited to as he was ideologically against its 'hyperliberalism' and global white monopoly capital is an indicator of a reconfiguration in foreign policy and relations with the West. This is in sharp contrast to Mugabe's foreign policy towards the West and global capital which was belligerent, confrontational and challenged the configuration of the liberal global international order and hostile towards the West. He also fired salvos and verbal blows against the then USA Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice whom he described as that girl born out of the slave ancestry, who should know from the history of slavery in America, from the present situation of blacks in America that the white man is not a friend. The white man is the slave master to her' (Aljazeera, 2005). The strategic doctrine of Zimbabwe that she is open to business is an indication that Mnangagwa's regime seeks to play a role as a responsible state in the international system and international order.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Sibusiso Moyo captured this in his address to accredited diplomats based in Zimbabwe when he said '...you will notice our determined drive to make Zimbabwe an attractive destination of Foreign Direct Investment through a deliberate economic bias in implementation of our Foreign Policy' (Munyoro, 2017). The intersection and relationship between foreign and domestic policy is one of the truisms of international relations, in this respect, foreign direct investment is crucial in helping the Mnangagwa administration achieve its promise of creating jobs and boosting the economy of Zimbabwe. Under Robert Mugabe, unemployment was thought to be at about 90%, the formal

economy had virtually disappeared leading to an informal economy of 'kiyakiya' which included selling various wares often smuggled, changing or selling foreign currency illegally, and 'dealing , making a plan and hustling' (Jones, 2010). This is a clear indication of a new doctrine where Zimbabwe recognises that the international political economy has been influenced by the forces of globalisation and how interconnected the global economy is. Being open for business is a clear indication of the free market economics direction that the country would undertake. Zimbabwe is open for business is to be interpreted as a pro-Western and free market oriented stance. This is a pragmatic mantra which takes into cognizance the economic needs of Zimbabwe especially its need for foreign direct investment, economic aid and foreign capital. This is unlike the Mugabe era where the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act was one of the cornerstones of his policy which served to scare away Western investors.

Another feature of the new administration has been doing away with the controversial indigenisation policy. However, it should be noted that this was already underway during the Mugabe-era; an indication that it has not just been about change but there has been a co-existence between change and continuity. President Mnangagwa has been mindful of the need to re-think and re-adjust Zimbabwe's domestic economic policy with what the administration communicates in the international arena. This is important in foreign policy as the foreign policy is a translation and interpretation of the country's domestic policy abroad in order to ensure that the international community so as to encourage Foreign Direct Investment ( FDI). A change in policy was visible as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade pronounced that 'we believe the recent adjustments to the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Law levels the field and removes any lingering impediments from the past' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2017). In this respect, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2018 Mnangagwa's administration launched Investment Guideline and Opportunities in Zimbabwe which is a revision of the previous administration's Zimbabwe's Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment policy which instituted the 51:49 percent ratio in favour of Zimbabweans. Zimbabwe's indigenisation policy was unpopular with global capital and potential foreign investors who were therefore reluctant to invest in the county as it was 'closed for business.' Foreign investors place importance on economic strength, economic performance, government's

attitude towards investors, government's policies towards foreign investment, the local business environment and policy consistency therefore repelling the Act is a demonstration of the goodwill of the regime to the international community and his embracing of free-market and neo-liberal economic policies.

Zimbabwe has taken steps to increase Foreign Direct Investment. The administration understands that it should model its economic relations in a manner which does not scare off and scare away investors as Zimbabwe is desperate for economic re-boost by attracting as many investors from all corners of the world. In order to win the hearts of the investors, the regime has to sell its opportunities available in Zimbabwe as such the new investments guidelines aim at showcasing a plethora of investment opportunities available for exploration in the Zimbabwe. As such the investment guidelines cover areas such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, information communication and technology and infrastructure development (Chidede, 2018). This policy gives credence to Mnangagwa's words that Zimbabwe is undergoing a progressive moment. Similarly, the policy is in sync with his call for the international community to embrace Zimbabwe as a newly progressive nation. The refrain that 'Zimbabwe is open for business' serves as an advertising mode and communication strategy of the new economic investment policy which is founded upon the best practices such as non-discrimination, effective protection of property, property rights, transparency and high standards of living. It can be argued that the administration understand the need for economic transparency in order to gain legitimacy as the international community was looking from 'the outside into the inside' of the new administration form of governance.

Additionally, the administration's foreign policy has placed a premium on the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). This is a strategy to encourage and promote investment in Zimbabwe and demonstrate that the era of international isolation is over. Through the establishment of SEZs, Zimbabwe aims at attracting FDI, promote value addition and benefit and increase exports by offering special incentives to qualifying investments. Mnangagwa's administration has stated that it will '...ensure the sanctity and security of your investment and shall honour to the letter, all agreements we enter into with you including, BIPPAS' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,2017). Critical in free-market economics is the issue of

property rights, these had become uncertain during Mugabe's tenure as land invasions and company seizures scared away investors as well as potential investors. The Zimbabwe is open to business mantra guarantees that the right to property shall be respected and that safety and security will be guaranteed. This is against the previous regime's investment climate which was characterised by lack of rule of law, poor protection of property, policies in conflict, policy inconsistencies, economic policy uncertainties without stability and poor policy coordination which resulted in the scaring of investors. Thus, it can be broadly observed that the administration realises the importance of synchronising its domestic policy with what it communicating in the international arena -particularly the investors which she is trying to woo.

The importance of bilateral ties in the international system cannot be underscored. Cognisant of the multi-polar global environment and Russia's global stature, Zimbabwe has moved to strengthen ties with Russia. The end of the Cold War witnessed the demise of the Soviet Union; the United States emerged as the world leader politically, economically, militarily and diplomatically. This was thought to be the era of the unipolar moment, however, Russia under Vladimir Putin has seen the resurgence of Russia challenging the unipolar dominance of the United States. Mnangagwa's foreign policy with respect to the great global powers requires a calibration and balancing of competing interests between and amongst the great powers. Sergey Lavrov the Russian Foreign Minister paid a visit to Zimbabwe; this was significant coming against the backdrop of the then US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited Africa. Zimbabwe and Russia signed agreements ranging from platinum exploration, agricultural as well as industrial revitalisation support, including special economic zones (Mules, 2018). For Zimbabwe, these bilateral agreements should translate to jobs, improving the economy and expanding the industrial base of the country. The Russians are eyeing a stake in Zimbabwe's minerals industry particularly platinum but for Zimbabwe, hopes are that strengthened ties will produce benefits for her in agriculture as food security will be improved, agricultural technology, military and defence cooperation (Chidza, 2018). Russia has been one of the countries which was steadfast in its 'defence' of Mugabe and used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block British and American proposals for decisive action to be taken against Zimbabwe. Russia has been a consistent supporter and has been unwavering in its support of

Zimbabwe; therefore Lavrov's visit and subsequent agreements were a case of consolidating relations between the two ensuring that Russia does not lose out in this neoliberal open for business era. From a Zimbabwean perspective, one would posit that strengthening ties with Russia which still wields power and influence in the international system provides Zimbabwe with a 'reliable' great power that she can turn to. This means that she is not beholden or dependent on the West and China but is able to count on one of the major players in the world. Zimbabwe is being realist and pragmatic, pursuing her goals whilst making a range and expanding her pool of allies.

The administration is mindful of the strategic and economic importance of maintaining congenial relations with China. China is a global power militarily, politically and economically. China's Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) has enabled China to expand her global footprint and visibility on the African continent. FOCAC has expanded and deepened China's economic, military and political relations with Africa and informs how China interacts with Africa. The administration is aware of this, aware of the power that China wields globally and is mindful of the importance of maintaining and consolidating relations with her. Interestingly, relations with China exist at a various levels such as party, state and military, one observes therefore that there is a convergence of the interests of the Communist Party with those of the administration at both state level and at party level. China is often referred to as Zimbabwe's 'all weather friend' and Mnangagwa has settled for continuity rather than change in his China policy. His main concern has been to access China's massive financial resources, modern technology in cyber security, artificial intelligence, security, as well as Chinese expertise in various fields. Military relations with China will continue thereby guaranteeing Zimbabwe's ability to defend itself militarily against any possible foreign intrusion. Strengthening ties with China is a policy designed to create jobs, export markets for Zimbabwean businesses and goods and ultimately reviving the economic fortunes of an ailing Zimbabwean economy. Without a shadow of doubt, one may confidently assert that the Mnangagwa administration will support the 'One China' policy; this will be a continuation in the tradition of Mugabe who was unwavering and steadfast in his belief in Chinese sovereignty and its 'One China' policy. With respect to the administration's China policy, conservatism triumphs as Mnangagwa has opted to maintain the status quo yet at the



same time seek to negotiate favourable terms for Zimbabwe. Publicly and symbolically supporting the ‘one China’ policy keeps Zimbabwe in China’s good books which guarantee various favours from her yet ensure that she is not a client state beholden to Beijing.

Zimbabwe seeks foreign policy independence and desires to maintain its sovereignty as a state. To this end therefore, the administration has been mindful of the need to diversify its repertoire and portfolio of allies. This is a break from the previous regime which appeared to forget the maxim and dictum so popular in international relations that ‘there are no permanent friends but permanent interests’ (Morgenthau, 1978) Zimbabwe has been proactive seeking ‘...new frontiers of cooperation...; beyond those with her traditional allies. An example of this is the investment by a Cypriot businesses entity which has invested in the mining sector. The project will include ‘a coal mine and power station to produce electricity for the smelter, and should employ 15,000 people when fully implemented’ (Dzirutwe, 2018). The strategic goal is twofold; at one level is the desire to create jobs for the local Zimbabwean population who are saddled by massive unemployment. Secondly, the administration seeks to wean Zimbabwe of being over-dependent on China, Russia as well as the West by finding alternative countries who can bring in new capital and investment injection into the country. Zimbabwe is mindful that China’s foreign policy may shift and gravitate towards kick starting the ‘One Belt One Road’ scheme which is reminiscent of the ‘Silk Road.’ It is prudent to have other allies and not be beholden to China only.

An over-dependence on either the West or China and Russia can have disastrous consequences for Zimbabwe as she would be trapped in the global matrices of great power politics thus becoming a client state which in effect would have lost its sovereignty. It is in this vein that Zimbabwe signed a cooperation deal with Qatar thereby expanding its repertoire of partners in the world. Doha has emerged as a major regional actor and player in The Gulf and Middle East and has a foreign policy that seeks to expand its influence not just in the region but in the globe. She is one of the richest states in the region as well as globally with the bulk of her wealth being derived from oil. In May 2018, Zimbabwe and Qatar signed a co-operation agreement designed to enhance bilateral and economic ties (Bwititi, 2018). This agreement seeks co-operation in energy, infrastructure and tourism, areas that are pivotal in Zimbabwe’s economic recovery.

Interestingly, Zimbabwe's policy in the Middle East involves support for Palestine a position shared by Qatar which also maintains cordial relations with Israel.

The integration of Africa is the centerpiece of Zimbabwe's policy towards the continent. This is in keeping in tradition to Zimbabwe's policy towards Africa which was well articulated by Mugabe. Here one notes both change and continuity coexisting in the new regime's articulation of foreign policy. Following his ascension to power, Mnangagwa's administration has carefully articulated Zimbabwean foreign policy in the direction which favours Zimbabwe's integration to the global community starting particularly in the African Continent. The administration seems to have abandoned what the former president Robert Mugabe and his regime stood for and advocated, despite Mugabe being one of the chief pan Africanist, the former president was careful not to involve Zimbabwe in projects which would threaten regime stability. Mnangagwa is keen to promote African Integration; this is demonstrated by his emphasis on the "Zimbabwe is open for business" mantra. The move by the President to sign the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) at the African Union Extra-ordinary summit highlights Zimbabwe new foreign policy dimension of opening borders in order to foster international cooperation and increase trade and investment within the African continent. It is important to observe that, signing the AFCFTA does not only signal Zimbabwe's commitment to the objectives of Africa Union rather it demonstrated a shift of Zimbabwe's economic policy which was largely protectionist by embracing liberal principles that will facilitate trade liberalisation and free market economy.

Also central to Mnangagwa's recent appendage of his signature to African Union Instruments was the need to legitimise the regime and assure the international community that Zimbabwe's time of closed door elections were over as Zimbabwe is now committed in holding free and fair elections. This was demonstrated by the president's signing the African Union Charter on the Conduct of Democratic Elections and guide lines. Mnangagwa's regime is cognisant of the fact that the international community is watching on how it will conduct its elections, as a result, free and fair elections will be used to measure Zimbabwe's progress towards democratisation and buttress its doctrine of Zimbabwe is open for business. In commenting on the Zimbabwean stance after the signing of the said declaration, the President had this to say:

*“The African Continental Free Trade Area has been launched today and out of 55 countries 44 have signed, then there was also the protocol of free movement of Africans in Africa and of the 44 out of 55 that signed, Zimbabwe is one of those that signed; then with relation to free movement of persons in Africa 43 countries signed and Zimbabwe is one of them, then there is the Kigali Declaration which means the AU members states are committing themselves to the AfCFTA even if they have not signed now, again we have signed that one and also went further and signed the agreement. Beyond that as Zimbabwe we have signed the AU Charter on the conduct of democratic elections and guidelines and lastly, we signed another protocol relating to the Pan African Parliament – most member states of the AU have done so and for some reason Zimbabwe had not done so. So we have put those things behind us and we are now a progressive member of the AU”* (The Staff Reporter, 2018)

Zimbabwe emerged from these meetings as a country committed to the full integration of the African continent where there is free movement of people, free movement of goods and services. One may submit that, since the ascension into power on the 24th of November 2017, Mnangagwa has embarked a progressive foreign policy with him (the president) being the chief articulator of the doctrine of ‘Zimbabwe is open for business.’

Regional cooperation has been one of the foreign policy principles informing the Mnangagwa administration. This is a continuation of the previous regime’s policy which placed a premium on African states co-operating with each other. Zimbabwe’s foreign policy has been packaged in a way that encourages cooperation of member states in the regions. The former president Robert Mugabe slacked in cooperation with other countries, especially those which were critical of Mugabe’s regime such as Botswana. President Mnangagwa has sought to mend this relationship and encourage cooperation on areas that will mutually benefit countries involved. The attempt at regional cooperation was the quick engagement of Botswana’s former President Ian Khama who was critical of the previous regime. The re-kindling of Zimbabwe-Botswana relations was crucial in crystallising the doctrine of ‘Zimbabwe is open for business.’ This cooperation resulted in the resumption of the Kazungula border post bridge construction project which was halted due to the frosty relations between Zimbabwe and Botswana (Moyo and Ndimande, 2018). Zimbabwe’s decision to agree and cooperate in the project showed that the new administration was doing

away with what the previous regime stood for. This is part of the move to ending Zimbabwe's isolation, Mnangagwa foreign re-engagement foreign policy requires not only to focus re-engaging the countries in the West but also regionally as Countries such as Botswana are keys in boost Zimbabwe's bilateral trade and investment.

Following the resignation of Robert Mugabe in a military-inspired takeover, the primary concern of the Mnangagwa regime has been the survival and legitimacy of the regime itself. This has necessitated engagement with regional powers such as South Africa which is the Southern African regional hegemon and economic powerhouse as well as Botswana where the regional Southern African Development Community (SADC) headquarters are housed. Regionally, he has visited South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana and Namibia. By paying visits to regional countries, Mnangagwa sought to garner support and legitimacy for the manner in which the transition from Robert Mugabe to himself was achieved. SADC as well as the African Union regard unconstitutional power transitions as illegal and frown upon them, they also subscribe to the notion that the military should stay out of politics and leave politics to civilians. The transition this instance was achieved with considerable assistance from the military which would in effect make it a soft military coup. In light of this and the legality of the transition, it has been important for Mnangagwa government to assuage SADC and the AU in order to gain legitimacy and sanitise his regime.

Mnangagwa has sought to replace Mugabeism with a pragmatic, co-operative and engaging foreign policy informed by constructive dialogue and engagement. Regionally she has cordial relations with her neighbours but is mindful of the security situation in Mozambique where Renamo rebels have from time to time threatened to destabilize the eastern border of Zimbabwe. She has also sought to strengthen relations with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through security cooperation and seeking a foothold in that country's vast mineral resources. One of the countries which Mnangagwa has visited has been the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In 1998, Zimbabwe sent troops to intervene and prop-up Laurent Kabila's regime which was under siege from foreign invasion sponsored by Rwanda and Uganda. It is estimated that she spent more than a billion United States dollars on that war (Mpofu, 2018). However, tensions bubble under in the relationship as Zimbabwe has reportedly been seeking compensation

amounting to close to a billion United States of America dollars for helping put down the Rwandese-Ugandan led invasion of the country in 1998.

Multilateralism is also at the heart of Zimbabwean foreign policy. She is a member of the African Union (AU), SADC, and the UN but in 2003 President Mugabe unilaterally withdrew Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth. The new regime is mindful of the globalised nature of the world and the importance of the Commonwealth. Of note is that Zimbabwe continues to subscribe and adhere to aspects of Mugabeism in foreign policy such as equality of all states, a multi-polar world, and respect for human rights, disarmament and a belief in international institutions. This is captured in the remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade who reiterated that ‘Zimbabwe strongly believes in multilateralism anchored in the founding principles of the United Nations (UN) Charter’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017). With regards the UN, Zimbabwe’s policy is similar to Mugabe’s where Zimbabwe’s position essentially challenges how power is distributed and configured within the global order as well as the hegemonic tendencies of the West in global governance issues. The clarion cry that the UN needs to reform is a position of Africa which was declared at the Ezulwini Consensus therefore Mnangagwa is demonstrating his solidarity with the continent and staying true to one of Zimbabwe’s foreign policy fundamentals with respect to the reform of multilateral institutions.

International peace and security is a public good that all states should work towards. Zimbabwe is committed to a just and positive peace where structural violence and direct violence is eliminated. In this regard, Zimbabwe pursues an activist foreign policy where she speaks out for peoples seeking statehood. Mnangagwa reiterated the position which was held by Mugabe that ‘Zimbabwe will continue to contribute to the international peace and security, urging for the granting of full statehood and freedoms to the Palestinian and Saharawi people’ (Mnangagwa, 2017). Zimbabwe’s position is that of full sovereignty and statehood for the Palestinian cause and Saharawis, the Palestine question runs against the grain of international politics as it is felt that a two-state solution is the way out. With regards the Palestine and Saharawi question, Zimbabwe seeks to project and promote its values that every nation needs its independence. It is also worth noting that despite her call for full statehood for the Palestinians she does have

strategic ties with Israel in the fields of security and military cooperation. As a state committed to peace and security, she continues to contribute troops and police towards peacekeeping operations although not as much as in the first decade of her independence.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, President Mnangagwa has sought to steer Zimbabwe towards a pragmatic foreign policy where she seeks new allies, maintains ties with traditional ones, re-engages those where relations were estranged and places a huge emphasis on economic relations. To be admitted and accepted by the international community, Zimbabwe is aware that she has to play by the rules of the globe, being open for business is one of these. The paper noted that, there has been some elements of continuity in Zimbabwe's foreign policy under Mnangagwa, hence Zimbabwe has sought to ensure to regulate the behavior of states so as to ensure that there is continuity which is informed by a number of factors such the historical factors like the liberation struggle, historical experience, norms and values defining being Zimbabwe. Be that as it may be, one notes that conservatism, change and continuity dominate the country's foreign policy. Despite a change in administration, Zimbabwe's foreign policy remains informed by regional integration, African integration, multilateralism as well as territorial sovereignty.

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