Zimbabwe Ambassador: Africa Shows How Globalization Equals Imperialism

Dr. Machivenyika J. Mapuranga is the Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the United States. He was a guest on The LaRouche Show, an Internet radio program, on March 3. The show airs on Saturdays from 3:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time, at www.larouchepub.com. The host was Marcia Merry Baker, and interviewers were Larry Freeman of EIR*, and Paul Mourino and Summer Shields of the LaRouche Youth Movement. The following transcript is slightly abridged.*

Freeman: I'm very glad to have my friend Dr. Mapuranga on this show. You're the first ambassador to appear on The LaRouche Show, so you may start a new trend in our coverage here in the United States, and around the world.

Mr. Ambassador, the American public is fairly ignorant of history in general, even our own, but they really have very, very little understanding of the history of the formation of African nations, and their fight against imperialism. Zimbabwe is the youngest, or maybe the second-youngest nation in Africa, having achieved its independence in 1980, and I was wondering if you could give our listeners a history of its intense struggle against the colonialist force.

Dr. Mapuranga: Yes. Thank you very much for this invitation to participate in this program. And I am flattered that I'm the first ambassador to participate in this very important forum.

Now, concerning Zimbabwe: It used to be called Rhodesia, because it was colonized by Cecil John Rhodes, a man who used to be the Prime Minister in the Cape province of South Africa. And he's the one who organized an army to invade Zimbabwe, and conquer it, so that it became part of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Empire.

Zimbabwe, or Rhodesia, then, was in a unique position, largely because of the known mineral resources, as well as the very temperate climate. If you go through the public record office at Kew Gardens in London, where the Colonial Office papers are kept, you see that Rhodesia and South Africa are referred to as "white man's country." The term referred to the white highlands of Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

That colonial policy of "white man's country," actually rested on two pillars, the first one being what you might call demographic change, meaning that the white authorities had as their major agenda, to redress the population ratio between the indigenous folks, and the incoming white settlers. In the case of Zimbabwe, for example, in 1894, the British South Africa Company, which was administering that territory, reported that for every one white man, there were 19,000 natives. But by the time that we had the peak of white settlement, during the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which was comprised of what is now Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, that ratio had been altered to 1:13. From 1:19,000, to 1:13! And in the case of South Africa, when the Dutch East India Company first arrived, they were reporting that the ratio between them and the natives was something like 1 white man, to 27,000 natives. But, as we speak now, the ratio is 1:10.

In all these countries that were labelled "white man's country," that was part of the policy: to reduce the population ratio between the whites and the natives.

Land Distribution

The second pillar of that policy was land-alienation. In all these countries, there was a deliberate policy to alienate vast tracts of land for settlement by the white immigrants, and the native population was herded—in Zimbabwe there were "native reserves"; in South Africa, they were called bantustans. By the time that we in Zimbabwe gained our independence, in 1980, 75% of our arable land was in white hands, and the indigenous folks had only 25% of the land.

This week, we will be celebrating the independence of Ghana, the first country to win independence south of the Sahara. In all these countries, it did not take an armed struggle. There were just negotiations, and maybe after a few demonstrations, and strikes, and so forth, they were granted their independence. Except, of course, in the case of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau. These were Portuguese colonies, but Portugal was saying, "They are not colonies—this is Portugal, overseas, and therefore inseparable from Portugal." And so the people of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau were forced to embark on a protracted armed struggle, before they won their liberation.

Now, in the case of Zimbabwe, the leader of the white

population there, a gentleman known as Ian Smith, had sworn that there would be no democracy in Zimbabwe for 1,000 years, and this is why—because there were no democratic avenues for achievement of our human rights—the Africans had to form a liberation army, and win their independence after 14 years of bitter struggle.

So, basically, that is the situation that confronted the first democratically elected government, in 1980, and these were elections organized and supervised by the British governor there. The British had restored their sovereignty over the territory, because the settler population had rebelled against the British Crown, since the British were insisting that the franchise had to be extended to the natives, and there was resistance, and therefore, they [the white settler population] declared independence unilaterally, in 1965, to ward off any possibility of a democratic dispensation.

At the end of the war [for independence, in 1980], there was a peace conference at Lancaster House in London. There had been a deadlock over the question of land—the African nationalists were saying, "No, we cannot *buy* land from the white farmers, to distribute to landless blacks, because the land had not been bought in the first place from our ancestors. It was merely grabbed, as booty, conquered booty." So at the end of the conference, the then-Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher of the Conservative Party, promised that the British government would help fund a land-reform program, to ensure a more equitable redistribution of land. And indeed, Thatcher put some funds into the project, to kick-start it, but as you probably know, in 1995, the Conservative Party was booted out of office, and Tony Blair and the "New" Labour Party came in. And the sad part of it was that a letter was written to the government of Zimbabwe, to say that the New Labour Party is not beholden to the promises made by the Conservative Party; and the British government stopped funding the land reform program, and the government in Harare in Zimbabwe was constrained to [ask] Parliament to pass enabling legislation, to empower the government to procure land for redistribution to the landless.

Freeman: Yes, I want to follow up with that. But I would add to your earlier comments, that Cecil Rhodes is identified as the number one staunchest supporter of the British Empire, for example, by Carroll Quigley in his book *The Anglo-American Establishment.* So, you'd only be able to describe the people around Cecil Rhodes as the most hard-core imperialists, and that is who President [Robert] Mugabe, and the Zimbabwean people, were essentially fighting against, for 14 or 15 years of very intense guerrilla warfare.

On this question of the land, it was in 2000, that President Mugabe started to redress this land injustice, because I believe you had something like 4,500 white, British Rhodesian farmers controlling 70% of the prime agricultural land. And this was supposed to be, as you said, after the Lancaster House meeting, turned over to about 12 million black Zimbabweans.

But it wasn't. So, President Mugabe started to take the land, and give it back to the people, and this caused one of the biggest confrontations that Zimbabwe had with the world. A lot of attacks on President Mugabe came from this.

Could you describe to us how this came about, and how the distribution took place?

Dr. Mapuranga: Yes. As I was saying, the enabling legislation was passed, the Land Appropriation Act, and even the Constitution had to be amended to enable the government to appropriate land legally for redistribution, in order to redress this imbalance inherited from the colonial regime.

But here I wish to say that when that happened, that was really 20 years after independence, because for the first ten years, the government's hands were tied. The Lancaster House agreement stipulated that in order to maintain the "confidence" of the white farmers, who were the bastion of the agro-based economy of the country, that there should be no forcible land appropriations for the first ten years. This was called an "entrenched clause" in the Constitution. The other "entrenched clause" being that, for ten years, there had to be 20 seats reserved for the white population in the Parliament. These would not be subject to contest by the indigenous population. Again, it was meant as a "confidence-building" measure.

But after the ten years had elapsed, still there was no progress on the front of land reform, because the principle that had been agreed to, and the government was meticulously following the agreement, was that of willing seller and willing buyer, meaning that the government was precluded from seizing land. The market forces should play out in this area: If there were willing sellers, and willing buyers, this imbalance would be redressed with the passage of time.

So, another 15, almost 20 years passed, and very little progress was made, using the principle of "willing seller, willing buyer." Incidentally, this was also the principle that was enshrined in the resolution of the Namibia problem. When Namibia gained its independence in 1990, they also adopted that principle, and recently the government of Namibia has declared that this principle has failed to redress this imbalance in land ownership, and the government has now started to appropriate land, through the passage of laws. And South Africa also has just discovered that the "willing seller, willing buyer" principle does not work, and last year, the government made its first appropriation of a white farm for redistribution to the landless.

The Effect of Sanctions

But when this started, and we started to seize land for redistribution, we earned the wrath of the British government, and they persuaded their allies, including the United States, to impose sanctions on the Zimbabwean government. These sanctions are in two parts: First, there is an executive order which was passed by the President here, which lists Zimbabwean leaders who are barred from entering the United States. And we have a similar list of leaders who cannot go into the European Union.

But that one does not really hurt. What really hurts is the second part of the sanctions package, and I'm referring, in the case of the United States, to the 2001 Act by Congress which instructed the Secretary of the Treasury to instruct all American executive directors of the Bretton Woods institutions—i.e., the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund [IMF]—wherever they may be, even in the private sector, to bar Zimbabwean access to capital, to credit, and to oppose any debt relief measures being extended to Zimbabwe. This has really had a very adverse effect on the Zimbabwean economy.

Without the imprimatur of the IMF, you cannot raise any loans abroad, especially in the Western world. And so, Zimbabwe, since 2001, has been completely starved of foreign credit, and this has impinged adversely on the economy. The economy right now is in the doldrums, and we would want the people of the United States to ask Congress to reconsider. Because this is a blunt instrument, which is affecting the children, the women, everybody in Zimbabwe, in terms of a shrinking economy. People are not able to find employment. And I'm told we have the highest inflationary rate at the moment.

That just goes to show that when you have an economy which is deeply embedded in the old imperial economy, it is very vulnerable. In the case of Zimbabwe, it has been proven beyond doubt that what Marcia [Baker] was talking about—imperialism being equal to globalization—this is a classic case of a Third World country, inheriting an economy that was fashioned by the imperial power, and is an integral part of that of the imperial power, and is unable to extricate itself from that, and therefore being in a very vulnerable situation indeed.

British imperialist Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) strides the continent, "from the Cape to Cairo." Rhodesia was named after him. Later reduced in size, Rhodesia was named Zimbabwe when majority rule was attained.

Mourino: I'd like to let you know we've been studying the question of the Anglo-American establishment as a historical phenomenon. Most people in our generation don't recognize who the British really are, or what they have done. When people think of Cecil Rhodes, they think of this great scholarship [the Rhodes scholarship] that you could get if you are the right person, in the right place.

We are revisiting that material now around him, because these particular political networks are now showing up as major backers behind the return of Al Gore. Could you speak a little bit about this character's role in Africa?

Dr. Mapuranga: Yes. Cecil John Rhodes was an invalid who could not stand the cold clime, the weather, of Britain, and he migrated to South Africa, where the climate was warm, and got involved in the mining. He formed the British South Africa Company, and got involved in the mining of diamonds, in Kimberley and other places. And in no time at all, he had become the richest and therefore, the most

powerful man in South Africa. He even became the Prime Minister of the largest state there, what was known then as the Cape province.

He said that the greatest thing that could happen to anybody in the world, was to have been born British. And he said his life ambition was to spread Her Majesty's domains, from Cape to Cairo—that's the phrase he used. "From Cape to Cairo." And South Africa hadn't been secured for the British. He organized an invasion force—he called it the Pioneer Column—which crossed the Limpopo River, which was then the border of South Africa, to invade the lands to the north. He managed the British Empire up to what is now known as Zimbabwe, and Zambia, across the Zambesi River, and Malawi, which he called Nyasaland. So, Southern Rhodesia, that is Zimbabwe, Northern Rhodesia—which is Zambia now—and Nyasaland. Eventually these three territories formed what was known as the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

And just six years after the invasion and occupation of Zimbabwe, there was a nationwide insurgency, and he personally came to supervise the war against the insurgency. He managed to talk with some of the tribal chiefs, and leaders, and eventually, the insurgency was defeated. And he wrote in his testament that he would want to be buried in this magnificent land, which was named after him, Rhodesia. And to this day, his tomb is there, at the great Motopo Hills. He called it the "world's view." He said, there's no place that is as beautiful as this in the entire world, and I want to be buried here. And he was indeed buried there.

And even after independence, we elected to respect his wishes. We do not commit what amounts to sacrilege—we let the dead sleep in total rest. So, even as we speak now, Cecil John Rhodes is buried in Zimbabwe. . . .

Globalization and Imperialism

Shields: Dr. Mapuranga, most university students would find it shocking, that, with the liberation of these African nations, nearly at the end of the 20th Century, you would have a continuation of the same type of imperial policies that ravished much of the planet, especially centered in Britain—that you would have a continuation of that today, in the guise of globalization. In your own opinion, *is* globalization a continuation of this same sort of policy?

I also wanted to bring up the case of both Bush and Cheney, and the obvious subversion of the political atmosphere, which you may or may not comment on, and secondly, the case of Al Gore, and the promotion of the global warming as an intended goal of deindustrialization of a planet, which is already deindustrialized.

Dr. Mapuranga: Zimbabwe's experience is indeed the African experience. I know that globalization is being used to denote this process that has been happening in maybe in the last 10-15 years, as a result of the enormous advances that have been made in transport and communications, the Internet and so forth; but one could indeed say, as an African, that when you consider the fact that my country, Zimbabwe, had never had any what you might call relations with Europe, since Cecil John Rhodes came, one would say that being integrated into the British Empire—and losing one's sovereignty—would classify that kind of action as possibly a globalization process.

I know that this argument has been made, even with respect to the discovery of the New World, and its integration into part of the British Empire, the Spanish Empire, and the Portuguese Empire, and that these territories, which had their own civilizations, in their own rights, have now become part of the European world—that also has, in some cases, been referred to as the origins of globalization.

But in the case of Africa, I would say that, yes, indeed, after independence, Africans did discover that their economies were appendages of the economies of their imperial masters. The Mozambiqan economy, the Angolan economy, discovered that at the time of independence, they were just adjuncts, or appendages, of the Portuguese economy, and they were also part of the multinational, or transnational, corporation domain of power, and influence. And therefore, that the concept of national sovereignty, was really circumscribed by the fact that, economically, even though they now had their own flag, and national anthem, economically they found themselves still dependent on their former colonial masters.

Largely, because we are talking of pre-industrial economies here, economies that were fashioned to provide raw materials, and primary products, to feed the industries in the metropolitan, or imperial, countries. So, to this day—and I'm talking of Africa south of the Sahara, and that I know very well—we're talking of a whole subcontinent that is still in its pre-industrial phase. We still have to go through an industrial revolution! And what is happening now, with this thrust for globalization and liberalization, is that we have very weak economies here that are entirely based on agriculture, with very little, and in some countries, no industry at all, and the traditional role is still continuing—that of providing cheap material for the factories, and industries, of Europe, and maybe North America. It is quite easy to see that globalization here tends to solidify this situation of economic subservience and dependency.

Because, you cannot have equality, and competition, between industrialized giants, and agricultural, peasant economies.

I had not looked at Al Gore as an advocate of deindustrialization. I would have thought that those who make the final decisions, particularly in the World Trade Organization—and I'm thinking here of the Doha Round and so forth—they would take cognizance of the fact that those countries that are still trading in primary commodities, in raw materials, without any value added to them, because they are in a pre-industrial age, that they would be given special consideration to allow them to industrialize, even using the traditional forms of en-

ergy that are being blamed for the greenhouse effect, and therefore, for global warming. But if there's not going to be any special consideration given to these countries, then it is unfair. Because how are they going to industrialize?

It's like someone who has already industrialized, saying, "Please, you cannot use these traditional forms of fuel, because they are polluting the atmosphere. You have to look for other forms of fuel for your industrialization." I think that is basically unfair.

There has to be a special understanding, or dispensation there. This is what I wanted to say in my initial reaction to the question posed.

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Farm workers' quarters on one of the largest commercial farms in Zimbabwe, 2001. There is no electricity or running water. The sanctions against Zimbabwe, cutting off credit and opposing any debt relief, have "really had a very adverse effect on the Zimbabwean economy," the Ambassador said.

IMF Austerity Demands Rejected

Freeman: You touched on this question of the role of these global financial institutions, including the IMF. The IMF tried to force the Zimbabwe economy, I believe, to accept economic structural adjustment programs in 1990, which was a mere ten years after independence, and this was a policy for the trade liberalization, globalization, attempted privatization of state industry. By the end of the 1990s, the Zimbabwe government refused to carry out this structural adjustment program, and was, as the ambassador said, severely penalized, with a shortage of credit, and complete isolation. Could you tell us a little bit about how these global financial institutions can destroy and isolate an economy? That, I think, is part of this globalization policy today.

Dr. Mapuranga: Yes. The unfortunate thing about the IMF is that they seem to believe that they have the panacea to the economic woes of the developing countries. The IMF seems to have just one prescription for whatever the disease may be. Basically, the major element in an IMF structural adjustment program is that the government must cut down on expenditure, in the social sphere—education, health, and housing, and so forth, in order to reduce government expenditure, and therefore to be able to service debt, and hopefully have whatever is left over for reinvestment for economic growth.

But, the problem is that Africa is the most backward in terms of education, health, housing, and other social services, and the economists of development have emphasized the importance of the human factor in development. If you do not have an educated and healthy population, it's not easy to undertake national development at all. In Zimbabwe, for a long time we ignored the dictates of the IMF, and we spent a lot on education and health, to the extent that Zimbabwe today, with 91% literacy, has the highest literacy rate in Africa. I want you to check that out with the UNESCO and the UNDP. At the time of independence, we had only one university; we now have 13 universities, within two decades. There is tremendous expansion even in primary and tertiary education as well.

But where does this lead us? You, Mr. Freeman, referred to the Zimbabwean dealings with the IMF, because it was only last year that Zimbabwe paid all that it owed the IMF, under the General Resources Account. Zimbabwe does not owe a single dollar now under this General Resources Account; but we still owe money under a different account, I think it is called the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility—we still owe there something to the tune of $120 million. But the point is that this matter has been politicized. And this is where people have been accusing the IMF, and to some extent the World Bank, of having become political tools for those that have the controlling vote in those institutions.

Because as it happened last year—and I personally was there in the meeting—all the governors, except those from Britain and the United States, voted to say that Zimbabwe had acquitted itself of the original cause that led to the suspension of its voting rights in the IMF, and therefore, there was a recommendation by the managing director of the IMF and his staff, that Zimbabwe should get back its rights. But this was vetoed by the governor from the United States, and the governor from the United Kingdom. A few other governors from Europe abstained. But the vast majority voted in favor of the restoration of voting rights.

But in the IMF you have a weighted voting system. Not every country's vote has the same weight, as is the case in the General Assembly of the United Nations. There, it's one country, one vote. But in the IMF, there are the "Big Boys": If you take the United States, for example, the governor's vote is worth that of maybe seven or eight countries. So, because of that, that recommendation to restore Zimbabwe's voting rights was stymied, or vetoed.

The point now, is that the IMF is not just doing what it was traditionally meant to do: in other words, to give budgetary support to those who need it. They have waded into the area of policy. They actually dictate now to the recipients, or applicants for loans, what policies they should pursue, what economic policies they should pursue, and of course, one of them being to open up, to liberalize, and you can see that when you have a country that is trying to create rudimentary industry, a country that is in incipient industrialization, you open up, and your young industry is not protected from competition from the already industrialized, that really leads to deindustrialization.

And unfortunately, this is what is happening in Africa now. The little industry that has emerged is under threat of total dismantlement, as a result of liberalization, and globalization, and the doctrine that is preached by the IMF.

What Role for the Commonwealth?

Mourino: I guess you'd say we, as Americans, are dealing with a double-edged problem. We're trying to reindustrialize our own domestic economy, while at the same time making a foreign policy that corresponds to that perspective for us and our neighbors. And in the recent period, we're running into a problem, especially on the campuses, in really understanding globalization, but even more specifically, the role that the Commonwealth plays in global, political international affairs. And also, how this overlaps with certain British educational systems. Because a lot of the people that carry out the policy of globalization, or deindustrialization, tend to come out of some of these specific British educational institutions, like the London School of Economics.

So, I wonder if you could give us a perspective on how you deal with this from Zimbabwe, and that way, in our organizing, we can have a fresh idea of what we're looking at.

Dr. Mapuranga: Yes. Well, the Commonwealth really used to be the British Empire, and at one point it was called the British Commonwealth, until the emergence of republics in Africa. They started to question why they should continue to be referred to as part of the British Commonwealth, when in fact they had their own national anthems, their own flags, presumably their own sovereignty. So the "British" was dropped. It's now just referred to as "the Commonwealth."

Originally, the mother of the Commonwealth—that is Great Britain, the United Kingdom—used to use the Commonwealth to give economic assistance to members of the Commonwealth, but I was surprised when I attended the last meeting of the Commonwealth in Brisbane, in 2002. They have now changed the remit, or the mandate, of the Commonwealth. There's very little by way of economic assistance now. They are now using what they call the principle of comparative advantage, they are saying that matters pertaining to economic and financial assistance, should be referred to the Bretton Woods institutions, and the Commonwealth must do what it does best, or "better," and that is to ensure that there is democracy, human rights, the rule of law, in the countries that are members of the Commonwealth.

There's nothing wrong with that, because all the members agreed to that document—it is called the Harare Declaration—setting out the political values that the Commonwealth members have to uphold. And they all agreed, in their sovereignty. But in practice, it seems as though that document from time to time is actually used to advance the political interests of the United Kingdom! And it has also been demonstrated that, even in cases where there is blatant transgression of the values of that document—for example, when an elected government in Pakistan was overthrown by a military leader, Gen. Pervez Musharraf—the British government was expected [by the rest of the Commonwealth] to react with an imposition of sanctions, and expulsion, and so forth. And that didn't happen.

To this day, the government in Pakistan is regarded as a great ally in the war against terror by Britain and the United States, even though there is no democracy there. So, some Commonwealth counties, particularly those in Africa, were beginning to question this as a manifestation of double standards.

So, the Commonwealth really has very little now, by way of economic and political solidarity. Countries vote at the United Nations according to their own dictates, not as a Commonwealth bloc. The safeguarding of the English language appears to be the major concern now of the Commonwealth, in the same sense that the French have what they called *Francophonie,* to maintain the heritage of the French colonial language in Africa, and elsewhere in the world.

But I don't think myself that the Commonwealth now is really a force to reckon with, in world politics, particularly in terms of voting patterns at the United Nations or elswhere.

Freeman: Do you have a statement you'd like to make to the American people, since your country has been so much vilified by the press, for standing up for its own sovereignty?

Dr. Mapuranga: Yes, I would like to say that in my travels in the United States, I see that there is a vast reservoir of goodwill from the people of the United States, for Africa, and for my country. The only problem is with Capitol Hill, and the White House. I hope the Americans can persuade their legislators and their leaders that a small country in Africa called Zimbabwe is not a threat to the United States of America, not at all, and does not deserve these sanctions that were imposed to redress a colonial inheritance, particularly in the form of the land apportionment in that country.