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Donald M. Payne (D-NJ), Chairman

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Testimony By

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Mr. Chairman:

Subcommittee Members:

Distinguished Guests:

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to appear before this august Subcommittee and before its distinguished Chairman, the Honorable Donald Payne. I have had the honor of working with Chairman Payne for the last twenty years or so on issues of importance to Africa and to U.S./African relations. From the seminal role he played in bringing to a close the Apartheid era in South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s, to his opposition to President Mobutu in the then-Zaire, to his support for the emerging democracies around the continent in the last decade, Chairman Payne has exhibited a unique and sustained commitment to Africa. It has been refreshing and constructive for those of us in the NGO and policy communities to have a Chair who has accumulated the experience and knowledge that is the hallmark of Chairman Payne, but, more importantly, who truly cares for Africa and its peoples.

I have been lucky enough to have been called upon to contribute from time-to-time some hopefully helpful guidance and insights from my 40 years of living and working in Africa as he and this Subcommittee have looked at ways to respond positively to the unfolding dramas around this magnificent continent. I welcome that opportunity again.

Today, as we look together at the situation in Zimbabwe and think about how we might play a constructive role in encouraging the transition to democracy, peace and stability in that troubled country, I must begin with a caveat about my level of knowledge. Although I was intimately involved in the early negotiations that led to an independent Zimbabwe as a U.S. diplomat in 1976-80, and have worked in subsequent years with that country in various other capacities, I have not visited Zimbabwe in almost 10 years. While I stay in close touch with colleagues who do visit, and have friends and contacts within Zimbabwe and in forced exile in South Africa, my reflections on the current situation, and the impact of the international sanctions regime, are, of necessity, second hand.

Therefore, having had a look at the scope and depth of the testimony that will follow mine from my distinguished colleagues, who will describe in detail the current state of play, the fragility of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) and the Transitional Inclusive Government, the human rights abuses, and the economic catastrophe that has beset this country, I think my best focus would be on some aspects of what the U.S. can most usefully do to make a difference and encourage the "renewal" of Zimbabwe that we all seek.

As I look at the historical sweep since an independent Zimbabwe emerged from the long war of liberation and subsequent peace negotiation that culminated in elections in 1980, I can remember that it seemed the very model for sustainable peace processes, heralding in an era of progressive economic, education and development policy, and an open, vibrant society that represented the best hopes of Africa emerging from minority rule. Yet to come were the transitions in Angola and South Africa, and Mozambique still had issues to work through after its 1975 independence from Portugal, but Zimbabwe stood out against all odds as the country that had gotten it right and gave hope to the other peoples of southern Africa that their aspirations could yet be fulfilled. It had become the "breadbasket" of Africa and a booming, progressive, exciting member of the global community

But, all was not as it seemed. I need not reiterate here the brutal campaigns against opposition that characterized the political landscape in Zimbabwe following the electoral success of ZANU-PF in 1980 to consolidate its power and eliminate rivals like Joshua Nkomo, Josiah Tongogara, Ndabagini Sithole and many others, whose lives were taken or were intimidated or bought into silence. ZANU-PF used a pretext of responding to criminals in the ZAPU heartland of Matabeleland for a January 1983 deployment of the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade of the army, called Gukurahundi - which in Shona means the "rain that washes away the chaff" - to engage in a series of massacres of Ndbele supporters of ZAPU that was unprecedented in Zimbabwe. Some, like current opposition party Senator Roy Bennett, deemed it "ethnic cleansing." Bennett, in a November 10, 2010, speech to the UK House of Commons and House of Lords, characterized the period and its impact as follows:

> *"The Gukurahundi has left a huge, festering wound in the Ndebele psyche; it hangs over Zimbabwe like a dark cloud. Not one of the architects of the Ndebele ethnic cleansing has been brought to justice—not a single one. Instead, many have been promoted for their loyalty to Mugabe and Zanu. The commander of the Fifth Brigade, Brigadier Perence Shiri, was later promoted to the head of the Zimbabwean Air Force. He now sits on the Joint Operations Command, a junta which effectively runs Zimbabwe to this day in spite of my party's victory in parliamentary elections of March 2008—a victory that was even grudgingly acknowledged by Mugabe."*

Through subsequent years, this pattern of intimidation and control has continued unabated. There were the now well-known farm takeovers and driving out of farm owners and farm workers. After the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change as an opposition party and its surprising success in 1999 in defeating Mugabe's draft constitution and winning a quarter of the parliamentary seats in the 2000 election, the regime began brutalizing of opposition party supporters and candidates. The most egregious single event was in 2005 in the townships of Harare, where over 700,000 people lost their livelihoods and had their homes demolished in mid-winter, during Operation Murambatsvina - a term that means "drive out the rubbish." This initiative was embarked upon in response to MDC's total control of the urban electorate and was meant to demolish MDC's urban support base and force destitute Zimbabweans to flee to neighboring

countries. This violence against opposition party supporters and candidates again characterized the 2008 elections, which were won by the MDC.

Through all of this, the international community, the United States in particular, has had limited options on how to respond. In fact, the situation has presented a real dilemma to policy makers. Part of that dilemma was created by the early support and excitement around Mugabe's ascension to the Presidency and the promise that his government held, as it offered free secondary education for all children, at first allowed opposition parties to contest elections and hold seats in government, worked with land owners and farmers to encourage production, supported a free market economy, manufacturing and mining, and moved Zimbabwe into a leading economic role in the region, and a seeming bastion of stability.

Subsequent behavior by Mugabe and his regimes, as they consolidated and perpetrated their hold on power, including eliminating opposition members, shackling a free press, and corrupting the democratic system, began to paint a different picture of who this man was, and what his true motivations were and are. Outside observers have been dismayed at the seeming transformation that occurred.

But, this early optimism from the international community makes the recent history of Zimbabwe, which is fraught with human rights violations, abrogation of democratic norms, corruption and mismanagement of an unimaginable proportion, all the more frustrating to policy makers the world over who watched Zimbabwe's birth and first years of existence with pride and hope. Recent years, as stated above and as will be developed by my fellow witnesses today, have dimmed the aura that once surrounded Mugabe and independent Zimbabwe.

The response of the international community has been the application of a number of sanctions against government officials, a redirecting of development aid through non-government channels, statements of strong condemnation for human rights abuses, encouragement of regional (SADC and Africa Union) peace initiatives, support for the GPA, a new constitution and free and fair elections, and a strong cooling of bilateral relations. At the same time, however, the international community has been and continues to be incredibly generous to Zimbabwe, particularly as it focuses on emergency food and relief supplies. Drawing from some statistics I received from Eddie Cross, an MDC official in Harare, foreign aid to Zimbabwe in the past

three years has hovered at about $800 million a year – 20 per cent of GDP in 2008 when donors provided food aid for over half the population and 10 per cent of GDP in the current year. Total foreign aid to Zimbabwe since 2000 (all of it in the form of grant aid) has in fact exceeded the total combined foreign aid received by Zimbabwe from independence in 1980 to the year 2000. In 2010, foreign aid has again exceeded $800 million – half of it being disbursed on humanitarian assistance in one form or another. International aid has started to fund the provision of social services very substantially - $200 million to health, over $100 million to education and $50 million to water and sanitation. Nearly 90 per cent of this has come from a group of States that call themselves the "Friends of Zimbabwe," a group started by Tony Blair in 2007, which includes the United States. The U.S. provides one third of all aid, the UK 14 per cent, and Germany and Norway about 7 per cent each. The UN Agencies are quite significant donors, but the bulk of their efforts are funded through bilateral donors – of which the Friends constitute the majority of contributors.

Despite major declines since 2000, including an almost 50% drop in the GDP, the economy has, in fact, shown signs of recovery in the last 2-3 years, not unrelated to the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in September 2008, and the subsequent formation of the Transitional Inclusive Government, more commonly referred to as the coalition government. The latest IMF report gives an estimate of GDP of $8 billion for 2011, up from $4.2 billion in 2008 (90 per cent in three years). Again, according to Mr. Cross, the industrial capacity utilisation is now just over 40 per cent compared to 10 per cent in 2008 and the mining industry has expanded significantly – mainly gold and platinum, although diamonds are emerging as a potential major contributor. The financial sector has recovered with deposits now standing at $2.4 billion and rising by about $80 million a month.

Although the implementation of the GPA has been painfully slow, accompanied by continuing incidents of human rights abuses, intimidation of opposition forces, and rampant corruption, the very fact that it exists, that MDC holds the Prime Minister's office and other significant Ministries, mostly focused on the economy and development, has given outside observers some room for optimism. With signs of recovery in the economy, continuing promises of cooperation among the parties to the Coalition Government to push through the actions called for by the GPA, and a new government in South Africa and dynamics in SADC that indicate an end of

their tolerance of the Mugabe regime, legislation has been offered in both the House and Senate that would seek to continue to apply pressure to the wayward regime and the individuals who have not committed to the GPA, while at the same time not exacerbating the damage to the fabric of the economy and the welfare of the people of Zimbabwe, and, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, fashioning a way to support a viable opposition and encourage a return to functioning democracy. The potential and hope for a nation naturally endowed with an industrious people, huge natural resources, and agricultural wealth, has created a dichotomy for policy makers as they try to encourage change but not further harm the people of Zimbabwe.

The intent of legislation offered by U.S. policymakers, and by other Western governments, as I read it, is to fully condemn the atrocities and depravations of the recent past, but to look for some thread of hope - some way to get around this government that turned so dramatically away from its people to focus only on perpetrating its own power and privilege – to find a way to help this long-suffering people in their recovery and transition back to democracy.

I would caution policy makers as they look at possible policy options to be certain that the "sticks" don't get lost among the "carrots," that the monitoring of performance on democracy and recovery be strict and comprehensive, and they do not allow the current government to use any lifting of sanctions, however targeted and whatever caveats are applied, as a propaganda victory. The ZANU-PF government has become adept at blaming the "illegal sanctions against Zimbabwe," as they call them, with holding back its economic recovery and inhibiting its industrial and agricultural sectors. It blames opposition party members for fomenting any violence or abuses against the population. In fact, it has been the clear policies and actions of ZANU-PF that have resulted in this situation, but they continue to live in denial, blaming everyone else, domestic and international, for the state of affairs in which Zimbabwe finds itself.

I know my colleagues will offer some concrete suggestions in their testimony on how U.S. policy and engagement might be shaped in the coming years. Legislation offered by this body and your colleagues in the Senate offer a number of possible avenues for positively impacting the transition. The support for youth employment; strengthening rule of law and human rights compliance; crucial development assistance in health care, agriculture, education, clean water, and land reform; and reconciliation and

democracy promotion are all necessary and I am glad that my government is including these elements in the options they are considering.

However, let me add one further thought on one specific aspect of the renewal that is to come. Based on my own experience in other conflict and post-conflict countries in Africa, as well as conversations I have had with Zimbabweans currently engaged in pushing for recovery, I would like to underline an important and often overlooked element in dealing with conflicted societies. Any country emerging from conflict has several common imperatives. They are intuitive, but almost always ignored. Trust has been broken and the antagonists to the conflict do not have a sense of interdependence or shared interests. Relationships are torn asunder. Communications are characterized by posturing and accusations. The key stakeholders do not listen to each other and discourse is confrontational. Finally, there is no agreement on how power is to be shared and decisions made. In short, there is no common vision or sense of common identity.

There are tried and tested ways in which antagonists can be brought together to address these issues, rebuild the trust, and form collaborative relationships that allow them to solve problems together and move forward while still taking into account the interests of all. Sometimes this approach is listed as reconciliation or conflict resolution, but it is really transformation, changing the way in which people compete, how they think about and interact with each other. At a level were insidious and self-serving interests seem dominant, where the outside world can see no "political will" from the opposing parties to reach out to each other, this job can be very difficult. But, my Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center has been pioneering this methodology over the last 8 years in Burundi, the DRC and Liberia, with increasing levels of success and the formation of networks of committed leaders to work together for a common future. These are ideas that I have explored with colleagues at IDAZIM in Johannesburg and Search for Common Ground in Harare, and we are exploring how best this approach might be used to assist in the transition in Zimbabwe.

The points of entry might differ, and one might have to start at local or community levels. Civil society along with political power brokers must be included. But it must be a part of any renewal effort, in tandem with or even precede the setting in place of institutional frameworks and processes, such as elections. Without trust, without a shared vision, without a sense of interdependence and a willingness to collaborate, the agendas of democratic

governance, development, reconciliation and recovery cannot go forward. I am pleased to see that bills now under consideration address this element by providing support for reconciliation efforts, strengthening local governments and encouraging peace building process. I hope this remains central to any role the U.S. decides to play.

Thank you.