

WHAT DOES THE BIDEN PRESIDENCY MEAN FOR USA-ZIMBABWE RELATIONS?

so
good evening for those of you this part
of the world
and good morning good afternoon
to the rest of our viewers across the
globe
and welcome to this the first in 2021
the surplus trust policy dialogue forum
on zoom
with a very successful program last year
one of the benefits of this pandemic
that
has turned us into this new and amazing
technology zoom
we've been having fantastic
conversations
with 14 sessions last year
hundreds on zoom
thousands on facebook and youtube and
right now we're live streaming
we continue from where we left last year
but on this occasion we chose
the historic events in the us
the departure of one
called trump and
the arrival of biden
as one newspaper put it today and
breathe the world exhales
as the madness of the trump era ends
and scanning the news this morning
there's almost virtual universal
acknowledgement even from
the conservative media
that indeed the trump era
was something else and the the
the and most of us watched the
inauguration last night yesterday
one couldn't feel that the world as a
whole
is gripped with infectious
optimism at least that

the madness is over that the us
can get back to the way of the world in
terms
of the traditional
and indeed historic role just played
as like them or not as an important
factor
in global affairs
so as i said in our concept note
this was more than just a coincidence it
isn't important
that we look at the zimbabwe situation
uh as we
celebrate either the departure of trump
and or the arrival of biden
and then for us today is to look at the
implications
for u.s policy in africa a policy which
traditionally
has been characterized especially in the
70s and 80s by the backdrop of the cold
war
and generally by economic factors
and strategic interests of the us in
this
on this continent thirdly
we won't look at the backdrop of the
legacy of us
zimbabwe relations over the last two
decades
in particular the data and
what is the likely trajectory
and possibilities obvious leverage
towards a settlement in zimbabwe
and it is about the zimbabwe situation
that is our main focus
in the context of this discussion we
want to argue
as we have throughout last year that
there is
a crisis in zimbabwe a political
and economic crisis a crisis which
the current regime
is unable incapable of resolving

neither politically nor economically
and and therefore
the discussion about finding a
settlement
on the base of which zimbabwe can be
be engaged with the rest of the world
but more important to be able to embark
on the return to concessionism and rule
of law
and indeed get rid
of this menace which is
truly a menace the secret
secrecy which
makes zimbabwe stand out as the odd man
out
in the region it's only in zimbabwe
that you have the military so obtrusive
so dominant in almost every part
section of society and it is an
abnormality that we wish
to have redressed by return to
positionism
rule of law and
back to democratic ways
of doing things so today we have
five panelists to help us and i'm going
to ask
nicole to
focus on them as i introduce them
the first is todd moss
todd moss from the u.s and former u.s
deputy assistant secretary of state for
african affairs
we've had him on this program before
and we brought him back by design
because of his familiarity with the
african affairs
having held that post but also todd
is a student of zimbabwean politics
i met him as a very young man in the 90s
when he was doing his phd
and he's always a pleasure
to listen to todd moss
welcome todd

an expert on military and peace and
security affairs
is a country based in durban at accord
but he is also a regular thus
thirdly i have sarah dorman
apologist sarah for the wrong spelling
is s-a-r-a-s-a-r-a-h
my technical people hello sarah
professor of politics and international
relations university of edinburgh
canadian by origin
but also one very familiar with the
zimbabwe situation i met her
some years ago at h surpass
and we have she's highly recommended
by our fellow zimbabweans in the
academic circles in
in the uk then we have ray
hartley hello ray
ray
ray yes hi ray
ray hartley research director at the
brand first
foundation and of course some of us have
read your
articles daily maverick here and there
and therefore you're not here by
accident
we welcome you only okay
and then last but not least gilbert
carigala
my kenyan brother professor of
international relations
and director of the afghan center for
the study of u.s
policy in africa at vids
these are the people assist us to unpack
this topic
so todd it's yours it's your turn
great thank you uh thank you professor
great to be with you again great to see
you and thank you for keeping
uh this dialogue going on on the future
of zimbabwe and

uh trying to help help such an
amazing country dig out of a really
unbelievable
uh hole that uh that it's stuck in
um so i think this is a great question
what does
the arrival of president biden mean for
the relations between zimbabwe and the
united states
the short answer is that we should
expect
a lot of continuity and
if any change is likely in the near term
it's likely to be even more skepticism
and potentially even tighter pressure on
the regime from
the united states and i'll give you some
reasons why
uh why i think that's the case and what
that means for
usm relations going forward
before before i do just a little bit of
context here
which is that obviously the new regime
the new
government in washington the biden
administration is going to want
to signal some pretty important
differences to the world
from the previous administration
we'll see a general return to
multilateralism for example the
you know one of the very first things
president biden did is re-enter the
paris
agreement uh we're likely to see much
more
international engagement uh with allies
around the world
and i think there's going to be a quite
a long period of the united states
having to
deliberately rebuild relationships and
restore

respect for the united states
around the world and that is going to be
a period of some humility
hopefully
but it's not gonna mean what i think
some zimbabweans
expect it to me and i'll come to what i
mean by that
a second piece of context is that
obviously the united states has a long
history of very close relations with the
with the
uh zimbabwean people and with the
government of zimbabwe
we have a you know a very large
new embassy the embassy staff is very
active we've got a very robust
usaid mission i would expect
none of that uh to change um
i would still expect us to have a robust
diplomatic and development
presence in in the country um of course
uh zadara the zimbabwe democracy and
economic recovery act
um helps to frame the us approach to
zimbabwe
this was passed way back in 2001
and it was updated just before the 2018
election
there's a lot of misinformation about
what is in
zadara and what it means in zimbabwe i
would urge
people to read it it's like
four pages and it's very plain you can
see exactly what it is and what it's not
um including the the updates and of
course we also
the united states government does have a
targeted sanctions program that it's had
for
quite a long time um including um
um monongagua on the on that sanctions
list

that list uh evolves over time
um there are people on and off i think
when i last looked it's about
70 individuals and about 70 companies
something in that
in that area but again
have a look that list of those people is
on the us treasury website
google will help you find both zadera
and the list
of uh of sanctioned individuals on the
u.s treasury site
um i'd say also there was a lot of
expectation i think in zimbabwe
that a lobbying effort uh
directed at the trump administration uh
for re-engagement was going to bear a
lot of fruit
and that re-engagement was going to
be completely different with the trump
administration
i actually thought the approach of the
of the zimbabwean government to try to
talk to donald trump about golf courses
was actually a good idea
and it had a chance of at least getting
in the door and
getting some attention on zimbabwe
but obviously that was a total failure
and in fact paying pr
firms by the foreign ministry to promote
a false front opposition to
have a foreign ministry paid lobbyist
arrange
meetings for supposed opposition leaders
in washington dc that was
utterly counterproductive um and
you know the foreign ministry paying to
organize events for a false flag
opposition
absolutely had the opposite effect that
i think it was
intended um
now under trump under donald trump there

might have been an
uh an opportunity to go around the
professional diplomats and appeal
directly
to the president to change course on
zimbabwe
that that was uh i think an opportunity
that the zimbabwean government had that
approach will not
possibly work under biden those pr firms
that are being paid to help
make that happen are complete and utter
waste of money
um uh so i would not expect any of those
approaches to
to bear any fruit um under the biden
administration
and of course for context the
backsliding in zimbabwe itself where the
conditions seem to have gotten worse not
better
have continued uh washington has
definitely noticed
i don't think that there's anyone in
washington dc
who is any longer kind of buying
promises
from the government um
and i actually think that the opposite
is happening
where those in zimbabwe either paid by
the zimbabwean government
or um or working for the zimbabwean
government who are peddling
obvious false propaganda including some
cabinet members uh i think that they're
at risk of facing a global
backlash and i do think some members of
the zimbabwean political elite
who are hoping one day to be welcomed
back into polite international society i
think they will find those doors closing
for them
um and then just one last sort of small

but i think potentially very important
contextual piece
is that the uh the biden administration
is going to be
exceedingly uh skeptical
and worried about russian interference
around the world
and will be looking at russian and
other um and other forces involved in
zimbabwe
um uh with uh with a very very keen eye
so given this given this context
i'm expecting continuity maybe some
tougher
um some tougher relations and even
potentially tighter sanctions i'm going
to give you three
reasons why i expect that to be the case
excuse me so the first is
the bipartisan views of zimbabwe in the
u.s
congress in many ways congress has been
a real driver of the u.s approach
to zimbabwe and if we look at the
principal actors in congress
we're thinking here about uh senators
coons
booker and menendez on the democratic
side and we've seen
uh chairman of the senate foreign
relations committee rish
who will no longer be chair but will
still be a very influential republican
member they're all
in lockstep on on zimbabwe policy
uh senator coombs chris coons
is probably the most important uh
senator on zimbabwe policy
he is exceedingly well respected
in the foreign policy community he has a
long
and very detailed history in zimbabwe
and he is also known as one of the most
um uh bipartisan operators

in washington um and it's worth noting that senator chris coons became a senator from the state of delaware why because he replaced the previous senator from delaware joe Biden when he became uh vice president uh under under president Obama so not only is coons very respected deep on Zimbabwe and very influential he's also exceedingly tight with the new president so that's the legislature uh as as people may know we have a separation of powers so we have the legislature but we also have an executive branch which is the white house and all of the federal agencies we have a kind of saying in washington that personnel is policy and especially during a transition everyone wants to know who are the people that are going to be in influential positions and what is their background so i'll just give you a little bit a couple of the individuals who are going to going to be influential in the administration on Zimbabwe policy first i'd say um we have we have a very recent uh announcement of the senior director inside the white house for africa is a career foreign service officer named Dana Banks Dana's previous post was in Pretoria so she um she's been in the foreign service a long time very experienced um and she obviously will know Zimbabwe well because she has

deep africa and southern africa
background and the assistant secretary
of state
the sort of lead diplomat for africa at
the state department that person has not
been chosen yet so we don't we don't
know
it could be a career foreign service
person it could be a political appointee
of the white house we don't know
however i'd say of all the leading
candidates the names that are kind of
swirling around washington
they are all universally very strong on
democracy and human rights issues
i would not expect unless there's some
surprise appointment i would not
expect any of them uh to depart from
that
and then there's two other um two other
individuals
that in some way may look like they're
slightly outside the zimbabwe policy
lane but who are going to be
exceedingly influential the first is
linda thomas greenfield who is the u.s
ambassador to the united nations she is
a 35-year veteran of the foreign service
she was in rwanda in 1994 during the
genocide
she was assistant secretary for africa
she was ambassador to liberia
she was a colleague of mine in the
africa bureau at state in 2008
when we all sat together and watched the
horror of the 2008 zimbabwe election
and the violent aftermath and so
linda thomas greenfield knows zimbabwe
extremely well she knows the human
rights and democracy situation
extremely well and the other person is
samantha power
who will who was a very uh she was the
u.s ambassador to the un

under obama she was a very senior official in the obama white house she's now the head or she's the um she's the nominated head of usaid um and she also has a long history of of watching and working on zimbabwe all the way back in 2003 she has an article in the atlantic about about zimbabwe so she's got a long experience there as well and will be a very forceful voice in washington for uh democracy and human rights so the takeaway here is that all of the diplomats and officials who will be shaping us policy in africa they all know zimbabwe very well they are not going to be fooled by propaganda coming from harare they will see through all of that and they have very very deep roots um in the policy making process so again a signal toward continuity and then the last factor is is the president himself so joe Biden has been vocal on human rights in africa going back to 1986 when he made a very uh visible speech and break with the reagan administration and was a very forceful voice in the anti-apartheid movement wes then senator Biden was a co-sponsor of zadera back in 2001. and so i know we've all seen tweets from um from monongagua uh expecting that u.s humility means that the us isn't going to talk about uh zimbabwe or isn't going to talk about human rights and democracy anymore because of the horrible scenes we've seen in violence in washington dc

i think actually the opposite is likely
to be true
who better to talk about democracy
than someone who just beat a corrupt
authoritarian who tried to ste
to cheat to stay in power
so who better to reinvigorate
u.s democracy efforts against corrupt
authoritarians
who have to cheat to stay in power i
think that that
i think there'll be a lot of lessons
that that the white house uh itself will
want will want to draw
from our own experience with humility
and with the context
that the united states is very far from
perfect
but our flaws do not justify abuses
elsewhere
um and so lastly what does this mean for
us
zimbabwe relations i think relations are
still going to remain somewhat
cool um there will still be a strong
humanitarian
aspect to it especially during the covid
pandemic
um but i do not expect a great warm
warming of relations between the two
capitals
uh i do not believe that zimbabwe is
going to fast track for debt relief or
new loans from the
from the international financial
institutions in fact zimbabwe may be at
risk of missing its window on this
because sudan somalia and
others have been moving ahead with
arrears clearance
and in some institutions uh there's a
first come first serve basis
uh for for for those for those uh
arrears clearance funds

on sanctions they're obviously going to stay and probably they're going to tighten
in fact the u.s has a new sanctions toolkit it's called the global magnitsky sanctions magnitsky
excuse me and this is a new tool for sanctioning people
who are specifically responsible for corruption and human rights abuses
in some ways it's tailor-made for certain individuals
in zimbabwe and we should note that it was almost exactly one year ago today that chairman rish and senator coons remarkably issued a public letter to the u.s
treasury to expand the list of names on the zimbabwe sanctions list
now a few names have been added but there are likely more to come because the process for gathering information about adding people it it takes some time
um but i would expect um i would expect more names to come not fewer
and then that lisa my last point is that really the only way back for a warm relationship between the united states and zimbabwe
is going to be reforms and it's real it's real reforms not propaganda
i i don't think that this is rocket science it's not complicated
the agenda is very clear the agenda's actually been articulated by the government in zimbabwe itself um
but there is very little appetite in washington dc
um under biden administration for helping
the very helping to further entrench the very same people who are viewed to have been

the source for undermining zimbabwe's
democracy for abusing its people
and for destroying its economy the
the idea that the biden administration
is suddenly going to embrace those very
same people and help them dig out of
this hole
i think is is extremely extremely
unlikely
so why don't i stop there iba thank you
thanks thank god
thanks very much uh before i call and my
next uh
panelist will be uh sarah because martin
is delayed
there's another meeting so sarah will be
ready but in the meantime i would also
ask
todd just two questions the first is
that
there is a an observation that maybe the
data has become an
end an end in itself it's more than
20 years now almost 20 years since it
was
enacted and in the absence of
a kind of
a leverage a kind of
what can i say timeline or benchmarks
better
is it is is it likely that there would
be a kind of benchmarking
in terms on the base of which the data
can be expected to be
relaxed and eventually removed
in the context of actual engagement
between the us
and zimbabwe that's the first question
the second question is
why should zwarwin be an exception in
terms of the focus
of u.s policy against
other general rulers against
corruption when we have

many similar situations
just at uganda the other day there is a
missivene there
wreaking havoc and probably
basking in the in the
crisis in washington that he was able to
do what he did
with such impunity so the two questions
maybe you could
address those quickly before i turn to
sarah
and muta and mute
can you enrich yourself
okay yep it wasn't letting me unmute so
but now i'm not good
so look those are great questions zadera
actually
is the framework for re-engagement right
if you look at
if you look at the actual zadara it lays
out pretty clear criteria
for what it will take um to have
relations
um get back on a normal path
and again i don't have it in front of me
right now but it's not you know this
again is not anything complicated it's
it's the restoration of the rule of law
it's it's um it's uh civilian oversight
of the military it's all of the basic
things that are actually contained in
the
um in the zimbabwean constitution so
it's really um
it's really uh just living up to what
the
zimbabwean leadership say they want to
do
and it's just that the gap between the
rhetoric and reality
is so laughably vast
that the attempts um
you know i had this personally by you
know

you know by the the foreign minister who unfortunately just passed you know his attempts to try to convince u.s officials that everything was fine were literally so laughable that it was undermining the case they were trying to make so i i do think that zadera is the basis for for warming relations and it you know it's going to be really the onus is on the is on the government to to live up to what it says it wants to do of course we understand that that them doing them restoring human rights actually running a um a valid election would threaten their very political survival so we understand that of course but that's not an excuse um that's not an excuse for um for what for what's happened on the hypocrisy front so and here i'm speaking as a obviously as a private citizen who's watched us foreign policy for a long time yes uh all countries are hypocrites in their foreign policy it's not just the united states and we do not treat all countries exactly equally all the time that's absolutely true foreign policy decisions are made in a complicated manner where there's a balance of a a whole bunch of different interests in zimbabwe because zimbabwe does not have any any first tier national security interests we are not security uh you know we are not cooperating on important global security issues you

know uh zimbabwe is not providing security for global sea lanes or you know zimbabwe is not is not um a close partner in other ways where there may be countervailing factors to human rights and democracy being the principal objectives but in zimbabwe the principal um interests of the united states are both humanitarian and on the democracy and human rights front i mean there are very few countervailing pressures there um i know that that monica monica's government was hoping that the insurgency in mozambique could be used to um to entice american officials to care more about that than than these other issues i don't think that will work i'm sure that um the ugandans will use their security cooperation in east africa and and their influence in the region as a countervailing pressure and we will see where the u.s administration comes out on uganda i would expect the blind administration not to whitewash the 70s claim to victory which has many many parallels to um to the events in zimbabwe so i hope that that at least partially answers your question for this for the time being thanks sir todd sarah sarah dorman if you can come in and one particular like you saw if you could consider the the relative position of the uk on zimbabwe and also in relation to uganda i think now the uganda thing cannot ignore it at

all

i mean just some just on that i think
what i mean what todd said about
uganda's on the spot but the crucial
thing about uganda is that they
positioned themselves
to send peacekeepers to do work in the
region

you know several years ago they kind of
set this all up you know they're not
kind of at the last minute trying to say
hey look

you know there's an issue on our border
they they very strategically
played those relationships and and
zimbabwe doesn't have that capital under
its belt

but anyway let me come to the things you
asked me to talk about um unusually
perhaps for one of your
forums i'm going to um agree to a large
extent

with todd um i don't know the
individuals involved so
i found his his discussion of those
really interesting

but um you know as a looking at it as a
political scientist and looking at
sort of the big picture um i think our
main takeaway is
as todd said we're unlikely to see very
much change

in broad u.s africa policy and in broad
u.s zimbabwe policy this um
you know this this is our lesson from
you know past decades of watching
um u.s foreign relations to africa of
course as president biden reminded us
all yesterday

um you can never really predict what
fate will throw at you
so um and certainly american foreign
policy over the years has been really
profoundly shaped by things that

pretty much no one saw coming or that at least they didn't expect to have quite such a big shock to their system everything korea iran and so forth so never say never um but with the exception of mozambique um on you know that situation and maybe the the east african um coastline more generally hotting up i it's difficult to envisage a situation whereby zimbabwe suddenly becomes a much higher profile security strategic interest of the sort that todd was talking about um as i said if we think about that big picture u.s policy on africa rarely shifts very much between administrations it tends to be broadly bipartisan we are seeing i think at the moment in the past year or so we've seen some interesting divides between republicans and democrats um in terms of um particularly thinking about tensions between egypt and ethiopia and so there are some potential shifts i think in the horn um but this i don't think there's any reason to think that's likely to change in zimbabwe um africa was low on the us priorities under the trump administration um again i don't think that's going to change hugely um zimbabwe is more likely to be affected i think positively by some of the shifts and prioritization of the biden administration

um re-engagement with world health organization
um reproductive health in particular the trump administration took over 8 billion out of global health funding
it looks like that's going to be restored i think those are are sort of not direct but indirect things that will um have a big impact on much of southern africa we also know that the state department has been really hollowed out um i'm not hugely well connected there but even i know many people who've left who've retired who or you know who are and we know that many posts haven't been filled and i think what we see there is um a real uh i think that's going to be a big project to to rebuild that competence um again i think there are clearly key people being brought in right away at the top people with lots of expertise lots of knowledge um but i do think the the institution itself has been hollowed out and i think that has um that will impede the administration's ability to move as um you know speedily on everything you know it will they will inevitably have to prioritize and i don't think their priority is going to be zimbabwe now obviously people like todd myself your other guests um those of us who are outsiders but who've known zimbabwe for many decades who remember zimbabwe as a state with institutions that functioned um can see why zimbabwe um ought to be a priority

and i understand that for most of your audience and and uh and zimbabweans we might think zimbabwe to be a priority but honestly zimbabwe isn't a particularly high profile country um on the global stage and particularly in the united states so let me share my screen with you just quickly um this isn't proper research that i'm going to show you but let me let me show you anyway so this is a chart some data that i um i i dragooned my ten-year-old who's being home schooled to help me do some data collection from the um us um databases and i looked at mention of a group of african countries um in the congressional record since zimbabwe's independence you can see zimbabwe is this blue line that starts off relatively high up in 1980 unsurprisingly but it then pretty much drops pops up again in the mid 2000s and is now again on a downward slope now i'm not saying that mention in congress is everything it's a proxy measure for political salience but what we do see is that zimbabwe is well below kenya um nigeria somalia um country tamale of course quite high here um in the night in the early 1990s um but all of those even now still get more congressional attention the case i thought was really interesting here that's worth reflecting

upon a little bit
is sudan which you can see in the mid
2000s had a very dramatic amount of
attention
in the us in the u.s congress now
just before i talk a bit more about that
which i think is something that's really
worth
understanding i'm just going to unshare
this and share a different slide so i'm
probably not doing this very um
effectively uh
no this is the right well here we are
yes sorry um
the host of comments so this is some
data that i didn't have to actually
control my children into computing for
me um this is a
data from a nice database based in the
university of
huddersfield in um in the uk
and here you can see um some of the same
countries i couldn't do quite as
quite as many countries um
charted in discussions in the british
house of commons from 1980
um to date the red line is zimbabwe
um because sorry the way this is
configured i'm having trouble seeing the
the legend there we go so the red line
is zimbabwe and you can see here
zimbabwe particularly in 1980 but then
again
starting from around 1998 onwards gets a
very
much more attention than any other
african countries craft here
um in in parliamentary discussions
we can see here that countries like
sudan kenya and nigeria
just don't come anywhere near it
so for those of us in the uk and perhaps
for um zimbabweans used to um
having a relationship and discussing

these issues with
um british government with the eu um i
think we do get a bit of a sense of
zimbabwe really being a priority country
and it simply
isn't that in the same way for the
united states so i'm just going to stop
sharing here for a minute um so
the one real exception there is you'll
have seen and i'm sorry this is very
that's very
very hastily thrown together data but i
thought it was illustrative
um but what we see there is that really
interesting peak in u.s congress
around sudan and what we saw there was
a really interesting rise in
kind of a a coalition of interest from
the
the um uh black congress the cop the
caucus of black
in the black congress congressional
caucus apologies
in the us um and churches and social
groups
mobilizing around sudan in the lead up
to
sudan's independence and the reason i
highlighted that is i think that is
absolutely exceptional if we were to do
more data which i'd quite like to um i
don't think we'd see any
other african countries where u.s troops
have not been deployed
that have anything like that level of
interest and buy-in
from congress and so
you know it's not just zimbabwe but
zimbabwe certainly doesn't have any
higher buy-in
than the vast majority of other
countries um there isn't that sort of
organized lobby what you do have
in the in the us is group is is the

zimbabwe working group
which um you know it's basically people
like todd and myself are of our age
anyway i'm not involved but
you know who um have you know who go
back to
who often um you know first visited
zimbabwe in the early 1990s
who've maintained those ties who have a
deep knowledge but their
their ex-state department their
their policy policy wonks they're you
know it's not
it's not a a societally embedded lobby
group so while there are
people in the us and i i'm sure there
are also
you know um i know there are in fact um
church exchanges
church ties um links and things like
that they haven't
um formed into that same sort of lobby
um that somewhere like sudan was able to
was that was mobilized around around
this the case of sudan
um so as i said that that's also very
different
to the uk um where media interest
remains very high
where um zimbabwean oh sorry uk
mps get tons of correspondence from
people
about zimbabwe whenever it's in the news
where there is
um a much broader set of interests
obviously an awful lot of that has to do
with colonialism a lot of that has to do
with the way in which zimbabwe has been
covered in the media
not always positively um i often point
out that actually over here it's also
just about it's it's about sports
zimbabwe's historically played
you know cricket and rugby and football

and the same so and and we used to have
british students going to zimbabwe on
gap years people went on safari
you know there's just a completely
different set of societal
connections um to zimbabwe that
simply isn't there in the us and i don't
think there is that
um capacity to build up on it in
in the same way um
let's see um i was going to um
also just mention i think to be honest i
think todd's talked about sanctions much
more comprehensively
um than i can although it's worth noting
that the british government is also
bringing in magnets i can't say it
either
magnitsky sanctions um
so you know that's uh uh
that we do have regimes that are uh
are are certainly looking more
pro-sanctioned than than anti-sanction
um although that may not be true of the
commonwealth and other groups
um i think the crucial point here um
that's worth thinking about
is that um all of these legislators that
we're talking about and ministers and
and so forth um you know they're they're
spending money that's taxpayers money
um they're they're spending money that
that on some level they're expected to
be accountable
for and we may have
we may have um uh broader
moral questions about the legitimacy
particularly in light of british
colonialism
and to the sort of the the moral
position there but essentially if people
are signing off on budgets that are
going to end up on the front page
of of of newspapers as foreign aid

budgets
often do um they're
they're not going to be making moves
that will be um certainly controversial
and likely unpopular so you know there
is a political rationale here
um it's not i think todd's done a really
nice job of explaining how
the biden administration carries with it
certain principles and traditions
and and and experiences going back to
the 80s
um but they're also they're pragmatic
politicians
and they're not going to be making
uh political decisions that
that uh that that don't jibe with
with the uh the inclinations of of of
their voters and so i think there is i
think it's
it's important just to remember that we
are talking about politicians we may
wish that some
broader moral compass guided these
things and provided a more equitable
distribution of resources and access to
global markets and so forth
but the people making these decisions
are at heart politicians and i think
sometimes we
um we lose track of that when we talk
about these things as people who are
um deeply committed and bought into them
i'm wondering shall i stop there about
um i'm happy to talk a bit about um
the processes and the um um
prospects for zimbabwe if you'd like but
i wonder if it might be more useful
to move on to a different a different
discussant at this point and then come
back to those issues
yes when you come back to your startup
maybe a bit more reflection on the
commonwealth

you just but you just mentioned in
passing anyway
uh ray are you ready
ray ray hartley
okay just unmuting um
yeah i think uh look i mean i'm
in a far less uh
uh knowledgeable position about u.s
relations with zimbabwe than
probably anybody else on the panel so
i'll just sort of dodge the question
then and uh talk about south africa
but i do think that uh the
you know the the biden embrace
of multilateralism brings the aau
into the picture brings the sadc into
the picture
and of course brings zimbabwe's neighbor
south africa into the picture
and these are the institutions
that are going to be in the background
when consideration is made
if if it's going to be a truly
multilateral
approach that is taken and i'm afraid
those institutions are not looking very
strong at all i think the au under
opposes chairmanship
over the last year has
singularly failed really to observe even
never mind comment on any of the
rollback of democracy under the
uh you know during the time of covet so
if you look across southern africa you
know with the insurgency in mozambique
in tanzania southern tanzania the
tanzanian election
which was incredibly
unfair and free i think everybody agrees
the opposition fleeing into exile
journalists arrested repression
then you go across to zambia
zambia's just defaulted on its debt
it also has a 10 years hold on electoral

democracy
you've got zimbabwe the economic
implosion
is huge um and i think
they you know at the center of it all is
south africa and what south africa
is doing and the approach from south
africa i think
has really been weak firstly in the role
as
chairman of the au nothing said or done
really
the sadc is completely silent
and tacitly endorses the incumbent
in in all of these political contests
and and south africa's engagement with
zimbabwe has been frankly just
just just bizarre i mean the you know
the the engagement has been led by
the party the african national congress
which has and i would put in brackets
tenuous because the real relationship
was with zapu and
and joshua and komo in exile but uh
liberation links with
zany and so the anc has gone to
zimbabwe and it has met with zanu-pf
but not with the opposition and the
outcome of all of those meetings has
been
i mean the only sort of striking outcome
that i can see
has been an agreement between the anc
and zionipf to describe the situation
not as a crisis but as a situation
so there was a you know this was
literally something that was emphasized
in various kind of press engagements and
so on
um so from that point of view
i think that um
you know i think if biden is to be taken
literally
on this sort of multilateral approach

and seeking partnerships with neighbors
and
and organizations in the region in the
sub-region
i don't really hold out much hope for
any kind of toughest stance
because the position that he will hear
from all of these bodies and neighbors
and so on
is going to be one of of tolerance
really for the continued
slide of zimbabwe and i think added to
that is
is the um the rising uh
xenophobia and nationalism in south
africa which i think is a very under
observed
and underreported phenomenon i think
it's often dismissed
as a sort of you know populist kind of
minority that are doing this but in fact
there is surprisingly broad support here
for keeping neighbours out and most
recently south africa
closed all of its land borders with its
neighbors
uh because of the situation
with covert testing and potential
positive
um entrance into the country um
but the the response that one years here
and sees and reads about is generally
just rejoicing at the fact that these
people are not coming in here to take
jobs
so the environment
in which i think the us engages here
is not really none of none of those
those institutions or bodies or regional
bodies or neighbors
is really going to endorse a tougher
stance so i think the
the the question that biden will face
is whether he wants to then sort of

retreat
to a more unilateral approach with
zimbabwe
and sort of break with this kind of
consensus
that's a passive consensus not an active
one
and try and get something get something
done
i think the other possible engagement
may be
on a dialogue which has been floated uh
in the background here some kind of
return to the national unity approach
that was taken
between the mdc and zanu
to try and get them onto a table
together to understand
you know the need to take some kind of
national action to deal with the
economic meltdown
to try and move on to a more politically
inclusive
uh public space um
but that dialogue and engagement i think
will
would have to be really first initiated
out of zimbabwe
and secondly would have to have the
support of
the the sub-region and the sadc
and um and south africa and i'm
concerned that
there isn't really that momentum so i'm
just going to leave it there
finished you know since 2005
both the us and
and and britain through
george bush and and
uh tony blair respectively
the virtually anointed south africa as a
point man
on zimbabwe when becky was there if you
remember

are you saying that the the
the policy the south korean policy on
ziva has become so porous
that is no longer a platform a viable
platform for such
kind of engagement or on the part of
either
the us or britain with respect to
zimbabwe situation
you don't see the same kind of peril
yeah
i mean i think a lot of domestic a lot
of domestic political issues here i
of poser you know he's facing a
challenge from the left
and they question his struggle
credentials
and i don't think he wants to burn any
of that credibility
um by taking a hard line in zimbabwe or
pushing zanu alienating zanu and risking
uh you know being seen as breaking ranks
with the liberationists
um so that that's that's a factor
but i also think grammar pauses you know
he's just weak on foreign policy
it's never been something he's done i
mean beky in all his years of exile
traveled the world's capitals
lived in several of them and basically
was lobbying for the anc abroad
and you know when he was became
president
i mean essentially took over the foreign
affairs role here
and um and was very comfortable
in that environment ramaphosa is a
negotiator
and a very good one and could probably
be very good
at a table uh with two contending
parties trying to
to find some common ground but i just
don't think he has the political

um energy to to spend on this
issue or wants to and i just
he's not comfortable in in the in the
foreign affairs space
so i think there's no policy i don't
think there is
there is a policy on zimbabwe here um
whatever meals are being made are being
made outside of the state
at a party to party level and government
is just
uh quiet and absent
from from the scene thanks thanks sir
ray
we'll come back to you gilbert gilbert
welcome groovit we all take advantage of
your
your position at the at the uh
the center for u.s studies on africa
if you can yeah
come in oh right gilbert
yeah can you hear me now can you hear me
yes i can hear you okay thank you very
much
um i think before i start with my
presentation i thought i would address
the uganda
puzzle uh that you raised at the
beginning
and underway go ahead yes
i i think to look at the uganda issue
that was raised previously is
really to look at the tanzanian issue
and i think people should remember that
before trump got out of office
they imposed some sanctions on on
tanzanian officials who had in fact
meddled badly in the elections
and so what i'm saying here is that
uganda is actually not out of the woods
yet
uh i see probably uh the
the bilingual administration really
picking up on that momentum

to make a statement uh that what happened in uganda in fact uh is wrong and i i think following this the tanzania story therefore it gives him in fact more more moral ground in fact to take that action on uganda i agree very much with that what todd is saying on the zimbabwe south africa zimbabwe u.s relations and sarah has picked up on some of those issues and also ray so i want to agree clearly with uh what you are saying about continuity uh about the lack of really momentum in the change in in the relationship but i think what i wanted to say from the outset was that it probably would have made sense to have this webinar a hundred days after the biden's administration has been in power rather than one one day after the inauguration and why am i saying this i think i'm saying this because i think 100 days would have given us a good sense of what the uh the policy on africa is going to be i think todd has mentioned that there are going to be a lot of continuities but i think it would just be interesting to have an administration that comes out with a very clear africa policy and then we can look at that policy and then begin to ask the bigger question how does how does zimbabwe fit into that policy for now we don't have a abide in africa policy at least in its explicit explicit sense the campaign

didn't have much on africa and i think there is a some sense of the individuals that todd was mentioning that are going to remain part of that framework but i it would just have been interesting to have a clear sense of where where does africa fit and then we can have a good discussion of where does zimbabwe fit in the larger framework of an africa policy that comes out of the biden administration and so far we haven't seen it yet and so i'm saying probably uh we despite what todd is saying i think we need to give the administration some time to come up with that kind of clear policy on what does it expect and what is it going to prioritize with respect to to africa but secondly i think a hundred day time frame would have been interesting to give the zimbabwean regime i think some time to begin to raise some signals to begin to do some signaling about how it wants in fact to approach the biden administration uh i think there was an earlier argument that there is already some triumphalism about change but it would have been interesting just to see how these uh the the the zimbabwean government responds to the biden administration in light of what is going to come up as an africa policy that is can infect naga regime meet the biden administration halfway in resolving some of these political irritants that have been part of the

20-year relationship under under
sanctions
so again here we need some time to
reflect
on how probably can the new how can
the zimbabwean sees on some
good things that may be coming out of
washington
uh to begin to change its attitudes and
its policy
uh probably with the with the objective
of
meeting the administration halfway
having said that i think i want to agree
that
since we are marking the 20th
year of the sanctions
there is probably not much that we can
expect
from the biden administration and i
think this is where i'm beginning to
agree
pretty much with what todd was saying
there is a policy that has been in place
for 20 years
a policy that has transcended republican
and democratic administrations and
therefore
unless there is a very dramatic movement
unless there is a very miraculous moment
i don't really see very much happening
in that relationship and that is i think
the
pessimism that i want to put through the
table
with respect to what i see as what todd
was saying
the more continuity in the relationship
but i also want to make a point that
this relationship has lapsed into what
i'm calling
a comfortable inertia
on both sides i think the cold war
between

u.s and south africa the u.s and
zimbabwe
has slapped into that comfortable in
asia for
two reasons i think one
on the u.s side as it has been made very
clear
and sarah's slides are also underscoring
that point
zimbabwe is not important to the united
states
but the united states is important to
zimbabwe
so the issue around humanitarian
engagement
the issue around the health engagement
is a very nice low-cost
policy that the us in fact can live with
for as long as it wants
humanitarianism in fact speaks directly
or appeals directly
to the bigger questions that the
majority of zimbabweans are suffering
through
and the u.s being the largest in fact
aid
giver in that respect gives it a lot of
soft power within the larger context
of what i'm calling the zimbabwean
society
so it's a comfortable policy
and i don't think there is a
really urgency to move away from
from that comfort zone and and that's
one i think one explanation
for the continuity in the
relationship and why things are not
going to change
but more fundamentally i think on the
zimbabwean side
than opf uh for it the sanctions of
are not really critical to the regime
i think if they were critical to the
regime

uh they would have in fact come
halfway as i was putting it from the
beginning
i think if there is if the sanctions
were a serious question
uh they would have addressed some of the
bigger questions
that have become very normal very
normalized part of the political
discourse
and i think the expectations
out of the sanctions are very normal
and they are now occurring in a context
where
there is not really much fear of regime
change
so that the basic basic components
of the sanction regime is that in fact
there will be governance reforms there
will be humanitarian observation ending
repression
and what uh ebola was talking to about
at the very beginning return to
constitutionalism and the rule of law
and so i look at this as really very
simple
very basic demands that were
embedded in a sanctions regime
that at some point was difficult to
swallow
but i'm saying that over the last 20
years
uh it was very easy if the munagaga
regime is serious about restoration of
relations with the u.s
they can in fact begin to address some
of these very
commonsensical components of
of the sanctions regime because they
have already been making
some gestures with respect to issues
such as the white farmers
compensation for property rights and so
on

so if they're already moving on a reform trajectory
why has it not boiled into
the kind of serious political engagement
with the opposition parties with civil
society groups
and basic norms that we are expecting
the naga regime in fact to be addressing
as a as a civilized
society so i mean the post-2017 election
i think context was a good context for
the
government to begin to signal that in
fact
it's very serious about
about reforms which leads me therefore
to the point that
sanctions may infect
that does paradoxically
benefit the regime
because they may probably be one of the
strongest
and the remaining legitimation
cut i think to a regime that is
very much under siege domestically
from a lot of pressures and so on
and of course kovit it behooves upon
them
i think not to address i think some of
the bigger questions that are
i'm not i'm saying they're bigger
questions but i'm also saying they are
very normal questions
that we should have expected the regime
to have actually put to the table in
order
to do away with sanctions and that's
just that's
uh uh my my reading of sanctions that
they have become very normal because
i think most of those elites probably
they are not
as significant there was a last point
that was raised by

by ray which i think is important
i think increasingly we'll see sadaq
we'll see south africa being pulled into
the picture
of trying to mediate these
very long running political irritant
between
the u.s and zimbabwe but i think i agree
with the ray
uh largely because uh i think the first
thing we need to note is that
south africa's uh credibility around
zimbabwe
has over the years
become increasingly in doubt and we saw
that last year
i think that had been mentioned about uh
anc delegation going to harare
and literally not uh speaking to all the
groups
but even when they spoke to the regime i
don't think they got much
so it it's going to be very difficult
uh for south africa to play that uh
mediator i think as i think that the
zimbabwean regime probably is going to
expect it to do
uh particularly if uh ramaphosa
has a more change relationship with
biden
sadaq is also going to be put in that
kind of
quagmire uh how do we and and it's been
the language i think
from sadaq from sadaq
communicates we need to address the us
needs to address this
zimbabwe sanction so i'm saying
increasingly i think we are going to see
that also becoming less salient
because this is really a problem that
needs to be resolved
uh directly around the issue of
what were the expectations of the

sanctions regime
and if these expectations are not being
met i don't know how
this issue is regionalized how the
zimbabwean government
regionalizes it or puts pressure on
countries such as south africa
to begin in fact to intercede on its
behalf
so let me just conclude by saying
therefore that i agree around the notion
of continuity
i also agree continuity stems from the
fact that
probably zimbabwe is not as significant
so that if there's going to be any
movement any momentum i think
in restoring the relationship we need to
move away i think from
the kind of political noises that we've
seen around it
i think we need to begin to argue to
what extent
does the regime in zimbabwe begin to
address
some of the core issues i think around
the sanctions regime
and i think i want to stop there and
get some questions at the end
i think you have said a lot you've
really helped the discussion
the notion of comfortable inertia that's
incredible um
i think part of the initial guru but if
i may just make a point before i
ask david david monyer to come in
is that over the 20 years
zimbabwe as demonstrated and an
incapacity to change
this is the point uh and when you talk
about them meeting at the u.s halfway
it's impossible they're not able to
and therefore the question which arises
is and under what conditions are asked

to taught at the beginning
under what conditions can there be a
kind of an engagement
a kind of lancaster house type
engagement
on such countries as zimbabwe uh where
if sanctions are not going to become an
end in the an ending themselves
they seem to have no leverage anymore
you know um
and i agree that they they become a
political
a political uh football
motorspeak it's not a blunt weapon
there is no necessary correlation
between sanctions
and the objections for which they were
they were they were imposed
david monae come in please david
thank you uh thank you uh for
wonderful um discussions there are few
questions that i have
and i mean i say this with uppermost
respect
to all panelists and and organizers
um firstly i think there's
a fatigue that is setting in on on on
the whole zimbabwe
um it is really really difficult this
crisis has been going on for too long
and to really point at one sega whether
within zimbabwe
uh in the region being south africa
is the case now or in in
international arena it
becomes problematic because we tend to
select
um there's a whole um
crisis of leadership in zimbabwe both in
government and opposition
and therefore i think it's high time for
to clean up the deck if if
if to have really new players with the
vision for the country

people who love their country and their
people
it doesn't appear to be the case uh
looking
at what's happening number two uh really
for
those uh uh we're looking well i'm
reminded with the liberation struggle in
malawi
and early 20th century that
there was this messianic
someone out there is coming to liberate
us
it seemed they seemed to be the case
that washington somehow
would resolve issues in zimbabwe
the reality is that washington does not
have resources
whether in manpower or hard resources
um to effect any
tangible change in zimbabwe or anywhere
else
for that matter
and the bigger question for me is what
what is left in zimbabwe to sanction
um that really pointed
me to to us and really give us an
example of what exactly that is
i think the only country that can really
sanction things in zimbabwe with south
africa and no one else
given the economic base and what's in
there
let's face facts
also the recycling of american
personnel that are coming uh whether
um they knew ambassador to you and i
think
she was in rwanda as we told and what's
the story in rwanda
94. um
as much as we love and the new
change that is taking place in america
we're all excited about

it it's better than the west's
we had for the last four years but the
very same lot
that is returning is the one that bombed
libya
and left africa with a major crisis
um and to come back with the same
mindset
that they know africa and therefore they
have answers that they never had in the
past
i really don't know where's the new
thinking and newfound dreams and
vision that would
really alleviate the situation it's
improved so my bottom line
is that it is up to zimbabweans really
to fix with the assistance of sadaq
members
and uk
washington they really bogged in their
own internal issues
thank you thanks david thank you
thank you i'd like to bring uh todd moss
back
if i may er to respond to
the very important points raised by
gilbert this this this
danger of this comfortable inertia
and raise the question again under what
conditions can we expect
a more uh
sort of organized
process internationally to support the
regional effort
and the national situation itself in
achieving the ends for which
the sanctions were imposed in the first
place
the idea of a settlement in zimbabwe
which is the key
todd yeah thank
thanks and uh thank you professor
gilbert that was uh that was

really useful and i'm
very excited to dig deeper into your
center on the study of the united states
we need
more africans commenting on the united
states
um uh we need a much more dose of our
own medicine so i i
i applaud you for that and uh hopefully
we'll you'll be leading a bigger charge
on
on that um one so i'll just make two
points
one is on sanctions maybe helping the
regime
but clearly you know the sanctions were
now
almost 20 years in and zanu-pf is as
entrenched as ever the sanctions have
not
worked in the sense that they were
supposed to encourage
change i think there were a couple of
moments
where um change was possible in zimbabwe
certainly 2008 was a window
certainly 2017 was a window and it did
not
work out in zimbabwean's favor those
times
and arguably the international actors
could have done
more i'd say well not even arguably
absolutely the international actors
could have done more to encourage
a transition at either of those windows
of 08 or 2017 it would have
helped to return zimbabwe to
constitutionalism
rather than in both cases literally
entrenching the exact same two people
including
the current vice president in both uh of
those windows

so um so i do think that that
um in that sense sanctions um have not
achieved what um what
the original intention was however
there's two very strong caveats here one
is that sanctions are just one simple
tool
and quite a crude tool um that's
supposed to be
part of a package of broader um
carrots and sticks and to the extent
that
um that sanctions are still a useful
stick
is is is debatable today but it's not
that sanctions alone
we shouldn't expect sanctions alone to
lead to um
to policy change um it's just one small
piece of a bigger
of a bigger puzzle the other is that i
know
a lot of people argue that the best
thing that could happen today
for zimbabwe is for the us to just multi
you know unilaterally lift sanctions
the question there is yes that would
take away
an excuse for zanu-pf for why
um the crisis gets worse rather than
better
um but i do think those that argue for
for unilateral lifting of sanctions need
to
lay out a much better case than i've
heard so far about what happens
let's just imagine that for a second
hypothetically
that tomorrow the bite administration
says
we're lifting sanctions on zimbabwe
um on on these 70 individuals
um and again it's 70 individuals and i'm
sorry david if you think

that there's nothing left to sanction i
mean there's a
there the the sanctions are so narrow
and so limited that there's a i can
think of a thousand other things that
could be
done as pressure points um but um
if that happened today and those 70
people including monongagua were
suddenly off the sanctions list
does anyone genuinely think that that
would accelerate
the reform process inside zanu-pf or
would that
be used as an um
as a as would that be claimed as a piece
of evidence
that the biden regime was endorsing
zanu-pf
and giving a stamp of approval to the
so-called reforms and therefore were on
a path to normalization with
the creditors in particular i
really just don't see how anybody could
make that credible case that that would
be a positive step forward
if you could go back in time to 2001 and
say hey maybe
sanctions we shouldn't we shouldn't um
do sanctions in the way we've done them
we should do
use other tools sure if we had a time
machine we could we could
make that hypothetical uh argument but
where we are now in 2021
lifting sanctions unilaterally is that
going to help encourage reform in
zimbabwe
and help the restoration of
constitutionality i think
absolutely not so i don't see that as
a credible case the other excellent
point that i think
uh gilbert made is that um

is that um while zimbabwe may not be very important to the u.s the us is important to zim and the sanctions are actually not even them even close to the most important thing the most important aspect is that zimbabwe desperately um it's it's economic situation cannot be resolved without a return to normal relationships with the international creditors and that means it has to clear its arrears at the major international financial institutions it has to be able to if it's going to invest in infrastructure and get economic growth going it's going to have to start borrowing again on international markets and that is just not possible while they're in deep arrears and because the arrears are so deep and so long they go back to 2001 or 2003 or i mean they're very long um arrears um uh that that they're going to have to have a comprehensive package now i was part of the team that was doing arrears clearance and debt relief for liberia in the mid 2000s and this was a case where there was charles taylor was gone president johnson sirleaf was in power she was doing an incredibly aggressive you know reform package she had the backing of the united states she had a close personal relationship with president bush she had all of the europeans behind her and it was still a very difficult

process because you have to go make the case for using taxpayer dollars to bail out a government that didn't pay its debts and that process was so difficult in liberia and given that that was a real transition with new leadership and strong international support the idea that zimbabwe is going to do it with a fake reform process with a president who has none of those relationships um especially at a time when the call for public dollars for covid for fighting other health issues for infrastructure in other parts of the world is so great the idea that zimbabwe is going to get that those dollars now to climb out of that hole to me seems highly improbable without a major political change so let me stop yeah just just the the the point here on the united states is that you're just not going to get arrears cleared and debt relief through the african development bank or the world bank if the united states objects that's just not going to happen and that isn't a very important reason why the us is critical to zimbabwe whether they like it or not unfortunately i think you've just summarized the problematic that is the reason why and i see david munir has left before hearing that it's very important but i want to ask sarah to come in sarah thanks very much i wanted to actually i'm sorry that david's left i hope he's maybe listening um i

want to thank him for his for his uh
reflections and questions and i think
he's completely right
to ask about recycling in the regime
um i think uh
there are very good reasons to to to
wonder
um about uh that practice that somebody
said you know really this is
replacing the new with the old not the
old with the new on some level
um but i think in light of the
disruption to the institutions in the us
and particularly as i said i think the
loss of a lot of talent within the state
department
um there's there is something to be said
for um
having people with a lot of experience
at
you know running those institutions and
uh so i i wouldn't so i think he's he's
he's right to raise those questions i
think
the issue is also about um you know new
people coming in and people have learned
perhaps from their understandings of
other cases um but yes i think there is
a there is a question there of uh
sometimes people who
think they know an issue aren't always
the best people to resolve it
um but that's perhaps more of an issue
with uh
elected politicians and and civil
servants and analysts ought to be able
to be
um pulling those lessons together
learning and
um not just you know repeating old
mistakes or repeating old policies and
i'd like to think that within
um within the state department within
the the us uh

institutions that's what they'll be
that's what they'll be
they'll be doing um can i also pick up
on this
this um question that's kind of it came
up explicitly in some of the
contributions earlier and it was
implicit
in in some of david's questions i think
um around sanctions sorry actually
one quick comment on sanctions which is
just to say um
sanctions are incredibly hard to get out
of they're easy to get into
and i think that's why they're so
attractive and that's why we're seeing
governments leaping on these magnitsky
sanctions because they seem kind of easy
in certain ways um particularly the
targeted ones the ones on individuals
they're really hard to get out of you
know how do you make that rationale as i
said this is a politically
rational set of actors how do they make
that case
for withdrawing and i think that's where
um we need to understand
kind of we need to think through the
process um from their perspective
rather than just say well you know
sanctions are counterproductive they've
they've
they've not worked in terms of bringing
reform
they've perhaps worked to signal just
displeasure signal a policy position
but um they're profoundly
counterproductive at the moment in
zimbabwe
um but that doesn't mean they're easy to
get out of and i think that's
even if it may seem so um from the
zimbabwean perspective that's not
necessarily doesn't necessarily make

sense from the
the politically pragmatic perspective on
the other side um
even if we might wish it did um so
anyway i wanted to come back to this
point about national unity
i think again david is completely right
to say you know these decisions have to
come within zimbabwe i really think
um my work has primarily been working
with zimbabwe and
um civil society and churches and groups
like that and i really do think there is
a profound
um uh desire for these for resolutions
for processes to happen internally which
is why i think
these seminars and the other initiatives
have been really important
but to say
you know go back to these old
governments of national unity i would
argue and i've argued this in much of my
writing and
much of what i've said that every single
um government of national unity
coalition government that zimbabwe has
had
um has led to zanu becoming more and
more entrenched
and you know so what do we do what is
going wrong here
if governments of national unity that i
understand why people
find them attractive people want
stability they want peace
um they want to move forward they want
to do so in a way that's non-adversarial
that that brings people together
but every single time we end up with a
more authoritarian government we end up
with
opposition parties weaker more sidelined
we end up with civil society groups and

voices of
citizens being more excluded
every single time starting from 1980
straight through to the most recent gnu
and i think we need to learn from those
i i shouldn't say wait
but i think that as a political
scientist you know
we need to learn from that and to simply
to say yes
national unity governments of
nationality are an attractive solution
but not until we we work out
a way to do that and to take those
lessons from previous attempts seriously
and also think about how to ensure that
what too often once you've reached an
agreement reaching an agreement seems to
be the end
the goal and then things fall apart
what we need to look at is how do you
actually reach an agreement that is
implemented in ways
that one group does not emerge out of it
powerful and able to abuse power simply
leading to the need
10 years down the road for another
government of national unity
and that's the that's the challenge it's
not finding getting to a government of
the united
national unity is a challenge it's
making a government of national unity
that doesn't need to be repeated that
doesn't lead
to further abuses of power and i think
that's
that's that's you know the nub of the
challenge
here um and i'm not diminishing how
difficult that's going to be um
but i think it needs to be faced up to
rather than
rehashing this oh let's have a coalition

let's have national unity
you know let's let's face how difficult
that is and look at the outcomes
not just the process into it thanks
thanks sarah i think we we are far from
a governor of national unity
i think the the current uh regime is
completely
miscalculated even the idea of
an internal settlement which was in the
making
seems to have backfired
nowhere near we have a serious uh
political impasse
in the country serious one as outlined
in in the concept note
but i we're getting to the end of our
program
i just want to put the question to
the panelists and i'll begin with
gilbert and end with todd
with the last word what's the way
forward
gilbert then ray then sarah again and
then
last but not least uh todd
what's way forward i agree with gilbert
by the way that uh
maybe we should come back after 100 days
to look at it broadly at the africa
policy but i mean and
on one condition that your group would
lead them lead the pack this time
yeah so that we yeah and i i think this
is it's a very important important point
you made
anyway the flow is yours now your last
words
yeah thank you again um i i think david
raised
very profound issues when he said um
there's a crisis of leadership not just
in government but also in the opposition
so this is really a profound

crisis and we need to think out of the
box
in the questions around how do we make
some traction around what remains a
a big star a big stalemate
so i wanted to suggest todd that uh
i think within the hundred days
there could be creative thinking
particularly from the u.s side about
how does one trade off what you call a
very robust engagement
uh on humanitarianism uh
on health and so on how does that how
does one trade off
that kind of engagement which benefits
the u.s
with what could be in fact a very
pragmatic
lessening of some of the sanctions
particularly as you mentioned
the very international dimension of it
the gradual
lessening of the of the the credits
and so on that relief and i'm saying
this because
my premise is that those small gestures
i think would be important
particularly since you met you mentioned
from the outset that in fact the
sanctions haven't worked
but also from the premise that uh
the sanctions actually do not the regime
doesn't really care much about sanctions
uh the the people who are suffering
sanctions are actually the population if
we could put it broadly under that
argument always comes up
is the people who are suffering so my
point is that how does one think out of
the box
to say you know
there's some rigidity to the
international dimension of those
sanctions particularly on credits

and so on boring and so on why can't
there be some momentum on that
that will go hand in hand not really
trading off but also just
you know as i said the us is very much
engaged in zimbabwe
but my point is that it's it's not very
productive engagement
if it continues to reproduce the same
circumstances
that drove the sanctions so
it's it's a way it's a good way to say
no how do we think more creatively
about getting out of the impulse and
that's why i was saying maybe a
100 day period uh gives us enough room
to begin to experiment
in thinking in thinking i think i'm done
thanks sir thanks good thanks very much
thank you
ray
can you find rey first yeah can you hear
me yeah
yes okay so very briefly i mean i think
that
the us should um use the leverage that
it has
with south africa and ramaposa because
they are
i mean this country has its own economic
issues problems and
capital raising issues and vaccine
issues and all kinds of things
where a bilateral strong bilateral
relationship
with the us along the lines of the
bilateral commission that was
established
you know between clinton mandela and
becky
um you know i think that
they could actually start persuading
south africa to
take a more positive and

productive role in its relationship with
zimbabwe
trying to get some kind of
um agreement to some of the the things
that might lead to the lifting of
sanctions
because i think lifting them
unilaterally with no
no you know no outcome i think would be
disastrous but if there were an outcome
um or at least an agreement to a path
to an outcome they'd say um you know
that might
allow the lifting of sanctions to take
place
and a little bit of saving of face as
well
um not even there because we're running
out of time
thanks ray thanks very much sarah
your last words
for today i mean i think i've already
i pretty much summed up the last things
i wanted to say in my last comment i
guess the only thing i would
say again is um in previous crises
i think a much wider range of zimbabwean
voices have been heard
um there were sort of stronger
connections through
um throughout static through you know
labor unions through the churches
through
um various networks um that that were
effective
in bringing sanic into engagement and i
think that's fallen away
um and i'd like to hear more of those
voices
being engaged not just kind of being
heard from as you know
kind of spokes you know spokespeople or
voices but actually being
being um being engaged i think that the

lesson

there is a strong lesson there people if we're going to say there's a failure of political leadership then i think maybe we need to look elsewhere that doesn't mean to diminish we still need well we probably still need politics but i would like to see a broadening of the discussions it's not just politicians um but that we're getting a uh stronger um networks of uh of communication from the diaspora from uh um people working and people being brought more into these discussions more substantially so we get a wider range of voices um i was hugely influenced in the years um leading up to the ncaa and during the ncaa in the late 1990s um by just the the things that people the the comments the the engagement that people made with that process around the constitution and i know then that happened again um more recently um but now suddenly in this crisis those voices that engagement seems to to be weakened and not to be there in the same way so i guess that would be my i think that any way forward needs to um engage people and draw people back in rather than excluding people and moving towards a more elite acting or or a narrow narrow set of discussions think ebo's uh disappeared uh maybe i can shift to tony really here uh sorry he's asked me to start my video i'm hello tony reader here i'm trying to back up and deal with the

vagaries of
internet and they drop left right and
center i hope you can hear me
uh time to get word
you get the last word thank you very
much sarah
and uh todd it's over to you
okay thank you tony i see we do have evo
back great
so look the way forward and i wish i had
i wish i had
far far better news for for zimbabweans
first uh just on gilbert's suggestion of
more flexibility
on re-engagement that ship has sailed um
the very first step for creditor
re-engagement is to have a
staff-monitored program with the imf
um the zimbabwean government made a big
push on an snp with the imf
the agreement that they reached was
ridiculously low it was
set up for the zimbabweans to succeed it
was so
easy i was i was furious actually when i
saw it
that i thought the imf was lowering the
bar so much
that the zimbabwean government would
have to do virtually nothing
to get uh through this and it didn't
even last nine months
and they were off they couldn't even
stick to that
so the idea even if the us government
wanted to help
zimbabwe that they could get through the
process of re-engagement through the imf
and then
the process at the at the other
multilaterals
i just it's going to be very difficult
because
there are fundamental things that the

government would have to do that it has
shown it is not willing to do
um and so i think that the process
the the prospects for um
re-engagement with the international
financial community without major change
in zimbabwe
are extremely poor
the u.s i think is ready to help support
zimbabweans when there is an opportunity
for
reform and for a better way forward
whatever that structure looks like
but the us is not going to dictate or
create that opportunity the us is not
going to lead
on a government of national unity or
on creating a new process
like you had with lancaster house you're
just not
there there's no reason to do that in
part because there's no reason to expect
zanu-pf to participate in good faith in
that process
um so in lieu of that opportunity
i think we're going to see again more of
the same
and i do think given the
given the links between
let's say russia and some eastern
european countries and senior
leaders of zanu-pf i think if anything
there's going to be a
more worrying trend from
washington dc they're going to view
russian misinformation
and other aspects of russian involvement
in zimbabwe with extreme alarm
and that's going to lead to additional
sanctions and a tightening
of of the pressure on the regime
um i think that that's what we're
looking at for the next uh
12 months uh absent some major change

uh in harare so but ibo and other uh
thank you for for the opportunity
sarah ray gilbert great to great to see
all of you
hopefully when we reconvene we'll have
far better news
and a much brighter outlook i do think
the long-term up
the long-term outlook for zimbabwe is
obviously bright
the the capacity for the diaspora to
return
capacity for the country to bounce back
is tremendous
um and i think that the diaspora is what
we're all going to be watching
if the zimbabwe and diaspora
particularly those sitting in south
africa
do not start flooding back into the
country no one is going to believe that
anything has changed
thanks thanks todd thanks i think a good
summary
the problematic is enormous
one at home here we have been pushing
the idea of the transitional authority
we believe that it's more urgent now and
i think the only way
we can break the
the gridlock that grips our country
yeah and we the hope that a hundred days
ends
uh gilbert we can converge
and and see not only how the u.s foreign
policy
leverages on zimbabwe and africa but
also the international committee as a
whole
and we'll keep the discussion going but
i want to thank
todd in particular for bringing a short
notice to lead us in this conversation
sarah gilbert

and ray thank you very much we have to
end now because
todd is rushing to another meeting thank
you very much
thank you
do
okay