

Zimbabwe's Foreign Policy in Southern Africa, 1980-2013

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Abstract : Soon after independence on 18th April 1980, Zimbabwe's foreign policy was shaped by the realities on the ground, which saw the country managing a sound relationship with both the Capitalist West and the Communist Eastern blocs. The post-independence foreign policy was therefore premised on security concerns illuminated by the Cold War era. This was one the reasons President Robert Mugabe adopted a policy of reconciliation and this earned his government recognition on the international platform. However, in Southern Africa apartheid South Africa was still the vanguard of capitalism and oppression such that she posed a serious threat to the newly born Zimbabwean nation which necessitated that Zimbabwe position herself both in the region and the continent to counter potential internal stability from within. Irrespective of how the international community viewed the country's foreign policy Zimbabwe has continued to influence regional, continental and world geopolitics, especially on behalf of the developing nations. This raises a question why as a result of its foreign policy the country is now regarded a pariah state, especially some Western countries which used to applaud its political economic policies immediately after independence. Therefore, this study argues that the political economy of Zimbabwe had a far-reaching bearing on its foreign policy. For this reason, the problem necessitates the investigation of Zimbabwe's foreign policy perspectives in Southern Africa since the turn of the 1990s. Two main theories which are Realism, Afro-centrism inform the study as an attempt to understand Zimbabwe's foreign policy paradigm shift and perhaps provide answers to the objectives raised. The research therefore employs a qualitative approach where the conceptual nature of the study into the foreign policy of Zimbabwe is largely desktop research. However, the nature of the study will also require that oral interviews are conducted to substantiate some of the arguments advanced.

Keywords : cold war set up, foreign policy, look east policy, pan-africanism, post 2000 period, Southern Africa, Zimbabwe

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